Crossword 15,749 Set by Redshank

ACROSS
1 Climate changes beginning to startle climber (8)
5 Article penned by endlessly crafty hack (6)
10 Musician has time to go over price index (7)
11 I think it's OK at sea without this raft (3-4)
12 Royal function involves performing music (5)
13 In which to fly fish, not entirely upright (9)
14 Clock marksman in due course (4,4,4)
18 Love emblems incorporating rare animals (5,7)
21 Died ordering different bottle (7-2)
23 One admirer returns carrying a canteen (5)
24 Healthy bird's last to head for capital (7)
25 Pair of soaks hire a sanctuary (7)
26 Escort model over visiting Times (3,3)

DOWN
1 Cold old house right for group of statisticians (6)
2 Mission Spain oversaw gets in the way (6)
3 Dislike a pose adopted by actor Leonard (9)
4 Where to go for drinks and return as well (4,3,7)
6 It can be hard to understand rambling old cops (5)
7 A good sign: lots of social workers here (8)
8 Leave head early indicator of result? (4,4)
9 They run round the room avoiding the stage (8,6)
15 See raddled regent swigging first of tall glasses (9)
16 Barking hound implicated in comic mystery (8)
17 Outrage troops breaching 3 (8)
19 Where staff, say, get introduction to equines (6)
20 Strike American defending a gap (6)
22 Irish love importing fine timber (5)

Solution 15,748

Christmas crossword

Copies of How to Sound Clever by Hubert van den Bergh and The Superior Person's Book of Words by Peter Bowler, published by A&C Black and Bloomsbury, will be awarded to the senders of the first three correct entries opened on Wednesday January 17. Entries marked Crossword 15,749 on the envelope, should be sent to Weekend FT, One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL. Solution on January 20.

Jotter pad