

## NOTES ON LISTENER CROSSWORDS: NUMBERS 2501 – 3000

### From *Ad Lib* by D.A.N. Jones, 21 JUNE 1979

The *Radio Times* (23–29 June) has an interesting article about George Scott [who had just resigned as Editor of THE LISTENER], with one of Barry Fantoni's rather alarming portraits: he has turned George's check shirt into bits of THE LISTENER crossword, hanging around his neck like an albatross.

I have a theory that George rather disapproved of the crossword, knowing how easily a 'minority' interest can become 'elitist'.

### Letter, 20 SEPTEMBER 1979

#### Crossword evolution

SIR: Now that your correspondents have disposed of the humorous definitions in *Chambers Dictionary* ('pawky' humour, Ximenes called it), perhaps they may be able to throw light on the origin of the type of crossword clue known in the trade as the '& lit.'. This is generally regarded as the pinnacle of the clue-writer's art, and the idea is to produce a set of words which may be read either as an indication of the meaning of the answer or as a cryptic indication of its spelling. Examples are:

'I rifle tubs at sea' (FILIBUSTER: anagram)

'Source of hope in troubled times?' (THEISM: h in anagram of 'times')

In his book, *The Art of the Crossword*, Ximenes said that this type of clue was certainly used by Afrit (presumably in THE LISTENER), but may possibly have been used earlier by Torquemada. Can anyone say who deserves the credit for inventing it?

E. M. HOLROYD

Basingstoke, Hants.

### Letter, 4 OCTOBER 1979

#### Crossword evolution

SIR: Mr Holroyd's letter (20 September), with its two excellent examples of '& lit.' clues, sent me to my complete set of all THE LISTENER crosswords, collected since April 1930 when I happened to be the only person to send in a correct solution to No 1.

Although Ximenes said Afrit used this type of clue I cannot find an '& lit.' reference in any of the solution notes to his 125 puzzles in THE LISTENER between July 1932 and May 1948. In fact, it would seem that Zander, in his notes to Crossword No 1,357 in June 1956, was the first to use this description to explain his 'down' clue: 'He loves to strike up an intrigue' (PARAMOUR: rap (rev) + amour).

A detailed investigation of every clue would be needed to discover if there were any earlier examples not specifically mentioned in the notes, but my feeling is that the idea goes back to the days of the double acrostic on which many of us were brought up before crosswords reached this country.

A search in my collection of some 200 Torquemada puzzles (including *112 Best Crossword Puzzles* chosen by J. M. Campbell from the 670 he composed, and published by Pushkin Press in 1942) has also failed to produce a single example of '& lit.'. Powys Mathers died in February 1939, aged 46, and one is tempted to wonder

how his Torquemada puzzles might have evolved had he lived to see the changes of the postwar years.

IVAN CRESSWELL

Shelton, Norwich

**From *Langham Diary* by D.A.N. Jones, 17 JULY 1980**

People who actually enjoy light music will be interested in Stephen Sondheim's latest production. So will even the tone-deaf word-men. It is a collection of the cryptic crosswords he composes for *New York* magazine—most of them, he says in his foreword, 'American adaptations of puzzles from THE LISTENER, a weekly publication of the BBC'. He explains, in this American publication, the ground rules of the British crossword—and his advice will be useful for newcomers to the LISTENER crossword, to whose setters many of Sondheim's puzzles are dedicated.

**Crossword No. 2598: Misprints Some Reflections by Ascot**

This puzzle was one of only two whose entries were not fully checked, since full checking recommenced. The reason was given in the following excerpt from the printed solution:

"It is appreciated that in order to conform with the preamble certain alternative solutions are available, as shown in the diagram. Prizes have been awarded to any acceptable solution, but Crossword 2,598 will be deleted from the annual competition because of the difficulties of checking."

**Crossword No. 2631: The Golden Fleece by Ploutos**

This puzzle had only 10 correct entries. Indeed, the published solution didn't entirely help, since three weeks later the following note appeared:

"A number of readers remain puzzled by Crossword 2,631: explanatory notes to this crossword will therefore appear in next week's magazine."

**Crossword No. 2632: Morphallaxis II by Novamor**

This puzzle is unique in that not only was the published solution wrong, but prizes were initially awarded on the basis of that solution. The week after the solution appeared, the following was printed:

"**Crossword 2,632.** We regret that there was an error on this Crossword's solution: 5 *Down* should have read CROCIDOLITE. We have now selected three more prizewinners, from the people who sent 100 per cent correct solutions. The earlier prizewinners can't, of course, be included in the statistics for the year."

**From *Langham Diary* by Russell Twisk, 11 FEBRUARY 1982**

One benefit of being editor is that I never go short of advice. Whether it is from readers, or shouted across the street by former Tsars of the BBC, or gently insisted upon by Princes of the Church, the message is often the same: 'You must change the paper, but don't touch ...', and here they insert their favourite feature. The Crossword enthusiasts are the most vocal and I have received one or two thinly anagrammed threats about what will happen if I lay a finger on it (it's safe, it's safe!). However, personally I do find the Crossword impenetrable, something I share, I'm told, with most of my predecessors. I ask the following question in all humility and as someone who has to have even the rules translated: has the Crossword become too esoteric?

Friends who can dispatch *The Times* and the *Guardian* crosswords tell me that they are walking on air if they can solve even three clues in THE LISTENER.

### Letters, 25 FEBRUARY 1982

#### Crossword

SIR: All the changes you have made in THE LISTENER promise well for readers' pleasure and profit, but some of us will benefit considerably from one tiny change you have made and don't mention in your 'Langham Diary' of 11 February. [This refers to starting numbering at page 1 for each edition, rather than having numbering running through each volume.] ...

In answer to your question as to whether readers find your crosswords too esoteric: well, I usually find them too difficult, but their esotericism I enjoy. I can often do the literary ones and should especially like to have more of those now very rare ones where you have to fill in words in a story, because these make sense as well as pattern. And I continually hope that your setters will have a shot at some intelligent double-crossics, for these have good sense-making potential; but those I get from America are poorly clued and usually reveal intolerable texts.

**Marghanita Laski**  
London NW3

SIR: The question you raise about the crossword in 'Langham Diary' (11 February) is an interesting one. I don't feel that comparisons with *The Times* and the *Guardian* are particularly relevant, because THE LISTENER puzzle is as different from those as bridge is from whist, or chess from draughts, or THE LISTENER itself from the *Radio Times*: you have to think harder and longer.

I think THE LISTENER puzzle *is* getting more difficult, and the sense of achievement on completing it grows accordingly. This could be because I'm getting older and thicker, but there may be another explanation based on the growth of logodaedaly as a fashionable cult. We have our National Crossword Championship: your setters have their annual dinner: they pay cryptic tributes to one another in their puzzles: there is even a Crossword Club which I have been urged to join. (I have resisted, because I suspect it is dangerous to take such an essentially masturbatory activity quite that seriously.)

One day, no doubt, we shall have the Benson & Hedges World Crossword Superstar Context, on television, with household names such as Sever and Dean, Hunt and Rich, slogging it out under the chairmanship of, say, Magnus Magnusson, for prizes presented by, say, Bill Cotton Jr. Heaven forbid. But the game is becoming an industry, and the industry is developing its personalities, and its élite—call it a Ploutocracy—are in danger of setting puzzles for one another rather than for the ordinary amateur, and that would be a pity.

All masturbation corrupts: incestuous masturbation corrupts absolutely.

**Alan Jones**  
London W14

### Letters, 4 MARCH 1982

#### Cross word [sic]

SIR: How I agree with your remarks about the crossword ('Langham Diary', 11 February). I have managed to solve it once or twice, but, generally speaking, I can rarely begin to understand the solution. Can you not persuade the setters to write

explanatory articles, so that I might aspire to join the ranks of those fortunate people whose names appear as prizewinners each week?

**H.P. Craig**  
Leicester

SIR: Speaking as one who does both *The Times* and the *Guardian* puzzles every morning (*Times* with my first cup of coffee, *Guardian* with the second), I say leave THE LISTENER crossword as it is! The fact that I only complete a solution to perhaps one LISTENER puzzle in six doesn't put me off.

After all, just because few of us ever make it to the top of Mount Everest doesn't mean we want the summit lopped off to make it more acceptable ...

**Phil Murphy**  
London SW1

SIR: Although it was a relief to discover that you were prepared to overcome your misgivings about the crossword to the extent of allowing it to continue ('Langham Diary', 11 February), it is also obvious that you do not wish crossword solvers to go unpunished.

For four weeks now it has been forced to share the penultimate page with Jack Trevor Story's article, and in one or two moments of abstraction I have had the unpleasant experience of noticing what he has written.

Would it be possible for you to provide some kind of perforation above the crossword so that it would then be possible to remove it or (more satisfying) Mr Story's 'Endpiece'?

**H.J. Hodges**  
Devizes, Wilts.

### **From *Langham Diary* by Russell Twisk, 11 MARCH 1982**

THE LISTENER always runs two pages of letters, and in some weeks it could easily fill four. ... The favourite subjects for LISTENER readers include solecisms, declining standards, Hans Keller, and the crossword.

The correspondence about the crossword was fascinating but, predictably, inconclusive. Those who can solve it will defend it to the cancellation of their subscriptions, and for many others it seems a pinnacle to aim for. As one reader said: 'Just because I can't climb Mount Everest I don't want to cut the summit off.' Many others have written to say that they have given up altogether, while one or two say they can solve the crossword faster than Jack Trevor Story's 'Endpiece'. Later in the year we will run an article or two about the compilers, with a few hints for those willing to make the journey. From where I stand, in the foothills, I find the prospect of the summit intriguing, but it is perpetually shrouded in fog.

### **Letter, 11 MARCH 1982**

#### **Crossword**

SIR: I must disagree with Alan Jones (Letters, 25 February) on the increasing difficulty of THE LISTENER crossword. The most reliable indication of whether or not the puzzle is becoming easier must be the statistics so painstakingly compiled by the arch Ploutocrat himself.

The average number of entries for the last few years have been: crosswords 2,397 to 2,474—214; 2,475 to 2,516—263; 2,517 to 2,566—254; and 2,567 to 2,614—296. I think these figures speak for themselves and cannot be explained entirely by reference to circulation figures or the rate of unemployment.

I have never thought of crosswords as in the least masturbatory. Is Mr Jones confusing THE LISTENER with some other organ?

**J.F. Grimshaw**  
Swindon

**From *Langham Diary* by Russell Twisk, 19 AUGUST 1982**

I decided to try two things on holiday that I have never done before—sailboarding in the sea and THE LISTENER Crossword. ...

With the Crossword I have to admit defeat. D.A.N. Jones and Eric Chalkley [Apex] have both tried gently to coach me, but without success. I give up. I will continue to pass the page for press not understanding a word of it.

**Crossword No. 2945: Just What the Doctor Ordered by Mass**

For this puzzle, and subsequent ones in THE LISTENER, the deadline for entries was doubled from one to two weeks, and this established the current practice of publishing the solution three weeks after the puzzle.

**Letter, 07 MAY 1987**

**Crossword Cry**

SIR: I note from your advertisement that '186,000 well-educated and articulate people read THE LISTENER every week'. However, I wonder how many of the 186,000 attempt the regular cryptic crossword? Having made yet another unsuccessful attempt to answer *one* clue in one by Amicus, I am left feeling decidedly uneducated and mildly inarticulate!

To put this in perspective, I am in fact a cryptic crossword enthusiast, regularly attempting and completing the normal type of cryptic crosswords found in the 'quality' press. Each week I make a serious attempt at the puzzle in THE LISTENER, ending usually with total failure. I did once answer two clues and felt I had scaled the heights of Annapurna such was the effort expended.

There are undoubtedly some among the 186,000 who are sufficiently well educated and articulate to complete the puzzle, but I wonder what percentage? Never one to bear a grudge, I would not dream of depriving this minority of their weekly 'buzz', but, as a democrat (in this case, a self-interested democrat), I wish to argue for the inclusion of a normal weekly cryptic crossword of the type and standard found in the *Daily Telegraph*, *Times*, *Observer* and others, for those among the 186,000 who, like me, consider themselves reasonably well educated, articulate and who would relish a 'buzz' of our own.

In an election year, the democratic process is high on the national agenda. Might I suggest a straw poll through the 'Letters to the Editor'. If, like me, you enjoy the challenge of a normal cryptic crossword and the pleasure of being so absorbed for a couple of hours each week, please add your voice to mine.

**K. Malone**

*Cambridgeshire*

**Letters, 14 MAY 1987****Crossword Cry**

SIR: My father-in-law will soon be 80 years old, and some of his faculties are fading. In recent years he has suffered a number of mortal blows to his self-esteem. These include being blown off the Snowdon Horseshoe, falling out of the apple-tree he had climbed, driving his car straight through the back of a garage, and getting lost in the last movement of Mendelssohn's Octet (second cello part).

Despite this alarming evidence of senile decay, he completes the LISTENER crossword almost every week, and sends it in. Nobody among his offspring and relations has been known to solve a single clue, and we hold his achievement in great awe. A crossword for lesser mortals would devalue his weekly triumph and drive him to carry out his threat of last week to stand for village idiot in the local elections. For his sake, please keep your crossword solitary and supreme.

**George Lang**

*Bristol*

SIR: Mr Malone's plea (Letters, 7 May) for a less daunting crossword in your paper seems reasonable enough, since he does not seek to deprive the minority of regular solvers of their weekly 'buzz'. But I fear his plea, for space is always at a premium, and sooner or later I believe his preferred puzzle would supplant the masterpieces of invention which have distinguished THE LISTENER for nearly 3,000 issues now. The type of puzzle favoured by Mr Malone is indeed a very excellent diversion, but surely abundantly available in the daily and Sunday quality newspapers. But I know of no daily or weekly which has anything to match the challenge, or the inventiveness of composition of the LISTENER crossword. I hope that the Corporation which gave us Radio 3 as well as Radios 1, 2 and 4, will not jettison this great puzzle on the basis of a straw poll.

I know how Mr Malone feels. I am now 58, and it was only five years ago that I first seriously tried to solve *Azed* in the *Observer*, and I shared Mr Malone's ecstasy if I could solve even one or two of the clues. But pennies gradually began to drop, and I now find I can solve both *Azed* and the LISTENER crossword almost invariably. But they still take effort, and their solving still gives correspondingly greater pleasure.

**R. F. Naish**

*Worcester*

SIR: In response to your correspondent Mr K. Malone, may I say that not only am I unable to solve any clues in your cryptic crossword but, what is worse, I cannot understand the majority of them even after checking the subsequent solution when they appear.

**William Bourne**

*Oakthorpe, Staffs.*

**Letters, 21 MAY 1987****Crossword Cry**

SIR: Mr Malone's crossword *cri de coeur* (Letters, 7 May) is clearly also an exercise in running up the flag and seeing who salutes.

My own vote would be against his proposal. As Mr Malone says, there are 'normal' (is any cryptic crossword a truly *normal* use of language?) cryptics in the *Times*, *Observer*, *Guardian*, etc., where several setters from THE LISTENER also ply

their trade, incidentally. The LISTENER Crossword's pre-eminence is due to its individuality. The number of 186,000 (oddly enough, the speed in miles per second of a radio wave) is no great amount in the comparison of circulations—but perhaps one should not attempt so invidious a comparison and be grateful that the only things up front on page three are the contents.

**Paul Henderson**

*Darlington, Co. Durham*

SIR: If K. Malone regularly completes the normal type of cryptic crossword found in the quality press, he should surely be able to do as we did and graduate to THE LISTENER puzzles. This does entail becoming accustomed to such things as hidden themes, codes, etc., but he will find that in practically all cases there are at least some clues similar to those in other cryptic crosswords. His declaration of total failure to solve *any* clues is therefore hard to understand.

We now regularly complete and send in your puzzle, and judging from last year's statistics, so do quite a few other readers. The highest number of entries for any puzzle was 445, and the lowest 69. (Mr Malone may be comforted to know that the 69 was for a puzzle set by Amicus.) The average was 209.

If you should decide to introduce a 'normal' cryptic puzzle, please do not let it be at the expense of the present variety, which provides pleasure and satisfaction to those addicts who have taken the time to come to terms with it.

**K. and G. Fowler**

*Manchester*

SIR: I heartily endorse all K. Malone says, and second a plea for a less cryptic puzzle. I enjoy the normally somewhat difficult ones, but I gave up yours years ago!

**Elizabeth Hamilton**

*Edinburgh*

SIR: I hope I am not alone in feeling a little disappointed that a fellow crossword enthusiast like your correspondent K. Malone should be discouraged by the apparent difficulty of LISTENER crossword puzzles, and should wish merely for another *Times/Telegraph* type of puzzle.

What the ingenuity of the human brain has constructed, the human brain can surely decipher. I am convinced from my own experience that solving crossword puzzles for pleasure is an activity at which one can improve with practice, *provided* one is always prepared to set one's sights higher than whatever level one might have attained. I can remember when I was unable to complete the small crossword in the *Daily Express*; through continued perseverance and practice I gradually came to tackle successfully *Times*, Mephisto and Azed puzzles. The fact that one can never be *sure* of being able to solve a LISTENER puzzle (because of the tremendous diversity of themes and setters) is for me a delight; but to tilt successfully with the setters opens the way to a feeling of affinity with the peculiar and idiosyncratic polymathy which informs their compositions. A recent example I would cite is the amazing and brilliant 'Theme and Variations' by Jago (No 2,882), in which the solver, after divining an unusually abstruse theme, is apparently betrayed by the fact that seven of the answers are one letter too short for their spaces. Incredibly, it is revealed that the seven vacant squares, when each filled with a star, form the exact pattern of the Plough, which is the puzzle's theme.

It sounds difficult, I know. When I first sent in a LISTENER puzzle without winning a prize, I felt scarcely able to believe that at least three other people besides myself had solved it. But in fact anything from 200 to 400 people will have correct solutions in any week, and maybe many more if we assume that some are just too blasé to send in their answers.

**M. A. Macdonald-Cooper**

*Inchture, Perthshire*

SIR: Regarding crossword, please keep status quo.

**D. R. Piercy (Mrs)**

*Wareham, Dorset*

P.S. I can't do it either!

SIR: May I add a plea to that of K. Malone, if only for a slight relaxation of the standard required for solvers of the LISTENER Crossword. For over 50 years it has, beyond peradventure, been the most demanding of the crossword puzzles in any periodical. But in the last year, compilers seem to have vied with each other in a degree of esotericism which sometimes verges on the incomprehensible.

I speak as one who started solving your puzzles 40 years ago, and up to the last year had a completion rate of about three-quarters, but who, during the last 12 months, has been lucky to solve more than a handful—not, I would add, because of decreasing mental agility.

**S. S. Townsend**

*Westward Ho, Devon*

SIR: It's difficult to see what Mr Malone has to gain by adding just one more cryptic crossword per week to the seven or eight he can find in the newspapers he mentions. I write as one who struggles, usually with some and occasionally with complete success, to solve these tortuous compositions, and this costs me many hours of research, rarely completed within the week Thursday to Wednesday. This is, of course, an appalling waste of time, and classifies me—and several hundred others—as crazy. I quite like the normal daily crosswords, but rarely have time for more than one a week. But if we, the struggling solvers, are crazy, what of the setters? Their devilish misused ingenuity, wasted on what is no more than a time-filling game, surely qualifies them as suffering from an acute form of certifiable mania. My thanks to them!

**E. T. Moore**

*Cambridge*

SIR: As a total cure is too much to hope for, perhaps therapy would be a good beginning. Perhaps a leaflet could be compiled so that, week by week, the sufferer could gradually be guided and helped in understanding the intricacy of the problem.

Although it is fully understood that a complete cure may not be possible in all cases, perhaps, with special care and attention many people will be able once again to lead as normal a life as could be expected under the circumstances.

**K. Carter (Mrs)**

*Formby, Merseyside*

SIR: I, too, am baffled by the crossword (though considering myself a whizz at the cryptic crosswords in the quality papers) and would dearly love a weekly puzzle in THE LISTENER. I, too, make desperate efforts to beat this annoying barrier; what kind of brain does it take? I end up gazing in respectful awe at the names of the winners, wondering if therein is a clue; like Old William's son, I ask: 'What made you so awfully clever?'

**F. Ledgard**

*Hull*

SIR: The letter of your futile reader, K. Malone of Cambridge, calls for some comment.

I have been taking THE LISTENER for over 40 years, chiefly for the crossword, winning prizes for nos 1,496 and 1,533 in 1959, to begin a fitful success saga. If it were not for the crossword in its present form, I would give your dreadful little journal the wide berth its contents so often deserve.

**John Coleby**

*Buckley, Clwyd*

SIR: I endorse every word of K. Malone's letter.

*A bas* these complex verbal twists  
 Enjoyed by mental masochists!  
 Let him who would embroil his brain  
 In puzzles that give only pain.  
 I prefer to spend my leisure  
 On crosswords that give simple pleasure.

**Andrew Weir**

*Leeds*

**Letters, 28 MAY 1987**

**Crossword Cry**

SIR: As an expatriate subscriber of some years standing, I would like to add my support to Mr Malone (Letters, 7 May). My other links with UK are provided by the BBC World Service, *Guardian Weekly* and *Spectator*. The last two have excellent crosswords and there is definitely room for a third of similar quality and rather less arcane than the very daunting item regularly provided by THE LISTENER.

I hope Mr Malone's straw poll may prod you (if you are not already convinced) in the right direction, and so benefit the expatriate subscribers who do not have access to the regular daily crosswords available in the UK.

**Professor P. Done**

*Trinidad*

SIR: I believe a similar correspondence took place in the *Times* in the 1930s to that in your columns over the past three weeks. Somebody wrote complaining that the crossword had become far too easy, and that he now habitually timed the running of his morning bath by the time it took him to complete it. A few days later, another letter supporting this view appeared. This correspondent used the solving of the crossword to time the boiling of his egg.

After a pause of a week or so, P. G. Wodehouse wrote in: he had tried both the methods suggested, and now had a severe flooding problem and dozens of very hard-boiled eggs; but he still hadn't finished the *Times* crossword.

**Tim Fell**

*Alresford, Hants.*

**Letters, 04 JUNE 1987**

**Crossword Cry**

SIR: I want to add my voice to Mr Malone's as one of the so far too silent majority of LISTENER readers. I, too, admire the compilers of the LISTENER Crossword as well as those who are able, and who have the time, to complete it. But just as I do not begrudge space in THE LISTENER for book reviews and transcripts of television programmes, in a magazine whose roots are so obviously founded in radio, so, too, I feel the vociferous minority should show some unselfishness and not object to the inclusion of a non-thematic crossword for readers like me who do not have the spare time to battle against the compilers of THE LISTENER Crossword.

No doubt I have the intellectual capacity to solve the LISTENER Crossword eventually, should I wish to. I expect I could hike around the coastline of Britain if I wanted to, or learn Sanskrit. The point is, I don't particularly want to do any of these things.

There seems to be a large dose of elitism in this issue, a snobbery that is fairly distasteful. Supporters have not yet put forward one decent argument as to why those readers who want a taxing but not mind-wrangling crossword puzzle should not be catered for, especially as we must be in the majority among the readership.

It has never been suggested that LISTENER Crossword be devalued in any way. It can and should remain one of the supreme tests of mental agility in the British press. I cannot see how having a second crossword operating at a different level can possibly affect those avid supporters of the LISTENER Crossword for whom the puzzle is a sacred cow. Maybe it could be called something other than a crossword, so that the rather selfish and elitist supporters of the present crossword can reign supreme in their little worlds.

**P. J. McGiveney**

*Strathclyde*

SIR: Personally, I don't understand the chess or bridge problems, but I do accept that some of your readers find them interesting and would not dream of asking you to deprive them of their pleasure.

Perhaps you could follow the example of those periodicals which include an easy crossword and a difficult one in every issue, but I suspect this might not satisfy the Malonites. Their real problem is that they cannot bear the thought that other people can solve a puzzle which they cannot.

To reassure them, perhaps the addicts should point out that an hour or two is not enough. I often take 12 hours or more, and I agree with Mr E. T. Moore (Letters, 21 May) that it is an 'appalling waste of time'. But if, like myself, the solver is retired and has time to spare, why should we not be allowed to spend it in this way?

I have never written to the editor of any periodical before, except to send my weekly offering of the crossword solution—well, most weeks, anyway—but I really am upset at the possibility of being deprived of the unique LISTENER Crossword.

**Mary R. Mason**

*Bolton, Lancs.*

SIR: You are wrong about how many people read THE LISTENER every week. There are 186,002 of us since, sparing no expense (and unbeknownst to you), it gets posted to us over here. Unlike K. Malone (Letters, 7 May), I have never achieved the genius level of solving two clues in the crossword, although on one occasion I did start to get a vague idea of what it was all about.

But, whenever I am called upon to defend the individualistic character of our island race, I just show our Belgian friends the LISTENER Crossword. It never fails to impress, though most of them think it's a put-up job—the cryptosetter's equivalent of 'Mornington Crescent'. Just for the record—is it?

**Rod Andrew**

*Mons, Belgium*

**From MARGINS by Lynne Truss, 20 APRIL 1989**

(The issue that contained Crossword No 3000)

To celebrate the 3000<sup>th</sup> LISTENER crossword, I thought I might share a little secret with you. Shout it loud in Gath and Hebron: nobody on the LISTENER staff has the first idea of how to do the LISTENER crossword. For years, we have been convinced that the clues are actually coded messages from MI5.