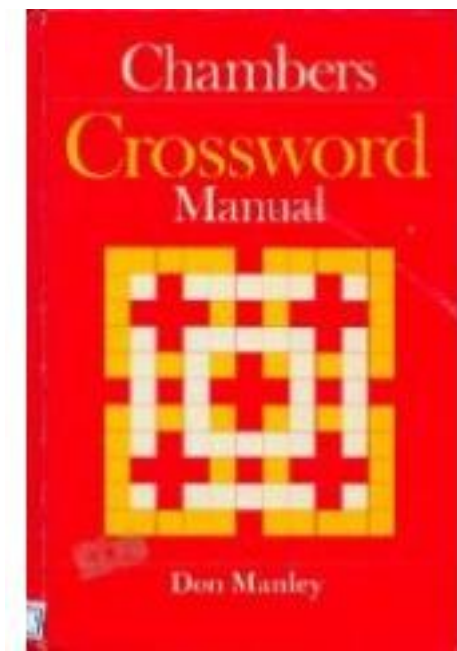


Chambers Crossword Manual



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This book is dedicated to the memory of my father, who must take much of the blame for my obsession with crossword puzzles. Chave Manley solved six puzzles a day (two each in the Daily Mail, the Daily Express and the Daily Telegraph) and one a week--usually on a Sunday afternoon--in the Radio Times. Until, that is, his son (with elder sister Jean's help) began filling the odd word in the 'small puzzle' of the

Express and the 'quick crossword' of the Telegraph. By my teens I was hooked and was pestering my father to explain how the cryptic puzzles worked. Soon the back page of the school common-room Times was being inked in, and not long after I left school I made my crossword setting debut with the London Evening News, followed within 18 months by Radio Times. Then a few years later a whole new world opened up with the discovery of the Observer's Ximenes and The Listener.

Not everyone has a father--or even a close friend--to explain the mysteries of the cryptic crossword, but I know that there are many in the ranks of the would-be solvers. 'You need a twisted mind for crosswords,' they say wryly--or else they denounce crosswords as a 'waste of time' without sounding convincing about it. The fact is that you do need to twist your mind to solve any problem, but why not? 'Problem-solving' is very much the fashion at the moment in the school curriculum. And there are, I believe, some real benefits in struggling with a good crossword: mental discipline and an increased vocabulary are two. But the benefits must not be overstated.

Crosswords are primarily for fun, but isn't the swimming pool more enjoyable once you can swim?

Curiously, there have been very few books actually about crosswords; those that I know of are listed in the bibliography at the back. There is of course an insatiable demand for actual puzzles, and those who want a good selection should not be disappointed by the offerings in this book. My priority, though, has been to tutor the reader in the basic essentials and the essentials at the more advanced level. Chambers 20th Century Dictionary has long been the basic 'word

bible' for the advanced crossword solver, but there has been little

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目录:

[Chambers Crossword Manual_下载链接1](#)

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