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In Memory of Knud Lysdal



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* 6/04/1950 † 12/04/2013

Our member Per Skjoldager has written an extensive obituary of his late friend Knud Lysdal, sharing some of his personal memories with us:

Completely unexpected to all of us, my good friend **Knud Lysdal** passed away on Friday, 12 April 2013 after a severe illness, only a few days after his 63rd birthday. He leaves a wife and three daughters.

Knud became a member of Silkeborg Chess Club at the beginning of the 60s and played actively there up to 1985. He played for their best team for 14 seasons and scored 49 points in 84 games.

Knud became the editor of the chess column in Midtjyllands avis in 1981 and he wrote about major and minor events for 25 years. Knud never took the easy way. On the contrary, he wrote in his own style in beautifully well phrased Danish about many different themes or subjects, always giving his own sharp comments and analyses.

In 1985, Knud and his wife Anne Dorte became teachers at Tjele efterskole where Knud served as a teacher of German for 4½ years. [Danish "efterskoles" are "continuation schools" following elementary school -residential schools that allow students aged 14-16 to defer going to high school while they make choices about their educational future.]

After Tjele, Knud and his wife moved to Grindsted, where they worked at a local school for some years. Later, Knud was employed at Middelfart/Fredericia Handelsskole [a secondary school of commerce] where Knud continued his work as a teacher of German.

Knud was a member of Grindsted Skakklub for some years, but it was obvious that the resistance they could offer was insignificant.

Knud became a member of Evans on 1st October 1997 and thus, we became Club mates. In his first game in the club championship, he defeated me with the White pieces. I don't remember my meeting with Knud as such, but I clearly remember the game. After the opening and a number of exchanges, it suddenly dawned on me. Knud, who was a very strong club player, saw it too - a positional blow that tied me up completely. I struggled on for about 30 more moves, but Knud never loosened his firm grip on the position.

Knud's knowledge and understanding of the game was far beyond his rating. He typically played sharp, positional openings and he often outplayed his opponents in the middle game. When he lost, it was typically because he overlooked a tactical "Gegenstoß" in time trouble.

We never played any blitz. In fact, I don't think he ever played it while we were club mates. I think Knud disliked it because it spoiled the beauty of the game.

During the years we met many times over the board. Often we would play our games privately and always in my "reading room". At nine o'clock precisely we would stop the clock and enjoy a cup of coffee, a piece of cake and a "grown up" Cognac. Always a Black Renault. Then we would talk about our mutual interests and often it would be the middle of the night before we finished our game.

After the game we would typically analyse it the "Knud Lysdal way". He once told me that he was "slightly annoyed" over the way his opponents "analysed" their games with him. He said that they tend to start the same game again and again, fiercely insisting on specific variations, instead of simply exchanging the various ideas they had during the game. And so did we - exchanging our ideas, sometimes however, falling into the trap of discussing specific lines.

The last time I met Knud over the board was in a small local tournament in Fredericia where we shared 2nd place. On that occasion, Knud defeated me with the Black pieces.



Knud Lysdal (Braunschweig, June 2006)

After we became club mates, it soon turned out that we shared a lot of interests. We often talked during the club evenings and one day, Knud agreed to my idea about going on a visit to Karlsbad. This was while Jørn Erik and I worked on the research on our Nimzowitsch book and it turned out that Knud would accompany me on many chess "excavations" over the years to follow.

Our first trip went to Munich, then Karlsbad and finally to Berlin where we worked at the newspaper library. We arrived late in the evening at the central station at the Berlin Zoo. I had booked in advance two single rooms at an economy hotel nearby (I thought). When we asked the taxi drivers to take us to the address of our hotel, they just shook their head. They had never heard of it, and had no idea of its location. At that point, I was pretty upset. Knud looked at the description of the Hotel, and he had a good laugh when it became clear I had mixed up "Tiergarten" [animal park] with the "Zoo". Finally we hired a Taxi to drive us to our hotel, and after a long ride all the way through Berlin to the outskirts of the former eastern part, we finally arrived at the hotel.

At the hotel it took me quite a while to calm down. But Knud took out his pocket chess set, opened the minibar and found two beers and invited me to sit down for a game. Of course, after a few minutes my calm was restored and we had a wonderful stay at this modest little Hotel. In fact, we always came back to this specific Hotel on our future excavations and I know Knud recommended it to family and friends.



Having a "Pilsner Urquell" in the Hotel Imperial [Photo courtesy of Per Skjoldager]

On this trip, Knud revealed his love for German classical food. One day in Berlin he took out a small paper note from his wallet and he told me that he had once (many years before) been to this specific restaurant, probably nearby, where they served the most wonderful "Knödel" [dumplings]. We had to find it! We

searched the streets for quite a long time, but finally gave up. We found a good replacement though. German food and beer became a mandatory part of all future excavations and even on our tours to Braunschweig, we now and then enjoyed "Das volle Programm" which was a major feast of "Kraut, Fleisch und Wurst".

At the library, I had a long list of microfilms I had to see. Knud wanted to give me a hand and requested instructions. I gave him a number of rolls and began my work. I knew pretty much what I was looking for and went forward with my work. I passed through one roll after the other, one chess column following another. When we arrived at lunch time I asked Knud if he would join me for a break, but he was completely absorbed in his work. He had diligently taken notes on everything he had found but he was still on roll number one. He confessed that he had lost himself in some interesting stuff he had found in the newspaper and he enthusiastically told me about his findings. It was interesting of course, but it rarely had anything to do with the subject we were looking for. This scenario repeated itself almost every day, but at the end of the day we were both very pleased at what we had found, each of us, in our own way.



"Old friends" Knud

Lysdal and Per Skjoldager (Braunschweig, 2006)

Knud, our Danish Expert.

One of the first times Knud and I were attending the auction in Braunschweig was in June 2006. It was a beautiful day, and all our assembled chess friends were in high spirits in the evening after a very successful trip to Ströbeck. Our mutual friends would soon learn that Knud also liked a good laugh. As usual we met with the other suspects in the evening at the Italian restaurant in the Hotel "Deutsches Haus". Detlef Krämer from Cologne was among the participants and he had brought a pile of duplicate books which he passed on to the people sitting around the table. Knud was one of the first in line, and he rapidly flicked through the pages several times, turned the book in his hands and appeared to weigh it carefully before he loudly said: "Ahh-haah - a typical binding from Cologne". Jurgen Stigter, who was eagerly awaiting his turn to inspect the treasure, took the bait. "How can you say that?" he asked in amazement. With the eye of an expert, Knud addressed the people at the table and said: "He is clearly a beginner". Jurgen, who hardly noticed the *insult*, wanted to have clarity; "Yes, yes, but how can you say that?" Knud looked at him for a

moment and then he said: "Because the bookbinder's tag says so".

From that day on, Knud was known as "our Danish expert", but people seem to have forgotten about "the beginner".



Again on a visit to the Klittich-Pfankuch auction - time to relax ... (Braunschweig, June 2007)



In company of IM Bernd Schneider - and in a very good temper (Braunschweig, November 2012)

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One more experience comes to my mind very often when I think about Knud. It happened on our second trip to Karlsbad, when we had originally planned a visit to Marienbad too. But we changed our mind because we had learned about a very interesting exhibition we both wanted to visit. In Leipzig (which has a major library), the exhibition "Das Leben der Anderen" (an exhibition about the regime in the DDR) had been extended for some days and we decided to go there. We spent almost the entire day at the exhibition and we were both quite overwhelmed with the impressions we experienced.

When we passed by the Nikolaikirche (where the uprising against the government began) we decided to step inside. We entered the church and sat down. We just sat there for more than half an hour lost in our own thoughts. Neither of us said anything. When we got outside again we agreed that such peace was a blessing.

This is how I remember Knud. Always friendly and approachable. Always ready to share his vast knowledge with a friend. Always good company.

May he rest in peace.