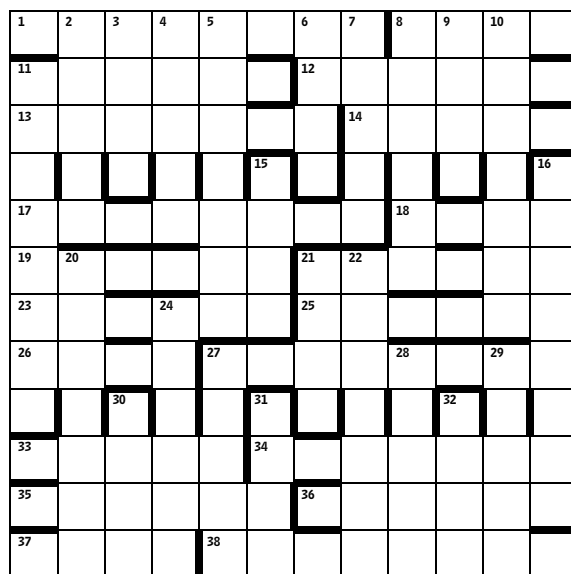


Azed No. 2,566 'Playfair'



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

In a Playfair word square the code phrase (in which no letter recurs) is followed by the remaining letters of the alphabet, I doing double duty for I and J. To encode a word it must first be split into pairs of letters, e.g. CR IT IC AL. Each pair is then to be seen as forming the diagonally opposite corners of a rectangle within the word square, the other two corners being the encoded form. Thus, in the example shown, CR gives SG (not GS, which RC would give). Where a pair of letters appears in the same row or column in the word square, its encoded form is produced from the letter immediately to the right of or below each respectively. For the last letter in a row or column the first letter in the same row or column becomes the encoded form.

Thus IC becomes CE. When all the pairs are encoded, the word is joined up again, thus CRITICAL is encoded as SGCICEOP. The answers to the four asterisked clues, which are without definitions, must be encoded in the diagram. The code phrase (of two words, one of them an abbreviation) **describes the answers to the asterisked clues**. It must be deduced with the help of the answers to normal clues, so that the diagram may be completed.

Across

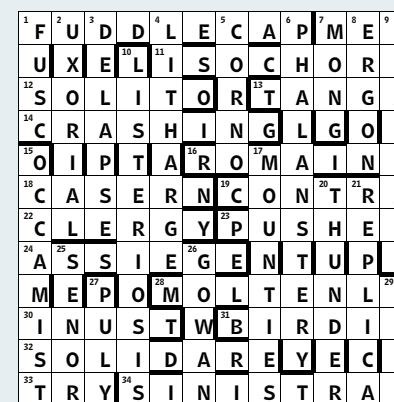
- *1 Pop, poorly, in care of brilliant daughter (8)
- 8 Bishop in usually striped cloth? Not necessarily (4)
- 11 Piano's left out of tune, though not old, relating to a chord? (6)
- 12 Somewhat debonair, i.e. rather more jaunty (6)
- 13 Controversial, extreme, provided with amplifier (7)
- 14 What implies Benin is swell (5)
- 17 Oil extraction centre, where you find youngsters, dropping out, in old breeches (8, 2 words)
- 18 Mark reef at sea: there's bony fish (4)
- *19 Fish that's not cooked inside, sent back (6)
- 21 Poet's bar, supplying special, was out mostly (6)
- 23 Lout is last on list for founder of colony (6)
- *25 Cask soak knocked back (6)
- 26 Members of high table after retiring in snug at St Andrew's (4)
- 27 AZ knows his solvers are never this stupid (8)

- 33 Plastic resin: it was liquid (5)
- 34 Rediscover agenda with peripheral pruning, excessive amount (7)
- 35 Wild gale or rain? Have this brolly fabric near (6)
- 36 He has line dipped in bait? (6)
- 37 Frump cut short, wife interrupting (4)
- *38 Subordinate in specialized army regiment (8)

Down

- 2 Track in bad condition after minimum of sweeping (5)
- 3 Old manor: worried when it's not included in deed (4)
- 4 Some Beaune that's almost out of date (5)
- 5 Treat youngsters cruelly, Squeers-style – protective garb needed (7)
- 6 Rabbit college used as stuffing for ox (4)
- 7 Shuffle letter sequence around (not hard?) (5)
- 8 Resurrect from the past eras obscured, for ever interred (6)
- 9 House denied love latterly, a heap of waste (4)
- 10 After battle of the sexes perhaps following shrink? (7)
- 11 What might describe mineral fragments? Well, not these (8)
- 15 Binding material you fit with similarly placed cuts (4)
- 16 Tennents? This aye disposes of watery beers (8)
- 20 Vagrant confined to California and cross about it (7)
- 21 Traipse south over clay, losing energy (4)
- 22 Rarely grasp what was written about soil's efflorescence (7)

Azed No. 2,563 solution & notes



Across 7, mes(quite); 12, so lit o; 22, erg in cly; 31, ref. golf; 32 sol + l + dare.
Down 10, list + anag.; 17, mo unties; 27, l in puy; ref. AYLI, 2, 7, 145; 29, yell(ow) & lit.

Special announcement

We regret to announce that, until further notice, we are unable to offer prizes for solvers of the Azed weekly crosswords. The special monthly Azed clue-writing competitions are not affected and will continue as normal. Entry rules for these will appear as usual.

- 24 I had vehicle before duke – it's uniquely personal (6, 2 words)
- 27 Philosopher, Chinese by the sound of him (5)
- 28 Elgar's variation that's extensive (5)
- 29 Group of seven? Faces losing six (5)
- 30 Small boat, not quite deserving to be upended (4)
- 31 Crumpet, very good with a bit of preserve (4)
- 32 It's included among anatomical features (4)

The Chambers Dictionary (2014) is recommended.