

# British Endgame Study News

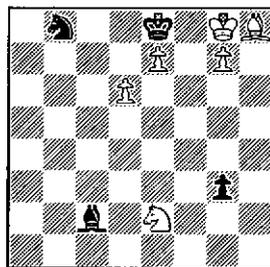
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## Contents of this issue

Editorial	385
Recently published British originals	386
Mike Bent's memorial tourney (2)	388
From the world at large	390
News and notices	392



by Brian Edwards  
White to play and win

**This issue.** Brian Edwards's study, from the January *Problemist*, will be found enjoyable to puzzle out, and the special number starts a new series which looks at foreign studies which first saw the light of day here. And this being March, my annual **book list** is enclosed.

**Binding.** Readers who are binding their copies may care to note that it has long been my intention to bring *BESN* to a tidy halt at the end of 2010, when I shall be 70. Even in my sixties, I find I am making mistakes which I like to think I did not make thirty years ago; far better to stop before things deteriorate too badly.

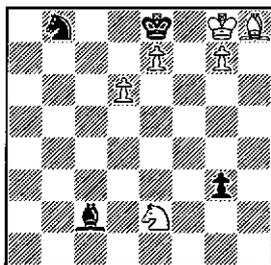
**FIDE Albums.** It is reported that judges for the FIDE Albums and certain other purposes have now been requested "to place, rank or give points to studies presented to them as if the studies had been composed in the traditional manner before the advent of the computer into compositional chess". This strikes me as absurdly unrealistic. How can it be possible, let alone sensible, to rank something produced by a computer as if it had been the result of the years or lifetimes of human endeavour which would previously have been necessary? But at least it suggests that the "FIDE Albums" are definitely seen as anthologies. It will of course create complete nonsense as regards using them as vehicles for the award of composition titles, but perhaps this part of the argument should be left to those who take these titles seriously. It would appear that I am far from being the only person who does not.

**Spotlight** (see also back page). Sadly, Alain Villeneuve points out that J. Brown's 6 in special number 53 fails; Black has **14...Qd3! 15 Kg1** (15 Rg1 Qe2) **Qd2 16 Rf1 Qe2 17 Rf3** (17 Rf8 Qe3+) **Kc2 18 Rf1 Qc4 19 Re1 Kd2 20 Rb1 Qe4 21 Rf1 Qd3!** etc. The study is in Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database III" as a win for the queen, but I worked from the original source and relied on my own analysis.

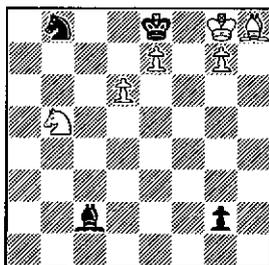
Harold himself points out a minor error in 7 in special number 51: as published in *Chess Studies* in 1851, the White king was on h5 (solution unchanged). He does not know when it migrated to g4, but he tells me it was there in Horwitz's 1884 "edition".

**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.

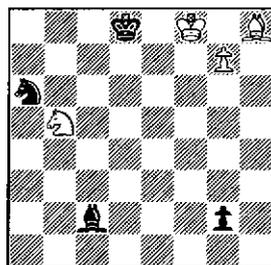
## Recently published British originals



1 - draw



1a - after 2 Nb5



1b - after 5 Kf8

There is only Brian Edwards's **1** to report. This started as a development of the little trifle of my own which I quoted in July, but as so often happens it took on a life of its own and ended up as something quite different. How did you get on?

White is two pawns ahead, but his advanced men are cramped and Black threatens mate by ...Nd7 and ...Nf6. White's immediate options are therefore restricted to Nxg3, Nf4, and Nc3.

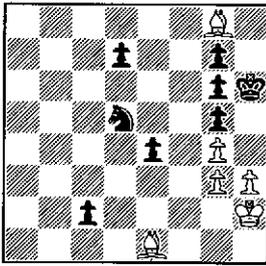
Try 1 Nxg3, ready to meet 1...Nd7 by 2 Ne4 (not 2 Nh5, when Black can simply wait), after which a knight move will allow White to mate, ...Bxe4 will be stalemate, and any other move by the bishop will allow Kh7 drawing in comfort: promising, but Black has 1...Bg6! bringing the bishop to the right side of the key square e4, and now it's mate in a few (2 Ne4 Nd7, 2 d7+ Nxd7 3 Ne4 Kxe7).

Try 1 Nf4, ready to meet 1...Nd7 by 2 Nd5 drawing at least (2...Bb3 3 Kh7 Bxd5 4 g8Q+ Bxg8+ 5 Kxg8 g2 6 Bd4): no, 1...g2 and Black is a crucial tempo ahead (2 Nd5/Ne6 Bb3 3 Kh7 BxN 4 g8Q+ Bxg8+ 5 Kxg8 g1Q+ etc, or 2 Nxg2 Nd7).

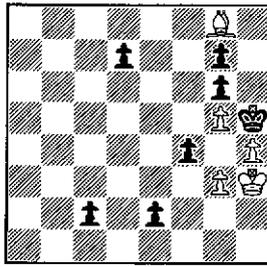
So try **1 Nc3**, when 1...Nd7 is again met by 2 Nd5 (but not now 2 Ne4, when 2...g2 wins for Black) and 1...g2 allows **2 Nb5** with no delaying pin by the bishop (see **1a**). If now 2...g1Q then 3 Nc7+, and White actually wins; if 2...Bb3+ 3 Kh7 g1Q then 4 Nc7+ Kd7 5 e8Q+, and he draws at least; and if 2...Na6 then **3 d7+ Kxe7 4 d8Q+ Kxd8 5 Kf8** (see **1b**), with draws after both **5...Bb3/Bh7 6 g8Q Bxg8 7 Bd4** and **5...g1Q 6 g8Q**. In the latter case, Black can pick up the loose knight on b5 (6...Qf1+, or 6...Qf2+ 7 Qf7 Qc5+), but White can then start checking, and Black must allow a draw either by the exchange of queens, or by the capture of the bishop on c2, or by perpetual check.

I found this little study distinctly paradoxical, in particular in that the way to avoid a crippling pin after 2 Nd5 Bb3 is to allow Black to give a check on the same line instead - or is this merely another variation of the Nimzovitch doctrine that a threat is often stronger than its execution?

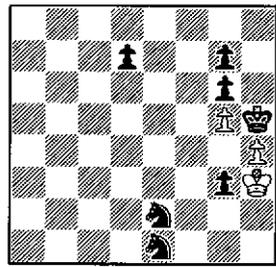
This leaves me space to record a couple of British studies which escaped my earlier trawls. Mike Bent's **2** was commended in the 1971 *New Statesman* Tourney. This is Mike in "semi-grotesque" mood, both in the opening position and in the ensuing play.



2 - draw



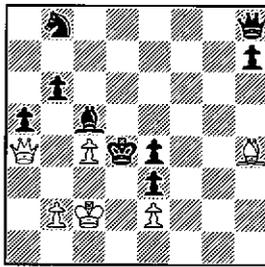
2a - after 6 Kh3



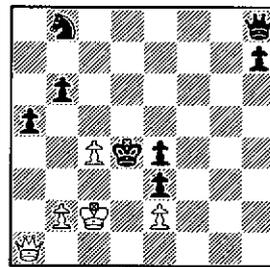
2b - 9...Nxe2 stalemate!

The initial move **1 Bd2** is obvious, and if **1...Nf6** to save the knight then **2 Bb3** and the c-pawn goes. But why should Black worry about his knight? His natural attack is **1...e3 2 Bc1 e2**, after which promotion cannot be prevented. True, White has **3 h4** threatening mate, but Black can interpose by **3...Nf4** and it is soon seen that **4 gxf4** will leave White with nothing. And surely **4 Bxf4** will be no better? But it will, because after **4...gxf4 5 g5+ Kh5 6 Kh3** White has a pawn on g3 with which to threaten another mate (see 2a). Black can of course take this pawn, **6...fxg3**, but the dénouement is now swift: **7 Bd5** (threatens mate on f3) **e1N 8 Bc4** (mate on e2) **c1N 9 Be2+ Ne2 stalemate!** (see 2b).

For all the opening position's apparently static and artificial nature, we notice that only four men do not move during the solution: the hopelessly blocked pawns on g3/g7/g6, and that on d7 (unfortunately needed to prevent **7 Be6** winning).



3 - win



3a - after 4 Qa1

David Blundell's **3**, from *The Problemist* 1990, extended an idea which T. R. Dawson had shown rather schematically in 1931. **1 Be1** threatens mate on c3, and after **1...Ke5** (**1...Bb4 2 Qb5 Qe5/Qd8 3 Bc3+ Bxc3 4 bxc3** mate) **2 Bc3+ Bd4 3 Bxd4+ Kxd4 4 Qa1** we have **3a**. White now threatens to win by **5 b3+/b4+**, and there are three pairs of lines each forcing a precise one of these moves. **4...Kxc4 5 b3+** and **4...Kc5 5 b4+** are obvious, **4...Qg8 5 b4+ Kxc4 6 Qa2+** and **4...Qf8 5 b3+ Kc5 6 Qa3+** a little less so. Dawson put a Black blocker on e8, and left it at that. David moved the Black blocker further away, and added the third pair: **4...Qe8 5 b3+ Kc5 6 Qa3+ Kc6** (**6...Kd4 7 Qd6** mate) **7 Qa4+** and **4...Qc8 5 b4+ Kxc4 6 Qc3+**. If Black takes his seventh option, **4...Qd8, 5 Qd1+** wins at once.

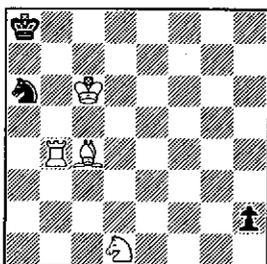
## Mike Bent's memorial tourney : the treatment of database-mined studies

As reported last time, one of the judges originally appointed for Mike Bent's memorial tourney, John Roycroft, withdrew because he was unable to accept the view of his colleagues as to how positions extracted from computer-generated databases should be treated. Given that this was a memorial tourney to a leading and much loved British study composer, that John had long been Britain's leading figure in the field, that he was one of Mike's closest associates, and that it was he to whom Mike's widow had entrusted his chess papers, this could hardly have been more unfortunate. It was the greater pity because it could surely have been avoided.

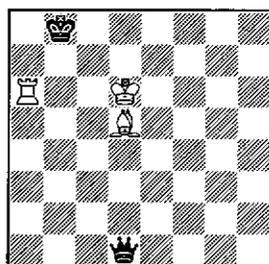
It has been apparent for some years that this is a controversial issue, and back in 2000 I laid down some rules for the column I was then conducting in *diagrammes*. These set out four principles: (a) all studies of quality were welcomed, whether extracted from computer-generated databases or conventionally composed; (b) studies extracted from databases would not be eligible for normal honours, but could be rewarded with "special" honours (special prize, special HM, etc); (c) where a study had been produced partly by database extraction and partly by conventional composition, the judge would have a discretion either to judge the entire study with the "database" studies, or to ignore the database element and judge the conventional contribution with the conventional studies; (d) a study which could have been extracted from a database at the time of its receipt by *diagrammes* would be treated as if it actually had been. I don't suggest that everybody should adopt these rules, though they appear to have avoided controversy and ill-feeling in a way that some other approaches to the matter have spectacularly failed to do. I do suggest that you have to say *something*. Had these or any other relevant rules been laid down by the organizers before the tourney was announced, any judge unwilling to accept them would simply have declined the invitation to participate, and the tourney would have been spared a most embarrassing public disagreement.

It has been suggested that John, not having made any stipulation when accepting the invitation to judge the tourney, should not have made one subsequently. This is not an argument I can accept. For more than seven years, John has put himself publicly, emphatically, even militantly, at the head of those of us who believe that conventional composition and extraction from computer-generated databases are processes so fundamentally different that studies produced by the one should not be judged against studies produced by the other. Given how prominently his principles had been stated, he could reasonably have assumed that an invitation to judge a tourney would carry an implication that it would be judged in accordance with them, and he could never have been expected to sign his name to a judgement that was not.

As regards the actual effect on the tourney, the stated action of the remaining judges was "to downgrade heavily database-dependent works", and only one such made it into the final award. This was not explicitly identified, but can only have been

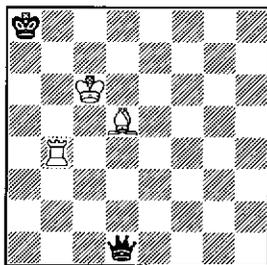


1 - win

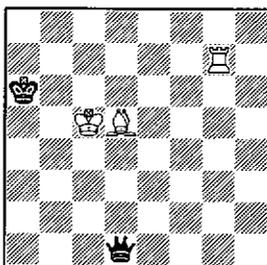


1a - 2...Qxd1, after 4 Kd6

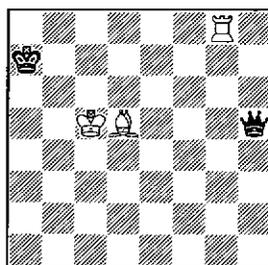
Yuri Bazlov's **1**. 1 Nf2 is soon seen to be met by 1...Nxb4+. The obvious counter, not mentioned in the tourney award, is 1 Ra4 pinning the knight, but Black naturally promotes, 1...h1Q+ 2 Bd5, and 2...Qh6+ and 2...Qf1 can both be shown to draw. Better is **1 Rb6**, abjuring the pin and keeping the rook on the b-file. Black can still play **1...h1Q+ 2 Bd5**, but the previous drawing moves 2...Qh6+ and 2...Qf1 now lose the queen (2...Qh6+ 3 Kb5+/Kd7+, 2...Qf1 3 Kd6+ Ka7 4 Rb7+ Ka8 5 Rf7+), and the immediate capture **2...Qxd1** is met by **3 Rxa6+ Kb8 4 Kd6** leaving Black helpless (see **1a**). However, Black can give up his knight on b4 instead of leaving it to be captured on a6, **2...Nb4+**, and after **3 Rxb4 Qxd1** White has no check on the a-file (see **1b**). Now how is he going to force the win?



1b - main line, 3...Qxd1



1c - after 6 Rg7



1d - after 8 Rg8

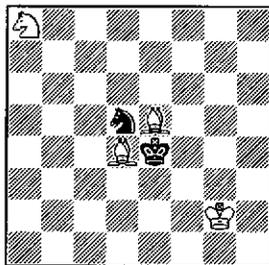
The answer is by **4 Kc5+ Ka7 5 Rb7+ Ka6 6 Rg7!** (threatening Bc4+ etc and preventing ...Qg1+, see **1c**) **Qh5** (what else?) **7 Rg3/Rg2 Ka7 8 Rg8**, after which we have an echo of **1a** (see **1d**). Apparently the final position had been seen before but only with an extra pawn on the board, and here we have it without supernumeraries and echoed. The study isn't perfect - the echo between positions **1a** and **1d** isn't quite exact though the difference is unimportant, the dual at move 7 is unfortunate, and the knight on d1 is captured without having moved - but for me at least it warmed the heart in a way that the studies we saw last time all too sadly failed to do.

Had the *diagrammes* rules been in force for the tourney, I imagine that this little study would have received at least Special HM, and perhaps even Special Prize. This would have given it the prominence it deserved, instead of leaving it buried among a group of "commendations" of otherwise very moderate quality.

## From the world at large

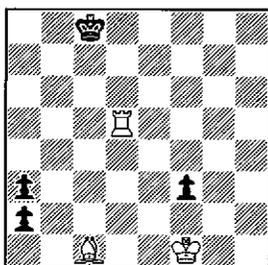
Noam Elkies responded to last time's remarks on the ending 2B + N v N with like bishops by drawing my attention to 1. He had suggested this ending to Lewis Stilller when the latter started his analyses, and 1 was among the more memorable of the positions thrown up.

The ending being a general win, Black will lose unless he can quickly prove otherwise. Try 1...Kf5 going for the knight: no, 2 Kf3 Ke6 3 Ke4, and White will win. Try 1...Ne7 threatening the fork 2...Nc6: no, 3 Bd6 Nd5 4 Bdc5 (or 3 Bc5 Nd5 4 Bed6) and Black must give ground. But if White to play tries say 1 Bf6,

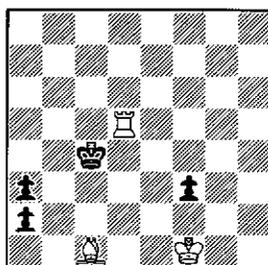


1 - reciprocal zugzwang !

Black has access to d6, and we have 1...Kf5 2 Kf3 Ke6 3 Ke4 Kd6 followed by 4...Kc6 and 5-6...Kxa8. Or try 1 Kg3: no, 1...Ne7 now threatens 2...Nf5+ as well as 2...Nc6, and if say 2 Bb2 then 2...Nd5 (threatening to bring the king round via c4 and c5) 3 Bbd4 (what else?) Ne7 and Black draws by repetition. And a move to the h-file or the first rank takes the White king too far from e4.



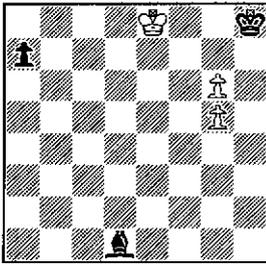
2 - draw



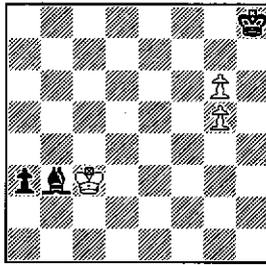
2a - after 4...Kc4

The Slovak composer Michal Hlinka runs an excellent column in *Československý šach*, still a joint (and bilingual) magazine despite the separation of the two countries, and in November he printed a selection of six-man and seven-man compositions. Among them was Mario Matouš's 2 (2nd Prize *Šachová skladba* 2004). 1 Rc5+ fails (Black can come down towards the south-east and eventually escape the checks), and the drawing move is 1 Rd8+. If 1...Kxd8 then 2 Bg5+ and 3 Bf6, hence 1...Kb7, and the next few moves are obvious: 2 Rd7+ Kc6 3 Rd6+ Kb5 (3...Kxd6 4 Bxa3+, 3...Kc7 4 Bf4 a1Q+ 5 Rd1+) 4 Rd5+ Kc4 (see 2a). White has now run out of checks on the d-file, but 5 Rc5+ works: 5...Kxc5/Kb4 6 Bxa3+ etc, 5...Kd4 6 Be3+, or 5...Kb3/Kd3 6 Ra5 a1Q 7 Rxa3+.

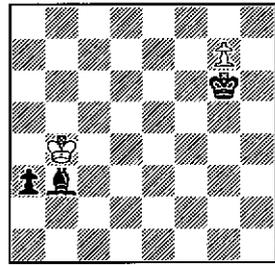
Ilham Aliev has been looking at various ideas with a rook's pawn and the wrong bishop (see for example our issue for September 1999), and his 3 (*Šachová skladba* 2004) was another composition quoted by Michal in November. 1 Kf7 threatens a quick mate and seems to make time for White to get back to a1, but after 1...Bb3+



3 - draw

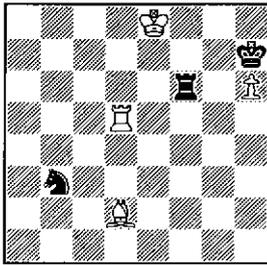


3a - 1 Kf7, after 5 Kc3

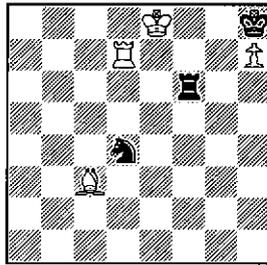


3b - main line, after 7 Kb4

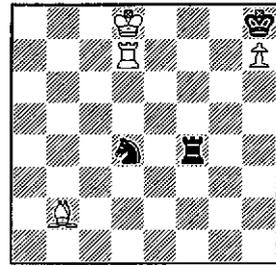
2 Kf6 a5 3-4 Kd4 a3 5 Kc3 we have a standard win for the bishop (see 3a): 5...Ba4/Bd1! and White will have to retreat. Instead, White drives Black away from g8, 1 Kf8 Bb3 2 g7+ Kh7 3 g6+! Kxg6, and only then goes for the pawn: 4 Ke7. He cannot catch it, but after 4...a5 5-6 Kc5 a3 7 Kb4 both Black men are under attack (see 3b), and if 7...a2 to keep the pawn then 8 Kxb3 a1Q 9 g8Q+ clinches the draw.



4 - win



4a - after 3...Nd4



4b - after 6 Kd8

Michal's own 4 gained a prize in *Nedělná Pravda* 1988. Play starts 1 Rd7+, and 1...Kg6 2 h7 is hopeless for Black. Retreating seems even worse, but after 1...Kg8 2 h7+ Kh8 3 Bc3 Black has 3...Nd4! with a potential stalemate (see 4a). If White now waits by 4 Ba1, Black has 4...Rf8+ 5 Ke7 Rf1 6 Bxd4+ Kxh7 with a draw, but 4 Bb2! avoids this, and after 4...Rf8+ 5 Ke7 Rf4 (nothing better) 6 Kd8 (see 4b) Black succumbs: 6...Rf8+ 7 Kc7 Rf6 (a last try) 8 Rxd4 Kxh7 9 Rd7+ and 10 Bxf6.

David Shire has written in praise of the **Yakovenko** study which I quoted last time (8 on page 383). For him, he said, it was an ideal study; he could solve it, all the pieces moved except the White king, the point was crystal clear, and the economy of means was perfect. He called it a textbook example of its theme, and wished there were more like it. I have passed on his remarks to Timothy Whitworth, who drew the study to my attention. If I may add a comment, it is to stress his first point. A clear exposition of the subtle points of a deep analysis can be very satisfying, but in general there is very little point in composing a study so difficult that nobody can solve it; far better to produce something which is within people's range, and so gives pleasure. As Paul Byway wrote in a *BESN* article some years ago, what are studies *for*?

## News and notices

**Jean Mennerat**, who died in September aged 90, did me many kindnesses. He introduced himself with a letter saying how he had found a copy of the “Euclid” Q v R book on the Left Bank in Paris before the war, and many good things were to follow: a copy of a Mandler letter, the results of a search for d’Orville problems in a volume of *Le Palamède* which the British Library could not then supply (it can now), and of course his account of the Chapais manuscript. Our sympathy to his family.

**Other magazines.** Readers may subscribe to *EG* for 2008 by paying £17 in sterling to myself (cheques payable to “J D Beasley” please). The British Chess Problem Society’s primary concern is with problems, but its magazine *The Problemist* includes endgame studies and its bookselling service normally has study books in its stock. The subscription for 2008 is £20 (under 21 £10): Sally Lewis, 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 9QA.

**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 (Parapet House, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent ME17 2QJ, [ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:afek26@zonnet.nl)) for *The Problemist*. There are also outlets abroad, and I will forward details on request.

**Meetings.** The next *EG* readers’ meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday April 4** 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.

**Spotlight** continued. Michael McDowell corrects my attribution of **22** in special number 51. According to Václav Kotěšovec’s site, the position in the *Chess Player’s Chronicle* in 1856 was **22a** with wRa3 and bBd5, Black to play and draw, “founded on a position occurring in a game of Mr. Zytogorski”. **22** itself was published as a win in *The Era* on 8 January 1860 under the names Campbell, Healey, Horwitz, Kling, and Zytogorski, with solution **1 Ra6 Bf7** (1...Bb3 2 f6+ Kg6 3 Ra3 B~ 4 Rg3+ and 5 Rg1, 1...Bc4 similarly) **2 Ra3 Bd5 3 Ra5 Bb3 4 Ra7 Bd5 5 Kd6+ Bf7 6 Ke5 Kg8 7 Kf6 Bd5 8 Ra4 Kf8** (8...Kh7 9 Ke7 Bc4 10 Ra3 Bb3 11 Kf8, with 11...Kh8 12 Rxb3 and 11...Kh6 12 f6 Kg6 13 f7 Bxf7 14 Ra6+) **9 Ra3 Kg8 10 Ke7** and wins.

Michael shares my admiration for Campbell and his problems, and he has prepared an excellent “complete Campbell” article for the Serbian problem magazine *Mat Plus*. This still won’t be in England, but at least it will be in English.

*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.*