

Parsing Notes for - Who's that? Published May 2021 on madryncrosswords.com.

Clues consist of 'definitions' either at the start or end of the clue which I underline in these notes and 'wordplay' which I explain below the solution.

Across

1 Head for Jordan. Declared unanimously! (2,1,3)

TO A MAN

Homophone (Pun!) Amman being the capital of Jordan.

4 Steps to get across empty threat over painful footwear (8)

STILETTO

Steps to get across - STILE. Empty threat - first and last letters of ThreaT. Over - O (Cricket abbreviation)

9 Fictional detective flips character, turns to stone (6)

MARBLE

Miss Marple is the fictional detective. Flip the letter or character P over to make it a B (Only works in lower case!)

10 Is excessively enthusiastic about ex-royal in pursuit of wealth (4,4)

GOLD RUSH

Is excessively enthusiastic - GUSH about (goes around) ex - OLD royal - R

12 They had the idea, why not in list? (8)

INVENTOR

INVENTORy - list, without the Y

Some might quibble over the use of 'they' for a single inventor, but I used it as a non-gendered

pronoun, rather than assume the inventor was male (Right on sisters!)
I admit that I might have signalled the why/Y homophone by adding 'I say' before 'why not in list'.

13 Occasionally, in some oaks Earl starts dangerous fires (6)

SMOKER

Alternate letters (occasionally) of SoMe OaKs EaRl. Definition is a bit cryptic but reflects the health risk!

15 Neck smacker (4)

KISS

Double definition.

16 They say I see friend go after car reversing unhelpfully (10)

INIMICALLY

They say I see - indicates a homophone for IC. Friend - ALLY. Go after - follows the next bit. Car - mini. Reversing - INIM. I considered 'small car' but felt this clue was already quite long.

19 F.R.S. boggled about man in the street (4,6)

FRED BLOGGS

Anagram, indicated by 'about' of F.R.S. BOGGLED.

F.R.S. is a Fellow of the Royal Society so I imagined some member of the intellectual elite being appalled by the ignorance of the common man.

20 Second key rejection (4)

SNUB

Second - S. Key - NUB, as in 'the nub of the issue'.

23 Forgot hicks included heavy type (6)

GOTHIC

Hidden answer, indicated by 'included'. ForGOT HICKs.

The definition refers to the type of heavy font, which I associate with Germany before the war. Unfortunately I can't show it to you here because the word processing package I'm using doesn't have it.

25 Focuses on absence of immorality in speech (6,2)

ZEROES IN

...or zero sin. Another silly homophone, indicated by 'in speech'.

27 Thin hair at front missing, at rear flies high overhead (8)

AIRLINER

Thin - hAIRLINE (as in fracture) missing the first letter of hair, H, but adding the last letter - R.

The surface meaning of the clue conjures up a very strange image for me!

28 Applaud senior officer who loses (not quite) all but finds direction (6)

ADMIRE

Senior officer - ADMIRal replacing not quite all - AL with E - east.

29 Intrusively pleading without answer. Idle, leaving out whole range (8)

PRYINGLY

PRaYING without the A (answer) Idle - LazY leaving out A-Z (whole range)

30 Very absorbed by unresponsive turn over (6)

INVERT

Very - V in the middle of (absorbed by) unresponsive - INERT.

Down

1 / 8 Three blokes, could be anyone (3,4,2,5)

TOM, DICK OR HARRY

Sort of a double definition, though Tom Dick *and* Harry would be more correct. I thought this was close enough to make it quite an easy clue.

2 Upstart spoilt rare visit (9)

ARRIVISTE

Anagram indicated by spoilt, of RARE VISIT.

I have heard this word a number of times in English but it is not in my Chambers dictionary. It is in many others online though, defined as, something like, social climber.

3 Below par right away in fencing (6)

AILING

Fencing - rAILING but without the r at the start (Right away)

5 Briefly animated Geordies here? (4)

TOON

Slightly loose double definition.

Cartoon is sometimes abbreviated to TOON which is also what Geordies like to call their football team in particular and the City of Newcastle in general.

6 Woman on small isle. Who does she think she is? (4,4)

LADY MUCK

Woman - LADY and MUCK a small island south of Skye. I was pleased to find out that Muck is one of a group of islands known as the Small Isles, along with Eigg, Rum and Canna.

In a down clue, 'on' can mean before.

I have also heard Lord Muck used for a man with overly-grand ideas about themselves but not nearly as often the female version.

7 Part of body in rear of automobile! (5)

TRUNK

Another double definition. Used automobile rather than car because we would say boot here.

11 Female following Baptist with no name (4,3)

JOHN DOE

Baptist - JOHN and, as Julie Andrews tells us, a DOE is a female deer.

Another Americanism. I am not aware of a UK equivalent to this name given to a body whose real name is unknown, so I didn't think I needed to specify.

14 More complacent runner left out (7)

SMUGGER

SMUGGIER - runner (as in drugs, guns etc) but with no L - left out.

17 Large majority comes to rest on top end to start with (9)

LANDSLIDE

Comes to rest - LANDS. Top - LID. First letter of end (to start with) - E.

Definition in the electoral sense.

18 Dark rock seen in outside broadcasts India put out (8)

OBSIDIAN

Outside broadcasts - OB, Plural so with an S. Plus an anagram of INDIA indicated by put out.

Obsidian is a glassy black volcanic mineral which is apparently still used today to make sharp blades. In Game of Thrones, as dragonglass, it was used by John Smith and co in weapons capable of destroying white walkers (of course!)

19 Dandy goes around, briefly attractive, to illuminate the gloom (3,4)

FOG LAMP

Briefly attractive - GLAMourous inserted into Dandy - FOP.

22/21 Frustrated outburst makes Breton gent nod irritably (6,7)

GORDON BENNETT

Anagram, indicated by irritably, of BRETON GENT NOD.

The first of the made up names*, which form a bit of a theme in this puzzle, that I thought of. Actually the first one I thought of was Pete Coutts but no one outside my family seems to have heard of him so I didn't use it.

*In fact there are various candidates for the original Gordon Bennett, though I think people who first used this name as an expression were probably just finding a way of saying God! (or Gord!) in a sentence when such things were frowned upon.

24 Sticky stuff outside Derby delayed (5)

TARDY

Sticky stuff - TAR. Followed by the outside of DarbY.

26 Hollow preliminaries of demagogue employing loose language (4)

DELL

Initial letters (preliminaries) of Demagogue Employing Loose Language.

Definition in the sense of a small depression in the landscape.