

Parsing Notes for - Punctilious. Published August 2022 on madrincrosswords.com.

Eight clues, marked with an * refer to punctuation marks. This includes 12a which counts if added to 4d.

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

Across

1 Star Republican writer is bitter (7)

ACERBIC

Star - ACE Republican - R Writer - BIC (Brand of ball point pen)

5 Workplaces desserts are rotten? (7)

OFFICES

Rotton - OFF Desserts - ICES. Question mark meant to warn there's something odd going on, i.e. switching the word order.

9 Mark agreed, reduce one to zero (5) *

QUOTE

One of three clues where MARK is the definition for a punctuation mark.
Agreed - QUITE with the I replaced by O - one by zero

10 Restricts area where scales tampered with and oil upset (9)

LOCALISES

Anagram, indicated by tampered with of SCALES and, by upset, of OIL

11 Essentially with me inside empty tunnel in New York (10)

INHERENTLY

With me inside - IN HERE and New York - NY around first and last letters (empty) of Tunnel

12 Half times over without tea (4) *

SEMI

tIMES - reversed (over) without the T - tea

14 Mark sudden outburst (11) *

EXCLAMATION

Double definition, mark being one

18 Punishment for breaking building regulations perhaps (5,6)

HOUSE ARREST

(Fanciful) cryptic definition

21 Obscure show (4)

MASK

Double definition

22 Solidly Catholic, exclusively around Greek island (10)

CONCRETELY

Catholic - C exclusively - ONLY around Greek island - CRETE

25 Horrible misanthropist not part of Japanese creed (9)

SHINTOISM

Amagran, indicated by horribly, of MISaNTHrOpISt excluding (not) the letters of part

26 Home soil (5)

EARTH

Double definition

7 Piper developed ploy for impressive range (7)

PANOPLY

Piper - PAN and anagram, indicated by developed, of PLOY

28 Expert painter doesn't finish article (7)

ARTISAN

Painter - ARTIST without the final letter (doesn't finish) with indefinite article - AN

Down

1 Account left clear (6)

ACQUIT

Account - AC Left - QUIT

2 Capitals of each part of country have stood for ages (6)

EPOCHS

Initial letters, indicated by Capitals of, of Each Part Of Country Have Stood

3 Groggy? Delay beery mayhem (6-4)

BLEARY-EYED

Anagram, indicated by mayhem, of DELAY BEERY

4 Components of fiasco - long list follows (5) *

COLON

Answer hidden (Components of) in fiasCO LONG

5 Local site moving from one extreme to the other (9)

OSCILLATE

Anagram, indicated by moving, of LOCAL SITE

6/24 American period of complete prohibition (4,4) *

FULL STOP

Complete - FULL prohibition - STOP. Period being American English for a full stop

7 Alien in universal war paint (8)

COSMETIC

Alien - ET in Universal - COSMIC

8 Noises decline around sorcerer's first secret spells (8)

SESSIONS

NOISES reversed (decline) with first letter of Sorcerer inserted and S - Secret at the end

13 Confusion, not very loud, about bike race defence (10)

BATTLEMENT

Confusion - BAFFLEMENT without (not) the double f (very loud in musical notation) and TT inserted (about) TT being the Annual Isle of Man TT motorbike race meeting

15 Tom's death caused by antique? (9)

CURIOSITY

Cryptic definition based on the phrase 'Curiosity killed the cat' Tom being a male cat

16 Green light wrecked bus in crash (6-2)

THUMBS-UP

Anagram, indicated by wrecked, of BUS inside THUMP - crash

17 Mark particle after search (8) *

QUESTION

Particle - ION Search - QUEST

19 Desires, without me, somewhere cool to live (6)

DESRES

DESiRES without me - I

20 Connection found in noteworthy phenomena (6) *

HYPHEN

Answer hidden in noteworthY PHENomena

23 Bullets return after Capone's initial pause (5) *

COMMA

Bullets - AMMO reversed (returned) after first letter of Capone

24 See 6