

## The Listener Crossword Setters Annual Dinner 1979 : London

This year's Dinner was held as usual at Ye Olde Cock Tavern, Fleet Street, and, despite the fact that we had already dined earlier in the year in celebration of Crossword 2500, the turnout was as good as in any previous year, and the number of setters in attendance continues to increase. Amongst those present were:

**Adam, Aeschylus, Alban, Apex, Brym, Cuth, Dogop, Eel, Egma, Generalissimo, Jago, Jasan, Jim, Jude, Klick, Leiruza, Machiavelli, Mime, Nibor, Nicholas, Notlaw, Novamor, Peto** (2 persons), **pH7, Ploutos, Sabre, Salamanca, Simian, Zander**

Solvers:	<b>G N Guinness</b>	}	All correct
	<b>J A Sever</b>	}	
	<b>R M S Cork</b>	}	
Special Guests:	<b>N C Dexter</b>		Author and Ximenean
	<b>A Howard</b>	}	From THE LISTENER
	<b>D A N Jones</b>	}	
	<b>Miss M E Gibson</b>	}	
	<b>Miss F Lloyd</b>	}	

Once again it was a pleasure to see new faces among the setters with **Alban, Mime** and **Novamor** making their first appearance in print during the year; **Nicholas** (dare one say it?) is a setter of historic rather than present standing, but nonetheless welcome for that. Among the others **Dogop** deserves special mention as one who was a regular attender at earlier functions but was then compelled to drop out of the field of crosswords owing to the illness of his wife, who has now sadly died; we extend our condolences to him. Enthusiasts, devotees indeed, may remember his two books and we hope to be entertained by him again soon.

It was also a delight to all present that THE LISTENER was able to send no less than four representatives to our function, and in particular Anthony Howard, the Editor, was the first holding that post to be present since the current series of Dinners commenced. It is he we can also thank for the reinstatement of 'The Fourth Week' – the Company will now be upstanding for a chorus of 'For he's a jolly good fellow ... and so say all of us!'. (Incidentally, Miss Felicity Lloyd is quite the youngest and prettiest of sub-editors we have had yet, so we hope she will not be promoted out of the post too soon.)

As usual the Dinner was simple, but genuinely good. The management of Ye Olde Cock Tavern has changed hands this year and those put off by memories of earlier less than *haute* cuisine can be reassured and return to the fold – not a Yorkshire pudding was left uneaten.

First speaker of the evening was Geoffrey Guinness whom we welcomed as one of those elite solvers who made it right through the year without error. Many of you will have seen the report in THE LISTENER itself of the occasion, and it is merely necessary to record therefore, that the speech was not only entertaining, as there reported, but also an insight into the extraordinary lengths to which the devoted will go for their weekly 'fix'. (We are promised by our Editor that every effort is being made to improve distribution, and I have noticed this already in my own remote part of the country.)

The reply to the toast of THE LISTENER was fittingly given by the Editor, Anthony Howard. Despite being a practised broadcaster he confessed to a certain trepidation in meeting this part of his 'public'. Readers of earlier reports will be aware that David Jones of the editorial staff has often been present at our functions, and can truthfully be said to be basically in sympathy with our particular form of lunacy; now we have an editor of like thinking, and I hope that after meeting us this once his fears will have been allayed – we are, after all, only mad one day a week. Come again, please, Mr. Howard.

Special guest speaker of the evening was N C Dexter, Oxford don, writer of the Inspector Morse detective novels and noted Ximenean. Mr Dexter chose as his subject 'misprints' and dispensed not only wit but good advice. Having heard him speak, and seeing his efforts regularly among Ximenes' prizewinners (two firsts in succession once), it seems a shame that such talent should not reach a wider field; it is to be hoped that he will one day submit an effort to THE LISTENER so that all might be as entertained as we were on the night.

In reply the Chairman rose to regret the absence of one Bernard Jackson due to speak but called to the bedside of an invalid son. Properly sensible of the need to be quick he belted his way through a few witticisms, mostly culled from local newspapers, and then announced his retirement as Chairman in favour of **Jude**. The health of the ex-Chairman was then proposed by **Generalissimo**, and appropriate noises of regret muttered round the room.

At last, however, we were able to move Valerie Cork to the piano and husband Robin celebrated the year's crosswords with a song. Sufficient only to record that Robin, having boasted of one hundred in succession last year, had to confess his error thus: "He hung his heart on a Ra-A-Andletree". All of which leaves Tony Sever as our longest undefeated solver – we must work to defeat him.

Good luck to you all, **Jude**.