

ERIC ERNEST ZEPLER

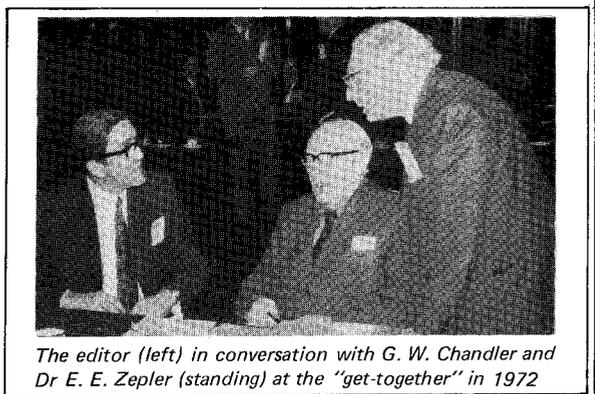
January 27th 1898 – May 13th 1980

Eric Zepler was one of the great composers of the present century: fertile in originality and imagination, crystal-clear and at the same time artistic in the expression of his ideas. When he first became active as a composer, at the end of World War I, the "new-German" logical school was at its most vigorous stage of development. He was one of the contributors to the *Teplitz-Schonau Congress Book*, a milestone in the theoretical evolution of the movement. Many of its themes were first shown by him. The clearance theme known by his name and the anti-Roman are only two examples. The founders of the school, Kohtz and Kockelkorn, were both, I think, still alive when Zepler as a schoolboy was first introduced to problems: Kohtz the logical analyst, Kockelkorn the artist. When Zepler was young the Kohtz in him predominated; as he got older the Kockelkorn element grew. I remember him saying that in his early days, the ideas came to him thick and fast but he had not yet learnt how to compose a good problem. I think he underrated these early problems, such as A-1.Qe3! Rexe3 2.Sxc6. 1. . . Rgxe3 2.Bxc6. The ones that came to be his favourites were typified by B, where the idea may not be entirely new but the economy is perfect and the theme is deeply hidden: 1.Qf1? (thr. 2.Bc2+) a5! 1.Qe1! c2 (thr.) 2.Bxc2+ 3.Qxe6+, 1. . . Ra6 (thr.) 2.Bd3+ 3.Bc4+. 1. . . f5! 2.Qf1 a5 3.Bxf5+ Ka2 4.Bxe6+ Ka3 5.Qf8≠ My own favourites are perhaps C and H, both marvellously clear expressions of strikingly original themes. C-1.Se8? Rb4! 1.Sb8! Rg7 2.Rf4 Rxf4 3.Sbc6 Rgg4 4.Sd8. 1. . . Rh7 2.Rf7 Rxf7 3.Sbc6 Rff4 4.Sd8.

My copy of the Zepler-Kraemer collection, *Im Banne des Schachproblems*, came to pieces with much handling, and I was glad when a second edition was published in 1971. One's only regret about this book is that the authors were so severe in their selection—many fine examples of their work, including some first prize-winners, did not find a place. Zepler set high standards, both for his own problems and for other composers! At the same time he had a catholic appreciation of the best problems of all schools, as is apparent from his other book co-authored with his friend and collaborator Ado Kraemer, *Problemkunst im 20. Jahrhundert*. The pleasure Zepler derived from chess problems was almost as inspiring as the example of his own works. He was a man of wide culture and a charming companion.

R.C.O. Matthews

All German chess problem lovers are deeply moved by the death of Dr. Erich Zepler. German born, and, until he emigrated to England before the outbreak of the last war, resident in Germany, he was, as a problem composer, one of the most outstanding representatives of the "new-German" school. Its tenets—*logic and purity of aim*—formed the self-evident basis of his compositions. This aim is not exclusively confined to individual ideas and themes such as Indian, Clearance, Roman, Dresden, among



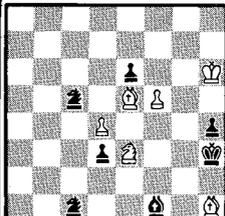
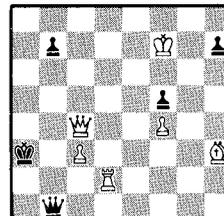
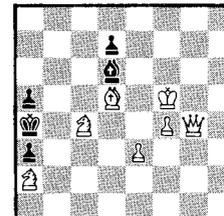
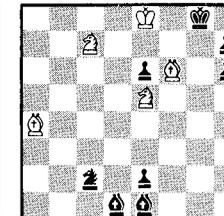
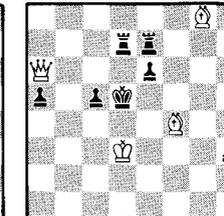
The editor (left) in conversation with G. W. Chandler and Dr E. E. Zepler (standing) at the "get-together" in 1972

others, as is often assumed by people who are not familiar with it; every strategic motive, however insignificant it may be in itself, can in fact form the subject of a logical preparatory or selective combination whose content and depth is then determined purely by the manner of its further development and consequences. Accordingly the scope of what Dr. Zepler has presented in his work is extremely widespread. Nature had endowed him in abundance with the qualities that distinguish the greatest problem composers—ingenuity, discernment, a clear view of the essential elements, and constructional ability. The presentation of the deepest strategic ideas in a logical manner as well as in a perfect aesthetic form was second-nature to him and is a goal attained in his work in almost every problem. The "new-German" school is indebted to him for a large number of its finest problems, which are of timeless value, even though the current logical three and more move problem may have moved into areas (complicated mechanisms, many-move manoeuvres) which clearly distinguish it from the style of the heyday of the classical logical problem.

In the years between the wars Dr. Zepler, with his friend Dr. Ado Kraemer, among many important composers, was doubtless the most outstanding representative of German problem chess. The mutual agreement between these two personalities in the style of their composition, and the mutual suggestions found in their work formed rich deposits to which many joint compositions bear witness. In 1951 (2nd edition 1971, supplemented by later problems) they gave together their selection of their own problems in *Im Banne des Schachproblems*, which is considered to be one of the most valuable publications in the literature of the chess problem. In addition they published *Problemkunst im 20. Jahrhundert* in which, after a lengthy sifting, they collected together what they thought to be of greatest value in this century.

Not only is a great composer of chess problems lost to us. On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of *The Problemist*, although I had not before made his acquaintance, I visited him in South-

| A | E. Zepler | B | E. Zepler | C | E. Zepler | D | E. Zepler | E | E. Zepler |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| Deut. Wochenschach 1916 | 2 Pr Osterr. Schachbund 1953 | v. Deut. Schachztg. 1951 | 1 Pr Dresdner Anz. 1929 | 3 Pr Palitzsch Mem. Ty. 1932 | | | | | |
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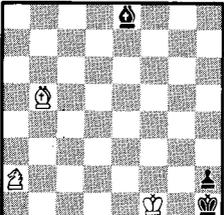
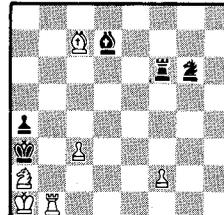
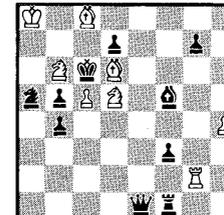
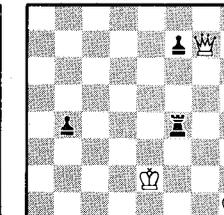
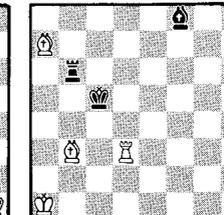
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|---|---|---|--|---|------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| F | E. Zepler | G | E. Zepler | H | E. Zepler | J | N.A. Macleod and E. Zepler | K | E. Zepler |
| 1 Pr <i>Die Schwalbe</i> 1935 Dedic. to A.C. White | 1 Pr Berger Mem. Ty. 1935 | 1 Pr Olympic Ty. 1936 | 15 Pl 2nd Int. Team Match 1970 | 2 Pr Ty. "Kissingen 1928" | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  | | | | | |
| ≠6 | ≠4 | ≠3 | ≠4 | ≠3 | | | | | |

ampton, and the day spent there (looked after by his charming wife) is for me unforgettable, for I found in Dr. Zepler a most congenial companion. I end my observations with comments on some of his problems which have in the course of my life made a special impression on me, and share in this selection some personal memories. **D**—1.Qxc6? Rc8! 1.Qxd6? c5 2.Qc6 but 1...Rd8! therefore 1.Qe6! (2.Qb3) d5 2.Qd6 c5 and after both fore-plans a disruptive intervention by the BR is prevented. Now comes the main-plan with 3.Qc6 b5 4.Qa6≠. I still know exactly how much I liked this problem as a student. "The consequent allurements of the Black pawns until the line e6—a6 is completely free is most enchanting" wrote the judge Frh. W. v. Holzhausen. **E**—1.Qd6? Sd1! 2.Rd7 Sd3! 3.Qxd3 stalemate; to avoid this stalemate the WQ must get behind the WR, so 1.Qd8! Se1 2.Rd7 Sd3 3.Rxd3 Kc2 4.Rc3≠ Loyd-Turton, a celebrated problem, that masters a difficult theme in miniature form. Dr. Zepler does not have many miniatures (I counted 14 in *Im Banne des Schachproblems*) but they are without exception full of content. **F**—1.Bf3? exf5!, the WP on f5 must be removed with Black's "help". 1.Sd1! Kg4 2.Sf2+ 2.Sf2+ Kxf5 3.Sd1 Kg4 4.Se3+ Kh3 and now 5.Bf3 attains the goal. A charming problem with a 4-move switchback of the BK in the fore-plan; such switchback problems, often with very long-range switchbacks, later became fashionable. **G**—1.Ra2+? Qxa2! fails because of the pin of the WQ, therefore in the fore-plan the WK is brought to another square by the enforced activity of Black: 1.Bxf5! Qxf5+ (1...Qb3 2.Be6) 2.Ke7 Qb1 and now comes the main-plan 3.Ra2+ Qxa2 4.Qb4≠. This was one of Dr. Zepler's favourite problems. **H**—To open the diagonal g4—d7 for the WQ we try 1.Kg6? (1...Kb3/Kb5 2.Qe2/Qxd7+), whereupon after 1...B~ 2.Sd6, which in the initial position would give stalemate, can now be played; however Black plays 1...Bxf4! and now after 2.Sd6 the stalemate is restored. To avoid this stalemate White plays 1.Ke4! interfering with the WQ on the 4th rank and thereby unpinning the BB, so that 1...Bxf4 (or 1...B~) 2.Sd6. An outstanding defensive problem with a profusion of tactical motives. Werner Speckmann

very pleasant evening at his house, he suggested that I might try my hand at composing a 4-mover for the 2nd World Team Match and outlined a basic idea. Midnight oil and a few more visits to his house produced by **J**—1.Bb3? (2.Bxe6≠) Sd4! 1.Sd5! exd5 2.Bb3 (3.Bxd5≠) Sb4/Se3 3.Sc6/Sg4. The result was modest enough but he had made another convert to longer problems. The more-mover was almost totally neglected in this country when Dr. Zepler's first *Selected More-movers* appeared in the September 1964 *Problemist*. His illuminating articles revealed a new world to many problemists and paved the way for the publication of original more-movers, the first to appear in *The Problemist* for at least twenty-five years. The thriving more-mover section we have to-day is largely due to Zepler's single handed efforts. On my last visit to his house, about a year ago, it was sad to see how illness had taken its toll. He said that intellectual activity was now impossible for him, and that he could no longer solve chess problems let alone compose them. Nevertheless he managed to guide me through the subtleties of E, perhaps his favourite problem.

A test of any composer's work is the amount of pleasure one gets from solving his problems. On this test Dr. Zepler's work is very near the top. His problems are always a delight but the solver has to dig to find the hidden treasures. In **K**, the BRs defend adequately against 1.Bh7? Rxb7! and 1.Bc7? Rxc7!, but after the key, 1.Bh2! block, Black must move. 1...Re8 2.Bh7 and 1...Rd8 2.Bc7 show that the other rook cannot quite do the job. The Dresden theme doubled, reciprocally. In **L**, 1.Sc3? Bxb5+ 2.Kf2 Bd3! and White is in Zugzwang. Fortunately White can turn the tables by 1.Bd3! Bg6 2.Sc3 Bxd3+ 3.Kf2 and now it is Black who is in Zugzwang—a classic tempo Roman. The beautifully constructed **M** is full of interest. The key 1.Rb2! threatens 2.Sc1 Be6 3.Bd6≠. Black has three anti-Roman defences 1...Bb5/Bc6/Bd8 and two anticritical defences 1...Rc6/Ra6. After 1...Bb5 2.Ba5 Rf4 3.Sc1 and 1...Bc6 2.Bb6 Rf5 3.Sc1 the anti-Romans are turned back into Romans. Finally 1...Bd8 2.Sb4 Rxf2 3.Sc2+. 1...Rc6 2.Ba5 Rc4 3.Sc1. 1...Ra6 2.Sb4 Bf5 3.Sxa6. **N** looks at first sight like a conventional focal play problem but the attempt to cut one of the Q's guards is not sufficient. A stronger Nowotny threat is required; try 1.Rg6? (2.Re6) but 1...Qxh4! So 1.Rg5!

I first met Dr. Zepler about twelve years ago while attending a symposium at Southampton University. During the course of a

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|------------------|
| L | E. Zepler | M | E. Zepler | N | E. Zepler | O | E. Zepler | P | E. Zepler |
| 1 Pr Miniature Ty. <i>Chess Review</i> 1937 | <i>Die Welt</i> 1951 | 1 Pr Bincers Mem. Ty. <i>Die Schwalbe</i> 1956 | v. <i>Deut Schachztg.</i> 1958 Dedic. to Th. Nissl | <i>Fairy Chess Review</i> 1943 | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  | | | | | |
| ≠5 | ≠4 | ≠4 | ≠4 | H≠2 (b) move 1 file right | | | | | |

(2.Rxf5) Bh3 2.Rg6 Qxh4 3.Rg4!—a Nowotny on g4! made possible by a combination of critical and pericritical moves by Black. O is a minimal of striking originality 1.Qg6! Re4+/Rd4/Rc4 2.Kf3/Kf2/Kf1!—another problem he delighted to show. Although direct mate problems in 3 or more moves make up by far the largest part of his work, Dr. Zepler occasionally made significant contributions to other types. P is a charming helpmate showing chameleon echo mates and using an ingenious twinning mechanism. a) 1.Bh6 Re3 2.Kd4 Bxb6≠ b) 1.Kd6 Re7 2.Ra6 Bb4≠. (For more of Dr. Zepler's problems see *Selected Movers, The Problemist*, January and March 1976 which have only one problem in common with the present selection; of

course, for anyone interested in learning more about the delights of the longer problem, *Im Banne des Schachproblems* is a must.)

Dr. Zepler was a pioneer not only in chess problems but also in electronics. His distinguished career was outlined in *The Times* of 20 May. By 1935 he had risen to a high position in Germany but was forced to flee the country, leaving everything. He came to England as a refugee and had to start his career again from the bottom, but his abilities soon brought him to the fore. In 1949 he became Professor of Electronics at Southampton, the first such chair in this country, and possibly in the world. A measure of the esteem in which he is held is the fact that the Department of Electronics is housed in the Zepler building. NAM

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL

Dedicated to the Memory of Eric Zepler

by Hans Peter Rehm

Authors of chess problems have thought deeply to find subtle ways how to mate. They used to classify black's moves by what weaknesses allow white to mate (say self-block, interference, Roman etc.). But we may look at a chess problem differently: it stages the fight of two adversaries. A football match is most exciting if both teams are equally cunning—even if one of them wins. Can we have successful black action in a chess problem where White is always to win? The answer is clear: Black may successfully defeat White's attack in a *thematic try* and we can arrange for much cunning on Black's side in doing that.

In problem E (see previous page) Black labours to obtain stalemate. 1.Rb8? (waiting) would be very good (1...S~2.Rc8+) but 1...Sb4+! 2.Rxb4=. So we give a little room to the BK 1.Qd6! S~2.Rd7. But Black is able to repeat his triumph by 1...Se1! 2.Rd7 Sd3! 3.Qxd3—again stalemate. Two goals down (so to speak) White counters by a truly splendid move cunningly outwitting Black's efforts: 1.Qd8!! Se1 2.Rd7 Sd3 3.Rd3: (no longer stalemate) Kc2 4.Rc3≠.

So I state: A black defensive manoeuvre is presented most convincingly in a chess problem if we have: (i) a white thematic try which is defeated only by the defence in question (ii) a modification of the White attack outwitting just that defence.

Erich Zepler and Ado Kraemer seem to be the first authors with a clear knowledge of that principle, and they created beautiful examples.

The mechanisms of outwitting

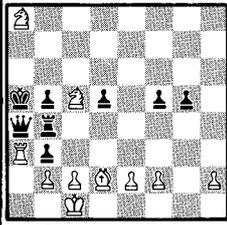
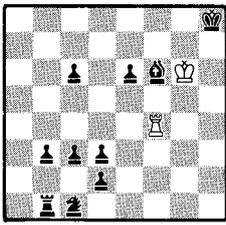
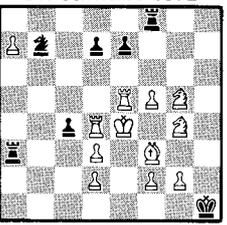
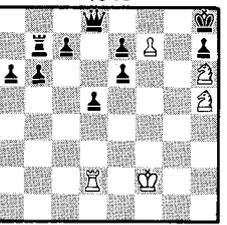
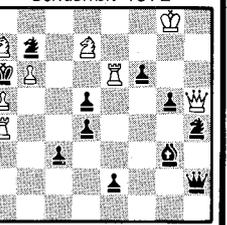
A crude way of dealing with a good Black move is just to prevent it. In Q the move 1.Bxg5? seems strong, and Black plays not 1...Rc4, not 1...Rd4 not 1...Rg4 but only 1...Rh4!! clearing the BKs path up to the flight g4 (2.Bd8+ Kb4 3.Sd3+ 4.Sb6+ 5.Bf6+ 6.Sc5+ (mate if that R would have stopped at g4)). Hence white plays beforehand 1.h4 (threatening, after 1...f4, 2.hxg5, to queen the pawn) 1...gxh4! (best) 2.Bg5 and "only" Rg4 is left.

Instead of preventing an action we may prepare for *undoing* it. In example R the White rook is mousetrapped critically at a1: 1.Ra4? Ra1! 2.Ra1: Sa2. White is able to open the trap by 3.Kf7 Sc1, but leaving it is too slow (4.Ra5 d1Q). White may undo Ra4—a1 successfully if he begins with 1.Rb4! Be5, then 2.Ra4 Ra1 3.Rxa1 Sa2 (trapped again) 4.Kf7 Sc1 5.Ra4! Bf6 6.Kg6 (trapping undone).

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to prevent or undo the enemy's action. Then it is a good strategy to take pains that this action will not achieve the purpose intended—robbed of its purpose it is *rendered harmless*. After 1.Sh3? in S, Black decoys a WR (using the well known Plachutta mechanism) in order to capture d3/f5 without being recaptured: 1...d5+ 2.Rxd5/Rxd5 Sc5/Sd6+ 3.RxS Rxd3/Rxf5. White is not able to prevent or undo the Plachutta but after 1.a8Q (threat e.g. 2.Kd5) R3xa8/Rfxa8 one "leg" of the Plachutta has become meaningless 2.Sh3 d5+ 3.Rxd5/Rxd5 S+ 4.RxS. Obviously rendering harmless may be effected by preventing something but since prevention occurs without rendering harmless a special class makes sense.

Sometimes White may counter Black's action by showing that Black is digging his own grave: some part of that action may carry a hidden weakness which can be exploited by modifying the White attack accordingly. In T, 1.Kf1? (or 1.Rd4?) seems good enough since Black's doubling of forces on the 8th rank is useless 1...Rb8? 2.Rg2(4) ~ 3.Rg8+ Qxg8 4.fxg8Q+ Rxxg8 5.Sf7≠ But the solver discovers that the Turton retreat 1...Qa8! will arrange the doubled pieces successfully with R in front. Just this can be used as a weakness if White plays the correct key 1.Ke1! Qa8! 2.Rg2 Rb8 3.f8Q+! Rf8: 4.Rg8+ exploiting the fact that the R is in front and not the Q. With this *reinterpretation* (a good manoeuvre can be interpreted, after suitable preparation, as a bad one) we have seen the fourth fundamental way of outwitting Black's defence. A special terminology seems to exist only in German. We have studied the following types: (i) *Prevention* (Verhinderung) (ii) *Undoing* (Rücknahme) (iii) *Rendering harmless* (Entschärfung) and (iv) *Reinterpretation* (from good to bad) (Umdeutung).

Almost every real chess problem theme can be and has been
Continued on page 68

| Q | G. Latzel | R | Hans-Peter Rehm | S | S. Eisert and H.-P. T | Eric Zepler | U | K. Wenda and F. |
|--|---|---|--|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|------|------------------------|
| 2 Pr | <i>Die Schwalbe</i> | 1 Pr | <i>Themes 64</i> | 1 Pr | <i>Die Schwalbe</i> | <i>British Chess Mag.</i> | 1 Pr | <i>Deut. Schachbl.</i> |
| 1953 | | 1976 | 1972 | 1972 | 1940 | 1940 | 1972 | 1972 |
|  |  |  |  |  | | | | |
| ≠8 | | ≠8 | ≠6 | | ≠5 | | | ≠4 |

ture is given after the key. 1.b4xc3 e.p. 0-0-0≠ (Rd1?) 4-CIRCE = captured pieces return to initial square (R, S, B to square of same colour on which captured—P to same file on which captured) 1.Kc7/c8/e7/e8? g1=Q 1.Kd8? g1=R 1.Kxd6? (Pd7) g1=B 1.Kc6? g1=S 1.Ke6! (tempo) 1. . .g1/Kh1, g1 2.Qxg1/Qxg2≠ 5-1.Bf4 bSxf4/eSxf4/gSxf4/hSxf4 2.Bg2/Nh5+/Nd5+/Be2+ Nx8/BxN/NxN/NxB 3.Nh5/Bg2/Be2/Nd5≠ First Plachutta with Nightriders, 4 variations. 6-ROSE is a Nightrider riding on a circular, not straight, path—i.e. Rose b2 can go a4, b6, d7 or d1, f2, g4, f6. Invented by R. Meignant 1969. 1.Qb5 (2.Qc5≠) Ra4/Rb4/Rc4/Re4/Rf4/Rg4/Rh4/Rx4/Rof2, a4/Roxd7/b6 2.dSf6/eSg6 / Qe5 / hRoxe4 / Qd5 / dSb6 / eSc6 / hRoxb7 / Qe5 / Rxd7 / dSf6≠ Two full Rose-wheels by Black and 7 Rook interferences on 4th rank.

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL (from page 53)

modified to act as a defensive idea. We have seen clearance (for the K), forced critical move followed by interception, Plachutta, and Turton. To outwit a defensive idea we can use practically every other problem theme. So the number of possibilities of "attack only" chess problems is squared. However, the difficulties of construction are usually more than squared. As a rule we need more moves, making soundness difficult to achieve. The composer needs considerable control of White and Black pieces in arranging for a successful defence manoeuvre and its outwitting.

Finally I want to draw the readers' attention to one more example—U. The try 1.Qe8? is defeated only by an annihilation clearance (Opferbahnung) 1. . .Bb8! 2.Sxb8+ Qxb8! pinning the White queen. What does White do in order to reinterpret Bb8 as a decoy weakening b8? He creates an annihilation clearance himself! 1.Re5 Bxe5 2.Qe8 (thr. Sb8+) Bb8 3.Qxe2+! Qxe2 4.Sxb8≠. I recommend the sparkling counterpoint of the same theme in defence and attack for special attention by readers. Perfect examples are rare and even less perfect ones are not common.

SOCIETY NOTICES

We welcome as new Fellows, David Friedgood and R. C. McWilliam. A warm welcome also to new Members: Alex Stewart; U. Avner and A. Ettinger (Israel); J. Antonio (Spain); Reto List (Switzerland); Anders Olsen (Sweden); and Erkki Heinonen, Ismo Lindström, Teppo Mantta and Lauri Saukko (Finland).

We regret to report that, on the grounds of health, Anthony Dickens has reluctantly resigned as Hon Sec. He is thanked most warmly for the tremendous amount of work he has done in dealing with the enormous backlog of correspondence that mounted up following Mr Chandler's illness.

Thanks are also extended to Laurence Perry who has volunteered to become Acting Hon Sec, while still retaining the treasurership. We ask readers, please, to note this change in duties, and to direct future correspondence accordingly.

As members may have noticed from the address label of the envelope in which their copies of the magazine arrive, the Society's mailing list has been computerised, and we are grateful to David Friedgood of City of London Computer Services Ltd for organising this. Inevitably there have been some errors of transcription, and members are asked to check the next label carefully, and to report any inaccuracies to Mr D. Friedgood, 14 Alton Close, Bexley, Kent DA5 3QJ. Changes of address should also be notified to him.

AGM AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Sixteen members attended the AGM on April 26. Because of Mr. Chandler's illness it was not possible to present the 1979 accounts. It was agreed that accounts would be prepared and sent

out to members as soon as possible. An increase in the subscription rate for 1981 to £5 (£7.50 fellows) was agreed. It was reported that Graham Lee and David Friedgood, the winner and runner-up in the Lloyd's Bank Solving Championship, were both willing to represent Britain in the next World Solving Championship in Yugoslavia in September. There were prospects of financial assistance from Government sources, BCF, and Lloyds Bank.

Main points from the committee meeting on May 30: it was decided unanimously to coopt Mr. Péquignot. Mr. Friedgood undertook to edit the Driver manuscript and investigate methods and costs of publication. As Mr. Chandler's accounts were still missing, in spite of a thorough search, Mr. Perry had prepared interim accounts for information. He would try to produce complete audited accounts by the time of the next meeting. Other matters such as relations with the BCF, selection of WCCT entries, guidelines for committee procedure are "in progress." NAM

WORLD CHESS COMPOSITIONS TOURNAMENT

Composers are reminded to send in their efforts to the team leader as soon as possible (see page 28, March). The address is: Dr A. C. Reeves, 23 Canons Close, Radlet, Herts.

OTHER TOURNEYS

Swiss Chess Federation announces international tourneys for two-, three-, and more-movers, helpmates, and selfmates, with judge Jean Morice. Special prize of Swiss fr 500 for best all-round composition. Send (no limit on number) to Edmond Bernard, 1302 Vufflens-la-Ville, Switzerland.

feenschach Judges for 1980 tourneys are: S≠, U. Avner; H≠2, M. Myllyniemi; H≠3 and more, M. Ott and R. List; Circe, B. Lindgren; retro and mathematical, A. S. M. Dickins; problems with fairy pieces (other than Circe), J. Mortensen and W. Jörgensen; other fairy types, judge to be announced. Peter Kniest, Postfach 10, 5144 Wegberg, West Germany.

SYNTHETICS by J. G. Grevatt

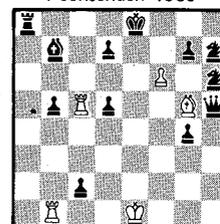
Synthetic 121 Selfmate in 2 moves. Key 1.Ba7 threat 2.Pf3+. 1. . .cR~+ 2.Qe5+. 1. . .Rc5+ 2.Qd4+. 1. . .Bf5 2.Sc5+ 1. . .Rb6 2.Qd3+. 1. . .Rxa7 2.Qc6+.

Synthetic 120 contains a cook: 1.Qxc6+ Kxd4 2.Qd5≠. Settings containing the cook will be acceptable; settings eliminating it even more so! The diagram will be held over until November.

Synthetic 119 was contributed at my request by former synthetic editor and solver Cedric Sells, from such of his work as has not appeared in *The Problemist*. It shows Black castles in (a) echoed by White castles in (b), nicely complemented by White and Black switchback respectively. Construction is very difficult and adds to my respect for helpmates. The choice of R in the stipulation was concealed; amusingly J. T. Sanderse has produced a sound version with WRs c5 and f5 in (a), with their roles switched in the mates. BSh6 stops (b) 1.Sf8 O-O 2.Qh3 f7; if BSh7 starts on g8 then BSh6 is not needed but the switchback is lost. BQh5 blocks (b) 2.Sh5 and prevents (a) 1.Kd8 ~ 2.Sf8 f7. Two solvers have used BPh5, BPg7, WBh4, BSg4 instead of BQh5, BSh6, BSh7 but again the switchback is lost. BBb7 can be on c8 saving BPd5, but then BPa7 is needed to stop (a) 1.Ra7 ~ 2.Qf7 Rxc8. BPC2 stops (a) 2. . .Rc1. Nobody uses BPg7 except the 2 solvers referred to above.

Comins Mansfield comments on **Synthetic 118** that BRe2 was placed to prevent duals after 1. . .Be2 or 1. . .Bd1. Welcome to new solvers B. Olis, Alain Biénabe and Uri Avner.

Synthetic 119
Dr C.C.L. Sells
Feenschach 1969



H≠2 (b) Rc5 to h1