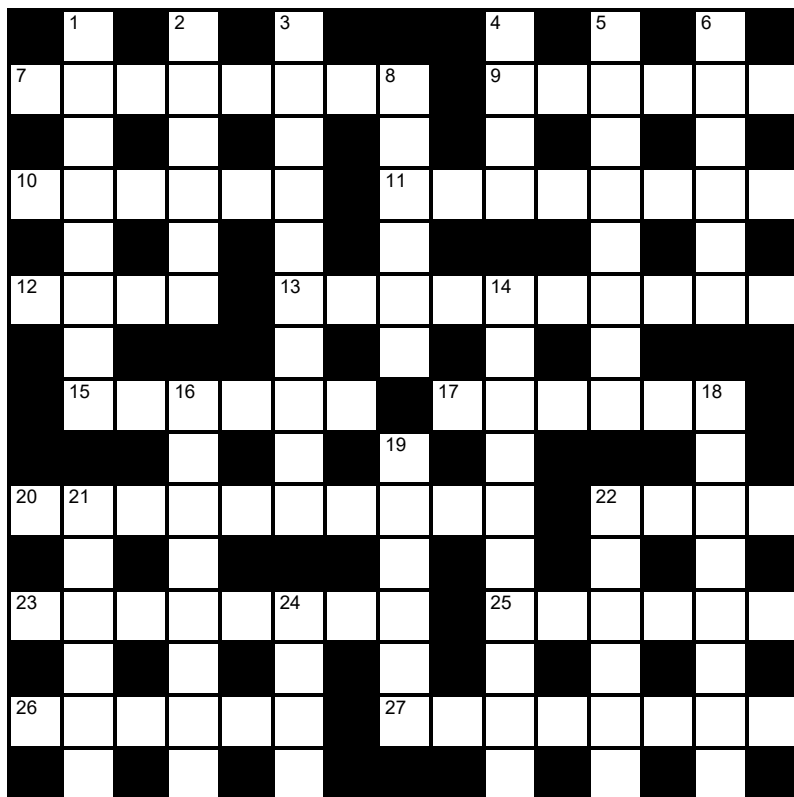


Easier By Half

*In half of the clues the wordplay only indicates half of the answer.
Hyphens are ignored in the enumeration.*



Across

- 7 Officer takes soldiers to a party in US state (8)
- 9 Butcherbird, backing off in fight (6)
- 10 Set off and fly (6)
- 11 Smooth cascade, seen in twilight (8)
- 12 In honour of Dorothy's dog (4)
- 13 A French girl's first appearance in bachelor party of sorts (10, 2 words)
- 15 Brooks and beaches contaminated with tritium (6)
- 17 Man hitched to southern county (6)
- 20 A way of purchasing Verne novel (10)
- 22 Not the original work, having been penned by contemporary on vacation (4)

- 23 Former Soviet police chief contracted disease (8)
- 25 Comic strip character serving egg on a roll (6)
- 26 More unattractive fruit is brought to emergency room (6)
- 27 Ska's played with viola in this country (8)

Down

- 1 Bigwigs must have little time to visit prostitutes (8)
- 2 Exquisite number to listen to (6)
- 3 British promoters will lose heart in German spa town (10)
- 4 Stop over to join regulars in boozier (4)
- 5 Advertisement appearing in *The Express*? (8)

- 6 Function truncated or inverted (6)
- 8 I will expose relationship between two people in Washington (6)
- 14 Oriental at work for a change (10)
- 16 Afternoon sex beginning with a poem that could whet the appetite (8)
- 18 One physics lecturer relaxed, not having caught the pox (8)
- 19 Ducks when circling chasm (6)
- 21 Generally, not all divers go (6)
- 22 Limbo dance (6)
- 24 Topless German soprano showing boobs (4)