

The Listener Crossword Setters' Dinner 1978 : London

We had hoped to have 57 again at this year's dinner, but unfortunately **Ascot** and **Leiruza** were unable to come at the last moment. Even so there were more setters in attendance than ever previously, as the following lists show:

Setters: **Adam, Aeschylus, Apex, Brym, Cuth, Duck, Eel, Generalissimo, Hal, Jago, Jasan, Jim, Jude, Klick, Machiavelli, Mass, Merlin, Nibor, Notlaw, Peto** (2 persons), **Phiz, Ploutos, Sabre, Salamanca, Smada, Smokey, Twudge, Zander**

Solvers: **J Coleby** }
 R M S Cork } joint winners, all correct
 J A Sever }
 A J C Saunders } one wrong

Special Guests: **Ivor H Evans** Editor of Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable
 R Tennant North Yorkshire County Reference Librarian
 D A N Jones 'Ad Lib' columnist of THE LISTENER
 Miss M E Gibson Crossword Editor of THE LISTENER

Fortunately this year menu cards and place settings had been properly organised, and lapel badges also to make identification easier for those coming for the first time. In this connection we were pleased to welcome not only **Eel** and **Phiz**, whose first efforts appeared during 1977–78, but also **Jim** and **Notlaw** who have not appeared in print for many years (an omission to be rectified?). Sadly, however, some of the wives who have been regulars in past years could not be with us, and it is to be hoped that this will be a lapse of one year only.

In order to keep down costs simple fare was the order of the day, but the Chairman hereby gives warning that a price rise is inevitable in 1979. Incidentally, does any Londoner know of a similar style of place where the dinner might be held with food of rather better quality, while maintaining much the same price level?

The first speaker of the evening was **Jude** who may be known to readers not only through The Listener crossword, but also through Games and Puzzles where he has taken over the editorship of the crossword section following the hiatus after **Dogop**'s retirement. **Jude**'s theme was the trials and tribulations of being an editor, which no doubt struck a responsive chord in the hearts of Miss M E Gibson who has now taken over as the crossword editor, and Miss Pat Bourne the previous crossword editor now happily retired (i.e. working harder than ever) as a successful essayist.

The reply to the toast of THE LISTENER came not from our editor but from D A N Jones, joining us once more at our dinner. As before he regaled us with his own breathless style of wit, and among his gems referred to No. 2456 Around the Table by **Apex**, on the subject of Hazlitt: discovering that Michael Foot was an ardent fan of the essayist enabled him to conclude that an early election was out of the question since it would prevent Mr Foot celebrating the bi-centenary properly – can similar hints be looked for in Listener editions of the future?

Our main guest speaker Ivor H Evans has been editor of Brewer's for many years, and told us something of the job, and of the difficulties of selecting some items and rejecting others; of sleepless nights of proofreading (still not perfect, see No. 2465 Priviledged [sic] Class by **Klick**) and the constant search for perfection. In his quiet way – dare I say a more serious speech than we have become accustomed to? – Mr Evans brought home the magnitude of the task of creating such a work of reference.

On behalf of reference librarians everywhere Mr Tennant replied in a speech of considerable panache – a necessary attribute of any prospective Liberal candidate, particularly in a ‘lost cause area’? – with reference to some of the most unlikely items of information which Joe Public expects to be able to find out. A great compliment was paid, however, to all of the crossword fraternity when he said how nice it was to meet some of the ‘customers’ who really give purpose to a reference library.

On this note of self-congratulation we once again sat Valerie Cork at the piano to play a medley of popular tunes while Robin Cork sang of the last year’s efforts, with due regard for his fellow prize-winners John Coleby and Tony Sever:

“Listener Crosswords, Listener Crosswords, yes I solved all thirty-nine, so did Tony, and John Coleby: all the others we outshine.”

Not an unfair boast, now that Robin has completed over one hundred without a mistake. (Do not give up hope, gentle reader, he tells me he is off to America for a while this year which should prevent him sweeping all before him for a third year running.)

Finally, to the bar and then home.

“If the supper was to my taste – the grace which followed it was much more so.”