

British Endgame Study News

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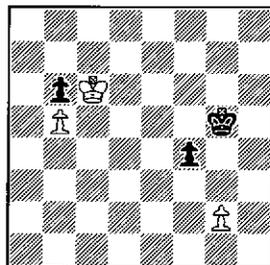
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Contents of this issue

Editorial	225
Recently published British originals	226
<i>Quarterly for Chess History</i> : composition	227
Chess in a nutshell	228
From the world at large	230
News and notices	232



from a study by Dedrlé
Not reciprocal zugzwang!

This issue. Our middle pages look at an item from pre-war British chess which has recently come my way, and our special number is devoted to the work of the Georgian composer Iosif Krikheli. In addition, there is an announcement on behalf of the *Quarterly for Chess History*, in which I shall be conducting a section on the history of chess composition. I feel honoured to have been invited to do this, and I hope that contributors will come forward.

And this being March, my annual **book list** is enclosed.

Spotlight. John Nunn points out that Herbstman's study 6 in special number 33 is unsound: White can also win by 2 Kh2 dxc6 3 a6 d4 (3...c5 4 f3 Bxf3 transposes to the intended main line of the study) 4 f3! Bxf3 (4...Bd5 is met the same way) 5 Bc5 d3 6 a7 d2 7 a8Q d1Q 8 Qf8+ mating. I don't know if a rescue is possible. I have a weakness for shut-out studies, and the loss of this one would be a pity.

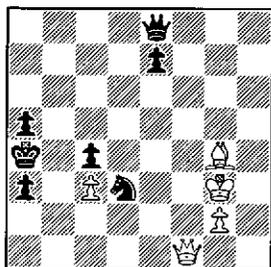
Timothy Whitworth also has eyes which miss little. He gently reminds me (a) that Mitrofanov's 3 on December's page 223 had got into the literature long before the unsound version appeared in *EG* 120 (see for example the August 1994 *BCM*, page 437), and (b) that Herbstman's 1 in special number 33 cannot have been "3 Pr Zadachy i etudy 1934" since this magazine had ceased publication in 1930 (it has recently been resumed). It was in fact honoured in a tourney dedicated to the 17th Party Congress, and I do not so much criticize people who support such events as breathe a very heartfelt sigh of relief that I personally do not have to. Herbstman had wR/bR on g3/f5, and according to Kasparyan in *Razvitie etyudnykh idei* the version I actually quoted was a rediscovery by B. Owesson, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* 1944.

And I have discovered a serious flaw in my exposition of study 1 in our "Dedrlé" special number: position 1b, repeated above, is *not* reciprocal zugzwang. For details, see the back page.

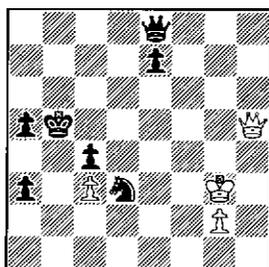
Large print copies. Readers are reminded that I can supply *BESN* in large print, and any reader who would prefer to receive it in this form is asked to tell me.

Recently published British originals

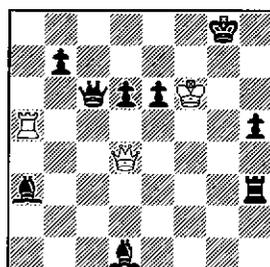
Once again we are beholden to Mike Bent, several of whose stalemate studies have recently appeared in *diagrammes*. Read through as presented in *BESN*, they may seem a little straightforward and artificial, but when set as something to solve many people find them just right; one of my solvers, who used greatly to prefer win studies and rarely sent solutions to the draws, tells me that Mike is beginning to convert him.



1 - draw



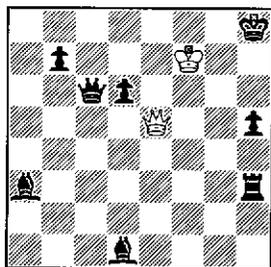
1a - after 4 Qh5+



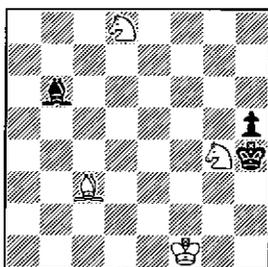
2 - draw

This comment was triggered by 1, which appeared last year. If we are looking for a stalemate (which quite possibly we are, since ...Qb8+ and ...Qb2 look dangerous), we note that it can be achieved by ...Qh5 provided that White can rid himself of his queen and bishop. 1 Qd1+ seems to lead nowhere ... ah, 1 Bd1+ Kb5 2 Ba4+! Kxa4 3 Qd1+ Kb5 4 Qh5+ (see 1a). Now 4...Qxh5 gives the desired stalemate, and other Black moves allow Qxd8 with at least a draw. The bishop clears the diagonal g4-d1 by moving along it in one direction, so that the queen can move along it in the other.

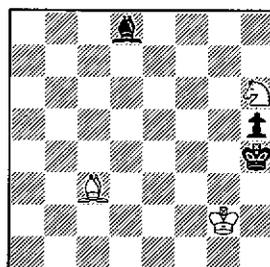
The first moves in 2 seem obvious enough, 1 Ra8+ Kh7 2 Rh8+ Kxh8, but now does White play Kf7+ or Kg6+? In either case, Black will play ...e5 ... ah! 3 Kf7+ e5 4 Qxe5+ (see 2a) and the recapture 4...dxe5 will take five flight squares.



2a - after 4 Qxe5+

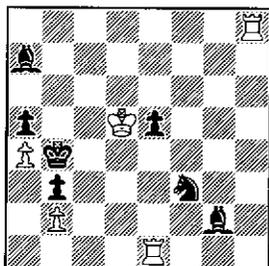


3 - win

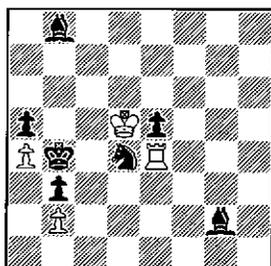


3a - after 2 Kg2

3 shows Mike in different vein. Two knights and bishop have a sure if slow win against a lone bishop and a pawn so far back won't help the defender, so Black must capture a knight before they both run away. So White starts with 1 Nh6 rescuing one



4 - draw



4a - after 2...Nd4

knight, and Black must reply **1...Bxd8** if he is to have any chance at all. Now comes **2 Kg2!** (see 3a), and what is Black to do? 2...Kg5 allows a fork; a bishop move off the diagonal d8-h4 allows Bf6 mate; ...Be7 allows a fork; ...Bg5 allows Be1 mate.

Studies like this are a useful reminder that length of solution is not necessarily a virtue, and 4 makes the point even more forcibly. White has 29 different moves here: 14 with one rook, 11 with the other, and four with the king. How many moves will it take to get rid of them all? Only two: **1 Rb8+ Bxb8 2 Re4+ Nd4** (see 4a)! In a case such as this, one might fairly say that the *shorter* the solution, the better.

Quarterly for Chess History : composition

The *Quarterly for Chess History* (editor Doc. Vlastimil Fiala) is starting a section on the history of chess composition, which will initially be under my own direction. We hope to print at least two high-quality articles in each issue, one on endgame study composition and one on problems, and there may be room for more.

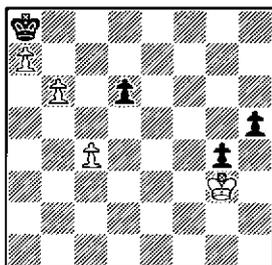
Contributions are invited on any aspect of the history of chess composition (for example, surveys of the development of themes and ideas, biographies of composers with a selection of their compositions, accounts of problem composition in particular countries or during particular periods, notes on the history of competitions and columns, descriptions of unpublished manuscripts, and so on). They should not normally exceed 1500 words and 20 diagrams, though the acceptance of occasional longer papers is possible. Writers should assume their readers to be mainstream chess enthusiasts rather than specialist composers; technical terms should be avoided as far as possible, and any whose use is thought essential should be defined in the text.

Papers will be published in English, but may be submitted in any language for which the editors can find a translator. All contributions will be acknowledged, and decisions on acceptance will be made and communicated as soon as is reasonably practicable. The editors reserve the right to seek opinions from third parties if the assessment of a paper appears to require technical or linguistic expertise which they do not possess themselves.

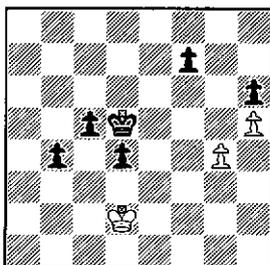
Contributions and outlines of suggested contributions may be sent to me either by e-mail or by ordinary post (addresses on the front page). Contributors do please come forward, and editors of other magazines please reprint!

Chess in a nutshell

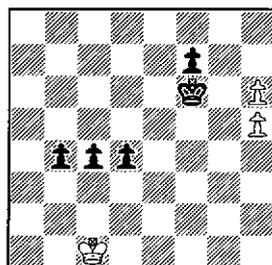
I recently came across a set of 50 cards published by A. Firth of Letchworth under the title "Chesnuts". They are undated, but Ken Whyld draws my attention to a reference in the *BCM*, May 1929, page 193, and it would seem that they come from that period. They comprise a mixture of composed studies and positions from play, and were published with the ostensible aim of teaching the End Game to the ordinary player of Social Chess (I quote from the *BCM*). Not being an experienced coach myself (nor even a minibus) I cannot usefully comment on this, but as the editor of a magazine which tries to present studies for enjoyment I can heartily applaud them.



1 - win



2 - win

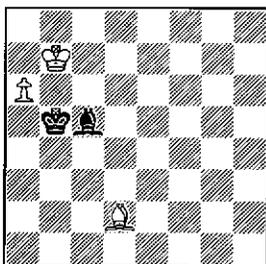


2a - after 4 Kc1

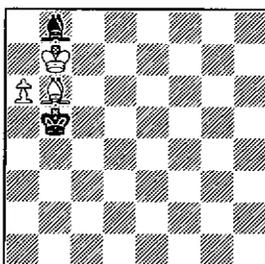
1 is by G. Reichhelm, *Lasker's Chess Magazine* 1904 (Firth gives few sources, and I am relying on Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database 2000"). The position appears obviously drawn, the kings being condemned to march to and fro *ad infinitum*, but it is not so: **1 Kf4 Kb7 2 c5! dxc5 3 Ke5 g3 4 Kd6 g2 5 a8Q+ Kxa8 6 Kc7 g1Q 7 b7+** and mate at move 9. The instructional value of this would seem to be slight (there are a few examples of the finish in master play, but I don't think any of them incorporates a clearance sacrifice equivalent to 2 c5), but it must have given quite a thrill to readers who had not seen the manoeuvre before.

2 is an 1851 classic by Kling and Horwitz, but I quote it anyway; however famous a study may be, there is always at least one reader who is seeing it for the first time. Two pawns winning against five? But they do: **1 g5 Ke5 (1...hxg6 2 h6 etc, 1...b3 2 gxh6 c4 3 h7 c3+ 4 Kc1 b2+ 5 Kb1** and this time the opposing king is one square too far away to force mate) **2 gxh6 Kf6** (now the Black king is in a straitjacket, and all that remains is to win the queen's-side ending with king against three pawns) **3 Kc2 c4 4 Kc1** and Black is in zugzwang (see 2a): 4...c3 5 Kc2, or 4...b3 5 Kb2 d3 6 Kc3.

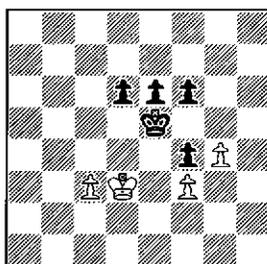
3 (Centurini, 1856) is one of several positions featuring bishop and pawn against bishop. There are duals, of course; White has a won position, and can play almost anything without forfeiting the win. But the given line **1 Bf4 Bd4 2 Bb8 Be3 3 Ba7 Bf4 4 Bb6** is as simple as any, and after **4...Bb8** we have 3a. Now "Endgame study database 2000" (which has the position reflected) gives 5 Bc7, which certainly wins (5...Bxc7 6 a7 etc), but Firth plays the waiting move **5 Bd8** which strikes me as crisper. I haven't seen the original source, and don't know which move is Centurini's.



3 - win

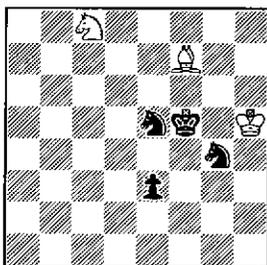


3a - after 4...Bb8

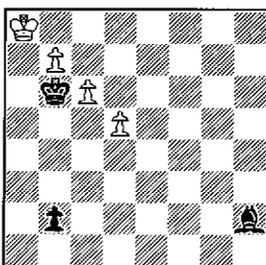


4 - win

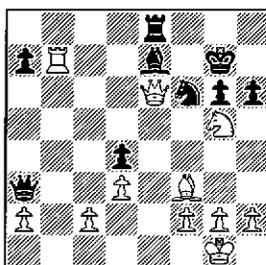
4 (William Bone, *A new treatise on chess* 1841) needs a quick mate; if White doesn't grab the opportunity while it is there, he certainly won't win, and he might even lose. Hence **1 Kc4** to guard d5, and now it's easy: **1...f5** (or **1...d5+ 2 Kc5** etc) **2 g5 d5+ 3 Kc5 d4 4 cxd4** mate. The final mate is what composers call "ideal": every man left takes part, and each square is barred to the Black king in only one way.



5 - draw



6 - draw



7 - White to play

5 and 6 are lollipop stalemates, short and sweet. 5 is by the Platov brothers, from their 1914 collection. **1 Ne7+ Ke4** (else the pawn falls to a fork) **2 Bg6+ Nxf6** (2...Kf3 3 Nf5 e2 4 Nd4+) **3 Nf5 Kxf5** and the deed is done.

6 is by H. Rubesamen, *Deutsche Schachblätter* 1913. The pawns will go, but White must time it correctly: **1 d6 Bxd6 2 b8Q+ Bxb8 3 c7** and both captures give stalemate. The d-pawn must go at once, the c-pawn not until the bishop is on b8.

Finally, 7 purports to be from a game "Bird v Blackburn, Paris Tournament 1878", though I cannot find it in the "BIG99" database that came with ChessBase 7. Be that as it may, the play is certainly spectacular: **1 Qf7+ Kh8 2 Qxf6+! Bxf6 3 Rh7+ Kg8 4 Bd5+ Re6** (4...Kf8 5 Rf7+ Kg8 6 Rd7+ Re6 7 Bxe6+ transposes) **5 Bxe6+ Kf8 6 Rf7+ Kg8** (6...Ke8 7 Bd7+ Kd8 8 Ne6 with a pure mate, each square being guarded once only) **7 Rd7+ Kf8 8 Nh7+ Ke8 9 Nxf6+ Kf8 10 Rf7** with another pure mate. If genuine, this would be a rare example of a game with the actual line and a natural variation ending in different pure mates, but is it perhaps a little too good to be true?

Never mind. Ken describes Firth, if not perhaps as an unsung hero of the game, certainly as an unsung toiler for it, and he reminds me of a remark by Spike Milligan: "in that case, we'll sing him." I hope readers have enjoyed my doing so.

News and notices

Other magazines. The international endgame study magazine *EG* (four issues a year) can be obtained for 2003 by sending me £15 (cheques payable to myself, please). The British Chess Problem Society is primarily concerned with problems, but its remit includes endgame studies and its bookselling service normally has study books among its stock. The UK subscription for 2003 is £18 (new members £15, under 21 £7.50); R. T. Lewis, 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 9QA.

Outlets for original composition. I do not normally publish originals in *BESN*, but I am always glad to receive new discoveries, whether conventionally composed or computer-generated, for the *BCM*. In addition, Ian Watson (Crismill Manor, Crismill Land, Bearstead, Kent ME14 4NT, ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk) accepts originals for *Correspondence Chess*, and I myself take them for the French composition magazine *diagrammes*. There are other outlets abroad, and I will send details on request.

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday April 4** at 6.00 pm; non-subscribers welcome, but please bring £5 towards the buffet (except on a first visit). **Bring the latest *EG* with you!**

Position from Dedrle study (see front page). We recall the fundamentals of the study. In the initial position, the White king is on c7, and 1 Kxb6 is met by 1-3...Kxg3 and 4-5...f2 drawing. To win, White must exchange the K-side pawns before going for b7. He therefore plays 1 Kc6 giving our front-page diagram, and now Black is in trouble; 1...Kg6 will be met by 2 Kxb6, winning at once since the Black king has strayed too far from the pawn on g3, while other moves allow the White king to turn the Black position.

Now consider 1 Kd6, either in Dedrle's initial position or in our front-page diagram. Black has to play 1...Kh6 to keep the opposition (1...Kf6 2 Kd5 Kf5 3 Kd4 etc) and he is now one square further from g3, but the White king is similarly one square further from b7. Honours even? No, because White has 2 Kc7. Black must come to the fifth rank, else 3 Kxb7 will win at once, but 2...Kh5 can be met by 3 Kd7 gaining the opposition, while 2...Kg5 allows 3 Kc6 and we have our front-page diagram with Black to move.

So the front-page diagram is *not* reciprocal zugzwang, since White to play can lose a move. However, it does not follow that the original study is unsound. 1 Kd6 does indeed provide an alternative win, but only after taking White into a blind alley and out again; White has to get back to the original position and start again if he wants to make progress.

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.