

British Endgame Study News

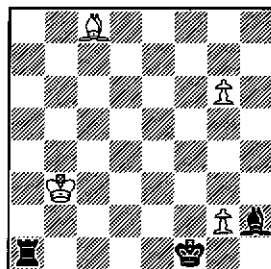
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by V. Dolgov
White to play and win

This issue. An article by Walter Veitch in the latest *EG* describes the study above (V. Dolgov, 1 Pr *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1968) as perhaps his outstanding memory of the years when he was contributing to *EG*. Play 1 g7 Rb1+; now the dark squares are poisoned, and if 2 Kc2 then 2...Rb2+ 3 Kd3 Rb3+ and 4...Rg3. So how can White win? Answer on page 103.

This apart, a recent judgement has prompted me to report an investigation into the "main line" which I conducted some years ago, and a special number contains a selection of studies by the excellent Czech composer Josef Hašek.

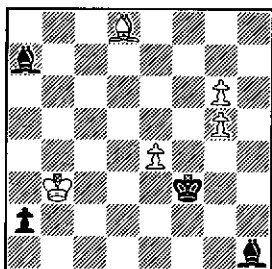
The printing of *BESN*. Until now, *BESN* has been prepared on separate-page A4 masters, but while this has been convenient editorially the necessary reduction has caused problems at the printing stage. As from the present issue, I am preparing actual-size paired A5 masters, and I hope this will lead to a higher quality of print. The "large print" option remains available, but it is now done by enlargement.

An unwelcome scoop. A journal normally likes to be first in the field, but I was not in the least amused to be told by Ken Whyld that we appear to have been the first British chess magazine to have printed an obituary notice for Mrs Loranth at Cleveland. Are people really so obsessed with parochial triviality that the death of such a person can pass without remark?

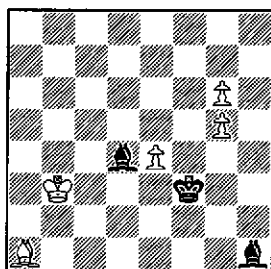
Spotlight. Timothy Whitworth reminds me that we omitted the Vandecasteele two-stalemate study (December, page 95) from *Endgame magic* because in the line 3...Ka4 White can also draw by 4 Kd1 (4...Bb5 and either 5 Rd3 or 5 Re4+ Ka4 6 Rd4, 4...Bd5 5 Rd3 etc). One can argue that the latter line is merely a dual by inversion of moves and waste of time, but it is still rather a pity.

EG claims that the Mestel-Comay study on page 90 is anticipated by "Kakovin and Motor" (originally quoted in *EG* as by Motor alone), 2 Pr *Schakend Nederland* 1973: 7K, 2kP1P2, 3p1r2, b7, 4b3, 8, 3R2P1, 8, draw by 1 d8Q+ Kxd8 2 Rxd6+ Ke7 3 Rxf6 Kf8 4 g4 Bc3 5 g5 Bd4 6 g6 Bxf6+ 7 Kh7 etc, but while the finish is indeed the same the lead-in is wholly different. Even if composers turn out to have been using a known finale, they are still entitled to the credit for what they have put in front of it.

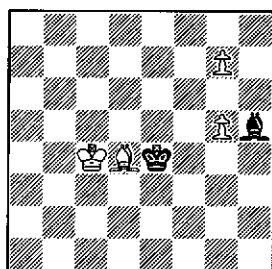
Recently published British originals



1 - win

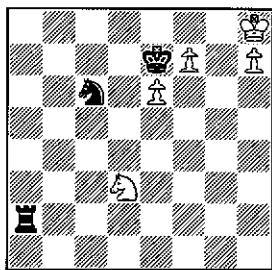


1a - after 2...Bd4

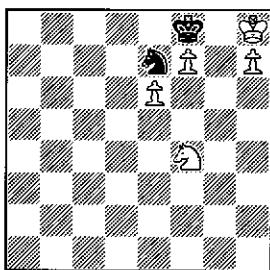


1b - after 5...Bh5

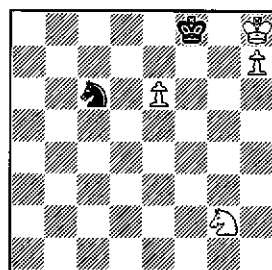
Paul Byway continues to produce a steady flow of polished work, and **1** appeared in *The Problemist* in May last year. **1 Kxa2** is soon seen to be hopeless (1...Kxe4 **2 g7** Kd4 and bBh1 will reach d5), but **1 Bf6** forces a subtle response: **1...a1Q 2 Bxa1 Bd4!** (see **1a**). The point is that after **3 Bxd4** (if **3 g7** then 3...Bxg7 **4 Bxg7 Kxe4** and wBg7 blocks wPg5) the attack **3...Kxe4** gains a tempo (**4 g7 Kxd4 5 g8Q Bd5+**). Moves such as **4 Ba1** also allow bB to reach d5 (**4...Kf5 5 g7 Bd5+**), as does **4 Kc3**, and the only hope is **4 Kc4**. But bB has another route, **4...Bf3 5 g7 Bh5** (see **1b**), and now the only promotion to win is **6 g8B**; **6 g8Q** allows 6...Bf7+ and stalemate. "Very precise play needed here," wrote column editor Adam Sobey; just so.



2 - win



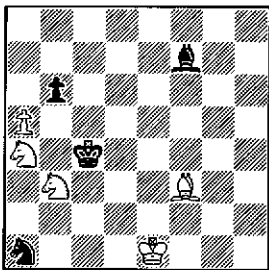
2a - an ultimate zugzwang



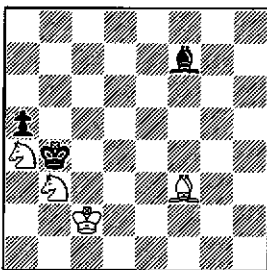
2b - main line, 3 Nxc2

Michal Hlinka from Slovakia was my 1996-97 judge for *diagrammes*, and by way of thanks I sent him **2** for his column in *Československý šach*. It's no masterpiece but I hoped it might amuse his readers, and he duly published it in October. White would like to extract wK and promote a pawn, but **1 Kg7** fails (1...Rg2+ **2 Kh6 Rh2+** **3 Kg6** and simplest is 3...Nd8). Correct is **1 Nf4** threatening **2 Ng6+** (if 1...Kf8 shutting in wK then **2 Ng6** is mate), and if 1...Ra8+ **2 Kg7 Ne5** then **3 Nd5+ Kxe6 4 f8Q** (**4 Nc7+** and **5 Nxa8** also wins) **Rxf8 5 Kxf8 Ng6+ 6 Kg7** and wins (**6...Kf5 7 Ne7+**, **6...Nh8 7 Nf4+ Ke7 8 Ng6+**). However, Black has an unexpected defence in the shape of **1...Rg2**, because after **2 Nxc2** he can play **2...Kf8** (shutting in wK) **3 Nf4/Nh4** (else **3...Ne7** and **4...Ng6** mate) **Ne7** (see for example **2a**) and we have an extreme position

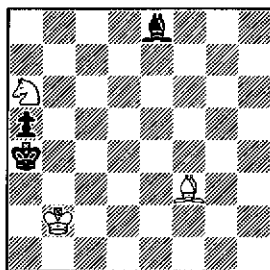
of reciprocal zugzwang: whoever has to move must allow immediate mate. But both sides are allowed to sacrifice, and if White interjects **2 f8Q+ Kxf8** before playing **3 Nxc2** he wins after all (see **2b**): **3...Ne7 4 Nf4/Nh4** and this time it is Black who is in zugzwang, or **3...Nd8 4 e7+ Kxe7 5 Kg7 Nf7 6 Nf4** with a book win (**6...Ke8 7 Ng6 zugzwang, 6...Kh8 7 Ng6+**).



3 - win (Black to move)

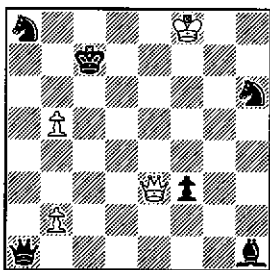


3a - after **3...Kb4**

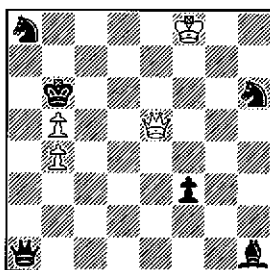


3b - after **6 Kb2**

The latest issue of *EG* reports that **3**, by Timothy Whitworth and Mike Bent, gained a 6th commendation in *Tidskrift för Schack* in 1995. The main line goes **1...Nc2+** (*EG* gives full analysis) **2 Kd2 bxa5** (sacrificing bN for counterplay) **3 Kxc2 Kb4** (see **3a**) **4 Nbc5 Be8 5 Na6+ Kxa4 6 Kb2** (see **3b**) and what is Black to do? **6...Kb5** and **6...Bd7** allow forks, and other moves allow immediate mate (**6...Bb5 7 Bd1, 6...B--7 Bc6**). *EG* questions whether position **3b** can truly be unanticipated and others may feel the same, but a composer is entitled to assume originality until proved otherwise.



4 - draw



4a - after **2 b4**

Mike's **4**, which appeared in the July-September issue of *diagrammes*, is in quite a different style. **1 Qe5+ Kb6** is straightforward, but now comes a surprise: **2 b4!** (see **4a**). This quiet move discovers an attack on bQ and threatens mate, **2...Qxe5** is stalemate, and if **2...Qa7** there is a simple perpetual check. It is very short but sweet, and my solvers enjoyed it; in the words of one, "voilà un coup qui échauffe le coeur!"

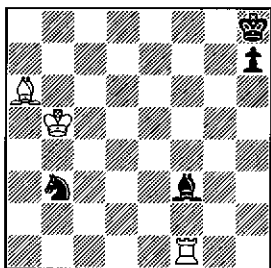
Although I trawl the obvious sources for this column, I do not see everything that appears in print, and I am always grateful when composers and their friends bring relevant material to my attention. - JDB

Thoughts on the “main line”

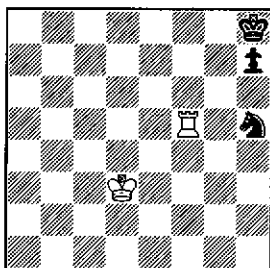
A recent judgement gave first prize to a study where Black allows a simple mate in four rather than playing to a position which had defeated 130 years of pre-computer analysis. This raises once more the question of what is the “main line” in a study.

The orthodox view is that Black defends against threats to win by gaining material, and if as a result he walks into a mate this is all good fun. When I became study columnist of *diagrammes*, I found my solvers did *not* take this view; they never played a move allowing a quick mate, however gruesome the alternatives. So in 1995 I showed four studies at an *EG* readers’ meeting, stopped each at the crucial point, and asked those present what they would play in a game. The results were reported in *diagrammes*, but I do not think they have appeared elsewhere. Seven participants (Paul Byway, Colin Crouch, David Friedgood, Jonathan Levitt, Jerzy Rosankiewicz, John Roycroft, Timothy Whitworth) were regular study enthusiasts, one (Jon Wilson) a strong player who came with Jonathan Levitt, and one (John Rice) a problemist.

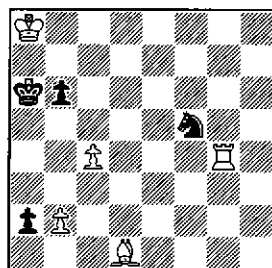
The questions set were as follows. In each case, “resign” was a permitted answer.



1 - win

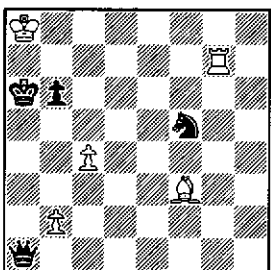


1a - Black to play

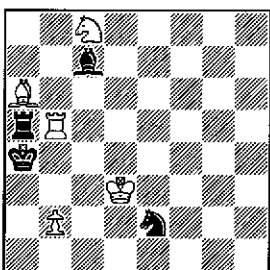


2 - win

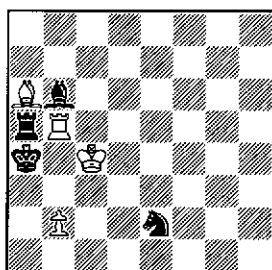
In 1 (Tigran Gorgiev, 64 1928), White plays 1 **Kb4 Nd4** (1...Nd2 2 Rf2) 2 **Kc3 Be2!** 3 **Bxe2 Nxe2+ 4 Kd3 Ng3 5 Rf3 Nh5 6 Rf5**, and we have 1a. What do you do?



2a - Black to play



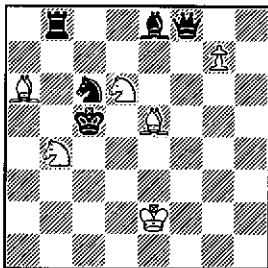
3 - win



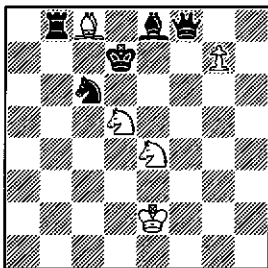
3a - Black to play

In 2 (Jindřich Fritz, 1935), White plays 1 **Bf3** threatening 2 **Rg1** and 3 **Ra1**, and after 1...a1Q 2 **Rg7** he threatens mate by **Ra7** (see 2a). Again, what do you do?

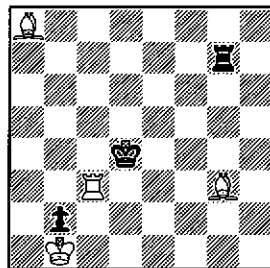
3 (Ernest Pogosyants, Azerbaijan Ty 1979) would appear in *Endgame magic*, but only Timothy knew that at the time. White plays **1 Nb6+** to block b6, and after **1...Bxb6 2 Kc4** he threatens mate by Rb4 (see 3a). Well?



4 - win



4a - Black to play



5 - Black to play

I have never seen the official solution to 4 (Velimir Kalandadze, *Pat a mat* 1994), but I think we have **1 Ne4+ Kb6** (1...Kxb4 2 gxf8Q+) **2 Bc7+ Kxc7** (2...Ka7 3 Bxb8+ and 4 gxf8Q) **3 Nd5+ Kd7** (3...Kd8 4 gxf8Q) **4 Bc8+!** (see 4a). Again, well?

In 1a, nobody chose the composer's **6...Ng7**, saving bN at the cost of mate by **7 Rf8**. Two would have resigned (though John Roycroft said this was as a player and he would have chosen **6...Ng7** as a solver), five voted for **6...Ng3** (and one would then have resigned after **7 Rg5**), and two would have played **6...Kg7**. I no longer have the original answer papers, and am translating back from the report in *diagrammes*.

In 2a, the obvious **2...Nxc7** allows a quick mate: **3 b4!** (threat **4 Bb7**) **b5 4 c5** etc. Nevertheless, seven would have played it, and the other two would have resigned. Nobody would have played **2...Ka5** or **2...b5**, avoiding mate at the cost of bQ.

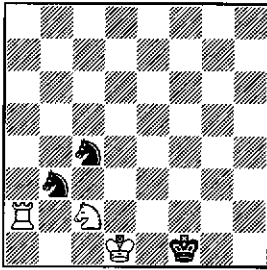
In 3a, **2...Rxb5** gives mate in two, and the composer's **2...Rxa6** leads to a sparkling last-pawn mate: **3 Rb4+ Ka5 4 b3** (threatening mate by Ra5/Rb4) **Nc3 5 Ra4+ Nxa4 6 b4**. The only move to avoid these mates is **2...Bc5**, when Black perishes miserably (**3 b3+ Ka3 4 Rxa5+ Kb2 5 Rxc5**). One would have played **2...Bc5** "hoping he would not see **3 b3+**", one would have played **2...Rxb5**, and one wrote down both without deciding between them, but the remaining six would have played the composer's **2...Rxa6**. As Jonathan Levitt said, it's nice to see your name in the anthologies.

In 4a, **4...Kxc8/Kd8** allow **5 gxf8Q**, and I think the composer's line is **4...Rxc8 5 gxf8N+ Kd8 6 Ne6+ Kd7 7 Nc5+ Kd8 8 Nb7+ Kd7 9 Nec5 mate**. Three would have resigned and one would have played **4...Kxc8**, but the rest voted for **4...Rxc8**. In David Friedgood's words, nothing saves the game, White has obviously seen everything, and he deserves to have his mate set down for all the world to enjoy.

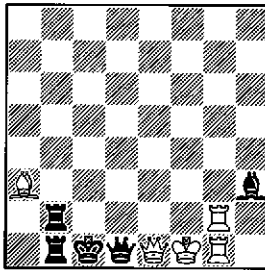
Make of this what you will (Wallace Ellison felt that the test was too artificial for valid conclusions to be drawn, a view which others may share), but in *diagrammes* Jean Monsour added an amusing tailpiece. Referring to 5, where the composer's **...Kxc3** loses at once, he wrote, "...rien n'oblige le roi noir à prendre la tour blanche. Il se condamne ainsi à perdre sa tour et à se retrouver sans défense. Si au contraire il ne prend pas la tour, il peut continuer la lutte, ou bien se rendre avec dignité. Mais quelle curieuse obéissance de la part d'un roi! on est loin de Louis XIV!"

From the world at large

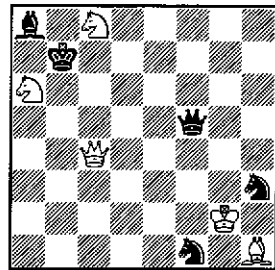
Positions where whoever moves *loses* have fascinated chess players ever since the famous "trébuchet" was discovered long ago. (According to Murray's *A history of chess*, pp 174/323, it appears in the manuscript "As'ad Efendi" at Constantinople.) More recently, people have been looking for *pawnless* positions with this property.



1 - whoever moves loses



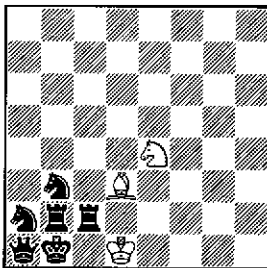
2 - whoever moves loses



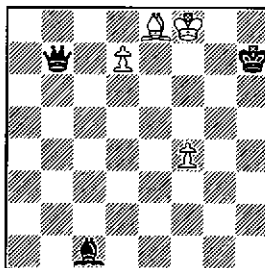
3 - whoever moves loses

I know of no such position with only five men, but the remarkable six-man position **1** was found by Lewis Stiller and Noam Elkies while examining computer output in 1992. It was the first such position to be discovered and remains the record for economy of men, but the wins with Black to move could hardly have been found other than by computer (White to move must allow immediate mate). However, John Roycroft has pointed out that adding wBb1 would make matters clear even to humans.

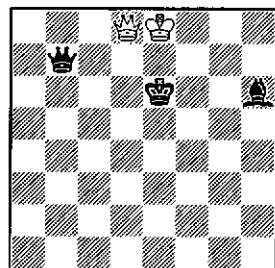
The next task was to find a position without knights, and **2** was published by Javier Rodriguez Ibran in *EG* 130 (October 1998). The position is symmetric, and every move loses at least a rook. Ibran also produced the elegant **3** (*EG* 131, January 1999) with no rooks; any move releases the opposing king, and allows a discovered check.



4 - whoever moves loses



5 - draw

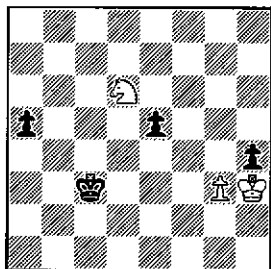


5a - after 4...Ke6

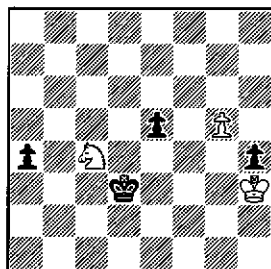
But mate in **3** can be postponed by sacrificing the queen, and the question remains: what is the most economical setting in terms of *moves to mate* by each side? The shortest I know is Marcel van Herck's **4** (*EG* 117, July 1995). Here Black must allow mate in one, while any White move allows mate in five at most (for example, **1** Nd2+

Nxd2 2 Ke2 Rb3 3 Ke3 Qf1+ 5 Ke3 Rxd3). Can any reader do better?

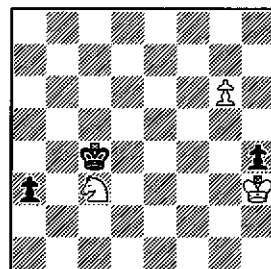
Jean Roche sent me 5 for *diagrammes* in 1997, and although it is not in the judge's award it gave pleasure when I showed it at an *EG* readers' meeting. An immediate d8Q will allow mate, and we have 1 Bg6+ Kxg6 2 f5 Kxf5 (nothing better) 3 d8Q (at last). This is a draw on material, but Black still has an attack and 3...Bh6+ 4 Ke8 Ke6 gives 5a. Only one move now saves the game: 5 Qb6+! The necessary 5...Qxb6 gives an attractive and pure stalemate, and every man has moved at least once.



6 - win

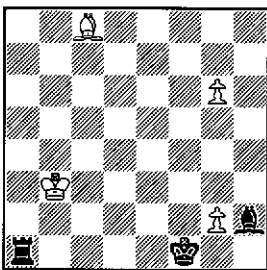


6a - after 3 Nc4

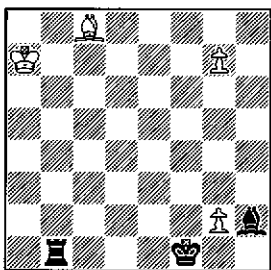


6b - after 7 Nc3

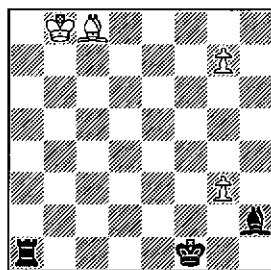
I have recently been receiving *Finales y temas*, an attractive magazine from Argentina. We tend to know little of South American work, and compositions such as 6 (Eduardo M. Iriarte, 1 HM *Magyar Sakkélet* 1995) suggest that we might usefully know more. Play starts 1 g4 Kd3 (1...a4 2 g5 Kd3 comes to the same thing) 2 g5 a4 3 Nc4! (see 6a), and now 3...Kxc4 exposes bK to check from g8 and 3...a3 4 Nxa3 e4 loses even though Black queens (5-7 g8Q e1Q 8 Qd5+ Ke2 9 Qe4+ Kd2 10 Nc4+ Kd1 11 Qb1+ and mate in a few). So 3...e4 4 g4 e3 5 Nxe3 a3 6 Nd5 Kc4, but the second wN sacrifice 7 Nc3! is decisive (see 6b): 7...Kxc3 8-9 g8Q a1Q 10 Qg7+.



7 - win



7a - after 6 Ka7



7b - after 9 g3

And Dolgov's 7, which so pleased Walter Veitch? After 1 g7 Rb1+ White plays 2-5 Kb7 avoiding dark squares (there is analysis in *EG*), and then 6 Ka7 (see 7a). Now wB can shield wK on the file, so 6...Bg1 7 Ka8 Ra1+ 8 Kb8 Bh2+ 9 g3!! (see 7b). Black must take, 9...Bxg3+, but by so doing he blocks g3. So White zigzags back, 10-14 Kb3, and after 14...Rb1+ he can play 15 Kc2 Rb2+ 16 Kd3 Rb3+ 17 Ke4. Now ...Rg3 is not available, and 17...Rb4+ 18 Kf5 wins.

News and notices

Other magazines. The international endgame study magazine *EG* (four issues a year) can be obtained for 1999 by paying £12 to Walter Veitch, 13 Roffes Lane, Caterham, Surrey CR3 5PU (cheques payable to W. Veitch, please). The British Chess Problem Society is primarily concerned with problems, but endgame studies are part of its remit and its second-hand bookselling service normally has a number of study books among its stock. The 1999 UK subscription is £18 (£15 to new members, £7.50 under 21); enquiries to R. T. Lewis, 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 4QA.

Outlets for original composition. My primary purpose in the *British Chess Magazine* is to introduce the classics to readers to whom the delights of studies are unknown, and I publish originals only occasionally. However, Adam Sobey (15 Kingswood Firs, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6EU) accepts them for *The Problemist*, and I myself accept them for the French composition magazine *diagrammes*. There are other outlets abroad, and I will gladly send details to composers on request.

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday April 16** at 6.00 pm. Non-subscribers are welcome, but are asked to bring £5 towards the cost of the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring a copy of the latest *EG* with you!

Tourneys. From Argentina is announced a tourney to celebrate the 75th birthdays of Alberto Foguelman (born 13.x.1923), Zoilo R. Caputto (14.xi.1923), and Oscar J. Carlsson (23.iv.1924). Any theme, but no more than two entries per composer; prizes US \$250, \$150, \$100, \$50. Send to Señor Carlsson at Casilla de Correo N° 309, 1412 - Suc. 12 "B", Buenos Aires, Argentina, to arrive by June 30.

Jiří Jelínek reminds me that the tourney in honour of the 90th birthday of František Macek (see September) is still open. Send to him at Španielova 1313, 163 00 Praha 6, Czech Republic, by March 29.

Books for sale. My annual book list accompanies this issue of *BESN*, and includes the names of other UK sources of books on studies. If any reader knows of an effective source of study material which I have not listed, please will he bring it to my attention?

I also remind authors and publishers that in principle I am willing to stock any book on studies that is written in English, and anyone wishing to use me as a UK outlet is invited to get in touch.

Anybody wishing to give notice here of any event, product, or service should contact the Editor. There is no charge and no account is taken of whether the activity is being pursued for commercial profit, but notices are printed only if they seem likely to be of particular interest to study enthusiasts. Readers are asked to note that the Editor relies wholly on the representations of the notice giver (except where he makes a personal endorsement) and that no personal liability is accepted either by him or by any other person involved in the production and distribution of this magazine.