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Off With Their Heads! by Peter Fenner

This is the filled grid before applying the preamble. The circled letters are those which should be beheaded.

The letters removed from the clues spell HEADS WILL ROLL, so 12 of the heads should roll around the other one, then be returned to the grid. A bit of experimentation will find that only one rotation leaves the grid in a state where every entry is a real word, and this reveals several thematic characters, highlighted.

Across

1. NOWT (nothing) = N (new) OWT (Off With Their heads)

 $\textbf{6. extra letter: H (hedges \rightarrow edges)}$

 $\label{eq:PETTED} \mbox{(indulged)} = \mbox{DEEP (profound)} \rightarrow \mbox{PEED (reflection) about TT (edges in TibeT)} \\ \mbox{10. extra letter: E (events} \rightarrow \mbox{vents}) \\ \mbox{}$

HEELED (closely followed) = WHEELED (circled) vents W (close to revieW)

11. extra letter: A (around \rightarrow round) Robots Are Round Everywhere initially = RARE (uncommon) 13. GRIEVE (distress) = EVE (first lady) with RIG (outfit) \rightarrow GRI (cycling) 15. PIG OUT (a stomachache might follow this) = PI (constant) GOUT (disease) 17. extra letter: D (din \rightarrow in) TO-DO (commotion) = OD (too much) in [TWO (2) \rightarrow TO (on radio)] 18. extra letter: S (slacking \rightarrow lacking) NEE (previously) = NEED (require) lacking D (daughter)19. TITS (boobies) (birds) 21. UGLY (unattractive) = [GUY L (50) gets makeover]23. ADVANCE (forward) = ADVICE (suggestion) trade I (one) for AN (one) 26. extra letter: W (who \rightarrow ho) HUM (ho makes this boring [HO HUM]) (sound) 27. RAT (rogue) = (abstract ART) 28. LC (drained LethargiC) O (old) M (man) overwhelmed by WEE (small) = WELCOME (greeting) 30. extra letter: I (image \rightarrow mage) MAXIM (magazine) suppresses M (source of mage) = MAXI (dress) 31. extra letter: L (lad \rightarrow ad) NW (north-western) AD comes back = DAWN (sunrise) 32. STY (dump) = in weST Yorkshire 35. LIST (bank) (index) 37. FIE (i am outraged) after [SELL (trade) \rightarrow SEL (reported)] = SELFIE (social media content) **39.** VERY BAD (really awful) \rightarrow ADVERYB (cycling) loses Y (last place in derby) = ADVERB (qualifier) 41. ERNIE (bert's friend) drop N (name) = ERIE (one of the greats) 42. wyVERN ALways hiding = VERNAL (in spring) 43. SKEWER (deride) = SR (senior) over EWER (disorganised WEEK) 44. ETON (school) turning over = NOTE ($\pounds 50$, say) Down 1. NIGH (close) TRESSES (locks) taking D (tip to don) = NIGHTDRESSES (clothes for bed) 2. OAR (paddle) = regularly in hOt wAteR3. TEED (prepared a ball) = Do/EvEnT - oddly uplifting 4. extra letter: L (learned \rightarrow earned) DEVOLVE (delegate) = EV (Earned Veterans initially) LOVED (admired) backsliding 5. BLED (was visibly injured) = DISABLED (paralysed) from the waist down [bottom half] 7. EDIT (polish) = ET (and french) entertaining DI (princess) 8. TAO (the way) = TO holding A (area) 9. (animated MERLIN DEBATE) = DETERMINABLE (is not impossible to decide) 12. RUEFUL (with regret) = UR (you're on the internet) \rightarrow RU (upset) over EFUL (dodgy FUEL) 14. I (one) O (zero) T (scrap of Titbit) A = IOTA (small amount) 15. POUNCE (bound) = drop D (dead) in [CE (church) after POUND (hit)] 16. GOLEM (man made from brick material) = GOLE (a sort of LEGO) M (man) 20. extra letter: R (randy \rightarrow andy) MA (Mandy and Andy's heads) have LICE (nits) = MALICE (ill intent) 22. extra letter: O (oman \rightarrow man) FATTER (more portly) = H (Historic leader) replaced with T (Thin leader) in FATHER (old man) 24. Fantasy Race Associated With Digging - primarily withdrawn = DWARF (&lit) 25. COULDN'T (was unable to) = twist COLD NUT 29. EASE (comfort) = CEASED (stopped) when undressed 33. extra letter: L (lair \rightarrow air) DEVIL (satan) \rightarrow EVIL (losing head) falls back = LIVE (on air) 34. extra letter: L (lover \rightarrow over) DK (donkey kong) over A R (first in Romancing) = DARK (evil) **36.** I (one) VAN (vehicle) = IVAN (historically terrible man) 38. LIE (lay down) = DIE (perish); L (left) for D (dead) 40. jabbeRwocky, balOney, praTtle essentially = ROT (&lit)