

Our Anniversary Tribute to Araucaria

An Inspiration

By John Henderson. Adapted from the *Independent*, November 27, 2013, with kind permission.

John Galbraith Graham lit up the crossword community. Finding the byline “Araucaria” beside the morning’s grid brought great joy to his innumerable fans. He was an inspiration to younger setters, including a certain 12-year-old growing up in Cornwall.

Typically, he responded quickly to each letter and amateurish crossword “Enigmatist” sent him, and with patience, kindness and warmth. He was instrumental in kick-starting the *Guardian* careers of John Young (“Shed”) and John Halpern (“Paul”); he even joined forces with the three of us (WE Johns!) to compile special puzzles for the *Guardian* under the pseudonym “Biggles”.

John was born in Oxford in 1921 into a word-puzzling family with five other siblings. After attending St Edward’s School in Oxford, he read classics and theology at King’s College, Cambridge, but war interrupted. He joined the RAF and flew as observer/navigator on Bostons and Baltimores with 55 Squadron. Shot down behind enemy lines, he was “mentioned in despatches” (which he said simply meant that you were “hiding” – as he was, with an Italian farming family) until being “found” in 1945.

Ordained in 1948, John served placements in London (including St Peter’s in Euston), later taking up the chaplaincy at St Chad’s College, Durham, until 1952. In that year, he married his first wife and moved south to become Chaplain of Reading University, then to Cambridgeshire to take up a rectorship in the early 1970s.

By then crosswords had become a significant part of his life. Having won an *Observer* compiling competition two years running in the late 1950s, John set his first puzzle for the *Manchester Guardian* in summer 1958. His sideline was to become his main source of income: divorced at the end of the 1970s, he was forced to leave the priesthood. He moved from near Peterborough to a cottage in Long Preston, North Yorkshire with Margaret, whom he married in 1983.

He began a monthly crossword subscription service based in Settle, later to become *1 Across* magazine, which he, Christine Jones and I launched from The Old Chapel in Middleton Tyas in 1984, and to which he contributed two puzzles per issue. Each month he set eight puzzles for the *Guardian*, and six (as “Cinephile” – anagram of Chile pine, the Araucaria tree) for the *Financial Times*. John’s puzzles were original, regularly thematic, and often featured Alphabetical Jigsaws and trademark long anagrams, painstakingly worked out with the aid of *Scrabble* tiles.

By the time Margaret died in 1993, John had returned to Cambridgeshire, resuming church duties, on which he worked tirelessly while maintaining his output as a compiler. In 2005 he became the second setter to be recognised in the Honours List, receiving an MBE.

At the end of 2012, in the solutions to a puzzle for *1 Across* republished in the *Guardian*, John revealed that he had been diagnosed with cancer of the oesophagus. The answer to 18 down in his last published puzzle was TIME TO GO.



John Galbraith Graham, aka Araucaria
Photo by Steve Caplin,
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Thank you Araucaria

By Sirius

Thank you John Graham, *Araucaria*, for the wind in our sails at the launch of our 3D Crosswords Project, to torture and fascinate solvers whilst helping youngsters in need. John had been one of the first to take a serious look at these slightly wacky 3D puzzles.

“Not good news I’m afraid, Eric. I am hopeless in three dimensions and I could only solve three clues. I don’t really like hard crosswords.”

Despair. Lesson One for me. / I don’t really like hard crosswords either!! I sent my all-time favourite setter the solutions.

Rapture! “Your clue-ing is pretty good!!” ... and ... “Yes. I would be very happy to write a foreword to the 3D website” ... and amazingly ... “Yes. I will write the clues for a 3D puzzle in the Calendar! ... (as long as

you design the grid)”. “Yes, of course, you may apply my jigsaw ideas in 3D, but they will be impossible!”

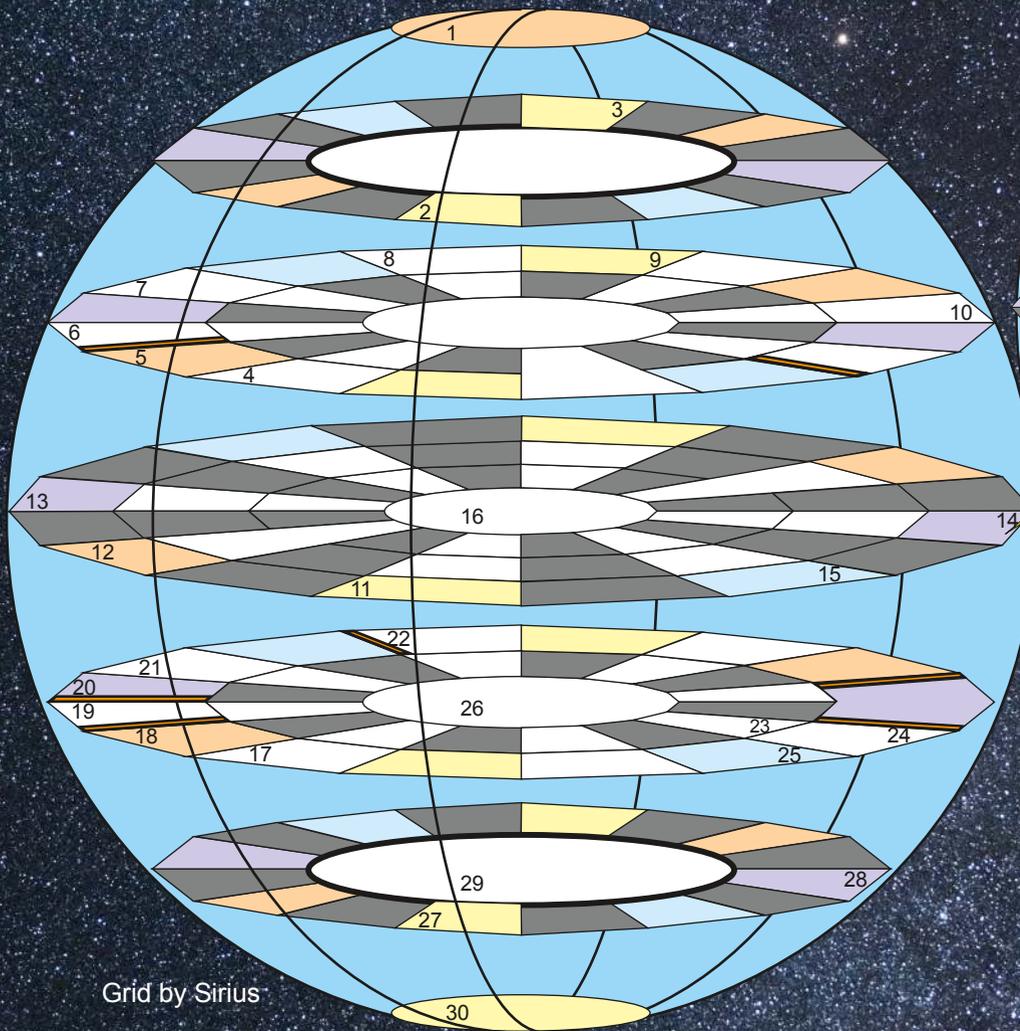
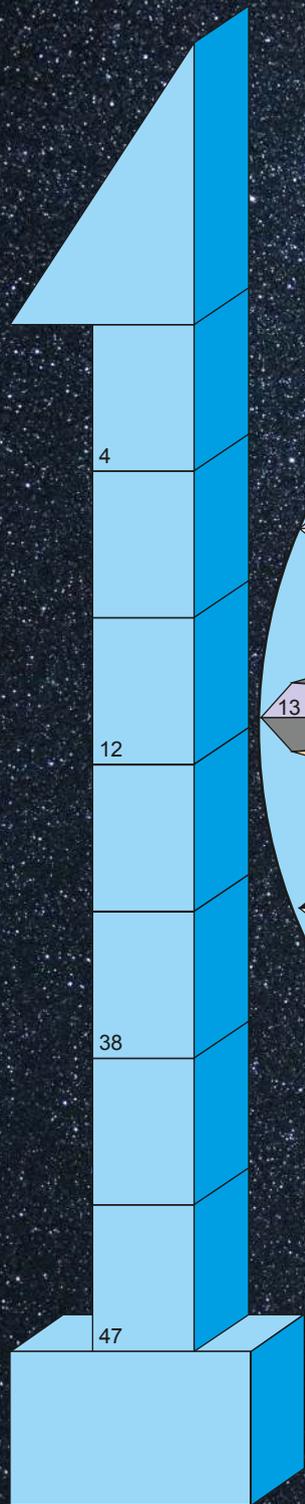
It was *Araucaria*, the inventor, who saw the potential to use the increased cross-checking of letters in 3D to develop the more imaginative aspects of crossword clues. He gave invaluable advice, coaching and encouragement. He suggested we offer modest prizes. He gave us permission to use any of the *Araucaria* puzzles from his subscription magazine, *1 Across*.

John was interested to meet in Cambridge at CAMREAD to see a demonstration of the first blind crossword program. I remember having to skip alongside the inspiring giant, complete master of the Cambridgeshire bus timetable, his countenance as broad and open as the skies above the fens.

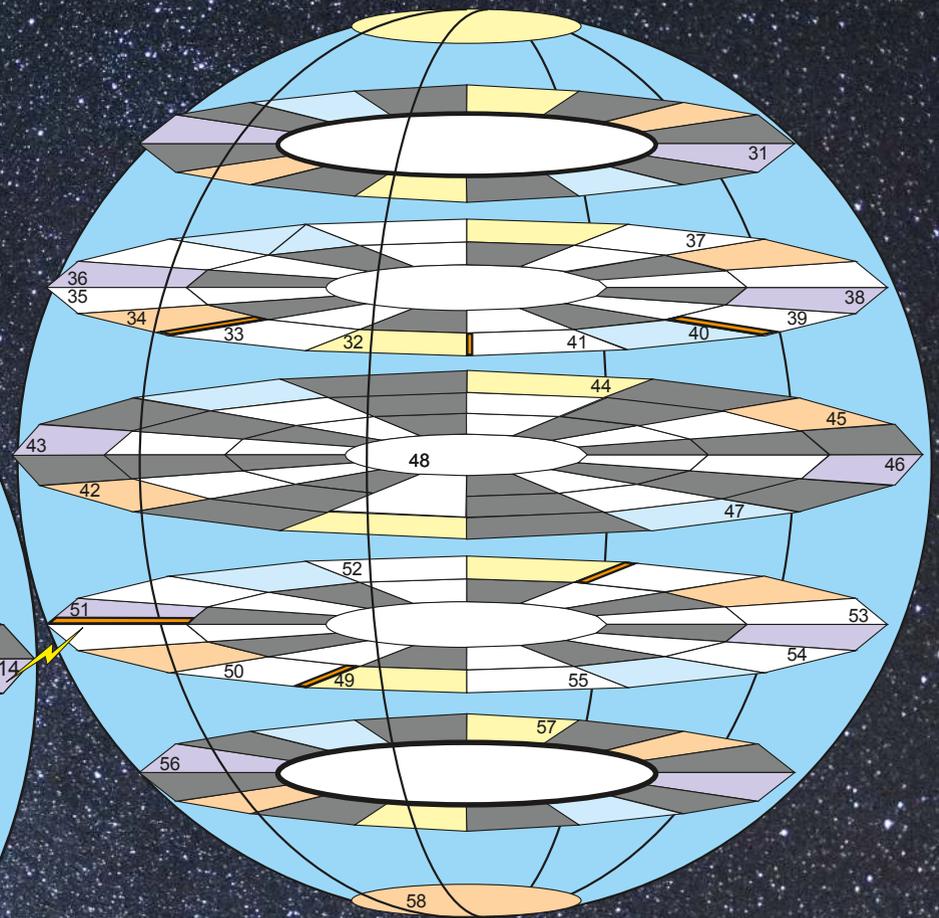
At his Ninetieth Birthday celebrations with *1 Across* in the Great Hall of King’s College Cambridge, having enjoyed official speeches along with music from the chapel choir, a well-lunched and lubricated assembly of devoted crossword solvers and setters heard an equally well-prepared RNIB speaker propose, in Jane Teather’s open mike session, that character spills over from crossword clues. When you pick up an alphabetical jigsaw puzzle by *Araucaria*, a hand of welcome extends across the grid. “Come on in, please do. Let’s have some fun!” Then a chuckling monkey bounds away in fabulous acrobatics of looping invention, anagrams, creative wordplay and the most wonderful wit.

The audience went mad with approbation and love.

We do so still.



Grid by Sirius



Extra Special 100
2021
Enigmatist
Sirius

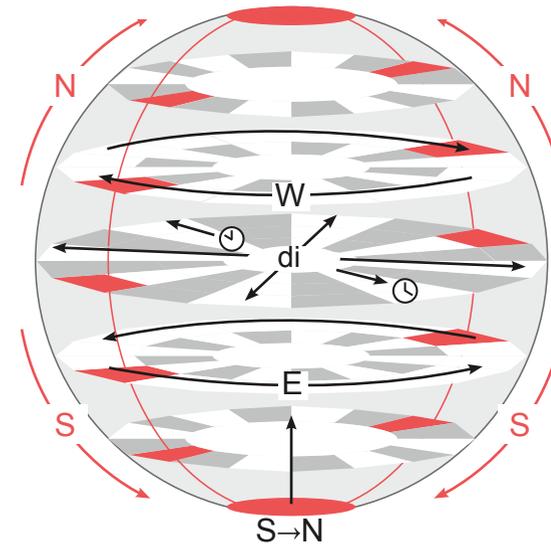
This puzzle's innovative grid comprises a 'Number One' column and two spheres, aptly denoting a 100-year anniversary.

INSTRUCTIONS

Information on use of directions within the two spheres is given in the key. One of the cells in the right-hand sphere is split in two, and requires two letters to be entered. The required entry in the column is unclued; numbers in its alternate cells refer to corresponding sphere cell numbers in the completed grid, where in each case the required letter can be found - the remaining letters should then easily be determined.

CLUES

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1 Column(figuratively),29di,27S-5 Elite British award-winner leaves magazine for crossword fans (1,6)</p> <p>2 1S(via 5,12...) Tweeps gutted our <i>Guardian</i> Cryptic Crossword's ultimately missing people with new ideas (12)</p> <p>3 4di Red Queen's delighted shout, wanting both justice and Alice's head (5)</p> <p>4 5E New A-Z missed off Christian compound (5) [Collins]</p> <p>5 7di Where Baltimores and Bostons were down, confess to 'hiding' somewhere in Italy (5)</p> <p>6 8di Many venerate him - Enigmatist does! (4)</p> <p>7 10di In <i>Guardian</i> Archive, like examples of <i>Araucaria</i>'s past work (1,2-2)</p> <p>8 11di Fits of which we got from 'Farmer proving he was famished' clue? (7)</p> <p>9 13di Vine-like, Cinephile's last snorter remains, letters occasionally erased (7)</p> <p>10 15N-7 Caps off behind enemy lines (Italy), meeting woman in garden, as Christian should (7)</p> <p>11 15di-4,16di⊙ 25's ace compiler(s) (7)</p> <p>12 16di⊙ Departed from Oundle to Long Preston, finally moving (4)</p> <p>13 18E-2,17di In eg <i>Bunthorne's Bride</i>, dressing is flashy? (6)</p> <p>14 18N-2,12di Too keen, suspended: turn to the other crossword Reverend (4-2)</p> <p>15 19di,9N-2,3di,2S-4,23di⊙,24W-5,35di What could possibly make prig heckle angelic school singers? (5,7,6,5)</p> <p>16 19di-3,26di⊙ Jazz saxophonist close to Brubeck at Sunday service? (5)</p> | <p>17 20W,6W,55di,57N-7
'Literary' home allowance – after a fashion – procured by theatre diva, is it rumoured? (3,3,8,12)</p> <p>18 20W,53di,14S Choral piece, a seventh he's composed, with a new vocal version (3,7,3,7)</p> <p>19 21di ARC or ARC_: the latter's missing letter not a crosser (5)</p> <p>20 22W Attention-seeker heading west exits from St Chad's and starts in St Peter's (4)</p> <p>21 22di Heartthrob expecting new setters perhaps to shift power (3-2)</p> <p>22 25S-5 A high point here with ideas for anagramming Shed sadly rejected (5)</p> <p>23 30S→N Designs on floor – not the first dance – with which Romeo's won Juliet's heart (7)</p> <p>24 31N-6 What Jane and Judith share with enigmatic <i>TES</i> editor was amusing (6)</p> <p>25 32W-2,33di,37E-2 Twice little boys' rooms vacated by one English Captain of Literature (1,1,5)</p> <p>26 32S-5 His was A Generation, notice, to talk about (5)</p> <p>27 34W-3,36S-3 Did Bill's awfully apt clue as a containment Paul sadly rejected (5)</p> <p>28 36W-6 Topless rockers burst into more than one marriage for songs and dances? (6)</p> <p>29 39E-2,38S-2,46N-2,38E-4 Monkey puzzled, finally escaping tree (7)</p> <p>30 39di Round buildings, this is in spirit holiest (5)</p> <p>31 40W,41di His ban voided and lifted, John thus welcomed back by church with good humour (6)</p> <p>32 44di Puzzle monkeyed with 35, one escaping (6)</p> | <p>33 45di-4,42di-3 For parting masterstroke, that is lousy pay! (5,2)</p> <p>34 46di,43N-2 Great man almost completely besotted with her? He's not admitted to it! (8)</p> <p>35 47di-4,48di⊙ Including Merlin and co among foremost of entertainers, John's #1 (7)</p> <p>36 48di⊙ Mentor's spoken of sentimentality to regret? (4)</p> <p>37 49E 'Araucaria' on top of grid, good cheer spread around (1,1,6)</p> <p>38 50W Masks etc used in Theatre course at Oxford? (3) [Abbr]</p> <p>39 50di Devotional one starts in Peterborough, Settle and Lavenham – then Somersham, ultimately (5)</p> <p>40 51W Property of this puzzle dear Eric put together honouring every one's Number One (5)</p> <p>41 54di Novelist cut short person speaking at church service (5)</p> <p>42 56S-6 Country priest, reflective chap, getting stuck into <i>Araucaria</i>'s "Perimetricals" (6)</p> <p>43 58N(via 42,34...),40S What could make us all upbeat? Whiz JG A-Z specials! (12,6,7)</p> <p>44 58S→N A giant among men – an essentially revolutionary Biblical interpretation (7)</p> <p>45 58S→N-4,48di⊙ Bible class: their 'S' is one of his <i>Scrabble</i> tiles (7)</p> |
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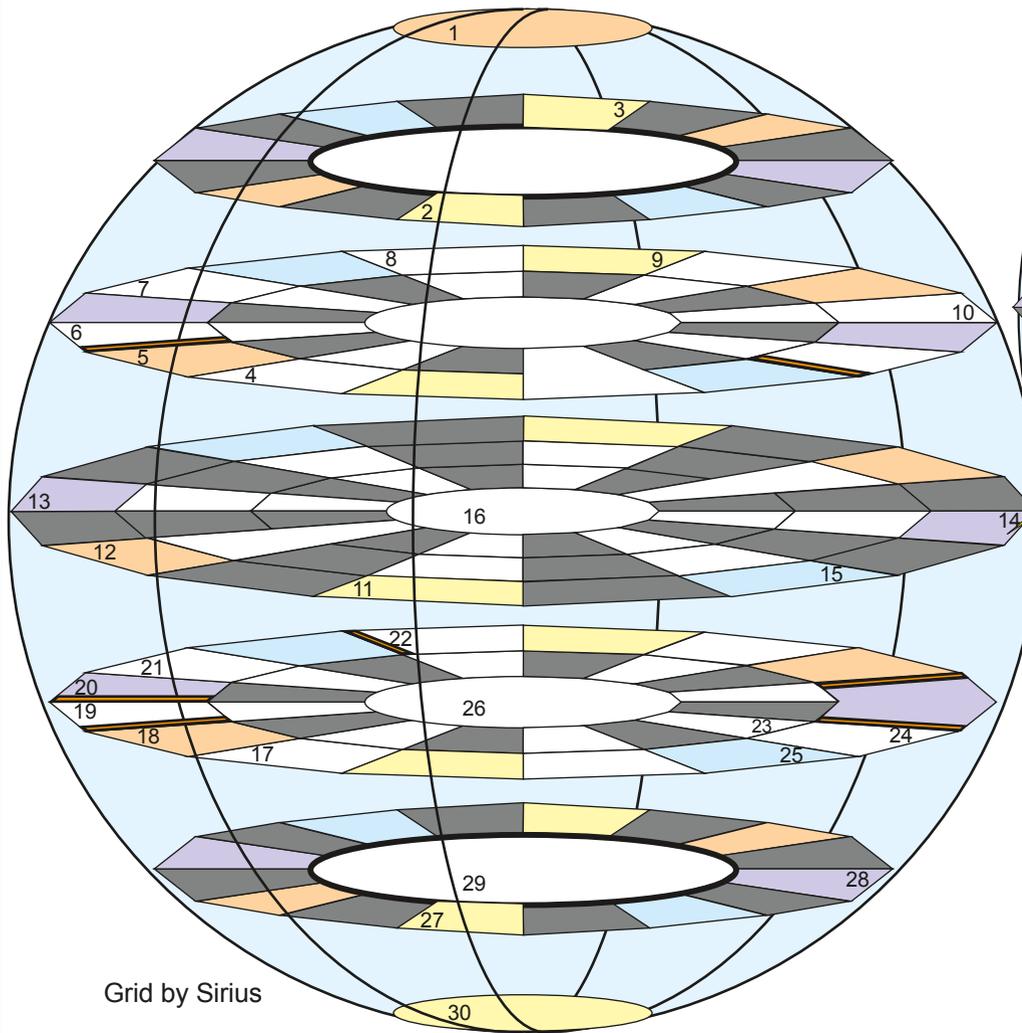
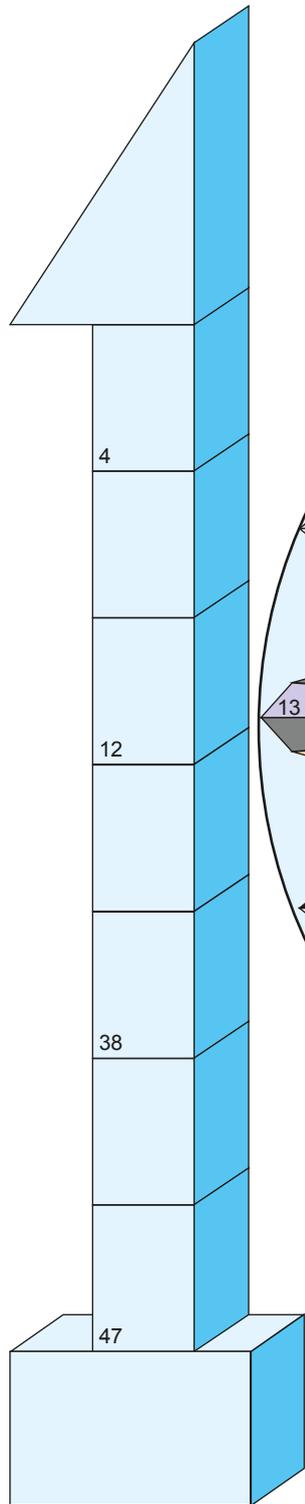


KEY

Solutions run:

E - circularly eastward
 W - circularly westward
 N - longitudinally north
 S - longitudinally south
 S→N - up
 di - diametrically
 di⊙ - diametrically from centre in direction indicated by clock face, e.g. 4 o'clock

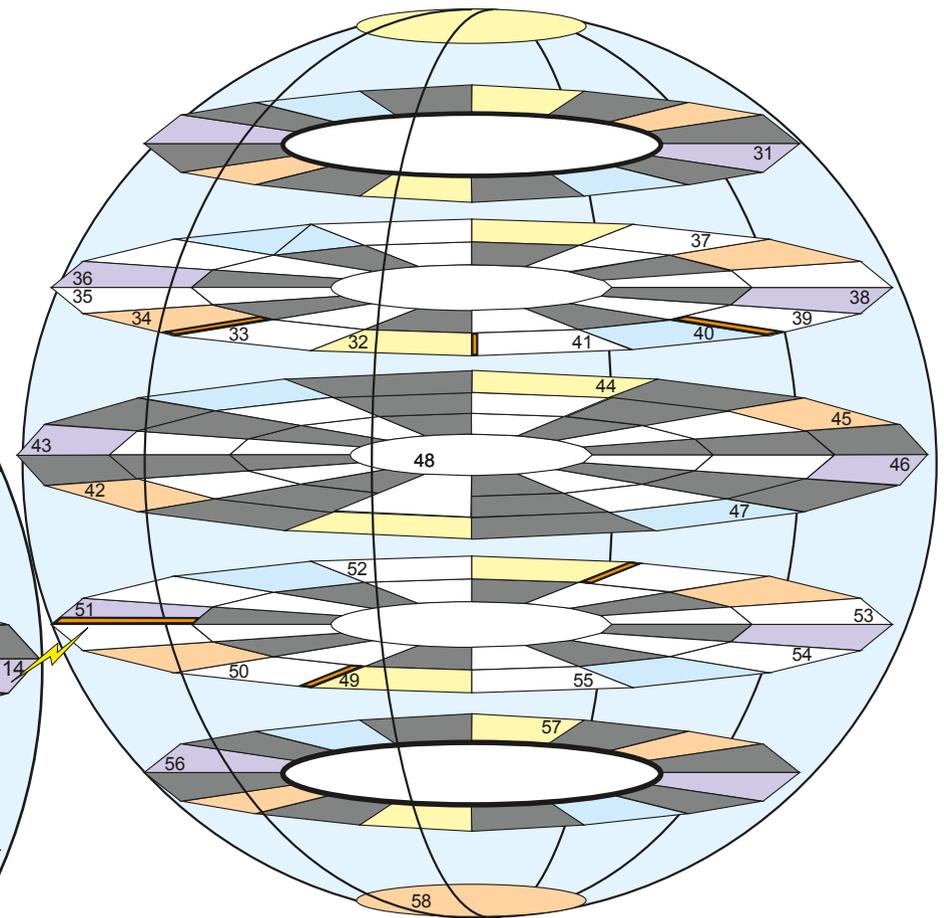
Colours guide the eye along lines of longitude.



Grid by Sirius

This puzzle's innovative grid comprises a 'Number One' column and two spheres, aptly denoting a 100-year anniversary.

Enter online at 3dcalendarpuzzles.co.uk/2021-puzzles



Extra Special 100 2021 Enigmatist Sirius