# NOTES ON LISTENER CROSSWORDS: NUMBERS 0 – 500

**Crossword No. 0: A Radiept Puzzle**
In the second issue in its second year, Vol 3 in 1930, THE LISTENER commenced a series of Competitions, the first being to write an essay of not more than 250 words on either *Italy Unvisited* or *First Thoughts on* Not *Having Seen the Exhibition of Italian Art,* with a prize of 5 guineas. (This was presumably linked to a major article in that issue: *The Genius of Italy* by Roger Fry.)

The competition series continued weekly, with various essays and poems to be written. No. 8, published on 26 February 1930, was this crossword puzzle. The series continued with its earlier themes until No. 12, when it effectively stopped, at the same time as the crossword series started in earnest. (There were occasional one-off competitions in later weeks.)

The puzzle was headed as follows:
"We offer five prizes of One Guinea each for the best solutions of *A Radiept Crossword*. Solutions will be opened and judged on Tuesday morning, March 4."

There were 5 winners named, with others offered a tour of B.B.C. Studios.

**Crossword No. 1: A Musical Crossword**
The puzzle was introduced as follows:
"This week we start a series of crosswords for the amusement of our readers. No prizes will be offered, but any reader who sends to us, within a week of publication, the correct solution of any of our crosswords, will be entitled to an invitation to visit the B.B.C. Studios on certain afternoons. … The names of readers who have correctly solved the crosswords will be published in THE LISTENER in so far as space permits."

The solution was accompanied by:
"This crossword proved difficult, and only one correct solution was received, that submitted by Mr. I. Cresswell of … Colchester. Honourable mentions are awarded to C.C. Parrott, Edwin Chappell, and Miss E.M. White."

**Crossword No. 3: An Indian Crossword**
The grid was in the shape of the outline of India, while some clue answers were Hindustani words. A prize was offered for the first time in the series proper, although it was not won on this occasion. The solution listed the most common errors.

**Crossword No. 4: A St. George's Day Crossword**
This puzzle was published on St George's Day itself, and the grid was in the shape of the outline of England.

The solution stated:
"This was easier than usual, and twenty-nine competitors sent in correct solutions. The prize of three guineas is divided among them, the amount received by each competitor being made up to 2s. 6d."

**Crossword No. 5: A Cricket Crossword**
No prize was awarded for this puzzle.

**Crossword No. 6: A Latin Crossword**
This was the first puzzle of a sequence for which a book prize was offered. In this case all 58 correct solvers were listed and were awarded a copy of the book.

**Crossword No. 8: A Botanical Crossword**
The grid contained a 7-letter entry with 6 consecutive unchecked letters.

There was a clue omitted in the published version; since it contained what was then called a "blind" letter, it was ignored in checking solutions.

**Crossword No. 9**
This was the first puzzle, after the first one in the series, to have a serial number. It was a plain blocked grid, chosen to increase the number of unchecked letters. The solution contained: "There were a good many straightforward blind letters, but the only deliberate trap (30 down, which might have been Sedan or Redan) did not catch any one."

**Crossword No. 10: A Greek Crossword**
Some clues contained Greek; all answers were to be entered in Greek. The preamble started as follows:
"The note printed below will indicate that competitors are asked not to approach this crossword in a spirit of pedantry, remembering that giving a clue to a word does not imply parsing it or adopting the first and commonest meaning to be found in the lexicon."

Below the grid was to be found:
"[*Note.*—Accents, breathings, and iotas subscript are ignored. Clues are not given for words of two letters, and while in most clues an indication of the tense, person, or case is given, competitors must be prepared for some looseness on this point. Some of the words are in dialect forms.]"

The solution contained the following:
"After correcting our Greek Crossword we are left wondering at the ability of our readers. The Crossword was a difficult one, difficult enough for a Professor of Greek to give it up on the ground that he had not 'a week to spare for it', and yet about twenty competitors sent in solutions which were substantially correct. On second thoughts we feel that the clue to 11 Down ('A busdriver would not say this to a policeman'—σαλασσω I overload) was not an absolutely fair one in view of three of the letters being blind and the clue negative. Our object in setting crosswords being to provide interesting tests of the skill of our competitors and not merely lotteries, we feel justified in accepting any reasonable alternative solution for the word in question … For similar reasons, where two competitors differed from us on grounds of scholarship as to the last letter of 52 Across (the only other word that proved much of a stumbling block) we have accepted their alternative."

**Crossword No. 12: A German Crossword**
Clues and entries were in German. There were 16 competitors with legitimate alternatives, but the four who submitted the intended solution were awarded an extra book.

**Crossword No. 14: A French Crossword**
Only entries were in French.

**Crossword No. 16: A Latin Crossword**
There were two errors in the published puzzle: a missing asterisk and a missing indication of reversed entry. Yet there were 25 correct submissions.

**Crossword No. 17**
The solution for this 'plain' puzzle contained the following:
"It is difficult to say why fifty-nine competitors did this Crossword successfully when two recent general crosswords of similar difficulty found practically no solvers. Is it that the recent bad weather has driven more of our readers to the crossword page? Does the particular prize offered make a difference? Or is it merely that certain patterns are more difficult than others?"

**Crossword No. 18: Crossword Old Style by Doggerel**
This was the first puzzle with an attribution of the setter. The name was possibly chosen because the clues were in verse.

**Crossword No. 19 by Doggerel**
The clues consisted of a story with missing words, to be deduced and entered in the grid.

**Crossword No. 20: A Musical Crossword**
This was scheduled at the opening of the Proms Season.

**Crossword No. 21: A Cricket Crossword**
This was scheduled for the deciding of the Ashes at the Oval Test. The grid was complex, with two cells containing wickets, two containing dots for the batsmen and others containing stars for the fielders. Many entries were names of cricketers.

**Crossword No. 22: A French Crossword**
Although no correct entries were received, one solver committed one small error and was awarded the prize. The solution noted: "It was unfortunate that a misprint should have been made in 33 Across (Nourish instead of Sourish) and that the clue to 20 Down should have been omitted, but these two mistakes did not present any difficulties to the solvers."

**Crossword No. 24: A Literary Treasure-hunt by Doggerel**
No correct entries were received, but eight solvers with one error received consolation prizes. The solution noted: "The clue, 11 across, contained a misprint 'od*e*rous' for 'odorous' which, by an unlucky chance, was a misprint in the volume from which the quotation was verified."

**Crossword No. 29: Virgil Bi-Millenary Crossword**
This Latin-based puzzle occasioned the following comments in the solution:
"The result of this competition was a landslide. Entries were received from all over the country, from every University, and from many public and other schools. … We feel that the solving, by over 150 members, of what seemed to us a difficult Latin crossword, is one of the most graceful tributes to the memory of Virgil and a striking proof that his influence is still a living one at the present day. A few entries arrived late and several competitors were reluctantly disqualified because certain letters in their solutions were illegible. We can hardly be expected to commiserate with the eighteen competitors from Stirling who all sent in solutions which, fortunately, contained an identical, rather stupid mistake."

This puzzle sparked the first published letter in THE LISTENER (05/11/1930):
"An acknowledgement is due of the pleasure given by your Virgil crossword. After completion of our attempts at solution we felt compelled to go on poring over half-forgotten passages with which we wrestled long ago. So the poet's prophecy,
*'Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit,'*
not fully appreciated in our school-days, comes true.
Camberley                                                                                                      S.J.D."

**Crossword No. 31: A Crossword for Everyman**
This puzzle was deliberately made easy "for a change", and no prize was offered. This possibly explains why there were only 24 correct submissions.

**Crossword No. 32: Guy Fawkes Crossword**
Published on November 5.

**Crossword No. 33: Miscellaneous Crossword**
Only one correct entry, but again there was no prize offered, although this solver was awarded one.

**Crossword No. 36: Wireless Crossword – Clue Competition**
This puzzle had only six clues, whose answers were to be found in given pages from the Technical Dictionary of the BBC Year Book 1931. They were: Cat's whiskers, Impedance, Frequency, Induction, Jigger and Resistance. A prize was awarded for the best clues to any three of these.

**Crosswords Nos. 39, 40: NO PUZZLES**
These corresponded to December 24 and 31 and non-crossword competitions were held in their place, although the serial numbers were not suspended.

**Crossword No. 41: Towns and Villages in Great Britain**
The way of our competitors is wonderful. A really hard crossword may find from 30 to 50 solvers, whereas for one which we hoped would prove amusing, but not very difficult, only three correct solutions were received.

**Crossword No. 42: (Overseas)**
This crossword appeared in the same issue as No. 41. It was prefaced thus:

"The notion of printing a crossword for overseas readers arose from a letter received from a reader in Canada. We have no idea as to what entry is likely to be attracted from overseas, but in order to stimulate a good entry we have made the crossword easier than the usual LISTENER crosswords, also bearing in mind that dictionaries and books of reference may not be so easy to obtain as they are in most parts of this country. If the experiment is successful Overseas Crosswords will be published regularly once a month with a rather higher standard both of difficulty and of prizes." [The prize was the *BBC Year Book 1931* and the time allowed was eight weeks, thought to suit all except those in the Far East and Antipodes.]

A second puzzle was published a month later, but no solution or prize list ever appeared, for either of them. No further such puzzle ever appeared. Presumably no correct solutions were submitted. If so, perhaps that is related to the clues, of which the following is a sample:

> A little English wildflower
> An old fashioned English port
> Initials of an English regiment
> A lovely hamlet in Dorset
> To strike or scratch (Scottish)

### Crossword No. 43: Greek (from Herodotus) by Janus
For a period of time, the preamble gave the name of the next week's crossword, in this case "A rhymed puzzle by Doggerel".

The solution ended with a single line paragraph:
"Several competitors are cautioned for execrable handwriting."

### Crossword No. 45: French Crossword by Janus
Only two correct submissions were received, which led to the following musing:
"It is curious that crosswords in French are not so popular as those in Latin and Greek. The reason for this (and for their comparative lack of interest, for which Janus apologises) is possibly that French is not a particularly good language for the purpose, a great many of its words being much the same as the equivalent words in English and the language lacking the interesting and unfamiliar short monosyllabic words of Teutonic origin which are so useful in English."

### Crossword No. 46: Dickens
The solution contained the following:
"It is not easy to 'flummox' a real Dickensian. The clues, therefore, had to be vague."

### Crossword No. 47: (Overseas) Canada
See No. 42.

### Crossword No. 48: St. Valentine' Day
This puzzle, which had a heart-shaped grid with a arrow through it, was published in the issue before the date in question.

**Crossword No. 49: Virgilian by Janus**
"Our competitors appear to have liked this crossword, some of them gallantly protesting their enjoyment in the face of grave doubts as to their success. These doubts were often justified."

The writer went on to welcome the appearance, in the prize list, of The Classical Sixth, Church Institute School, Bolton.

[The issue containing No. 55, published on 1 April 1931, included in the Letters Page a *Tribute to Janus,* a poem written entirely in Latin.]

**Crossword No. 56: Latin**
The publishers Nonesuch presented a copy of a limited edition of the *Iliad* for the most successful solver in the next six classical crosswords. These would normally appear as the second in each month, alternately Latin and Greek. In the event of a tie, the prize would be awarded to the solver who lasted longest in the succeeding classical puzzles. It was later agreed, at the request of some solvers, that the competition would be suspended over the summer months, to allow for vacations.

Whether initiated by this or not, a set of rules was published for the first time. These were then printed at the foot of each grid. It was regular practice to print the grid among the advertisements in the front of the magazine, with the clues in the normal text, presumably to avoid solvers losing part of any article printed on the back.

1. Entries should be on the printed diagram and envelopes containing them should be addressed to The Editor of THE LISTENER, Savoy Hill, London, W.C. 2, and should be marked 'Crossword' in the left-hand top corner.
2. Clues are not normally given for words of two letters. There are no capricious traps, and legitimate alternatives are accepted.
3. Collaborators may only send in single joint solutions.
4. The Editor reserves the right to disqualify entries for bad handwriting, late arrival, and on suspicion of a breach of the preceding rule.
5. Subject to the above rules, the sender of each correct solution is given a copy of the book prize, when one is offered. Competitors may suggest an alternative book of the same price, when sending in their solutions.
6. In all matters connected with the Crosswords the Editor's decision is final.

**Crossword No. 58: St. George's Day by Janus**
Like No. 4, the grid was in the shape of an outline of England.

**Crossword No. 60: 'Random Rhyme' by Doggerel**
There was only one correct solution:
"A very small entry (for which presumably the sudden arrival of spring must be blamed)."

**Crossword No. 61: Greek (Homer)**
"Fortunately for the prize fund the quite legitimate difficulty of 50 Across eliminated all except 21 competitors."

**Crossword No. 65: Latin (Horace) by Janus**
"The crossword was more or less of 'summer strength' and we hope to be able to offer a sterner challenge to lovers of Horace next winter."

The prizewinners [52] included "H. R. Trevor-Roper (Charterhouse)".

**Crossword No. 67: Italian Literature**
No correct solutions:
"Our competitors, so learned in Latin, have not, it seems, the same interest or proficiency in Italian."

**Crossword No. 68: 'North America' by Doggerel**
Published on July 1, to commemorate Dominion Day and Independence Day.
"The number of solutions received indicates the widespread interest taken in the correspondence regarding American slang, which filled the columns of some of our newspapers about two months ago."

**Crossword No. 70: 'St. Swithin's Day' by Doggerel**
The grid was surmounted by an umbrella.

"As it rained on St. Swithin's Day and during the rest of the week, competitors had plenty of time to complete their solutions, which resulted in a very large number of correct solutions being received."

The solution also remarked that BHISTEE, which had caused solvers problems, could be found in the Supplement in *Chambers' Twentieth-Century Dictionary*. This seems to have been the first reference to that dictionary as a resource.

**Crossword No. 71: The Arts by Janus**
The grid was in four unconnected sections. Solvers apparently found the "Visual Arts" section the hardest. Only one correct solution was received.

**Crossword No. 72: Mainly Scientific by Janus**
"Every candidate had the word for 7 Down wrong. The correct word was SOLECTRICS, Janus' authority for which was a letter by Rear-Admiral A.H. Smith-Dorrien to the *Morning Post* published on July 1 of this year, in which he says that there was a book on *Solectrics* written by Alfred C. Cooper in 1917. … Unfortunately the word does not seem to be included in any dictionary."

The prize was awarded to nine competitors, who presumably were otherwise correct.

**Crossword No. 73: The Great War**
The emblem for the *Victoria Cross* occupied the centre of the grid.

**Crossword No. 75: 'A Quiet Holiday' by Doggerel**
This was a story with the required entries omitted.

The Crossword page also contained a photograph 'The Unfinished Crossword' by H.F. Baxter, submitted for the July Photo Competition.

**Crossword No. 76: 'Components'**
83 correct solutions were received, while: "Eleven Down came to the rescue of the prize fund".

**Crossword No. 77: The Torn Diagram by Doggerel**
The top left triangular corner of the grid had been torn away. Solvers had to reconstitute it as part of the solution; the clues were given. All bar two competitors succeeded in that part of the challenge.

"For 20 Across the alternative of CAT cannot be accepted for WAT, in spite of the ingenious equation submitted that CAT = PUSS, PUSS = HARE. The allusion to Mrs. Glasse can be found under the word 'hare' in *Chambers' Twentieth-Century Dictionary.*" [A crossword based on an equivalent reference in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* was published in 2004.]

**Crossword No. 80: Miscellaneous by Janus**
"This was intended to be a stonewaller, some recent Crosswords having caused rather a run on the prize fund." [Five correct solutions were received.]

**Crossword No. 81: Latin by Janus**
This puzzle resumed the classical competition after the summer break. A list was given of three solvers who currently were 4/5 and seven who were 3/5.

**Crossword No. 82: 'The Thruster' (13 dn.) Doggerel**
"As the cub-hunting season is in full swing we are giving an easy puzzle for our fox-hunting fraternity."

The solution noted:
"A good many solvers complained of the absence of a clue to 13 down, but a glance at the title will reveal it."

**Crossword No. 83: Greek by Janus**
This being the final puzzle for the classical competition, the solution listed those still contenders for the prize, each being 5/6: Mr C.W. Baty, Sir S. Dannereuther and Mr. D.W. Pye.

**Crossword No. 85: Latin by Janus**
"The division of this puzzle into four sections was intended to, and did, make it more difficult than usual, though the only (unintentional) catch seems to have been an omission in the clue for 13 Across, where it should have been said that a vowel had been left out." [Mr C.W. Baty failed on this puzzle, reducing the contenders to two.]

**Crossword No. 87: Greek – Armistice Day by Janus**
Mr D.W. Pye failed on this puzzle, so Sir S. Dannereuther was declared winner of the classical competition. [The only fully correct solution to the very first Greek crossword was from "Sir Sigmund Danereuther" [*sic*]; some of the early puzzles listed a prizewinner: Ed. Dannereuther, also of Slough. It appears that the correct name is Sir Sigmund Dannreuther, one-time Permanent Undersecretary for Air.]

**Crossword No. 88: Miscellaneous by Janus**
"Few things are more difficult to identify than a quotation which looks easy but is not sufficiently definite to give a clue to the poet or poem."

**Crossword No. 93: 'Our Christmas Card' by Doggerel**
No prize was awarded for this puzzle, published on December 23. The grid contained "A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU", spaced out in its cells. All clues had a Christmas theme in their wording.

"Readers found time to find one or two amusing alternatives, especially one for 23 Down, ASCRB [in place of ATOLL] on the ground that Christmas Island is full of crabs."

**Crossword No. 97: 'Puzzlers' by Doggerel**
The solution notes refer to *Brewers* as a reference source.

**Crossword No. 98: 'Lewis Carroll' by Doggerel**
"The entry for this crossword was very good and competitors evidently appreciated having to turn again to the pages of 'Alice'."

**Crossword No. 99: Miscellaneous by Janus**
"One reader felt that 'a village near a big lake in Africa' was too obscure, but Lake Chad would show on any map of Africa, and the village Nguigmi is actually marked in the atlas volume of the *Everyman Encyclopaedia*, which was recently given as a crossword prize."

**Crossword No. 100: Greek by Janus**
H. R. Trevor-Roper was again a prizewinner.

"'Janus' attributes one or two lapses (for which he apologises) in the clues to a disturbed emotional state caused by contemplating the hundredth crossword of the series."

**Crossword No. 104A**
This was a week in which a "Classical" puzzle was normally scheduled.

"This week space makes it possible for us to accede to requests from our readers and give an easy English Crossword as an alternative to the monthly Classical Crossword. There will be no prize for the alternative, but names of solvers will be published in the usual way." [No correct entries were submitted.]

**Crossword No. 105: 'Irish Stew' by Doggerel**
"There was a smaller entry than usual for this crossword and the three prizes won all go to Ireland."

**Crossword No. 107: April by Doggerel**
"For 13 down the STRANGLER weed (dodder) we were disposed at first to accept the alternative ENTANGLER, but we had to agree with one competitor who 'wondered how toads are filled by the advent of Spring'."

**Crossword No. 109: Greek Miscellaneous by Janus**
"School holidays were probably responsible for the smaller entry for this Crossword, which did not seem to be a particularly difficult one."

**Crossword No. 111: Mathematical**
This was the first puzzle with numerical entries in the grid. It was genuinely a CROSS-number puzzle since using crossings in the grid was essential to completing the puzzle. Unlike the early word-based puzzles, this would not seem out-of-place today, except for two clues: one used more licence that would now be permitted — entering a rounded decimal without a decimal point — and the other was "Telephone number familiar to listeners", which turned out to be that of Scotland Yard. (It was possible to ignore it, except for its unchecked digit.)

The solution notes contained:
"The experiment of offering readers a mathematical 'cross-number' puzzle has been successful to the extent of producing an overwhelming entry and consequently a record number of correct solutions. The fact is that it is hard to estimate the difficulty of a novelty like this without the co-operation of our readers, which, in this case, has caused quite a run on the prize fund. However, we have the consolation of being able to welcome well over a hundred new competitors, and the gratification of knowing that the experiment was very much appreciated. Accordingly we hope to offer from time to time more 'cross-number' puzzles but of a much higher standard of difficulty."

There then followed a list of 240 winners. [The next mathematical puzzle was No 124 "Cross-number by Afrit". This attracted 72 correct entries.]

**Crossword No. 124: 'Cross-number' by Afrit**
"'Afrit' is indebted to four competitors for alternative solutions of 41 Across (5865), 45 Across (39048), 30 Down (65080) and 31 Down (52064), which were an improvement upon the original."

[It is intriguing how one valid solution can be better than another in a numerical puzzle, but these four clues were connected and the entries mentioned seem to involve several trailing 0s, which was not the case for the alternative.]

This puzzle also included, in the solution notes, "By deduction and trial the puzzle could have been solved in the following order: 36A; 42A, 43A, 44A, 39D, 27A; 32A, 27D, 33D; (41A?); first two digits 26D, 31A; …".

**Crossword No. 126: Greek by Janus**
"The schools' holidays, combined with a difficult patch in the right-hand top corner and an invitation to gamble on the first letter of 42 Across, resulted in a very small entry and only three correct solutions of what was otherwise a fairly interesting

crossword. 42 Across had several more or less likely possibilities, but the correct solution, ζαθ(ερες) scorching, was easily the best: one competitor sent in seven alternative entries.”

### Crossword No. 127: 'General' by Doggerel
“The heat-wave was perhaps responsible for the comparatively small entry for this puzzle, and for the few correct solutions.”

### Crossword No. 128: Italian Literature
“This Crossword should not have presented much difficulty to our readers conversant with Italian, as it was composed mainly of well-known passages from the Divine Comedy, but we can only congratulate two competitors, Emiolio Ceeché (Rome) and E.G.W. Hewlett (Bushley), on sending in absolutely correct solutions.”

### Crossword No. 130: 'Jumble' by Doggerel
“In any otherwise correct solution the alternative word 'ATELITE' for 5 Down will be accepted if solvers will quote their authority for giving it.” [No further report on this was ever made.]

### Crossword No. 133: Latin — Tacitus
Prize: *Tacitus Histories,* Vol. I
A quaint example of the cavalry arriving too late? — 57 people won the prize.

### Crossword No. 136: 'Wren' by Doggerel
This puzzle celebrated the tercentenary of Sir Christopher Wren; the Greek puzzle that should have appeared in this slot was postponed for a week.

### Crossword No. 140: 'B.B.C. Birthday' by Doggerel
This puzzle contributed to an edition of the magazine celebrating the first 10 years of the BBC.

### Crossword No. 142: 'Gradatim' by Afrit
“The mnemonic ALL-SIN-TAN-COS was not generally known, and solvers were driven to desperate shifts, of which 'ELP-SENTENCES was perhaps the most amusing.”

### Crossword No. 144: Greek by Janus
“One competitor complained of 44 Across beginning with three blind letters, but that there were twelve correct solutions is perhaps sufficient justification.”

### Crossword No. 152: 'Epigrams' by Doggerel
“35 across, from The Ingoldsby Legends, also spoilt a large proportion of solutions.” [There were 12 correct entries. Crossword No. 3106 The Golbyd's Toes by Mr Lemon, published almost 60 years later, had a similar effect.]

### Crossword No. 154: Greek by Janus
“This was difficult in the sense that competitors who could not find the words for 11 Across, 40 Across and 42 Down had not much hope of doing the puzzle at all.”

**Crossword No. 155: 'Cross-number IV' by Afrit**
"It is remarkable that 842 and 882 for 9 Down with the consequent alterations elsewhere also satisfy the conditions; and, since the reduction of the second digit of 4 Down by *one* merely reduces the third digit of 10 Across by *five*, there are in all six correct solutions. We are indebted to Mr. A.W. Joseph of Birmingham, for pointing this out, and congratulate him on his success in solving the puzzle. No other competitor was completely successful."

**Crossword No. 156: 'March' by Afrit**
"March is a treacherous month, and the 'March' crossword abounded in traps."
[There was only one correct entry.]

**Crossword No. 159: 'Biblical' by Afrit**
"The Biblical Crossword proved very difficult, perhaps because so many of the clues depended for their solution upon a knowledge of the Revised Version; in the story of EHUD (2 Down), for instance, the R.V. reads *sword* for the A.V. *dagger*."

**Crossword No. 162: 'Sixes and Sevens' by Afrit**
"The printer added point to the title of this Crossword by misspacing the clue of 29 Across, but competitors apparently experienced no difficulty in that respect."
[Perhaps by way of compensation, eight consolation prizes were awarded.]

**Crossword No. 163: 'Slavery' by Doggerel**
*Slavery* was the subject of the principal article in this edition.

"Many competitors took the opportunity of assuring us that although they have been unable of late to reach the correct solutions, they have not been idle, and their interest in the puzzles is apparently as keen as ever."

**Crossword No. 165: 'Hit or Miss' by Doggerel**
"The form of this crossword was in the nature of an experiment, every letter in the diagram with the exception of four on the edges being checked, but it proved extremely hard. As the title suggested, no alternatives were possible."

**Crossword No. 166: Latin by Janus**
H.R. Trevor-Roper again appeared among the prizewinners, now in 'Oxford'.

**Crossword No. 167: Ariosto**
The theme was Italian, recognising the quatercentenary of the death of the poet Ludovico Ariosto on June 6, 1533.

**Crossword No. 169: 'Cross-number VI' by Afrit**
"We thank the competitor who offered us suggestions for making the triangle clues harder; but, since another called down plagues upon us for making them so hard, we had better refrain!" [The standard formulae for deriving Pythagorean triangles was quoted in the solution notes.]

**Crossword No. 170: Miscellaneous**
"We have been criticised in the past for using excerpts from Modern poets whom not everybody knows, but having this time kept sedulously to the classics, no correct solution has been received."

**Crossword No. 188: 'Gradatim II' by Afrit**
"The original 'Gradatim' puzzle was adjudged easy by many competitors; the second has proved very difficult indeed, and the title of the book prize, *How the Mind Works*, may have seemed a trifle ironical." [There were no correct entries, but one consolation prize was awarded.]

**Crossword No. 191: Latin 'Newspaper Pattern' by Janus**
"This crossword was intended to show that the ordinary 'newspaper pattern' crosswords depend almost entirely on the pattern, which usually makes about half of the letters blind. The result has certainly come up to expectation, as there were no correct solutions and most of the entries had more than one large part of error."

**Crossword No. 192: 'November' by Janus**
The preamble stated: "As this puzzle would otherwise prove too easy, we have omitted the rhymes [the ends of the clue lines] and ask readers to supply their own." Solvers were required to submit the rhymes in addition to the completed grid. No solver succeeded in this and the requirement was ignored.

"'Not as easy as you thought!' was the comment of one competitor, and we are constrained to agree."

**Crossword No. 193: 'Dreams' by Doggerel**
"One of our clever readers found the puzzle so easy that he 'did it in his sleep'. Alas, for 18 across he did not dream of LAMBS!"

**Crossword No. 195: 'General' by Doggerel**
"It was anticipated that difficulty might have been experienced in solving 1 across; but in view of the publicity given in *The Times* of November 9th to the building scheme for Chesterfield [the answer] House, the answer to this clue was easily ascertained."

**Crossword No. 199: 'Cross-number X' by Afrit**
"The presentation of a Cross-number in symbolic form proved a welcome innovation, and we have to congratulate a much larger number of successful competitors than usual." [There were 28 correct entries.]

**Crossword No. 200: Latin — Virgil by Janus**
"This was the 200th crossword and coincided more or less with the fifth birthday of THE LISTENER. It was purposely a rather easy one and was taken from Virgil by way of reminding competitors of the Virgil Bi-Millenary crossword which was one of the first and most popular." [There were 60 correct entries.]

**Crossword No. 202: 'Aquarius' by Afrit**
"Some competitors apparently do not appreciate the difference between an anagram and a 'mixed' word, and this led to error in 32–33Across."

**Crossword No. 203: 'Twenty-six Again' by Afrit**
"This week 'Afrit' appears in a white sheet [penitential garb?]. Ten Cross-numbers and a previous 'XXVI' without a miscalculation and then disaster! There were two typographical errors in 33 Across … and the correct solution of 28 Across is, of course, KRHJIZQY …. The very kind and appreciative letters which accompanied many solutions encourage him to try again some day, and he has now thought of a secure way of locking the stable-door."

**Crossword No. 206: 'General' by Doggerel**
"One among alternatives given was LOSSIE from 'The Lament of Ramsay MacDonald', but we cannot verify the poem."

**Crossword No. 214: 'The Vulgar Tongue' (Diagonal) by Afrit**
"Chronologically A.D. is the converse of B.C., hence B-A-D was contrasted with B.B.C."

**Crossword No. 216: 'Flowers' by Doggerel**
"The clue for 22, 24 Across was rather ambiguous, as 22 and not 24 had to be reversed, but few solvers even mentioned this as having caused them any trouble."

**Crossword No. 218: 'A Tale of Terror' by Doggerel**
This puzzle was a narrative, with grid entries words in the narrative that had to be deduced. The preamble contained: "Competitors must decide which clues are down or across, and some of the words are reversed." It backfired to some extent: "The story, an abridged translation of Paul Courrier's letter (Charles Knight) seems to have been very well known." [There were 268 correct entries.]

**Crossword No. 221: 'Biblical IV' by Afrit**
"Did ASAHEL fall in the wilderness? All competitors, except one, assert that he did, and we have decided to accept this assumption, though the reference in 11 Across was to AZAZEL, 'the fallen angel' (Driver), to whom the goat was sent into the wilderness on the Day of Atonement."

**Crossword No. 230: Latin by Janus**
"A holiday strength puzzle, with few difficulties and some very easy clues." [It was published on 8th August.]

**Crossword No. 232: 'Fruits' by Doggerel**
"This puzzle proved very difficult and we cannot believe that one reader solved it while his morning apple was being eaten."

**Crossword No. 234: 'Once Removed'**
The preamble stated:
"In this puzzle each clue is related to the corresponding answer not directly, but by means of a 'bridge', which is a word equivalent in one of its senses to the clue and in

another to the answer; e.g., the clue 'stretch' might lead to the answer 'froth' through the 'bridge', 'ream', because 'stretch' = 'ream' = 'froth'." [A list of the 'bridges' was required in addition to the completed grid.]

"No correct solutions were received and the crossword as a new form of puzzle was disappointing in the amount of interest it attracted. The majority of our regular competitors evidently were not inclined towards trying a new idea."

**Crossword No. 238: Music**
The puzzle was headed by a single stave of music, with the inscription "Muss es sein? Es muss sein! Es muss sein!" [Must it be? It must be! It must be!] added by Beethoven to the finale of his last string quartet (Op 135).

**Crossword No. 244: Greek by Janus**
"… 6 down, where competitors failed to realise that the statement 'but the text is corrupt' was crossword language for one of the letters having been changed."

**Crossword No. 246: 'Wedding Bells' by Doggerel**
"Those of our readers who did not attend the Royal Wedding seem to have been helped by the broadcast of it in at least three clues."

**Crossword No. 255: 'Pluviose' by Afrit**
"Quite the easiest 'Afrit' has set yet, and competitors took the opportunity of wiping out some former defeats!"

**Crossword No. 262: 'Proverbs' by Doggerel**
34D: According to proverbs should not be interfered with

"For 34D GUESTS, supported by the authority of Ovid, is accepted, but it was thought that the proverb about sleeping dogs would have quickly suggested the word given in the solution [SIESTA]."

**Crossword No. 265: 'A Cage' by Doggerel**
The preamble contained the instruction "Solvers to insert down bars".

"The task of inserting the 'Down' Bars does not seem to have added any difficulty to this hard crossword."

**Crossword No. 266: 'Lent and Easter' by Afrit**
"Rain on Good Friday and Easter Day did not produce as good a crop of entries as was expected."

**Crossword No. 270: 'Mrs. Hemans' by Doggerel**
"It is hoped that the notes will answer the large number of letters which accompanied solutions."

This is the first occasion on which there was a clear indication that solvers often enclosed letters with their entries.

**Crossword No. 274: Latin [*sic*] by Janus**
"This Greek crossword was difficult in itself and was made more so by two errors in the setting."

No mention was made of the error in the published title. The crossword was most definitely a Greek one.

**Crossword No. 291: 'Music II'**
As in the first 'Music' puzzle, there were some bars of music above the grid. On this occasion they gave the first entry of the Alto in *The Song of Destiny* by Brahms.

**Crossword No. 293: 'Cryptogram' by Afrit**
"Above is a cryptogram — composed by a reader who complains that he has never yet been a prizewinner in one of Afrit's crosswords, and rarely in those of his two colleagues. We cannot submit to reprisals of this sort, and we invite competitors to solve it for us."

The puzzle revealed a message: "Listener readers are warned against three men, known respectively as Janus, Doggerel and Afrit, who persistently thwart the editor's generous intentions towards crossword solvers".

**Crossword No. 295: 'Square the Circle' by Doggerel**
A disc, diameter two less than the number of cells in each direction, has wiped out the centre of the grid, so the puzzle is largely *Carte Blanche* in format.

**Crossword No. 296: Greek by Janus**
"There was a regretted *lapsus calami* in 36 Across, where bad handwriting allowed Janus, in composing the crossword, to read the fourth letter as alpha and simultaneously as omicron in 24 Down."

**Crossword No. 300: Latin. Virgil by Janus**
"This crossword, which was Janus' swan song, was intended to be easier than normal. Virgil was the chosen subject, as an echo of the Virgil bi-millenary crossword which was one of the earliest and most popular of this series." [No 29: 152 correct entries]

**Crossword No. 306: 'Secret Codes' by Louis C.S. Mansfield**
"As a diversion from the usual crossword, this week's competition takes the form of two sentences written in code, and competitors are only required to decipher them."

The sentences were:
WILZRTQNWIG KRZTX MWBF AEY WILR NZEALX RNNUXWRIX RIME XMWGCL TWSSWNQMLE KRQMT-HF NZEALRG ZUACFZX GFIFZUMME GQUZT UGUWIXL XQNC RHDWRQX AWLSUMMX

The decrypted text was: "Introducing words like pyx into crypts occasions only slight difficulty. Would-be cryptographers generally guard against such obvious pitfalls."

**Crossword No. 307: 'Words' Worth' by Afrit**
"In our innocence we had pictured a dredging through Wordsworth, and [competitors] using their ingenuity in deducing what they could not find; but now we think we know where those public libraries are which contain a concordance! We condole with those who failed through neglecting this short-cut and with a few others whose Arithmetic proved unequal to the strain. Perhaps we should add an apology to those pure mathematicians who refused to divide QUIXOTE by 2 to get 'semi-Quixote'."

**Crossword No. 312: 'Second-hand' by Afrit**
"After a long series of rather easy ones, competitors did not complain at finding this crossword much more difficult. There were many traps, and each one claimed its victim."

**Crossword No. 335: Latin by Pollux**
"A straightforward puzzle, containing no recondite allusions — unless the Epitaph on Claudia can be so described. The holiday season and the heatwave and no doubt responsible for the few [4] correct solutions."

**Crossword No. 338: 'Gradatim IV' by Afrit**
"Others failed to notice that ENO (19D) could also be read as 'ONE up'." Only eight solvers did as Afrit intended, but nine others were also deemed to be correct.

**Crossword No. 341: 'Diagonal V' by Afrit**
The diagonals read SOVIET RUSSIA and FASCIST ITALY. No comment was made as to any intended irony in scheduling this puzzle immediately after 'Utopia' by Doggerel.

**Crossword No. 346: 'Bishop's Move' by Afrit**
The grid involved each entry running from the numbered square to an edge using a Bishop's move. The directions were given.

**Crossword No. 350: 'The Knight and the Castle' by Afrit**
This involved a combination of Knight and Rook moves for the entries.

**Crossword No. 360: 'Cross-number XIV' by Afrit**
There was fascination at this time with special triangles. Mr D F Ferguson of Repton School had apparently supplied Afrit with various data. In this puzzle, two triangles had angle A twice B, while three had angle A 90° more than half of B. The solution provided generators for these: $pq : q^2 : p^2\text{-}q^2$, with $(p+2q)(2q\text{-}p)$ a perfect square, and $p^2 : pq : p^2\text{-}q^2$, with $(2p+q)(2p\text{-}q)$ a perfect square.

**Crossword No. 362: 'Comic Poets' by Doggerel**
"We congratulate the solver [not the usual 'competitor'] who tossed up for HOOKE, COOKE, TOOKE, ROOKE and SMOKE in 30, 31 across and COOKE [correct] won!"

**Crossword No. 366: 'To Any Reader' by Afrit**
"This crossword was intended to appeal to readers of all tastes, from those who enjoy Edgar Wallace's stories of the River to admirers of Thomas Hardy, from students of

Milton to devotees of Lewis Carroll. While we have reason to believe that *Any Reader* could solve some clues, we regret to find that *No Reader* could solve all, or even nearly all, and there are no prizewinners."

### Crossword No. 374: Greek by Pollux
"The many distractions of the week before last reduced the number of solvers." [The crossword was published on 12th May 1937, the day of the Coronation of George VI.]

### Crossword No. 377: 'Printer's Devilry' by Afrit
The preamble stated:
"The lights are complete words which were originally 'hidden' in the clues. It is to be assumed that the compositor, seeing that certain consecutive letters spelt a word or words, removed them and closed up the gap, sometimes taking a further liberty with the spacing and punctuation, but not altering the order of the letters. There is only one break in each clue, and the lights show the omitted letters in their original order."
[This is presumably the first example of what is now a standard device.]

### Crossword No. 380: Analysis of Unknown Solution by Proton
The clues were scientifically based and non-cryptic.
"Of the many entries to the unknown (but easy) solution, about half were precipitated by 23D and 24D."

This was the first appearance of Proton, who continued a series of this type, but later developed a lengthy series of "Word Sum" puzzles, which relied on simple arithmetic sums coded by words.

### Crossword No. 382: 'Re-Hash' by Doggerel
[From *Points from Letters*, 28th July 1937]
### Congratulations to 'Doggerel'
The completion by 'Doggerel' of seven years of crossword composing strikes me as being a suitable occasion upon which to write a few words of appreciation to you.

I look back over these years with great delight, thinking of the hours of happy recreation and instruction which THE LISTENER crosswords have given me. I remember with pleasure the sensation caused when I read one morning early in April 1930 (I was still a schoolboy in those days) that 'this crossword proved difficult and only one correct solution was received, that submitted by …'—me. That was 'Our Crossword no. 1'. In the light of subsequent events, I know that were that puzzle set today the prize list would be colossal and for that THE LISTENER and its crossword composers must consider themselves responsible. They have done a good work and may congratulate themselves on being connected with the publication of crosswords without pareil anywhere. Not least among the composers is our good friend 'Doggerel'—for to one who has followed these puzzles through the years (not always having time and very rarely having the erudition to finish them, for they have got very hard of late!) he *is* almost a personal friend. I may say that 'Re-hash No. 382' has proved exceptionally interesting to me and it has given me an excuse to peruse THE LISTENER crosswords which I have sedulously saved since the very first one. I find this file a very useful source of reference, for I have each puzzle indexed.

Will you kindly convey to 'Doggerel' my congratulations on his splendid achievement, together with my thanks for all the pleasure he has given me these past seven years.

      Norwich                                      IVAN CRESSWELL

## Crossword No. 393: 'What For?' by Afrit

The theme was the jocular alphabet "A for horses", etc.

" 'Though O for Come, I for Give' says one unsuccessful competitor, handsomely acknowledging that the puzzle was great fun."

## Crossword No. 397: 'Playfair' by Afrit

This seems to have been the first ever Playfair puzzle. 12 entries were coded, but there were no unchecked letters involved. Instead, solvers had to insert the code square in the 5 × 5 block in the middle of the grid. The preamble referred to Lord Peter Wimsey. [The codeword was "whiskerando".]

## *Competition* No. 398 by Proton

"For the past seven years we have published each week a Crossword puzzle; but this form of brain exercise does not appeal to everybody, and we have therefore decided to try the experiment of setting a literary competition on a subject having in some way a connection with broadcasting, which we hope will appeal both to present regular Crossword competitors and to those readers who have in the past been neglected. If there is a good response to this type of competition, we shall in all probability continue it, say, once a month instead of the usual crossword."

A Script, of not more than 250 words, of a dialogue between a B.B.C. Announcer and Christopher Columbus on his return from discovering America, to be broadcast in the 'In Town Tonight' series of programmes.

"The entries for this competition were sufficiently numerous to be encouraging; but their quality was not up to the standard that we hope will be reached in THE LISTENER literary competitions. Perhaps the nature of the subject set had something to do with this, as it called for considerable ingenuity both of plot and style." [No first prize was awarded.]

The next (No. 402, based on Trollope) brought: "Although the entries on this occasion were not as numerous as previously, they were of an encouragingly high standard." The winning piece was printed.

## Crossword No. 399/405: 'Cross-number XV' by Afrit

"An apparently trivial error on Afrit's part at an obvious starting-point caused competitors much fruitless toil, and entirely ruined the puzzle. There was only one successful competitor, E. P. Whitcombe, Bewdley. We offer most sincere apologies for this slip, and in order to give other competitors a chance of completing their efforts we are withholding the solution, and will set the puzzle again next month."

## Crossword No. 412: 'Brevities' by Doggerel

A preamble stated:

> "Verification of first quotation
> Assistance lends for some words' ends."

This quotation read: "Thou map of woe, that thus does talk in [signs]."

The theme was that the ends of some answers should be entered by a sign such as +, &. Not every solver realised this; the solution noted: "However, solutions have been accepted where knowledge of the sign required was shown."

### Crossword No. 418: Current Topics by Proton

28D: Polite half of half a radio combination
"We were deeply shocked to observe that many solvers failed to recognize, and were even ignorant of, the existence of GERT (and Daisy)."

### Crossword No. 419: 'Afrit' by Afrit

"Some readers failed to recognise in the diagram a self-portrait of Afrit, with the Q's as eyes."
Comparison with No. 418 (recognize v recognise) suggests different editorial (or sub-editorial) hands.

### Crossword No. 426: Greek. Sophocles by Pollux

"A puzzle which seems to have presented difficulties only to the composer."

### *Competition* No. 428

The objective was to provide a list of 12 suitable words (from the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*) for use in a spelling bee. The judge did not approve of words "whose sole claim to distinction in inclusion [therein]". He awarded the first prize to a Mr C P T Bee [*sic*], whose list was: exacerbation, interpellate, desuetude, phylactery, Philippic, ululate, schismatic, hemistich, pemmican, Eisteddfod, concinnity, caravanserai.

### *Competition* No. 433

The literary competition finished with this one, although no announcement or reason for given. The general tenor of the reports was disappointment with the quality. Interestingly, the most common criticism was that the submissions were essays rather than scripts, indicating a failure to engage with the medium of radio.

### Crossword No. 457: Cross-number by Abdul

Most clues were groups of three, in which the corresponding numbers were in arithmetic progression, while the sum of any two was a perfect square.

"Abdul admits his initial effort was relatively easy when the formula was found by means of which the possible 'sets' could be calculated—but he hoped it could just be solved without the formula."

The middle number was $2(m^2+n^2)^2$ and the common difference $16mn(m^2-n^2)$, where $m/n$ were 13/12, 14/13, 15/14, 16/15, 17/16, 17/14, 18/17, 18/1, 20/1, 21/2, 22/1, 23/2, 24/1, of which only 17/14 was not used.

### Crossword No. 460: Alphabet by Proton

"Most entrants knew their ABC and its PQliarities." [There were 118 correct entries.]

**Crossword No. 461: Graeco-Roman by Pollux**
Across entries were to be made in Latin and down ones in Greek. The latter were to be made using their Roman transliterations. The grid was fully checked, so knowledge of Greek was not essential (in theory).

**Crossword No. 475: 'Two minus One' by Afrit**
"In this crossword 150 clues were given to 818 letters, of which only 55, or less than 7 per cent., were unchecked. It was therefore possible to arrive at the solution without solving all the clues; but, even so, the task has proved far too difficult, and no complete solution has been received."

**Crossword No. 480: 'Printer's Devilry' by Afrit**
"It was hardly to be expected that a fine Whitsuntide should be devoted to crosswords, but some gallant attempts were made at this rather difficult puzzle. 1A ('He saw the firsT OAR break or bend, …') defeated all."

**Crossword No. 484: Miscellaneous by Doggerel**
"We are glad that the entrant who spent six hours in searching for 10 down ran it to ground and wins a prize."

**Crossword No. 486: 'Cricket' by Scorpio**
"Messrs. Gray, Gilroy and Carter made a good score on what proved a difficult wicket. All, however, were no match for The Grand Cricket of New Zealand at 1D [ANOSTOSTOMA]; (for this clue see Century Dictionary under 'Cricket'). A no-ball was bowled at 37, which should have been reversed."

**Crossword No. 498: 'Miscellaneous' by Doggerel**
"NOTE : In future prizes for 'The Listener' crossword puzzle will be given to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened, instead of, as present, to the sender of each correct solution. In order to obtain a wider circle of readers to compete, an easier crossword puzzle will be set from time to time."

"The new system of awarding prizes did not seem to affect the entry for this puzzle, but the first five solutions were soon found."