

British Endgame Study News

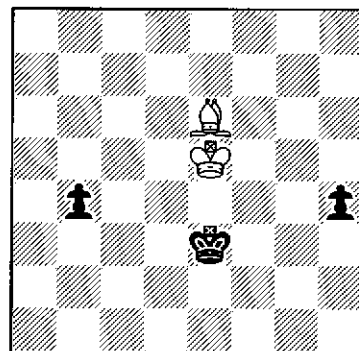
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by Aleksei Selesniev
White to play and draw

Editorial. Our first contribution from abroad this time: a special number by Alain Pallier on the BCF study tourney of 1945-6. Alain has a love of study history, and I have read his text with interest; you will too, I hope. The main magazine contains our usual features, but my attempts to twist the arms of composers for material for the middle two pages have borne no fruit and I have had to use a story of my own to fill the gap.

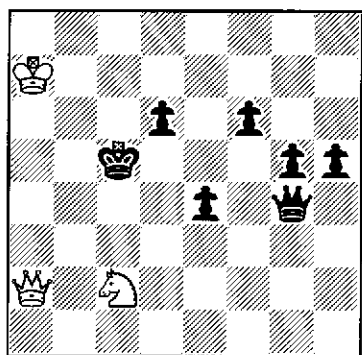
Asymmetry. Walter Veitch has been sharply critical of my remarks in the Adamson issue (special number 1, page 6). Asymmetry is an inherent characteristic of the chess board, he says, involving effects that needed to be explored at least once, and even if I have since come to regard them as dull that is not a reason to criticize Dawson for having set the theme in 1922. He reminds me of the position above, which arose in a study published by Selesniev in *Deutsche Schachzeitung* in 1917. (The composer was apparently Ukranian and his name appears as "Oleksa Selesniv" in a recent Ukranian book, but I have retained the version that will be familiar to readers.) If we try 1 Kf6 (wK must not obstruct wB) we have 1...Kf4 2 Kg6 Kg3 3 Kf5 (going for the b-pawn instead, because if Black plays 3...Kf3 to head him off then 4 Ke5 Ke3 will return to the diagram) h3 4 Ke4 (this obstructs the diagonal d5-h1, but if 4 Ke5 then 4...h2 5 Bd5 b3 wins) h2 and wins. So wK must go the other way, 1 Kd6 Kd4 2 Kc6 Kc3 3 Kd5 b3 4 Ke4 b2, and now 5 Ba2! is available. "Justifies asymmetry better than words!"

On the whole, I am inclined to stand by my guns. Whatever may have been hoped of the theme, most of the actual examples of it do seem to me to be rather trivial. However, Walter is quite right to point out that there are exceptions, and that the Selesniev is one of them. As he says, studies don't come much neater than this.

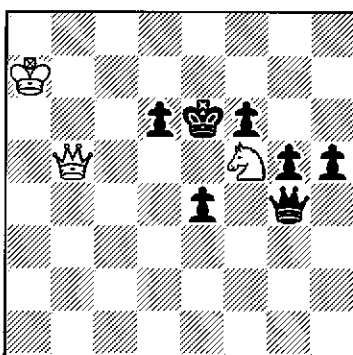
Duals. My appeal in December has produced three widely differing opinions, from Marco Campioli, Walter Veitch, and Timothy Whitworth. I will report on them when we have space; in the meantime, thank you.

Spotlight. My apologies to Roger Missiaen for having repeatedly misspelt his name on page 32 of the December issue.

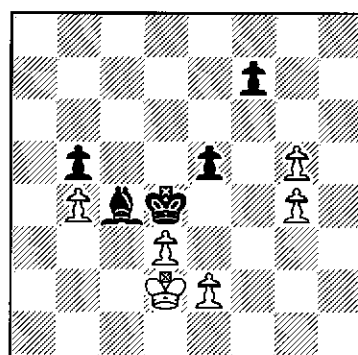
Recently published British originals



1 - win



1a - after 4...Ke6



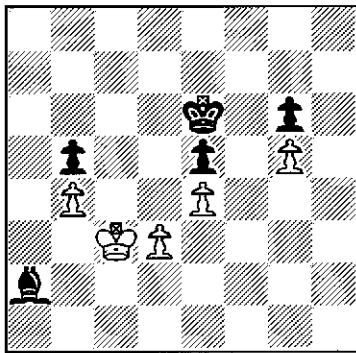
2 - draw

Mike Bent's **1** was used in last year's World Chess Solving Championship. Play starts **1 Qa5+** (1 Qa3+? Kc6 2 Qa4+ Kc7 and there is no win) **Kc6** (1...Kc4 2 Ne3+) **2 Nd4+** (2 Qb6+? Kd7) **Kd7** **3 Qb5+** (3 Qd5? Qg1 and White will get nowhere) **Ke7** (3...Kd8 4 Nc6+ Ke8/Kd7 5 Ne5+ winning bQ, or 3...Kc7/Kc8 4 Qb7+ Kd8 5 Nc6+ followed by mate) **4 Nf5+ Ke6** (4...Kf7 5 Nh6+, or 4...Kf8 5 Qb8+ Kf7 6 Nh6+, or 4...Kd8 5 Qb6+ and now 5...Kc8 6 Qb7+ Kd8 7 Qe7+ etc, or 5...Kd7 6 Qxd6+, or 5...Ke8 6 Qb8+ Kd7 7 Qxd6+). We have reached **1a**, and now comes the good move: **5 Ne3!** with mate or loss of bQ. This may seem quite easy, but there are a lot of false trails for White and only 22 solvers out of 50 succeeded. The study was originally accepted for *diagrammes*, where it has since appeared, and was offered for use in the championship in advance of magazine publication.

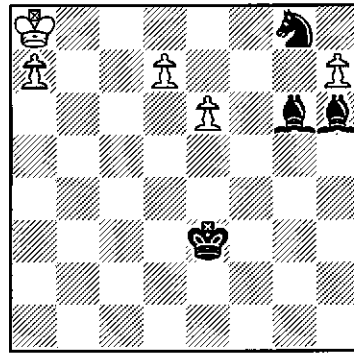
2 was my own contribution to the event. This also seems quite simple, 1 e3+ Kd5 2 Kc3 Ba2 3 g6 fxg6 4 e4+ K-- 5 g5 with a draw by blockade (see **2a**), but there is a catch: Black can play 3...Kd6 and win. The g-pawn must advance first: **1 e3+ Kd5** **2 g6** (now 2...Kd6 can be met by 3 dxc4) **fxg6** **3 Kc3 Ba2** (3...Bxd3 leads nowhere, a typical line being 4 Kxd3 e4+ 5 Kc3 Ke5 6 Kc2 Kf6 7 Kc3 Kg5 8 Kd4 Kxg4 9 Kxe4) **4 e4+ K--** **5 g5**. Only 18 solvers got this correct; 24 played 2 Kc3 (and so have most of the people to whom I have shown the study subsequently).

This year's WCSC director is Brian Stephenson, 9 Roydfield Drive, Waterthorpe, Sheffield S19 6ND. **Please will composers send suitable original studies to Brian for the event.** I have composed four out of the nine studies used in the last three years, and I am beginning to run out of ideas. I may take the personal view that the endgame study round should be dropped from the WCSC, but as long as it exists we have a duty to supply suitable material and this is particularly important when we have a British director. Rally round and help, please.

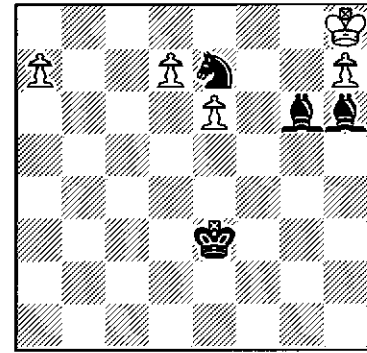
Jonathan Levitt sent **3** to the 50th Jubilee Tourney of the Israeli Chess Composition Society, and though he was disappointed to receive only 7th honourable mention this was a comment on the competition rather than on his study. Black starts (I have a prejudice against this, but here is not the place to discuss the matter) and we have the amusing introduction **1...Be4+** **2 Kb8 Bf4+** **3 Kc8 Ne7+** **4 Kd8 Nc6+** **5 Ke8** (5 Kc8? Nxa7+ 6 Kd8 Nc6+ 7 Kc8 Bxh7 and Jonathan shows the win) **Bg6+** **6 Kf8 Bh6+**



2a - after 4...Ke6 5 g5



3 - draw (Black to move)

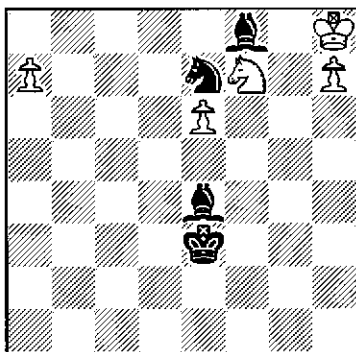


3a - after 8 Kh8

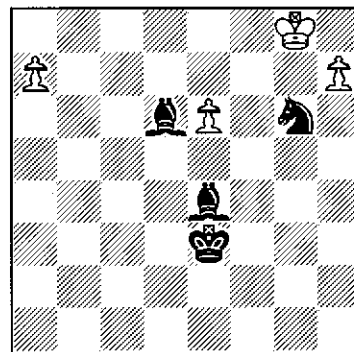
7 Kg8 Ne7+ 8 Kh8 (see 3a). The wK has walked along the top rank, and every Black man has done a switchback (bN to e7, bBB to their original squares).

Now comes 8...Bf5! (threat 9...Ng6+ and 10...Bxe6 mate) 9 d8N (one wP defused!) Be4 10 Nf7. If 10 Nc6? then 10...Bxc6 11 a8Q Ng6+! 12 Kg8 Bxa8 13 Kf7 Nh8+! 14 Kg8 (14 Kf6 Bc6) Bd5 15 Kxh8 Bf4 16 Kg7 Be5+ 17 Kf7 and White is a crucial tempo down on the main line: 17...Kf4 18 Ke7 Kf5 and wins. Black plays 10...Bf8 to save bB without releasing wK, giving 3b, and 11 Nd8/Ne5? Bd5 12 a8Q Bxa8 13 Nc6 Ng6+! 14 Kg8 Bxc6 will be a Black win; White must play 11 Nd6! ready to meet 11...Bd5 by 12 a8Q Bxa8 13 Nc8!! (13...Ng6+ 14 Kg8 Bc5 15 h8Q). But this loses the hard-won wN: 11...Ng6+ 12 Kg8 Bxd6 (see 3c).

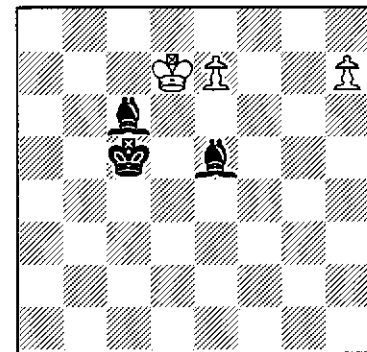
So wK must do it himself: 13 Kf7! (13 h8Q? Nxe8 14 Kxe8 Kf4 and wins). If Black removes bN from danger by playing 13...Nh8+ we have 14 Kf6! Kd4 (14...Ng6 15 a8Q Be5+ 16 Kf7 Bxa8 17 Kxg6 transposes into the main line) 15 e7 Bxe7+ (now 15...Be5+? even loses: 16 Ke6 Bd5+ 17 Kd7! Kc5 18 e8Q Bc6+ 19 Ke7 Bd6+ 20 Kd8 etc) 16 Kxe7 with an easy draw. Hence 13...Be5, and 14 a8Q Bxa8 15 Kxg6 Bc6 16 Kf7 (16 e7? Be8+) Bd5 17 Ke7 Kd4 18 Kd7 Kc5 19 e7 Bc6+ brings us to 3d.



3b - After 10...Bf8



3c - after 12...Bxd6



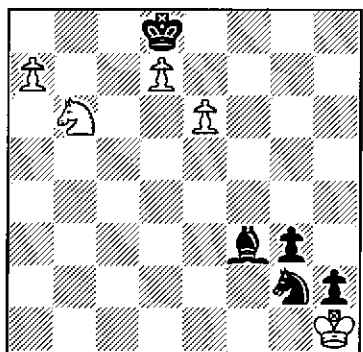
3d - after 19...Bc6+

Now 20 Kd8? Kd6 21 e8N+ Ke6 leads to a lost N v 2B ending (study composers tend to ignore the fifty-move rule, and in any case wN is so badly placed that a position where he can hold out for fifty moves is hardly likely to arise) but wK doubles back once again: 20 Ke6! gains the crucial tempo against bBe5, preventing ...Be8, and 21 Kf7 (or h8Q) will clinch the draw. White has played nineteen "only" moves in a row.

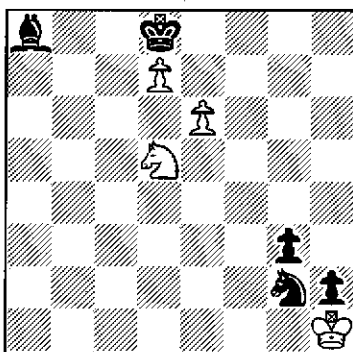
Turning the board around

by John Beasley

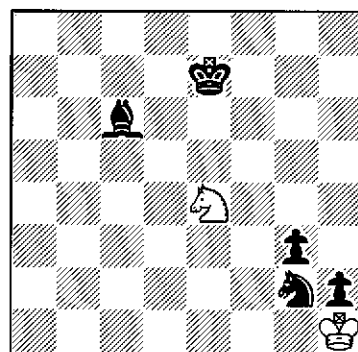
An option open to the study composer that is not open to the problemist is to turn the board around: if a study does not work as “White to play and win”, perhaps we can reverse the colours and present the successful defence as “White to play and draw”. Usually, however, I find that this produces an unsatisfying study; the reader is left with the feeling that Black has played well yet still failed, not that White has played well and deservedly succeeded. In my own composing, I have only twice been able to reverse the colours in this way, and both times it has owed everything to luck.



1 - draw



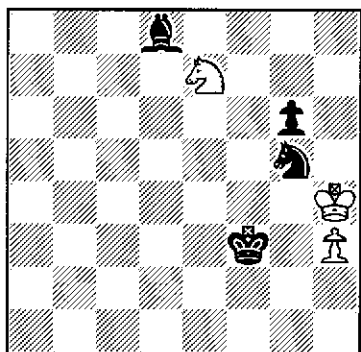
1a - after 2 Nd5



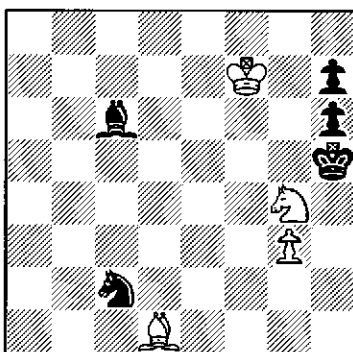
1b - after 5...Ke7 6 Ne4

1 appeared in *The Problemist* in 1981. The bottom corner is unpleasantly artificial, but I could do no better. 1 a8Q+ Bxa8 2 Nd5 gives us 1a, and now either 2...Bxd5 or 2...N-- allows White to sacrifice his pawns for stalemate. Hence 2...Bc6 (or 2...Bb7). However, White can do the same again: 3 e7+ Kxd7 4 e8Q+ (4 Nf6+ at once allows 4...Ke6 - Black can leave bB to guard e8 and bring bK down the board, narrowly winning in all lines) Kxe8 5 Nf6+ K-- 6 Ne4 (see 1b). We still have the stalemates after ...BxN and ...N--, and any other move allows White to mop up the pawns.

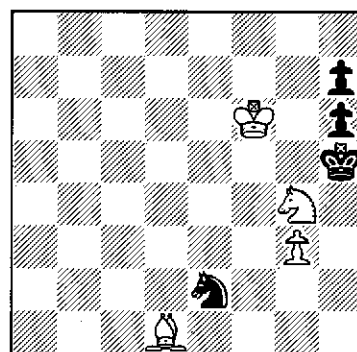
Unfortunately position 1 does not appear to allow any non-capturing introductory play. Even to put wP on a6 and bB on d1, hoping for 1 a7 Bf3, fails because White can play 1 e7+ first. Trying to do better, I set up 2, in which wK is away from the corner and everything seems more tractable. Fortunately I saw the snag before I had



2 - Black to play



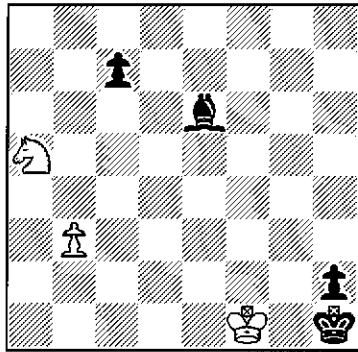
3 - win



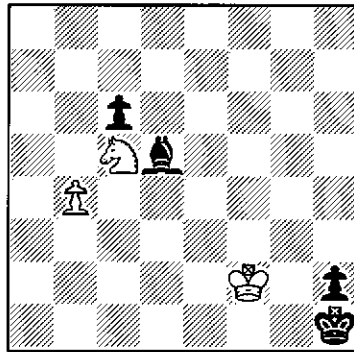
3a - after 3...Ne2

invested too much effort in the position: the sacrificial ...Nxb3 destroys the stalemate.

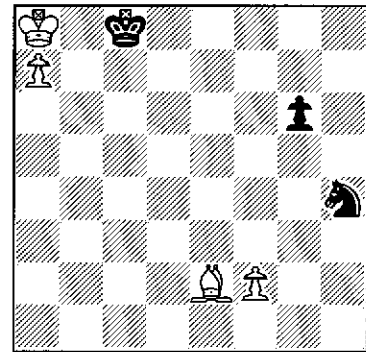
Then came the bit of luck: I noticed that if there were a wP on h2, Black would have a mate. A little work produced 3 (*The Problemist*, 1990). Play starts 1 Kf6 (discovered checks win a piece but not the game) Bf3 (now the discoveries lead to mate, and this is Black's only defence) 2 Bxf3 Nd4 3 Bd1 Ne2 (if 3...Nf3 then 4 Kf5 Nd4+ 5 Ke5 Nc6 6 Kf6 and mates). Now we have 3a, and both 4 Bxe2 and 4 N-- give stalemate; but there is 4 Nxb6! Kxb6 5 g4 (5 Bxe2 is still stalemate) N-- 6 g5 mate.



4 - White to play



4a - after 4...Bd5



5 - WDE & JDB, draw

During 1995, Wallace Ellison was looking at endings with N v B in which the knight needs to win a pawn. 4 illustrates one of them. I no longer have his original diagram, so this may not be the precise position that he sent me, but it reproduces the essentials. White's aim is to win the c-pawn and then to use his own pawn for a tempo move, and play unfolds 1 b4 Bd5 (it is obviously best to hold wN back as long as possible) 2 Kf2 c6 3 Nb7 B-- 4 Nc5 Bd5 (see 4a - White will win if he can play Nd4, so bB must guard b3/e6 as well as e4) 5 Nd3 Be6/Bf3 6 Nf4 Bg4 (again, wB must guard e6 as well as e2/h5) 7 Kf1 (Black's checks are harmless - 7...Be2+/Bh3+ 8 NxB and mate next move) Bf3 (bB must still guard e2/h5) 8 Ne6 (now wN will reach d4) Bg2+ (nothing better) 9 Kf2 B-- 10 Nd4 (at last!) Bd3/Bg4 (bB must guard e2/f5 and must leave bP to its fate) 11 Nxc6 B-- 12 Nd4 Bd3/Bg4 13 b5 and mate in two.

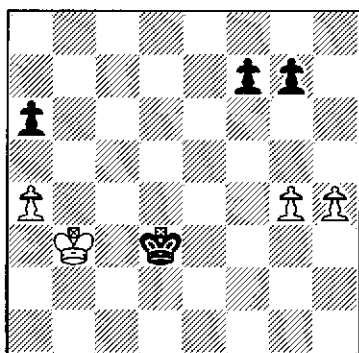
This was a fine piece of analysis, and then it occurred to me to ask: after 1 b4, what happens if Black plays the utterly ridiculous move 1...c5? It draws, doesn't it? White has nothing better than 2 bxc5 (he cannot cope with a fleeing c-pawn) and there follows 2...Bc4+ (this interpolation is essential - 2...Bd5 3 Kf2 and Black is in zugzwang) 3 Kf2 (3 Nxc4 stalemate) Bd5 (now it is White who is in zugzwang) 4 c6 (if 4 Kf1 then 4...Bc4+ repeats) Bxc6 and draws because 5 Nxc6 is stalemate.

This seemed too good to waste, so I produced 5, in which the chance discovery has become the main line and Wallace's excellent work refutes the natural try, and suggested that we publish it as a joint study. There are some other difficult lines as well, notably 1 Ba6+? Kc7 2 Bd3 g5 3 Be4 g4 4 Bd3 Nf3 5 Bc4/Bf5 Ne5 6 Be6 (6 Bb5 Ng6 as later) Nd3 (threat 7...Nc5 and 8...Na4/Nd7) 7 Bd7 Nf4 (threat 8...Nd5) 8 Bc6 Ng6 9 Bd5/Bd7 Ne7 10 Be6/Bb7 Nc8+ 11 Bxc8 Kxc8 12 f4 g3 etc. No solvers' comments have reached us (it appeared in *Moravskoslezský šach*, 1996) but it has always produced a good response when I have shown it to an audience.

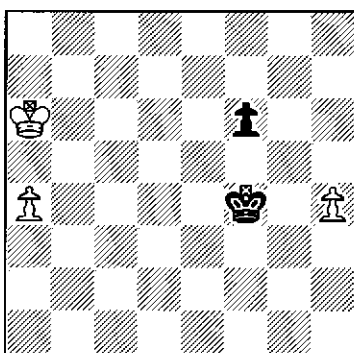
From the world at large

The advent of desk-top publishing is leading to the appearance of so many new books that it is difficult to read everything even superficially. If they were poor books, one would not regret this. In practice they are good, and one does.

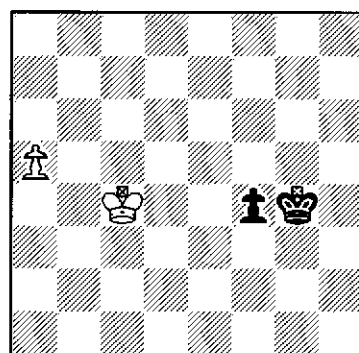
Prime Actions of Helsinki recently published John Roycroft's compilation of Richard Guy's studies. Richard is now better known as a writer on mathematical recreations (with Elwyn Berlekamp and John Conway, he produced the now classic *Winning ways for your mathematical plays*) but he was the *BCM* study columnist from 1947 to 1951 and his dozen or so years of chess enthusiasm produced nearly 200 studies. With some exceptions, they are neat rather than spectacular, and a comparison with Grigoriev in respect of the pawn studies is surely claiming too much; few of Guy's studies show the deep subtlety based on reciprocal zugzwang which characterize the best of Grigoriev's. However, they will be found pleasant and of interest, and many of the pawn studies have a great deal of practical value.



1 - win



1a - after 5 Kxa6



1b - after ...Kg4

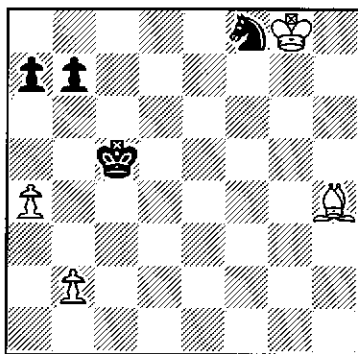
Consider **1** (*BCM*, 1940). We play the obvious **1-2 Ka5 Kf4**, and now **3 Kxa6** can be met by **3...Kxg4**. Hence **3 g5**, whose purpose is not so much to slow down the f-pawn (it certainly delays the arrival of a bP on f5, but only by the move that White has expended on playing g5) as to clear the way for the h-pawn. There follows **3...f5 4 gxf6 gxf6 5 Kxa6**, and we have **1a**.

Now, which will win, the a-pawn or the f-pawn? Try **5...Kg4**. If White plays **6 Kb5**, Black will reply **6...f5** and both pawns will promote. White must therefore play **6 h5** to gain a tempo, because it only takes one move to advance the h-pawn whereas it takes two for bK to capture it and get back. Black must capture, **6...Kxh5**, and after **7 Kb5** a typical line is **7...f5 8 a5 f4 9 Kc4 Kg4** (see **1b**) **10 a6 f3 11 Kd3 Kg3 12 a7 f2 13 Ke2 Kg2** (forced, but now bK is exposed to check from a8) **14 a8Q+**. But White must play the tempo-gaining sacrifice **h5** at once. If he delays, Black can rely on his f-pawn and let the h-pawn run.

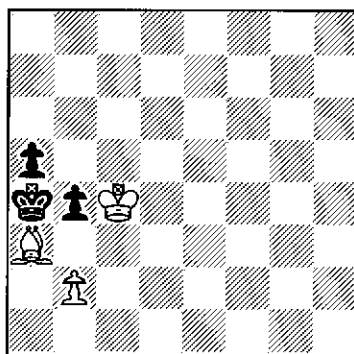
But Black has another option: **5...f5**. This threatens **6...Ke3** with an easy draw, so **6 h5** is necessary to divert bK, and after **6...Kg5** another tempo-gaining sacrifice is necessary, **7 h6**, and once again it must be made before the f-pawn has advanced further. There follows **7...Kxh6 8 Kb5 Kg5 9 a5 f4 10 Kc4 Kg4**, and we are back at

1b: 11 a6 f3 12 Kd3 Kg3 13 a7 f2 14 Ke2 Kg2 15 a8Q+. Some transpositions are possible earlier in the play (the commentary notes one and I think there are others) but the play from **1a** is precise and instructive. Richard's work should be better known.

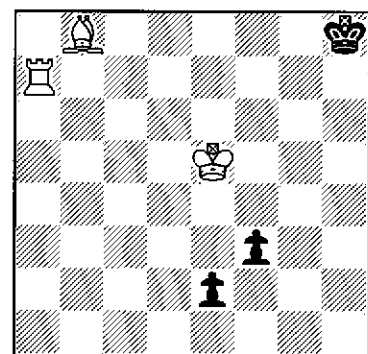
Also recommended, although quite different in style, is *Endgame Virtuosity*, a selection of 222 Israeli chess studies from the period 1945-95 presented by the composers. This is published by Friedrich Chlubna in Wien, but the text is in English. However, I must make a qualification: whereas most of Guy's are in the classical style with light and reasonably natural positions, the Israeli studies are more recent, and most are in the romantic style in which a relatively artificial starting position is accepted as the price for spectacular play. If this doesn't put you off, go ahead and buy, because exposition and printing alike are excellent (and many studies are furnished with an additional diagram to highlight a key position).



2 - win



2a - after 7 Kc4



3 - win

A study from the book that is certainly in the classical style is **2** (Yehuda Hoch, 6th Prize, Roycroft Jubilee 1979). Let's look at the obvious **1 Kxf8** first. It fails because Black can reply **1...Kb4** and destroy both White pawns: for example, **2 a5 Kxa5 3 Bf2 a6 4 Ke7** (4 Bc5 is no better: **4...Ka4 5 Ke7 Kb3 6 Ba3 b5** and **7...b4**) **Kb4 5 Kd6 Kb3 6 Bd4 a5** and **7-8...a3**, or **2 Bf2 a5 3 Ke7 Kxa4 4 Kd6 Kb3 5 Bd4 a4**. But this is Black's only resource, and in the actual solution White turns it to his own advantage.

Play starts **1 Be7+**, and Black must play **1...Kc4** to preserve his hopes of destroying White's pawns. (Here and on the next move, the book gives detailed refutations of alternative moves by Black, but we shall skip them.) Now comes **2 Kxf8**, and Black must play **2...a5** to fix the White a-pawn. White is now awkwardly placed because wB impedes wK, and **3 Bf6** will allow Black to draw as in the lines we first looked at. Hence **3 Ba3**, after which Black can certainly capture wPa4 and then advance his b-pawn, **3...Kb3 4 Ke7 Kxa4 5-6 Kc5 b4**; but **7 Kc4** produces **2a**, and if Black follows through his strategy by playing **7...bxa3** he allows **8 b3 mate**.

Seven lines of text left, one diagram. Let's have a lollipop from the latest issue of *EG*. **3** (V. Kondratev) took first prize in the 1993 Kopnin Memorial Tourney: **1 Ke6 e1Q+ 2 Be5+ Kg8 3 Rg7+ Kf8 4 Rb7! Kg8 5 Rb8+ Kh7 6 Kf5** and Black must sacrifice bQ to avoid mate (White's fourth move has prevented **6...Qb1**), or **1...f2 2 Be5+ Kg8 3 Rg7+ Kh8** (**3...Kf8 4 Rh7** and mate next move) **4 Rf7+ Kg8 5 Rxf2 e1Q 6 Rh2** similarly. I hope readers have been able to follow this from the diagram, because the final position in each line is really rather delightful.

News and notices

Other magazines. The international endgame study magazine *EG* (four issues a year) can be obtained for 1997 by paying £15 to Walter Veitch, 13 Roffes Lane, Caterham, Surrey CR3 5PU (cheques payable to W. Veitch, please). It is essential reading for serious study enthusiasts, and I make no apology for repeatedly plugging it. A small amount of what appears in it is reprinted in *BESN*, witness the final item on page 39 of this issue, but a typical magazine contains at least a dozen studies of this quality (the recent issue 123 strikes me as particularly fine) together with other material of general or theoretical interest. It would be very hard to produce a magazine such as *BESN* without the scholarly base of *EG* on which to rely.

The British Chess Problem Society is primarily concerned with problems, but endgame studies are part of its remit. A typical issue of its magazine *The Problemist* (six issues a year) includes five original studies for solution and a short selection with comments of studies recently published elsewhere, and its library offers a Thompson database look-up service to members. The 1997 UK subscription is £18 (£15 for new members). Contact R. T. Lewis, 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 4QA.

Outlets for original composition. My primary purpose in the *British Chess Magazine* is to introduce the classics to readers to whom the delights of studies are largely unknown, and I publish originals only occasionally. However, Adam Sobey (15 Kingswood Firs, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6EU) accepts them for *The Problemist*, and I myself accept them for the French composition magazine *diagrammes*. There are other outlets abroad, and I will gladly send details to composers on request.

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday April 18** at 6.00 pm (please note change of date from that announced at the January meeting). Non-subscribers to *EG* will be welcome, but they will be asked to pay £5 towards the cost of the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring the latest *EG* with you!

The reluctant bookseller. I am a writer and not a bookseller, but the advent of desktop publishing has released a flood of first-rate study material not all of which can command a market through normal trade channels, and if I do not offer to supply it I fear that nobody will. I am therefore arranging with authors and publishers to make their wares available through me if they wish, and a first list accompanies this issue of *BESN*. It is my intention to issue such a list with *BESN* once a year, and I hope readers will regard it as a cut above the usual run of junk mail.

Anybody wishing to give notice here 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.