

British Endgame Study News

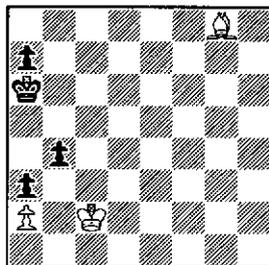
Volume 10 Number 3

September 2005

Edited and published by John Beasley, 7 St James Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4NX
ISSN 1363-0318 E-mail: johnbeasley@mail.com

Contents of this issue

Editorial	305
Recently published British originals	306
Endgame study database III	307
Porterfield Rynd again, and more	308
Seven-man computer progress	309
From the world at large	310
News and notices	312



This issue. There are reviews of Harold van der Heijden's latest database and of a book in which Harrie Grondijs gives his own take on the Porterfield Rynd saga (and a lot more besides), and a report of further remarkable progress in the analysis of seven-man endings by computer. This time's special number continues our survey of British studies from the past, and do please try the little trifle above before looking inside. This appeared in *The Problemist* with solution alongside, as is now that magazine's practice with endgame studies, but I think *BESN* readers will prefer to solve it for themselves.

Spotlight (see also page 312). Timothy Whitworth tells me that Troitzky originally published study 6 in special number 43 with the Black king already on g7, and that he gave the same setting in *500 Endspielstudien* (1924). We do not know whether he himself or somebody else was responsible for the subsequent improvement.

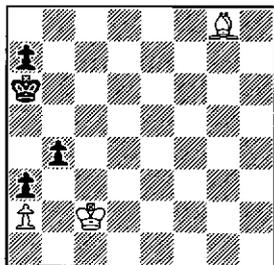
Regarding Jespersen's 10 in the same special number, Timothy draws my attention to an article by Jaap Smit in the March 2002 *EBUR*, in which he discusses Tattersall's sources (or lack of them) and fills in some gaps. In particular, he says that the Jespersen study was published in *Rivista Scacchistica Italiana* in 1901 as "originale", and in a follow-up article (June 2002) containing notes by Timothy and Alain Pallier, Timothy reported that he had checked through the weekly chess column in *Nationaltidende* for the entire year 1890 without finding this study.

My apologies to Vladimir Samilo for mistranscribing his name on page 302. That said, Alain Villeneuve expresses considerable surprise that his 2 should have received an HM in a recent tourney, since (a) his post-introduction position 2a is identical in all essentials to a 1940 study by Wouter Mees and (b) the Mees study had a second part with the pawn on a3, when Bd6 works and Bc5 does not. I think this deserves more than a mere mention in "Spotlight", and I give it in full on page 310.

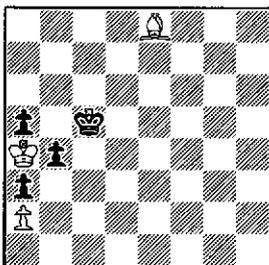
Alain also points out that Paul Michelet's 1 on page 298 won't quite do. Moving wP/bK to d4/c6 and adding 1 d5+ Kd6 is fine, but the further shift of wBg8 to a2 lets Black win by 2...Ke5 3-4 d7 h1Q 5 d8Q Qxb1+ etc. Paul and I both overlooked this.

Recently published British originals

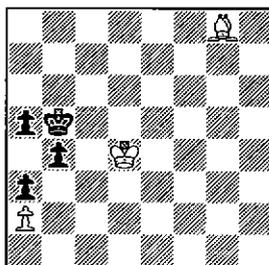
British originals have been very few in recent months, and I seem to have only my own **1** to report. How did you get on?



1 - win



1a - **1** Kb3, after 4 Ka4



1b - main line, after 2...a5

The obvious way to start is **1** Kb3 Kb5 **2** Bf7 (or would **2** Be6 be better?) a5 **3** Be8+ Kc5 **4** Ka4, giving **1a**. But Black continues 4...Kb6, and how can White force the Black king away from a5? Try **5** Bb5: no, Black plays **5...Kc5**, and if **6** Kxa5 then **6...b3** and it is Black who will win. All right, try say **5** Bf7 Ka6 **6** Be6 Kb6 **7** Bc4 keeping an eye on b3 with the bishop: no, Black has **7...Kc5** counterattacking. And if White tries putting his bishop on a4 instead of his king, Black has **...Kc5** (or **...Kd5** if his king is already on c5), and White will not be able to generate any pressure.

Nor would **2** Be6 have helped, and the mistake was at move 1; White must forego the obvious attack on the pawn at b4, and play **1** Kd3 Kb5 **2** Kd4 keeping the Black king out of c5. Black has nothing better than **2...a5**, giving **1b**, and now we are on known ground: **3** Bc4+ (Black threatened **3...a4** and **4...b3**) **Kb6** (**3...Ka4** **4** Kc5 and mate next move) **4** Bb3 **Kb5** **5** Ba4+ (an ancient sacrifice, though always attractive) **Kxa4** (**5...Kb6** allows **6** Kd5 etc but **5...Kc5** would draw if Black could play it, which is why White had to go all the way up to d4 at move 2) **6** Kc4 **b3** **7** axb3 mate.

The original component of this study rested wholly in the first two moves, yet I felt that this little preliminary manoeuvre was worth having, and I hope that at least some readers will have been tempted down the wrong road. But while I thought the study best presented in *BESN* as a gentle challenge to solvers, I have no quarrel with the decision of *The Problemist* to present it with solution alongside. The primary duty of a magazine is to entertain those who pay good money to receive it, and readers used to the certainty of "White to give mate within *n* moves" will always find the less precise "win" or "draw" of the endgame study a bewildering challenge. I can well believe that the editors of *The Problemist* have decided that its readers will appreciate studies better if the solutions are normally given straight away.

Although I trawl the obvious sources for this column, I do not see everything that appears in print, and I am always grateful when composers and their friends bring relevant material to my attention. - JDB

Endgame study database III

Since receiving Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database 2000", I have been using it when preparing *BESN*, and although it has imperfections I have been routinely describing it as "invaluable". Harold's "Endgame study database III" is now available, and I am sure I shall find myself using the same description.

When reviewing "Endgame study database 2000", I started by making the point that everything had been done on top of family commitments and a full-time job, and that for all Harold's magnificent efforts he could have put only in a fraction of the work that I would advise a professional organization to budget for when setting up an authoritative technical database of this size and complexity. Inevitably, the same is true of "Endgame study database III". This is not intended as a criticism, and anybody taking it as such is missing the point; rather, it is an acknowledgement, which I think is necessary, that there are very severe limitations on what we are entitled to expect.

"Endgame study database III" contains 67,691 studies, so there are almost ten thousand new entries (in particular, Harold tells me that he has now incorporated around 90% of the Macek collection). In addition, "at least the same number" of entries have been updated. However, when reviewing "Endgame study database 2000" I took a random sample of 50 studies, checked those 16 for which the original sources were conveniently available to me, and found two which were seriously defective in that they were "either side to move" studies and only one case was given (see March 2001, pages 166-7). I have to say that they remain defective, and perhaps more than anything this shows the difference between what Harold has had time to do and what would be done professionally. A professional organization routinely assigns several times as much effort to checking, correcting, and rechecking as to the original keying in of the data; a lone spare-time worker doesn't have the effort to assign.

But while such imperfections are a pity, how much difference do they make in practice? There are errors beyond Harold's control which are much more numerous: solutions which were incomplete as published, and (massively) studies which were unsound as conceived by the composer. In fact I normally regard the database only as a source of candidate positions, and I reanalyse these from scratch using the powerful computer programs now available. I suspect that many other users do the same.

In presentation, "Endgame study database III" is much more polished than its predecessor; there are some useful stylized comments within solutions, and there is a file "hhdbIIHa" in which the database source codes are replaced by actual source titles. Less happily (at least to me), the studies have been reordered with the most recent first. I am sure there is a good reason for this, but I use the database to check for anticipations or to obtain historical selections of something, and I normally want a list which starts with the earliest. But I expect I'll get used to it.

Buy it, of course. Harold is offering it at 60 euros, but by arrangement with himself and ARVES I can accept **£40** in sterling up to the end of this year (send the money to myself, cheques payable to J D Beasley please). UK readers can thus obtain it without the need to pay bank charges for foreign currency, and I hope this will do something to aid its dissemination within the UK study community.

Porterfield Rynd again, and more

Readers will recall my account of John Roycroft's exposure of Porterfield Rynd as a plagiarist in the matter of the Saavedra study (March 2002, pages 196-7), and my demonstration, based on an examination of over a million genuine games, that the position he claimed to have reached in play against one Lt-Col W. Lynam appeared even on its own internal evidence to be something derived from the study and not a true game position (September 2002, page 212). I was therefore very surprised to see the alleged "Rynd-Lynam" game position cited by Harrie Grondijs in the September 2004 *EBUR*, and repeated in his recent book *No Rook Unturned*, with a specific place and date ("Dublin 1890"). What did Harrie know that I didn't know back in 2002?

On the evidence of *No Rook Unturned*, only two things: that Lynam had died in August 1894 (which is relevant because Rynd's claim regarding the "Rynd-Lynam" position was not made until 1895), and that there was a third Rynd plagiarism, of a Troitzky study which he had claimed to have reached in a game with colours reversed, which was exposed by Chigorin in 1896. But surely these additional points argue yet further against Rynd, and not in favour of him? Indeed they do, and I do not see how Harrie can regard "Rynd-Lynam" as the genuine original and the famous move merely as something which Saavedra had seen and remembered. True, he appears not to have been aware of my demonstration that the "Rynd-Lynam" position appeared to be study-derived rather than natural, nor does he take into account the fact that Saavedra, as a strong solver, would have been just the sort of person who would routinely try every defensive move "just in case" and would thus find the flaw in Barbier's intended solution. But even the evidence that Harrie does cite - Rynd's "Cordes" and "Troitzky" plagiarisms, and the fact that he did not claim "Rynd-Lynam" as a game position until after Lynam's death - would make most of us say "I do not believe this".

Harrie thinks we who denounce Rynd as a petty liar and a stealer of other people's work are unfairly traducing the reputation of somebody who is no longer able to defend himself. I reply that the evidence available at present appears to allow no other conclusion. If somebody can show me relevant new evidence - for example, that the "Rynd-Lynam" position was claimed as genuine at a time when Lynam was still alive and able to confirm or deny it - I shall be delighted to publicize it, and to draw any new conclusions that may seem justified; but on the evidence that is available at present, Rynd's guilt appears to be clearly established.

Enough of Rynd. *No Rook Unturned* is subtitled "A tour around the Saavedra study", and it is exactly that; a tour - indeed, an extended ramble - covering almost everything closely related to the matter and quite a lot whose connection seems tenuous in the extreme. Nearly half the book's 384 large pages are devoted to letters and extracts from the correspondence of the late John Selman: over two hundred letters and parts of letters, some of deep and obvious interest, some of the most routine triviality. There are biographical notes on 45 people, some of whose connections to the matter (for example, that of Daniel Harrwitz) seem not so much tenuous as non-existent. There are around 300 diagrams of endgame studies (I haven't checked for duplicates

and non-study positions), many of whose connections to the Saavedra study again seem extremely tenuous; but most are of high quality, and far be it from me to complain when an author finds an excuse to present a lot of good endgame studies.

All in all, the entertaining sections of the book far outweigh the dull ones, and I am sure future historians will find it a valuable quarry. But they may want to treat it with caution, since there is a glaring mistake on page 15, where the extract from Rynd's column in the *Dublin Evening Herald* of 25 May 1895 is captioned as being from the *Dublin Evening Mail* of 25 May 1890. This error is repeated in the list of illustrations at the front, but I don't know whether it is a typical or an isolated occurrence.

No Rook Unturned is beautifully produced in a limited edition of 30 copies. It is available only from Van Stockum Boekhandel in Den Haag (www.vanstockum.nl) and earlier in the year it was being sold for 64 euros plus postage from the Netherlands, but I have heard that the price may be changed (I don't know in which direction) and future purchasers should check before ordering. I may disagree wholeheartedly with the author's view of the probity of Rynd and I may regret his devoting no fewer than nineteen pages to a biography of someone who in my opinion has no place in the matter at all, but the book as a whole is something I am glad to possess.

Seven-man computer progress

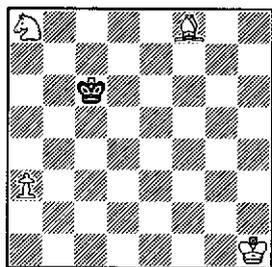
In June, we quoted a report of Marc Bourzutschky's first successful computation of a 7-man ending. Work has continued, and June 24 brought the following message from Marc: "At the moment I'm working with Yakov Konoval on fast programs for 7-man endings ... We can generate NNNN vs Q in less than a day, and QQ vs RRR and RR vs NNN in about a day." In a subsequent message, he described Yakov's program as "blazingly fast (about 4 times faster for KNNNNKQ than my original program)", and he says that the latest versions are "faster still, almost another factor of 2".

I understand that Marc and Yakov are thinking of writing a technical paper on their work for a computing journal, but they have allowed me to outline their main results so far and I am sure readers will be interested. As at July 11, they had provisionally generated 4N v Q, 4B v Q, 3B v 2N, 2R v 3N, 3R v 2R, 3R v Q+N, 2Q v 3R, and 3Q v 2Q. The longest (3R v Q+N, with a depth of 131) took less than 1.5 days. They were still performing consistency checks.

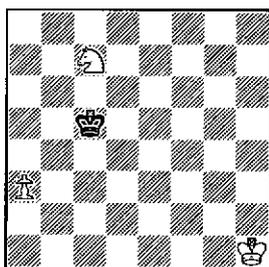
All these were win/not-win databases, but Marc also generated the reverses (such as Q v 4B) so that the reciprocal zugzwangs could be identified. 4B v Q turned out to have 303 half-point reciprocal zugzwangs, 3B v 2N 68, 2R v 3N 13188, 2Q v 3R 283, and 3Q v 2Q unsurprisingly 0. So far, no further full-point zugzwang has been found.

I remarked of 4N v Q that it was a computing rather than a chess milestone, and much the same is true here. However, 3Q v 2Q having been calculated, the door is opened to the calculation of queen-and-pawn endings right down to Q+2P v Q+P, subject to the constraint that promotion is permitted only to queen, and the results will be correct except in the relatively few cases where an underpromotion is necessary to win or save the game. This might not be perfection, but it would normally give us the right answer when such positions turn up in sidelines.

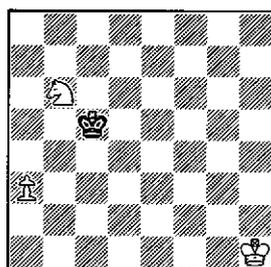
From the world at large



1 - win

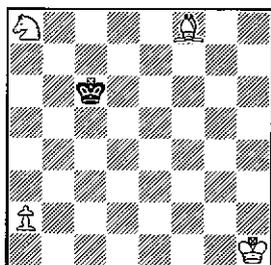


1a - 1 Bc5, after 2 Nc7

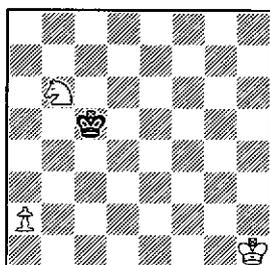


1b - main line, after 2...Kc5

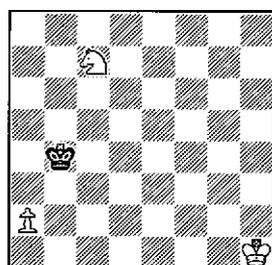
Diagrams 1 and 2 (Wouter Mees, *De Schaakwereld* 1940) show the twin study referred to in "Spotlight". 1 is straightforward. Try 1 Bc5 Kxc5 2 Nc7 (see 1a): no, ...Kc4 followed by ...Kb3 will draw easily (say 2...Kc4 3 Kg2 Kb3 4 Nb5 Ka4). But 1 Bd6 Kxd6 2 Nb6 Kc5 gives 1b, and 3 Na4+ wins (3...K-- 4 Nb2 and 5 a4).



2 - win



2a - 1 Bd6, after 2...Kc5

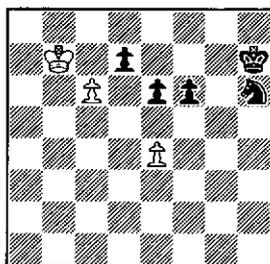


2b - main line, after 2...Kb4

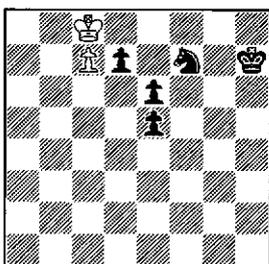
Now put the White pawn back to a2, as shown in 2. This time 1 Bd6 Kxd6 2 Nb6 Kc5 gives 2a, and the availability of ...Kb4 will allow Black to draw: 3 Na4+ (nothing better) Kb4 4 Nb2/Nb6 Ka3 and the pawn falls. But 1 Bc5 Kxc5 2 Nc7 leads to a win even though his knight is further from the pawn and 2...Kb4 brings the Black king closer to it (see 2b): 3 Nd5+ Ka3 (if 3...Kc4 then simplest is 4 Nf4 with 5 Ne2 and 6 Nc1) 4 Nc3 Kb4/Kb2 5 a4.

There are many fine twin studies in the literature (the names of Mandler and Korányi are particularly prominent), but this little gem bears comparison with any.

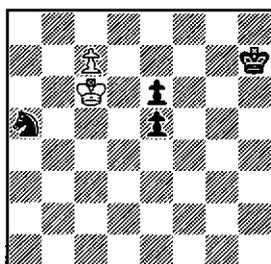
Among the lighter studies in *EG* 157 are examples of two of my favourite themes. Ilham Aliev's 3 took only a first commendation in *Rochade Europa* 2002-3, but I must confess that I personally preferred it to much that was ranked above it. 1 cxd7 Nf7 is clearly hopeless (in fact Black probably wins), hence 1 e7, and Black again plays 1...Nf7. Now 2 c8Q is met by 2...Nd6+ and the immediate "droit de seigneur" move 2 Kc8 can be answered by 2...Ne5, but 2 e5 guards d6 and so forces 2...fxe5, and now the "droit de seigneur" can be exercised: 3 Kc8! (see 3a). The square e5



3 - win

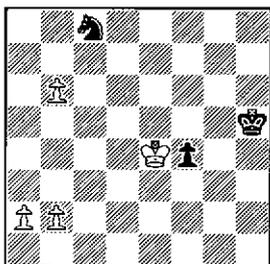


3a - after 3 Kc8

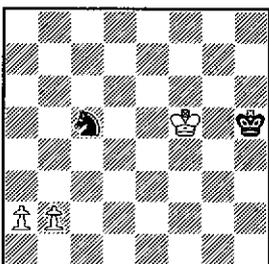


3b - after 5...Na5+

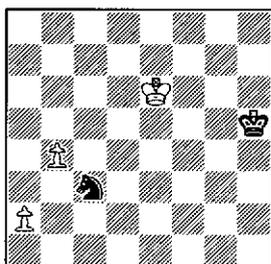
being blocked, Black has nothing better than **3...Nd6+** (if instead **3...d5** then **4 Kd7** and **5 c8Q**, and Black's pawns are too far from promotion to be a threat), but **4 Kxd7** forces **4...Nc4**, and after **5 Kc6 Na5+** it's easy (see **3b**): **6 Kb6** (the simplest) **Nc4+** **7 Kc5**. This might be described as "droit de seigneur, et plus"; the king has to wait for one of his minions to sacrifice itself before he can walk in front of the other.



4 - win



4a - after 3...Nc5



4b - 4 b4, after 5 Ke6 Nc3

The judge of the Sarychev-95 Memorial Tourney seems to have grouped studies composed conventionally and studies which could have been mined from databases all together, and Harold van der Heijden's **4** gained a 1st Honourable Mention. *EG* gives no more than a single line of play, and the exposition that follows is my own.

The moves **1 b7 Nd6+** **2 Kxf4 Nxb7** merely conform to contemporary fashion, but now **3 Kf5** holds off the Black king (if instead **3 a4** or **3 b4** then **3...Kg6** draws), and if **3...Kh6** or **3...Kh4** then **4 b4** wins. The thematic play follows **3...Nc5**, which gives **4a**.

If now **4 b4** then **4...Na4** followed by **5...Nc3** (see **4b**), and White's need to spend a move rescuing his a-pawn will allow the Black king to get across (for example, **6 a3 Kg6** **7-8 Kc6 Ke7** **9 b5 Nxb5** **10 Kxb5 Kd7** and **11...Kc8**). Correct is **4 b3**, and after **4...Nd3** (threat **5...Nc1** winning a pawn) then **5 a3** (if **5 a4** then **5...Nc5** wins a pawn). Now **5...Nc5** comes back to **4a** with the pawns on **a3/b3**. There follows **6 b4 Na4** **7 Ke6** and *EG* gives **7...Kg6** **8 Kd7** etc, but **7...Nc3** is the move which highlights the thematic play. It gives **4b** with the a-pawn on **a3** (in effect, playing **b3-a3-b4** instead of **b4** directly has given us the move **a3** for nothing), so White has time for **8 Kd7** and he is a crucial tempo ahead (**8...Kg6** **9 Kc6 Kf7** **10 b5 Nxb5** **11 Kxb5** and **12-13 Kb7**). It is a splendid addition to the corpus of pawn-one "festina lente" studies.

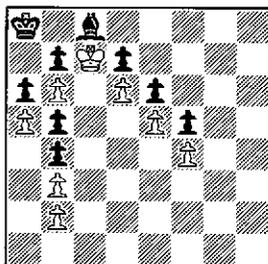
News and notices

Depth and beauty (my translation of Artur Mandler's *Studie*). There is one further source of supply in addition to ARVES and the dealers I listed last time. John Ling, 41 Tiverton Road, Loughborough, Leics LE11 2RU, who edits and publishes *Problem Observer*, has also been handling the book for me, and he tells me that he has a single copy left. The book is *not* now available from myself.

Friedrich Chlubna's books (see March, page 296). Klaus Wenda tells me that Michael Ehn (Gumpendorferstrasse 60, A-1060 Wien, schachundspiele@magnet.at) has taken over the unsold stock of the chess books published by Friedrich Chlubna. This includes copies of the Israeli study anthology *Endgame Virtuosity*, but apparently John Roycroft's book on the studies of T. R. Dawson had sold out.

Freezer. Guy Haworth draws my attention to the endgame analysis program Freezer, available via www.freezerchess.com for 79.95 euros or US dollars. It needs at least 256 MB of RAM (512 MB recommended) and a processor with a speed of 700 MHz or more, so I cannot use it on my present machine, but he tells me that he has acquired it himself and has been putting it to good use. It exploits any Nalimov tablebases (including 6-man tablebases) that have been downloaded or otherwise installed.

Spotlight continued. One final item, which occurred to me after I had sent the June material to the press: the Reichhelm position 17 in special number 42 is illegal! On the face of it there is nothing to worry about, since White has only made six pawn captures and Black has lost six men, but one of these six is the rook from a8 and this was never able to venture beyond the squares a8/b8/a7. So one of the pawns must come off, and I think the best rescue is to remove h7 and to put the kings on c7/a8 (see diagram), with 1-11 **Kxb4 Kb8** replacing the previous 1-9 **Kxh7 Ka8** 10-18 **Kxb4 Kb8**. The White king does not move back and forth quite as



by Gustave Reichhelm
(suggested correction)

many times as Reichhelm intended, but there is a stalemate avoidance right at the start.

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on ****Friday October 14**** at 6.00 pm (please note that this time it will be on the *second* Friday in the quarter). Non-subscribers welcome, but please bring £5 towards the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring the latest *EG* with you.

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.