

British Endgame Study News

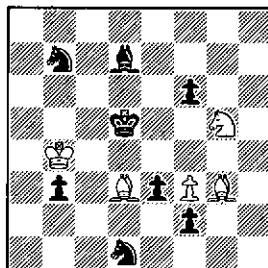
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by Mike Bent

White to play and draw

This issue. There is a note on recent computer developments, and a sequel to last time's article on study continuations which have been missed in play. The special number covers British studies published during the period 1937-1949, and this being March, my annual **book list** is enclosed.

When publishing Mike Bent's study above in a recent issue of *diagrammes*, I gave the final position instead of that at the start. This spoils it for my solvers, and deprived Mike of the pleasure of reading what they had to say. Try it before looking inside.

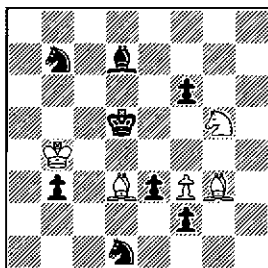
Spotlight. To round off my ten years as study columnist of *diagrammes*, I wrote a special number containing some of the good things that had appeared in *BESN* but had not been quoted there. Among the studies I selected was John Nunn's **14** from special number 20, where I was very surprised to see that **1 Kd3** appeared to work just as well as **1 Ke3** (Black's extra moves don't help him). John agreed, adding that the bust had been reported a couple of years ago though he could not remember by whom. Fortunately the cure is self-evident: **move wK to c4**, and use **1 Kd3** as the solution.

Timothy Whitworth points out that **2** in special number 37 actually won second prize in *L'Opinió* (my mistake, the source given by Harold van der Heijden was correct), and that the tourney closing date was 30 November 1934. "*L'Opinió* was a Catalan journal published in Barcelona but its life was short, May 1933 to October 1934. The results of the tourney were given in *Els Escacs a Catalunya*, in the issue dated July-August 1935." He adds that **9** "looks as if it is fighting" a Mattison study (**32** in his revised edition) for "2 Pr *Schweizerische Schachzeitung* 1923", but that there were separate prizes for individual studies and for sets; Mattison's won an individual prize, Lazard's was one of a prizewinning set. The original award showed Lazard's as having won third prize only, but "the award may have been revised later".

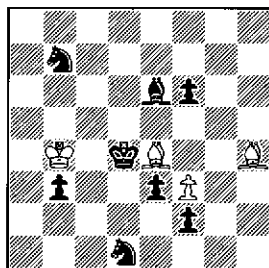
And John Roycroft makes an analytical point: if in **15** Black plays **4...Qf3**, White must temporize with his bishop; he must *not* play **PxQ**!

Large print copies. Readers are reminded that I can supply *BESN* in large print, and any reader who would prefer to receive it in this form is asked to tell me.

Recently published British originals



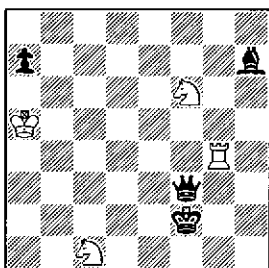
1 - draw



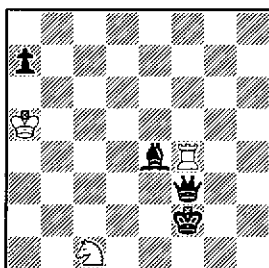
1a - after 3 Bh4

1 repeats Mike Bent's front-page study as it should have appeared in the July-September issue of *diagrammes*. 1 **Be4+ Kd4** is easy enough, but now comes a typical Mike touch: 2 **Ne6+ Bxe6** clearing the way for the quiet move 3 **Bh4** threatening mate (see 1a). If 3...**Ke5** then 4 **Bg3+** drives him back again, and 4...**Kd4** 5 **Bh4** repeats the position. All right, try 3...**e2** giving him some air: no, White has 4 **Bxf6+ Ke3** 5 **Bg5+ Kd4** 6 **Bf6+** with a perpetual on f6/g5 instead.

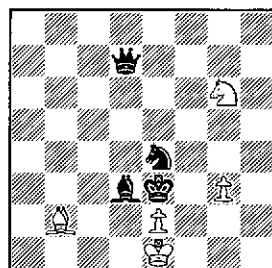
A wrong diagram is always unfortunate, especially in the case of a composer such as Mike who deliberately sets out to entertain solvers. I could only apologize.



2 - draw



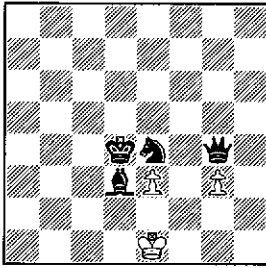
2a - after 2 Rf4



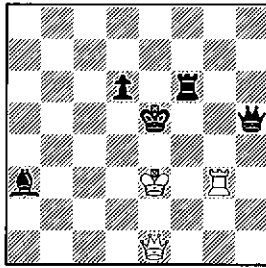
3 - draw

If we know our Mike, 2 (*diagrammes*, Apr-Jun 2002) will end in stalemate, so it is natural to try and get the Black bishop to d3 and the queen to the fourth rank. This being so, the opening move 1 **Ne4+** seems to be a significant step in the wrong direction, since it pulls the bishop on to the fourth rank instead of the queen. However, after 1...**Bxe4** 2 **Rf4!** all becomes clear (see 2a); Black can only play 2...**Qxf4**, and 3 **Nd3+ Bxd3** puts his men where we want them to be.

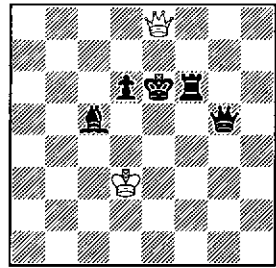
3, from the Jan-Mar 2002 *diagrammes*, was missed in my earlier trawls. This time only two squares in the White king's field need guarding, d1 and f1, but what are we going to do about the pawns? Ah, 1 **Ne5 Qc8** (or any other move continuing to guard g4) 2 **Ng4+** (anyway) **Qxg4** (one pawn blocked) 3 **Bd4+ Kxd4** 4 **e3+**, and it does not matter whether this pawn is taken or not (see 3a).



3a - after 4 e3+

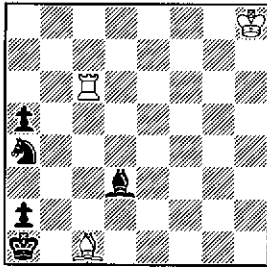


4 - win

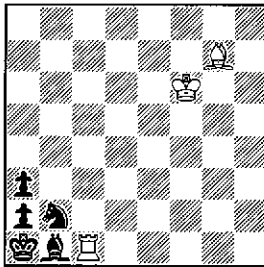


4a - after 5 Qe8+

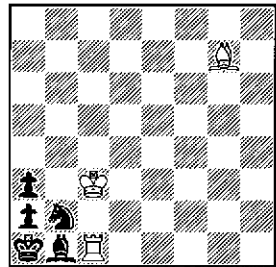
4 (*diagrammes*, Jan-Mar 2003) will surely require an immediate mating attack, and **1 Kd3+** is the natural and correct start. Black replies **1...Kd4** (other moves lose at once), and White must time his continuation carefully. Correct is **2 Qa5+ Bc5** and now the sacrifice **3 Rg5+**; the necessary reply **3...Qxg5** takes the queen away from the defence of e8, and there follows **4 Qa8+ Ke6** (4...Ke5 5 Qe4 mate) **5 Qe8+** and it's mate next move (see 4a). If White plays Qa5+ and Rg5+ the other way round, **2 Rg5+ Qxg5 3 Qa5+**, Black need no longer play the move ...Bc5 which will leave him blocked later on; he can afford to take his king off the line, **3...Ke6**, since the capture of the Black queen no longer gives White a win.



5 - win



5a - after 7 Kf6



5b - after 13 Kc3

Readers will recall the subtle stalemate-release study by Paul Michelet which I quoted in our September 2002 issue. He recently sent me the alternative version 5, which I published in the Oct-Dec *diagrammes*. **1 Ba3** threatens **2 Rc1+ Bb1 3 Rc8 Bd3** (no other bishop move is better, and **3...Nb2 4 Rb8 N-- 5 Bf8** is hopeless) **4 Rb8 Bc4** (again nothing else is better) **5 Bd6 Nb2** (now or never) **6 Be5 Kb1 7 Rxb2+ Kc1 8 Rb8** with a routine win, and only **1...Nb2** offers hope. There follows **2 Rc1+ Bb1 3 Bf8! a4** (3...N-- **4 Bg7+** transposes) **4 Kg8!** (if instead **4 Kg7** then **4...Nd3** and **Bg7+** is no longer possible) **N-- (4...a3 5 Bxa3 N-- 6 Rc8** and again White will get a grip on the b-file) **5 Bg7+ Nb2 6 Kf7 a3 7 Kf6** and thanks to the manoeuvre **Ba3-f8-g7** and **Kh8-g8-f7-f6** the stalemate is released (see 5a). The rest is easy: **7...N-- 8 Ke6+ Nb2 9 Ke5** and so on down to **13 Kc3** (see 5b), then **13...Na4+/Nd3/Nd1+ 14 Kd2+** (simplest) **Nb2 15 Rc3** followed by **Kc1, Rxa3,** and **Bxb2** mate. Thanks to the Black bishop, the White king moves are unique from h8 right down to c3.

More news from the computer

There continue to be extensive developments on the computer front, and I think readers will welcome an update even if I have to provide most of it at second hand. Most of what follows has been distilled from a vast amount of information supplied to me by Guy Haworth, and I hope I have summarized fairly and accurately. It will be realised that the situation is changing almost daily, and the ICGA web site www.icga.org offers a detailed spreadsheet giving the latest information.

Calculation of six-man endgame tables. Eugene Nalimov has now finished the pawnless endings with three men against three and four men against two, and work is well advanced on four-against-two endings with at least one pawn on the board ("70 done out of 95" is the most recent figure I have heard). Three-against-three endings with pawns apparently require an adjustment to the generation code, and are unlikely to be started until the four-against-two set is complete.

These calculations give depth to mate and the results are provided in "Nalimov EGT" form, but the largest tables exceed 2GB in size and it has been necessary to break them into chunks. It appears that Crafty, Fritz 8, Hiarc 9, Shredder 8, and Wilhelm are currently the only chess engines that can read these multi-part tables, but no doubt most of the rest will soon catch up.

Distribution of six-man endgame tables. It is one thing to calculate such tables, quite another to distribute them. It is estimated that the full set will occupy well over 1000GB, and apparently the approved high-tech method of distribution among state-of-the-art researchers in the USA is to send 200GB hard discs using a courier service. However fast one's communication line, there is a volume of data beyond which "send a man with a van" is the quickest option.

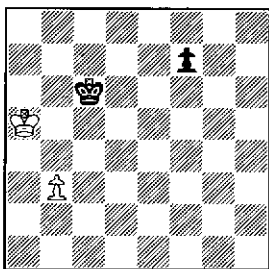
Distribution by hard disc is never likely to appeal to users such as myself who are extremely reluctant to take the covers off their machines and fool around inside them, but ChessBase (www.chessbase.com) is currently offering a set of 5 DVDs containing all the three-to-five man endings plus $K+R/B/N+2P \ v \ K+R$, $K+R+B \ v \ K+2N$, and $K+2Q \ v \ K+2Q$. I am not sure that this would have been my own choice of a first subset to be made available, but at least it is a start. The price: a mere 49.99 euros!

Ken Thompson. Ken's index site at <http://cm.bell-labs.com> has not survived a change of file servers, but his position-by-position enquiry service at "plan9" (see the June 2000 *BESN*, page 142) was still there and giving apparently sensible results when I tried it on February 1. There is no reason why Lucent Technologies should continue this service and no doubt we shall wake up one morning and find it has gone, but for the moment it remains the most convenient way of dealing with a large set of pawnless six-man positions. We can only be grateful to Lucent for supporting Ken's hobby for so long and for continuing to grant us access to his work after his departure.

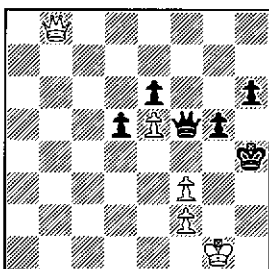
Chess Query Language (CQL). *EG* 151 reports a chess query program by Lewis Stillier and Gady Costeff designed for use with Harold van der Heijden's database. It is available from www.rbnn.com/cql, and though there appear to be difficulties downloading to some computers I am sure these will be sorted out. It appears to be a most valuable development, which I shall certainly be exploring; more next time.

Nature genuinely failing to imitate art

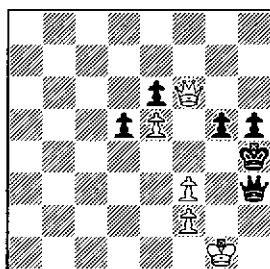
Hardly had I sent out the December *BESN* than I received the December *EBUR*, where Yochanan Afek quotes just such an example as I had been looking for. 1 is from Ljubojevic - Browne, IBM tournament, Amsterdam 1972. Play continued **39...f5 40 Kb4 f4 41 Kc4** with a draw, but if Black had remembered a famous study by Grigoriev, *Izvestia* 1928, wKd3, Pf2, bKa4, Pb6, he would have had a victory for the anthologies: **39...Kd5!!** and either **40 b4 f5 41 b5 f4 42 b6 Kc6! 43 Ka6 f3 44-45 b8Q f8Q+** and Black wins even though White has promoted first, or **40 Kb4 Kd4 41-42 Kb2 f4 43 Kc2 Ke3! 44 Kd1 Kf2** (simplest) **45 b4 Kg2 46-48 b7 f1Q+** and again wK has been lured into check. Yochanan and his editor cite several Dutch sources (Donner in *Schaakbulletin* at the time and in his essay collection *De Koning*, Krabbé in his *Nieuwe Schaakkuriosa*), and adds a story which he had recently heard from Jan Timman: a young musician, Misha Mengelberg, tried to draw the players' attention on their way out of the tournament hall, and later that evening demonstrated the Grigoriev win "in the Kring, where the bohemians used to meet in those days".



1 - Black to play move 39



2 - White to play move 60



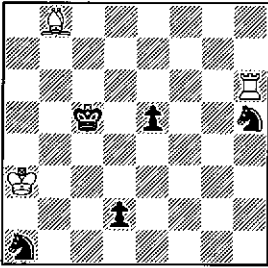
2a - after 61...Qh3

And John Bycroft from Hull sent me **2** from *Instructive Positions* by Mieses. This was from a game Harrison - Loughran, and Mieses gives its source as "Australian Championship Tournament, 1916". This didn't exist as such, but Des Cowley of the State Library of Victoria and Paul Dunn of the Australian Chess Federation have traced the game: it was from that year's Championship of Victoria, round 2, and the finish was quoted in the May 13 issue of *The Australasian*.

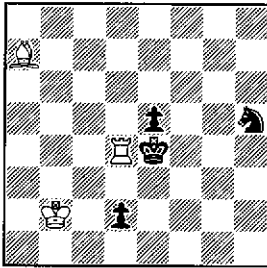
Play continued **60 Qh8 h5 61 Qf6** (threat 62 Qxf5 etc) **Qh3** (see 2a) **62 Qf8** (if 62 Qf4+ then 62...gxf4 is stalemate and 62...g4 allows mate, but 62...Qg4+ wins) **d4 63 Qb4 Qxf3 64 Qxd4+ Qg4+ 65 Qxg4+ Kxg4** and White resigned. However, Harrison later found a remarkable win: **62 Qf7! d4 63 Qf8! d3** (63...Qf5 64 Qxf5 exf5 and wK will stop bPd4) **64 Qb4+ g4 65 Qe7 mate**. "If this were a constructed study, its composer could be proud of every move" (Mieses). If 61...Qf4 then 62 Kg2 d4 63 Qxe6 g4 64 Qf6+ Qg5 65 f4 Qxf6 66 exf6 d3 67-8 f8Q d1Q 69 Qf6 mate (Mieses); if 61...Qh7 then the natural 62 Qxe6 no doubt wins, but crisper is 62 Kg2 Qg8 63 f4 d4 64 f3 d3 65 fxg5 Qxg5+ 66 Kf1.

Thank you, John, Des, and Paul: a most entertaining position.

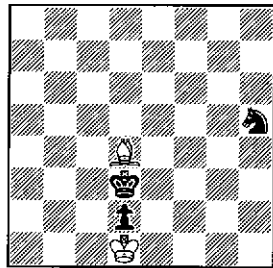
From the world at large



1 - draw



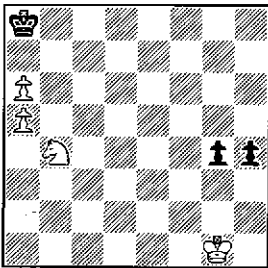
1a - after 5 Rxd4+



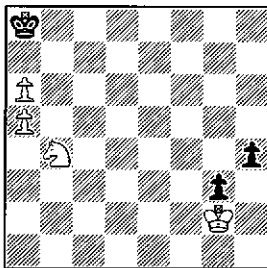
1b - after 8 Bxd4

EG 151 reprints some awards from the German composition magazine *Die Schwalbe*, and among several items which caught my eye was Igor Yarmonov's 1 (October 1998, 1st HM in the 1997-98 award). Try the natural 1 Rd6 to stop the pawn; no, 1...Nc2+ 2 Kb2/Kb3 Nd4(+) 3 Rxd4 Kxd4 4 Kc2 Ke3 5 Kd1 Nf6 (simplest, though any knight move wins) 6 Bxe5 Ne4 and the rest is esy. Better is 1 Ba7+ bringing the bishop to bear on d4 instead of e5, when play continues 1...Kd5 (1...Kc4 allows 2 Rd6, with possible sequel 2...Kc3 3 Rc6+ Kd3 4 Kb2) 2 Rh8 (getting to the d-file another way) Nc2+ 3 Kb2 (not 3 Kb3, when 3...Nd4 will give check) Nd4 4 Rd8+ Ke4 5 Rxd4+ and we have 1a. In the corresponding position after 1 Rd6, the bishop was still on b8, and Black could play ...Kxd4. Now, he has nothing better than 5...exd4, and 6 Kc2 Ke3 7 Kd1 Kd3 (7...N-- 8 Bxd4+ Kd3 transposes) 8 Bxd4 gives 1b. In this curious position, the only moves not to lose material are 8...Nf4/Ng3, and each puts an additional guard on e2 and allows 9 Bc3 Kxc3 stalemate.

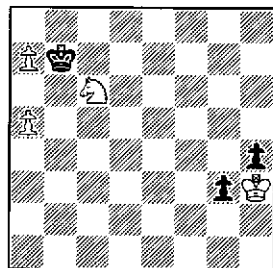
EG has "Jarmonov" here but "Yarmonov" elsewhere, and I assume it is the same. The Russian vowel "Ya" naturally transliterates as "Ja" in German.



2 - win



2a - reciprocal zugzwang (!)



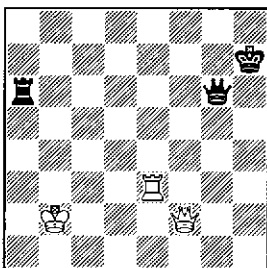
2b - 2...Ka7, after 5...Kb7

Another that took my fancy was Gerd Rinder's 2 (December 1998, 4th Comm). Try 1 Nc6 preventing ...Ka7: no, 1...g3 2 Nb4 (2 Kg2 h3+ and draws by stalemate) h3 and White is worse off than when he started. Try 1 Nd5 Ka7 2 Nc7: no, 2...Kb8 3 Ne6 Ka7 4 Nc5 Ka8 (or 3 Nb5 Ka8) and White is getting nowhere.

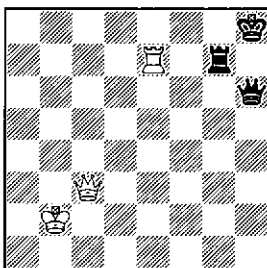
These explorations suggest that the knight is actually well placed on b4, where it guards a6 and can play to c6 if needed. So let's try a king move: 1 Kg2, say. No, 1...g3 (see 2a) 2 Kh3 Ka7 and the king must go back to g2; and 1 Kh2 h3 is clearly no better. Well, as Sherlock Holmes used to say, when the impossible has been excluded, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth: **1 Kh1!!**

If Black now advances a pawn, say 1...g3, White blocks it, 2 Kg2, and we have 2a with Black to move. The most demanding line is 2...Ka7, met by 3 Kh3 Kb8 (3...Ka8 4 Nc6 is simpler) 4 Nc6+ K-- 5 a7 Kb7 (see 2b) 6 a8Q+ Kxa8 7 a6 g2 8 Kxg2 h3+ 9 Kh1 h2 10 Nb4 with a win; if instead 2...Kb8 then 3 Nc6+ K-- 4 a7 Kb7 (now we have 2b but with the White king on g2) 5 a6+ (this time we don't need the tempo-transfer sacrifice a8Q+, and in fact it forfeits the win) Ka8 6 Kh3 with the same finish.

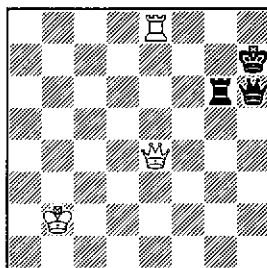
The win after 1...h3 2 Kh2 is similar, but cannot Black avoid the zugzwang by tempozing with his king at move 1? It turns out that he cannot. Try 1...Ka7; White advances, 2 Kg2 (or 2 Kh2), and now 2...g3 allows 3 Kh3 transposing back into the main line; alternatively, 2...Kb8 3 Nc6+ K-- 4 a7 Kb7 5 a6+ Ka8 6 Kh2 etc (or 5 a8Q+ Kxa8 6 a6), or 2...Ka8 3 Nc6. And if Black tries 1...Kb8, White has 2 Nc6+ K-- 3 a7 Kb7 4 a6+ Ka8 5 Kg2/Kh2, and again we are on familiar ground.



3 - win



3a - after 5...Rg7



3b - after 11...Rg6

Mario Matouš's remarkable 3 gained 4th HM in last year's "Quiet Move" tourney in *EBUR*. I don't know how he composed it, but I needed a computer just to play it through and satisfy myself that the solution worked; I haven't attempted to examine the refutations of the tries. **1 Qh2+ Qh6** (if 1...Kg7/Kg8 then 2 Rg3 pins Black's queen, and White can escape from the checks) **2 Qc2+ Rg6** (the play after 2...Kg7 3 Qc7+ and 2...Qg6 3 Re7+ may be messy for a human analyst, but the computer takes the variations in its stride and shows that White can always win material or force mate) **3 Re7+ Kh8** (now things get simpler, 3...Kg8 4 Qc8+ Qf8 5 Re8 etc) **4 Qc8+ Rg8 5 Qc3+ Rg7** (see 3a) **6 Re8+** (the systematic sequence R+, Q+, R+, Q+ will allow White to staircase in) **Kh7 7 Qd3+ Rg6** (7...Qg6 8 Qh3+ Qh6 9 Rh8+) **8 Re7+ Kh8 9 Qd4+ Rg7** (giving 3a with the queen on d4, but if 9...Rf6 then 10 Rf7 and White can again hide from the checks) **10 Re8+ Kh7 11 Qe4+ Rg6** gives 3b, and now comes the killer move: **12 Kb1!!** Black must move his queen, and he soon succumbs: 12...Qg5 13 Re7+ Kh8 14 Qa8+ Rg8 15 Qh1+, or 12...Qd2 13 Re7+ etc, or 12...Qh5 13 Re7+ Kh6 14 Qf4+ Qg5 (14...Rg5 15 Qf8+ etc) 15 Qh1+ Qh5 16 Rh7+, or 12...Qh3/Qh2 13 Re7+ Kh6 and either 14 Qf4+ or 14 Qc3+ as appropriate.

News and notices

Other magazines. The international endgame study magazine *EG* (four issues a year) can be obtained for 2004 by sending me **£16** (cheques payable to myself, please). The British Chess Problem Society is primarily concerned with problems, but its remit includes endgame studies and its bookselling service normally has study books among its stock. The UK subscription for 2004 is £18 (new members £15, under 21 £7.50); R. T. Lewis, 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 9QA.

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on ****Friday April 23**** at 6.00 pm (please note later date than usual). Non-subscribers welcome, but please bring £5 towards the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring the latest *EG* with you!

Outlets for original composition. I do not normally publish originals in *BESN*, but I am always glad to receive new discoveries, whether conventionally composed or computer-generated, for the *BCM*. In addition, Ian Watson (Crismill Manor, Crismill Land, Bearstead, Kent ME14 4NT, ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk) accepts originals for *Correspondence Chess*, and Yochanan Afek (van Boetzelaerstraat 26/1, CW 1051 Amsterdam, NL - Nederland, afek26@zonnet.nl) accepts them for *The Problemist*. There are also outlets abroad, and in particular my chair in *diagrammes* has passed to Olivier Ronat, 2 rue Mehl, 59800 Lille, France (olivierronat@wanadoo.fr, English spoken). Olivier has run study composition tournaments at the two most recent meetings at Messigny, and the realisation that a suitable successor had come on to the scene caused me to think it was perhaps time to pass on the torch.

Obituaries. I have been very sorry to hear of the sudden death of **Jean Monsour**, who can only have been in his fifties. He was one of my solvers in *diagrammes*, and his piquant remarks were always a pleasure to read. Several have been quoted in *BESN*, that on page 101 of our March 1999 issue being particularly striking. They also serve who merely write in and show that they enjoy what is being provided.

And Michael McDowell, having visited the Family Records Centre, tells me that **Arturs Spuris** (see June, page 240) has indeed died; his death was registered in the district of Leicester in 2001. He had been born on 16 May 1922, and his name was given in the Latvian form as above. I owed "Arthur" to *The Problemist* for November 1993 (he signed himself "A. Spuris" and I always used "Mr Spuris" to him) and Colin Russ, BCPS secretary at the time, tells me that he was on the membership list as "Arthur", but whether he explicitly chose to adopt the anglicized form, or was simply too polite to object to its use, I do not know.

Anybody wishing to give notice in BESN 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.