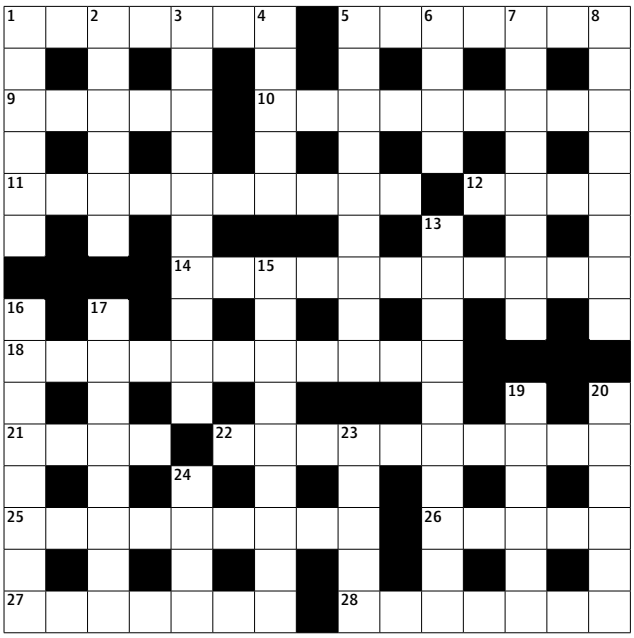
Guardian cryptic crossword



No 26,118

A tribute to an old friend

Across

1 Driven thing, tough – and the best! (7)
5 This unusually fruitful giant outstanding at finding inspiration for starters (4-3)
9 Such a noted art I'm not sure returns thus (5)
10 Gilt-edged artist, foremost of compilers on song, our beloved hero (9)
11 10 across's ultimate invention that's timeless, followed by a complete devotee (10)
12 Entertained by endless poetry, us solvers were indebted (4)
14 Sort of nag, Shetland pony might you say, with a love of the country (11)
18 Other characters are all quite square, possibly? (11)
21 Spirited crossword, perhaps? (4)
22 Getting on, a parish priest with RAF ultimately feared lost was seen again (10)
25 One decorated by monarch, perhaps, 8's responsibility to drop off award – I'll be blowed! (9)
26 Much-respected rector tucking into good feed (5)
27 What may restore fount of knowledge from King's, after playing with some appropriate language (7)
28 Attention given to fantastic old master's noble rank (7)

Down

1 Holy man, nothing less, composed for service book (6)
2,23 Our final wish is a pretence, it turns out (4,2,5)
3 In match, start to play with clubs in a calculated way (10)
4 Uncomplicated man of the cloth spilling his tea (5)
5 Reverend's ultimate parting gift, setters' youthful education of old (5,4)
6 A vicar finally getting his place above all others (4)
7 Drop round – we're sorry to say goodbye ... (8)
8 ... but we fitted much of 10 in, Dei gratia (8)
13 Innovator holding up letter to show worthy opponent (10)
15 Understanding devious hinter's in-joke? (9)
16 Behave shiftily and selfishly? Not this self-effacing character! (8)
17 Rehearsal for card game finished by Spoonerist? (5,3)
19 Close of day for close companion (6)
20 Master standing to admit dereliction of duty in sanctum sanctorum (6)
23 See 2
24 Nothing's better than faith and hope, according to Paul (and Enigmatist and Shed) (4)

Solution No. 26,117