

British Endgame Study News

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World Chess Solving 2007. Champion, John Nunn; team champions, Great Britain (John, Jonathan Mestel, David Friedgood). Our congratulations once again.

This issue. The award in Mike Bent's memorial tourney has appeared, and I think we should reproduce the leading studies even though I found the standard rather disappointing. Timothy Whitworth has taken up a comment I made on one of the Behting studies in special number 52, the special number completes our trawl through British studies of the past, and there is an updated composite index

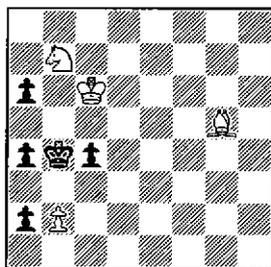
Recently published British originals. There is only Caspar Bates's study above, published in *EG* 170, very light but enjoyable to solve. Answer on the back page.

Legal deposit. I have received excellent service from the legal deposit libraries over the years, and I do not have the slightest objection to honouring my obligation to supply legal deposit copies of *BESN*; indeed, I feel mildly flattered by the implication that some future reader may wish to consult them. I have every objection, after doing exactly what I am supposed to have done, to receiving unsigned computer-produced letters from the Agency for the Legal Deposit Libraries citing legislation and calling for material which has already been sent. This has now happened three times, and my protest on the second occasion resulted only in another unsigned computer-produced letter repeating the call and reminding me that it was the second time of asking.

I have accordingly written to the libraries represented by the Agent (the British Library itself has a separate receiving office, about which I have no complaint) to say that when *BESN* ceases publication, either I or my representative will contact them and will make good any gap in their holdings however this may have occurred, but that I am not prepared to respond to piecemeal demands from an Agent in whose ability to process material and keep accurate records I no longer have confidence.

Accounts for 2007. The gradual increase in costs has finally caught up with us, and I am having to charge UK readers £8 for the year (£9 to the rest of Europe, £11 elsewhere). There is a reminder letter with this issue if your subscription has run out; if there isn't, please assume that you remain in credit until told otherwise.

Spotlight has had to migrate to the back page.



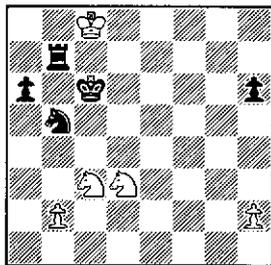
by Caspar Bates
White to play and win

Mike Bent's memorial tourney

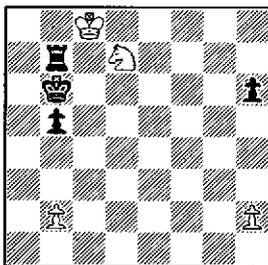
The memorial tourney for Mike Bent was promoted by the British Chess Problem Society, and the BCPS devoted four pages of the September issue of its magazine *The Problemist* to the tourney award. This included the startling statement that one of the judges originally appointed, John Roycroft, had withdrawn because he had felt unable to accept the view of his colleagues as to how positions extracted from computer-generated databases should be treated. Such an occurrence would have been unfortunate at any time and was particularly so in the context of a memorial tourney to a major and much loved figure, and I may come back to it next time. However, the remaining judges, David Friedgood and Timothy Whitworth, were men of competence and standing, and I think *BESN* ought at least to reproduce the studies to which they gave prizes and honourable mentions.

The tourney attracted 40 entries from 28 composers in 17 countries, figures which some of us read with considerable relief. We had feared that the absence of an e-mail address for contributions would severely reduce the entry, and it was good to read that the esteem in which Mike was held was apparently sufficient to overcome this. The tourney director, Adam Sobey, reported that many competitors had accompanied their entries with personal plaudits on Mike's achievements, or had remembered with gratitude his help to young composers or recalled their pleasure at meeting him.

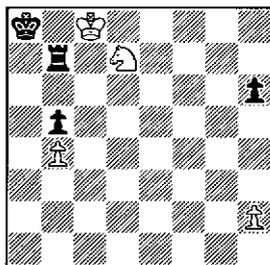
As regards quality, matters were less happy. The judges' summary speaks of a "reasonably good standard", but this is putting something of a brave face on things. The level drops off markedly after the leading few, and even these are hardly of the quality which one hopes to find at the head of a major memorial tourney.



1 - draw



1a - after 3 Nd7+



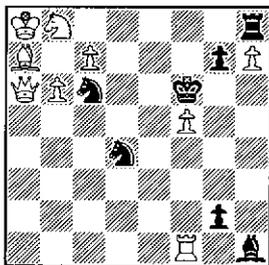
1b - after 4...Ka8

The first prizewinner and first HM share a controversial feature best discussed separately, so let us start by looking at the second prizewinner. This is 1, by the American composer C. Bill Jones. The Black king is tied to the defence of b7 and so can be harassed, but there is no immediate perpetual check, and if White starts 1 Nb4+ Black can eventually extricate himself and win (there is analysis in the tourney award). 1 Ne5+ Kb6, therefore, but further checks on a4, c4, or d5 lead nowhere and if White tries 2 Nd7+ Black wins by giving up rook for knight (2...Rxd7 3 Kxd7 Nxc3, and if 4 bxc3 then 4...Kc5 and 5...a5 etc). But White can interpolate the exchange

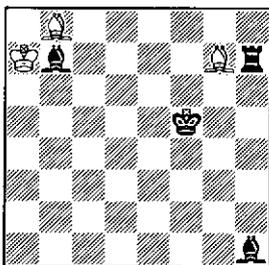
2 Nxb5 axb5, and now **3 Nd7+** is playable (see **1a**) because the pawn ending after **3...Rxd7 4 Kxd7** is safely drawn. **3...Kc6** allows **4 Ne5+ Kb6 5 Nd7+** repeating and **3...Ka6** loses the rook, hence **3...Ka7**, and after **4 b4 Ka8** we have reached the heart of the study (see **1b**).

Nullify the h-pawns, and this will be reciprocal zugzwang. Black to play cannot extricate his rook, since **...Ra7** allows mate on the move, and if **...Ka7** then **Kd8** and the occupation of **a7** by the king means that again the rook has no move. But White to play will have only **Kd8**, after which the pressure will be released and Black will be able to play **...Ra7**. So in the actual position White must play **5 h3**, and when the pawn moves have run out it will be Black to play: **5...h5 6 h4 Ka7 7 Kd8 Ka8 8 Kc8**.

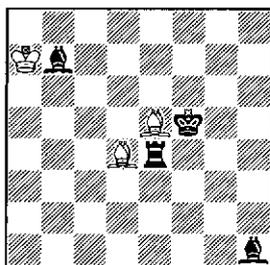
This isn't a bad little study, far from it, but second prize in a major memorial tourney? The final stage is amusing and apparently original, but the study as a whole is far too static to deserve a top honour; the White king and Black rook are in position from the outset, and the Black knight on **b5** is captured without having moved. The study would have been in a wholly different class had the rook moved to **b7** in the course of play and forced the White king to choose between **c8** and **d8**, integrating the tempo play with the construction of the final tableau instead of leaving it to be provided through the essentially add-on mechanism of the h-pawns.



2 - BTM, White to draw



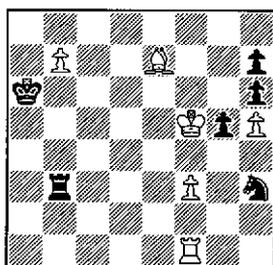
2a - after 6...Rxb7



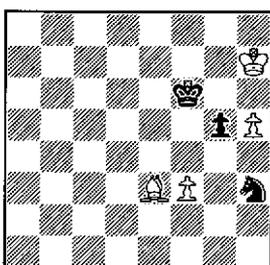
2b - after 9 Bge5

There are two equal 2nd HMs, of which Gregory Slepian's **2** is an out-and-out grotesque where achievement of the task is everything and constructional inelegancies are irrelevant. **1...Nxb8 2 cxb8B** (2 cxb8Q gxf1Q+ 3 b7+ Qxa6 and mate next move) **gxf1B+** (but now **2...gxf1Q+ 3 b7+ Qxa6** is stalemate) **3 b7+ Bxa6 4 Bxd4+ Kxf5 5 Bxg7 Baxb7+ 6 Ka7 Rxb7** (see **2a**) **7 Bbe5 Rh4 8 Bd4 Re4 9 Bge5** (see **2b**) and the main line continues for six more moves, but it soon becomes obvious that White can play to keep the rook below the diagonal **a1-h8**. The award draws attention to a previous double-underpromotion study by the same composer (those who receive *EG* will find it in *EG* 164), but the amusing finale is new.

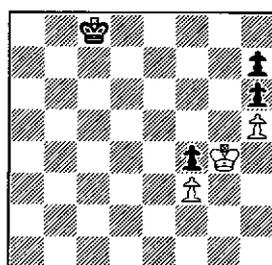
Would Mike have enjoyed this? On the face of it, the study would seem more suited to a Lommer Memorial than to a Bent, but Mike enjoyed exotic repetitions and he seems to have been the first to look at the ending **2B + N v N** with bishops on squares of the same colour. Walter Vcitch did the analysis and the resulting study appeared jointly (see the front page of our special number 28), but the inspiration would appear to have been Mike's.



3 - win

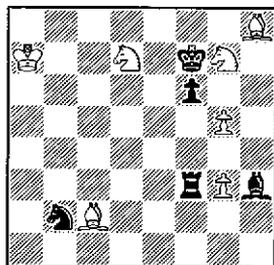


3a - 1 b8Q, after 10 Kxh7

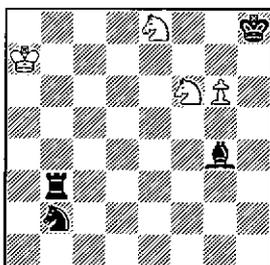


3b - main line, after 7 gxf4

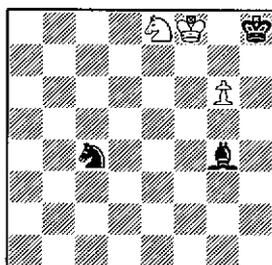
The other 2nd HM is Vitaly Kovalenko's 3. Try 1 b8Q Rxb8 2 Ra1+ Kb7 3 Rb1+ Kc8 4 Rxb8+ Kxb8 5 Bc5 shutting in the knight (5...Nf4 6 Bd6+): no, the tourney award gives 5...Kc7 6 Be3 Kd6 7 Kf6 Kd5 8 Kg7 Ke6 9 Kxh6 Kf6 10 Kxh7 (see 3a) Kf7 11 Kh6 Kf6 12 Bd2 Ng1 13 Bxg5+ Kf7 14 f4 Ne2 15 Kh7 Ng3 16 h6 Nf5, and Black can hold out despite having become two pawns down. But 1 Kg4 forces 1...Nf4 at once, and now 2 b8Q Rxb8 3 Ra1+ Kb7 4 Rb1+ Kc8 5 Rxb8+ Kxb8 6 Bd6+ Kc8 7 Bxf4 gxf4 takes off all the pieces and leaves Black's pawns open to the wolf (see 3b). True, White has to be careful; 8 Kxf4 is soon seen only to draw, and after 8-10 Kg7 Kd5 he must take in order h7/h6 so that he can then attack the f-pawn, 11 Kxh7 Kd4 12 Kxh6 Ke3 13 Kg5. Now, after 13...Kxf3 14 h6, Black can only play to g3 or e3, and White can come down to a Q v Pf2 win. But this is routine textbook stuff, and only Black's ability to hold out from 3a is at all surprising.



4 - win

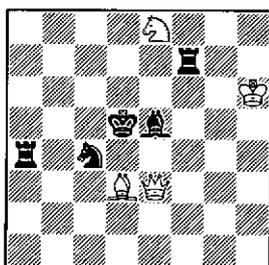


4a - after 5 Nge8

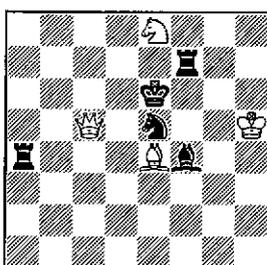


4b - after 11 Nxe8

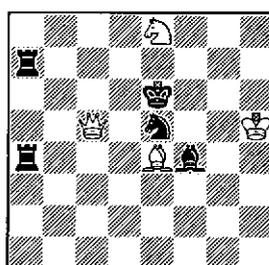
Gerhard Josten and Martin Minski's 4th HM is more to my personal taste, at least in its later stages, though the position is untidy and the passive bishop on h8 most regrettable. 1 g6+ (the only note is "1 g4? fxg5") Kg8 2 g4 (to make Black block the g-file) Bxg4 3 Bb3+ Rxb3 4 Nxf6+ Kxh8 5 Nge8 and White threatens mate, see 4a, but 5...Ra3+ makes him play accurately. 6 Kb8 (the light squares are poisoned, and 6 Kb6 allows 6...Nc4+) Rb3+ 7 Kc7 Rc3+ 8 Kd6 (letting the Black knight into play, but now its move blocks its rook) Nc4+ (8...Rd3+ 9 Ke7 Rd7+ 10 Nxd7 Bxd7 11 Kf8 and the same finish as the main line) 9 Ke7 Re3+ 10 Kf8 Rxe8+ 11 Nxe8 gives 4b, and if Black plays 11...Be6 to cover g8, 12 Nf6 shows that White was also threatening mate in two. Accurate king walks always appeal to me.



5 - win

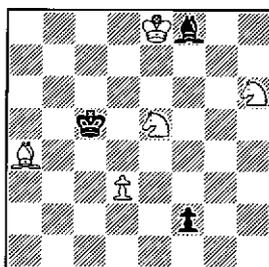


5a - after 4 Kh5

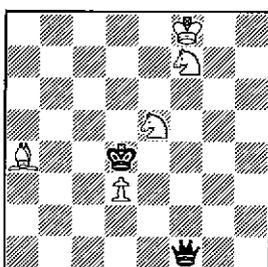


5b - after 4...Rf7

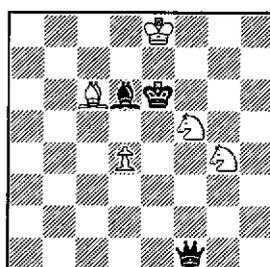
Now to the two controversial studies. Yuri Bazlov's 5 gained 1st HM. Play starts **1 Be4+ Ke6 2 Qc5 Bf4+ 3 Kg6 Ne5+ 4 Kh5** (see 5a) and the "main line" is **4...Rxe4** allowing **5 Qd6+ Kf5 6 Qf6+ Rxf6 7 Ng7 mate**, but why is Black so greedy? How will White win after the simple defensive move **4...Rf7** keeping 2R v Q (see 5b)? Given is **5 Bd5+ Kd7 6 Nf6+ Kd8 7 Be6 R4a5 8 Qb6+ Ke7 9 Ng8+ Kf8 10 Qd8+ Kg7 11 Qf6+ Kh7 12 Ne7**, an eight-move line ending in a move which is not a check. Can we really expect a Black who has seen all this to walk into check-check-mate?



6 - win



6a - 1 Kxf8, after 2...Kd4



6b - main line, after 5 Ng4

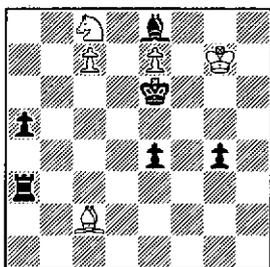
In the first prizewinner, also by Bazlov, **1 Kxf8** is met by **1...f1Q+ 2 Nhf7 Kd4** with various lines (see 6a), the solution starts **1 Nf5 f1Q 2 Bd7**, and the point, not stated in the tourney report, appears to be that Black must now save his bishop because he can no longer blockade the d-pawn on d3 (in other words, **B + 2N + P v Q** is generally won, 6a is an exceptional draw). If we accept this, play continues **2...Bd6 3 d4+ Kd5 4 Bc6+ Ke6 5 Ng4!** (see 6b) **Qxf5** (else the Q goes) **6 d5+ Qxd5 7 Bd7 mate**, but Black could have made things much harder by giving up his bishop at move 2 or 3.

Mike's own mating studies were always clear-cut: Black had or was threatened by a straightforward loss on material, and trying to rectify or avoid this allowed mate instead. Given that 6a is drawn, I don't think he would have accepted as automatic the need to save the bishop by **2...Bd6** and **3...Kd5** in 6, and he would surely not have regarded 5b as so obviously lost that **4...Rxe4** could stand as the main line move in 5. But if 5 and 6 had been marked down for merely exploiting helpful mate-building play by Black, as I think they properly could have been, what would have been left?

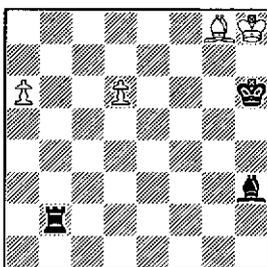
Perhaps the absence of an e-mail address had a baleful effect after all.

Rook and bishop crossing-point sacrifices

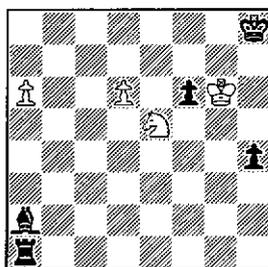
In special number 52, I described Carl Behting's **1** below (main line **1 Ba4 Bxa4 2 Na7 Rc3 3 Nc6** obstructing both rook and bishop) as "the lightest setting I know of a theme which is too often presented in a static and clumsy manner". Timothy Whitworth promptly drew my attention to pages 316-322 of Kasparian's 1979 book *Razvitie etyudnikh idei*, where a number of studies exploiting the idea are displayed.



1 - win

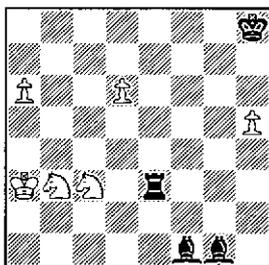


2 - win

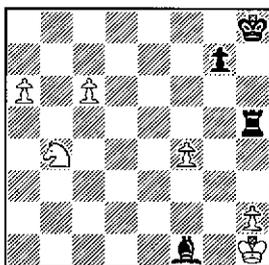


3 - win

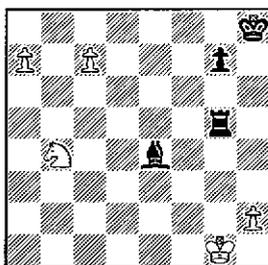
2, a typical piece of minimalism by Henri Rinck, *Deutsche Schachzeitung* 1906, is not in the Kasparian book, but was quoted by Ed van de Gevel in *EG* 164: **1 a7 Bg2 2 d7 Rd2 3 Bd5**. Slightly more complicated is Rinck's **3**, from *Bohemia* 1907: **1 d7 Rd1 2 a7 Bb1+ 3 Kh6 Be4 4 Ng6+** (both sides use the enemy king to help) **Kg8 5 Ne7+** and **6 Nd5**.



4 - win

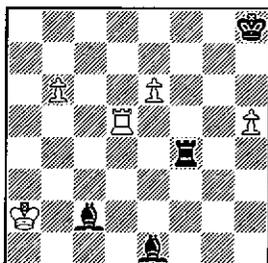


5 - win

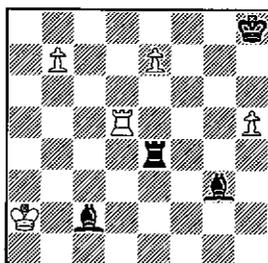


5a - after 4...Rg5+

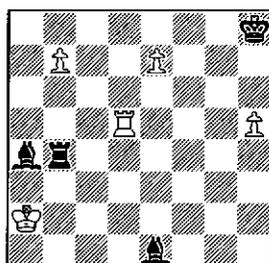
If we can do something once, perhaps we can do it twice. F. Sackmann's **4** appeared in *Deutsche Schachblätter* in 1910. **1 d7 Rd3 2 Nd4** is now obvious, but Black can play **2...Rxd4** without suffering immediate disaster. However, **3 a7** forces **3...Bg2**, and **4 Nd5** does it again. Aleksandr Herbstman's **5** (*Shakhmatny listok* 1929) starts **1 c7 Bh3 2 f5**, and this time it is the bishop capture **2...Bxf5** which can be made without immediate disaster. White can play **3 a7**, but **3...Be4+** covers a8, and after **4 Kg1** Black can set a trap by **4...Rg5+** (see **5a**): **5 Kf1** allows **5...Rf5+** and **6...Rf8**. Hence **5 Kf2**, when **5...Rf5+** can be met by **6 Ke3**, and **5...Rc5 6 Nc6** duly follows.



6 - win

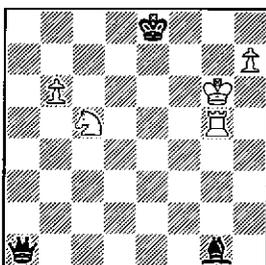


6a - 1...Re4, after 2...Bg3

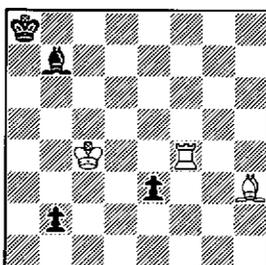


6b - 1...Ba4, after 2...Rb4

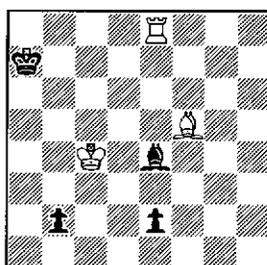
4 and 5 showed two crossing-point sacrifices in succession; Sackmann's 6, also from *Deutsche Schachblätter* 1910, shows them in separate lines. 1 e7 gives Black a choice. If he plays 1...Re4, White continues 2 b7 Bg3 giving 6a, and 3 Re5 is the winning move. If Black plays 1...Ba4, 2 b7 Rb4 gives 6b, and 3 Rb5 is the move. My computer is a little worried that 3 Rd8+ and 4 e8Q in 6a (or a move earlier) might lead to an alternative win, but even if this works the judicious addition of a Black pawn would probably fix it.



7 - win



8 - win



8a - after 3...Be4

We finish with two further developments. T. C. L. Kok's 7 (*Residentieboed* 1934) shows how a crossing-point sacrifice may be effective even with like-moving pieces. Play starts 1 b7 Bh2 2 Re5+, after which 2...Qxe5 is met by 3 b8Q+ Qxb8 4 h8Q+ with a quick mate to follow, and 2...Bxe5 by 3 h8Q+ Bxb8 4 b8Q+ with another.

V. Yakovenko's 8 (*Donbass Socialist* 1966) shows White playing to defeat the manoeuvre. 1 Rf8+ Ka7 2 Bf5 e2 3 Re8 seems to have stopped both pawns, but Black can play 3...Be4 (see 8a). Now 4 Bxe4 is clearly hopeless, and if White tries 4 Rxe4, hoping for 4...b1Q 5 Re7+ K~ 6 Bxb1, Black can thwart him by 5...Qb7. But White can interpolate 4 Re7+, and Black has a problem. If he plays 4...Ka6, White can capture with the bishop, 5 Bxe4, and 5...e1Q is met by 6 Bb7+. If Black moves to the b-file, say 4...Kb6, White takes with the rook, 5 Rxe4, and now 5...b1Q can be met by a rook check, 6 Re6+, because the queen can no longer interpose.

My thanks to Timothy for drawing my attention to most of these, and to Wallace Ellison's nephew James Armstrong, who donated Wallace's copy of *Razvitie etyudnikh idei* to the BCPS Library.

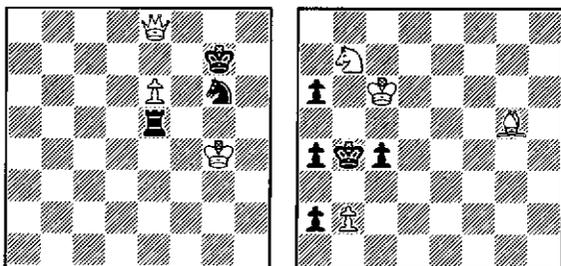
News and notices

Sad news just received from France: **Jean Mennerat** has died. More next time.

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday January 11** 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.

Readers wishing to subscribe to *EG* for 2008 may do so by paying me **£17** as hitherto (cheques payable to J D Beasley, please).

Spotlight. Alain Villeneuve reports that the solution to Prokeš's **14** in special number 47 fails: Black can continue **4...Rxf4 5 e8Q Rf5+ 6 Kh4 Ng6+ 7 Kg4 Re5**, and he has a fortress (see below). Even **8 Qd7+ Kh6 9 Qf7** leads nowhere. Eiko Bleicher's web site confirms. And since **14** has no solution, it follows that **13** has two.



British originals. Caspar Bates's study yields to **1 Na5** (threat **2 Bd2+**) with a quick mate: **1...a3 2 Bd2+ Ka4 3 b3+ cxb3 4 Nb7!** and **5 Nc5**. If instead **1...c3** then **2 Be7+ Kxa5 3 Kc5 a3 4 b3** etc is quickest, though **2 bxc3+** also appears to win.

The identification of "Euclid" as Alfred Crosskill (see special number 50, page 8). I have now seen Crosskill's *Beverly Independent* obituary, but it throws no light, and the earliest evidence known to me remains the 1890 edition of Berger. However, Timothy Whitworth points out that Berger and Euclid, contemporary experts in the same field, would probably have known something about each other, and he thinks it would be surprising if, during some 25 years, there had been no communication between them; Crosskill, as reported by Hooper and Whyld, had received "a liberal education in England and Germany", so they probably had a common language. Timothy is therefore inclined to regard Berger as a reliable witness to the identity of Euclid, and I am happy to associate myself with his judgement.

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.