

The First Book of The Times Concise Crossword Puzzles

FOREWORD

When *The Times* decided in the spring of 1983 to introduce a quicker and easier crossword than the famous (or infamous) back-page puzzle, there were not a few raised eyebrows. Had *The Times* really gone down-market? What was this horrid little nonsense? Was it now a paper for lame-brains? Would the mighty Thunderer become the Whimperer?

It proved too much even for some lame-brains. One man wrote, full of indignation, to complain to the Editor. It was impossible, he lamented, to do the crossword because there could be 'several different answers to any clue'. For instance, 'Bay (4)' might be COVE, or HOWL, or BARK. It had to be gently pointed out to him that that is the main function of a quick crossword such as this; it is to tease at possibilities by testing dictionary knowledge.

We came to test other things too, like geography and current affairs. After the Prime Minister used 'frit' during Parliamentary questions, we got that in too (but with a slightly different meaning). And we found that fame-brains, and grand dame-brains, and acclaim-brains did the little one, and enjoyed it.

It is not for lame-brains, or tame-brains, come to that. It taxes while it teases; and hopefully it teaches a little too, about everything from abbreviations to a little Latin. And, with any luck, its devotees are tempted on to the back page in due course.

All the puzzles in this book come from the first year of the puzzle's life in *The Times*.

My thanks go to Edward for his patience and skill on the computer and to the Features staff of *The Times*, especially Ron Gribble.

Some guidance for solvers: words, except proper ones, have to be found in a dictionary. *The Collins Concise English Dictionary* is recommended.

There, that's all you need to know. Oh, except how to use a rubber.

Margaret Webb
Compiler and Editor