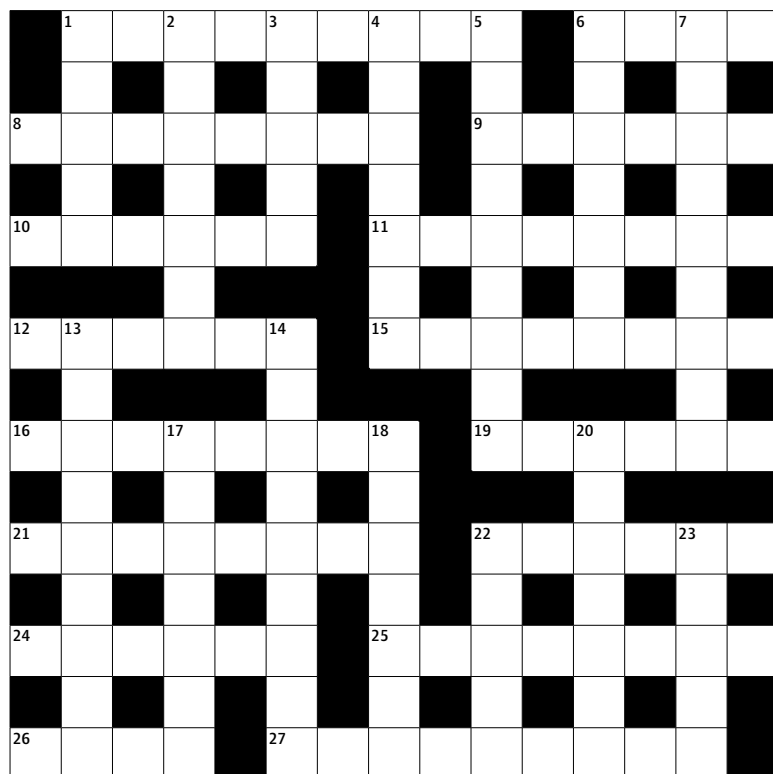


**Guardian cryptic crossword** No 28,174 set by Brummie



**Across**

- 1 Labourer's assistant could be so devious (9)
- 6 Believe house comes with vacant grounds (4)
- 8 Switching on Apple with new version of office (4-4)
- 9 Hail lovely ground (6)
- 10 Wretched old Tory right-wingers holding back (6)
- 11 Excitedly anticipating a modest backing (8)
- 12 Dodge Row (6)
- 15 Lofty's 'prior use' rumpus (8)
- 16 Place vessels around large plot (3,5)
- 19 Board's on edge? (6)
- 21 Dancing rumba without a singer for protection (8)
- 22 A zek or tsar with wings clipped, backing coup (6)
- 24 Soak vessel and put back (6)
- 25 Pence's 'thing'? Just a little bit (8)
- 26 'Earth', the artist said (4)
- 27 That's how pie ceremony reveals a fine specimen (9)

**Down**

- 1 Stimulant blows head off drinker! (5)
- 2 Working men in Black Country (7)
- 3 Very last of troupe to quit demonstration (5)
- 4 Old reports about Ursula's first bloomers (7)

- 5 Lee proved to be sporting photographer's solution (9)
- 6 Colt might be secured by this composer, on reflection (7)
- 7 One-time superior European city with lake by old road (5,4)
- 13 Warning: a large branch by our cartoonist (5,4)
- 14 Rigid principles for the running of public transport (9)
- 17 Exercise right to sit on panel – that's a crime (7)
- 18 Start to smoke joint and smell clean hair (7)
- 20 Mass association of king and clergy member shortly in church area? (7)
- 22 One leaves the old governor's band (5)
- 23 Sort of boomerang likely to lose line and deviate (5)

Solution No. 28,173

