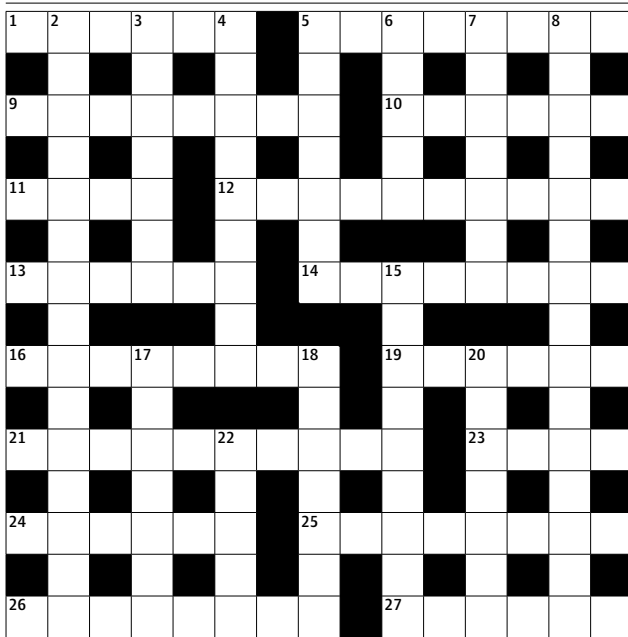


Guardian cryptic crossword



No 26,315 set by Picaroon

Across

- 1 Twirling journalist wearing clown's suit (6)
- 5 Explorer back in country, one caught spying on royalty (8)
- 9 Acceptable payment to occupy empty London club (4,4)
- 10 Most of sheep in the rain? One of them (6)
- 11,23 Conferred with footballer needing to be paid off? (8)
- 12 Scots bash vessels navy moored in bay (5,5)
- 13 PM losing head in conflict with European (6)
- 14 What makes baker stop (5,3)
- 16 Verbally abuse Tory minister? Party leader's appalled (8)
- 19 Nothing wrong with car that's kind of blue (6)
- 21 Reluctant to explore a hot and steamy novel (4-2-4)
- 23 See 11
- 24 Not public school receiving royal backing (6)
- 25 Uncovered bird or rodent or mammoth (8)
- 26 Farm fertiliser has stable particle (8)
- 27 Decline in the west has society getting soft (6)

Down

- 2 Left idea for saucy yarn's beginning with one's newspaper (8,2,5)

3 Like some computers?

- Very nearly like the whole lot! (7)
- 4 Flora and Johnny involved in fling (9)
- 5 Criticise American pressure about promoting political unity (3-4)
- 6 Cruciverbalist's sidekick with some incredible wisdom (5)
- 7 Tip for cooking, stuffing cut carp (7)
- 8 Seek out cheerful, hazy line in futuristic picture (3,3,5,4)
- 15 English wound up? In France, we could be easily aroused (9)
- 17 After 31 days, examination of a government official (7)
- 18 Teacher, with age, defends right to be a bore (5,2)
- 20 Diver, turning up gold fish's head, fed (7)
- 22 Taunt a trio intermittently, giving musical instruction (5)

Solution No. 26,314

