

THE PLAY'S THE THING that explains (i) why two answers are entered minus a common element, giving grid entries of the length indicated; (ii) the sequence of words around the perimeter from 23 to 29; (iii) the sequence of redundant words in seven clues; and (iv) the rationale for encoding clue answers consisting of only those letters in 27 across before entry. Solvers must write the name of the play under the diagram. Chambers (1998) is recommended, apart from a placename and 16 across (in NODE).

[2016 note: Chambers {2014} now has 16 across, but with a different meaning. One abbreviation used has vanished between 1998 and 2014.]

ACROSS

- 10 Herring is spinning round lake dead (4)
- 11 March left, not right, in a stew (6)
- 14 Timeless works in painting medium (4)
- 15 A pal backed one Gulf city (5)
- 16 Leave again – some more golf? (4)
- 17 Insubstantial, hot, bubbling, carried by cook (6)
- 19 Shy, courteous, charming? Not half – that's the truth (6)
- 20 Expression of disgust about canteen ditching a type of seafood (4-4)
- 23 Modest male in his flapping scanty garb (6)
- 25 Inlaid ornaments – bad one from Germany is returned (6)
- 26 Colourful heather concealing prime position of rare butterfly (4)
- 27 *See preamble* (8)
- 28 Experience the city (3)
- 29 Ship carrying foul-smelling compact substances (6)
- 32 Form of insect – curious strain (6)
- 35 Played again, like great-grandma, after a breather (8)
- 36 I wait to get married in the same place (6)
- 39 Tinder, article getting blazing, then almost extinguished (6)
- 42 Vestry gutted? Extremely churlish (4)
- 43 One's surrounded by fringes of coiling, greasy smoke (5)
- 44 Children in Scotland bound to return (4)
- 45 Soup – this is stirred, with chestnut in it (6)
- 46 Opening an inch, allowing start of day in (4)

DOWN

- 1 Prophet is always forgetting verse (or perhaps not) (4)
- 2 Valiant man's not disheartened once carried off (4)
- 3 Quarrelsome former actor in Lancashire town (6)
- 4 John captures black wolf (4)
- 5 Fool in bedroom with yen to be brazen (6)
- 6 Embellishes answer involving stick up? (6)
- 7 Field measures? Nothing when applied to various deserts (8)
- 8 US politicians against reversing drug cut (5)
- 9 Grass, very dry, dead at the top (4)
- 12 Removes top from trees after ruin (8)
- 13 Game family getting a chance (4-2)

- 18 Journal contains this old circumstantial inscription to us? (4)
- 20 Reduction in tension about Russia gets Scots cross (5)
- 21 To provide education, fashionable trust works with college (8)
- 22 Allege phosphorus a metal? (5)
- 24 Racket in exams doing for first, second and third, say (8)
- 27 Lapels always stocked by latest couple of tailors (6)
- 28 Poet's function started with absence of poetry, say (4)
- 30 Sex expert once close to politician? Look at that! (6)
- 31 "Sac" I've redefined here? (6)
- 33 Single passage filled by a North wind (6)
- 34 Six runs? Success – it must be a sign (5)
- 37 This broadcasts live, in two directions (4)
- 38 Old dairymaid, we hear, active in period after dawn? (4)
- 40 One gets direct stroke on palm (4)
- 41 Heads for organisation that is concerned about hearing (4)