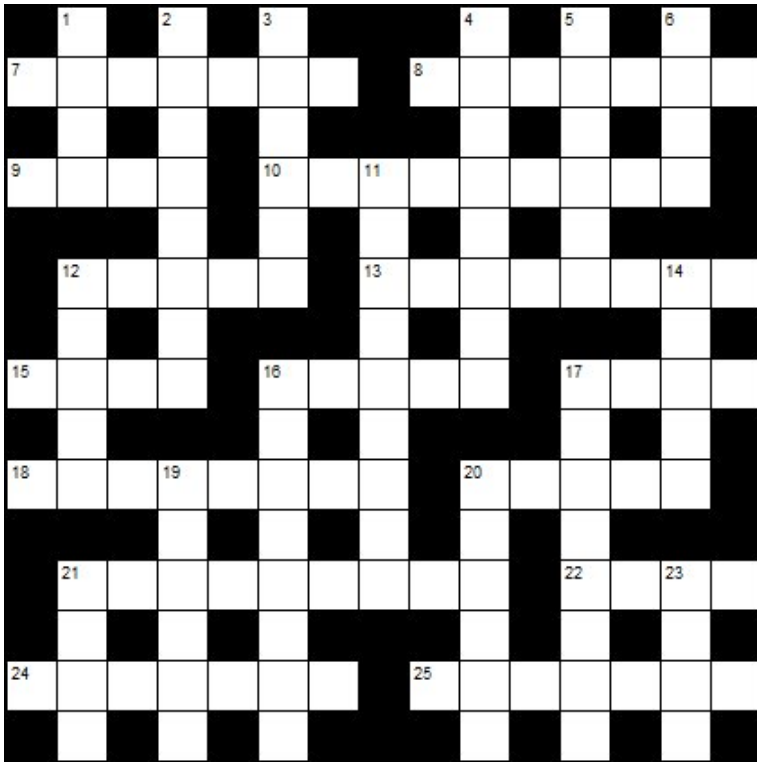


# Puzzle by Gonzo

This is one of those puzzles which are fiendishly tough to solve, yet once you've finished you wonder why you struggled. Everything is fairly indicated and neatly hidden in plain sight. Which, of course, is the hallmark of a fine puzzle. There are so many good clues that it was hard to choose a favourite, but for me the honours go to 19 down.

Gonzo would like to express his thanks to Grub for help with filling the grid.



## ACROSS

- 7 Played a role all over Delaware, toupee provided (7)  
 8 Old city gripped by mega-torrent and cattle plague (7)  
 9 3 down taking little time out for studies (4)  
 10 Assemble performance target nightly with retrospective sampling (9)  
 12 Annoyed Supreme leader's predecessor? (5)  
 13 Target for one in union is to speak more frankly (8)  
 15 Chances slim for selfism (4)  
 16 Woman enthralling Irish county (5)  
 17 Ace backing for space (4)  
 18 Confused scene captured by monitor formerly showing Turkish power (8)  
 20 Little chap springing forward – or not (5)  
 21 Oddly calmer after military unit secures leader of UKIP in cell (9)  
 22 Parrot to cut hair (4)  
 24 Discovered in plaza, Russian who was brought back to life, we're told (7)  
 25 Woman's belt is silver darling (7)

## DOWN

- 1 Poet's festival requires experimental diet (4)  
 2 Stick with Oxford's detectives? (8)  
 3 Dybbuks, content to become wicked (6)  
 4 Skirt on old film star inspiring affection (8)  
 5 One's reportedly soothed by music once savage animal has eaten Queen (6)  
 6 Long number between two transcendentals (4)  
 11 "High Court" – is it full of people tripping? (9)  
 12 Silence, darkness in the middle of a wood (5)  
 14 Old Norse official, both short and unsteady? (2-3)  
 16 In ghetto, sports copper mirror (8)  
 17 Photographers take Representative with bowl, after throwing up aboard ship (8)  
 19 Dash starkers – out of religious sentiment, originally? (6)  
 20 Mechanical engineer's life ends at sea notably, funds firstly withdrawn (6)  
 21 Gamble with a hundred on court matter (4)  
 23 Mercenary's not very upstanding, in a public way (4)