Age

Of the 102 respondents, all gave their age, ranging from 21 to 80 with a mean of 49.70, slightly under the estimated average age of a Listener solver which appeared on the message board. The median was 50. Modal classes are as follows:

Age Range	Number	% of Total
20 – 24	2	1.96
25 – 29	1	0.98
30 – 34	9	8.82
35 – 39	5	4.90
40 – 44	18	17.65
45 – 49	12	11.77
50 – 54	21	20.59
55 – 59	16	15.69
60 – 64	8	7.84
65 – 69	6	5.88
70 – 74	2	1.96
75 – 79	1	0.98
80 – 84	1	0.98
Total	**102**	**100.00**

The total age of all solvers was 5069, meaning that the respondents in total are 41 years short of achieving the aforementioned mean of 50 years. Assuming an even spread of birthdates throughout the year, and that all ages quoted in replies were accurate as at the closing date of 31st March 2005, this means that this mean will be reached on the 19th of July 2005.

Gender

Of the 102 respondents, only 87 gave their gender. A process of deduction led to identifying the sex of the other 15, however. Of the 102, 96 (or 94.12%) were male, and 6 (5.88) were female.

The ages of the female respondents ranged from 47 to 63, with a mean of 66.2; the ages of the male respondents had a mean of 49.35. The author of this report makes no judgement as to the meaning of these statistics.

The author has further assumed that there has been no change in the gender of any of the 102 respondents since 31st March 2005.

Location

Statistics of location of solvers have proved hard to compile in any meaningful format, largely due to the wish to keep solvers' identities concealed. To do this, rather than use specific locations, the author has divided the United Kingdom into regions. These are given in an appendix, together with the counties which have been deemed to be in each region. These groupings are in-line with those found on certain government websites.

Of the 102 respondents, an impressive 16 (15.69%) are non UK based. Even more impressive is that of these 16 only 12 are ex-pats, proving that even such a British thing as the Listener crossword can be exported.

Apology is made for the British bias in the following statistics; having groups so diverse in geographic area as 'UK – South East' and 'USA' has made the author uneasy, but any further breakdown of non UK areas beyond those given would result in almost literally one person per class.

Area	Number	% of Total	Mean Age	M – F Split
UK – East	3	2.94	44.33	2 – 1
UK – Midlands	12	11.77	53.08	11 – 1
UK – North	4	3.92	38.75	4 – 0
UK – North East	1	0.98	52.00	1 – 0
UK – North West	9	8.82	51.33	8 – 1
UK – South	3	2.94	36.50	3 – 0
UK – South East	44	43.14	49.04	43 – 1
UK – South West	3	2.94	53.67	3 – 0
UK – N. Ireland	1	0.98	41.00	1 – 0
UK – Scotland	4	3.92	46.75	3 – 1
UK – Wales	2	1.96	54.00	2 – 0
Asia	2	1.96	58.00	2 – 0
Australia	4	3.92	55.50	3 – 1
Europe (non UK)	3	2.94	46.67	3 – 0
USA	7	6.87	53.57	7 – 0
Total	**102**	**100.00**	**49.70**	**96 – 6**

Regions are defined as follows, noting that only counties in which respondents live are given:

UK – East: Cambridgeshire, Suffolk

UK – Midlands: Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, West Midlands

UK – North: Yorkshire

UK – North East: Tyne & Wear

UK – North West: Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside

UK – South: Dorset, Sussex

UK - South East: Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Bucks, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Greater London, Oxfordshire, Surrey

UK – South West: Cornwall, Devon

Education

Of the 102 respondents, only 63 gave indication as to the level of their education. It is accepted that this is probably due to a change in the information requested after a few days of the survey.

Of the 63 who gave this information, the following results were found:

Education	Number	% of Total
A-Level	4	6.35
Degree	44	69.84
Further Degree	15	23.81
Total	**63**	**100.00**

When read in combination with the list of professions of each respondent, the author expects this trend to have been followed if all replies had indicated level of education.

Occupation/Profession

Information as to the profession of solvers has, of the information requested, been by a long way the hardest to compile and interpret. This has been due to a number of reasons, including the fact that people have changed career path or retired, as well as whether a person's discipline or actual job is more important. For instance, should a science teacher be classed as a scientist or a teacher?

It was concluded that the most important factor was a person's discipline – for instance, that they are of scientific bent rather than a teacher. The perception of cryptic crossword solvers is often that they are all people with logical minds – eg scientists, mathematicians – so this is the approach that has been taken.

Where a respondent is of retirement age, a profession of 'retired' has been given only where no other information is available. For example, a retired banker would have been classed as a banker.

Professions have been banded into disciplines, with as fair a view taken as possible as to into which discipline each person should be placed.

It should be noted that the respondent who described his profession as 'geek' has been unashamedly classed as a scientist, the author being in this case also uncertain as to the content of a BSc course in the Philosophy of Science.

Apologies are also due to the one professional crossword compiler in the results, whose identity will be obvious to many.

As can be seen from the table below, some 53% of respondents are based in finance, science, technology and mathematics, a fact which lends weight to the perception noted above.

Discipline	Number	% of Total
Civil Servant	5	4.90
Professional Crossword Compiler	1	0.98
Design & Engineering	5	4.90
Finance & Banking	13	12.75
Housewife/House husband	1	0.98
Language	1	0.98
Law	2	1.96
General Management	3	2.94
Management & Business Consultancy	5	4.90
Mathematics	11	10.90
Media, Literature & Journalism	5	4.90
Medicine	4	3.92
Music & Arts	2	1.96
Personnel	1	0.98
Philosophy	1	0.98
Retired, no profession specified	3	2.94
Science	11	10.79
Student	3	2.94
Teaching, no discipline specified	5	4.90
Information Technology	20	19.61
Total	**102**	**100.00**

Years Solving Crosswords/Listener Style Crosswords

In hindsight, a slightly clearer picture would have been established by asking respondents to specify three figures; years solving cryptic crosswords, years solving barred crosswords such as Enigmatic Variations and Azed; years solving the Listener or equivalent. Apology is also made for the poor wording of the question, which led some solvers to supply details of how long it takes them to solve the Listener – information which, whilst it gave the author assurance that he is not particularly slow in this regard, was otherwise of little use. All solvers, however, did actually give the information required.

The mean time that a respondent has been solving cryptic crosswords is 30.93 years, with the mean time of solving Listener or similar crosswords being 15.17 years. This, coupled with the mean age of solvers, indicates that the average Listener solver is 49.70 years old, started solving cryptic crosswords shortly before their 19th birthday, and took a further 15 years to graduate to Listeners, doing so at the age of almost 34. What is also clear, is that if you haven't started solving cryptic crosswords by the age of 30, then you are very unlikely to start.

Some surprising information appeared, as can be seen in the tabulated information below. The feat of Simon Anthony, winner of the Listener Silver Salver this year at the age of 31 is impressive; this pales into insignificance, though, at the fact that some people were solving cryptic crosswords at ages younger than 10, and Listeners at the age of 13 or 14. Given the high number of mathematicians featuring in the survey, this information can only be assumed to be correct.

No of Years	Years solving cryptics		Years solving Listener		Years solving cryptics before graduating to Listener	
	Number	**% of Total**	**Number**	**% of Total**	**Number**	**% of Total**
0 – 4	0	-	26	25.49	16	15.69
5 – 9	6	5.88	17	16.67	13	12.75
10 – 14	4	3.92	12	11.76	24	23.53
15 – 19	9	8.82	11	10.79	12	11.76
20 – 24	6	5.88	11	10.79	18	17.65
25 – 29	17	16.67	7	6.86	9	8.82
30 – 34	18	17.65	8	7.84	3	2.94
35 – 39	13	12.75	4	3.92	3	2.94
40 – 44	14	13.73	2	1.96	2	1.96
45 – 49	8	7.84	1	0.98	2	1.96
50 – 54	3	2.94	2	1.96	0	-
55 – 59	0	0.00	1	0.98	0	-
60 – 64	3	2.94	0	-	0	-
65 - 69	1	0.98	0	-	0	-
Total	**102**	**100.00**	**102**	**100.00**	**102**	**100.00**

Age	Age started solving cryptics		Aged started solving Listener	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
5 – 9	2	1.96	0	-
10 – 14	29	28.43	2	1.96
15 – 19	43	42.16	9	8.82
20 – 24	12	11.77	13	12.75
25 – 29	7	6.86	17	16.67
30 – 34	3	2.94	13	12.75
35 – 39	3	2.94	15	14.71
40 – 44	1	0.98	12	11.76
45 – 49	0	0.00	9	8.82
50 – 54	1	0.98	2	1.96
55 – 59	1	0.98	7	6.86
60 – 64	0	-	2	1.96
65 - 69	0	-	1	0.98
Total	102	100.00	102	100.00

Reasons for Starting to Solve Cryptic Crosswords

This section was perhaps the most predictable of all the questions asked. Of the 102 respondents, 99 gave the reasons for starting to solve cryptic crosswords; the most popular introduction was via parents, with 44 people giving this as an answer, with another 8 being started off by another family member.

Most interesting is the fact that only two people began solving to keep their mind active. At least it is assumed to be only two; five people stated that they 'cannot remember' why they started. One can only pray that they did not do so with the aim of improving their memory or keeping their mind active, and have since forgotten.

Reason	Number	% of Total
Purchased Listener for articles	1	1.01
Can't remember	5	5.05
Challenge	2	2.02
Enjoyment	6	6.06
Introduced by a colleague	3	3.03
Introduced by a friend	4	4.04
Introduced by parents	44	44.45
Introduced by other family member	8	8.08
Introduced by a teacher	4	4.04
Love of words/language	2	2.02
Keep mind active	2	2.02
Likes puzzles	7	7.07
Looked clever	1	1.01
Pass time/hobby	3	3.03
Self taught (no other reason stated)	7	7.07
Total	**99**	**100.00**