



By Mark Taylor and Jane Fitzpatrick AE

This month's crossword solutions include the first two and last two lines of a seasonal poem by the Scottish poet Edwin Morgan. These are found at 23a, 9a, 28a and 13a; 9a and 5d. Your compilers send our warmest wishes to all solvers for peace and joy across the coming month, and as good a new year as we could hope for – 9a, 10a!

**Across**

- 1 Deception I'll wear? (4,2)
- 4 I'm taken aback after a computer-aided design gets an A in halls of learning (8)
- 9 Misjudge, in my cheery disposition? (5)
- 10 Noel Coward's first play, Mrs Has It! (9)
- 11 Flat, but in tune? (4)
- 12 Stick burned in dojos sometimes? (4)
- 13 10a trimming, totally drained of whisky (5)
- 15 Faces whinging, abuse, some pranks – it sends him cranky! (7)
- 16 Rat scurried back to the bottom deck (4)
- 19 All cardinals gathered for an update (4)
- 20 Attentive dog's command to circle ewe, we hear, and outer fold, turning back in (7)
- 23 Frightfully 9a! (5)
- 24 Zodiac medium reveals zenith (4)
- 25 D'oh - flipped ingredients from teaspoon! (4)
- 27 Short-lived boom takes mug aback – something to chew on (6,3)
- 28 Reportedly plant fruit (5)
- 29 Professional art is trying, with flair in the heart (8)
- 30 Unknowing, ate aubergine as ingredient in cake? (6)

**Down**

- 1 Improvising Motown, he found roots (8)
- 2 Star found in outback's south, rising in Virgo, has no gravity (8)
- 3 Stone caught in phony X post (4)
- 5 Hesitating after Chris sang out hymn to Daisy (13)
- 6 Let off after departmental chief is indicted (10)
- 7 Mix up losing original jazz, on mike something heard indistinctly (6)
- 8 Tries, we hear, ore tests? (6)
- 10 He's a free-loader, not working after dope found in wardrobe (7,6)
- 14 Spirit rides through generations (4,6)
- 17 Surely not on the flight path, missing France! (2,6)
- 18 Spooner's assent to colour is a way of saying thanks (5,3)
- 21 Superior American people sail into old Washington (6)
- 22 Almost the whole wine barrel, we hear (3,3)
- 26 Supergroup: Palindrome! (4)