

## Cinio Cyfansoddwyr Croeseiriau'r Listener 20 Hydref 1990 : Caerdydd

(The Listener Crossword Setters' Dinner 20<sup>th</sup> October 1990 : Cardiff)

The Avenue Suite of the Cardiff Moat House, still aka The Inn on the Avenue, was the setting this year for the setters and their guests at the annual dinner.

59 persons attended and by 7.35 pm 58 had descended, an apologetic Nicola finally making up the number a few minutes later.

Grace was delivered (in Welsh) by **Hellebore** – eventually, the conversation at his table being so animated that he unfortunately missed his cue. Those assembled then enjoyed a meal of french onion soup, roast turkey with all the trimmings, chilled Grand Marnier soufflé (or cheese and biscuits) and coffee and mints.

The formal proceedings began with **Gos** welcoming all to Cardiff (again in Welsh) and thanking everyone who had helped organise this year's event, with a special thank you to **Dimitry** for his inventiveness with the menu (a map of Wales in the form of a crossword grid).

Following this came a few statistics, followed by the sad announcement of the passing of three of the team during the past year, **Dado**, **Casein** and **Klan**.

Apologies from those unable to attend came next and then a brief word about the prizes offered during the year.

Some anticipated comment on the puzzles caused amusement, with **Gos** ensuring that he first mentioned those that he got wrong. A Frame-up, of course, received pride of place and a list was given of the interesting and varied subjects which received attention during the year.

The toast to the setters followed quite naturally and this was responded to by Inspector Morse himself, crossword enthusiast and crime novel award winner Colin Dexter, whose witty and most interesting comments about his efforts at solving some Azed clues and experience of teaching and writing entertained everyone for a full fifteen minutes.

An appraisal of the magazine was followed by Colin's toast to THE LISTENER.

Peter Fiddick, who, it was announced, was 21 the following day, then replied in his most professional way and began by explaining the history of the various sponsors of the crossword and mentioning some of the difficulties at present being experienced, following ITV's decision to withdraw from joint ownership of the publication. An assurance was given, however, that all was not doom and gloom and indeed plans were afoot with the help of market research to revitalise the magazine early next year. A guarantee of the crossword's continued existence while Peter was at the helm was understandably well received.

Finally the awards ceremony was announced. The worthy winner of the Solver Silver Salver was Ross Beresford, whose 98.08% accuracy for the year was equalled only by Terry Hughes. A warm welcome was extended to these experts. The records showed that Ross had had the longest successful run with puzzles received, after once more adopting the countback system introduced last year. Ross chose **Phi**'s Cretan Bull (from his Labours of Hercules series) as the crossword most deserving of the Ascot Gold Cup. **Phi** was so overcome by this choice that he unthinkingly agreed to organise next year's event, at a venue to be decided.

Thus ended the evening's formal proceedings and the serious occupation of talking and drinking, drinking and talking, then began. Lively discussion continued well into the small hours of Sunday morning.