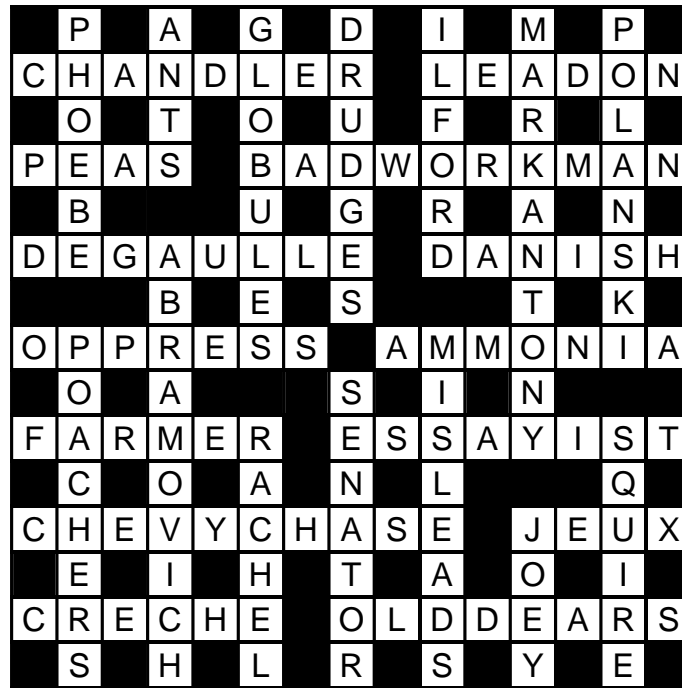


Theme and Variations



The theme, which is unstated, arises from the words of 6 to, among others, some 19s. This in turn leads to three sets of variations. All these are partially clued.

Theme derives from MARK ANTONY's words to some SENATORS: "FRIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRYMAN" (not stated) Variation A: Characters from TV series FRIENDS; Variation B: people called ROMAN; Variation C: Rural characters

Across

- 8** VAR A: He worked in Marlowe (8) Ref. Raymond Chandler/Philip Marlowe
- 9** Prick-tease, but no deal, unfortunately (4,2) Anagram NO DEAL
- 10,2** VAR C: Vegetables and insects (8) Charade PEAS + ANTS
- 11** He fingers penises in law (3,7) Ref. Proverb 'A Bad Workman blames his tools'
- 12** In general, legal due is doubtful (2,6) Anagram LEGAL DUE
- 14** Judo level's hard pastry (6) Charade DAN + IS + H
- 15** Work papers are tyrannical (7) Charade OP + PRESS
- 17** Corrosive imam on a tour (7) Anag IMAM ON A
- 20** VAR C: Umpire's back, holding a serviceman (6) F[A+RM]ER (REF reversed)
- 22** Lamb might be, for example, in building sites (8) Ref. Charles Lamb SAY in anag SITES
- 24** American comic ballad (5,5) Double Definition
- 25** First person who's foreign to take DJ with top off gets a ballet(4) JE + (t)UX
- 26** Noisy accident for Royal Family in the nursery (6) Homophone CRASH
- 27** Pensioners altering Dads' role (3,5) Anag DAD'S ROLE

Down

- 1** VAR A: Hope some bees fly away (6) Anag. HOPE + BE[es]

- 2** See 10
- 3** Bull goes bananas? Balls! (8) **Anag. BULL GOES**
- 4** Many of Barnaby's slaves (7) **D+RUDGE [Dickens]**
- 5** Florid orgy in Essex (6) **Anag. FLORID**
- 6** Two boys (4,6) **MARK + ANTONY**
- 7** VAR B: A lot of country seen by runner (8) **POLAN[d]+SKI**
- 13** VAR B: Hit Mach I? Bravo! (10) **Anag. MACH I BRAVO**
- 16** VAR C: The woman's set on fucking a cop (8)
Anag. A COP + HERS
- 18** Dupes girl about important part (8) **MIS[LEAD]S**
- 19** High treason (7) **Anag. TREASON**
- 21** VAR A: A pain in the sides (6) **R[ACHE]L**
- 23** VAR C: Quantities of paper, last to first (6) **QUIRES to SQUIRE**
- 25** VAR A: A small jumper (4) **Pun on 'Jumper' - Kangaroo**