

The Times Listener Crossword Setters' Dinner — 2025

The 2025 Dinner was held at the Waterfront Hotel, Southport, on 15 March.

119 people confirmed their attendance. Setters present included **Alchemist, Aldhelm, Almasti, Apt, Aramis, Arcadia, Artix, Brock, Bufo, Cagey, Chalicea, Check, Chen, Craft, Derek, Deuce, 'Eck, Elap, Encota, Enigmatist, eXternal, Hellebore, Henry, Homer, Ifor, Jago, JFD, Karla, Kea, Kruger, Lato, Leo, Lionheart, Mohawk, Oyler, Paddock, Ploy, Quinapalus, Rebel, Remus, Seps, Shark, Shenanigans, Simian, Skylark, Smudge, Stick Insect, Tea Leaves, Theod, Third Man, Tiburon, Toffee, Twin, Verbascum.**

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

Jane Teather and John Henderson were organisers. At the start, Jane welcomed the guests, then read out apologies for absence. After two of the obituaries plus a special tribute (see below), Jane proposed a toast to "Absent Friends and Future Generations", and the meal began.

Apologies for absence

... were received from **Augeas, Degen, Elgin, Foxglove, Goujeers, Hawk, Hotspur, istenem, Lath, Mr Snaky, Ottorino, Ozzie, Phobis, Pilcrow, Raich, Rok, Sabre, Salamanca, Samuel, Shackleton, The Don, Tringa, Tut, Vagans, Virgilius, Xanthippe.**

Obituaries

Tributes were delivered to the following, who died in 2024:

- Charles Curran (part of **Chalicea**), by Jane Teather
- **Dysart** (Andy Stewart), by **Enigmatist** (John Henderson)
- **Aragon** (Richard Rogan), by **Mohawk** (Mick Hodgkin)
- **Ascot** (Allan Scott), originator of the Ascot Gold Cup, by **Tiburon** (Shane Shabankareh)

Tribute to John Green

Jago (Jim Coulson), himself celebrating the 50th anniversary of his first published Listener puzzle, delivered a tribute to **Trev** (John Green, JEG), retiring after 39 years as marker and statistician. JEG himself could not be present, so a presentation of an engraved crystal tankard was made *in absentia*.

The Quiz

The quiz was set by **Enigmatist** and formatted by Jane Teather. Picture clues eventually revealed JOHN GREEN, for whom solvers were required to write a cryptic clue. The winning clue, as judged by John, was Table 8's "Can my knight capture rook, checking king?" [(JOHN + GEE + N) around R].

The Prizegiving

Tiburon announced the winner of the **Radix Auditorum** claret jug — Joe Baldwin, who submitted 27 correct out of 29 entries in his first year.

The **Solver Silver Salver** passed to Keith Williams, who could not be present in person but supplied a round-up of the top puzzles of 2024, based on recommendations from the year's all-correct solvers. The highest-scoring puzzles, in reverse order, were:

- 3rd: Listener 4800, **Ready Now** by 'Eck
- 2nd: Listener 4834, **Bygone Characters** by Shark
- 1st: Listener 4819, **By George!** by Enigmatist

The **Ascot Gold Cup** was therefore accepted by **Enigmatist** for the first time.

The **Bronze Casket**, filled with sweets, was presented to Table 8 for the winning clue, and passed around. After its presentation, "formal" proceedings ended with an indication that "somewhere on the South Coast (subject to affordability)" is under consideration for the 2026 Dinner venue, with all suggestions welcome.

Guests then adjourned to the Bar.