

**CRYPTIC** by DA 20,654

**NB** - The four marked clues lack a definition. In order, their answers make their own clue, solved by which fifth entry in the grid?

**ACROSS**

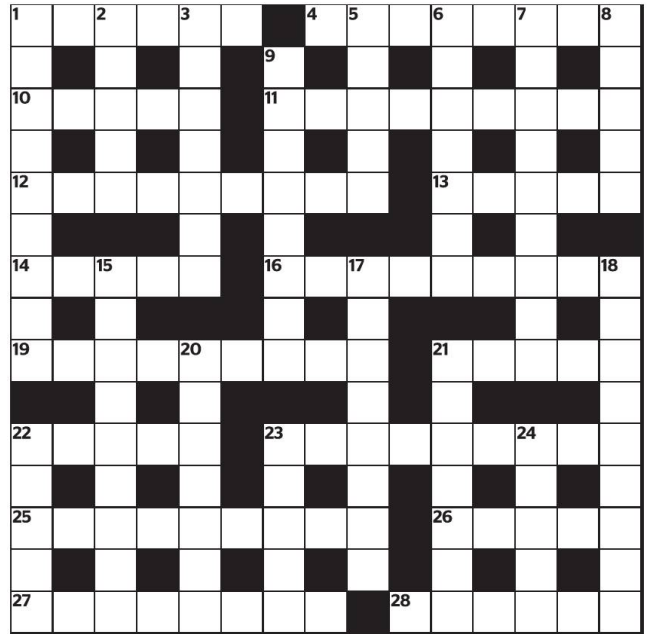
- \*1 Abbott initially stops backbench running (6)
- \*4 26-across gear absorbs bent purist (8)
- 10 How trapeze artists fearlessly swing a small choir (5)
- 11 He's corrupting maids with elan! (6,3)
- \*12 Country food store ran out of savoury (9)
- 13 Adhesive paste ultimately useless? (5)
- 14 Extremely keen to acquire web address projection (5)
- 16 11-across keeps one muppet obedient? (9)
- 19 Bitter sides in election fracture calm (9)
- 21 Group of boys twice shed blood in rocky canyons (5)
- 22 Heavenly streaker in stir, shaking bottom? (5)
- 23 Popular cause of a Xword? Torment when incomplete (9)
- \*25 Thing I have contracted (9)
- 26 Pluckier Xbox addict (5)

- 27 23-down is dividing show (8)
- 28 Spicy Indian bread each regular ate (6)

**DOWN**

- 1 Port authority in meek war deployment? (9)
- 2 Party to bemoan Nullarbor scrub (5)
- 3 Select one deficient poddy from sight? (7)
- 5 Stylish, mostly clean Indian banker? (5)
- 6 Heard to stroke beloved Nordic grazer (7)
- 7 English state gets closer to healthy airs (9)
- 8 Bright lad recited (5)
- 9 Alien covered up bed supplied by the French staff member? (4,4)
- 15 Bear up in a big way? (4,5)
- 17 Just like an orderly ledger? (8)
- 18 Entire 300 rebuilt out there (9)
- 20 Saw how a scone differs from a torte? (7)
- 21 Astrologist, most likely, points to gamble (3,4)
- 22 Bandleader succumbed to cold and throat complaint (5)
- 23 Felicity Carey novel (5)
- 24 Silverback pounces onto Manx pooch in range (5)

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**Yesterday's cryptic** 20,653

