

The Listener Crossword Setters' Dinner 21st March 1998 : Winchester

The 1998 *Listener* Crossword Setters' dinner was held on Saturday 21st March at Winchester College. The following setters were present among the 109 diners:

Adam, Aragon, Arcturus, Ark, Bandmaster, BeRo, Blank, Blod (1 of 2 persons), **Brym, Bufo, Calmac, Caper, Corylus, Derek, Dimitry, Duck, Elefa, Fawley, Gioconda, Gos, Lato, Le Gallois, Machu** (2 persons), **Machiavelli, Mespot, MynoT, Nibor, Noggs, Obiter, Owzat, Pabulum, Phalarope, Phi, Phil Brindall, Plausus, Ploutos, Politicaster, Psyche, Quinapalus, Radix, Third Man, Trev and Wolfram.**

Eight of the nine successful all-correct solvers were also present. Glen Mullineux, who had won the right to retain his grip on the salver, generously followed tradition by ceding the prize to Derek Arthur, who duly made a speech of acceptance thanking all concerned with the crossword (as well as his forbearing family!).

The Ascot 'Gold Cup' prize for the setter of the year's best puzzle was awarded on the basis of a poll of the all-correct solvers. The clear winner was *All Square* (3398) by **Dimitry** (who had the distinction of having fourth place as well). Second and third respectively were *A-maze-ing* (3395) by **The Tall'n** and *Potiores?* (3436) by **Petti**. The cup was presented by **Peeper (Bufo and Corylus)**, winners of the 1997 award.

Earlier in the evening **Phi** (the evening's organiser) had thanked those responsible for the occasion and had also read out messages from a number of setters who were unable to be present; he recorded the deaths of **Scorpio** (R.W. Purnell – 51 puzzles between 1938 and 1971 and 29 as **Castor** between 1936 and 1950) and **Babs** (S. Beale – 137 puzzles between 1943 and 1975, making him the Listener's second most prolific setter to date); and that **Law** had written to say he was reluctantly unable to continue maintaining the register of Listener setters due to his academic commitments. Applications for successors were solicited and two volunteers have stepped forward already.

Phi made special mention of **Dimitry's** leading rôle in saving the Listener crossword from extinction during 1997. **Dimitry** responded by thanking a number of others who had contributed significantly to this effort, particularly **Trev, Blank**, the editorial team of **Arcturus** and **Ploutos** and especially all solvers and others who had written to The Times. Special thanks were also due to Nick Brown of Northern Ireland, whose appeal persuaded his local MP (Peter Robinson) to put down an early-day motion in the Commons condemning The Times's plan.

As a result of this concerted and high profile campaign, the Saturday Editor of The Times has given a written undertaking to continue to publish The Listener Crossword 'for as long as there are compilers to compile it'.

Next year's dinner is likely to be in Yorkshire. Many of those present at the dinner congregated on the next day with other members of the Crossword Club to celebrate its 20th Anniversary.