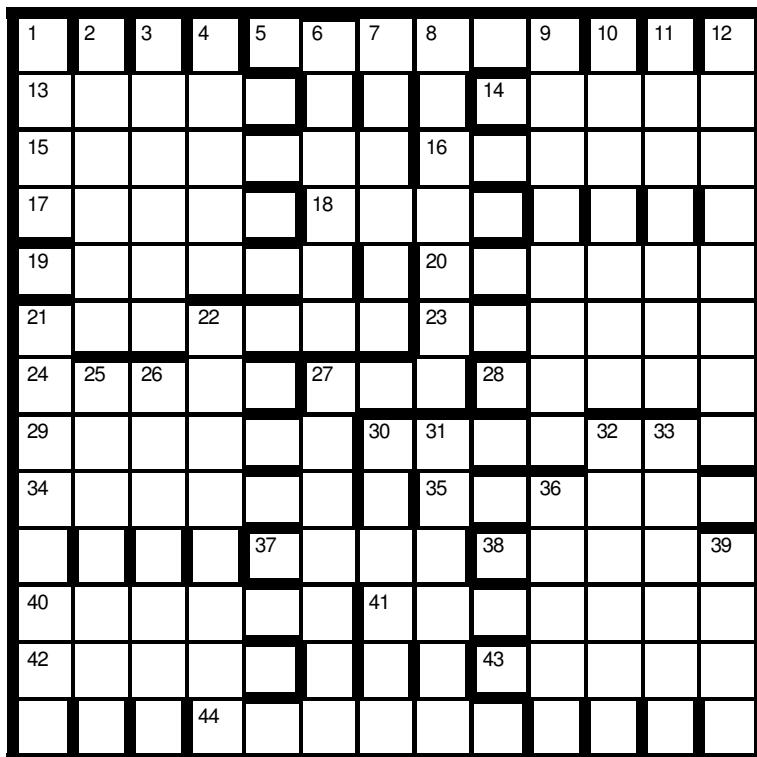


Cover Stories

By Phylax

Six answers must be replaced prior to entry. In the initially populated grid, two of these entries must be modified to show their provenance. To complete the symmetrically arranged thematic group, a seventh entry must be modified in either of two ways, as the solver prefers. All changes create only real words. Numbers in brackets refer to grid entries; *The Chambers Dictionary* (2016) is recommended.



Across

- 5** Second officer on ship backing old salt (6)
- 13** More than one being held in penitentiary (5)
- 14** Scheffler's first delicate chip at St Andrews (5)
- 15** Boris Johnson was one to continue ignoring Government, ego essentially gigantic (7)
- 16** Lots son enjoys ringing about (6)
- 17** Fellow caught letting slip exclamation of distaste (5)
- 18** Enthusiastic about opening passage bypassing river (4)
- 19** Train passes Elmswell without stopping (6)
- 20** Amateur maybe counts less British reptiles (6)
- 21** Sprayed sloop red, having rejected soft deep pink (7, 2 words)
- 23** Where Chancellor of the Exchequer makes modest cut? (6)
- 24** Dissident bishop engaged in riotous merrymaking stripped of see (5)
- 27** Reckless speed, staggering speed (3)

28 With movement very good in both directions after introduction of masseur (5)
29 Spurs vary Academy drills (6)
30 American's failure to take on board setter's quality? (7)
34 Bird that's developing late, eg cuckoo (6)
35 Gnawing stick leads to eating native trees (6)
37 He avoids cutting down branch (4)
38 Swimsuits and similar items, each with concealed support (5)
40 Collection of complex polymers lining churns (6)
41 Denied twisting information about unruly adolescent (7)
42 Last of venom being sucked from arm/leg wound essential for snakebite (5)
43 Relative to the French, complimentary about King (5)
44 Eggs and white wine saving a potato dish (6)

Down

1 Ask what constitutes Calvin Klein's monogram (4)
2 Net cord on return bounds forward (6)
3 Kept tax officer probing M Hucknall's band? (6)
4 Conceals contracts after failing to involve HR (5)
6 They don't rush to secure empty Sainsbury's bags (6)
7 Short skirt made shorter by floozie (6)
8 Never drink anonymous black dye (7)
9 Record accepted, so put on spinning device linked to speakers (8)
10 Openings for rhythm and blues in country songs (7)
11 Quits supporting English league football teams (7)
12 Arousing protests, widened part of interstate? (8, 2 words)
21 Lichen hunter perhaps losing head and damaging base of logs (8)
22 One who lamented accepting 100 pounds for power chair that's adjustable (8)
25 Careless clown doing somersault traps one in upper back (7)
26 He's in denial about wearing atrocious shirt with zip (7, 2 words)
27 Unlawfully withholding property of Parisian can upset EU (7)
30 Threatening war-club pounding setter's nut (6)
31 Curtailed wild celebration to consume almond drink (6)
32 Raised newt that man's captured close to pond (6)
33 Concludes ring's been discarded by trespassers (6)
36 Mole kept one to help run up clothing for Ratty (5)
39 Every so often dropped roadies at concert halls (4)