ACROSS
1 Author has a pastry while eating tea (6)
4 Hadn’t a doctor nearby (2,4)
8 Ejection from cricket ground after touching member (7)
9 Escorts wanton and stays (7)
11 Uproar during address for investiture (10)
12 Entice student to the river (4)
13 Child appearing in Pilgrim’s Progress (5)
14 Service electronic network for composer (8)
16 What’s new in footballers’ underwear? (8)
18 Period when a champion loses his head (5)
20 Endlessly reject encouragement (4)
21 Tear round shopping centre for conditions of sale (5,5)
23 Operator sat against it (7)
24 Tool somehow let us in (7)
25 Posh student staying in holiday development (6)
26 Is scornful of man taken in by prophets (6)

DOWN
1 Dim British king (5)
2 Crook finds Tories more encouraging (7)
3 A brown fish appearing obliquely (2,2,5)
4 Time on instrument is a source of irritation (5)
6 Forgive a boy getting crack (7)
7 Stop fellow getting cleaner (9)
10 Notice society girl wearing ring (9)
13 Student leader with essay that’s abrasive (9)
15 Carol spilled the beans all by herself (9)
17 Rogue gets debts sustaining a lot of interest (7)
19 Ignored exotic French region (7)
21 Merchandise keeps wife smart (5)
22 Norwegian leader hurt by small claws (5)

SOLUTION 15,699
B E W A R E A B S E N T I E E
O T I I S C E N
N O N A G E A R C H W A Y S
A N D A F T O P U
F A L L B L I G H T D O M E
I A A R D E T D
D I S A G R E E A B L E
E S A L Y A W V
S C I V I L S E R V I C E
M S N G U E N
U N I T C H O R S M U T
M T B T T L A U
B L O W O V E R B A C K E R
A U A R M E E
I N T E R E S T L E A R N S

A prize of The Good Word Guide by Martin Manser and How to Sound Clever by Hubert van den Bergh will be awarded for the first correct solution opened. Solutions by Wednesday November 29, marked Prize Crossword 15,711 on the envelope, to the Financial Times, 1 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL. Solution on Monday December 4.

The winner’s name will be published in Weekend FT on December 2.