

Prize Puzzle 4

1925 Daily News Competition (unsolved)

Gilbert Frankau

An excerpt from "On the Art of the Crossword" by DS Macnutt (Ximenes)

"...still far removed from the modern [1966] crossword but at least a matter of skill rather than of luck, was the series of crosswords, each one harder than last, forming the basis of a competition with a large money prize, intended to go on until an ultimate winner emerged. Perhaps the most famous of these... appeared in the Daily News in 1925: the first prize was £5,000 [$>$ £200,000 nowadays]. The first puzzle was a very easy one: there were more than 100,000 entries (entry fee, 1s. per time). At this point, Gilbert Frankau, the novelist, was called in as composer to complete the process of elimination. This he did, in four more rounds. The third of these demanded a knowledge of French, Spanish, German, Italian and higher mathematics: after this, there were still over 300 competitors left. His fourth puzzle, of which I have been able to obtain a copy, was not wholly solved by anyone; the prize was shared by a syndicate of London solvers, who presumably had the fewest letters wrong. To show the almost incredible tortuosity that was resorted to, and to preserve what may be regarded as a historic work, this puzzle, cumbersome as it is, is appended..."

In this BlueJay edition, I have changed the clue numbers (and references) to adapt to the modern convention - the letters of the clues are as they were. No enumeration was provided in the original puzzle, so none is given here. I have also taken liberty to change some of the language in a few clues (using [italics]) to avoid some issues that a century of social evolution have addressed.

A personal note from BlueJay - I have "parsed" almost all of these, with reference to the bible, historical texts, archaic language and 1920's culture. I can provide explanations for most of the answers, but there are several that still elude me.

I provide this puzzle initially without solution information, because I'm interested to see how many correct answers arrive. BUT I will change the options on the puzzle to reveal letters after an appropriate amount of time.

Across

- 1. Initialise a father
- 4. By adding hydrogen here, help the British Dyestuffs Corporation
- 9. Full of hops
- 13. Curtail a formula
- 19. Might describe the condition of a rustic wooer
- 21. A poetess
- 22. A moke
- 24. The guns of Trafalgar

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12		13	14	15	16		17	18	
19			20		21					22				23							24	
25			26	27	28		29						30				31					
32			33			34	35			36		37		38			39			40		
41		42			43	44			45				46		47							
48				49				50				51		52						53		
		54						55				56										
57	58		59				60	61			62	63		64							65	
66			67			68	69						70				71	72	73	74		75
			76			77							78			79						
80	81						82		83	84		85									86	
87							88					89			90					91		92
93					94	95						96			97				98			
		99			100					101		102										103
104							105				106	107						108			109	
							110				111	112				113					114	
115	116	117		118				119			120				121			122				
123					124				125					126			127				128	
		129	130		131				132					133			134			135		
136																137						

25. Curtail and decapitate an enormous oven
26. Reverse one part of a pulley block
29. One way out of the harem
30. Once decapitate and thrice curtail the race of a man whose skin might have been saved had he been able to exercise 29 across
31. Decapitate and curtail something which also answers to clue 88 across
32. Curtail and decapitate something which apparently did *not* fall
33. Twice curtail an exiguous meadow
35. Two code letters found on a certain brand of advertised cigarettes
36. Reverse either three-fourths or three-fifths of a neurosis
38. Add one and make a tragedy
41. Curtail and decapitate a diminutive
43. Her husband's initials were J. R.
47. Found under the table
48. Reverse two words which might describe the influence of several specimens on the judgement of a mining engineer
50. First reverse, then twice decapitate an idler
51. Look for this on the end of a blowpipe
53. Reverse one through paced scoundrel
54. Reverse something made of chestnuts
55. First reverse, then twice decapitate a city bossed by a bull
56. Might describe hawthorn
57. Curtail a Saracen's stronghold
59. Curtail a word associated with mice
60. First reverse, then invert the first two letters of a knowledge invaluable to Mr. Royce
62. Ask your tailor about this
64. Found under expensive cigar boxes
66. Could also be initialised as U, Q, F, E, G, D
67. See house agents' advertisements
68. Start an ode
71. Curtail one who would have been better shingled
76. The fore-runner of the land girl
78. Twice curtail that which put behind 136 across conveys social reform
80. By decapitation and the alteration of one letter, make print vocal
82. One of the lacertilia
86. Reverse the first half of a hill
87. A form of promotion
88. Dished up with vegetables
89. A female
90. Add a couple and make a row
91. To surround
93. Curtail a village
94. Set our fathers singing
96. Curtail one who goes veiled
98. Made men cry, "Bring out your dead"
99. A relative of Peeping Tom
102. One who entered on behalf of the House
103. Curtail a river
104. Might have been the first two words of a historic South African cable
105. Remove two letters from contracts
106. {with 101 down} By combining these two make a lark
108. Decapitate a doubtful beautifier
110. Reverse a form of communication
112. Two thirds of a military unit
113. Deduct an aromatic liquid from an aromatic plant
114. B.C. three thousand two hundred and sixty
115. Gives knights nightmare
122. Reverse projections
123. The last of the fairies
124. Curtail an inhabitant of the Gebbi
125. Singularise and reverse a reversal
126. First decapitate, then reverse a property vital to a play
128. Twice beheaded a fearsome monster
129. Nice nicknames (reversed) for a brace of peeresses
134. Once decapitate and thrice curtail a business which is also an art
136. See 78 across
137. A chorus
- Down**
1. Title of a poem
2. The novice oarsman's friend
3. Would apply to 21 across
4. Reverse a patient carrier
5. The first two letters of 9 across
6. Half a fruit
7. Reverse an obsolescent individual
8. Reverse, then four times decapitate a war policy
9. Reverse a phrase which might be used by a channel swimmer
10. Stand a cup on its rim
11. Deduct first an American

- animal, then an English interjection from a barometrical term. Then reverse your result
- 12.** Reverse a knight
- 13.** First deduct the opposition from, then reverse a word whose original significane is precisely the opposite of opposition
- 14.** The wrong way to pluralise some [*Asians*]
- 15.** First reverse then decapitate the forerunner of 104 down
- 16.** Was used for keening
- 17.** Take the last four letters of 14 down and turn them into the past
- 18.** Singularise, without authority, symbols of a jolly evening
- 20.** The answer the doctor made to his nagging wife
- 23.** Give this to your enemies
- 27.** Reverse an inflammation
- 28.** Reverse that which has as bad an effect as 130 down
- 34.** Stops "fans" fanning
- 37.** Add a conveyance and make a spectacle
- 39.** Add the beginning and the end of 123 across to the ultimate of 1 across and the penultimate of 134 across
- 40.** Reverse the first half of a Swinburnian town
- 42.** Reverse a sign of decomposition
- 44.** Appeal to peelers
- 45.** Curtail that which tallies with 80 across
- 46.** Another Wells
- 49.** Curtail a cereal
- 52.** Curtail and reverse a provider of transport
- 58.** Halve a frisky lady
- 61.** Several Zevs
- 63.** Halve a cake
- 65.** Never wrote vers libre
- 69.** More trouble for H. G. Wells
- 70.** One of these rarely obtains 133 down
- 71.** The gardener's friend
- 72.** A reformer
- 73.** Reverse a sign of utility
- 74.** Reverse and add a couple to 121 down
- 75.** The typist's curse
- 76.** Reverse a name
- 77.** Cross
- 79.** Sets [*some Chinese people*] gobbling
- 80.** Seven score
- 81.** Reverse a process Biblically connected with a beard
- 83.** The day to which no one looks forward to
- 84.** Initialise and reverse a preserver (?) of morality
- 85.** Bad in the lung, worse in the brain
- 88.** Reverse a newspaper suggestion about 90 across
- 91.** Initialise a story title
- 92.** The largest inhabitants of a South American republic
- 95.** A racecourse
- 97.** Reverse of the last two letters of 104 across
- 98.** Curtail a kicker
- 100.** Reverse whom you curse
- 101.** See 106 across
- 104.** Reverse that which makes men distrust legality
- 107.** Halve embellished
- 109.** Voyage, and learn this
- 110.** Depenultimse an African tribe
- 111.** Reverse a flapper's dream
- 116.** An appellation of intimacy
- 117.** A great handicap
- 118.** Thrice curtail a trademark
- 119.** Leslie Henson does this
- 120.** Reverse a headman
- 121.** Reverse three primal liquids
- 127.** Not the Southern's, we hope
- 130.** Makes H.G. Wells see red
- 131.** Reverse a revenue payer
- 132.** What the Yorkshireman said when they offered him ginger beer
- 133.** Rarely obtained by 70 down
- 135.** One of the things that is his