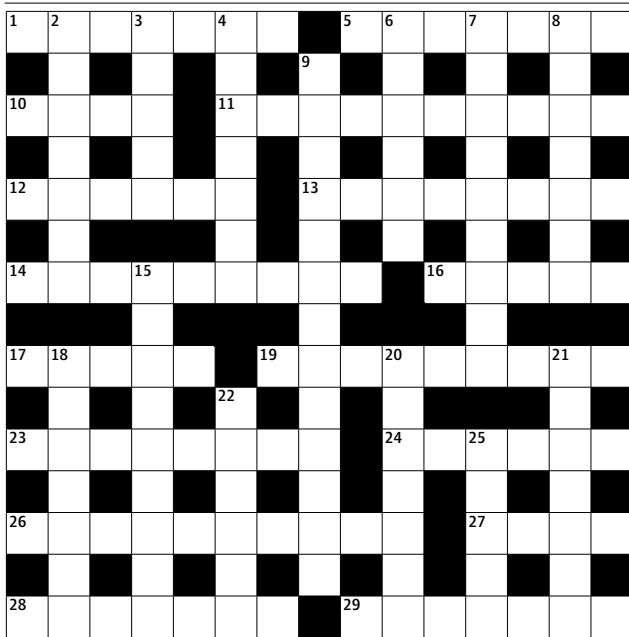


Guardian cryptic crossword



No 25,404 set by Boatman

Across

- 1,18** Four-and-twenty blackbirds in sour cream! F-word recipe? (1,6,2,5)
5 Puzzle is Boatman's tale: love lost, embracing life at last (7)
10 Lover's letters leave us emphatically with value and purpose (4)
11 Eponymous songbird suffered distress (5,5)
12 He killed off a detective – not at all sinister (6)
13 Detective's first to remove uniform in US venture (8)
14 Swing, dead after coil set round sergeant's head (9)
16 Clash with faction leads to an end to shooting (5)
17 Detective left out of scrap (5)
19 Give a wide berth, taking a berth with a fish (9)
23 Plans a scam involving the forgery (8)
24 Got together with everyone in the club (6)
26 Location of shooting craps etc: no moral outrage? (5,5)
27 War is wrong; peace begins with an end to shooting (4)
28 How to sit on bike: quick spin uses no force (7)
29 Trap for attacker in fields of lost middle England (7)

Down

- 2** Men: those who give nothing away receive violent end (7)

- 3** Restore state of sapper on location of shooting (5)
4 Entrance hall rent collected, a pound off (7)
6 Yard is led astray and gives up (6)
7 Boatman's cover is partial, unsurprisingly (9)
8 Beast firm on sitting under overturned vehicle (7)
9 Drama at no stage gives way over police search among some trees (6,7)
15 Detective uses bug to catch copper with gold (9)
18 See 1
20 Backstage sound effect for killing casually (4,3)
21 Starting crisis in denial upset bankers' host (7)
22 Carried on with detectives in bad taste (6)
25 Exceptionally wise novice first to make sergeant (5)

Solution No. 25,403

R	E	D	A	C	T	O	R	H	I	S	S	E	R		
A	R	O	V			N	U	E							
C	H	A	R	M	L	E	S	S	C	R	I	S	P		
E	G	E	R	H	H	G	U								
				F	O	S	T	E	R	P	A	R	E	N	T
A	I	N	H	O	I	N	A								
S	U	M	O	H	E	A	V	E	N	S	E	N	T		
T	M	D	S	E	S	R	I								
R	E	A	L	E	S	T	A	T	E	D	I	D	O		
I	C	P	I	U	S	S	N								
N	E	U	R	O	S	C	I	E	N	C	E				
G	L	R	K	S	I	A	I								
E	P	A	C	T		S	I	D	E	L	I	N	E	D	
N	T	E				A	L	T							
T	R	E	N	D	Y			D	Y	N	A	M	I	T	E