

From Adam McBride

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Dear Colleagues and friends,

I am writing with the sad news that Dr David Monk passed away peacefully on Monday 3 October at the age of 90.

David was known to many as a giant and the doyen of the IMO community. At the end of this message, you will find a modified version of an article that I wrote for the UKMT Newsletter on the occasion of David's 90th birthday.

David's funeral will take place

on Thursday 20 October
at 2.30
in Mortonhall Crematorium, Edinburgh EH16 6TX.

I am liaising with David's family and, to assist with catering, it would be helpful if anyone who intends to be present could let me know as soon as possible, via the email address above.

I would also be pleased to pass on any tributes, memories or anecdotes about David that friends wish to offer. Again please send them to me via the email address above.

In some ways, this feels like the end of an era for the UK's involvement in Olympiads, and the IMO in particular, but David's influence will be with us for a long time to come.

Kind regards,
Adam.

Based on the UKMT Newsletter article in February 2022

Dr David Monk celebrated his 90th birthday on 25 February 2022. For almost 50 years he was a major figure in the world of mathematics competitions, both at home and internationally.

In 1967 the UK took part in the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) for the first time. David was involved from the start, being Deputy Leader of the UK team in 1968. He went on to attend the IMO four times as Team Leader (in 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1989) and four more times as Deputy Leader (in 1974, 1982, 1983 and 1985). He also led the UK team at the IMO substitute competition in Luxembourg in 1980. In the early days the training of the team was much less intensive than now and was run by a small group including R C Lyness, Frank Budden and David. In particular, in the late 70s and 80s David ran a correspondence course for potential team members. When the British Mathematical

Olympiad Committee (BMOC) was set up in 1991, David was a founder member. The BMOC was then subsumed into UKMT after the latter was established in 1996.

David was probably best known as an amazing composer of problems. As recently as 2016, two of his problems were used in the British Mathematical Olympiad. Some of his problems have been used in the Balkan Mathematical Olympiad, the Romanian Master of Mathematics and the Gulf Mathematical Olympiad. However, it was in the arena of the IMO that David achieved international renown. He was the author of 13 problems that appeared on IMO papers, making him the most prolific composer of IMO problems in the world ! His achievements were recognised in 2018 by the receipt of a Paul Erdős Award from the World Federation of National Mathematics Competitions.

David kept a meticulous record of all his problems in a little pocket book. They were grouped in sections and all written out in his own hand. One section contained his famous "Background Problems" which were used at the annual UKMT camp at Trinity College, Cambridge. David attended these camps regularly and he loved being back at his old college. However, perhaps the most remarkable section in the pocket book was headed "Problem Ideas", of which there are no fewer than 203(!). Also included were notes of his frequent collaborations with the late Dr Christopher Bradley.

On a personal note, David gave me my very first mathematics lecture at Edinburgh University in 1964. Little did I realise that I was to be taught by a future giant of the Olympiad scene.

Adam McBride