

The Times Listener Crossword Setters' Dinner — 2024

The 2024 Dinner was held at the Lincoln Hotel, Lincoln, on 9 March.

119 people confirmed their attendance. Setters present included **Alchemist, Aldhelm, Apt, Aramis, Arcadia, Artix, Brock/Raven, Cagey, Chalicea [Rasputin, Chen], Check, Craft, Cubic, Derek, Eck, ELAP, Elgin, Encota, Enigmatist, eXternal, Filbert, Hedge-sparrow, Hellebore, Henry, Homer, Ifor, Karla, Kea, Leo, Lionheart, Little Hare, Mash, Mohawk, Nod, Oyler, [part of] Banjaluka, Pilcrow, Ploy [½ Harpy], Poat, Quinapalus, Rebel, Seps, Shackleton, Shark/Handyman, Shenanigans, Smudge, Spud, Tea Leaves, Third Man, Tiburon, Trev, Twin, Vagans, Vainglorious, Verbascum.**

Those who could not attend the Dinner in person were able to observe remotely via an online video feed managed by solver Dmitry Adamskiy.

Jane Teather and John Henderson were organisers. At the start, Jane welcomed the guests, then read out apologies for absence from setters. **Henry** (Neil Aspland) delivered a tribute to his father, former Solver Silver Salver winner **Denis Aspland**, who died on 3 March, aged 90. **Enigmatist** (John Henderson) delivered a tribute to **Nutmeg** (Margaret Irvine) who died in 2023.

Jane proposed a toast to “Absent Friends and Future Generations”, then handed over to **Vagans** (Bishop David Thomson) to say grace before the meal started.

Apologies for absence

Ben Trovato, Bufo, Charybdis, Demoniactal, Donarino, Dragon, Ferret, Goujeers, Hawk, istenem, Jago, Ottorino, Paddock, Phobis, Raich, Sabre, Salamanca, Samson, Stan, Stick Insect, Theod, Tringa, Xanthippe.

The Quiz

The quiz was set by John Henderson (**Enigmatist**) and formatted by Jane Teather. Clues were in the form of pictures, the answers to which were to be entered jigsaw-wise into a grid to reveal THE OUTLAW IN LINCOLN GREEN, giving ROBIN HOOD for which (whom?) solvers were required to write a cryptic clue. The winning clue, as judged by John, was Table 13's “Winger covering Nottingham Forest's poor defender” [‘robin’ + ‘hood’ + cryptic definition].

The Prizegiving

Shane Shabankareh (**Tiburon**) announced the winner of the **Radix Auditorum** claret jug — John Howe, who submitted 33 correct out of 43 entries in his first year.

Currently top of the consecutive all-correct rankings is Peter Blayney, on a run of 366 puzzles. The **Solver Silver Salver** passed to Andrew Nelson, who could not be present in person but supplied a round-up of the top puzzles of 2023, based on recommendations from the year's all-correct solvers. The highest-scoring puzzles, in reverse order, were:

4750: I Want You by Twin (35)

4788: Infeasible by Quinapalus (50)

4792: Doing the Lord's Work? by Craft (57)

4782: Life 2 by Hawk (65)

4775: Citation Needed by Cagey (86)

The **Ascot Gold Cup** was therefore accepted by Cagey (Stuart Thomas).

The **Bronze Casket**, filled with sweets, was presented to Table 13 for the winning clue, and passed around. After its presentation, ‘formal’ proceedings ended with an indication that “somewhere in the North-West” is under consideration for the 2024 Dinner venue, though all suggestions are welcome.

Guests then adjourned to the Bar.