

British Endgame Study News

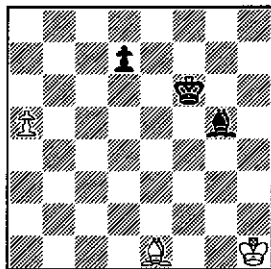
Volume 4 Number 3

September 1999

Edited and published by John Beasley, 7 St James Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4NX
ISSN 1363-0318

Contents of this issue

Editorial	113
Recently published British originals	114
Life imitates art <i>by Lars Falk</i>	116
From the world at large	118
News and notices	120



by Ilham Aliyev
White to play and win

This issue. A welcome and slightly unusual middle-page contribution this time: Lars Falk gives us an entertaining episode from “real life” (and makes me very envious of the conditions under which chess is played in Stockholm). Our look at events outside Britain includes the study above, which comes from an article written for *EG* by the young Azeri composer Ilham Aliyev. It is short but piquant, and will reward a few minutes spent on it before looking inside.

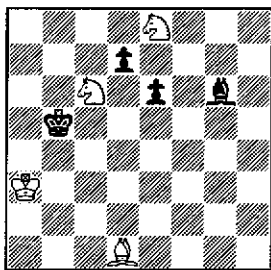
And our special number is devoted to the work of Jindřich Šulc, yet another of the fine composers to have come from Bohemia. Šulc devoted only two relatively short periods of his long life to chess composition, but he produced some charming and instructive studies at least two of which have found their way into the textbooks.

Printing. I tried to reduce costs by using a different copying service for the June issue, but the results were not entirely satisfactory and for this issue I have returned to the service I used in March. If any reader would like a copy of the June material reprinted to the present standard, I shall be happy to supply it.

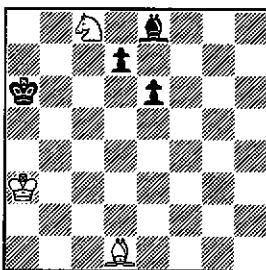
Spotlight. John Roycroft felt that my commentary to the conclusion of his Golden Fleece study (special number 15, page 8) did it less than justice. Not wanting to reproduce all the analytic detail spelt out in *EG*, I wrote “given as main line is 6...Rh7”, but John points out that “given as” is inappropriate: objectively, 6...Rh7 *is* the main line. I quote from his letter, converting to our standard notation: “There is only one winning reply to 6...Rh7, and that reply is the move of the light bishop to a poor-looking square, leading to what was hoped would be a surprising win of the rook despite it being allowed an escape check. There is also the line 6...Rc8 7 Bb7 (again an only winning move - if now 7...Rc4 then 8 Nd5). Other moves of the rook are easier to meet, and some can be met in more than one way.”

All this is fair comment, and I apologize. And there was an unfortunate error in the June main issue which I have only just noticed: the name under the diagram on the front page should be *Josef* Hašek the chess composer, not Jaroslav Hašek who wrote about the good soldier Švejk.

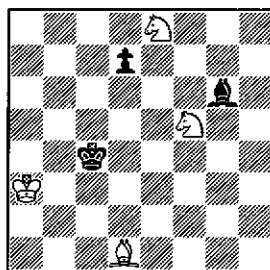
Recently published British originals



1 - win



1a - after 2...Bxe8

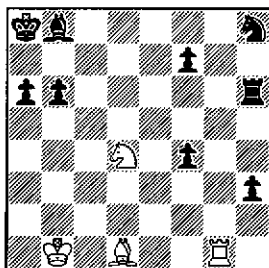


1b - see text

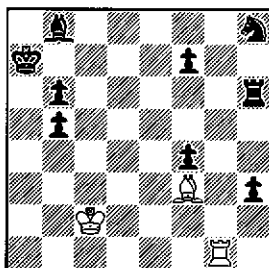
Adam Sobey's column in *The Problemist* has been badly under-represented in recent issues of *BESN*. Let me try to remedy this.

Mike Bent's **1** appeared in May last year. A bishop and two knights normally win against a bishop and the pawns here are too far back to be a threat, so White starts out with a win on material, but both wNs are under attack and it is soon seen that one of them must fall. The right way to concede it is **1 Na7+ Ka6** (1...Kb6 2 Nc8+ and 3 Ned6) **2 Ne8**, and after **2...Bxe8** we have **1a**. Now **3 Be2+** forces **3...Ka5** (if 3...Kb7 then 4 Nd6+ picks up bB), and **4 Nd6** leaves bB only one square: **4...Bg6**. Now comes a capture by discovered check that is well known but always pleasant: **5 Nc4+ Ka6/Kb5 6 Ne5+** and **7 Nxb6**.

The bPd7 is needed to block bB, but why is bPe6 on the board? The answer is that without it White would have a charming alternative draw by **1 Nd4+ Kc4 2 Nf5** (see **1b**). The bB now has the choice of either wN, only to fall victim to a fork from the survivor.



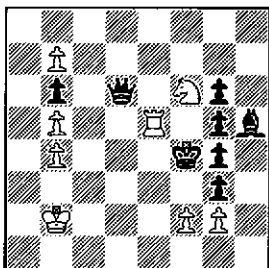
2 - draw



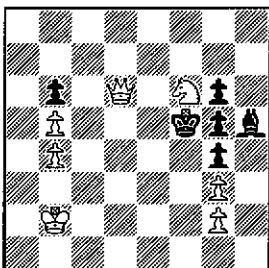
2a - after 3 Kc2

2, from September, shows another of Mike's favourite themes. This comes into the "short and simple" category of studies, because the play is wholly forced: **1 Bf3+ Ka7 2 Nb5+ axb5 3 Kc2!** gives **2a**, and how is Black to avoid mate on the a-file? He must free a bolt-hole on b8, **3...Bd6/Be5**, to which White replies **4 Rg8!** This threatens mate on a8 instead, so bB must go back to cover, **4...Bb8**, and we have

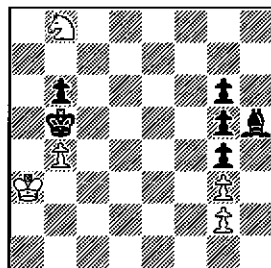
5 Rg1 with a draw by alternating mate threat on a1 and a8. Inevitably, Black has several immobile men (he must start with a winning material advantage against White's R + B + N, and if this powerful force is allowed to get into play it will create havoc), but I think the solution is sufficiently amusing to carry them.



3 - win

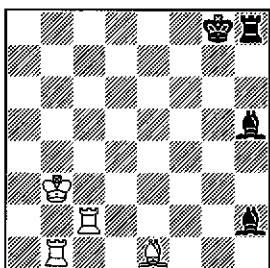


3a - 2 b8Q, after 3 Qxd6

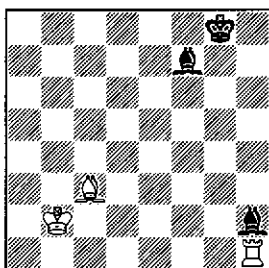


3b - main line, 5...Kxb5

Adam likes to devote his January column to British composers, but this year he only received two suitable contributions. One was Cedric Lytton's 3, which was a correction of an entry to the 1993-6 WCCT. Play starts 1 fxb3+ Kxe5, and now comes the unexpected move 2 b8B: not 2 b8Q, when Black can reply 2...Kf5 since 3 Qxd6 will give stalemate (see 3a). There follows 2...Qxb8 3 Nd7+ and all might seem to be over, but in fact there is still some play left. The thematic line is 3...Kd4 4 Nxb8 Kc4 5 Ka3 Kxb5 (see 3b) and now only 6 Nd7 wins; White must avoid 6 Kb3 with a second stalemate (the theme of the tournament was "White wins by avoiding a mid-board stalemate"). Black can also play 4...Ke3 and go for the g-pawns, but White captures bPb6 and promotes with enough time in hand.



4 - win



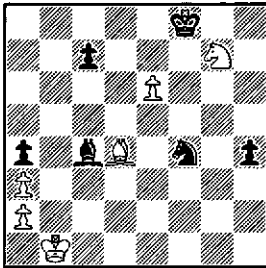
4a - after 5 Kb2

Mike Bent's 4, quite different in style, was Adam's other British offering in January. Again there is a simple start, 1 Rc8+ Kh7 2 Rxb8+ Kxb8 3 Bc3+, and the natural and good reply is 3...Kg8 to get bK off the h-file. Even so, 4 Rh1 skewers the bishops, and Black's only hope of saving them is the tempo-gaining check 4...Bf7+. White's answer to this is 5 Kb2! (see 4a). This hides wK from further checks, and we see that Black's fourth move has crucially blocked bK; if bBh2 moves to safety, we have 6 Rh8 mate.

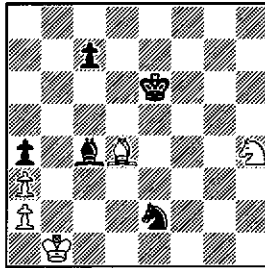
Life imitates art

by Lars Falk

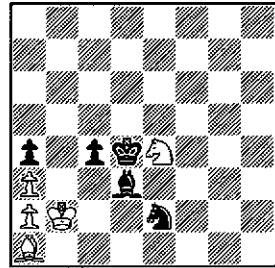
Some years ago, I wrote an article about knights in the corner, and published it in the Swedish journal *Schacknytt* (May 1995). It was tempting to write a counterpart about bishops in the corner, in view of the abundance of studies and games based on this theme.



1 - draw



1a - after 3...Ne2



1b - after 8...Kd4

An unusual manoeuvre is shown in **1** (A. Kuznetsov and O. Pervakov, 3rd Prize, Chavchavadze Memorial Tourney 1989), where Pervakov's youthful energy blends nicely with the refined taste of his teacher Anatoly Kuznetsov. Neither author seems to fear analytical difficulties.

In order to stop the h-pawn, White must sacrifice his trump card. **1 e7+ Kxe7 2 Nf5+ Ke6! 3 Nxh4 Ne2!** (see **1a**). Black threatens the bishop, and is simultaneously weaving a mating net. White can try to escape by **4 Nf3**, but the knight will eventually be captured: **4...Bd5! 5 Ng5+ Kf5 6 Be3 Nf4! 7 Bxf4 (7 Nh7 Ne6!) Kxf4 8 Nh3+ Kg3 9 Ng1 Bc4! 10 Kc2 Kg2**.

Instead, White selects a defence which could occur only in a lunatic's dream. **4 Ba1!! Bd3+ 5 Kb2 c5!** We were never taught to play chess like this! After **5...Be4 6 Nf5! Bxf5** White is stalemated, but White is strangling himself and Black can play for mate. **6 Nf3! c4 7 Ng5+ Kd5 8 Ne4! Kd4** (see **1b**).

The pressure has reached its height, and it is time to strike back. **9 Nc3!! Nxc3 10 Kc1!** draw. In his efforts to squeeze White, Black has contrived to place his knight and bishop on squares such that he cannot prevent **11 Kd2**. This fine study won first prize in the Russian championship for 1989-91, when the former Soviet republics were still invited to compete.

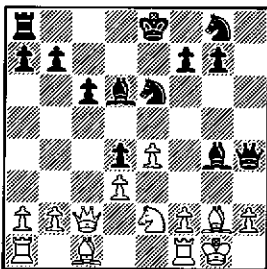
Editorial problems delayed the publication of my article, but then some young enthusiasts took over and asked for a contribution to their first issue. So "Bishops in the Corner" was finally published.

Every Christmas, the Rilton Cup is played for in Stockholm, and a copy of the journal was placed at each board as an advertisement. Entering the playing hall, I was as usual first attracted by the magnificent view over Lake Mälaren and the Old Town, but then I saw the journal. Obviously others did so too, because Swedish GM Jonny

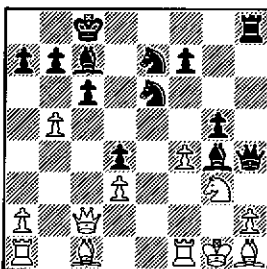
Hector came up and asked me to take a look at his position. Jonny is well known for his romantic play. This time he was faced by the Dragon with reversed colours, and he confused his opponent at an early stage by pushing the h-pawn. White soon got into trouble.

Mats Andersson - Jonny Hector, 3rd round, Rilton Cup 1998-99. **1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 Bg4 3 Bg2 Nd7 4 c4 e6 5 cxd5 exd5 6 0-0 c6 7 Nc3 h5 8 d3 Bd6 9 Qa4 Nc5 10 Qc2 Ne6**. This position is so good for Black that the value of the queen manoeuvre seems dubious. **11 e4 d4 12 Ne2 h4!** If White takes on d4, Black can strike back on g3. **13 Nxh4 Rxh4 14 gxf4 Qxf4** (see 2a).

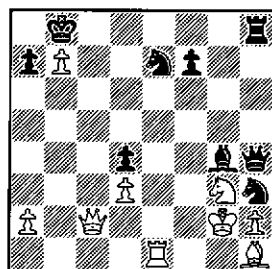
Here White must play **15 f4** or **15 Ng3**, because Black will win the race that follows. **15 e5? Bxe5 16 f4 Bc7 17 Ng3 Ne7 18 b4 0-0-0 19 b5 Rh8 20 Bh1 g5!** (see 2b).



2a - after 14...Qxf4



2b - after 20...g5



2c - after 26 Kg2

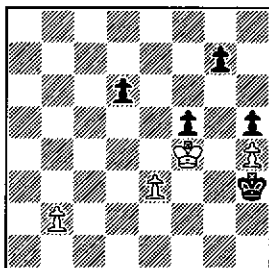
At this point, Hector came up and asked me to compare my article with his position; yet neither of us suspected how close he would get. **21 bxc6 gxf4 22 exb7+ Kb8 23 Rxf4 Bxf4!** White had hoped to confound his opponent with **23...Nxf4 24 Qxc7+ Kxc7 25 Bxf4+**, but Jonny planned a different ending. **24 Bxf4+ Nxf4 25 Re1 Nh3+! 26 Kg2** (see 2c).

The king and bishop have taken up the positions in Kuznetsov and Pervakov's study, but this arrangement is highly inconvenient for defence. Jonny was already looking for mate and he actually considered the thematic variation **26...Kxb7?? 27 Rb1+ Ka8 28 Kf1+**, but fortunately he found a mate at the other end as well. **26...Qf6! 27 Rf1 Nd5! 28 Rxf6 Ne3 mate.**

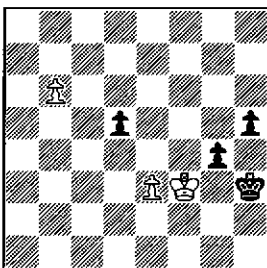
This beautiful finish, worthy of Adolf Anderssen, was greeted with restrained but hearty applause from the audience. White too must be thanked, for allowing himself to be mated like a gentleman from the good old days. Hector had to take account of the possibility that White might try to deflect his pieces before capturing the queen, but after **27 Qc8+ Rxc8 28 bxc8Q+ Kxc8 29 Rxf6 Ne3** it is still mate. This model mate would have been a rare guest in modern tournament play.

Thank you, Lars, for a most entertaining episode. We always talk about the relevance of studies to practical play, but it is unusual for the matter to be quite so graphically demonstrated. If any other reader has a similar story to tell, we shall be delighted to receive it. - JDB

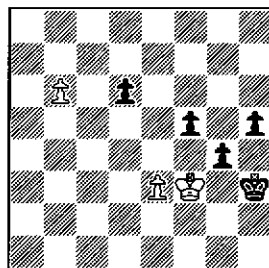
From the world at large



1 - win



1a - 1 Kg5 d5, after 6...g4+



1b - 1 b4, after 4...g4+

EG 133 includes the 1995 award of the reborn Russian magazine *Zadachy i etudy*, and among the studies which took my fancy was S. Zakharov's second prizewinner 1. The natural way to start is probably 1 b4, since this pawn cannot be stopped and Black will have to spend a move capturing on h4 before he can run his own pawn, but the commentary directs us first to 1 Kg5 defending wPh4. This seems to leave Black nothing better than 1...d5, upon which follows 2 b4 f4 (hoping for 3 exf4 clearing the way for the d-pawn) 3 Kxf4 (no such luck!) Kxh4 4 b5 g5+ 5 Kf3 Kh3 6 b6 g4+ and White wins if he is careful (see 1a): 7 Ke2! (avoiding check from g3) g3 8 b7 g2 9 Kf2 Kh2 10 b8Q+. If White plays 7 Kf2 instead, 7...Kh2 8 b7 g3+ draws.

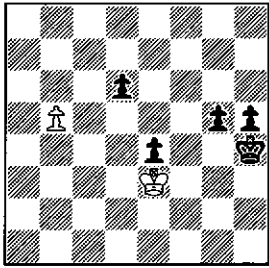
However, Black can do better: 1...f4! Now 2 Kxf4 Kxh4 3 b4 g5+ will leave Black a crucial tempo ahead, because he has not spent a move playing ...d5, and so 2 exf4 is White's only hope. However, this does clear the way for the d-pawn, and 2...d5 duly draws (3 f5 Kg3).

All right, so being clever doesn't work; let's try the natural 1 b4. Unfortunately this doesn't work either: 1...Kxh4 2 b5 g5+ 3 Kf3 Kh3 4 b6 g4+ gives 1b, and now even 5 Ke2 g3 6 b7 g2 7 Kf2 Kh2 8 b8Q doesn't win because bPd6 out blocks the check.

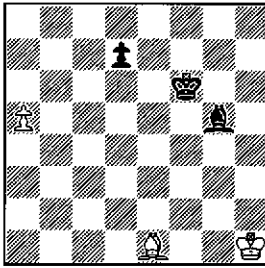
The answer is 1 e4! The sole purpose of this move is to free e3 for wK, putting it out of the way of Black's advancing g-pawn. There follows 1...fxe4 2 b4 Kxh4 3 b5 g5+ 4 Ke4! (see 1c, top of next page), and now 4...g4 doesn't give check and the rest is easy.

How did you get on with Ilham Aliyev's 2 (*Baku* 1993)? White must play 1 Bh4! If Black captures, 1...Bxh4, we have 2 Kg2 Bg5 3 Kf3 and bB is held at bay; if Black plays 1...Ke6 hoping to get bK into the corner (for White has the "wrong" bishop) we have 2 Bxg5 and Black finds that his pawn is in the way of his king (2...Kd6 3 Bd8 Kc6 4 a6 and bK will have to retreat as soon as Black's pawn moves have run out). This may be only a few moves long, but it is full of charm.

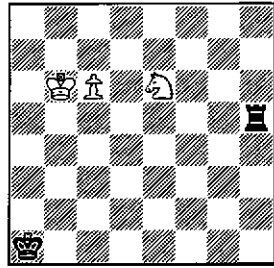
3 (Max Karstedt, *Deutsches Wochensach* 1911) is also quoted in EG 133. The wK has to travel via c2 from the b-file to the d-file: 1 c7 Rh8 2 Nd8 Rh6+ 3 Kb5 (3 Ka5 also works since wN prevents ...Rc6) Rh5+ 4 Kb4 Rh4+ 5 Kb3 (or 5 Kc3 Rh1 6 Kc2) Rh3+ 6 Kc2 Rh2+ 7 Kd3 Rh3+ 8 Kd4 Rh4+ 9 Kd5 Rh5+ 10 Kd6



1c - main line, after 4 Ke3



2 - win



3 - win

Rh6+ 11 Ke7 (now wN's guard of c6 is crucial) **Rh7+ 12 Nf7** and wN prevents 12...Rh8. It's a fine study, but the reason for its quotation in *EG* is that the ChessBase program which interrogates the Thompson CD-ROMs gets it wrong and says there is no win! Given that computers are supposedly infallible, what has happened?

The answer is two-fold. Firstly, the databases record positions only as "won" and "not won", and do not subdivide the positions which are "not won" into "drawn" and "lost"; secondly, the CD-ROMs on sale do not contain all the databases, and among those omitted is N + P v R. They *do* contain R v N + P, but that gives the positions which are "won" and "not won" for the *rook* and here it is the knight and pawn that are trying to win. But the interrogation program, seeing R v N + P on the board, calls for the only database it knows, and promptly suffers what used to be called an helical deformation of its nether garments.

Harold van der Heijden, reporting this in *EG* 133, says that at least once a month he receives or sees a false claim based on misuse of the CD-ROMs. He correctly says that several interface programs are commercially available and that some may be less likely to give erroneous results, but ChessBase 6.01, which he used for his article, is probably the most popular and the interface program on my own machine gives the same results. I imagine the bug will be fixed in due course, but for the moment caution is advisable. Don't just put an unknown ending into the computer and hope; try some simple known cases first, and verify that the results are what you expect.

More than one enthusiast has regretted that the Thompson CD-ROMs do not include the ending with two pawns against one. It was reported at the July *EG* readers' meeting (quoting the *ICCA Journal*, I think) that this ending has now been analysed, but I understand that the data would occupy no fewer than 42 CD-ROMs and I do not know what arrangements if any have been taken to make them generally available. However, the reason the data are so extensive is that they must embrace all possible promotion combinations however unlikely (a general ending with 2P v P can lead to X + Y v Z where X, Y, and Z are any three pieces or pawns). If we consider only cases where two opposing pawns face each other on the same file, at most two pawns can promote, and if my calculations are correct a complete set of "won-drawn-lost" data would occupy no more than 320 Mb even before compression. This would fit on to one CD-ROM with space to spare, and the release of such a CD-ROM would start to rationalize an area which has become rather untidy.

News and notices

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday October 8** (please note the date, which is different from that advertised at the July meeting) at 6.00 pm. Non-subscribers are welcome, but please bring £5 towards the cost of the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring the latest *EG* with you!

The reason that the *EG* readers' meeting has been moved from the usual first Friday in the quarter is that I have just received a letter from Jurgen Stigter which tells me that there will be a meeting of the Dutch-Flemish study organization ARVES in **Antwerp on Saturday October 2**, when the legendary Russian author and analyst Yuri Averbakh will be talking about the history of composing in the USSR and in particular about the prosecution of composers. I have no further details as yet, but both John Roycroft and I are intending to go and I shall be happy to pass on further information as soon as I receive it (telephone me on 01582-715858, or write to the address on the front page). I do not normally regard it as the function of *BESN* to advertise meetings held outside the UK, but this seems to be an occasion on which to make an exception.

Tourneys. The latest issue of *Infoblatt* has yet to reach me, but *EG* 133 reports that the closing date for the ARVES tenth anniversary tourney (see December, p 96) has been extended to 1 January 2000.

EG 133 also announces that composers wishing to be considered for the study section of the 1995-97 FIDE Album should send their best work published during this period "in five clear copies, in diagram form with a position control, on one side of the paper (continuation sheets allowed), with full name(s), postal address(es), complete solution, comments **and detailed source**" to John Roycroft at the address above: "mark entries and envelope *FIDE Album 1995-1997*." The closing date is November 30. The notice in *EG* stresses that composers should send **only** their best work, but experience suggests that this will be a very pious hope. Every composition selected for a FIDE Album gets its composer a point towards the title "FIDE Grandmaster of Chess Composition", and some composers have become notorious for submitting copies of everything they have got into print and hoping for the best. At the other extreme, a few eccentrics such as myself regard the whole business of mutually-awarded titles for composition as fatuous, and refuse to have anything to do with them. The man who really deserves a title never needs one, because his name carries sufficient lustre on its own.

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.