

British Endgame Study News

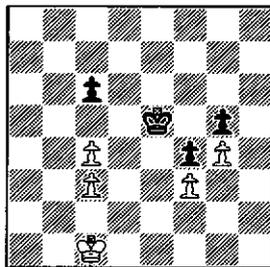
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by Wallace Ellison
White to play and win

This issue. Sadly, Wallace Ellison died in October, and I have omitted our usual selection of recent British originals to make room for an obituary. Our middle pages return to the question of "what is the main line", and there is a special number devoted to the British composer A. W. Daniel.

Additionally, readers whose address labels do not show the code "NV" will find our usual December special number on endgames in chess variants. Readers are reminded that those not wishing to receive these special "variant" numbers may say so, in which case their subscription is extended over an equivalent number of ordinary issues instead.

1999 accounts. Notwithstanding the slightly improved print quality, I have been able to keep costs reasonably low, and UK readers have been charged only £6 for the year (£7 to the rest of Europe, £9 elsewhere). If your subscription has now run out, there will be a reminder letter with this issue; otherwise, please assume that you remain in credit until I tell you otherwise.

Spotlight. Alex Ettinger remarks that the Hathaway sketch quoted in June (p 107) is dualized by **3 Bd5**, and Albert van Tets notes that Mike Bent's **2** in special number 15 falls foul of a **2B v N** win: **1 Nf4 Kxd6 2 Nxg6 fxc6 3 Bc2** and bP will soon fall. He also queries **1** in the same issue: **1 Be6+ Nf4 2 Be3 Bd6+ 3 Kh1 Bf4 4 Bc5 Nb5 5 Ng2** and White will have **2B+N v 2N+2P**. A difficult win? In 1999, I fear so.

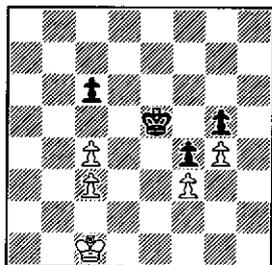
In the other direction, Alain Villeneuve points out that Mike's pleasant **2** in March 1998, reported in June 1998 as cooked by **2 Qf6+**, can be cured by adding **bPg7**. As he says, would it were always as easy!

Alain also spots a flaw in my analysis of Josef Hašek's **12** in special number 14: after **1...Kg1**, my **2 Kg7 Kh1 3 Rh8+** allows **3...Kg2! 4 f7 Rg1** (threat **5...a1Q+**) **5 Ra8 Kh1+**. Nor does **2 Kg8** work (it stops **3 Rh8+**), nor **2 Kg6** (**2...Kh1 3 Rh8+ Kg1 4 f7 Rf1 5 Ra8 Rf2! 6 Rxa2 Rxa2 7 f8Q Rg2+** etc). But Chéron has the answer (*Lehr- und Handbuch der Endspiele* Vol I, pp 226-7): **2 Ra4 Kh1 3 Ra5 Kg1 4 Kg8 Rf1 5 f7**, or **4...Kh1 5 Rh5+** and **6 f7**. Chéron devotes over a column to this excellent study.

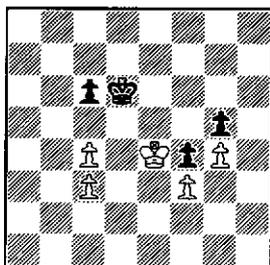
Wallace Ellison

Wallace Ellison died on October 7, one day short of his 88th birthday. He had been a teacher of mathematics, and I imagine he had been a very good one. I went to see him a few years ago, when he was nearly 85, and there was none of the need to talk slowly and repetitively that usually arises when talking to people of such an age; he was still extremely sharp, and I was fully stretched trying to keep up.

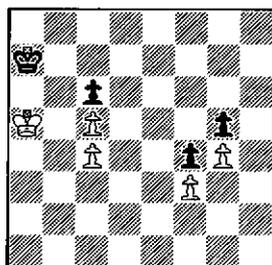
Wallace was a good county player (he played on high boards both for his native Yorkshire and for Leicestershire), but it is for his studies that he will be remembered. The examples kindly sent to me by Harold van der Heijden suggest that he composed only from 1969 to 1972 (though some studies published during this period may have been composed earlier) and again from 1994 until a serious fall in 1996 took the edge from his concentration, but these two short periods were enough to establish his name.



1 - win



1a - after 6 Ke4



1b - after 12...Ka7

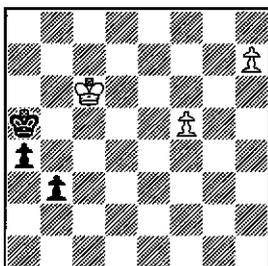
Wallace delighted above all in subtle play to gain or lose a tempo, and my favourite among his studies is perhaps **1** (*EG* 1969). There is nothing spectacular here, but it is an elegant piece of manoeuvring which ought to be in all the textbooks. White starts by advancing on the left, **1 Kb2 Kd6 2 Ka3** (not **2 Kb3**, when **2...Kc5** wins for Black), and Black must play **2...Kc5** to keep him out. But **3 Kb3** forces Black back, and **3...Kd6** will let wK advance with an easy win. So Black plays **3...Kb6**, and White will get no further on the Q-side. He has however gained space by forcing bK back to b6, and he can use this to advance in the centre: **4 Kc2 Kc5 5 Kd3 Kd6 6 Ke4** (see **1a**). Can Black ignore the threat to his g-pawn and play **6...Kc5**? No, he will be one move too late (**7 Kf5 Kxc4 8 Kxg5 Kxc3 9 Kxf4 K-- 10-12 g7 c3 13 g8Q**).

So Black plays **6...Ke6**, and White has gained enough space to play **7 c5** (or **7 Kd4 Kd6 8 c5+**, but in a strategic ending like this minor duals in the play are unimportant). Black's g-pawn is still threatened, hence **7...Kf6**, and now White goes back to the Q-side, **8 Kd4 Ke6 9 Kc4 Kd7** (if **9...Ke5** then **10 Kb3 Ke6 11 Ka4** winning, but *not* **Kb4** when **...Kd5** wins for Black) **10 Kb4 Kc7 11 Ka5 Kb7 12 c4 Ka7** (see **1b**).

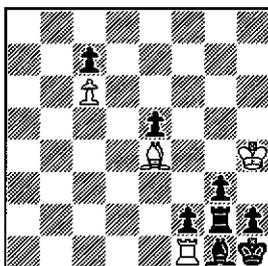
Now **13-16 Ke5** will win the g-pawn, but after **13 Kb4 Ka6! 14 Kc3 Ka5** Black is still not done: **15-16 Ke5 Kxc5 17 Kf5 Kd4! 18 Kxg5 Ke3 19 K-- Kxf3 20 g5 Ke3 21-23 g8Q f1Q** and he is just in time. White must gain yet another tempo, **15 Kb3! Ka6 16 Kb4! Kb7**, and now **17-19 Ke5** does win: a splendid lesson in king play.

Can you trust the computer?

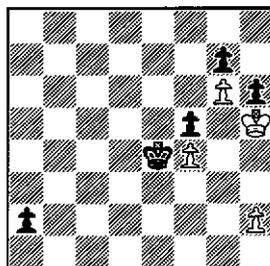
Early this year I started using **Fritz 5.32** to analyse studies, and although my first impressions were very favourable I noticed that it continued to regard the Ellison-Beasley study in *Moravskoslezský šach* (March 1997 page 37) as drawn by both 1 Bd3 and 1 Bf3 long after I expected it to have found the mate-in-15 reply to the latter. Further investigation has shown that its judgement of endings can be curiously faulty.



1 - Black to play



2 - White to play



3 - White to play

Black draws in **1** by playing 1...b2 (2 h8Q b1Q 3 Qa8+ Kb4 4 Qb7+ Ka3 5 Qxb1 stalemate, 2 h8R a3 3 f6 Ka4 4 f7 b1Q 5 Ra8+ Kb3 6 Rb8+ Ka2 7 Rxb1 Kxb1 8 f8Q a2). However, if I ask Fritz for three lines of analysis, it gives 1...Kb4, White mates in 9 (true); 1...b2, White mates in 8 (utterly false); 1...a3, White mates in 4 (true again).

2, from a study by Bondarenko, was sent to me by Harold van der Heijden. White has a forced mate in three (1 Bd5 e4 2 Kh3), but Fritz gives the position as drawn.

3 is almost as crude. Black threatens 1...a1Q and a quick mate, and the only drawing move is 1 h4. Fritz gives both 1 h4 and 1 h3 as drawing.

Each of these occurs consistently on my own machine, and **2** at least has been verified on another machine. Something would seem to have gone badly wrong.

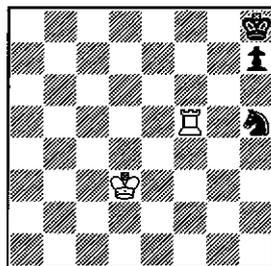
No doubt these will be fixed (Fritz 6 is imminent), but fortunately there are alternatives. While still ignorant of **2** and **3**, I sent **1** to various people, and Emil Vlasák recommended **Hiarcs 7.32**: "for studies, there is nothing better". Hiarcs gets **1-3** right, and I now use it instead of Fritz. In nodes per second, it is almost ten times slower, but this amounts to less than one ply in a typical position (when Fritz is at $n+1$ ply, Hiarcs is still at n ply) and it is a small price to pay for better judgement.

Brian Gosling also told me that Hiarcs included look-up tables giving the results of all endings with four men and some with five, including K+2P v K+P, and allowed the user (subject to the resources available on his machine) to generate the tables that were not supplied. Indeed it does and I already have made use of this, though my own machine is unable to generate the more demanding tables. So the rationalization for which I called in our September issue is already happening, and the pioneering Thompson CD-ROMs will eventually become museum pieces.

Emil and Brian, thank you very much. To obtain Hiarcs, see page 128.

Yet more about the “main line”

Our articles in March and June have prompted further comments. They centre about a study by Gorgiev, 64, 1928, wKb5, Rf1, Ba6, bKh8, Bf3, Nb3, Ph7, win. White hunts bN by 1 Kb4 Nd4 2 Kc3 Be2! 3 Bxe2 Nxe2+ 4 Kd3 Ng3 5 Rf3 Nh5 6 Rf5 (see right), and now given as “main line” is 6...Ng7, saving bN at the cost of 7 Rf8 mate. In March, I reported an experiment in which I had asked various people what they would play here, “resign” being an option, and the composer’s move had found little support. Hence the question: can this properly be regarded as the “main line”?



Position after 6 Rf5

In June, Walter Veitch defended it. “In a game, of course Black resigns. But he does not merely resign, he resigns because . . . , i.e. he is unwilling to allow the ‘pretty’ mate by Rf8, but Rf8 nevertheless is the deciding factor. The whole solution ... is trying to capture bN. Can it escape? Yes, it can: by 6...Ng7, so 6...Ng7 is the logical climax (triumph and disaster). The resultant snap mate may be obvious now, but it was not so at the beginning. To argue on the basis of just one move is wrong.”

Paul Byway does not entirely agree. “The view of Walter Veitch is undoubtedly attractive, but emphasises the logic of the *composer’s intention*: the logic of the *play* leads elsewhere. *To argue on the basis of just one move...* One of the hard lessons a player must learn is just this: many blunders result from following a logical path, unaware that the logic has just been superseded. Gerald Abrahams talked of *the figure in the marble*: Gorgiev has drawn attention to it, but the composer’s job is to chisel it out. A mismatch between the logic of intent and the logic of play amounts to a failure of construction.”

Both viewpoints have now been cogently put, and I am going to declare an honourable draw. What I find particularly interesting is that Walter, a connoisseur but not a composer, is willing to accept the conventional composer’s way of looking at things, whereas Paul, who *is* a composer, quite clearly is not. Be it noted that both Paul and Walter are to be taken seriously when speaking as players. Paul has been a British Championship finalist, and many times champion of Hertfordshire; Walter in his prime was perhaps even stronger (equal 7th-9th in the British Championship of 1950), and in these days of devalued titles could have become an IM at the very least.

A more general contribution comes from John Roycroft, author of *Test tube chess* and long-standing editor of *EG*, who has done more than anyone in the last 35 years to gain new enthusiasts for the endgame study. I have edited slightly for publication.

“The re-opening in the June *BESN* of the debate is producing useful clarification, it seems to me. JohnB’s standpoint originally non-plussed me, but now it’s clearer: he’s interested in studies only insofar as they can interest the ordinary player. Now, provided such a praiseworthy aim is served, any argument is surely valid - a rare case of the end justifying the means?! But this aim differs from mine, which is to draft

statements that are valid for (almost) all studies. If the best studies are (as many of us believe) valid works of art then they are the ones we ought to have in mind when we make serious statements about studies. By serious I mean that the statements we make ought to be able to withstand close examination and ought not to be subject to variation at the whim of, for example, an individual composer. Certainly I stand by the statements that I have made, though surely the wordings can be improved upon.

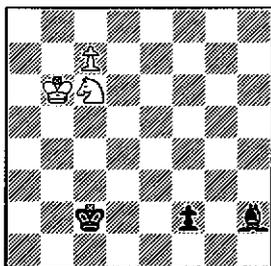
"I should also like to comment on our good and loyal friend Walter Veitch's observation on endgame theory, namely that he knows no statement 'according to which one suffers mate when it can be avoided'. Neither do I, but nor do I know any statement in endgame theory that relates to studies, and it's primarily studies that we're dealing with (if not, I'm editing the wrong magazine). The relationship between studies and endgame theory is that studies need endgame theory and use it for their own 'ends'. The converse is not true - endgame theory has no need of studies, though studies often help as examples. To illustrate, take duals. Endgame theory rather favours several solutions or strategies to achieve an end, as alternative winning (or drawing) procedures tend to make the ending in question easier to understand. Studies consider duals to be flaws. (Now *there's* a studies-related statement!) Consider JohnB's original example [see above]. After 6...Ng3 White can win (I believe) with 7 Rg5 or 7 Rf3 or 7 Re5 or 7 Rd5 or 7 Rc5 or 7 Rb5 or 7 Ra5, though 7 Rg5 is undoubtedly the most efficient. These alternatives in themselves make 6...Ng7 the main line, because there is only one winning reply to it. As an afterthought, your player wasn't afraid of Rf8+ before Ng7, so what's new? The answer to *that* little question tells us something about the main line, I suggest. In this, it seems that Walter and I are at one, for he says 'the snap mate may be obvious *now*, but it was not so at the beginning'.

[At this point John criticized my exposition of his 'Golden Fleece' study in June, raising points which I accepted as valid in 'Spotlight' in September.]

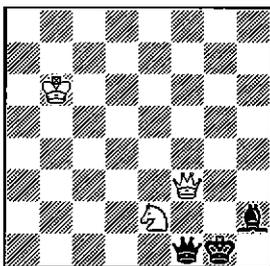
"Your club player is no more concerned with duals than endgame theory is. But we have to be: with duals as with soundness, with originality, with beauty, with judging, and with many other matters. That is our world. If you don't agree, JohnB, I invite you to consider where your line of reasoning leads. If it leads to gaining more enthusiasts for studies, then we'll all be cheering you on. But if it leads to principles of populism claiming universal validity then that could be a different matter."

Should I claim an editor's right to the last word? I certainly agree with Paul Byway that the audience for studies must be mainstream players and not specialists, and I wish composers would spend more time trying to find natural positions which demand surprising play and less producing complicated and artificial creations more redolent of the problem than the game. If this is populism, so be it. But my statement in June was that Black's "non-main-line" moves should lead not just to a known theoretical outcome as sought by White but to an *obvious* and *easily realized* outcome as sought, and this is a demand for clarity which applies to popular and esoteric studies alike. Yes, a study which is clear has a chance of popular appeal, whereas one which is not has none; but it is the *clarity* which is the fundamentally desirable quality, and I don't think it is mere populism to say so.

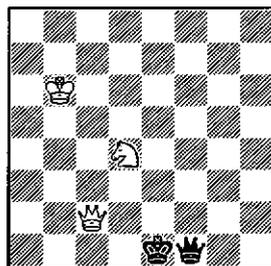
From the world at large



1 - win



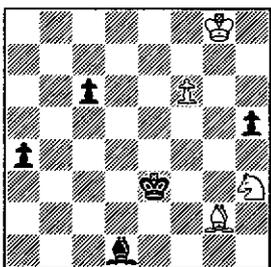
1a - main line, 5...Kgl 6 Ne2+ 1b - 2...Bc7+, after 4...Ke1



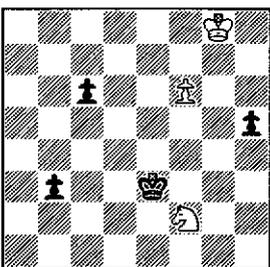
Marco Campioli recently wrote in *Scacco!* about the work of Enrico Paoli (b 1908), and among the studies quoted was the charming 1 (4th Prize, *L'Echiquier de Paris* 1957). An immediate 1 c8Q is met by 1...f1Q, and if 2 Nd4+ then 2...Kd2 draws. The knight must check first, 1 Nd4+, and if 1...Kd2 then 2 Nf3+ and 3 Nxh2. We also have 1...Kd3 2 c8Q f1Q 3 Qa6+, and 1...Kc3/Kb2/Kb1/Kc1 are easily met; not so easy is 1...Kd1, when the main line is 2 c8Q f1Q 3 Qc2+ Ke1 4 Qc3+ Kf2 (4...Kd1 5 Qa1+) 5 Qf3+ Ke1 6 Ne2+. However, 5...Kgl 6 Ne2+ is more instructive (see 1a).

The point is, what happens if Black interjects 2...Bc7+? It appears absurd, but if White simply plays 3 Qxc7 f1Q 4 Qc2+ Ke1 5 Qc3+ etc we eventually come down to 1a without bBh2, and now ...Kh2 draws for Black since Qxf1 will be stalemate.

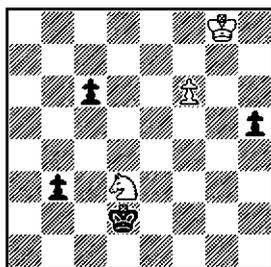
So White must think of something else, and the answer (after 3 Qxc7 f1Q 4 Qc2+ Ke1, see 1b) is 5 Ka5!!: one of the neater ways of winning a Q+N ending.



2 - win



2a - after 3 Nf2



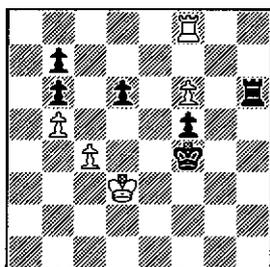
2b - after 4 Nd3

Another fine Italian composer was Adriano Chicco (1907-1990). He was better known as a problemist and perhaps better still as an historian, but 2 took a prize in *L'Italia Scacchistica* in 1947. 1 f7 can be met by 1...Bb3 pinning, hence 1 Bd5, and if 1...cxd5 then 2 f7 wins easily. However, Black has 1...Bb3, and after 2 Bxb3 axb3 he can meet 3 f7 with 3...b2 drawing. White's answer is 3 Nf2! (see 2a). 3...b2 can now be met by 4 Nd1+, and if 3...Kxf2 then 4 f7 and White will promote with check.

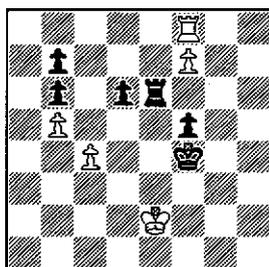
So Black plays 3...Kd2, and 4 Ne4+ will get White nowhere. However, he has the

second sacrifice **4 Nd3!** (see 2a). This time Black must accept, **4...Kxd3**, but the capture has lured **bK** to a bad diagonal and after **5-6 f8Q b1Q** White has **7 Qf5+**.

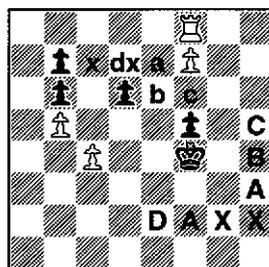
EG 134 was devoted to the 1989 study composing match between the USSR and the Rest of the World, and **3** (V. Kondratev and A. Kopnin, USSR) particularly took my fancy. I am no lover of composition tourneys, especially between nations or other political entities, but occasionally they prompt the creation of something good which might not have come into existence otherwise.



3 - win

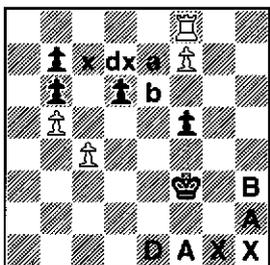


3a - after 2...Re6+

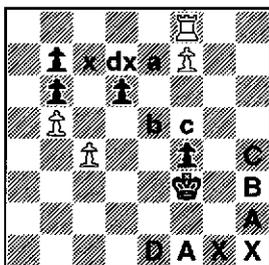


3b - squares for bR (i)

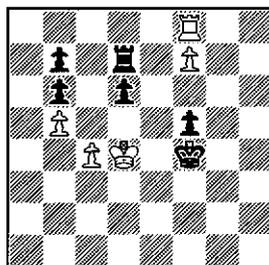
Play starts **1 f7**, and **1...Rh7** will let **wK** walk in. Better is **1...Rf6**, when **2 Kd4** gets nowhere because **bR** defends **bPd6**. The move is **2 Ke2**, and after **2...Re6+** we have **3a**. Now **3 Kf2 Re7** leads to the draw by corresponding squares shown in **3b-3d** (if **wK** goes to **A**, **bR** goes to **a** and so on, with **...Kf3** if **wK** retreats to the first rank and **...f4** or **...Kf4** if **bR** has no good move). The point is that if **wK** tries moving to the **d**-file while **bR** is on **d7**, Black will draw by **...d5** since **bR**'s recapture on **d5** will be with check, while if he tries to advance via **B** he finds that **bR**'s move to **b** threatens mate (and if White stops this mate by playing **Rh8** then Black can reply **...Re1**).



3c - squares for bR (ii)



3d - squares for bR (iii)



3e - after 8 Kd4

But if White gets move 3 right, he can avoid all this. Play continues **3 Kf1! Re7** (**bR** must attack **wPf7**, and if **3...Rf6** then **4 Kf2** wins at once) **4 Kf2 Re7!** (setting a trap) **5 Ke1!** (**5 Ke2** allows **5...Rd7** with a draw, for example **6 Kf1 Kf3 7 Ke1 f4) Rd7 6 Ke2 Re7+** (nothing better) **7 Kd3 Rd7 8 Kd4** and **wK** will penetrate (see 3e).

But what a path for **wK** to have to travel to get to **d4**: **d3-e2-f1-f2-e1-e2-d3-d4!**

News and notices

Games fonts. I read in *Variant Chess* the wretched news that Steve Smith, whose "Linares" font is used for *BESN*, has been killed by a car while cycling in Wyoming. His fifteen-year-old son Adrian is continuing to supply his fonts, and very good they are (he has three chess styles, plus fonts for many other indoor games). Order from him at alpine@wavecom.net or <http://partae.com>. The snail-mail address (Alpine Electronics, 526 West 7th St., Powell, WY 82435, USA) may also still work.

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday January 7** at 6.00 pm. Non-subscribers are welcome, but please bring £5 towards the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring the latest *EG* with you!

Books. Emil Vlasák has produced a new edition of *Matouš under the microscope*, available from me at £3 including UK postage. Those who received the first edition with *BESN* last year will find the major differences listed with this year's index.

I understand that books published by Batsford are again reaching retailers, but in any case *Endgame magic* is available from me at £11.50, and *Genius in chess* (£12.99) and *Secrets of spectacular chess* (£15.99) from Jonathan Levitt at 46 Clarendon Court, Finchley Road, London NW11 6AD. All include UK postage.

Hiarcs 7.32 (see page 123) is distributed by ChessBase, and is available in the UK from the *BCM*, The Chess Shop, 69 Masbro Road, London W14 0LS, at £37.99 plus postage (I bought over the counter) and presumably from other UK ChessBase outlets. Readers abroad may prefer to go direct to ChessBase at Mexikoring 35, D-22297 Hamburg (<http://www.chessbase.com>). The stated system requirements are "Pentium with Windows 95/98/NT4.0" and any such machine should suffice for ordinary use, but to generate a complete set of five-man look-up tables takes 640MB of RAM and 8GB of hard disk. (The extra RAM is needed only during table generation; once generated, a table can be copied and used on a machine with only the normal system requirement.) The booklet with my copy is largely in German, but there are manuals in English on the CD-ROM. Go to directory `MANUALS\ENGLISH`, read `HIARCS732 BOOKLET` first, and take it from there. The main file `ENGLISH MANUAL` is actually a Fritz manual, but Hiarcs has a similar operational interface.

Year 2000. I am not expecting "Y2K" problems (my computer is so old that it stores the date *ab urbe condita*), but as a precaution I intend to prepare as much as possible of the March material before the present millennium closes. The usual rule will therefore apply: if you haven't received the March issue within a day or so of the start of the month, there will be reason to write and enquire what has gone wrong.

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.