

## The Listener Crossword Setters' Dinner 18<sup>th</sup> March 2000 : Paris

79 setters, solvers, spouses and friends gathered at the Hotel Opera Holiday Inn, Paris. (The Times had sent over several copies of the Weekend supplement, just in case people had had trouble finding it.) The setters in attendance were:

**Arachne, Aragon, Arcturus, Bandmaster, BeRo, Blank, Bogtrotter, Brym, Buff, Bufo, Calmac, Columba, Derek, Elefa, Gioconda, Hellebore, Jasan, Kea, Leo, Macbu** (1 of 2 persons), **Machiavelli, Mespot, Mr Lemon, Myno T, Nibor, Owzat, Pabulum, Phalarope, Phi, Pilcrow, Ploutos, Politicaster, Rebel, Samson, Third Man, Trev, Viking.**

The dining room was a splendid Belle Époque creation and perhaps the most decorative we have yet tried. After a meal of quail eggs, veal and fruit sorbets (served at what the French considered a most unsuitable hour for dining), we moved on to the business of the evening.

There had been five all-correct solvers (or teams of solvers) – congratulations to Glen Mullineux, Piers & Elizabeth Ruff, James Allman, Chris and Margaret Butler and David McNeill. David – the holder of the salver from 1999 – has now set up an unbeaten run of 165 puzzles. He would have been entitled to retain the salver from last year, but graciously agreed to hand it on to the Butlers (themselves no slouches with a run of 118 puzzles!). Margaret Butler had not felt able to travel to Paris, so it was Chris who took the floor to reveal the identity of the puzzle chosen as best of 1999.

He had conducted a vote between the five all-correct solvers; everyone had participated, and a wide range of puzzle had been suggested – no fewer than 20 puzzles had received at least one vote. The final frame held five puzzles:

4 <sup>th</sup> equal	<b>Waterloo</b>	A Different Convention
	<b>Noggs</b>	Initials
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Bufo</b>	What on Earth?
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Pabulum</b>	Subvert

and the winner:

1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Peeper</b>	Scans
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**Peeper** is a setting team (aka **Corylus** and **Bufo**) who have now won the Ascot Gold Cup twice. Last time **Corylus** was in attendance to accept the trophy; this time **Bufo** (also placed third with a solo effort) came forward to receive it.

After that it was the usual talking until the dregs were drained (though not without several refillings en route). Next year back on this side of the Channel, venue still under consideration.