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No Question by Phi

In several cases the answers to across and down clues clash as to the presence or absence of a letter – lengths in brackets refer to the number of spaces in the grid. Solvers should choose one of two overall options for the final grid (even the theme can't be in two places at once); either way every entry (allowing for spaces) is a real word or proper noun. Most clues contain a word not needed for solving; initial and final letters of these words form a pair – in clue order, one letter in each pair contributes to something that isn't a question, while the other identifies the theme. (No, you won't need 1 across; trust me...)

The non-question in this puzzle was correct at the time of publication in April 2012.

ACROSS

- 6 Father without smart Catholic office (6)
- 12 Grainy foodstuff that's come in for Irish zoo (4)
- 13 Some European oil-drum incorporates single pressure regulator (8)
- 14 English bore beginning to ruin one affair (8)
- 16 Eco-aid I arranged for aspidistra plants (7)
- 17 Happy editor grabbing delayed notes (7)
- 19 Difficulty for sport board appearing with book (4)
- 20 Unable to move around either hydrant – bother! (6)
- 21 Transactions seen in trade empire also (6)
- 24 Wimbledon favourite always here, regardless of London hearts (4)
- 27 Securing lawyers, call America (7)
- 28 Toilet support – more peculiar cement (7)
- 31 Something in nettles irritated Tom, I fear (8)
- 32 Instruct fool before ceremonies in compounds (8)
- 33 Positions woman possessing tenor voice (4)
- 34 Theologian capturing English cathedral city's exalted stone (6)
- 35 Beleaguered party – hard year – therefore in retreat in areas of conflict (6)

DOWN

- 1 Fond fellow to perform intimately, without haste? Not entirely (6)
- 2 Worthless point incompletely upheld (4)
- 3 Stomach mostly accepting of much vegetarian food (4)
- 4 Man picked up apple ripening well into season, like an orange (6)
- 5 Additional money never reduced, drawing in the German speculators (7)
- 7 Star turns completely filled with energy (5)
- 8 The French impression in Chambers shows in prominent positions (8)
- 9 Up-beat article is following athletic club races without number (9)
- 10 American outrage about stomach trouble: chemical engineer left one account (6)
- 11 Laden wagon in Kentucky overturned item in station yard (6)
- 15 Locate school bus for relocating school pupils (9)
- 18 Current measure isn't a false tale, with river full of water? On the contrary (8)
- 20 Often fearful about queen getting marked (7)
- 21 Key line incorporated in Independent stories with polish (6)
- 22 Zero potassium found by Australia in pass? That's a fine thing (6)
- 23 Norwegian city renovated third of hotel rooms (6)
- 25 Anti departure, say, regarding ship (6)
- 26 Partner data transmission process with electronic concept (5)
- 29 What's common to his and her hearts? (4)
- 30 Excessive hope over OPEC's initial oil (4)