

# British Endgame Study News

Volume 6 Number 3

September 2001

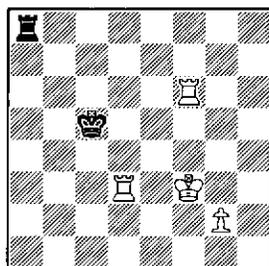
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ISSN 1363-0318

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Deep Junior v Deep Fritz  
White to play (see below)

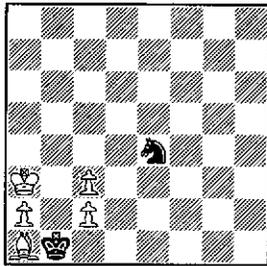
**This issue.** This month features the first of what I hope will be two special numbers by Adam Sobcy on his 33 years as study editor of *The Problemist*, and also a first attempt to summarize the mass of data that has been provided by Ken Thompson on six-man pawnless endings. The main magazine features a couple of “nature imitates art” items, a wholly frivolous one below and a more normal one on page 183, and I have had to make use of the back page to fit in some cogently expressed readers’ replies to the question of what is a “quiet” move.

**Nature imitates art (1).** When reviewing an early use by a computer program of the Nalimov 5-man tablebases (see *EG* 136 pp 118-20), I constructed the position “wKa1, Qc7, Pf3/f2 (4), bKf8, Pf4 (2)” in which the computer played neither (a) the beginner’s move 1 Qxf4+ winning yet more material nor (b) the expert line 1-5 Kf6 with mate next move, but (c) 1 Qf7+ with mate in 25 (because it had a complete table of results with K+2P v K+P and so could look up the answer without further analysis). I was therefore delighted when Hew Dundas sent me a report of a top-level computer-against-computer match in which just such play had occurred. Hew’s source gave only an outline, but the actual position was reported at the July *EG* readers’ meeting (quoted, I think, from 64 - *Shakmatnoe obozrenie*). Both sides had a complete table of results with K+R+P v K+R and could see that the sacrifice of a rook would give White a known win, and play continued **70 Rc6+! Kb5! 71 Rc5+!! Kb4!! 72 Rb5+!!! Kc4!!! 73 Rd4+!!!! Kc3!!!! 74 Rc5+!!!!!! Kxd4** (nothing else holds out longer) and White duly mated on move 109.

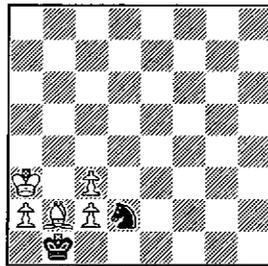
**Spotlight.** Jonathan Mestel suggests that Black doesn’t have to play 5...Bxd5 in Mike Bent’s study 5 in June (page 171); he can play 5...Ke5 allowing 6 Nxc7, and then continue 6...Bc6 eventually winning the knight. Sadly, the computer confirms.

**Another outlet for originals?** David Shire’s problem column in *Correspondence Chess* recently reprinted a study of mine, and I think he would be willing to consider not-too-difficult originals of quality if they were to be offered. Try him at 25 Palmars Cross Hill, Rough Common, Canterbury, Kent CT2 9BL.

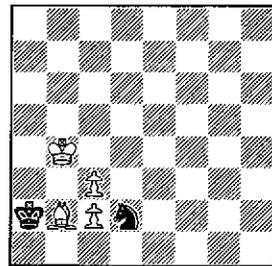
## Recently published British originals



1 - win



1a - after 1...Nd2



1b - 2 Kb4, after 2...Kxa2

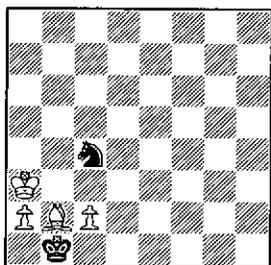
Harold van der Heijden and I published **1** in *diagrammes* last year, and although my contribution was only one move I think it qualifies for inclusion here.

The bishop cannot be saved (1 Bb2 Nd2 and it will go), and the question is whether the White king and pawns can overwhelm the knight before the Black king can get back to help. Try 1 c4; no, 1...Kxa1 2 Kb3 Nd2+ 3 Kc3 Nb1+ 4 Kb3 Nd2+ and Black has a perpetual check. Try 1 Kb3 releasing the a-pawn; now 1...Kxa1 can be met by 2 a4 winning, but Black has 1...Nd2+ (2 Ka3 Kxa1, 2 Kb4 Kxa2 with ...KxB to follow). Try 1 Kb4, again releasing the a-pawn and this time avoiding the check from d2; once more 1...Kxa1 can be met by 2 a4 winning, but Black can play 1...Kxa2 and pick up the bishop afterwards. This leaves only **1 Bb2** and if 1...Kxc2 then 2 c4 releasing wB with a routine win, but Black has **1...Nd2** keeping wK out of b3 and threatening a fork on c4 (see **1a**).

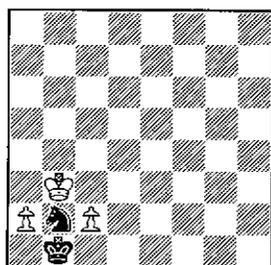
Bishop moves can now be met by captures (even 2 Bc1 Kxc1 3 Kb4 Kxc2 4 a4 is only drawn, 4...Ne4 5 a5 Nd6 6 a6 Nc8 7 c4 Kd3 8 Kc5 Kc3 9 Kb5 Kd4 10 c5 Kd5) and 2 Ka4 Kxb2 is clearly hopeless. What about 2 Kb4? 2...Kxb2 3 a4 Ne4 4 c4 is a win, isn't it? Yes, it is, but Black has 2...Kxa2 (see **1b**), once more taking the pawn first and letting the bishop wait. The bishop can now escape by 3 Ba3 or 3 Bc1, but 3 Ba3 is met by 3...Kb1 threatening 4...Kxc2 with an N v B+P draw (and if 4 c4 then 4...Nxc4), while 3 Bc1 Ne4 also leads to the loss of wPc2 (Black threatens 4...Kb1 forking bishop and pawn, and if say 4 Bd3 then 4...Kb2).

So White seems to be at an impasse, and only one of my solvers found the answer: **2 c4!** Faced with a threat to win a piece, White not only allows it to happen but throws away a pawn into the bargain. Black must play the fork else wB will escape, hence **2...Nxc4+** (see **1c**), and now comes the next trap. The natural 3 Kb3 Nxb2 gives **1d** with White to play, and he has no way of winning: 4 a3 Kc1 (**1e** with White to play) 5 c4 Nd3 6 a4 Kd2 7 a5 Ke3 8 Kc3 Nc5 9 Kb4 Kd4 10 Kb5 Ne6 and White will make no further progress, or 4 c3 Nd3 with various lines of which perhaps the most important is 5 a4 Ne5 6 a5 Nc6 7 a6 Na7 8 c4 Nc8 9 c5 Na7 10 Kb4 Kc2 11 Ka5 Ne8 12 Kb5 Kd3 13 Kc6 Kc4.

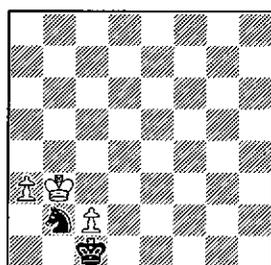
Instead, from **1c** White must play **3 Kb4!** Black still has nothing better than **3...Nxb2** (3...Nb6/Nd6/Ne3 4 Kb3, 3...Nd2 4 a4) and now **4 Kb3** gives **1d** with Black



1c - main line, 2...Nxc4+



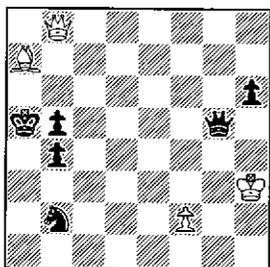
1d - reciprocal zugzwang



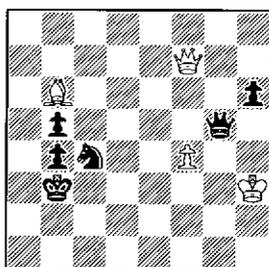
1e - reciprocal zugzwang

to play. 4...Nd1 and 4...Ka1 are met by 5 a4, but 4...Kc1 is more troublesome because the obvious 5 c4 exploiting the withdrawal of pressure on a2 still fails: 5...Nd3 6 a4 Kd2 7 a5 Ke3 8 a6 Nc5+. Nor is 5 Kc3 Nd1+ or 5 c3 Nd3 any better, and the right move is 5 a3! giving 1e with Black to play. Black is now lost; 5...Kb1 allows 6 c4, now winning because bK is one square further from the action (6...Nd3 7 a4 Kc1 8 a5 Kd2 9 Ka4 Kc3 10 Kb5 Nb4 11 c5 etc), while 5...Nd1 leads to the slow excelsior 6 a4 (6 c4 can be met by either 6...Kd2 or 6...Ne3) Ne3 (6...Kd2 7 a5 Nc3 8 Kc4, 6...Nf2 7 c4) 7 a5 (7 c4 Kd2 8 a5 Kd3) Nd5 (7...Nxc2 8 Kc4) 8 a6 Nc7 9 a7 Nb5 10 a8Q.

A study set for solution should be sportingly difficult but not impossible, and as one wrong answer followed another I began to wonder if I had committed the ultimate editorial sin of setting something that nobody could do. Fortunately a correct solution arrived from Jean-Marie Barré on the island of La Réunion (the birthplace of de la Bourdonnais) a day or two before I was due to send in the solving ladder. As regards the division of labour, Harold sent me a study based on 1c reflected about the b-file (bNa4, wKc3, Kb4 again necessary to win), I set up 1a in a spirit of "wouldn't it be nice if" and was amazed when the computer said it was sound, and Harold then pointed out that we could start from 1 and give the bishop a move.



2 - win

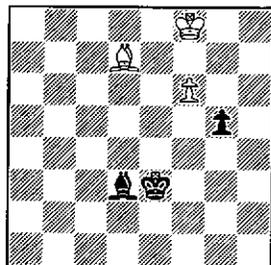


2a - after 3...Nc4 4 f4

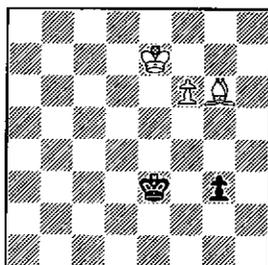
If 1 proved to be at the far edge of what is acceptably difficult, Mike Bent's 2, from the October-December *diagrammes*, showed that a study does not have to be difficult to be enjoyed. Black has a material plus, and it is soon seen that only one line leads to an advantage for White: 1 Bb6+ Ka4 2 Qa7+ Kb3 3 Qf7+ and 4 f4! (see 2a say). None of the 17 squares to which the Black queen can move offers a safe refuge.

## A tale of two prizewinners

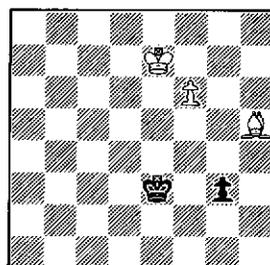
This is a tale of two studies honoured in the same tourney. One has attained the status of a classic, frequently reproduced; the other is forgotten.



1 - win



1a - 1 Ke7, after 3...g3



1b - main line, after 4...g3

1 (W. Issler, 3rd Prize, *New Statesman* Ty 1970) has become recognized as one of the classic modern studies. The obvious line is 1 Ke7 Bg6 (1...Bc4 2 Be6) 2 Be8 apparently chasing bB away, but Black has 2...g4! and 3 Bxg6 g3 (see 1a) 4-5 f8Q g1Q is only a draw. The alternative 1 Kg7 is hopeless (1...Bc4 etc), and 1 Be6 is met by 1...g4! with sufficient counterplay to draw: 2 Kg7 (2 Bxg4 Kf4 3 Be6 Bg6) g3 3 Bd5 (3 Bh3 Bc4) Be4.

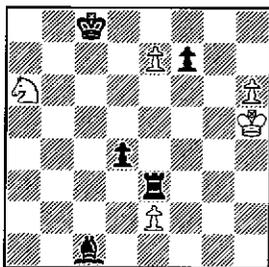
The winning move is the remarkable **1 Kf7!!** remaining in front of the pawn. This threatens 2 Be6 and 3 Kg7, and if 1...g4 then 2 Bxg4 and White wins because wK is one square nearer the action (2...Kf4 3 Be6 Be2 4 Kg6). So Black plays **1...Be2**, ready to meet 2 Be6 by 2...Bh5+ and 2 Kg6 by 2...Bc4. Now White plays **2 Ke7**, and after **2...Bh5 3 Be8 g4 4 Bxh5 g3** we have 1a with wB on h5 instead of g6 (see 1b). This allows White to play **5 Bf3!** and after **5...Kxf3** he will queen with check (**6 f7 g2 7 f8Q+**). It is an unusually subtle decoy manoeuvre. In the natural line 1 Ke7 Bg6 2 Be8 g4 3 Bxg6 g3 the White bishop ends up on g6 and the move Be4 doesn't help White, but the spectacular opening move 1 Kf7 decoys the Black bishop to e2, and after 1...Be2 2 Ke7 Bh5 the White bishop will capture its counterpart on h5 and the move Bf3 will win.

Fine. A classic study, with a light setting, a spectacular opening move, and a subtle strategic motivation for the play. But it only received *third prize*; what can have been placed ahead of it?

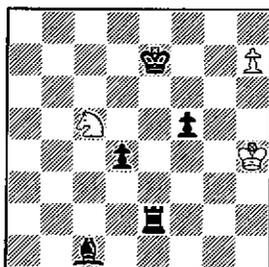
The second prizewinner is easily dealt with. It purported to show a lengthy and elegant out-and-back idea, but it was found to be fundamentally unsound almost as soon as the award was published and it has sunk without trace. (I have not seen the original award, and am relying on the reports in *EG* 23 and *EG* 24.) But the first prizewinner (P. Perkonjoja, see 2) is rather a different matter.

This was described in the award in the following terms (notation converted). "A study without drama or central point, but of consistently high standard throughout. There are few captures, the wK must walk with precision, there is a black excelsior in

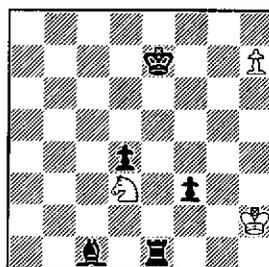
the variation 8...Bf4, and there is a fascinatingly natural position after 13 Nxe5 in the main line." The play (original notes in quotation marks) goes **1 h7 Kd7** (now the rook can concentrate on the h-pawn) **2 Nc5+** ("2 Kg4? f5+ 3 Kh4 Ba3 4 h8Q Bxe7+ 5 Kh5 Rh3+, or here 4 Nb8+ Kc7. If 2 Nc7? d3 3 e8Q+ Rxe8 4 Nxe8 Bb2") **Kxe7 3 Kg4** ("3 Kh4? Rxe2 4 Kg3 Bf4+ 5 Kxf4 Rh2") **f5+ 4 Kh4 Rxe2** (see **2a**) **5 Kg3** ("5 Kh3? Bf4 mates") **f4+** ("5...Bf4+ 6 Kxf4 Rh2 7 Kxf5 Rxh7 8 Ke5") **6 Kh3 Re1 7 Kh2** ("7 Kg2? f3+ 8 Kh2 Bf4+ 9 Kh3 Rh1+") **f3 8 Nd3** (see **2b**) **f2** ("8...Bf4+ 9 Nxf4 f2 10 h8Q Rh1+ 11 Kxh1 f1Q+ 12 Kh2 Qxf4+ 13 Kg2. Or here 10...f1Q 11 Qg7+ Ke8 12 Qg8+ Kd7 13 Qd5+") **9 Nxf2** ("9 h8Q? f1Q 10 Qh4+ Kd7 11 Q/Nxe1 Bf4+") **Bf4+ 10 Kg2** ("10 Kh3? Be5 11 Nd3 Re3+") **Be5 11 Nd3 Re2+ 12 Kf1** ("12 Kf3? Re3+") **Rh2 13 Nxe5 Rxh7 14 Nc6+ K-- 15 Nxd4.**



2 - draw



2a - after 4...Rxe2



2b - after 8 Nd3

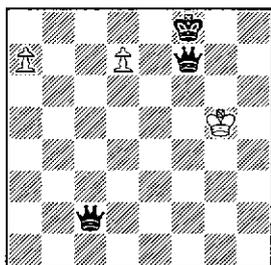
This is far from being its composer's best work, as those who look up "Perkonjoja" in the van der Heijden database will readily discover, and it is easy to see why it has become forgotten. The initial position is characterless and untidy; there is indeed no drama or central point to the play; there may be "few captures", but three are of unmoved men, one of them a pawn on the point of promotion; and the draw in the line 8...Bf4+ 9 Nxf4 f2 10 h8Q f1Q 11 Qg7+ Ke8 12 Qg8+ Kd7 13 Qd5+ is not as clear-cut as I like to see in a side variation (White has to keep checking, because if he grabs the d-pawn Black has an attack leading to mate or win of material). The study would be in a wholly different class if the saw-tooth wK manoeuvre h5-g4!-h4-g3!-h3 were continued to the second rank, and if the necessary single-step Black move ...Re2 were not forced by a capture. But as it is, I am afraid we have an all too typical prizewinning study in which length and depth are present in abundance, but shape and elegance are not.

So, had I been one of the judges, would I have placed these studies differently? I cannot honestly say that I would. A judge plays over the studies many times, and the impact of a move such as 1 Kf7 inevitably decreases with repetition. He may start by putting study 1 at the top of the field, but then he reflects: we are judging *compositional content*, and the composer has put so much *more* into 2 than into 1, so should we not in honesty place it higher? Length and depth can be measured, surprise, shape, and elegance cannot; so the effect of length and depth persists, while the impact of other factors wears off, and the dominance of the former in the prize lists is assured.

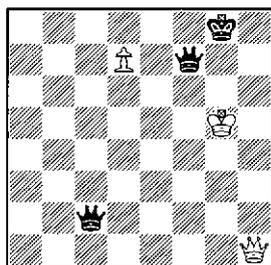
## From the world at large

The results of the sixth "World Chess Composition Tournament" (a composing competition for national teams) were recently announced. The results of the previous tournament had shown a significant level of bias, the seven countries providing judges having received an average of 30.3 points out of 47 for the round judged by their own national compared with 13.7 points for each of the other rounds, and I am sure that the publicizing of these figures in *BESN* was one reason why no British study composer was willing to submit his work to the scrutiny of the present tournament. It is therefore sad to have to report that the situation this time has been little different. One judge came from a non-competing country; the six countries providing judges for the other rounds received an average of 29.8 points for the round judged by their own national, compared this time with 14.0 for the others.

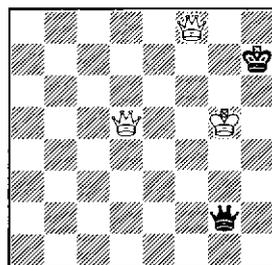
Those parts of the composition world which attach importance to tourney awards have long been concerned at the apparent intrusion of extraneous factors into judging, and mutterings about cronyism and mutual back-scratching have been all too frequent. Such things can never be proved - even now, it is not possible to point to a particular WCCT section judgement and demonstrate that it is dishonest - but the occurrence of such results in two consecutive events is an overwhelmingly clear indication that something somewhere is seriously wrong.



1 - win



1a - after 3...Kg8



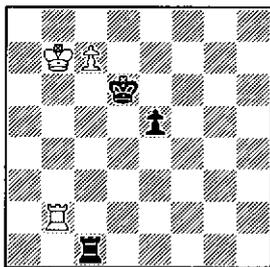
1b - 4 d8Q+, after 6...Qg2+

The more abstract and disinterested world of computer research is in a much healthier state, and **1** appeared in Noam Elkies's column in *EG* 140. It is based on Peter Karrer's researches with 2Q v Q+P (Peter and Eugene Nalimov have independently investigated this ending with an advanced centre or bishop's pawn) and is credited as "**\*C\*** P. Karrer (2000), version by NDE" ("**\*C\***" is *EG*'s symbol for computer-dependent work). When preserving the results of a state-of-the-art endgame analysis, it is usual to store only the positions where the side trying to avoid defeat is to move, and Noam reports that Peter has extracted all the Q+P v 2Q positions with a pawn on d7 whose outcome depends on promotion to rook or bishop, finding 19 positions with White to move where a bishop promotion is needed to draw (there are none where it is needed to win) and 21 with Black to move where an eventual rook promotion by White is needed to win (there are none to draw).

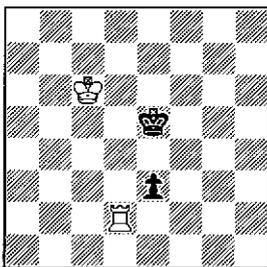
Play in **1** starts **1 a8Q+** (1 d8Q+ is met by 1...Qe8) and we are in the realms of definitive knowledge. The computer gives **1...Kg7** (1...Ke7 2 d8Q+ and mate) **2 Qa1+ Kh7** (2...Kg8 3 d8Q+ Qf8 4 Qd5+ Qf7 5 Qaa8+ Kg7 6 Qd4+/Qe5+ and mate) **3 Qh1+** (third corner!) **Kg8** (Noam points out that the stalemate traps after 3...Qh5 4 Qxh5+ Kg7 are easily avoided) and we have **1a**. The natural 4 d8Q+ is now met by the remarkable line 4...Qf8 5 Qhd5+ (5 Qdd5+ leads nowhere) Kh7! 6 Qxf8 (nothing else offers hope, but bK is now stalemated) Qg2+! (see **1b**) 7 Kf6 (ready to meet 7...Qxd5 by 8 Qg7 mate) Qf3+! and this time White must concede a queen or give stalemate (even the cross-check line 8 Qf5+ Qxf5+ 9 Kxf5 ends in stalemate).

So White must play **4 d8R+**, and after **4...Qf8 5 Qd5+** he can meet **5...Kh7** by **6 Rxf8** and there will be no stalemate. But there is more. Black also has **5...Kg7**, and White must be careful because **6 Qe5+ Kh7 7 Rxf8** will allow Black to escape (7...Qg6+ 8 Kh4 Qg5+ and stalemate, or 8 Kf4 Qh6+). Correct is **6 Qd7+ Kg8** (6...Qf7 7 Qd4+ and mate) **7 Qe6+ Kh7 8 Rxf8** and now Black has nothing.

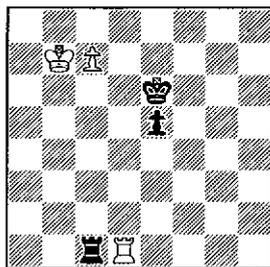
In my opinion, Noam's claim to add his name to this lay not in providing the trivial opening move but in sorting through the positions reported by the computer, seeing what lay behind them, and presenting the most interesting for our delight. The result has been to add yet another to the positions which it may have taken a computer to *find*, but which once found can be *enjoyed* by even the modest of us.



2 - win



2a - White only draws



2b - after 2 Rd1

**Nature imitates art (2).** 2, from Leko-Kramnik, 2nd Rapid-play match game, Budapest 2001, was quoted in Leonard Barden's *Guardian* column in February. White's actual 1 c8Q only drew, but Artur Yusupov pointed out the win.

1 c8Q leads to 1...Rxc8 2 Kxc8 Kd5 and wK is too far away: White will have to sacrifice wR for bP. So we try 1 Rd2+ hoping to make space for wK to advance, but after 1...Ke6 2 c8Q+ Rxc8 3 Kxc8 e4 4 Kc7 Ke5 5 Kc6 e3 we have **2a** and again there is no win (6 Re2 Kd4, or 6 Rd1 Kc4 7 Kc5 e2 8 Re1 Kd3).

The winning line is **1 Rd2+ Ke6 2 Rd1!** (see **2b**). If 2...Rxd1 then 3 c8Q+ and material will soon go, hence **2...Rc2** say, and **3 c8Q Rxc8 4 Kxc8 e4 5 Kc7 Ke5 6 Kc6 e3** gives **2a** with wR on d1 instead of d2. Now wR is not attacked, and White has time to bring wK one rank nearer: **7 Kc5 Ke4 8 Kc4 e2 9 Re1 Ke3 10 Kc3 Kf2 11 Kd2**. By manoeuvring wR down to d1, White has gained a crucial tempo.

Not a "study", since it arose through the accident of actual play? Perhaps not, but a true study-like manoeuvre which I am sure readers will think worthy of our attention.

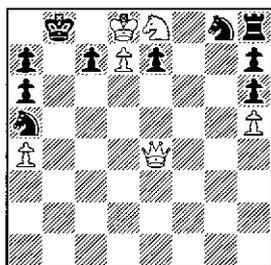
## News and notices

**Meetings.** The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday October 5** 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!**

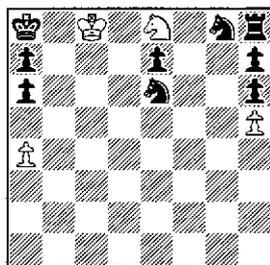
**What is a "quiet" move?** Walter Veitch's comments (June, p 169) have prompted remarks from two further readers, and though there seems to be general agreement in principle I think the different flavours may be of interest.

Jean Monsour thinks that "quietness" is always illusory, because if all White's moves are necessary to force the win, all are equally dangerous, whatever their immediate and short-term consequences. "When one writes in a comment a *quiet move*, it actually means *this move looks quiet, but it is deadly dangerous for Black.*"

Timothy Whitworth approaches the matter from a different angle, and suggests the following as "one possible answer" to the question. "A quiet move is one that (a) issues no threat, or sets up a threat that is only remote; (b) carries on the struggle in an unexpected manner, given the previous play; and (c) is visually modest, unflamboyant. There is no inherent contradiction in describing a move as both 'strong' and 'quiet'." He goes on to give an example: "How else should we describe White's final move in the following study?"



1 - draw



1a - after 4...Ne6

This is by K. A. L. Kubbel, 1st Prize *Magyar Sakkvilág* 1928, and the solution with Timothy's commentary runs **1 Qa8+** (Black was threatening to win by 1...Nb7+ 2 Qxb7+ Kxb7, and if White tries 1 N~, then 1...N(x)f6+ wins) **Kxa8 2 Kxc7** (if 2 Kc8, then 2...Nf6 3 d8Q Rxe8 wins) **Nb7 3 d8Q+ Nxd8 4 Kc8 Ne6** (the only way to prevent 5 Nc7 mate) [see **1a**] **5 a5** (this leaves Black in zugzwang) **Nf6 stalemate**.

*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.*