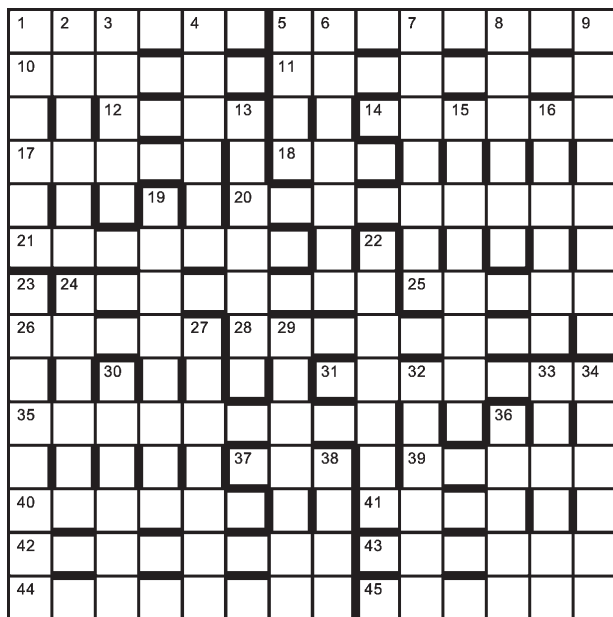


2659: Splitting the atom

by CheeseCracker

The twelve unclued lights comprise six symmetrically placed 'split atoms'.



Across

- 5 Fruit devastation, not the first linked to difficulties (8)
- 10 Disregard Italian bloke, shunning introduction (6)
- 11 Adherent of government line disheartened only celebs (8)
- 12 Tea offered by curt Cromwellian? (4)
- 14 White metal club 37 holds (6)
- 18 Cunning son, extremely lazy (3)
- 20 Earlier, chilled poodle played around sports field? (9)
- 21 Imagined force in heroic exploit (7)
- 24 Area in county gripped by Sunak's vision (8)
- 28 Prince overlooked checks, lacking means to absorb shock (8)
- 31 Domineer over male, pressure to go in front? (7)
- 35 One shortens naughty poem about sex first (9)
- 37 In the style of Maclean, off and on (1,2)
- 40 Selection from bronze/brass animals (6)
- 41 Dry wit is key (4)
- 42 Praise foreign letter that is circulating about university record (8)
- 43 Satisfy petitions to escape from trap (6)
- 44 Cup-bearer from Classics Faculty mostly inspires illicit drinking establishments (8)

Down

- 1 Sent out of hotel, drank very little (6)
- 2 Clinton's VP securing a marketplace once (6)
- 3 Disguised officer beset by vacuous infighting (5)
- 4 Destroys shelled base, stopping before sierra (6)
- 6 Simultaneously discharges drunken volleys (7)
- 7 Challenge exhausted clubs following exchange (4,3)
- 9 Magical beginning absorbs daughter, you and me (8)
- 15 What could make one leak in pubs, possibly? (5-3)
- 16 Rascal Ortega punished (6)
- 19 Endless tirades spun about police force measure through (8)
- 23 Hate I spread with gusto mainly renders godless (8)
- 24 Masses of work secured by football legend (6)
- 27 Charge to keep soldiers in field of action (7)
- 29 Tool for fixing invalid regularly held up by collapsed lung (4,3)
- 32 Article about bribe is incendiary stuff (6)
- 33 Hairy tramp finally expelled from Settle (6)
- 34 Smacked child pinches sister on and off (6)
- 36 Complete Plato treatise wraps up (5)

A first prize of £30 and two runners-up prizes of £20 for the first correct solutions opened on 8 July. Please photograph entries and email them (including the crossword number in the subject field) to crosswords@spectator.co.uk, or post to: Crossword 2659, The Spectator, 22 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9HP. Please allow six weeks for prize delivery.

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