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| 1  | 2  | 3  |    | 4  | 5  |    | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 11 |    |    |    |    |    | 12 |    | 13 |    |    |    |
|    |    |    | 14 |    | 15 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 16 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 17 |    |    |    |
| 18 |    |    |    | 19 |    |    |    | 20 |    |    | 21 |
| 22 |    |    |    | 23 |    | 24 |    |    | 25 |    |    |
| 26 | 27 |    |    |    | 28 | 29 | 30 |    |    |    |    |
|    |    | 31 | 32 |    |    |    |    | 33 |    |    |    |
| 34 |    |    |    |    | 35 |    |    |    |    | 36 |    |
| 37 |    |    |    |    |    |    | 38 |    |    |    |    |
| 39 |    |    |    |    |    |    | 40 |    |    |    |    |
| 41 |    |    |    | 42 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

Countdown by Phi

One letter is to be omitted from each of nine across answers (in one case as a doublet) – the secondary indications (anagrams etc.) refer to the answer after omission. These letters in clue order spell out a pronouncement attainable by repeated consideration of the six unclued down answers, which are of a kind.

## ACROSS

- 1 Scotsman, say, receiving something ludicrous – one grand (8)
- 7 Rob beheaded for nothing? (5)
- 11 Concerned with rubber band? (6)
- 13 Cheap instrument – one carried by zany character endlessly? (5)
- 15 Speaking noisily – shouting with joy, as it were (8)
- 16 Very much about one male having no length of shin (7)
- 17 Prison ship (4)
- 18 Disease with multiplying discharge (4)
- 19 Hairband – one secured by nail! (5)
- 22 Line I quote (non-English) is allowable (5)
- 24 What Sandy uses to eat middle of dessert – this one? (6)
- 26 Abnormal growth round a body regressing? Not right (6)
- 30 Test volunteer soldier who's ignored the Queen (5)
- 32 Back introduction of greenery, on reflection? I might! (6)
- 33 Antipodean valley is turned over (5)
- 34 Love or loves? (5)
- 35 Wheeled vehicle – take one quietly into alley (7)
- 37 Crab larvae cooked in pilau (7)
- 39 Hiss is held back by snake – listen! (6)
- 40 Purple telephone returned after one's installed (5)
- 41 We make cuts in a former government department (5)
- 42 Military vehicle after small amount of petrol, say, discarded container (8, 2 words)

## DOWN

- 2 One type of vermouth served up – for a teetotaller? (4)
- 4 Main source of coal running short (3)
- 5 Eucalyptus removing core from the skin blemish (6)
- 8 Hideaway would briefly do for nobleman (5)
- 9 Study first elements of integral calculus, say, or geometry (6)
- 12 Scanty garb in which you will see I am clothing her when disheartened (5)
- 14 Proper cross, having cracked china, botching things (6)
- 20 Famed engraver detailed hated bodyguard's coercion (6)
- 23 Hunted water creatures – one escaped in river-mouth routine, turning over (7)
- 25 Ancient Asian language has lain abandoned (7)
- 27 A fox's first to attack chicken (6)
- 28 King Edward, perhaps – one hung in gallery (5)
- 31 Hen to cry about duck's egg? (5)
- 34 Gladdens artillerymen, in part? It used to (4)
- 36 Knitting style requires a decrease in row? (4)
- 38 Mountain edge that one's slipped from under peak of Andes (3)