

April 24, 2021

MULLINS HOUSE 1925 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

I was very bucked to learn from the Mullins House Centenary website that 1st Prize for the 1925 Crossword Puzzle was coming my way. Can't wait for that Range-Rover: although in these Covid times of austerity, a Suzuki Jimmy won't go amiss. The St Andrew's College Register was invaluable: the vital clue re the *Victor Ludorum*'s initials revealed William Percy Dallas Atherstone for WPA, a worthy Mullins athlete.

The identity of IEH, the compiler of the puzzle, was also suggested: Ivan Ernest Hunt. He would have been in matric when he authored the crossword: a champion golfer and rugby-player, he was 'in the bag' as a P.O.W. after Tobruk until the end of WWII – no doubt composed many a puzzle during those years. His son Errol Ivan Hunt must be known to many Mullins 'survivors' as he left at the end of 1957 and emigrated to Australia in 1970. Hope he's still around and aware of his father's legacy?

Assistance from UK family and friends was required re 'a manufacturing firm in England'. The answer via cross-clues is confirmed as ELYBATT but we cannot find verification for any such industry: Google has failed us. A friend suggested Ely Cathedral cathodes – batteries in the belfry perhaps? A family member, however, nailed WIRELESS, all the rage in that era. They both deserve a run in the new vehicle. Interesting to note that there were apparently very few SWIMMERS in Mullins *circa* 1925: what a contrast three to four decades later.

Crossword puzzles (originally 'word-cross') only came into vogue in the early 1920s, the first crossword book in 1924. EH must be something of a schoolboy prodigy in that regard: another feather in the Mullins House cap. The fad was thought to be dying a natural death by 1930, but not so. Even the New York Times started featuring them after Pearl Harbour to combat the grim realities of wartime: trust that IEH benefited thus. Great idea to include the 1925 innovation in the Centenary memories, SAC Foundation: many thanks.

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