

# British Endgame Study News

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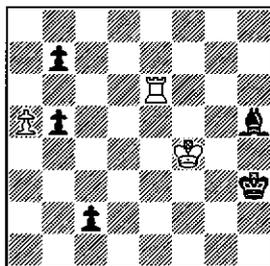
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**This issue.** We look at some studies by John Nunn, and present the second of Paul Michelet's "answer next time" originals from the November *BCM* (do try this before looking inside). The special number pays tribute to the computer, and looks at some of the many beautiful things it has uncovered for us. And this being March, my annual **book list** is enclosed.

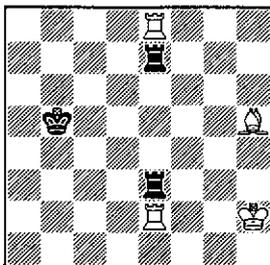
**Spotlight.** Readers who have been with us from the beginning will remember the study by Emil Vlasák and Michal Hlinka which I quoted in June 1996 and which ended in the spectacular position alongside (White has just played Rd2-e2 to clinch the win). The advent of the definitive seven-man endgame tables calculated by Marc Bourzutschky and Yakov Konoval has caused studies ending with this material to be re-evaluated, and in an article for *Československý šach* Emil has had to report that the spectacular finish is unnecessary; White has a win by other means as well (for example, Re8-c8). Apparently this move had been previously suggested as a possibility by Frank Korostenski, White's position becoming very strong, but analytic proof was lacking and the matter had to be dropped as inconclusive.

It doesn't apply in this particular case (White can reduce to a simpler winning ending in at most 26 moves), but Emil has suggested invoking the 50-move rule to cut out at least some busts of this sort. Well, perhaps, but I think I would prefer to see "Win within  $n$  moves" where  $n$  is whatever the particular circumstances demand. However it may be done, there is a place for studies which highlight finales like this, even if we have to find a way of excluding intricate and long-winded alternatives that are incomprehensible without artificial aid.

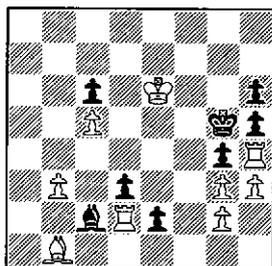
**Large print copies.** Readers are reminded that I can supply *BESN* in large print, and any reader who would prefer to receive it in this form is asked to tell me.



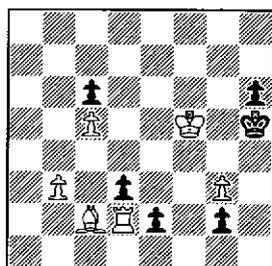
by Paul Michelet  
White to play and draw



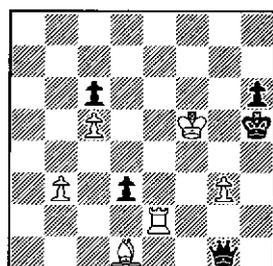
## Recently published British originals



1 - win



1a - after 3...hgx2

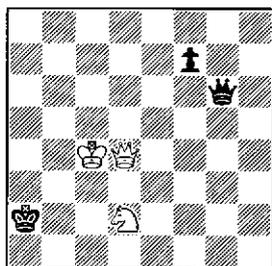


1b - after 5 Rxc2

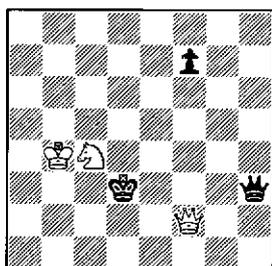
Yochanan Afek has been finding it hard to attract British studies to *The Problemist*, but the January issue contained examples from both ends of the composing spectrum. I am going to start with the relatively easy **1**, by Caspar Bates, which was announced as a first published composition. The opening moves **1 Rxb5+ Kxb5 2 Kf5 gxb3 3 Bxc2** are soon found, and if **3...e1Q** then **4 Bd1+** wins Black's new queen and White will mop up. The challenging line is **3...hgx2** threatening ...g1Q, and we have **1a**.

If now **4 Bxd3** then **4...e1Q**, and **5 Rxc2** can be met by ...Qf1+ or ...Qf2+ since B/RxQ will be stalemate. If **4 Rd1** then **4...d2**, and after **5 Rg1 e1Q** even **6 Bd1+** fails (**6...Qxd1 7 Rxd1 g1Q 8 Rxc2 d1Q** with **9 Rxd1** stalemate or **9 g4+ Qxc4+ 10 Rxc4** stalemate). But White also has the pin **4 Bd1** (**4...exd1Q 5 Rxd1** and White will have time to release the stalemate), and after **4...g1Q** he can play **5 Rxc2** with mate in two more moves (see **1b**). Why not **4 Rxc2**, intending **4...g1Q 5 Bd1** and the same? Because Black can play **4...dxe2**, and if **5 Be4** then **5...g1N**.

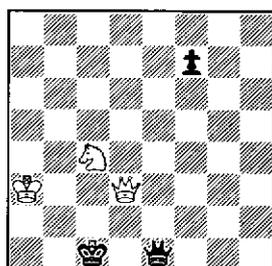
Blood and thunder, certainly, but enjoyable blood and thunder, and I hope the composer will favour us with more.



2 - win



2a - after 5...Kd3



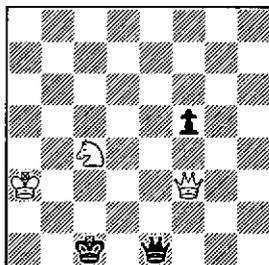
2b - after 12 Ka3

The other was a queen-and-knight blockbuster by John Nunn, with eight non-checking moves in the main line and well over twenty variations and subvariations. Fortunately readers who do not see *The Problemist* can use the Nalimov tablebases on Eiko Bleicher's site [www.k4it.de](http://www.k4it.de) if they want to check out the sidelines, so I can omit

them here and concentrate on the main thread. My own perception has been greatly aided by the notes in *The Problemist*.

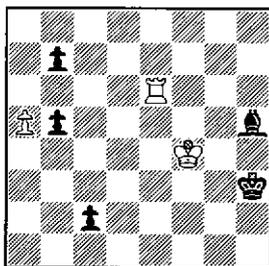
Play unfolds **1 Kb4** (threat Qc4+) **Qe6 2 Qa7+ Kb2 3 Qc5** (threat Qc3+) **Qh3 4 Nc4+ Kc2 5 Qf2+ Kd3** (see 2a) **6 Qe1 Qe6 7 Ne5+ Kc2 8 Qe2+ Kb1 9 Qf1+** (there are time-wasting alternatives at various points from here on, but White must always come back to the main line if he wants to make progress) **Kc2 10 Qd3+ Kc1 11 Nc4 Qe1+ 12 Ka3** and we have reached the key point of the study (see 2b).

King and queen moves soon lose, so Black must move his pawn, and it turns out that the position with **wQf3** and **bPf5** (see 2c alongside) is reciprocal zugzwang. Hence **12...f6** (12...f5 13 Qf3) **13 Qh3!** (13 Qf3? f5! and if 14 Ka2 then 14...Qe4 and White will be unable to make progress) **f5 14 Qf3 f4** (the natural move to give as "main line" because it highlights the difference between 13 Qf3? f5! and 13 Qh3! f5 14 Qf3, though in fact it turns out to lose more quickly than some others) **15 Ka2** (this move has become possible because Black can no longer play ...Qe4) **Qb4 16 Qxf4+** with either **16...Kd1 17 Nb2+** or (I think) **16...Kc2 17 Na3+** winning the queen (but not 17 Ne3+, when 17...Kc1 makes White go round again because 18 Qxb4?? would be stalemate).

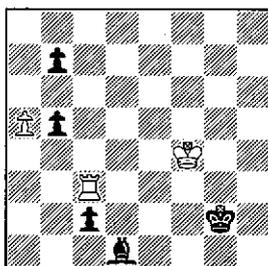


2c - reciprocal zugzwang

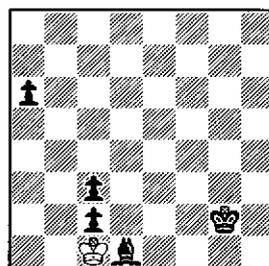
I might add that I have every sympathy with Yochanan; I found it just as hard to attract French compositions when I was study editor of *diagrammes*. In the first few issues after Olivier Ronat took over, he printed studies from at least three French composers who had never sent me anything at all.



3 - draw



3a - after 2...Bd1

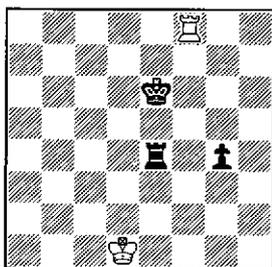


3b - after 6 Kc1

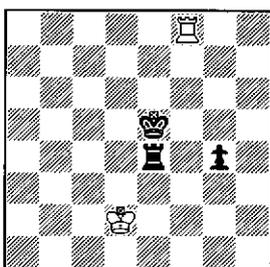
Paul Michelet's 3 is rather easier; how did you get on? White can stop Black's advanced pawn by **1 Re3+ Kg2 2 Rc3**, but Black can defend it by **2...Bd1** (see 3a), and will not the advance of the pawn on b5 be decisive? No, **3 a6** defuses it, because after **3...bxa6 4 Ke3** White can meet **4...b4** by **5 Kd2!** leaving the rook to its fate. Now **5...bxc3+ 6 Kc1** sets up a stalemate (see 3b), and if Black releases it White will capture both the c-pawns and draw against the a-pawn and the wrong bishop. Black can try **2...Bg6** instead, but it is no better and in fact gives White alternative options. The stalemate is well known (the classic realisation is by W. Korteling, *Tijdschrift v.d. KNSB* 1942), but the addition of the a-pawn gives a new twist.

## John Nunn's endgame studies

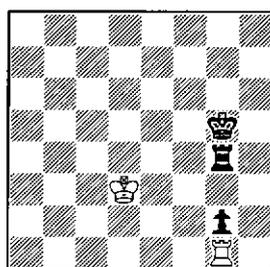
John Nunn recently published *Grandmaster Chess Move by Move*, the third of three books containing the best games from his now concluded professional career, and the book includes a chapter containing some of his endgame studies. I say "some of" because two of my favourites are not there (the king triangulation queen-and-knight study which graced the front page of our special number 10 back in 1998, and the pawn-one against a distant Black knight which Alain Villeneuve quoted last March in his selection from 1995-97), and on reading the accompanying text I see why not: he decided to exclude studies arising from his work on 5-man databases apart from a handful which were entered in study tournaments. True, they can all be found in his "Secrets of" books, but they have to be dug out from a large amount of other material, and it is a pity that he did not take the opportunity to repeat at least the half-dozen most exciting. They are well worth a second airing.



1 - draw



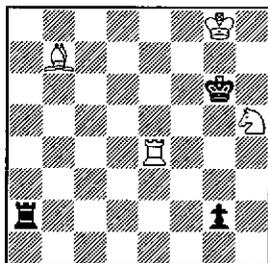
1a - after 1 Kd2 Ke5



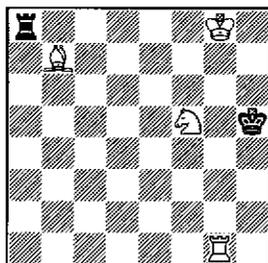
1b - 2 Rf7, after 6...Kg5

One that did satisfy the criterion was **1** (Special HM *Schakend Nederland* 1992). If we play the natural 1 Kd2 Kc5 we have **1a**, and every White move proves to have a disadvantage. 2 Rf7 brings the rook closer to the Black king, and after 2...g3 3 Kd3 Rg4 4 Re7+ Black can stop White's checks while his king is still near enough to win (4...Kf6 5 Re1 g2 6 Rg1 Kg5 etc, see **1b**); 2 Kd3 exposes the king to check from f3, allowing 2...Rf4 and if 3 Rg8 then 3...Rf3+ and 4...Kf4; 2 Kd1 loses contact with d3 and again allows 2...g3 (3 Rf1 Rf4 4 Rg1 Rf3 5 Ke2 Kf4). So it's **1 Kc2** (lovely move!) **Ke5 2 Kd2**, and now we have **1a** with Black to play. Try 2...g3 as before: no, **3 Kd3 Rg4 4 Re8+ Kf6 5 Rf8+ Ke7 6 Rf1 g2 7 Rg1**, and because Black has had to go further to suppress White's checks he can no longer get back to g5 as in **1b**, and his pawn will fall. Try 2...Rf4: no, 3 Rg8, and there is no tempo-gaining check on f3. And if Black plays 1...Rd4 trying to keep White one file further from the pawn, White has 2 Kc3 Rd7 3 Rf4 Rg7 4 Kd3 g3 5 Rf1 g2 6 Rg1 and again he gets across in time.

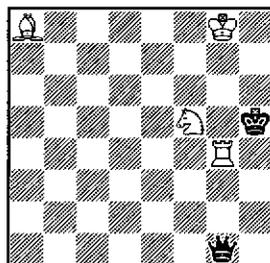
John's other studies appear in full, starting with some unpublished compositions from his schooldays. But he has been highly selective with his games; why not so with his studies? It is not that these early studies were bad, but they are not in the same class as his best, and by putting them first and setting them for solution I fear he will cause readers to lose interest and drop out before they reach the really good stuff.



2 - win



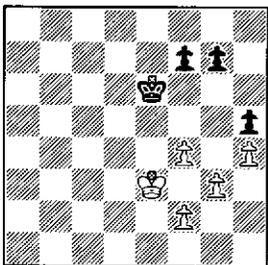
2a - 1...g1Q, after 4...Ra8+



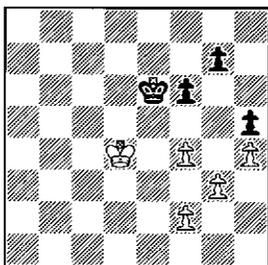
2b - main line, after 4...Kh5

For good things there undoubtedly are, as *BESN* has several times borne witness. One that we seem to have missed is 2 (*Schaakbulletin* 1982). The way to stop the pawn is 1 Ng3 with an eye to 1...g1Q 2 Rg4+ and a knight check, and if Black plays for stalemate by 2...Kh6 3 Nf5+ Kh5 4 Rxg1 Ra8+, as in 2a, it can be avoided by 5 Kf7 Rf8+ 6 Ke6 Rf6+ 7 Ke5 Re6+ 8 Kd4 (simplest) Re4+ 9 Kd3.

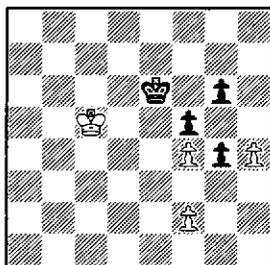
But Black can sacrifice his rook earlier, 1...Ra8+ 2 Bxa8, and now 2...g1Q 3 Rg4+ Kh6 4 Nf5+ Kh5 gives 2b and the queen seems inviolable - ah, 5 Rg3 and the check on f3 nets her another way (but not Rg2 or Rg7, when ...Qd1 holds the position).



3 - win



3a - after 1...f6



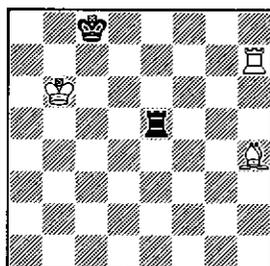
3b - after 5 Kc5

In 1999, John presented a set of king-and-pawn endings as a challenge in the *BCM*. We saw two in the March 2000 *BESN*, and 3 provides a third. Try 1 Ke4: no, 1...f5+ 2 Kd4 Kd6, and Black keeps the opposition. So it's probably 1 Kd4, and if 1...Kd6 then 2 Ke4 Ke6 3 f5+ and it's easy. Try 1...Kf5 2 f3 Ke6: no, 3 g4 wins (if 3...g6 then 4 f5+ etc). Try 1...g6: no, the outflanking move 2 Kc5 wins. But after 1...f6 (see 3a) the outflanking 2 Kc5 can be met by 2...Kf5 (John gives details); what now?

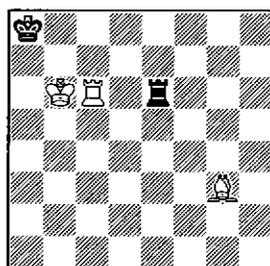
The answer is the wholly remarkable 2 g4!! Lines other than 2...hxg4 3 Ke4 f5+ 4 Kd4 g6 give no trouble, and after 5 Kc5 (see 3b) White can manoeuvre his king to e5 and then advance his h-pawn (given is 5...Kd7 6 Kd5 Ke7 7 Ke5 Kf7 8 h5 gxh5 9 Kxf5 Ke7 10 Kg5 Ke6 11 f5+! Ke5 12 f6 and after 12...Ke6 there are various ways to win). Why not g4 at move 1, since 1...hxg4 2 Kd4 will transpose? Because 1...f5! holds the draw: 2 hxg5 Kd5 and Black will patrol c5/d5, or 2 g5 Kd5 and the same.

John's best studies are very fine, and in omitting some of the most interesting, and diluting the rest with lesser material, he has done himself rather less than justice.

## From the world at large

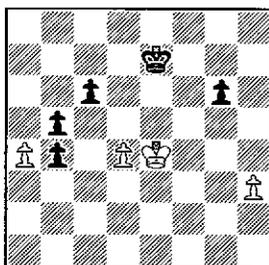


1 - win

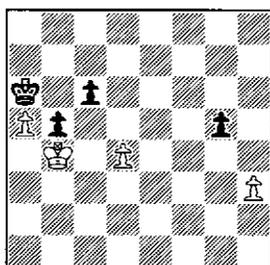


1a - after 3...Ka8

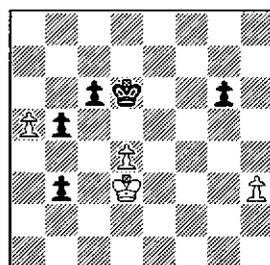
The January issue of *The Problemist* reported the death of Vladimir Archakov, the Ukrainian writer and composer who was co-author with Mikhail Zinar of that lovely little book *The harmony of the pawn study* (Kiev 1990). Most of his studies were joints, usually with Zinar, but **1** (EG 1982) was a neat little trifle which appeared under his name alone. **1** **Rc7+ Kb8** is obvious, and **2** **Bg3** is the only way to make progress. Black has nothing better than **2...Re6+**, but after **3** **Rc6+** he can set a stalemate trap with **3...Ka8** (see **1a**). What now? Ah, **4** **Bd6**, and after **4...Re8** (what else?) White has **5** **Kc7** and mate in a few. The stalemate trick and counter had been exploited before, but on the evidence of Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database III" only in a more complicated position with extra men on the board.



2 - win

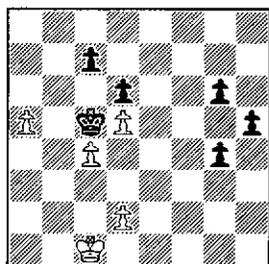


2a - 1...Kd6, after 5...g5

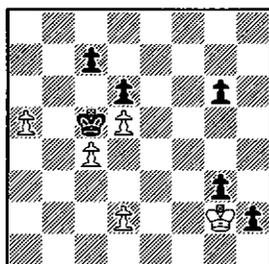


2b - main line, after 2...Kd6

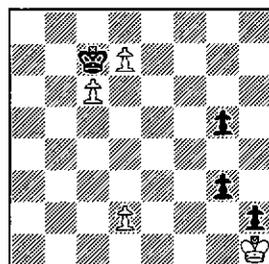
**2** (Archakov and Zinar, *Nauka i Zhizn* 1986) is more typical. **1** **a5** is obvious, and if **1...Kd6** **2** **Kd3 Kc7** then **3-4** **Kb3 Ka6** **5** **Kxb4 g5** (this has given **2a**, which looks like reciprocal zugzwang but isn't) **6** **Kc5 Kxa5** **7** **Kxc6 b4** **8-10** **d7 b1Q** **11** **d8Q+ Ka4** **12** **Qa8+** followed by **13-14** **Qxb1+ Kxb1** and **15-18** **Kxg5**. More testing is **1...b3** (or **1...Kd6** **2** **Kd3 b3**, which transposes), and after **2** **Kd3 Kd6** we have **2b**. If White now plays the natural **3** **Kc3**, Black can play **3...c5!** and neutralize the d-pawn; White's normal counter would be **4** **a6 Kc-** **5** **d5** winning at once, but on **c3** his king is exposed to check and Black can interpolate **4...cxd4+**. Hence **3** **Kd2!** and if **3...g5** then **4** **Kc1**, after which we soon arrive at **2a** again.



3 - win



3a - after 4...g3



3b - after 10...g5

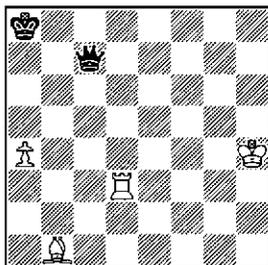
Play in 3 (Archakov and Zinar, *Nauka i Zhizn* 1986) starts **1 Kd1 h4 2 Ke2**, and if **2...g3** then **3 Kf3** followed by **4 d4+** and it's easy. Hence **2...h3**, and after **3 Kf2 h2 4 Kg2 g3** we have **3a**. Now **5 d4+** fails, because after **5...Kxd4 6 a6** Black has **6...Ke3** followed by a mate (**7 a7 h1Q+ 8 Kxh1 Kf2** etc). White must therefore leave his d-pawn at home to guard e3, and play **5 Kh1**.

Black will have to play **...c6** sooner or later and in fact it makes no difference when he chooses, so let's do it straight away: **5...c6**. White can now break things up on the Q side, and gain two pawns for one by playing **6 a6 Kb6 7 c5+! Kxa6 8 cxd6 Kb6 9 d7 Kc7 10 dxc6**. The given move is now **10...g5** (playing **...Kd8** instead makes no difference), and we have **3b**.

If now **11 d4** then **11...Kd8 12 d5 Kc7 13 d6+ Kd8 14 Kg2 g4 15 Kh1 g2+ 16 Kxg2 g3**, and Black will sacrifice his pawns for stalemate. So it's a "festina lente": **11 d3! Kd8 12 d4 Kc7 13 d5 Kd8 14 d6 g4 15 Kg2 h1Q+ 16 Kxh1 g2+ 17 Kxg2** and Black's move **17...g3** gives White time for **18 e7+** releasing the stalemate.

**World Chess Composition Tournament.** The British entry for the study section is again being co-ordinated by David Sedgwick (23 Tierney Court, Canning Road, Croydon CRO 6QA, david.sedgwick@amservice.com). The set theme is as follows:

"In a position in the main line of a win or draw study where an unprotected white or black piece A is directly attacked, White or Black instantaneously (right on the following move) places another piece B (of the same colour as A) en prise (again unprotected and directly attacked). This thematic move, resulting in the two white or the two black pieces A & B hanging, must be a quiet one, i.e. not a check nor a capture. A and B may be any pieces except pawns. If an attacked piece is also guarded, the subsequent elimination of this guard (by interference, capture, withdrawal, pin, etc.) cannot by itself be considered thematic." A thematic example (G. M. Kasparian, 1 Pr *Magyar Sakkélet* 1969) appears as 4 alongside: **1 Kg4 Qc8+ 2 Kf3 Qb7+ 3 Rd5** (the thematic move) **Qxb1 4 Ra5+ Kb7 5 Rb5+**.



4 - draw

To facilitate discussion at *EG* readers' meetings, David would like contributions by "20th June if ready, 20th September if possible and 20th December at the latest".

## News and notices

**Other magazines.** Readers may subscribe to *EG* for 2006 by paying £17 in sterling to myself (cheques payable to "J D Beasley" please). The British Chess Problem Society is primarily concerned with problems, but its magazine *The Problemist* includes endgame studies and its bookselling service normally has study books among its stock. The UK subscription for 2006 is £18 (new members £15, under 21 £7.50); Stephen Taylor, Greenways, Cooling St., Cliffe, Rochester ME3 7UB.

**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, o\_ronat@hotmail.com).

**Meetings.** The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **\*\*Friday March 31\*\*** (please note the unusual date, not the first or second Friday of the quarter) at 6.00 pm. Non-subscribers welcome, but please bring £5 towards the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring the latest *EG* with you.

**Mike Bent Memorial Tourney.** Reminder to composers: entries (any theme) should reach Adam Sobey, c/o 12 Allee Drive, Liphook, Hants GU30 7YD, by **30 June**. For the **World Chess Composition Tournament** see page 327.

**Spotlight continued.** It was reported in *EG* 158 that the judge of the Sarychev-95 Memorial Tourney (see September, page 311) changed his mind in the final award, and gave "special" honours to studies which could have been mined from databases.

**Citation of sources.** Notice to anybody quoting from *BESN*. When writing my review in December 2004 of Timothy Whitworth's new book on Kubbel, I drew attention to his scrupulous citing not only of the original source of each composition but of the source he had actually used if he had been unable to consult the original. Such standards of scholarship are not claimed by *BESN*. I certainly check the original source of something I quote if it is conveniently available to me (in particular, the BCPS Library gives me access to all the *Chess Amateur* and to nearly all the *BCM*), but in general I rely silently and without further acknowledgement on the information given in Harold van der Heijden's invaluable "Endgame study database III" or in whatever other secondary source has brought the item to my attention.

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