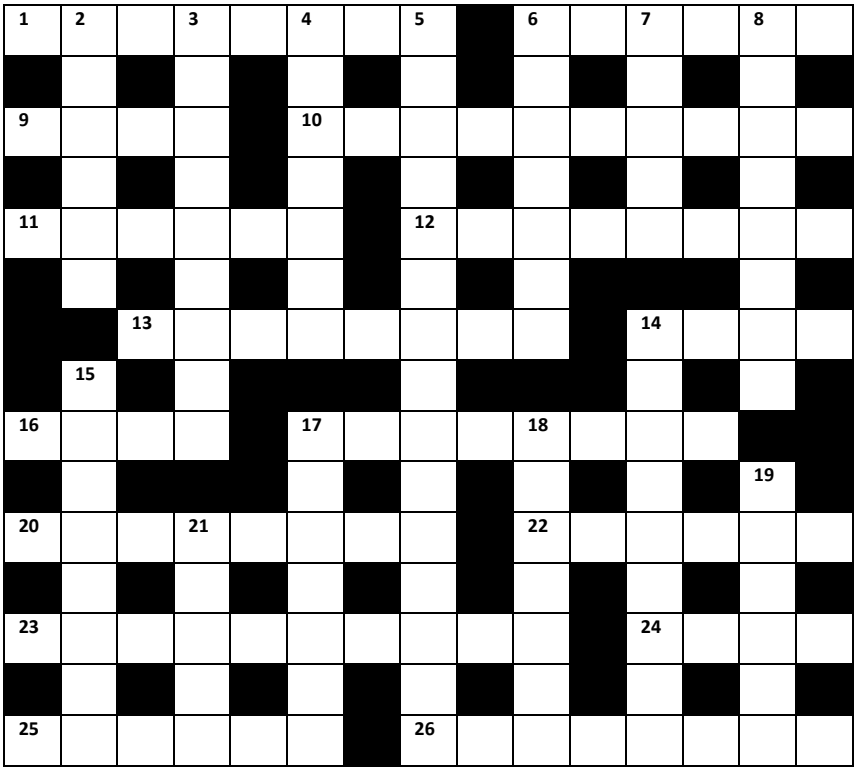
Number 696: 26 October 2026



**Across**

**1** Corrupt journalist backed rogue against English conservationists (8)
**6** Pretty woman's pursuing disloyal type (6)
**9** Urge kept in check by pious Puritan (4)
**10** Uneven rendition with input from alto that's excessive (10)
**11** Look through barristers' case, accepting argument with one note (6)
**12** Book German grandmother's written about old leader (8)
**13** Backer of bands regularly on the radio to promote pop duo (4,4)
**14** A lot of gardener's organic material left out (4)
**16** Scrap work ahead of strike (4)
**17** Clear company charter expanded by governor, maybe (8)
**20** Be given single urn finally during wake (4,4)
**22** Think fruit puree should be unwrapped (6)
**23** Dog poo in deserted warehouse poisoned bird (10)
**24** Wander north of river, travelling west (4)
**25** Secure basic food (6)
**26** Sneaky guards originally uncover detainee's shelter without warning (8)

**Down**

**2** Large realm sees European power getting into difficulty (6)
**3** Plant from farm grown away from walls to spoil without oxygen (9)
**4** Plain, dingy bar returning bloke opens late (7)
**5** Travelling to Seoul, brothers are those who can resolve issues (15)
**6** Extremist gunmen followed by retired Los Angeles detectives (7)
**7** Lieutenant on galleon circling group of islands (5)
**8** One concluding service with bible hurried toward church door (8)
**14** Group of animals from e.g. marine environment initially reclassified (9)
**15** Bin day – time to collect wheel at end of terrace (5,3)
**17** Brief commanding officer gets given since altered (7)
**18** Stylish man wearing black meets one Scottish yob (7)
**19** Press covers liberal nonsense (6)
**21** Eventually appear back in court (3,2)

**PUZZLE 695** – *Across*: **1** Judder; **4** Lambda; **8** Strong suit; **10** Room; **11** Stoner; **12** Curtains; **13** Feud; **14** Hankering; **16** Minibreak; **18** Lilt; **19** Picaroon; **21** Banger; **22** Stye; **23** Lederhosen; **24** Extent; **25** Pounce
*Down*: **1** Jet stream; **2** Drowned; **3** Eager; **5** Afterdeck; **6** Biryani; **7** Adorn; **9** Unconcerned; **14** Hobgoblin; **15** Goldeneye; **17** Neatest; **18, 20 & 21** *Lincoln in the Bardo*

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