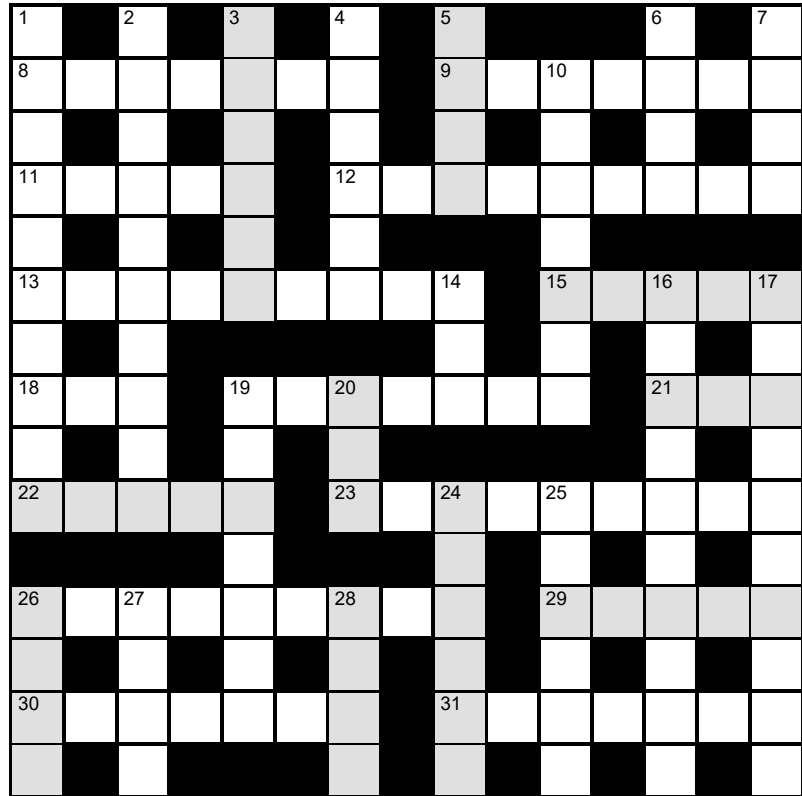


The 10 highlighted solutions may be anagrammed to form 7 capital towns or cities. (Three of the capitals are each derived from two of the highlighted solutions.) The initial letters of the 7 capitals are themselves an anagram of another one (nominally indicated by two other solutions.) What is it?

Across

- 8 It's taken to ridicule claim he made (7)
- 9 I'm presented with a cheque after returning paperwork (7)
- 11 Change plug fitting (5)
- 12 Regular rugby player (Welsh) visits Irish town (9)
- 13 Bookmaker's gesture in pursuit of mug (9)
- 15 Tail of small river rat (5)
- 18 Retreating stick insect (3)
- 19 Best man's clout procures wedding car? (2,5)
- 21 Booked Left half, a bad call (3)
- 22 Compass directed the wrong way perhaps (5)
- 23 Risk possibly being fed up when reported willing (5,4)
- 26 Split 50:50 with week to go, suddenly begin (5,4)
- 29 Place bazaar (ignoring ban) in market place (5)
- 30 Saw too much flashed around (7)
- 31 Maybe now and again, crack giving discharge (7)



Down

- 1 Foreign agent shot abroad after live sons captured (10)
- 2 Solid core and hot liquid (10)
- 3 Moderate Conservative abandons cause to advance more quickly (6)
- 4 Woman's hat affording protection in seedy environment? (6)
- 5 Reporter's spread vulgar work for one (4)
- 6 Ring for good woman with a lover's trousers (4)
- 7 Monk's last to make cross in church (4)
- 10 How memory's measured on set mark in test (3-4)
- 14 This tapped: slake gallons (3)
- 16 The limit of gaseous nebula enveloping minor constellation? (10)
- 17 Let off old flame one thought highly of (10)
- 19 Desert dweller blessed people by holding hand (7)
- 20 Difficulty promoting Battenburg cakes (3)
- 24 Cheers up about a locksmith's entrance without a key (6)
- 25 Dismiss Norman from work for artist (6)
- 26 Try to strike the ball (4)
- 27 Overwritten minute place for instruction (4)
- 28 Is without undies, posing? (4)