Crossword 15,578 Set by Rosa Klebb

ACROSS
1 Spooner's escort approached old maid, perhaps (4,4)
5 Bill, in retrospect, missed daytimes playing snooker (6)
9 Wanting company to lend money, we hear (8)
10 Social isolation of hard-up drunk (6)
12 Whine of siren around docked vessel (9)
13 Minor sources of conflict hopefully involving little disagreement (5)
14 Saw sassy sons all disappearing abroad (4)
16 Argentinian red befuddled vague artist (7)
19 A hole in state funds (7)
21 Droppings of five hundred westbound wildebeest (4)
24 Mysterious disrobing involving more ale (5)
25 Nina's middle-class social worker is a communicator (9)
27 Clothes, I suspect, hamper work of doctor (6)
28 One exhibiting sloth, mollusc, fish and dispirited eland (8)
29 Soup perhaps on counter (6)
30 When sympathy overcomes hesitation and harshness (8)

DOWN
1 Names about eleven half-cut American cobblers (6)
2 The French, after row, continue to cause irritation (6)
3 Verbose idiot in Grimsby on vacation (5)
4 Imitating Puccini heroine with sob (7)
6 Chunter on angrily in officers' club (9)
7 Song from European 19 adopted by loony left (8)
8 Primitive layers had since disintegrated (8)
11 Banks of Boyne representing shipping hazard (4)
15 Content to outwit her, ingloriously supercilious (9)
17 Closer to summit of Parnassus, second group going first (8)
18 Criminal trespass is most infrequent (8)
20 Ex-PM scratching head in bolthole (4)
22 Caesar for example returned 19 of Gambia (6)
23 Hunky student entering room (6)
26 Goat gored by good elephant gone bad (5)

Copies of How to Sound Clever by Hubert van den Bergh and So You Think You Can Spell by David L. Grambs and Ellen S. Levine, published by A&C Black, will be awarded to the senders of the first three correct entries opened on Wednesday June 28. Entries marked Crossword 15,578 on the envelope, should be sent to Weekend FT, One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL. Solution on July 1.

Jotter pad