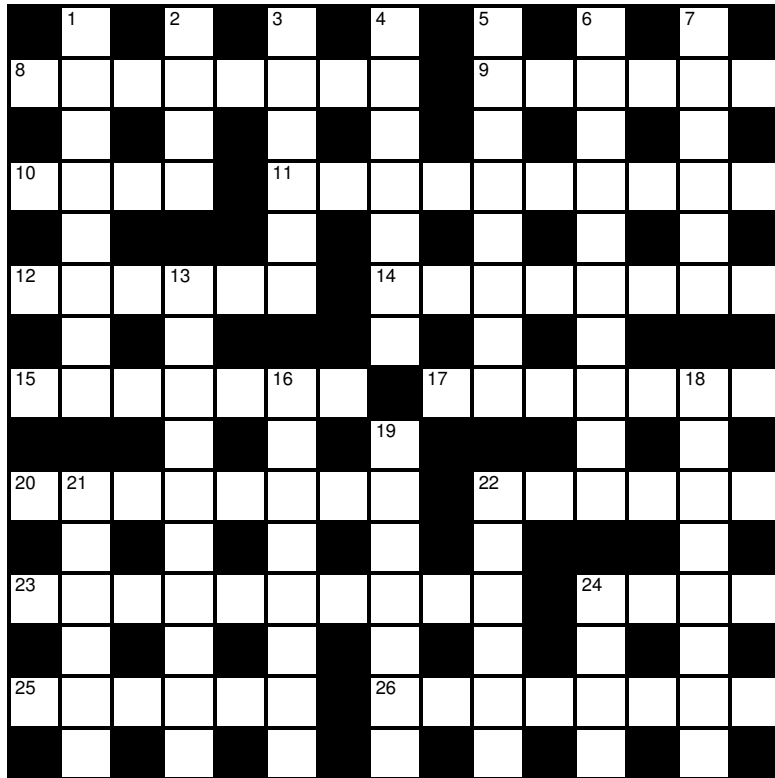


Puzzle for *the Guardian* Feb 2000 by Pinkie



Across

- 8 EastEnders get chicken joints, we hear (8)
- 9 Sung by choir in church, not written (6)
- 10 Strongly criticize, though it could be grand (4)
- 11 Direct confrontation: look at Tories with diplomacy (3,7)
- 12 Covering for animal on the move? (6)
- 14 Think fool in Ulster, for example, has enormous head (8)
- 15 We would shortly hold the marriage (7)
- 17 Recommended commercial against one's editor (7)
- 20 Pleasure-seeker captures professor in robbery (8)
- 22 Unusual exit (3,3)
- 23 Large rodents crop up on high-class trees (10)
- 24 Difficult situation in Soho? Leave it to me! (4)
- 25 Modest and restrained, though pursued, we hear (6)

26 Uncertain, yet phone a beginner (8)

Down

1 Black look at the cutting edge (8)

2 From cask, I managed to remove the cream (4)

3 Dislike of French question (6)

4 Nature of wild scenes with sweetheart? (7)

5 Bolt from the blue made mincemeat of cat and of dog (3,2,3)

6 Charles' Old Man grabs it, and plaything is stuffed with it - how highfalutin! (5-5)

7 Does he eat too much Whiskas? (3,3)

13 Laws police manipulated to bolster cover (10)

16 A hundred Bohemians and carpenters (8)

18 Symmetry of Eastern character (8)

19 A hundred in Gateshead being penitent (7)

21 She holds rozzer back for ages (6)

22 Norman's tooth? (6)

24 Martha has hidden fence (2-2)