Crossword 16,093 Set by Mudd

ACROSS
1 Battle-axe’s reward to cuddle sweetheart: time to use delaying tactics! (4,4,4)
8 How bread may appear cut initially, it’s said (7)
9 Music possibly encapsulated by Mozart, for many (3,4)
11 Marine animal and insect getting closer? (7)
12 Clock heads for third hour, egg duly boiled! (7)
13 Salt on after egg (5)
14 Nan and mother, squeezing first of sponges, left wiping the floor with the others (5,4)
16 Restaurant in old club welcoming sovereign (9)
19 Isle in better state (5)
21 Home behind field that’s most unproductive (7)
23 Most unholy of sins? Choose to embrace one (7)
24 Taste insect in tin (7)
25 Wave spoilt a sheet of canvas (7)
26 Very much in detail? (12)

DOWN
1 Last of sediment hauled up to take away (7)
2 Price going up? (3,4)
3 One’s experienced chafing down below wearing tight leotards (3,6)
4 More than one test paper cut up first (5)
5 Charlie brings articles into fashion (7)
6 Very important office’s opening in new chapel (7)
7 Means of securing the basics (4,3,5)
8 Parisian girl produced wine, one bottled (12)
9 Narrative too orderly about European Community, full stop! (9)
10 America doesn’t need me to drink a black coffee (7)
11 Cunning insult overheard? (7)
12 Old ship, one docking? (7)
13 Mother dear holds precedence (7)
14 Note something invigorating (5)

Copies of The Meaning of Everything: The Story of the Oxford English Dictionary by Simon Winchester, published by Oxford University Press, will be awarded to the senders of the first three correct entries opened on Wednesday February 27. Entries marked Crossword 16,093 on the envelope, should be sent to Weekend FT, One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL. Solution on March 2.