

British Endgame Study News

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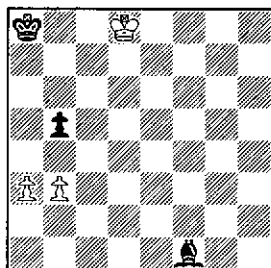
Another British solving success. The British team has again won the World Chess Solving Championship. John Nunn came third in the individual rankings, Colin McNab tenth, and Jonathan Mestel also contributed.

This issue. We have a delayed report on John Nunn's 50th birthday tourney, a confirmatory diagram of the Bourzutschky-Konoval "S17" position announced in a "Stop Press" slip sent out with the June issue, and a postscript for readers who hold Timothy Whitworth's book *The Best of Bent* (it's cheaper to send these out in bulk than to field enquiries individually). The special number looks at some British studies from the period 1860-99. For a follow-up note on one of the "one minor piece ahead appears to win" endings, see the back page.

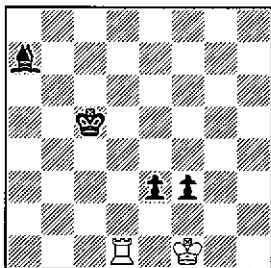
John Nunn gives himself 30 minutes to try and solve a study, and in his tourney judgement he said that he failed to solve Jarl Ulrichsen's study above within this time limit. See if you can do better before looking inside.

Spotlight (see also back page). A most embarrassing report from Alain Villeneuve: the Prokeš study which I featured on the front page of special number 47 is unsound. As stated by Chéron, and by Alain himself in his book *Les Finales*, positions like this are won for the bishop only if at least one of the pawns is a centre pawn, so no heroics are needed; Rc7 and Re8 also draw, as do Rd1+ and Rc1. He also points out a simple cure: bring the bishop down to a7, and move else everything one file left (see the diagram alongside). Now the position is indeed won for Black unless White does something, and the composer's elegant drawing solution (1 Rd3 Kc4 2 Rd2 and 3 Rf2) is necessary.

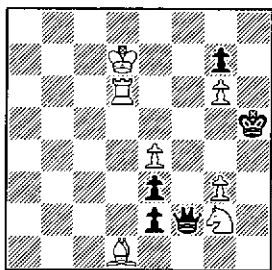
Alain also points out that Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database III" contains an unprovenanced version of Prokeš's 5 with a bPe7 added to cut out the dual at move 4. But, as he says, it is a matter of taste, and my vote would be emphatically against.



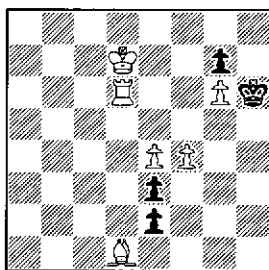
by Jarl Ulrichsen
White to play and draw



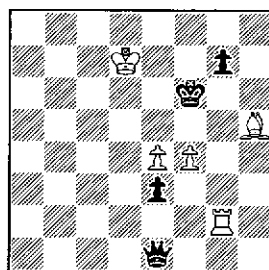
Recently published British originals



1 - win



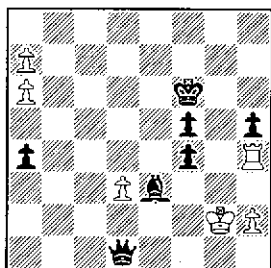
1a - after 2...Kh6



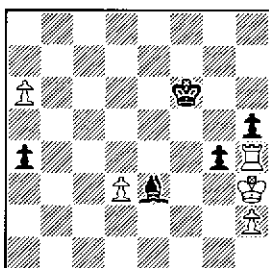
1b - after 6 Rg2

The May issue of *The Problemist* included a joint study by Paul Cumbers and John Nunn which was the former's first essay in study composition. I have to say that my own first thought was 1 Bxe2+ Qxe2 2 Nf4+, but this is a trap; Black plays 1...Kh6 instead of capturing, and if 2 Nf4 to defend the bishop then 2...Qxf4 3 gxf4 is stalemate. Correct is 1 Nf4+ at once, and if the king moves then 2 Nxe2 leaves all White's men safe and his e-pawn will win. Hence 1...Qxf4 2 gxf4 Kh6, giving 1a.

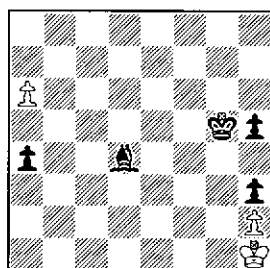
Now ...e1Q is a threat and Bxe2 will again give stalemate, hence 3 Rd2! ready to meet 3...e1Q by 4 Rh2+. Play continues 4...Kxg6 5 Bh5+ Kf6 (5...Kh~ 6 Bf7+ and mate) 6 Rg2 threatening 7 Rg6+ Kf7 8 Rg1+ winning the queen (see 1b), and the queen has no square free from the rook's attentions. The only moves to offer hope are 6...Qh4/Qh1, and now White can discover an attack on the queen instead of on the king: 7 Rg6+ Kf7 8 Rh6+ Kg8 (8...Kf8 9 Rh8 mate) 9 Bf7+.



2 - draw



2a - after 4...fxg4+

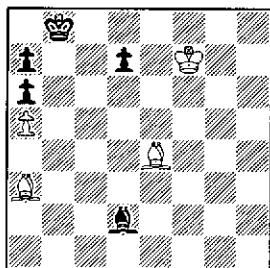


2b - after 8 Kh1

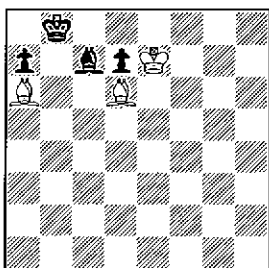
The July *Problemist* had a first composition of a different kind. Brian Stephenson is one of those dedicated enthusiasts whose hard work makes possible the enjoyment of others, and one of his self-imposed duties (or pleasures) is the organization and running of problem-solving competitions. Among the compositions he had shortlisted for a recent competition was a 1975 *Magyar Sakkélet* study by L. Mozes, but on testing it he found that composer's intended line did not work; everything was fine as long as Black played what seemed to be his natural and sensible moves, but there was

an apparently pointless alternative which in fact gave Black a draw. So, not for the first time in study history, the position could be turned round, and a bust "win" study for one side could be presented as a sound and satisfying "draw" study for the other.

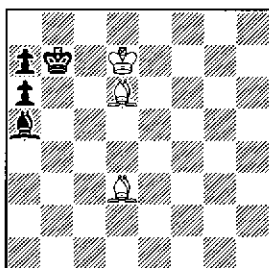
The result was 2, where 1 a8Q gives the Mozes position with colours reversed. The intended winning line for the side that is now Black was 1...f3+ 2 Qxf3 Qg1+ 3 Kh3 Qg4+ 4 Qxg4+ fxc4+ (4...hxc4+ generates no pressure), giving 2a, and if White plays the natural 5 Kg3 Black has 5...Kg5 6 h3 (everything else is clearly hopeless) Bf4+ 7 Kf2 Bb8 8 hxc4 Kxh4 and the a-pawn will win. But Brian plays 5 Kg2!, and after 5...Kg5 (5...Kg6 is no better) he continues 6 d4 Bxd4 7 Rh3. Black must grab the rook if it is not to escape, 7...gxh3+, and after 8 Kh1 White has a stalemate defence (see 2b): Black can neither block nor capture the a-pawn, he can only try 8...a3 9 a7 a2 10 a8 Q a1Q+, and 11 Qxa1 gives a book draw. (After 11...Bxa1 Black can play bPh5 to h4, bK to e2/e1, and bB to g3, and then meet White's Kh1 by ...Kf1 forcing hxc3, but it will be to no avail; an immediate reply ...hxc3 will give another stalemate, and anything else will give White time for gxh4.)



3 - win



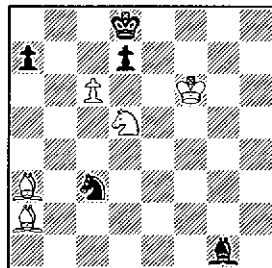
3a - reciprocal zugzwang



3b - 3...Kb7, after 4 Kxd7

Paul Michelet's 3 recently appeared in *Correspondence Chess*. Those who remember last times "tale of two bishops against one" will find the main line quickly enough, 1 Bd6+ Kc8 and now not 2 Ke7 Bxa5 3 Bd3 Bc7 4 Bxa6+ Kb8, when White has no good move (see 3a), but 2 Ke8! Bxa5 3 Bd3 Bc7 4 Bxa6+ Kb8 5 Ke7 and it is Black who has to move. And if Black plays 3...Kb7, White replies 4 Kxd7 (see 3b). Now 4...Kb6 loses the bishop, and if Black tries say 4...Bc3, 5 Bc7 wins the king instead (5...a5 6 Be4+ Ka6 7 Kc6 and 8 Bd3).

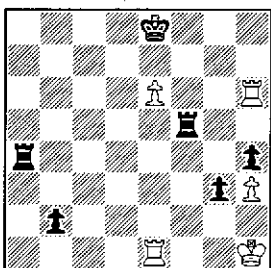
This was composed with knowledge of the study by Dashkoria, Kalandadze, and Martsvalashvili which we saw last time (see 4, 1 c7+ Kc8 2 Nxc3 Bd4+ and not 3 Ke7 but 3 Kf7 with Ke7 to follow later), but I think it a significant improvement. To present the solver with the choice between good and bad wK moves, Dashkoria and his colleagues use two extra knights, one of which is captured unmoved, and the Black bishop plays to the key square c7 by another capture. Paul achieves the same without capturing more than two blocked pawns, and these more than pay for themselves by making possible the byplay after 3...Kb7.



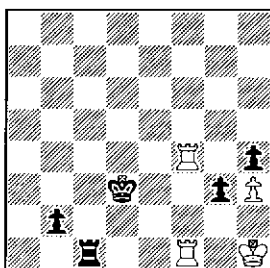
4 - win

John Nunn's 50th birthday tourney

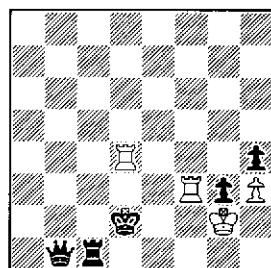
John Nunn's 50th birthday tourney attracted entries from most of the big names in study composition, and the tourney award includes no fewer than 30 compositions. Fortunately, it has appeared in full elsewhere (in *EG* 163 and on Brian Stephenson's web site <www.bstephen.freeuk.com>), so I can be selective. I have to say that I was surprised in one respect: most of the leading studies seem to me to be of exactly the same kind as feature in other contemporary tourney awards, and the award shows little of the distinctive flavour that I might have expected from the judgement of a leading player. (No, this isn't sour grapes from a disappointed competitor. I do sometimes submit something to a memorial or jubilee tourney in order to put my name on the list of participants, but this time I had nothing suitable on hand.)



1 - draw



1a - after 8...Kd3

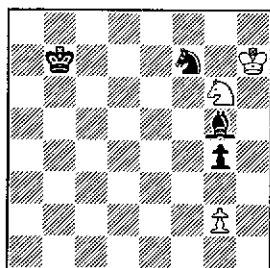


1b - after 12 Rd4+

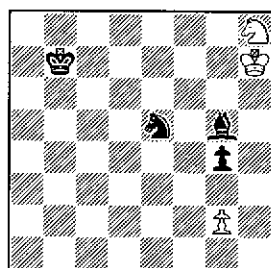
The 1st Prizewinner 1, by Oleg Pervakov and Karen Sumbatyan, illustrates the point. Play starts **1 e7**, and if **1...Re4/Re5** then White will draw by **2 Rh8+ Kd7 3 e8Q+ Rxe8 4 Rhxc8 b1Q 5 Rxb1 Kxc8 6 Rb2** followed by **Kg2**. But **1...Rf1+ 2 Rxf1** defuses the e-pawn, and **2...Ra1** puts on the pressure. We'll look at **3 Rh8+** later, but the actual move is **3 Rhf6**. Black has nothing better than **3...Rc1** (here and later, there is analysis of various alternatives in *EG* and on the web site), and now comes **4 Rf8+ Kxe7 5 R8f7+** driving the king down. At what point should it step on to the third rank? If it tries b3, White will play **Rf8** and draw. So it must aim for some other square, and after **5...Ke6 6-8 R7f4+ Kd3** (say) we have **1a**.

Now White can play **9 Kg2**, because **9...b1Q** can be met by **10 R1f3+** (with **bK** on **b3**, Black would have **10...Rc3**). Suppose **10...Kc2**; now **11 Rc4+ Kd2 12 Rd4+** sets up a perpetual check (see **1b**), because **12...Ke1** allows mate and **12...Ke2 13 Re4+ Qxe4** is stalemate. And we see the reason for **3 Rhf6**: if White had come down the h-file, the capture of the pawn on h4 would have destroyed the stalemate.

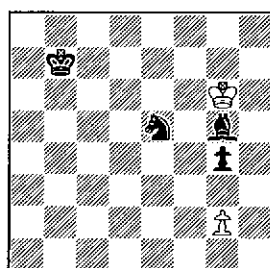
Yuri Bazlov's 5th Prizewinner 2 is less artificial. **1 Kg7 Nd6** is a long but sure win for Black (**2 Ne5 g3** etc, or **2 g3 Nf5+ 3 Kf7 Ne3!**), and the drawing line starts **1 Nh8**. **1...Nxb8** fails because the Black king is one square too far away (**2 Kxb8 Kc6 3 K Kg7 Kd5 4 Kg6 Bd3 4 Kf5 g3 6 Kg4 Bf2 7 Kf3** and White will reach **f1**), but **1...Ne5** keeps White's king out of **g6** (see **2a**), and is this not sufficient? If **2 Ng6** then **2...Nc4**, and again Black will have a win. However, White has the lovely move



2 - draw

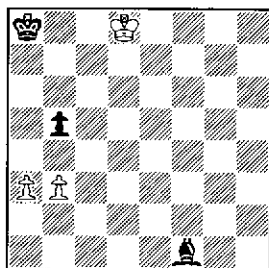


2a - after 1...Ne5

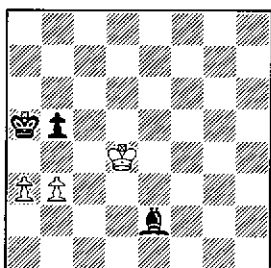


2b - after 3...Ne5+

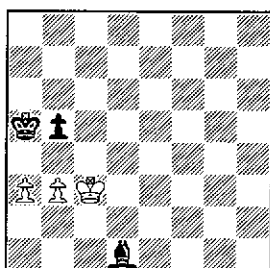
2 Nf7!! Black must take, 2...Nxf7, and after 3 Kg6 he must save his knight since 3...Kc6 4 Kxf7 Kd5 5 Kg6 will transpose into the line from 1...Nxh8. Hence 3...Ne5+, and we have 2b. Now 4 Kxg5 Kc6 gives Black another win, but 4 Kf5 holds the game; conceding the knight allows a draw as before, and 4...Nf7 is met by 5 Kg6 repeating the position.



3 - draw



3a - after 4 Kd4 Be2

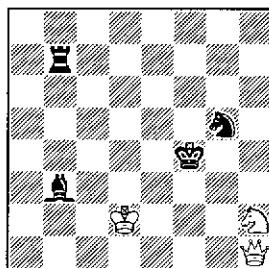


3b - after 5 Kc3 Bd1

But my favourite from the tourney is Jarl Ulrichsen's 3, even though it took only 8th Prize. Try the natural 1 Kc7 Ka7 2-3 Kc5 Ka5 4 Kd4 Be2 (see 3a) 5 Kc3 Bd1 (see 3b); no, White has nothing better than 6 Kb2 Kb6 7 Kc3 Kc5 (3b with bKc5) 8 b4+ (8 Kb2 Kd4 loses more quickly), and Black will come round to the K-side and force his way in. Try 3 Kd5 Ka5 4 Kc5 to lose a move, and after 4...Be2 5 Kd4 (3a BTM) Bd1 6 Kc3 we have 3b BTM, and a K-move will allow 7 Kb4 or 7 a4 drawing at once; if instead say 6...Bf3 then 7 Kc2 and White will patrol b2/c2, coming to c3 only when forced, and this will keep Black at bay (if Black tries ...Kb6 while White is on b2 or c2, White will play Kc3 threatening Kb4, and Black will have to return to a5 since ...Kc5 would allow b4+ followed by a4). However, Black can lose a move in his turn by 4...Bd3, and after 5 Kd4 Be2 we again have 3a WTM (or Black can play 5...Bc2 if he prefers). Try 4 Kd4 in this line: no, we've been here already, 4...Be2. Try 4 Ke4 Be2 5 Kd4 losing a move here instead; ah yes, this is the line that leaves Black without resource. In full, 1 Kc7 (1 Kd7 Kb7 2 Kd6 Kb6 3 Kd5 Be2 4 Kd4 Bd1 5 Kc3 Kc5 and again we have 3b with bKc5) Ka7 2 Kc6 Ka6 3 Kd5! Ka5 4 Ke4!! Be2 5 Kd4 (3a BTM) Bg4 (Black temporizes) 6 Kd3! (so does White) Bd1 (now the threat of Kc2 forces Black's hand) 7 Kc3 (3b BTM) and draws as above.

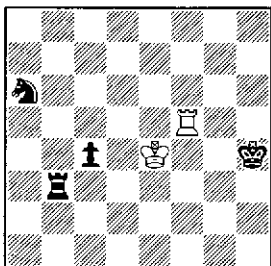
From the world at large

First things first. **1** confirms the new depth record established by Marc Bourzutschky and Yakov Konoval: after Black's $1...Rd7+$, the winning line against best play involves no fewer than **517** moves before the first capture. The moves are on Tim Krabbé's web site <www.xs4all.nl/~timkr>, posting 316 dated 26 May 2006, and in *EG* 164.

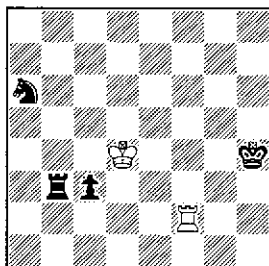


1 - 517 moves to capture!

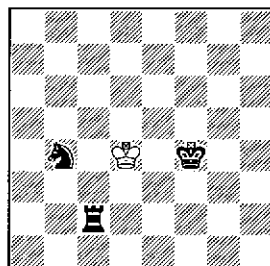
The main conventional event of recent months has been the appearance of the *EG* "catch-up" volume containing over a thousand honoured studies not previously reproduced in *EG*. A treasure-house? Well, maybe. But an article by John Nunn describes quite a few studies published today as looking "like a middlegame position from a game between two madmen" (a line to rank with Michael Ernstoy's description of a study some years ago as "looking like a traffic accident"), and I would put it rather more strongly. All too many studies in modern tourney awards feature complex and characterless positions with no semblance of naturalness or logic, and the incentive to set them up on a board and see what happens is negligible. Frankly, I am skipping something like nine out of ten.



2 - draw

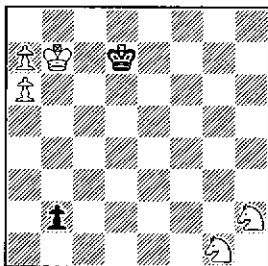


2a - after 2 Rf2

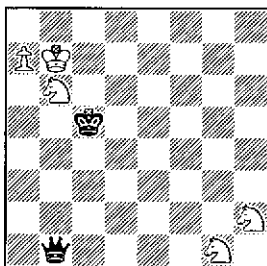


2b - 6...Kxf4 stalemate

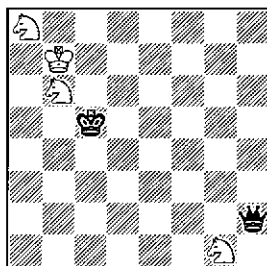
But there are exceptions. Yuri Makletsov has long been a name I look out for, and his **2** was commended in the 8th All-Russian tourney of 1973-74. $R \vee R + N$ is safely drawn, hence **1 Kd4**, and if $1...Rb4$ then $2 Ra5 N\sim 3 Rc5$ ($3...Ne6+$ $4 Kc3 Nxc5$ $5 Kxb4$ and the pawn goes). So **1...c3**, and White must play **2 Rf2** to stop ...c2 (see **2a**). Black might now think of $2...Rb2$, but $3 Rf4 + Kg5/Kg3$ $4 Kxc3$ is good enough. More subtle is $2...Nb4$, because after $3 Kc4 Rb2$ $4 Rf4 + Kg5/Kg3$ $5 Kxc3$ Black can interpolate $5...Rc2+$ and save his rook. However, it is to no avail: **6 Kd4!** and the capture **6...Kxf4** gives stalemate (see **2b**). This stalemate was familiar even in 1974, which is doubtless why the study gained only a commendation, but it is normally achieved by much cruder means, and on the evidence of Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database III" this was the first sound realisation out of nearly twenty where every man initially on the board moved at least once.



3 - draw



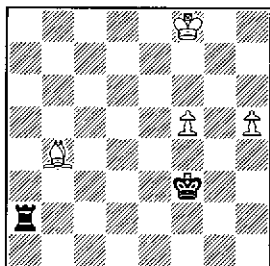
3a - after 3...Kc5



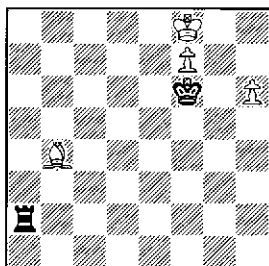
3b - after 6...Qxh2

Sergei Didukh's remarkable 3 gained 1st HM in the 2004 Moscow Town tourney. Only a draw? But 1 a8Q loses (1...b1Q+ 2 Ka7 Qxg1+ 3 Kb7 Qg2+ and Black will manoeuvre in to a mate on c7), and 1 Nf3 will lead to a mate on c8 instead. This leaves 1 a8N, after which 1...b1Q+ 2 Nb6+ Kd6 3 a7 will surely give White a win? Again no: 3...Kc5 (see 3a), and 4 a8Q Qxb6+ will give Black a Q v Qa8 win.

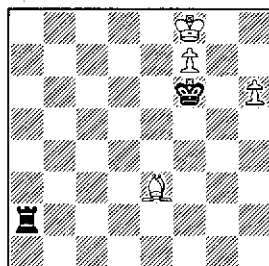
All right, 4 a8N, and even though one knight goes the remaining three will surely be enough to draw? After all, even 2N v Q is supposed to be a book draw. Yes, but only if the defenders can establish themselves away from the edge, and here they are badly cramped. So White cannot afford to lose two knights, and the draw demands exact play for several moves: 4...Qe4+ (4...Qxg1 5 Nf3 Qg2 6 Nd7+ and 7 Nde5) 5 Kc7 Qe5+ 6 Kb7 Qxh2 (see 3b) 7 Nd7+ Kd6 8 Nf3 Qb2+ 9 Nab6 Qg2 10 Nde5.



4 - win



4a - after 3...Kf6



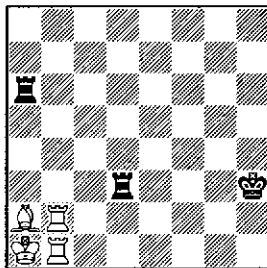
4b - after 7...Kf6

The judge described Gerhard Josten's 4 (1st Comm, *StrataGems* 2002-03) as a study that made it to the award almost because of a single move, but in truth there is a lot more to it. Play starts 1 h6 Kf4 (say) 2 f6, and if 2...Kg5 attacking both pawns then 3 Kg7 and White wins fairly easily. Better is 2...Kf5, when 3 Kg7 can be met by 3...Rg2+ and 4...Rg6. Hence 3 f7 Kf6 threatening mate (see 4a), and now comes a bishop-king duel which is worth studying in detail: 4 Be7+ (4 Bc3+ Kg6 and draws) Ke6 (but now 4...Kg6 can be met by 5 Kg8, since if 5...Ra8+ 6 f8Q Rxf8+ then 7 Bxf8 protects wPh6) 5 Bc5 Kf6 (back to 4a but with wB on c5) 6 Bd4+ Kg6 (so what has changed?) 7 Be3 (ah, this has - it would have been Bd2 before) Kf6 (see 4b) 8 Bg5+! (the move referred to by the judge) Kxg5 (the g-file having been blocked by the intrepid bishop, 8...Ke6 is no better) 9 Kg7 and wins.

News and notices

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meetings will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on ****Friday October 13**** (please note, the *second* Friday in the quarter) 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.

More on an advantage of one minor piece (see June, pages 330-332). Noam Elkies points out that after 31 moves of the 138-move maximal winning line with **two rooks and bishop against two rooks** exhibited on Tim Krabbé's website we have the position alongside, with White cramped into the corner and his bishop pinned. He comments that if even this is a win then it certainly looks as if the ending should be a win in general, and I imagine that most of us would agree.



Spotlight continued. Ilham Aliev has pointed out that the computer-generated B + N v R discovery by Guy Haworth which I quoted in June 2002 is partially anticipated by O. Danielson, *Schackvärlden* 1929, wKh6, Ba4, Ne5 (3), bKh8, Rb8 (2), win by 1 Bc6 etc. However, while the material and the first move are both identical, there is no second quiet move in the Danielson as there is in the Haworth. I think Guy's discovery is a genuine advance.

And a minor analytical point, picked up by the ever-sharp eyes of Noam: in **11** of special number 47, my abbreviated note "perpetual check on the a-file" applies only after 4...Kc2 5 Ra2+ Kd3. I'll leave readers to work out the rest.

World Chess Composition Tournament (see March page 327). David Sedgwick would still like to receive more submissions. To facilitate discussion, he would like to have them by 20th September if at all possible, and by 20th December at the latest. A reminder of the theme: "In a position in the main line of a win or draw study where an unprotected white or black piece A is directly attacked, White or Black instantaneously (right on the following move) places another piece B (of the same colour as A) en prise (again unprotected and directly attacked). This thematic move, resulting in the two white or the two black pieces A & B hanging, must be a quiet one, i.e. not a check nor a capture. A and B may be any pieces except pawns. If an attacked piece is also guarded, the subsequent elimination of this guard (by interference, capture, withdrawal, pin, etc.) cannot by itself be considered thematic." 23 Tierney Court, Canning Road, Croydon CR0 6QA, <david.sedgwick@amsolve.com>.

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