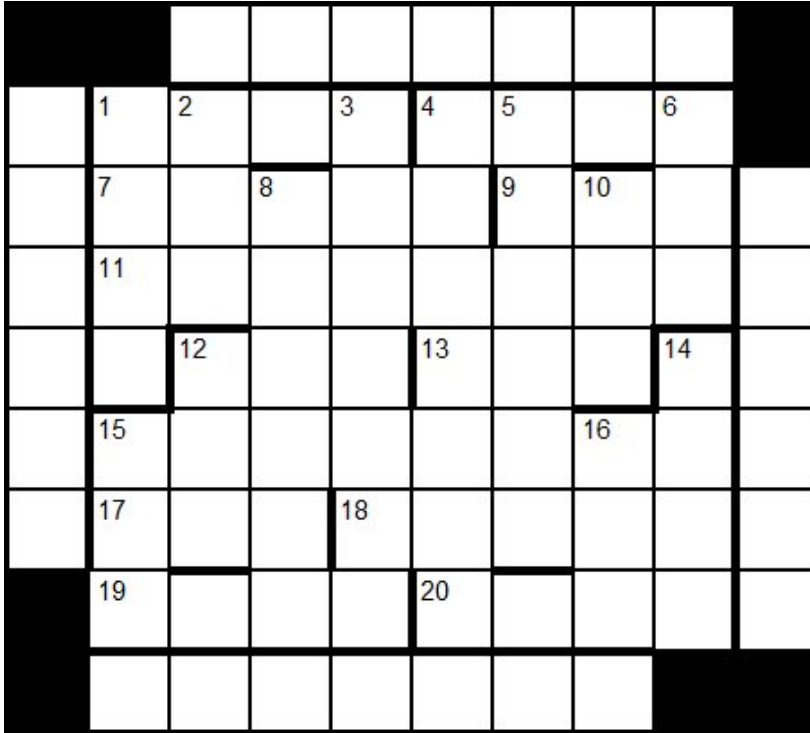


Northern Lights by Dhansak

This is the ideal puzzle to wean solvers on to barred thematics. It's at the gentler end of the spectrum, thanks to generous checking in the grid, and the clues shouldn't scare off anyone who can solve puzzles like the *Times*. Once you've worked out what is going on around the grid, you should experience that "penny drop moment" which is what makes these puzzles so enjoyable. I hope Dhansak's excellent effort will encourage those who haven't already done so to try the Listener, Inquisitor and Enigmatic variations puzzles.



The wordplay in most clues leads to one or two superfluous letters, which should be entered outside the grid to the left or right (for across clues) or top or bottom (for down clues). In the final grid two words (14 cells) should be shaded in the appropriate colour to complete the quintet.

ACROSS

- 1 Trustworthy thief astutely holds back (4)
- 4 Hanoverian language without a root (4)
- 7 English architect familiarly would make this remark on entering? (5)
- 9 Carriage of Papa's predecessor (3)
- 11 Open-handed group protects floundering rower (8)
- 12 Uneven fragments of eyeglass for Ernie, of course? (3)
- 13 Needlework victory at King's Head (3)
- 15 Translated Rasta made suitable for all laymen (8)
- 17 Ra's rag? (3)
- 18 Yorkshire's toy epidemic has to cease, by order of law (5)
- 19 With caring nature, begin to defend Scottish pirate (4)
- 20 He tucked in case of toddy for those people (4)

DOWN

- 1 Exhale sadly, endless cigs in silence (4)
- 2 Remainer endlessly loses sleep for Scottish unity (3)
- 3 Evacuated esteemed gallery, at first, in confusion (7)
- 4 Israel got destroyed; most horrific (7)
- 5 Wildlife activist can resolve our acne, given time (6)
- 6 At first, my romantic sister married woman (3)
- 8 Not marginal, bar Democrat following clique (6)
- 10 Take whelp from Cuban/British seabird (3)
- 12 Theorem: eugenicist shelters fast Australian runner (3)
- 14 Observation exercise: Teletubby has sinking heart (1-3)
- 15 Beg like careerless drunk? (3)
- 16 Eggs broken - shell missing (3)