

British Endgame Study News

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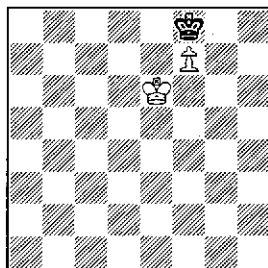
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by Noam Elkies

Add one man so that the position remains reciprocal zugzwang (4 solutions), also with wKg6 (3 sols)

This issue. There is a review of Lewis Stiller and Gady Costeff's database retrieval program CQL, another computer contribution to endgame theory, and a special number devoted to the studies of the Latvian composer and analyst Friedrich Amelung. The position alongside is quoted for the sake of the back-page correction, but you will enjoy solving it if you haven't seen it before.

Spotlight (see also back page). Alas, H. F. W. Lane's trip round the mulberry bush (10 in special number 38) is not needed; as Jarl Ulrichsen notes, **8 Rxc4** is simpler.

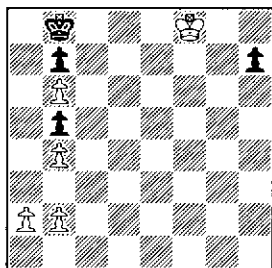
And Noam Elkies was the first to point out that Robert Robinson's **15** also has a quicker solution. After **1 Bd1 Bg6**, White can play **2 Bb3** at once (2...Be4 **3 Ba2** as main line, **2 Bf7 3 Ba4! Be6 4 Bd1** etc); more seriously, **3 Ba2** is itself an inferior move, since **3 Bc4** is quicker (3...dxc4 **4 Kxe4** etc, **3...Bf3 4 Kxf3 dxc4 5 Ke4** and the same, **3...Bg2/Bh1 4 Be2**, **3...Ke6/Kg6 4 Be2**). A lose-a-move manoeuvre may still be needed, but the play can be made shorter and crisper: **1 Bd1 Be8/Bg6 2 Bb3 Bf7** (2...Bc6 **3 Ba2**, 2...Be4 **3 Bc4** as above) **3 Ba4** (threatening **4 Bd7** and **5 Bc8**, and if **3-5...Ba6** then **6 c6**) **Be6 4 Bd1 Bf7 5 Bf3** and mission accomplished.

Harold van der Heijden points out that Paul Michelet's **5** on page 259 of our March issue is largely anticipated by G. Amiryán, 8th Comm, Bron Jubilee 1980, wKb8, Rf8, Bc4 (3), bKh1, Bd4, Ng2, Ph5/h2 (5), win by **1 Rf1+ Bg1 2 Bd5** etc. But Harold acknowledges that Paul's king-in-the-corner start adds something, and I agree. Paul seems to have a knack for finding something a little extra even in a well-tilled field.

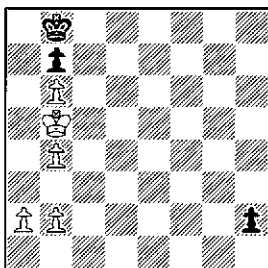
I have also noticed that my little Q v R+P study which I quoted in December 2000 was anticipated not only by František Dedrle's 1937-38 theoretical survey (see special number 31 page 6) but more explicitly by Berger (146 in *Theorie und Praxis der Endspiele*, 1922, and according to Harold van der Heijden in the 1890 edition also).

BESN is an exercise in day-to-day journalism and not in academic scholarship, but readers using it for reference should note that "Spotlight" appears on the front page (unless it overflows) and that anything reported in it is included in the annual indexes.

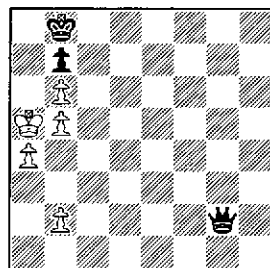
Recently published British originals



1 - draw



1a - after 4...h2



1b - after 7 a4

I shall need most of these two pages to write about CQL, but there is room to welcome Martin Gawne of Barrow-in-Furness. He sent me **1** at the end of last year, and I was more than happy to offer him publication in the *BCM*.

The h-pawn is out of reach, so White must think of something else: **1 Ke7 h5 2 Kd6 h4 3 Kc5 h3 4 Kxb5 h2** (see **1a**). Now White can bury himself for self-stalemate, **5 Ka5 h1Q 6 b5 Qg2 7 a4** with b4 to follow (see **1b**) - or, if Black prefers, **6...Qc1+ 7 b4** with a4 to follow. The idea was by no means new, but it was neatly done. In particular, we may note the precision needed at moves 5 and 6; if White advances his a-pawn too early, say by playing 5 a4, Black has **5...h1Q 6 Ka5 Qc1** pinning the b-pawn, and it's mate in a few.

More please, Martin. There are too few of us around.

CQL and related matters

In March, I reported the advent of the Costeff / Stiller endgame database interrogation program CQL, and promised more this time. Let's take it from square one.

General description. CQL is a program for the selective extraction of studies from a database. In particular, it allows the user to search for the following.

- Studies by a particular composer, or published in a given year or range of years.
- Studies in which a particular position or type of position occurs. This may feature specific men on specific squares or groups of squares, specific men attacking each other, specified numbers of certain types of men, etc etc. Particularly valuable is the ability to shift and flip a pattern, allowing it to be matched wherever it occurs on the board.
- Studies in which a specific moves occur, either singly or in sequence.
- Studies in which a position is repeated either identically or with modifications (shifted, with a man or men missing, with the other side to move, etc).

It was developed for use with the van der Heijden database, and this will undoubtedly be its main field of application.

Obtaining the program. In principle, CQL is downloadable from the CQL web

site www.rbnn.com/cql, but at the time of writing it appears that the far end drops the connection after one minute, and if you only have a 56K modem this leaves you with a truncated and unusable file (the complete file occupies over 500Kb). Emil Vlasák's web site www.quick.cz/EVCOMP suggests a way around this, but I haven't tried it because an appeal to Gady Costeff resulted in a copy being e-mailed to me directly.

Preparing the database. To use CQL to search the van der Heijden database, the first step is to use ChessBase to make a PGN copy of the database (it occupies about 30Mb). Having done this, you might as well run Emil Vlasák's utility Hhkonv (downloadable from his site) and replace the source mnemonics by actual sources.

Specifying the search. The user creates a file listing his requirements. The format may be found uncongenial by those without a background in computer programming, but an extensive set of examples is provided (22 at the time of writing), and my own practice is to take the example which seems nearest to what I need, make a copy of it, and alter the copy to do what I want. The task is simplified by Emil Vlasák's program VisualCQL, downloadable either from the CQL site or from Emil's own, which provides an editor elegantly tailored to the requirements of the CQL user.

Running the search. If you are using VisualCQL, just click on the "run" button. A minute or so of calculation produces a file "out.pgn" containing just the selected studies, which can be displayed and used in the normal way.

Summary. The program strikes me as providing a vast step forward, and I hope these notes will encourage its use.

A search program such as CQL is of course only half the story. The database and the search program must go hand in hand. As currently written, CQL only takes notice of what is actually recorded in the database; for example, it only picks up a reciprocal zugzwang study if the "wrong side to move" try is spelt out in full. When describing it in *EG 151*, Gady described this as a "shortcoming", but I am not sure that I agree. Even if the program could be rewritten to analyse the position for itself and take account of everything that turned up, would we want it to? Do we want a search for "pure stalemate in the corner" to give us every study which comes down to a draw with Pc7 v Q, or "underpromotion to knight" to give us everything where a sideline comes down to a certain class of book draw with P v R? I suggest that "only take account of what is explicitly there" is in fact a sensible and correct policy.

But from this point of view, many studies are imperfectly presented in the database, not because the database compiler has made an error but because his own source was defective. A simple example is given by 3 in our special number 39, which a CQL search for "reciprocal zugzwang" would not have picked up because the line 1 Bc3 is not in the database. In the long term, therefore, the next phase must be to go through the database and tidy it up, reinstating with suitable comment what the original editors did not see fit to include. Its raw coverage seems now to be reasonably complete (Harold told me in February that he had checked nearly two-thirds of the Macek collection and had found only 1,351 unfamiliar studies out of 35,969); of course, there are as yet untrawled sources to find and incorporate, plus the far from negligible effort of adding new studies as they are published, but perhaps the emphasis will gradually shift towards polishing and correcting what we already have.

Q v R on a 16 x 16 board : not a general win!

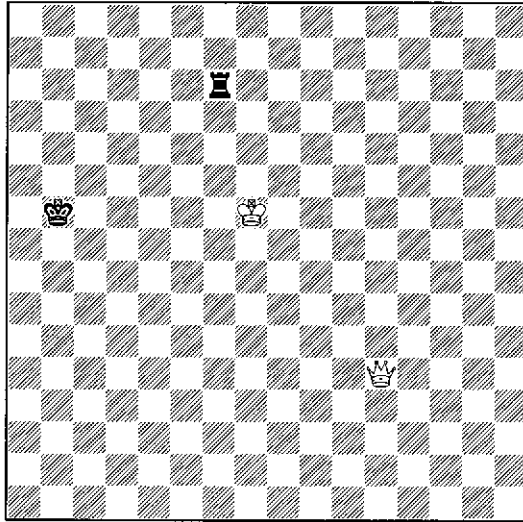
When writing special number 25 in 2001, I noticed that the winning manoeuvres with K+Q against a widely separated K+R appeared to be somewhat unsystematic, and I speculated that perhaps the ending might not be "always won" on a larger board. Marc Bourzutschky, adapting a computer program by Eugene Nalimov, has given us the answer: it isn't. On boards up to 15 x 15, the queen wins unless Black can force an immediate mate, stalemate, capture, or perpetual check. On a 16 x 16 board, the defenders may be able to hold out by continually running away.

There are in fact 21 positions of reciprocal zugzwang, which I list in order of increasing king separation K-k ("d" is the depth to capture with Black to move):

K-k	wK	bK	wQ	bR	d	K-k	wK	bK	wQ	bR	d
2,0	h16	f16	c13	e15	125	3,2	d13	g15	b12	a10	69
	f15	f13	m12	p5	83		e13	h15	c12	b10	81
	f12	d12	e2	g3	14		f13	i15	d12	c10	81
							g13	e16	h15	n6	105
2,1	f15	d16	f6	o8	129		g13	e16	m15	o8	118
	f15	h16	c15	a10	25		h13	j16	d15	b7	22
	c14	d16	e13	f15	27	4,0	c13	a13	h11	d2	99
	d14	e16	f13	g15	74						
	e14	c15	d4	o6	97	4,1	e15	i16	c15	a10	23
	c14	c15	e5	n7	87						
	e14	d12	n11	k2	84	6,0	h10	b10	l5	g14	17
3,0	f14	f11	j8	o7	80						
	e12	h12	k8	l3	103						

The last of these is diagrammed on the facing page, and when a position as open and characterless as this turns out to be reciprocal zugzwang it is clear that identifying "won" and "drawn" cases is going to be extremely difficult. I have in fact little doubt that large subsets of this ending are "hard" in the sense that no exposition can be significantly more economical than listing each position and its result individually.

I suppose we ought to give the longest wins, though I cannot believe that any reader is likely to set out four boards and play them through. They start with wKe1/f1, Qo10, bKg12, Rm1, and the computer counts 155 moves to capture: **1 Kf2! Rm2+ 2 Kg1! Rm1+ 3 Kh2 Rm2+ 4 Ki3 Rm3+ 5 Kh4 Rm4+ 6 Kg5 Rm5+ 7 Kf4 Rm4+ 8 Ke5 Rm13 9 Qi10+ Kf11 10 Qh9+ Ke10 11 Kd4 Ro13 12 Qh7+ Kf11 13 Qi8+ Kg12 14 Qk8+ Kf11 15 Qn11+ Ke10 16 Qn10+ Kd9 17 Qm9+ Kc8 18 Ql8+ Kb7 19 Qk7+ Ka6 20 Qj6+ Kb5 21 Qi5+ Kb4 22 Qc5+ Ka4 23 Qk5 Ro15 24 Kc5! Rc15+ 25 Kb6! Ri15 26 Qk6! {zz} Re15 27 Qi8! Rj15 28 Qi7! Rj14 29 Qi6 Rj15 30 Qb13 Ri15 31 Kc5 Rc15+ 32 Kd5 Rn15 33 Qb16! Rn11 34 Kc5 Rc11+ 35 Kb6! Rc4 36 Qd14! Rj4 37 Qa11+ Kb4 38 Qi11+! Ka4 39 Qc11 Rm4 40 Qf11 Rc4 41 Qd13 Ro4 42 Qe14 Rl4 43 Qk14+ Kb4 44 Qk13+! Ka4 45 Qk3 Ro4 46 Qk8**

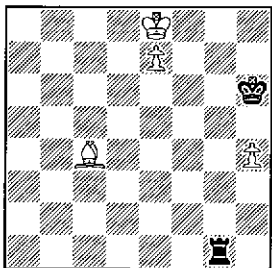


Reciprocal zugzwang!

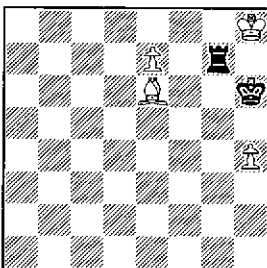
R14 47 Qg8 Rp4 48 Qi10 Rk4 49 Qi6 Rp4 50 Kc5 Rp5+ 51 Kc6 Rp4 52 Qi10 Rk4
 53 Qm6 Rh4 54 Qk8 Rm4 55 Kc5 Rm5+ 56 Kb6 Rm4 57 Qj7 Rk4 58 Kc5 Rk5+
 59 Kc6 Rk4 60 Qj13 Rc4+ 61 Kd5+! Kb4 62 Qb13+ Kc3 63 Qm13+ Kb3
 64 Qm3+! Rc3 65 Qm12 Rc15 66 Qb1+ Ka4 67 Qb16 Rh15 68 Qn4+ Kb5
 69 Qc4+ Ka5 70 Qc5+ Ka4 71 Qc9 Rn15 72 Qh9! Rd15+ 73 Kc5 Rc15+ 74 Kb6
 Rk15 75 Qc4+ Ka3 76 Ql4 Rk16 77 Qm4 Rk10 78 Qm3+ Ka4 79 Qc13 Rb10+
 80 Kc6 Rb4 81 Qa11+ Kb3 82 Qi3+! Ka4 83 Qd3 Rj4 84 Qb5+ Ka3 85 Qi5 Rj15
 86 Qb12 Rh15 87 Qe9 Rl15 88 Kb5 Kb3 89 Qe6+ Kb2 90 Qk6 Rl16 91 Ka5 Rh16
 92 Qk11+ Kb3 93 Qb11+ Ka3 94 Qb4+ Ka2 95 Qb10 Rl16 96 Qd10 Kb3 97 Qb8+
 Ka2 98 Qa7 Re16 99 Qn7 Rg16 100 Qj11+ Ka3 101 Qj3+ Ka2 102 Qb11 Rg5+
 103 Kb4 Rg4+ 104 Kc3 Rg3+ 105 Kd2 Rg2+ 106 Ke1 Rg1+ 107 Kf2 Rc1 108 Kc3
 Ka3 109 Kd3 Rc6 110 Qh11 Rb6 111 Kc4 Rb4+ 112 Kc5 Rb16 113 Qh10 Rc16+
 114 Kb5+ Kb2 115 Qj10+ Ka3 116 Qa1+ Kb3 117 Qb1+ Ka3 118 Qb4+ Ka2
 119 Qo4 Rj16 120 Ka4 Kb1 121 Qn4 Kb2 122 Qi9+ Ka2 123 Qi10+ Kb2
 124 Qb10+ Ka2 125 Qb3+ Ka1 126 Qb12 Ka2 127 Ql2+ Kb1 128 Qd10 Rl16
 129 Qc10 Ri2 130 Qb9+ Rb2 131 Qh3 Kc1 132 Qc3+ Kb1 133 Qe3 Ra2+ 134 Kb4
 Rb2+ 135 Kc4 Rc2+ 136 Kd3 Rp2 137 Qn3 Ri2 138 Qh3 Rp2 139 Qb9+ Ka2
 140 Qh9+ Kb1 141 Qb15+ Rb2 142 Qp1+ Ka2 143 Qh9+ Kb1 144 Qh1+ Ka2
 145 Qd5+ Ka1 146 Kc3 Kb1 147 Qh1+ Ka2 148 Qd1 Rb14 149 Qe2+ Ka1
 150 Qm2 Rc14+ 151 Kb3 Rb14+ 152 Ka3 Kb1 153 Qh7+ Ka1 154 Qh8+ Rb2
 155 Qxb2. The final capture also gives mate, but this is incidental. Unique winning
 moves are denoted by "!" (there are 16), and we meet the deepest reciprocal zugzwang
 at move 26. In contrast, the longest win on a 15 x 15 board (209 moves to capture)
 has White right on the edge (wKa1, Qc1, bKj7, Ra15), a feature typical of the longest
 wins in "generally won" endings, and there are no unique winning moves at all.

From the world at large

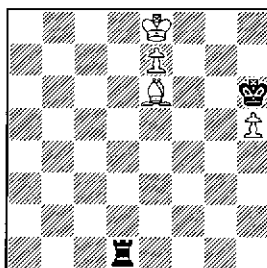
Ted Greiner recently sent me a copy of Pal Benko's *My life, games and compositions*, which includes 85 of his endgame studies. Benko's studies are known for their difficulty and I have tended to fight shy of them, but this has caused me to try again.



1 - win



1a - 1 Kf7, after 4...Rg7



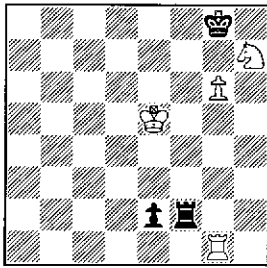
1b - main line, after 2 h5

1 (1 *Pr Magyar Sakkélet* 1981) is one of the easier ones. Try 1 Kd7: no, 1...Rd1+ and 2...Re1(+), taking off the e-pawn and leaving a wrong-bishop draw. Try 1 Kf7 (underlined analysis is in the book) because after 1...Re1 2 Be6 Rf1+ White can hide on h8: no, 3 Kg8 Rg1+ 4 Kh8 Rg7! (see 1a) and 5 e8Q is met by 5...Rh7+ 6 Kg8 Rh8+ with stalemate, while "5 e8R!? forces Black to find 5...Rf7!!, which is the only way to draw" (Black can follow with 6...Rf4, whereas 5...Rb7 allows 6 Bc4 winning). And if 3 Ke8, Black has 3...Kg7 threatening 4...Kf6, and if 4 Kd7 then 4...Rf8.

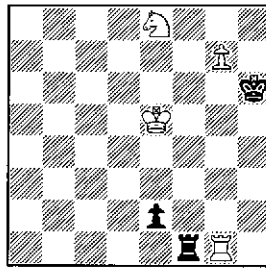
So the move is 1 Be6 shielding the e-pawn and guarding c8, after which White threatens 2 Kd7 Rd1+ 3 Kc6 etc coming down the board. Black can try 1...Kg7, since after 2 Kd7 Rd1+ 3 Kc6 Rc1+ 4 Kd5 Rd1+ the continuation 5 Kc4 Rc1+ 6 Kd3 takes the White king too far away and Black can draw by 6...Rc8 7 Bxc8 Kf7, but White has 5 Kc5 Re1+ 6 Kf5 Rf1+ 7 Kg5 Rg1+ 8 Kh5 taking refuge on h5 instead.

Hence 2 Kd7 cannot be tolerated, and 1...Rd1 is needed. If now 2 Kf7 then 2...Rf1+ draws as before, but 2 h5 destroys the stalemate and we have 1b. White now has two possibilities: (a) with bK on h6 or g6, to play Kf7/8 and hide on h8 or g8; (b) with bK on h8, to play Kf7/Kg6 and come down the board. This explains the rest: 2...Kg7 (2...Kh7 3 h6 Rd2 4 Bf5+) 3 h6+ Kh7 4 Bf5+ Kg8 5 h7+ Kg7 6 h8Q+ Kxh8 (Black can wriggle no longer) 7 Kf7 and White has won the battle. Benko continues 7...Re1 8 Be6 Rf1+ 9 Kg6, but it seems to me that the true climax is at move 7.

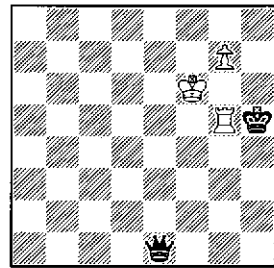
But the book gives only what is in bold or underlined; I had to work out the rest myself. In contrast, the copious game annotations give motivation as well as analysis. On the evidence presented here, Benko sees an endgame study as a private challenge between composer and solver, the harder and deeper the better, and if a deep and difficult study is to give pleasure to the less expert reader a leisurely and perceptive exposition is essential. The book is sumptuously produced (Siles Press, Los Angeles) and it is a lovely thing to have, but if you buy it for its endgame studies you must be prepared to do a lot of hard work to understand what is going on.



2 - win



2a - after 3...Rf1



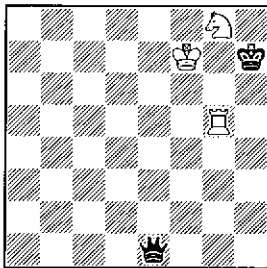
2b - after 7 Rg5+

EG 152 reprinted the 1997-98 award for *Československý šach*. We quoted Jan Lerch's first prizewinner in June 1999, and Mario Matouš's 2 gained the second prize. I remember watching Mario demonstrate this to some friends prior to publication, and being completely out of my depth; the men were flashing to and fro far more quickly than I could comprehend. At leisure and with computer help, it is easier.

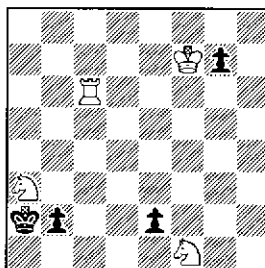
Play starts **1 Nf6+ Kg7**, and we shall see in a moment that **2 Ne8+** is the check to choose. If **2...Kg8** then **3 g7** (threat **4 Nf6+**) **e1Q+** **4 Rxe1**, with **Rh1** and **Rh8** to follow. The main line is **2...Kh6**, when **3 g7** can be met by **3...Rf1** (see 2a).

Can White risk **4 Rg6+**? Yes, **4...Kxg6** loses quickly (**5 g8Q+** **Kh6** **6 Qg7+** **Kh5** **7 Nf6+** **Rxf6** **8 Kxf6** and the mate threat leaves Black no time to promote). Hence **4...Kh5**, and we see why the knight chose **e8** at move 2. Play continues **5 Nf6+**, when **5...Kxg6** loses even more quickly and **5...Kh4** **6 Rh6+** **Kg3** **7 g8Q+** is little better. This leaves only **5...Rxf6**, and after **6 Kxf6 e1Q** **7 Rg5+** we have 2b.

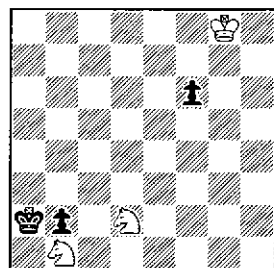
If now **7...Kh4** then **8 g8Q** wins, but after **7...Kh6** the queen promotion will set up a stalemate and Black will draw by sacrificing. **8 g8N+**, therefore, but how can White continue after **8...Kh7**? The answer is by the quiet move **9 Kf7** (see 2c), which leaves Black helpless; he can postpone mate for a few moves only by sacrificing his queen.



2c - after 9 Kf7



3 - win



3a - after 4...gxf6

3 (V. Kondratiev) took 4th HM in the 2001-02 award. **1 Nd2** imprisons the Black king, and **1...e1Q** (**1...b1Q** **2 Naxb1 e1Q** **3 Rc2+** **Ka1** **4 Nc3 Qf2+** **5 Kg8** and mates) **2 Nab1 Qf2+** **3 Kg8 Qf6** (**3...Qa7** **4 Nc3+** **Ka3** **5 Nb5+**) **4 Rxf6 gxf6** gives 3a. Now White can employ a Réti manoeuvre: **5 Kf7 f5** **6 Ke6 f4** **7 Kd5 f3** **8 Kc4**, with either **8...Ka1** **9 Kd3** catching the pawn or **8...f2** **9 Nc3+** and mate next move.

News and notices

Ken Whyld's library. As has been widely reported elsewhere, Ken Whyld's chess library and collection has passed to the Musée Suisse du Jeu at La Tour-de-Peilz. This is between Vevey and Montreux, and is conveniently accessible by either car or public transport (TGV from Paris to Lausanne, then forward by local train - or, if the timing is right and the weather is good, take the little cog-wheel tram down to the harbour and go forward by one of the lake steamers). The library comprises some 4000 volumes and a little time will elapse while before it becomes available to the public - there is a need to prepare a catalogue and to create space for some 200 metres of shelving - but I presume that the museum's web site www.msj.ch will announce when all is ready. It was apparently Ken's hope that his collection could be preserved intact, and this would seem to have been an excellent way of doing it.

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday July 2** 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 (continued). A property of elegant puzzles is that they are passed on by word of mouth (good) and their originators' names get lost (not so good). I was first shown our front-page puzzle by Jonathan Levitt, and when I quoted it in our special number 8 I could cite no source other than himself. I can now put the record straight: it was by **Noam Elkies**, who published it in 1989 in the Massachusetts chess monthly *Chess Horizons*, and it should have two parts. The answers? With wKe6, add wPf5 or h5, or bPc7, or wNg7(!); with wKg6, add wPf5 or bPg7 or wNe7 only (adding wPd5 allows 1 Kf5 Kxf7 2 d6 etc).

And a corrective note on **computers**. Guy Haworth reminds me that people whose computers are more recent than my own may not need to open the box to install an extra hard drive; external interfaces are available giving access to up to 160GB. He gives a web site reference which I will forward on request.

The problems of G. C. Alvey. It's a problem and not an endgame study matter, but I recently published a small book by Michael McDowell on the problems of the excellent English composer G. C. Alvey (1890-1929), and copies are available at £3 including UK postage (usual 10%/20% extra for postage abroad).

Ken Thompson (sec March, p 260). Alas, my fears have proved justified; Ken's position-by-position enquiry service at "plan9" has now vanished. *EG* 152 reported its disappearance, and I immediately checked and found the same.

Never mind. It was good while it lasted.

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.