

# British Endgame Study News

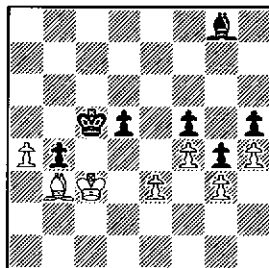
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Can White win, either here  
or with wBc2 and bBe6?

**The March mailing.** As I reported in follow-up letters to those affected, most of the address labels used for the March mailing had a line missing. In fact the great majority of copies seem to have got through in spite of this (the post offices both here and abroad seem to have done far better than I had any right to expect), but if yours did not please tell me. I still have a few copies on hand.

**This issue.** There is a look at the latest "FIDE Album", and the special number continues our survey of foreign studies which first appeared in the *New Statesman*.

**Books.** John Roycroft tells me that he no longer has copies of his books on Blandford and Dawson, though he does have "starter packs" of books, mainly in Russian, which he can recommend to new enthusiasts.

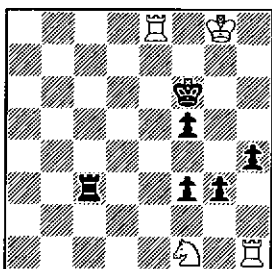
**Help, please.** I have not hitherto used *BESN* as a sounding-board for work in progress, but I am completely defeated by the position above. Can any analyst among our readers give a definitive verdict on it? For the background, see page 395.

**Spotlight.** Timothy Whitworth points out that Gulyaev's 3 in special number 54 is virtually a replica of a study by Horwitz, *The Chess-Monthly*, 1882 (White Kg6, Rg1/g3, Black Kh8, Qf8, Na1, 1 Rh1+ Kg8 2 Kh5+ Kh7 3 Kg4+ Kg8 (3...Qh6 4 Rxh6+ Kxh6 5 Rc3 with 6-8 Kd3 and 9 Ra3) 4 Kh3+ Kf7 5 Rf3+. This was not only earlier but would have been more elegant, but alas it cooks. After 1 Rh3+ Kg8 2 Kh5+ Qg7 3 Rxc7+ Kxc7 4 Rc3, Horwitz says that Black will release the knight by 4-5...Ke5 etc and draw. Indeed he will, but the computer finds a win starting 4 Kg5.

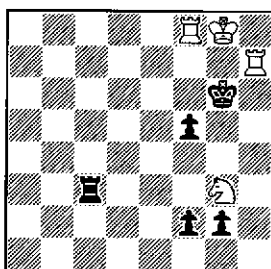
Timothy also tells me that Nadareishvili's 8, although sent to the *New Statesman*, seems not to have appeared there. "It certainly didn't appear in the tourney award ... and I haven't spotted it in any of the other columns that year." Nadareishvili gave it as "Sent to..." in his 1970 collection, but as "*Izbrannye etyudy 1970*" when reprinting it in his 1986 collection.

For some further observations by Timothy, which will be of interest to all who lack the 1851 Kling and Horwitz book but do have a copy of the 1889 book, see the back page.

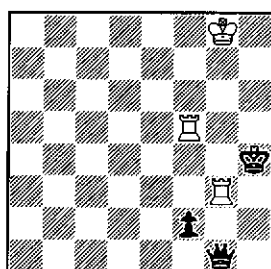
## Recently published British originals



1 - draw



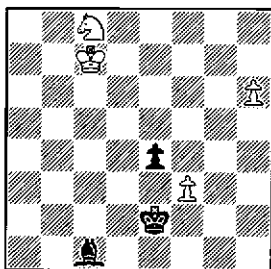
1a - after 4 Rh7



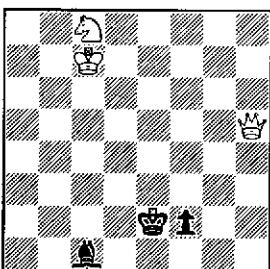
1b - after 7...Kh4

John Nunn's **1** gained 5th Commendation in the Corus-70 tourney. It should have been reported last time, but I overlooked the e-mail containing the award. The award did not reproduce all the composer's analysis (nor will *BESN*), but John has sent me his original submission and I will answer enquiries if anything is unclear.

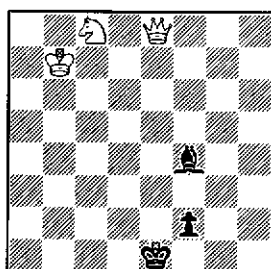
Black's pawns are strong. Wins after 1 Nh2/Nxg3/Ra8 are given in the award, and correct is **1 Rf8+**. My first thought was 1...Kg5, but this lets White play 2 Kf7, and if 2...g2 then 3 Rg8+ Kf4 4 Rxh4+ Ke5 5 Nd2 and it is Black who will be glad to settle for the draw. Moves to the e-file are more quickly dealt with (1...Ke5 2 Nxg3 hxg3 3 Rh5, 1...Ke6 2 Nxg3 hxg3 3 Rh6+), and the main line move is **1...Kg6**. John gives refutations of 2 Nxg3/Rg1/Nh2, but **2 Rxh4** now comes into consideration, because after **2...g2 3 Ng3 f2** White has **4 Rh7** threatening mate in two (see **1a**). Black can only take the knight, **4...Rxxg3**, and White picks up the rook by **5 Rg7+ Kh5** (if 5...Kh6 then 6 Rxg3 and 6 Rf6+ both draw) **6 Rxxg3**. If 6...f1Q then 7 Rf7 Kh4 8 Rfg7 draws, hence **6...g1Q**, and after **7 Rxf5+ Kh4** we have **1b**. 8 Rxxg1 fails, but White has **8 Rg7**, and after **8...f1Q 9 Rxf1 Qxf1 10 Rh7+** there is a perpetual check.



2 - win



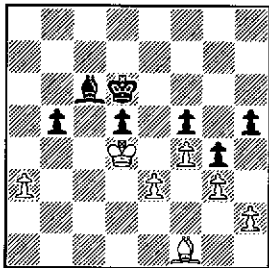
2a - 1...exf3 2 h8Q f2 3 Qh5+



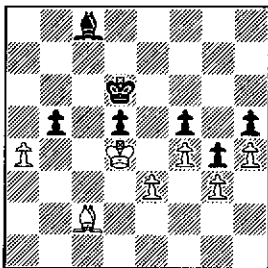
2b - main line, 5 Qe8+

John's **2** appeared last year in *Schach-Aktiv*. **1 h7**, and 1...Bb2 2 fxe4 is easy. Try 1...exf3 2 h8Q f2: no, 3 Qh5+ (see **2a**), with 3...Kd2 4 Qd5+ Ke1 (4...Ke2 5 Qc4+ Kd- 6 Qf1) 5 Qe4+ Kf1 (5...Kd1/Kd2 6 Qc4) and White has gained a tempo to bring up his knight, or 3...Ke1 4 Qc5+ Kd1/Kd2 5 Qd4+ etc. Surely there is more than this?

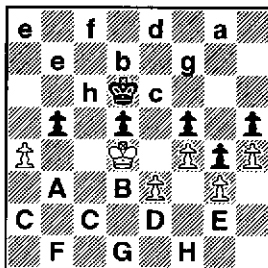
Indeed there is. White wants to make Black play ...Kf1, and it can be shown that he will not succeed if Black can safely move his bishop to d2/e3/g5. So Black plays 1...Bf4+ (or 1...exf3 2 h8Q Bf4+), and where will the White king go? 2 Kb6 allows 2...Be3+ and 2 Kd8 allows 2...Bg5+, so he must choose a light square, and as play unfolds we shall see that 2 Kb7! is his only move. Black continues 2...exf3 3 h8Q f2, and after 4 Qh5+ Ke1 5 Qe8+ we have 2b. The line that holds out longest is 5...Kd2, but it is 5...Kd1 which points the need for Kb7 at move 2; the only winning replies are 6 Qa4+ (quickest) and 6 Qb5, and a king on c6 or d7 would block these. The rest is easy: 6...Ke2 7 Qc4+ Ke1 8 Qe4+, and White has achieved his aim.



3 - win



3a - after 6 a4



3b - see text

Our front page query arises from 3 by J. N. Baxter, which took 2nd Prize in the 1961 *New Statesman* Tourney. The main line runs 1 h4 Be8 2 Be2 Bc6 3 Bd1! Bd7 4 Bb3 Be6 5 Bc2 Bc8 6 a4 (see 3a) bxa4 7 Bxa4 Be6 8 Be8, and if White deviates Black has the corresponding-square defence shown in 3b. This was a fine conception in itself, but it recently occurred to me that it would be better still if we started with the bishops on g2 and b7, when the solution becomes 1 Bf1 Bc6 2 h4 etc and we have the elegant point that an immediate 1 h4 is met only by 1...Ba8.

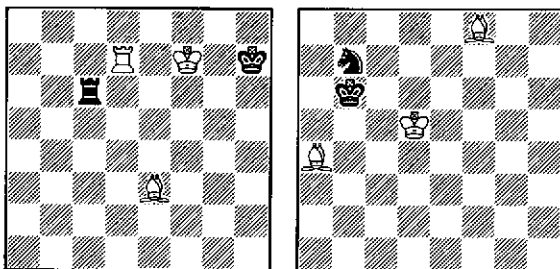
However, the extended study will be sound only if the original is sound. If White, having gone wrong, plays to b3 or c2 and then pushes his a-pawn, Black, having put his bishop on g8 or e6, can exchange pawns and then move to f7 to cover e8, and White will not get through. However, suppose White first plays his king back to c3, threatening Kb4 and (I think) forcing Black to play ...Kc5, and only now pushes his pawn. Black's king no longer guards d7, so he cannot exchange without letting White in, and he must play ...b4+ instead. White now has a distant passed pawn to divert Black's king or bishop, and again he will break in; can Black save the day?

Frankly, I cannot say, even with computer assistance. After White has sacrificed his a-pawn, Black's b-pawn will give him counterplay, and many lines appear to be decided by a single tempo. In every line I have tried, Black can just hold the draw, but he is wholly passive and White can choose his moment to attack; I cannot but feel that the unwanted win must be there somewhere. Can any reader clarify the matter?

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

## An unrealistic request

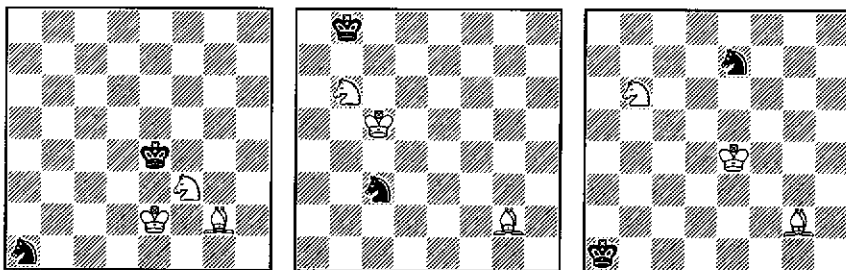
It has been gently suggested to me that when an international commission requests judges "to place, rank or give points to studies presented to them as if the studies had been composed in the traditional manner before the advent of the computer into compositional chess", it deserves better than to have its request described as "absurdly unrealistic" in a couple of dismissive sentences. Let me spell the matter out.



1 - BTM, 43 moves to capture    2 - 45 moves to capture

1 and 2 illustrate the limits of human analysis of five-man pawnless endings. 1 is the Zytogorski position which we saw in special number 50. As we saw then, neither he nor Crosskill analysed it quite perfectly, but each made only one significant error, and Crosskill's merely consisted in playing a slightly inferior move for Black and overlooking a shortening line for White. We also saw that Berger thought he had improved on Crosskill but hadn't, and that Chéron's solution, which is the one now normally given, although improving on Berger's, was inferior to Crosskill's original.

2 was given as drawn by Kling and Horwitz in 1851, and although many attempts were made to prove a White win, it was not until the computer analyses of Comay and Thompson in 1983 that the task was achieved.



3 - 8 moves to capture    4 - 31 moves to capture    5 - 52 moves to capture

3-5 are taken from a review article in the September 2003 *BESN*. I had asked the then new database mining program Wilhelm to go through the definitive database of  $K + B + N \text{ v } K + N$ , and to give me all the positions where Bg2-h1 was the only

winning move. Not counting captures and retreats from danger, it gave me nine positions, of which these are three. Be it noted that whereas the resolution of 1 had required a great deal of work by some of history's finest analysts, I obtained 3-5 with no effort beyond the giving of a few commands to a machine.

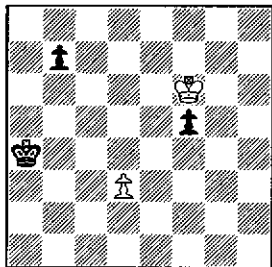
3, with solution 1 Bh1 Kf4 (1...Kd5 2 Kd3 etc) 2 Nd4 Ke5 (the logical defence, seeking to rescue the knight, though a spite attack on the bishop by 2-3...Kh2 delays its capture by one move) 3 Kd3 Kd6 4 Kc3 Kc5/Ke5 5 Ne2 and 6-7 Kxal, could certainly have been discovered without computer aid, and would probably have been quite highly regarded had it been. The resolution of 4, had anybody thought to look at the position, would appear on the evidence of 1 to have been within human capacity (part of the story is that the position with the bishop on f3 and the Black king on c7 is reciprocal zugzwang, so 1 Bf3 Kc7 is a draw whereas 1 Bh1 Kc7 2 Bf3 is a win), but this takes no account of the numerous other positions that would surely have had to be analysed before this one showed up as particularly interesting (in contrast, 1 and 2 turn up as a result of sensible Black play in routine endings with the same material). 5, even had it been miraculously given out of the blue as a position to be analysed, would appear to have been well beyond human capability.

I did not enter these positions for a formal tourney, and I did not even publish them in a column where originals automatically take part in an informal tourney (I would have been most embarrassed had they been placed above something on which somebody had expended genuine effort). But it can be only a matter of time before some pot-hunter or title-bagger starts sending positions discovered by this means to tourneys and competitive anthologies, and he will be delighted to learn that judges have been explicitly requested to assess them as if they had been produced by the years or lifetimes of skilled work which would previously have been necessary.

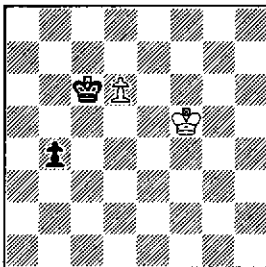
It may be asked why so clear an absurdity was not taken into consideration when the request was made, and the answer is that the "Permanent Commission of the FIDE for Chess Composition", under whose auspices it was made, is overwhelmingly a body of *problemists*. On the evidence of its minutes as printed each year in *The Problemist*, it is a rather pretentious and self-important body, and ever since reading the mish-mash document which it has seen fit to promulgate as a "codex for chess composition" I have regarded it as a body which is filling a much needed gap. However, for present purposes the operative word is "problemists". I have no doubt that problemists find it convenient, when their relevance to mainstream chess is challenged, to be able to point out that "chess composition" also includes endgame study composition, but in truth problem composition and study composition are quite different things; the objectives are different, the techniques are different, the aesthetics are different. Yet here we have a request, which specifically relates to studies and not to problems, being made by a body of problemists; furthermore, it has been made on the proposal of a "subcommittee for judging", two of whose three members, on the evidence of Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database III", have never published an endgame study in their lives. When the leading role in a specialized matter is taken by people who have no relevant experience, it is hardly surprising that the result turns out to be unrealistic.

## From the world at large

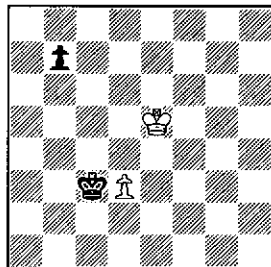
Last year saw the publication of a "FIDE Album" purporting to display the leading compositions the period 1998-2000. As far as endgame studies are concerned, it gives a sadly unflattering picture. Like its recent predecessors, it features a disproportionate number of artificial and complex heavyweights (the median number of men on the board is no fewer than 10), and elegance and charm are too rarely to be found. However, there are some honourable exceptions.



1 - draw

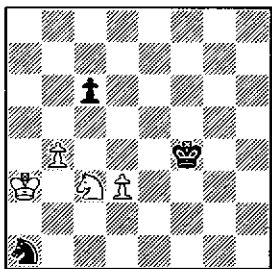


1a - 1...b5, after 5 Kxf5

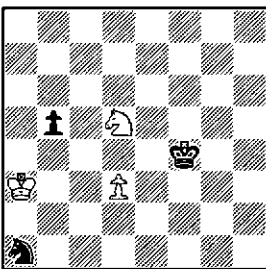


1b - 1...Kb3, after 3 Ke5

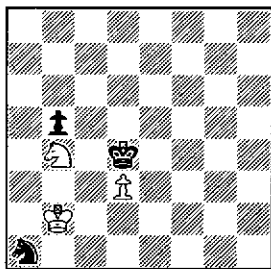
Oleg Pervakov's **1** (1 Pr 64 2000) is a sparkling addition to the ranks of "don't capture" pawn studies. 1 Kxf5 b5 2 d4 b4, and Black will promote with check. 1 Ke5 b5 2-5 d7 b1Q 6 d8Q Qe5+, and White's queen will be exchanged or lost. 1 Kg5! with two lines: 1...b5 2 d4 b4 3 d5 Kb5 (3...b3 4-5 d7 b1Q 6 d8Q and the f-pawn will soon go) 4 d6 Kc6 5 Kxf5 (see 1a) with draws after 5...Kxd6 6 Ke4 and 5...b3 6 Ke6, and 1...Kb3 2 Kxf5 Kc3 3 Ke5 (see 1b) with 3...Kxd3 4 Kd5 or 3...b5 4 d4.



2 - win

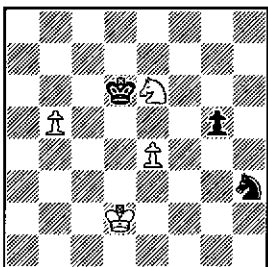


2a - after 2 Nb4+

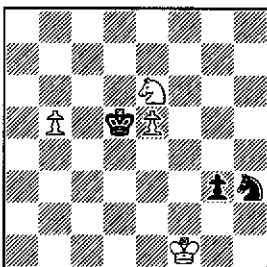


2b - reciprocal zugzwang

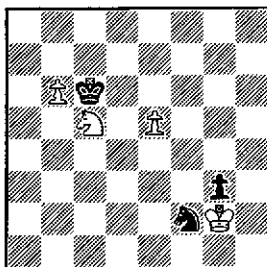
**2** (Nikolai Rezvov and Sergei Tkachenko, 1 Pr *Uralski Problemist* 2000) starts with the gift of one of White's valuable pawns: 1 b5! There follows 1...cxb5 2 Nd4+ (see 2a) and Black's natural move is 2...Ke5, but after 3 Nb4 Kd4 (what else?) 4 Kb2 (see 2b) Kc5 5 Kc3 Kd6 6 d4 White will have time for 7-8 Kxa1. Black can improve by 2...Kf5 3 Nb4 Ke5, when 4 Kb2 Kd4 will give 2b with White to play, but two can play that game: 4 Ka2! Kd4 5 Kb2, and we are back on familiar ground.



3 - win

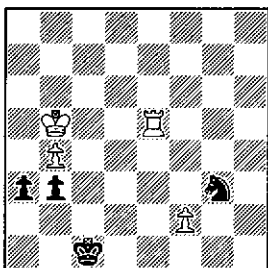


3a - after 3...g3

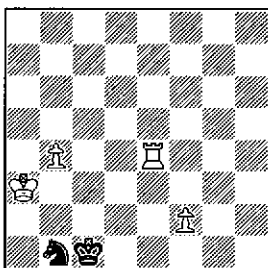


3b - after 6 Nc5

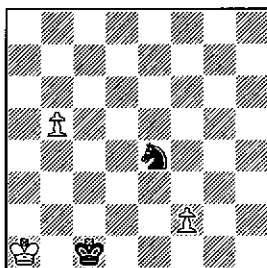
Karen Sumbatyan's 3 (Prize, Grigoriev-100 1998) also starts with the offer of a valuable pawn: **1 e5+**. But **1...Kxe5/Kxe6/Ke7** lose quickly, and **1...Kd7 2 Ke3** gives White a dominating position. More demanding is **1...Kd5**, when only **2 Ke1** wins (Black can hold out after **2 Ke3 g4** and **2 b6 Kc6 3 Nc5 Nf4**). **2...g4 3 Kf1 g3** gives **3a**, and an immediate **4 Kg2** fails (**4...Kxe6 5 b6 Nf4+ 6 Kxg3 Ne2+** etc). Correct is **4 b6** forcing **4...Kc6**, and only now **5 Kg2**. The rest is fairly easy: **5...Nf2 6 Nc5** (see **3b**) **Kxb6** (**6...Ng4/Nd1 7 b7 Kc7 8 e6** etc) **7 e6 Ng4 8 e7 Nf6 9 Nd7+**.



4 - win



4a - after 3...b1N+



4b - after 6 b5

Yochanan Afek's 4 (2 Pr Korányi Memorial 1999-2000) starts **1 Ka4 b2 2 Kxa3**, and **2...Ne4** lures the rook to a bad square. **3 Rxe4 b1N+** gives **3a**, and where should the king go? The answer is **4 Ka2 Nc3+ 5 Ka1**, when **5...Nxe4 6 b5** wins (see **4b**). If the king goes anywhere else, Black will have a tempo-gaining check sooner or later.

The compilers will of course say that they can't publish what they are not sent, and herein lies at least a part of the problem: they don't seek out the material themselves, but expect composers to send it in. No anthology of standing can be put together on such a basis. There can in any case be no such thing as "the" representative anthology of a particular period - judgement is far too personal a thing for this - but if compilers restrict themselves to what they are explicitly sent, and ignore everything else however good it may be, the result is bound to be inferior. Yes, there is some good stuff here, but there is much that is less good, and a look through Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database III" will disclose many studies from 1998-2000 that will surely be in future anthologies but are not to be found here.

## News and notices

**Meetings.** There will be another Harpenden summer meeting on **Saturday June 21**, with a light buffet lunch at 1230 and gentle endgame study chat from 1400 onwards, and all who receive *BESN* from me will be welcome. We are about 25 miles north of London (M1, A1, former "Thameslink" railway), and a map will be sent on request (or type "AL5 4NX" into an Internet streetfinder program).

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

**Change of address.** Yochanan Afek, who receives original endgame studies for *The Problemist*, is now at Olympiaweg 48/1, 1076 XA Amsterdam, NL - Nederland (afek26@gmail.com).

**Bent Memorial Tourney: database-derived studies.** John Nunn sends me a competitor's view. "When inviting entries to the tourney, no mention was made of any special conditions regarding database-derived studies. I think it is reasonable for composers to assume that, unless it is stated to the contrary, all studies will be treated on an equal footing. If it is stated that database-derived studies will be treated differently (by only being eligible for special honours, or by being downgraded) then composers have the choice to go ahead or send their efforts somewhere else."

I have to say I would challenge the apparent implication that "special" honours in this context are inferior to "ordinary" honours. When this system was in operation in *diagrammes*, it quickly became apparent that the database-derived studies given "special" honours tended to be more attractive than the heavier and more artificial studies produced by conventional composition. In no sense were they seen as comprising an inferior category.

**Kling and Horwitz 1851.** Some years ago, Timothy Whitworth made a page by page comparison of Part I of Horwitz's 1889 edition against the original 1851 book, and he found the following discrepancies.

- 18 studies in Part I (pages 1-4, 32-34, 69-71, 231-238) were not in the 1851 book.
- Page 46, the White king was on h5 in 1851 (as was reported in March).
- Page 81, the diagram for study 8 was accidentally turned through 180° in 1851.
- Page 159, the solution given in 1851 was wrong (1...Kd4).
- Page 162, the solution given in 1851 was less efficient.

Additionally, page 99 of the March 1904 *British Chess Magazine* has a better solution to the study on page 168, and an amendment to the final note on page 193.

*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.*