British Endgame Study News

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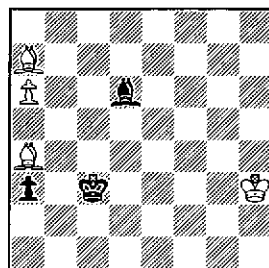
by Mike Bent
White to play and win

This issue. Earlier this year, I was asked to write an endgame study column for the *Braille Chess Magazine*. My first column contained three studies, a simple one instructive to beginners and learners, a more advanced practical one, and one for fun, and the thought occurred to me that it might usefully be repeated in *BESN*. Many of our readers give regular or occasional talks on studies, and perhaps they will welcome a page devoted to what I hope will be suitable material. In future, therefore, what I send to the *Braille Chess Magazine* in June will normally appear in the September *BESN*, and so on. My thanks to Guy Whitehouse, editor of the *Braille Chess Magazine*, for agreeing to this republication.

This apart, John Roycroft has combined some thoughtful insights with a small tribute to Mike Bent (try the above before looking inside), and the special number presents another selection of attractive foreign studies from the past.

An unrealistic request (June, pages 396-7). John Roycroft has sent me a detailed explanation for his having been party to something which appears in flat contradiction to everything he has been standing for during the past eight years. I think it can be fairly summarized as follows. John likes to play his part in the "Permanent Commission of the FIDE for Chess Composition"; there was an impasse hindering the production of the latest "FIDE Album" and hence the award of composition titles, which is one of its main activities; the request to judges offered a way out; it relates only to FIDE events, not more widely, and can be rescinded at a later date; he has not changed his opinions and fully supports the dissident judge in the brave stance that he took, but in practical terms there was a choice of evils. In essence, he was helping a friend out of a hole, and he has no regrets about doing so: "Sometimes, especially if one has agreed to serve on committees, one has to wear a different hat."

My private opinion is that he was outmuscled and outmanoeuvred, and I stand by the statement that those who have only composed problems should have no role in deciding what happens in the world of endgame studies.
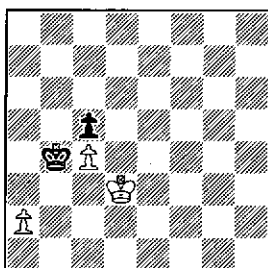
Spotlight has had to migrate to the back page.
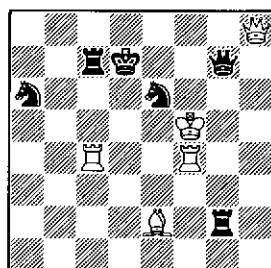
British studies from the past

Alas, no recent British originals this time, but here are three old-timers to fill the gap.
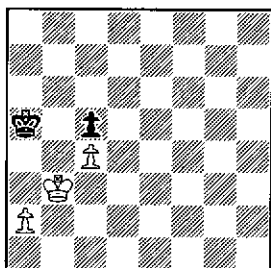

1 - win	1a - reciprocal zugzwang	2 - draw

1 is given as "Walker, 1841" by Averbakh (1983 Russian edition, page 93), but if I have interpreted his note correctly Walker analysed it wrongly (I haven't seen the original source) and the correct solution was given by Kling. The key to the matter is that **1a** is reciprocal zugzwang, and the solution unfolds **1 Ka3** (1 Kc3 Ka4 is drawn) **Kb6 2 Kb2! Ka5 3 Kb3 Kb6 4 Kc3 Ka5 5 Kd2! Ka4 6 Ke3! Kb4** (6...Ka3 7 Ke4 etc) **7 Kd3** and White has won the fight. If his pawn starts on a3, he can only draw.
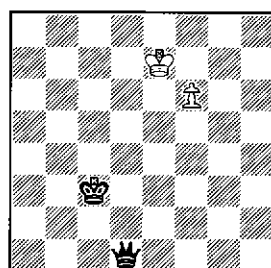
Paul Valois showed Harold Lommer's brisk **2** (*New Statesman* 1958) at our June meeting. The play is hardly subtle, **1 Rfd4+ Ke7** (1...Nxd4 2 Rxd4+ and White wins) **2 Rxc7+ Naxc7 3 Qxg7+ Nxg7+ 4 Ke5 Rxe2+ 5 Re4**, but now the smoke has cleared we have an amusing draw by perpetual rook opposition (see **2a**).
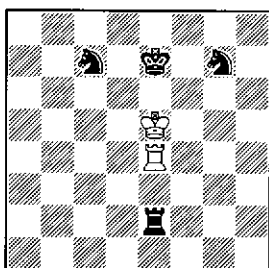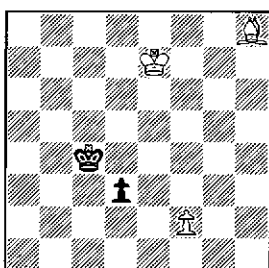

2a - after 5 Re4	3 - draw	3a - after 4 f5

H. F. L. Meyer's **3** appeared in the *Chess Player's Chronicle* in 1885. 1 f4 loses (1...d2 2 f5 d1Q 3 f6 Kc5 4 f7 Qd6+ 5 Ke8 Qe6+ 6 Kf8 Kd6 7 Kg7 Qg4+ 8 Kf6 Qf4+ 9 Kg6/Kg7 Ke7 and the pawn goes), and the way to draw is **1 Bc3!** Now **1...Kxc3 2 f4 d2 3 f5 d1Q 4 f6** gives **3a**, and it doesn't matter whether Black plays **4...Qe2+** or **4...Qe1+**; in either case, **5 Kf8!** leaves him unable to stop the pawn's advance to f7. "Sacrifice a bishop to come down to a Pf6 v Q draw" was the theme of my own first published study, but Meyer did it very much more neatly.

Studies for the *Braille Chess Magazine*

My first selection for the *Braille Chess Magazine*, edited to fit into a *BESN* page.

I chose three promotion studies to start things off, of which **1** was published by Josef Moravec in 1938. White starts **1 d6,** and each Black knight move needs a different reply. Suppose first **1...Na3**. If White plays 2 Kc6, Black has 2...Nc4 attacking the pawn and forcing 3 d7, and 3...Ne5+ forks and wins it. If 2 Kc7 then 2...Nb5+ forking; if 2 Kc8 then 2...Nc4 d7 3 Nb6+. Try the e-file. 2 Ke8 allows 2...Nc4 3 d7 Nd6+ and 4...Nb7 controlling d8, and 2 Ke7 allows 2...Nc4 3 d7 Ne5 4 d8Q Nc6+ forking the queen; but after **2 Ke6!** White has 3 d7 and then d8Q, and Black is helpless.
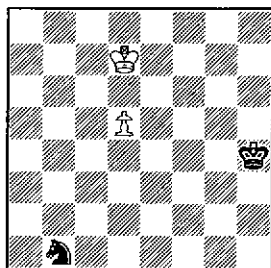
1 - win

If Black plays **1...Nc3**, White has to play **2 Kc6!** (we omit the details), and if **1...Nd2** then **2 Kc7!** Not the apparently equivalent 2 Ke7, because Black has 2...Nc4 3 d7 Ne5 4 d8Q Nc6+ as before. If he tries the same after 2 Kc7, playing 2...Ne4 3 d7 Nc5, he finds that White's 4 d8Q gives check, and he has no time for the fork.

2 was published in its present form by Moravec in 1952, though Cassidy (1884) and Troitsky (1927) also had a hand in it.

White plays **1 Kf2**, and if say 1...Kd7 then 2 Kg3 Ke6 3 Kh4 Kf5 4 Kxh4 and wins easily. Hence **1...h4**, and if White continues 2 Kf3 Black has 2...h3! (a White h-pawn will be no threat). So White must think again, and the move is **2 Kg1!** With the Black pawn on h5, this was too slow, but now the pawn is within range. But why not again **2...h3**? The answer is **3 g3!!** Now **3...Kd7 4 Kh2 Ke6 5 Kxh3 Kf5 6 Kh4 Kg6 7 Kg4** is a standard win; but if White plays 3 g4, 7 Kg4 will be impossible, and Black can hold the draw.
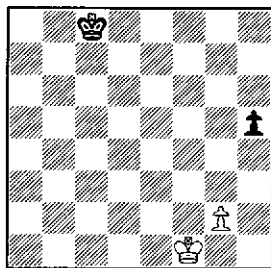
2 - win

These studies have had practical value. **3** is purely for fun. It was published in its present form by Paul Michelet in 2000, though it owed quite a lot to a 1938 study by Vitaly Halberstadt.

1 b7, and Black must aim for c6. If 1...Nb4 then 2 Nd4 wins easily. But **1...Ne5** also threatens 2...Nd7, and if 2 Kb6 then 2...Nd7+ 3 Kc7 Nc5 4 b8Q Na6+.

So White must think again: **2 Kb8!!** I call this "droit du seigneur", the king walking in front of his pawn just when it is about to promote. Now 2...Nd7+ can be met by 3 Kc8 (3...Nb6+ 4 Kd8), and if instead **2...Nc6+** then **3 Kc7 Nb4** (hoping for 4 b8Q Na6+) **4 Kb6 Nd5+ 5 Ka7!!** The White king has walked right round his pawn, and has ended where he started. But the Black knight has been lured from e5 to d5, and now it's easy: **5...Nb4/Ne7 6 Nd4**, and White will safely promote.
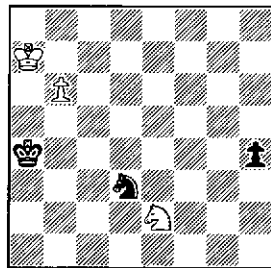
3 - win

Charm

by John Roycroft

The word 'charm' is a favourite of mine when drafting an award. I'm always on the look-out for this quality. When I find charm in a study, I mark it up.

But what is charm? Is it as elusive and circular as the standard dictionary definition suggests?

As far as studies are concerned I have an answer, one that combines the two senses of what a definition is as recognised by Aristotle, namely: listing the attributes; and listing the components, which in classical formal logic is called 'extension'.

Here goes.

Charm in a study is:

The cumulative effect of two or more distinct features, each one simple in itself, integrated into the whole without loss of economy.

A study without charm may be impressive in many respects but will not persist in the memory for as long as a study with charm. Heaviness loses out to lightness.

An ideal example is to hand. It was found among some 70 diagrams in the papers of the late Mike Bent. All were clipped together with a covering scrap reading *PROBABLY NOT GOOD ENOUGH.*
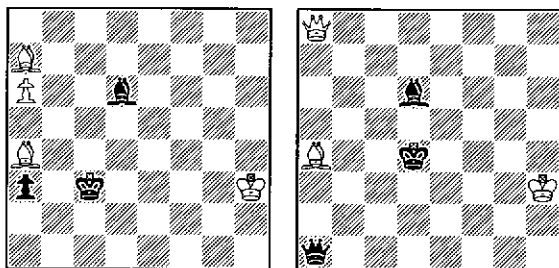
1 - win   **1a** - after 3...a1Q

C. M. Bent (first publication)

1 Bd4+ Kxd4 2 a7 a2 3 a8Q a1Q (see 1a) 4 Qa7+!! (Qh8+?)
and the black queen is lost next move.

The following features contribute to the study's charm:

1. A natural position.
2. A miniature.
3. Following the sacrificial key the black king has complete mid-board freedom of movement: eight flights replace five.
4. If White plays 2 Bb3? to stop the black a-pawn, the opponent mirrors the manoeuvre with his own bishop.

5. The temptation 4 Qh8+? is met by 4...Be5.

6. The foregoing defence ...Bc5 is obviated by the minimalist change of line for the white queen after 4 Qa7+!! The space-devouring power of the queen is effective here only with this insignificant move.

7. After 4 Qa7+!! the black king may move to any of two dark, or four light, squares. The dark alternatives are met by 5 Qg7+, when interference by the black bishop is invalidated, and the light alternatives allow a bishop check (with duals) followed by wQa7xbQa1. The shorter diagonal (from g7 to a1) works while the longer (h8-a1) failed.

8. The 'interference' 4...Bc5 is a 'thematic' bonus. There is a diagonal echo in that the c5-d4 black piece-pair relationship also crops up on d6-e5 in a deliciously compact transfer of blocking.

9. The black bishop's contributions permeate every line of play, with perfect economy of force.

10. The white king does not participate but remains seated in the h3 'Royal Box' loggia. Through opera glasses he serenely and approvingly observes the coronation of his consort and her arrival on the discreet square a7.

(Editorial note: the white king has been moved to h3 from g2 to remove a cook discovered by computer analysis. Mike would no doubt have made a similar change had he used a computer for testing.)

John having left me half a page to fill, perhaps I can add another example.
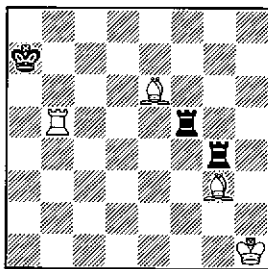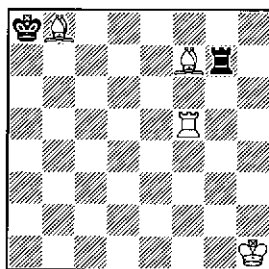

2 - win   **2a - after 3...Rg7**

2, also by Mike, appeared in *Schakend Nederland* in 1977. Play unfolds **1 Bb8+ Ka8** (if 1...Ka6 then 2 Rxf5 wins easily) **2 Rxf5** (2 Bxf5 Rb4, and 3 Rxb4 will be stalemate) **Rg6** (2...Kxb8 3 Rf8+/Rb5+ and 4 Bxg4) **3 Bf7 Rg7** (see **2a**) with another stalemate in view after the bishop on b8 retreats (4 Bh2 Rxf7 5 Rxf7), and White has only one move to win: the subtle and unexpected **4 Bc7!!** interrupting the line from f7. Although the tactical details are completely different, it seems to me that the impact is very much the same: we have a simple seven-man position, the solution is full of little tricks and teases, and the climax is a one-step move by a piece with considerable freedom of action.

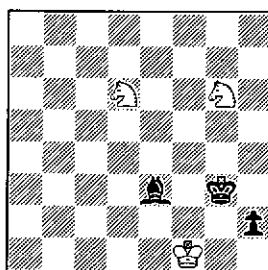Truly, Mike knew how to please solvers.

From the world at large
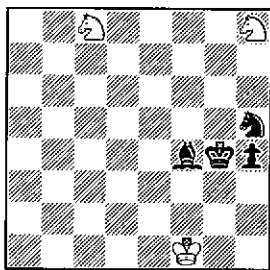

1 - draw
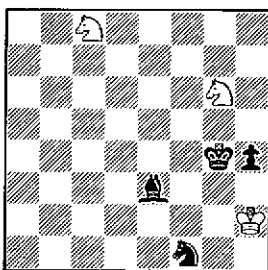
1a - after 3...Nf1+

1b - after 6...h2

Yochanan Afek's **1** received 5th HM in Mario Matouš's 60th birthday tourney. The final stage was not new, but Yochanan put a lot in front of it.

1 Ng6 threatens the pawn, and 1...h3 2 Nxf4 is drawn. Harder is **1...Ng3+**, hoping to advance the pawn with check. There follows **2 Kg1** (2 Kg2 h3+ 3 Kh2 Bc7 4 Nce7 Ne4+ 5 Kg1 h2+ 6 Kg2 Nf2) **Be3+ 3 Kh2** (3 Kg2 h3+ 4 Kh2 Nf1+ 5 Kh1 h2 6 Kg2 Bg1) **Nf1+** and Black will succeed in his aim (see **1a**) because 4 Kh1 allows 4...Kh3 winning. But all is in vain: **4 Kg2 h3+ 5 Kxf1 Kg3 6 Nd6 h2** (see **1b**) **7 Ne4+ Kh3** (7...Kf3 8 Nh4+ and 9 Kg2) **8 Nf4! Bxf4** (now we are on known ground) **9 Nf2+ Kg3 10 Ne4+ Kf3 11 Nd2+** (but not 11 Nf2, when Black escapes by 11...Bg3 12 Nh1 Bh4 13 Nf2 Kg3 14 Nh1+ Kh3), with repetition or **11...Bxd2 stalemate** (see **1c**).
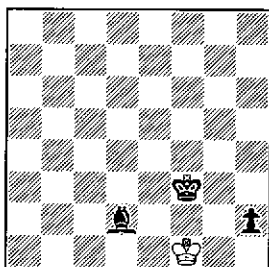

1c - 11...Bxd2 stalemate
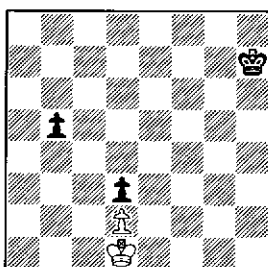
2 - draw
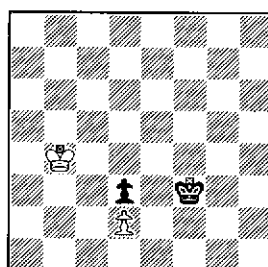
2a - after 5...Kf3 6 Kxb4

EG 173 carried an article on the recent reappearance of Ukranian pawn maestro Mikhail Zinar. **2** (*Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1985) is one of his lighter pieces. Try 1 Kc1: no, 1...Kg6 2 Kb2 Kf5 3 Kb3 (or 3 Kc3 Ke4) Kf4! 4 Kc3 Ke4 5 Kb4 Kf3, and Black will win. But **1 Ke1!** threatens 2 Kf2 etc, and forces **1...b4**. *Now* White can go for the b-pawn, **2 Kd1!!**, and **2...Kg6 3-6 Kxb4** will be a draw however Black plays (see **2a**). It is a remarkable development of the "Walker" position we saw on page 402.
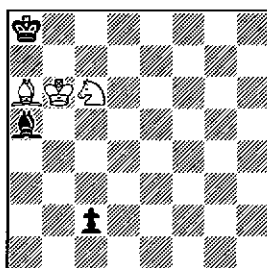
This isn't from the article, but from the lovely little book *Garmoniya peshechnogo etyuda* which Zinar wrote with Vladimir Archakov - except that the article says that it was wholly Zinar's book, and Archakov merely had the pull to get it published.
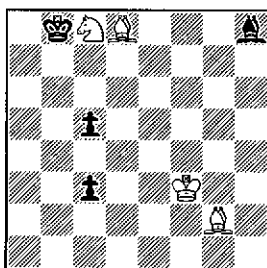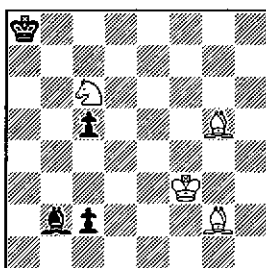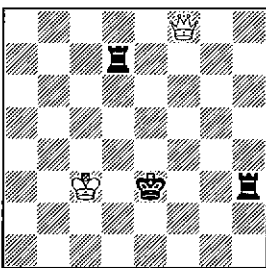
3 - win   3a - after 3...Bb2   3b - 4 Bf1, after 10...Ba5+

V. Vlasenko's **3** took an HM in the 80th anniversary tourney of the All-Russian Society for Problem- and Study-Friends. (Thus *EG*, but would not "problem and study enthusiasts" be a more idiomatic translation?)
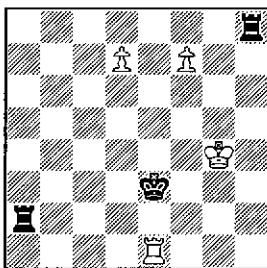
Driving the king to the corner is not without elegance: **1 Ne7 c2** (else 2 Ke2 etc) **2 Nc6+ Ka8** (2...Kb7 3 Na5+ and 4 Nb3, 2...Kc8 3 Bh3+ and the same). Now **3 Bg5 Bb2** gives **3a**, and Bf1-Ba6 or Bh3-Bc8 will bottle up the king ready for mate on b7. Which should we choose? Try 4 Bf1 c1Q 5 Bxc1 Bxc1 6 Ba6: no, 6...c4 7 Ke4 c3 8 Kd4 Bd2 (8...c2 9 Kd3 and wins the pawn, and White will mate at leisure) 9 Kc5 c2 10 Kb6 Ba5+ (see **3b**), and 11 Kxa5 c1Q will give Black a draw. So it must be **4 Bh3**, and after the same line the bishop will be on c8 and **11 Ka6** will be available.
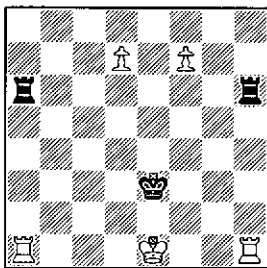
4 - win (castling allowed)   4a - 1 Rh3+, after 5 Kc3 Rxd7   4b - main line, 5 Re1+

Martin Minski's **4** (1 HM in Iuri Akobia's 70th birthday tourney) is pure fantasy. Do we really expect White to have reached such a position not having moved his king, nor either of his rooks? But let us assume so, and try to solve it.

Black threatens mates on a1 and h1. Try 1 0-0: ouch, 1...Rag6 mate. Try 1 0-0-0: no, 1...Rhc6+ 2 Kb~ Rab6+ with perpetual check. Try 1 Kf1: no, 1...Raf6+ 2 Kg~ Rhg6+ and again perpetual. 1 Kd1 Rhd6+ similarly. Try 1 Rh3+ to divert a rook, and after 1...Rxh3 then 2 0-0-0: no, 2...Ra1+ 3 K~2 Rxd1 4 f8Q Rd2+ 5 K~3 Rxd7 (see **4a**), and the fork 6 Qe8+ fails because Black's king can discover check.

So it must be **1 Ra3+ Rxa3 2 0-0**, after which there is no skewer check on the rank. Black has only **2...Rg6+**, and after **3 Kh2** (quickest) **Ra2+** (3...Rh6+ is no better) **3 Kh3 Rh6+ 4 Kg4** he is running out of checks. He can only play to the eighth rank, say **4...Rh8**, and after **5 Re1+** (see **4b**) we have **5...Kd4 6 d8Q+** and **5...K~ 6 Re8**.

News and notices

The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday October 3** 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. When reporting the Bent Memorial Tourney in December, I should have acknowledged that the award was still provisional. It was reported in the May *Problemist* that three of the studies I quoted were unsound.

Not to my surprise, Yuri Bazlov's **6** was one of them. "The study rests on the assumption that B + 2N + P v Q is a general win for the pieces and pawn, but it is not" [notation converted]. Gerhard Josten suggested a drawing line for Black starting 2...Bh6, and the judges accepted it: "...although Black cannot generally force perpetual check, White, in his efforts to fend off the checks, gets his pieces misplaced for the purpose of advancing the pawn."

Josten also refuted Gregory Slepian's **2**, where 3 c8Q Rxc8+ 4 Kb7 Rh8 5 Kxa6 Nc6 6 b7 Kxf5 7 Kb6 Ne5 (7...Nxa7 8 Kxa7 Kg6 9 b8Q Rxb8 10 Kxb8 Kxh7 gives the same result) 8 Kc7 Kg6 9 Kd6 Nf7+ 10 Kc7 Kxh7 11 b8Q Rxb8 12 Kxb8 Kg6 13 Kc7 Kf5 14 Ra1 Kf4 15 Kf7 Ng5 16 Kd6 Nh3 17 Kc6 gives an alternative draw, and Vitaly Kovalenko's **3**, where he found a winning continuation 12 Bd4+ Kf7 13 Bb6 in the intended "wrong" line 1 b8Q.

There was also a revealing comment about Bazlov's **5**: "It is a pity that the spectacular finish depends on Black playing without any foresight on the fourth move. We noticed this long ago and should have mentioned it in our earlier report..."

Elsewhere, Harold van der Heijden points out that study **3** in special number 55 was by Tavariani and A. Machitidze (not D. Makhatadze), and both he and Timothy Whitworth question whether it genuinely appeared in the *New Statesman* in 1975. From Timothy: "This is indeed the source that Tavariani himself gives for No. 112 in his 1985 book *Fantasy on the chess board*, but I think it is a mistake. The composers may have sent the study to the *NS* but I have not found it in any of Assiac's columns in 1975 or 1976. Tavariani was already familiar with the biennial *NS* tourneys, and as the closing dates for the 1971 and 1973 tourneys had both been 31 December, he and his co-author may have assumed that 31 December 1975 would be the closing date for the next one. But in column No. 1300, 18 October 1974, the next study tourney was announced with 31 *October* 1975 as the closing date. So maybe their study was late ... they heard nothing ... they knew it hadn't been honoured ... but perhaps they thought it had been printed ... who knows?"

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.