## 3D Crossword January 2020 Newsletter 1

This edition covers the following item:

## 1. Review of the December 3D Crossword

NOTE: Submission deadline for the January crossword is 15th February

## 1. Review of the December 3D Crossword

The December crossword was designed by Aramis and clued by our very own Puck. The winner was chosen after this edition was completed and will be announced separately. The rubric read; solutions are to be entered jigsaw style, where they will fit. Fifteen clues (yellow boxes) lack a definition; their solutions are thematic, one plurally and another in a collective sense.
Solutions to the asterisked clues need re-ordering before entry; all three are related to theme in some way. Three of the solutions must be entered as snakes as indicated. Clues are to be entered alphabetically.

After last months arty tribulations I loved the look of this crossword. A brand new concept, a 2D/3D grid shaped for the season with a fascinating set of instructions including a jigsaw grid fill.

Lots of solving to be done before starting on any grid fill. Obvious entry points were the long clue $9(6,2,7)$ and the 3 snakes. Solving was pretty steady for the normal clues but it took a while before the penny dropped on the theme for the clues lacking a definition. We got OIL PALM and COLA but rejected both as non thematic. However when ELM emerged we realised they were all trees and what better theme for a Christmas tree shaped grid. By the time we dried up about 3/4's of the clues were cold solved.

It took a little while to clock that the three arrows top centre of the clue sheet indicated that the clues could be entered in pretty much any direction. MAPLE was the first entry and CEDARS OF LEBANON next with YUCCA helping to confirm it going from top right to bottom left. We soon filled the tree-pot and the left side of the grid. The right side took longer with some clues still to be solved. Clue 32 ROOTEDLY was a crux clue linking left and right and devilishly difficult to solve. Likewise the overlapping TOO and OUTDO.

All in all a wonderful crossword with some brilliant cluing. I particularly liked clue 6 BEECH (BITCH replacing IT with EE) and YA YAS from a Mick Jagger song. And a final thought, the odd risqué clue always raises a smile and there were one or two of them.

## Solution to November 3D Crossword



DUTCH ELM We have a man by the Brandenburg Gate holding a German flag and pointing at you to indicate DU (German for you); a T shape and CHELM ( $50 \%$ off Chelmsford)

NOTE: Extra bar needed between SE in bottom right of grid now shown in Yellow

## DEC 2019 PUCK Aramis Christmas 3D: Clues and Explanations

Theme for the clues without definitions: Trees
Directions: in this puzzle we have the usual across (ac) and down (ba), but up and down are replaced by the diagonal directions:up left(ul), up right(ur), down left(dl), and down right(dr).

|  | Solution | Direction - Clue - (letter count) | Explanation | Comments |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | ALEC | 4ac Drink cold Guinness? (4) | Ale + C | Alec <br> Guinness |
| 2 | ANGEL* <br> (ALNEG <br> entry) | 29ac *Article setter wanted at top of <br> grid? (5) | An + gel | Angel on top <br> of a <br> Christmas <br> tree |
| 3 | ASHEN* <br> (ENSHA <br> entry) | 34ur *Woody Allen's first novel (short <br> name) (5) | A[llen] + She + n |  |
| 4 | AU | 2ac Araucaria's offering is a precious <br> commodity (2) | Hidden answer | Au=gold |
| 5 | BAY | 37ul Bottom's head? Yes, what might <br> have come from an ass that's run <br> away (3) | B[ottom] + Ay; b[r]ay | No definition <br> Two <br> wordplays |
| 6 | BEECH | 15dr Female setter possibly taking <br> drugs for sex (5) | Bitch, with ee for it | No definition |
| 7 | BEEPER | 18dr A buzzer for each signaling <br> device (6) | Bee + per | N |

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| 17 | FORBAD | 9dl Vocal number Wicked didn't allow (6) | Homophone of "four" + bad |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 18 | FOREST | 9ba Soft ground? That's about right, by end of race (6) | ( $R+$ [rac]e) in anag of soft | No definition |
| 19 | GAES | 6ac Sega game works in Perth (4) | Anag of Sega | Perth in Scotland |
| 20 | GOO | 31ur Sticky substance fellow ejaculated by mistake (3) | Goo[f] |  |
| 21 | GREAT TOE | 17ba Got a tree ordered? It'll show in your digital footprint $(5,3)$ | Anag of (Got a tree) |  |
| 22 | LO | 27ba Behold more than one 35 out East regularly, Christmas having returned (2) | L[E]o; [ N$] \mathrm{o}$ [e] $]$ (rev.) | Two wordplays 35=star |
| 23 | MAPLE | 36ur, 30dr Buxom old woman's back (5) | ample, with Ma reversed | No definition Snake |
| 24 | MAY | 26dl Puck's pinching Titania's bottom (3) | [Titani]a in my | No definition |
| 25 | NIM | 23dr Almost perfect, but no treetopper put up (3) | Min[t] (rev.) | No definition |
| 26 | OIL PALM | 24ac Stretch limo going off with 29 inside ( 3,4 ) | Pal in anag of limo | No definition 29=pal |
| 27 | OMBU | 35ac Complaint investigator's ignoring detective chap (4) | Ombu[DS/man] | No definition |
| 28 | OUTDO | 11dr Best known party (5) | Out + do |  |
| 29 | PAL | 33ul TV broadcasting system showing beginnings of Puck \& Aramis link-up (3) | P[uck] [Aramis] [[ink-up] |  |
| 30 | REACH | 16dl, 20ac-2, 21dr Come to a climax, starting to open up present (shortly to be sent back) (5) | (a + c[limax]) in her[e] (rev,) | Snake |
| 31 | REALM | 32ul-2, 28ur, 25ac Field only half of La Liga team (5) | Real M[adrid] | Snake |
| 32 | ROOTEDLY | 13ul Old toy redistributed in a thematically established way? | Anag of (Old toy re) |  |
| 33 | RYPE | 32ac Ptarmigan as a form of prey (4) | Anag of prey |  |
| 34 | SHEA | 19ba Cut short (4) | Shea[r] | No definition |
| 35 | STAR* <br> (ASTR Entry) | 5dl *Expression of annoyance about something missing at top of grid? (4) | Rats(rev.) |  |
| 36 | TOO | 7dr-3 First signs of tinsel, and other ornaments as well (3) | t[insel] o[ther] o[rnaments] |  |
| 37 | YA-YAS | 1dl Triumphant cry when Mick told you to get these out! (2-3) | Yay + as | Mick Jagger, Get Your YaYas Out |
| 38 | YUCCA | 1dr Reportedly why you caught cholera on vacation (5) | Homophone of "why you" + c + c[holer]a | No definition |

## December Solver's Comments

I am sorry that any comments posted after 31st December are not included. You will remember from earlier announcements that the editor (me) is away for the next four months and had to complete this edition of the newsletter in advance of the January 15th cut off date for submissions.

Superb grid and excellent clues (especially YAYAS). Great way to celebrate Christmas and the end of another 3D year. JM

Jigsaws are usually tough and this was no exception. ANGEL got us into the starred clues but with rearrangement required they were of no use for jigsawing. Then we cracked OIL PALM and guessed the tree theme. The MAPLE snake got us started on the grid and the CEDARS were a major advance. Luckily we also have an older physicist on the team putting some work in (in ergs) - great clue! At the end we had filled the grid with one solution left over. It took some careful accounting to find the lost shea(p) amongst the floc(k)s! J\&JH

Nothing like ending the year with a real toughie! Lots of cold solving and then a convoluted grid to fit it all into. However there was only one place Cedars of Lebanon could go which gave the locations for the 8 letter words and I built up from there. I hit a snag which was resolved when I changed Flock to Flocs but the clue that caused the most trouble was the penultimate day. I tried YE HAS! YE HAW! YO YOS! before finally finding YA YAS. PD

An intimidating grid but CEDARS OPF LEBANON made the jigsaw straightforward N\&SI
After looking at Sirius's excellent hints \& tips, I saw why 3 of my answers wouldn't fit! I still don't think l've got this crossword correct but I wanted to get my updated answers in before the version with the directions comes out on the $20^{\text {th }}$. RE

I woke at 4.30 this morning and rushed to the Chambers I won in 2009. I must have been having a real ponder about the crossword in my dreams. I never knew that 'Cola' is a tree or that 'floc' has no ' k '. I do now know how to describe someone who is delirious and plucking at their bedclothes! So I think I may have finally cracked December RE(2)

I have to say I found it very difficult and certainly above my pay grade were it not or the wonderful hints from Sirius followed by the numbering...but I have done my best! SW

Thank you for this wonderful seasonal offering. Here's my tree duly decorated. JB
Herewith my typed comments.
Brilliant!! I particularly liked the clues to day 1 (Drink cold Guinness!) and day 8 (Manx cats have no tail). I identified the 15 trees but was stumped for a long time on the non-starting stars. Suddenly inspiration and I realised that they represented the turning points for the 'snake' lights.10/10. Thanks for an enjoyable and challenging experience. SA

It was a lot easier once I knew where the answers went - after that the only obscure parts were some of the tree names. I had abandoned the jigsaw version, but fortunately not the answers I had found HB

I'm still unsure about this despite all the help from Nora and the numbered clues. However, it's the first December puzzle that l've managed to complete more or less. I'm dubious about Days 2 \& 19
especially, but I enjoyed it enormously, so my thanks go out to everyone who made such a super grid and puzzle. JJ

I really enjoyed this one - very unusual and learnt some new trees! JT

## Sirius's Hints \& Tips for December 2019 Puck to Aramis Grid

The December 3D crossword usually has a special quality and this is no exception. Wow! I find it an absolute tour de force by Aramis and Puck. The grid by Aramis is both beautiful and innovative. The clues are wonderfully Puckish, full of mischief that will delight. All our setters aim for and achieve precision, concision and wit. Beyond that our personal favourite setters show further qualities that may be appreciated subjectively. I'm looking for magic, sparkle, scintillation. I want some humour that makes me run outside and kick the wheely bin. The wonderful Puck does all those things for me. He is clearly an admirer of Araucaria whilst showing his own flair and highly developed style. How can anyone know so much?! There is a richness here and a stylish texture.

Most of our setters take the word list that we send and write their brilliant clues. Who could ask for more. They lend us their genius. We send the solution grid as well as a courtesy and with no expectation of them looking at it. Puck is one of the setters who work through and check the grid. One half of Aramis, Andre Sonnet, invented and completed the grid - a 3D grid presented in 2D. A triumph! The three axes are at 60 degrees to one another in one plane, instead of the more usual 90 degrees in 3D space. Puck took the challenge on of understanding the grid, seeing how it worked and then went about manipulating it to his purpose. That's not a five minute job!!

This puzzle is an absolute cracker of a Christmas tree...
...if only we could work out what we have to do!! Well help is on its way here with some grid explanations and close examination of sufficient clues to make a confident start. It looks a bit scary, but actually it is very do-able if only we knew where to put the bloomin' answers!! Who on earth had the idea of presenting this as a jigsaw with no directions??

I'm afraid I had a hand in the decision, thinking that as a jigsaw, it would provide excruciating pleasure for the super-solvers. If you have cracked the puzzle already and have been wondering if you are on the super-solver train then I can tell you that you have arrived!

If like me you are still trying to get your ticket into the automatic barriers and the service has been cancelled anyway, let's go and have a cup of coffee in the cafeteria and pass a pleasant half hour or so and sort this Puck out!

Because I have some very good news. The second part of our plan is to release a fully directed version of the puzzle in the next few days. We can polish off The Puck in plenty of time to get stuck into the Christmas Pudding

The grid appears to be made of cubes in a cascade down a Christmas tree.. Letters run from one face to another where they meet on an edge. Solutions also run across where vertices touch. This is unusual with letters connecting point to point. That's just how it is.


Another way to look at the grid is to pick out hexagons in a flat plane. Each hexagon has a white diamond or rhombus in which a letter will appear. Connections to run letters happen where hexagons share a side.

## 5ur,1dr,7ac CHRIS TMAS TREE <br> 8ul EVER

The puzzle has a theme. Clues with themed solutions are highlighted in yellow.
Solutions of clues marked with an asterisk need to be rearranged before entry.

## Day 1 4ac Drink cold Guinness? (4)

This might put something like a smile on your lips to get started! Day 1 solution starts near the beginning of the alphabet. Definition is 'Drink' or 'Guinness'. Hm. 'Drink' seems more likely since there are so many and I can't think of many synonyms for Guinness surely? 'cold' could be an abbreviation. If so, the solution probably ends with ' $C$ ' or starts with ' $C$ '

A three letter drink starting with 'A' (Red Label IPA Dhillons Brewery Longford Coventry highly recommended) + ' C ' gives a chap who is definitely a Guinness (May the force be with you).

## Day 2 29ac *Article setter wanted at top of grid? (5)

Note the asterisk. This means that when we solve the clue we will have to change the letters around before entering them in the grid.

The grid is referred to in the clue. This exemplifies the richness Puck brings to his clues with this cross-reference. Hint: the grid is a Christmas tree. What do you put on yours?
'Article' in crosswords is often ' A ' or 'AN'. That should be enough given the tree top. 'Setter' often refers to the compiler eg 'me', 'l' or suchlike. But not here. Could be a dog eg red setter or sun. or glue or a jelly. Or, or , or. You've got it way before me. Remember to enter an anagram when you have some checking letters.

## Day 9 3dl Awfully scared, getting up to catch fairy with nothing on (6,2,7)

I find this an extremely funny, Puckish and tough clue to parse fully. It's well worth solving early for its strategic position in the grid. It involves a word for 'catch' that might be used in hackneyed police work, another word for 'fairy' with reversal and an addition. Complex and delightful.

It is easy to solve by getting the anagram at the beginning and knowing it is a themed solution helps greatly. Looking at the letter count you might happen to know the variety. I didn't, and I have been to what the taxi driver called a Lesbian restaurant on the Edgeware Road!

If you put your anagram result space??space??????? in One Look Dictionary search box, you will find it. Or you could leaf through Chambers.

When you think you are on to the theme, you are well away and could look at the clues with yellow highlights. You will be roaring through the puzzle then.

## Day 12 12dl Wife lost in space $(5,3)$

Wives appear often in Puck puzzles. Picturing Mrs Sirius in full flow, the image always makes me laugh.l'm sure if it said 'husband' she would feel the same about me. Usually it's a way to include the abbreviation, but not in this case. Bowman would know straight away. That gets you the (5). Given your suspected theme, you will egt the (3). Yippee!

## \& Day 13 34ul Tinsel? M\&S has it (3)

This is a gentle 'hidden' clue which will help out with Day 12 if missed.
Day 14 8ul Some work involved in returning Christmas greetings (4)
Reverse hidden. Older Physicists will remember the energy unit in the cgs system.

And everyone, even new physicists know work requires energy otherwise it's just building regs.

## Day 15 14ba Boob showing in somewhat drunken striptease? (3)

This Christmas would be merry. Super Puckish clue. Puck is somehow able to be slightly saucy without causing offence.

## Day 16 10dr Sheep grouped together, say, in woolly clumps (5)

I think you will get this quickly and certainly when 'say' is seen as a homophone (sounds like) clue

## Day 18 . 9ba Soft ground? That's about right, by end of race (6)

This is a theme clue with no definition. 'ground' is an anagram signal. 'right is am abbreviation and end of race indicates a single letter.

## Day 32 13ul Old toy redistributed in a thematically established way? (8)

Purists might argue that this is slightly naughty and it would be edited by several of the national newspapers, though not GU and certainly not in 3D. The clue contains part anagram and part anagram signal. Puck is always scrupulously fair and mischievous; O think these devices increase enjoyment.

## Day 37 1dl Triumphant cry when Mick told you to get these out! (2-3)

This is a reference to Sir Michael Phillip Jagger and The Rolling Stones second live album.

## Frank Paul Drawing

Geographers and people living in Chelmsford will recognise the position indicated in the map. Remove $50 \%$. The chappie on the left is indicating 'YOU', however his flag is German and so we need to look up 'you' in German. That will get you to the answer I think.

I think you will be well on your way. Out the café. The super solver Express awaits! Get ticket ready for inspection. First Class of course. These are 3D Crosswords. Wishing you the best 5ur,1dr, 8ul $(8,4)$

## Final Note from the Editor

I am away to sunnier climes for the next 4 months. So the newsletter will be published in skeleton format until May. I have prepared templates for these newsletters which Nora will complete each month. Normal service will be resumed on my return. A happy New Year to you all.

