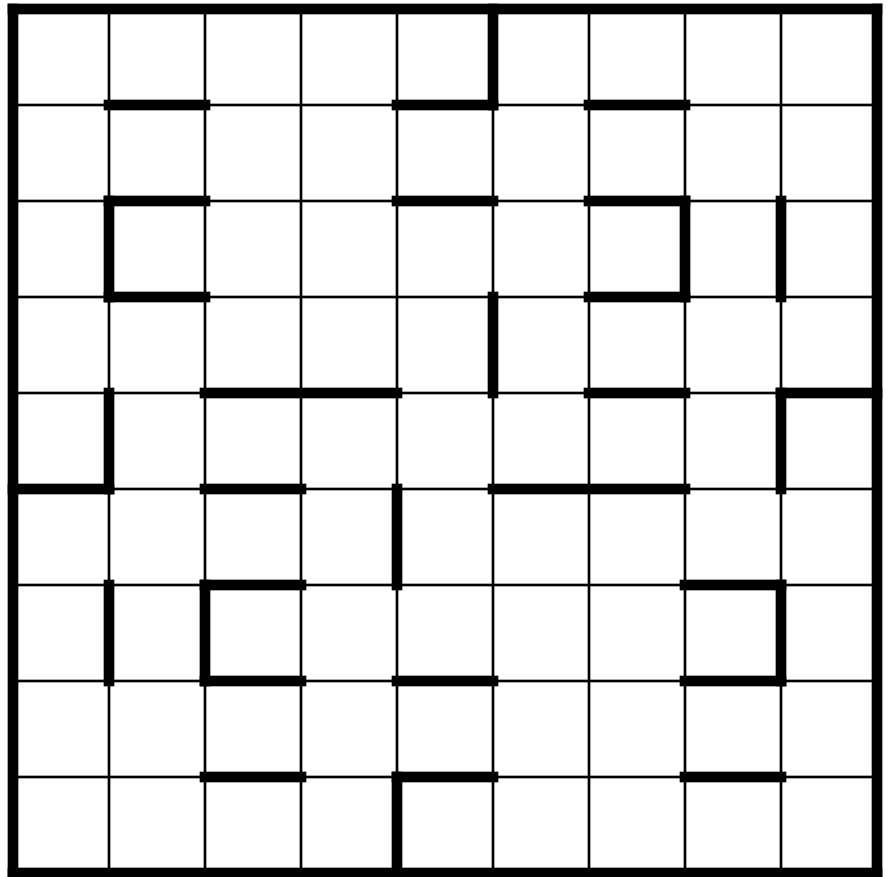


# Jolly Old *Elf* by Ucaimhu

A group of eleven, surprisingly, will be sharing a Chinese meal at Yuletide. As you solve the clues and fit the answers into the grid, you will see:

- (1) Four of the group fit symmetrically into the grid as Downs; their clues are wordplay-only.
- (2) Each of the other seven (which share four slots in their original setting) is in a clue for a Down entry, and must be deleted before solving; these entries are also symmetric in the grid.
- (3) Each of ten more clues has wordplay giving a letter sequence with one letter missing; in *clue* order, these letters will say specifically what this group will do. The clue letters for the (1) clues, and separately those for the (2) clues, will each (in *grid* order) give a term that can precede the key noun from the phrase you have found.
- (4) The five remaining clues clue Across entries normally. In grid order, their clue letters spell nothing at all; however, the entries themselves form an ambiguous cryptic clue that can clue either term from (3).



- A. Dutch, like that woman (6)
- B. 1000 deer or pheasant in Italy, three thousand clicks from a Londoner (9)
- C. What an auditor does is/isn't gauche (4 2)
- D. Gossip about couple getting together with another individual (5)
- E. Avian bird on Nero ultimately resembling one of the Jackson 5 (4)
- F. Said what happens to morale when limb LIX emits drop (4)
- G. Our old notes at the end (5)
- H. Weather phenomenon of some type hampering Romeo (5)
- I. Monsieur intends to describe unknown or famous Parisian restaurant (5'1)
- J. Fashionable adult people of Peru (4)
- K. Urge doctor, quietly, to return (4)
- L. Newspaper piece uncovered what the Large Hadron Collider collides (7)
- M. Read up about the Tarheel State (6)
- N. Person who employs op ran cervine beast's Sumerian city, reportedly (4)
- O. As ex-stranger's name in the House of Windsor's hid understory (4)
- P. Length of French mock-archaism between "Ye" and "Shoppe" (4)
- Q. Creature from Planet 7 assumes I like the "Carol of the Bells" (9)
- R. Levi, Xena loses head when embracing New York singer from Ireland (4)
- S. Arrive on time (5)
- T. Fool with Kevin, Diana, and Herb lit Zeno's last taper at the start (5)
- U. Fido 'n' Dern doubled (almost) by legislator or impermanent worker (4)
- V. Uncostumed Tony host speaking into an electronic device (2 3)
- W. 1,500–50,500 were lazy (5)
- X. Finger at the bottom of goblet (5)
- Y. Imperial Russian sailor (4)
- Z. Average character from Friends is angry (5)