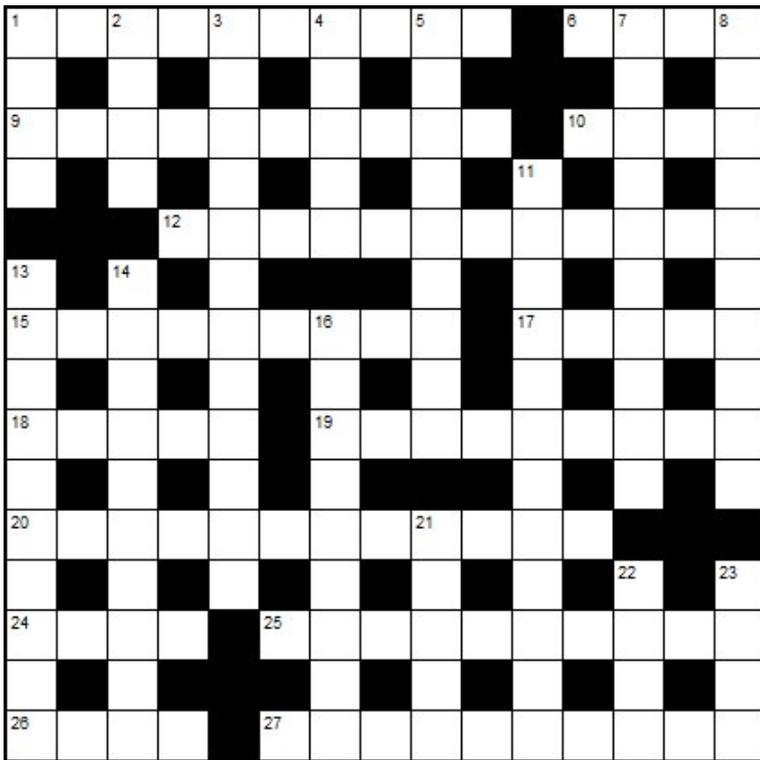


Puzzle by Wolfgang

Wolfgang is another new setter whose debut puzzle shows that he has a flair for invention and technique. There are some excellent cryptic definitions (I'm a sucker for these, not least because they are the origin of cryptic crosswords) and he has done a good job of writing decent clues for some non clue-friendly words. Even experienced setters find the latter difficult at times. Favourites: 12 across and 7 down.



ACROSS

- 1 Stroke given by creep after show (5,5)
- 6 Band has hit without manager, initially (4)
- 9 Ammunition law announced by party (10)
- 10 A "page one" article reveals capital in South Pacific (4)
- 12 Sweet woman helping children on the road to education? (8,4)
- 15 Party of lookers with the same status? (4,5)
- 17 Faithful follower's story coming with good energy (5)
- 18 Scrap drink in empty club (5)
- 19 *Hot and Cold* article includes section on one musical instrument (9)
- 20 Soccer nation displayed devotion (12)
- 24 Article on police is biting (4)
- 25 Top angler lands bird! (10)
- 26 Lean in to impart lurid tale, first of all (4)
- 27 Hot English skater goes to pieces – effect of over-exposure? (10)

DOWN

- 1 Meet by dilapidated cafe (4)
- 2 Animal's sound is coming from demo in kitchen (4)
- 3 Trained to support out-and-out racehorse? (12)
- 4 About Britain, the Spanish put up a fight (5)
- 5 Defence essay earns decoration (9)
- 7 Greek character's name showing up under "B" in order of characters (10)
- 8 Steely air? (5,5)
- 11 He looks into caves with misplaced steps, occupied by sign with reason mostly (12)
- 13 Vessel with elbow-room? It will take you out of this world! (10)

- 14** Quiet lanes redeveloped following an order (10)
- 16** Manage their woes – or else (9)
- 21** Close match gets time to replace first of linesmen (5)
- 22** Go away with second husband and unlimited food (4)
- 23** Release without charge (4)