

The Times Listener Crossword Setters' Dinner — 2019

The 2019 Dinner was held at the Gimcrack Suite, York Racecourse, on Saturday 2 March.

109 people attended, including the following 47 setters: Aldhelm, Apt, Aramis, Artix, Ben Trovato, Cagey, Chalicea, Charon, Derek, 'Eck, Elgin, Encota, Enigmatist, eXternal, Ferret, Harribobs, Henry, Homer, Ifor, Jago, Kea, Kruger, Lato, Leo, Mohawk, Mountain Ledges, Nod, Oyler, Ozzie, Ploy, Raich, Samuel, Shackleton, Shark, Shenanigans, Smudge, Somniloquist, Spud, Stan, Stick Insect, Tea Leaves, Tiburon, tnap, Trev, Twin, Verbascum, Xanthippe.

Jane Teather and John Henderson (Enigmatist) made their debut as organisers. John welcomed the guests to York before handing over to Jane, who began by thanking Jim Coulson (Jago) and Jan Antonovics for their organisation of so many recent dinners and their much-valued support this year; and Sylvie Vanston, for organising last year's event in Paris. She then read out apologies for absence from setters, followed by obituaries, before proposing a toast to "Absent Friends" at the start of the dinner.

Apologies for absence

Arachne, Arepo, Auctor, Bandmaster, Brimstone, Buff, Charybdis, Colleague, Dimitry/Corvettes, Elint, Essira, Franc, Garth, Hedge-sparrow, KevGar, Little Hare, Merlin, Nudd, Ottorino, Owzat, Pabulum, Paddock, Phobis, Pilcrow, Poat, Politicaster, Polymath, Puffin, Sabre, Salamanca, The Ace of Hearts, Theod, Virgilius, Wan.

Obituaries

Smokey (Dave Crossland), Don Bradley, Geoffrey Kay, Towser (Paul Taylor), Stephen Rice, Frank Pasterczyk.

The Quiz

The quiz was set by John Henderson (Enigmatist) and formatted by Jane Teather. The first part was on the tables from the start, and Jane read out a further microphone round before dessert.

Five tables submitted all-correct answers to the quiz. Of these, Jane adjudged the best tie-breaker clue (a cryptic clue to a historical figure with links to the York venue, revealed by the answers) to have come from table 12. Table 12 duly received the Bronze Casket (lavishly filled with Swiss chocolate by Shirley and Charles Curran) at the end of the prizegiving.

The Prizegiving

Shane Shabankareh (Tiburon) announced the winners of the Radix Auditorum claret jug — Meredith Topliss and Denise Wilks, a daughter-and-mother team who only began submitting entries during 2018, with only one error since. Meredith gave a brief speech of appreciation.

Currently top of the consecutive All-Correct rankings, on 267, is Neil Talbott (Elint); he's followed by Shirley (Chalicea) and Charles Curran on 237. The Solver Silver Salver passed from Shirley and Charles to the solver in third place, on 138 — Richard Foden (Artix), who gave a droll speech featuring a Venn diagram, before announcing the votes for the Ascot Gold Cup for Best Puzzle. In reverse order, the top five were:

- 5th 4521: Translate into Spanish by Cagey
- 4th 4509: Disappearances by 'Eck
- 3rd 4512: Putting the World to Rights by Charybdis
- 2nd 4526: Quads III by Shark
- AGC 4487: Doing a Sort by Elgin

Glen Mullineux (Elgin) accepted the Ascot Gold Cup with thanks.

After presentation of the Bronze Casket, 'formal' proceedings ended with an indication that the 2020 Dinner will be held somewhere in the south of the UK (yet to be determined), and guests adjourned to the Bar.