The Listener Crossword Setters' Dinner 20th March 1999 : York

This event was held on Saturday 20th March under the chairmanship, and thanks to the organisation, of **Ploutos**. The chosen venue was the Stakis Hotel in York which gave some of those attending a chance to look round the historic city.

The dinner itself (basically melon, pork and brandy snaps couched in rather more elaborate language) was quite simple but well presented. There were 86 present, which would have been 89 but for late cry-offs, of which 43 were setters – see list below – and the remainder guests or solvers, these latter including 9 of the 12 solvers (treating an inseparable pair as one) who managed an all-correct year in 1998.

In his toast to the solvers **Ploutos** put before the meeting a motion proposed by one of the setters present that "this house believes that all-correct solvers over the number of five are deemed the personal guests of the vetters, and shall be paid for accordingly". Not surprisingly he gave this notion short shrift, maintaining that the high number was actually a tribute to the work done by the vetters in producing crosswords that are entirely fair; in general "unsolvable" crosswords are that because they are unfair rather than extremely difficult, particularly now that so many expert solvers are determined upon being all-correct. **Ploutos** then listed the all-corrects (an asterisk indicates those unable to attend) in the reverse order in which they will appear in the annual statistics (the number quoted is the last crossword *not* solved correctly):

Tony Sever *	3438	The Butlers	3427	Julian West *	3390
Roderick Forman *	3433	Paul Peters	3420	John Minter	3386
Glyn Hinde	3432	John Harrington	3410	Stephanie Perks	3386
Nicholas Maxwell	3428	Richard England	3399		

and finally the recipient of the Solver Silver Salver, still working his way toward the longest all-correct total of 224 set by Ross Beresford (**Arcturus** – poacher turned gamekeeper, as vetter):

David McNeill	3380

All rose to the acclaim of setters and their guests, and David then replied to the toast.

Firstly he gave thanks to all the setters for the past year, and the many (many) hours of enjoyment which the crosswords had given. He explained that as there had been so many all-corrects this year, then while he was naturally delighted to be the recipient of the Salver he had canvassed all his fellows in determining upon the winner of the Ascot Gold Cup. Each had been asked to place their three favourites in order and no less than seventeen puzzles had received a vote with no less than nine being given first place. However, as above in reverse order, the final tally appeared like this:

=7	3484	Tacit Mystery	**Elgin**
	3480	Clashing Pairs	**Sabre**
6	3471	The Open: The 19th Hole	**Loda**
5	3456	Spot the Theme	**Third Man**
4	3482	Hidden Word	**Bufo**
3	3470	Rum Journey	**Aragon**
2	3493	Stealth	**Dimitry**
1	3486	A Marvellous Game	**Columba**

The meeting then broke from its semi-formal attitude and proceeded with progressive disorder into the night. Next year's dinner will be in Paris; the date is as yet unknown but will be advised to all as soon as possible so that one weekend at least should be an immutable fixture in the diary – see you there!

Aragon, Arcturus, Ark, BeRo, Blod (2 persons)**, Brym, Bufo, Bundle, Calmac, Cheiron, Corylus, Derek, Dimitry, Doc, Elgin, Enigmatist, Fawley, Gioconda, Gos, Jasan, Lato, Leo, Macbu** (2 persons)**, Machiavelli, Monk, Mordred, Mr Lemon, Nibor, Obiter, Pabulum, Phalarope, Phi, Plausus, Ploutos, Politicaster, Psyche, Rebel, Samson, Schadenfreude, The Tall'n, Third Man, Trev, Wolfram.**

© Listener Team 2003