British Endgame Study News

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*by* David Blundell
White to play and win

This issue. David Blundell has recently returned to composition (try the position above before looking inside), and the special number continues our look at foreign studies which first saw the light of day here.

51 flights of chess fancy. All readers should have received a complimentary copy of this towards the end of July. Any who did not should please tell me without delay.

I prepared a short paper **On being a chess endgame study impresario** for a meeting in Amsterdam to celebrate John Roycroft's 80th birthday, and have a few spare copies if anyone is interested. I am told that a version will be appearing in *EG*.

Spotlight (see also back page). Gady Costeff and Noam Elkies remind me that Jeremy Morse's knight promotion (see June, page 429) was later shown to even more sparkling effect by Robert Brieger (1 Pr *Chess Life and Review* 1984). I quoted this in June 2001 but only in notation, and it bears repetition. **1 Kb7!** (1 b7 Nd8 2 b8N Kb4) **Ne5** (1...Nd8+ 2 Kc7 Ne6+ 3 Kd7 Nf8+ 4 Kc6) **2 Kc7 Nd3 3 b7 Nb4 4 Kb8!! Na6+** (4...Kb6 5 Kc8 Na6 6 b8Q+ Nxb8 7 Kxb8, 4...Ka6 5 Kc8 Nc6 6 Kc7) **5 Ka7 Nb4 6 b8N! N~ 7 Nc6 mate**. Not only is there the knight promotion, but the White king twice exercises his royal privilege in a typically uncouth manner, walking across in front of his own pawn when it wants to advance.
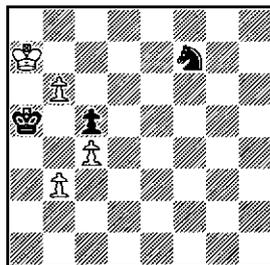
by Robert Brieger
White to play and win

Regarding 2 in special number 59, Noam asks whether Sackmann observed that 4 Rc4!! produces a reciprocal zugzwang. Observed in print, perhaps not (I haven't seen the original source, and Harold van der Heijden's database gives only variations without commentary), but noticed, given the exhaustive and meticulous analysis that will have been needed to produce such a study, surely. "Alas there doesn't seem to be a thematic try; after 2 Rc4? one of Black's drawing moves is 2...Kf8 when 3 Kd6 forces Bg3!, but Black also holds with 2...Kf7 or 2...Bd6."

Recently published British originals
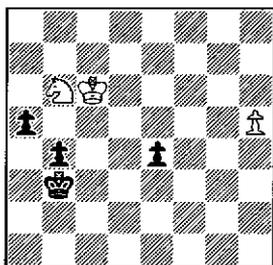
1 - win
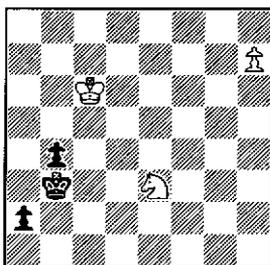
1a - after 4...a2

2 - win

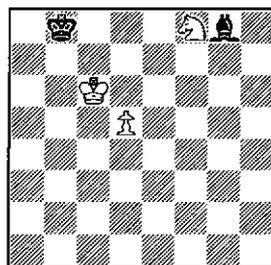Recent months have seen some valuable polishing work. **1**, a first composition by Gordon Davies, was in the March *BCM*. 1-3 h8Q e1Q is only a draw, hence **1 Nd5**; which pawn should Black now run? If 1...Kc2 for 2-3 h7 b2, White has 4 Nc3! Kxc3 5 h8Q+ etc. If 1...a4, White's 2-4 h8Q will cover a1. But if Black interpolates **1...e3! 2 Nxe3** and then plays **2...a4, 3 h6 a3 4 h7 a2** gives **1a**, and 5 h8Q a1Q 6 Qxa1 will be stalemate; White must take a bishop, **5 h8B!** The finish is well known, but Gordon brings the knight in from further afield than any of his predecessors did.

Paul Byway's **2**, from the May *BCM*, improves on a 1952 setting by Aleksandr Herbstman. **1 d6**, and if 1...Kc8 then 2 d7+ Kd8 3 Kd6 B~ 4 Ne6+ Bxe6 5 Kxe6 etc. But **1...Bb3** will meet 2 d7 by 2...Ba4+, and so forces **2 Nd7+**. 2...Kc8 3 Nc5 is easy, but more subtle is **2...Ka7!** Now **3 Nc5** (3 Nb6? Be6) **Bf7 4 d7 Be8!** gives **2a**, and only **5 dxe8B** wins. Herbstman had the knight on f6, and needed another on b3 to cope with 1...Be6. By moving the knight to f8, Paul has saved a man.
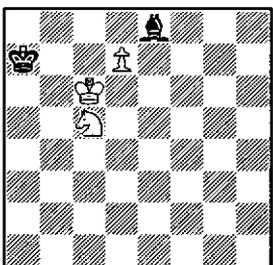
2a - after 4...Be8
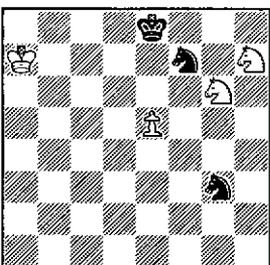
3 - win
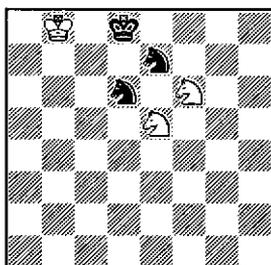
3a - after 5 Ne5

Paul Michelet's **3** was also in the May *BCM*. **1 Nf6+ Kd8 2 e6** is natural and correct, and only **2...Nd6** stops White from promoting forthwith. But out of the frying pan... **3 Kb8** threatens mate, and after **3...Ngf5** (3...Ndf5 is no better) **4 e7+ Nxe7 5 Ne5** we have the charming **3a**: whichever knight moves will allow mate next move. There are at least eight existing studies with this finish, but most have at least one extra man on the board at the end, and in none does every man move during the play.
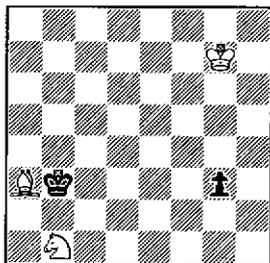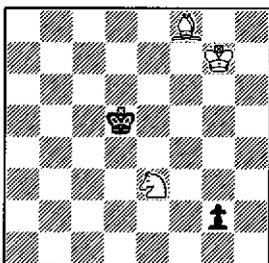
4 - win   **4a** - 2...Kb3, after 6 Ne3+   **4b** - 2...Kc3, after 6...g2
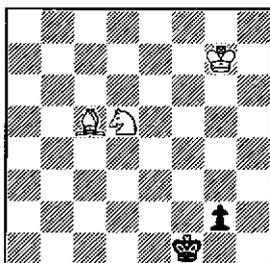
And did you crack David Blundell's **4**, which appeared in the July *BCM*? White wants to get on to the diagonal a7-g1, so why is **1 Bf8!** the only move to win?

Let's play it through. **1...Kc2 2 Na3+ Kb3 3 Nb5 Kc4 4 Nd6+ Kd5 5 Nf5 g2 6 Ne3+** (see **4a**), or **2...Kc3** (to support his pawn) **3 Nb5+ Kd3 4 Nc7 Ke2 5 Bc5** (or 5 Nd5 Kf1 6 Bc5) and White's knight just gets across in time: **5...Kf1 6 Nd5 g2** (see **4b**) **7 Ne3+ Kg1 8 Ng4+ Kh1 9 Nf2+ Kh2 10 Bd6+ Kg1 11 Nh3+ K~ 12 Bc5**.

Now try 1 Bc5: no, 1...Kc2 2 Na3+ Kb3, and if Nb5 then ...Kc4. Try 1 Bd6: no, 1...Kc2 2 Na3+ Kb3 3 Nb5 Kc4 4 Nc7 g2 forcing 5 Bh2, and Black draws (5...Kd3 6 Nd5/Ne6 Ke2 7 Nf4+ Kf1 8 Nh3 g1Q+ 9 N/Bxg1 Kg2). Try 1 Be7: no, we reach **4a** but with the bishop on e7, and 6...Ke6 draws. A stunning first move, neatly forced.
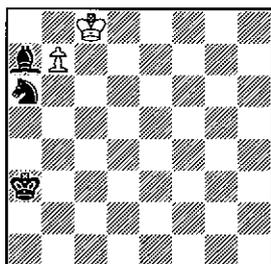
5 - draw   **5a** - after 5 Kf5   **5b** - after 9...Na6

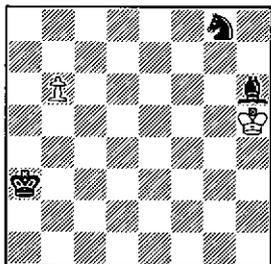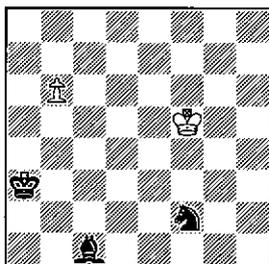David's **5**, which gained an HM in the "baby studies" section (up to five men) of David Gurgenidze's 55th birthday tourney, shows the other side of the coin. **1 Kg6** is obvious, and if we copy the previous play we get **1...Bc1 2 Kf7 Nh6+ 3 Kf6! Ng4+** (3...Bb2+ 4 Ke6 Bc1 5 Kf6 repeating) **4 Ke6 Nf2.** But with the Black king on a3 instead of b2, White has **5 Kf5** (see **5a**). Now 5...Nd3 6 b7 Bf4 can be met by 7 Ke4, and the Black king prevents 5...Ba3 (which if playable would win). Black has only **5...Be3**, and the manoeuvre that previously refuted 1 Bd6 becomes the main line: **6 b7 Ba7 7 Ke6 Nd3 8 Kd7 Nb4 9 Kc8 Na6** (see **5b**) **10 b8Q B/Nxb8 11 Kb7**.

I have to say that I prefer the "win" version **4**, whose spectacular first move far outweighs the minor inaccuracy at moves 5 and 6 in the line 2...Kc3, and I think David does too, but the play through **4b** had already been shown by Gurgenidze himself and so David sent the "draw" version to the tourney.

On rules for solving competitions ...

At the January Pushkin House meeting, Ian Watson talked about last year's European Study Solving Tournament. This used different rules from those in the 1994 World Solving Championship: only the composer's main line had to be written, and it had to be continued as long as White's moves were unique. I achieved the former as director in 1994 by announcing in advance that each study had a clear main line and everyone giving this line in full would receive full points, but I had to abide by the imprecise and subjective criterion of continuing until the required win or draw was "obvious".

On the face of it, the European rules were a clear improvement on the 1994 WCSC rules - or were they? In a study ending with mate or decisive loss of material, my solvers in *diagrammes* would *never* regard the mate, however pretty, as the "main line"; they assumed Black would see it, and sent me the boring alternative. So I gave full points to any solution which reached the point of choice, and any solving director with mainstream players in his field will risk trouble if he does otherwise.
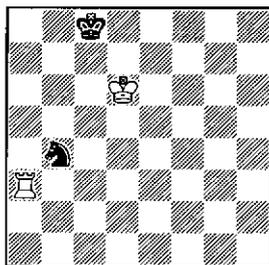
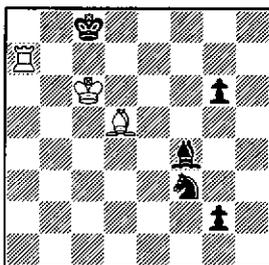

| 1 - Black to play | 2 - draw | 2a - after 6 Bg4 |
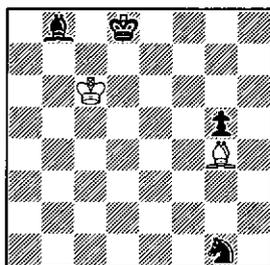
Or what about the end of a typical "domination" study? **1** is an elegant winning position which occurs if Black blunders with N v R. 1...Na6/Nc6/Nd5/Nd3/Na2 2 R/KxN, 1...Nc2 2 Rc3+ forking, 1...Kb8/Kb7 2 Rb3 pinning, 1...Kd8 2 Ra8 mate. Very neat, but only in the lines 1...Na6 2 RxN and 1...Kb7 2 Rb3 Ka7/Kb6 3 RxN are White's moves forced; in all other cases, he can waste a move or two now, and still pick up the knight in due course. Do we really want solvers to have to go to this degree of detail in order to work out what they do and do not need to write?

And what about "positional draw" studies? **2** is one of the studies I used in 1994. **1 Ra8+** (to block b8) **Bb8 2 Ra1 g1Q 3 Rxg1 Nxg1 4 Be4** (to block g5) **g5 5 Bf5+ Kd8 6 Bg4** and we have **2a**, prior use of this finale by Gurvich being acknowledged. I stopped here and nobody argued, but under the "unique White moves" rule solvers would have had to continue with one of 6...Nf3/Nh3 7 BxN; the two moves which force unique replies are two of the three gratuitously bad moves that a sensible Black would *not* choose (the third, 6...Ne2, allows both BxN and Kb7).

I am all in favour of solving studies for pleasure, but for serious competitive solving, where people will argue over the slightest detail, the precision of "Mate within *n* moves" is essential. This is why the chess problem was invented.

... and on duals in general

The emphasis on unique White moves described opposite is just one manifestation of a trend which strikes me as wholly misguided: the elevation of "uniqueness of White play" from a highly desirable feature to an end in itself, to be pursued almost irrespective of other considerations. Yes, of course the main point of a study must be unique in all essentials, but the same is hardly true of every minor detail, and the more piquant the idea at heart of a study the more we are willing to tolerate minor inaccuracies. Here are three classic studies, all used as examples in *Endgame Magic*, which the high priests of the "accuracy at all costs" movement would presumably reject as unsound.
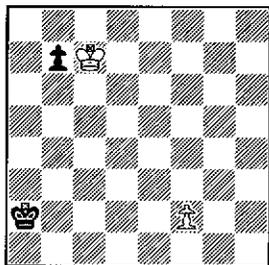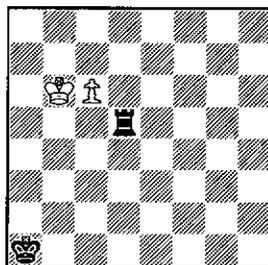
| 1 - win | 2 - win | 3 - win |

1 is by Artur Mandler. Play starts **1 Kd6!** (the study is worth having for this move alone) **Ka3 2 Kc5 Ka4 3 f4 b5**, and the line normally given is **4 f5 b4 5 Kc4 b3 6 Kc3** (luring Black within range of a check from f8) **Ka3 7 f6 b2 8 f7 b1Q 9 f8Q+** with mate or capture of the queen.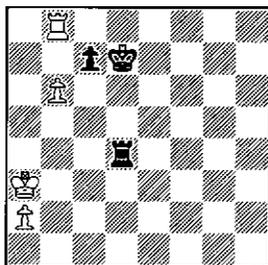 The final stage had of course already been shown by Grigoriev, and it was only the sparkling opening move 1 Kd6 that was Mandler's. But in fact 5 Kd4 does just as well as Kc4 (Black still has nothing better than 5...b3, and 6 Kc3 transposes), and White can even play it at move 4 (4 Kd4 b4 5 f5 etc). So should we stop the solution at move 3, and cut out the Grigoriev finale on which everything depends? Certainly not, is the traditional and surely correct view.

2 is by Josef Moravec. 1 b7 is met by 1...Kc6. **1 Rd8! Kxd8 2 b7 Rb4!** (tit for tat) **3 Kxb4 c5+ 4 Ka5/Kb5!** (4 Kxc5 Kc7 is drawn) **Kc7 5 Ka6 Kb8**, and now the natural line is **6 Kb6 c4 7-9 a6 c1Q 10 a7 mate** but White can advance his a-pawn first (6 a4 c4, with 7 Kb6 or even 7 a5 c3 8 Kb6). Moravec, perhaps even more than any other composer, was unworried by minor inaccuracies.

And what about **3**, which is the Barbier-Saavedra study? The line everybody gives is **1 c7 Rd6+ 2 Kb5 Rd5+ 3 Kb4 Rd4+ 4 Kb3 Rd3+ 5 Kc2 Rd4! 6 c8R!! Ra4 7 Kb3**, but of course 4 Kc3 does just as well; Black has nothing better than 4...Rd1, White again plays 5 Kc2, and 5...Rd4 transposes.

These studies are gems in spite of their inaccuracies. Should I give an example the other way, a shapeless computer-generated horror which offers length and accuracy but nothing else? No, let us leave a good taste in the mouth rather than a bad one.

From the world at large
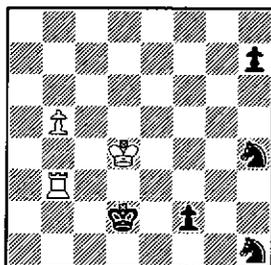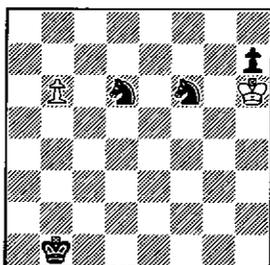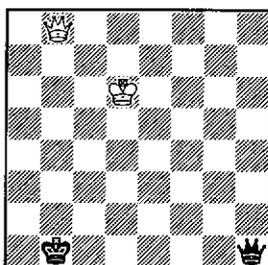
| 1 - draw | 1a - after 9...Nf6 | 1b - after 15 b8Q+ |

John Roycroft recently drew my attention to Sergei Didukh's long-range decoy study **1**, which took the first prize for 2007-08 in *Shakhmatnaya poesia*. 1 Rb1 Nf3+ 2 Ke4 Ne1 3 Rb2+ Kc3 4 Rxf2 Nxf2+ is a win for Black (...Ne1-c5 will stop White's pawn, ...Nf2-f6 and ...h5 will save his own), and alternatives at White's second move are no better. White must play **1 Rb2+**, and if 1...Kd1/Ke1 then 2 b6 and he has gained a crucial tempo (2...f1Q 3 Rb1+). Hence **1...Kc1** attacking the rook, and there follows **2 Ra2** renewing the option of a first-rank check and forcing **2...Kb1**. White now takes the f-pawn, **3 Rxf2**, and play unfolds **3...Nxf2 4 Ke3** (we'll look at an immediate 4 b6 later) **Nh3 5 b6 Nf5+ 6 Kf3** (all White's main line moves are exact) **Nd6** (for 6...Nd4+ see below) **7 Kg4 Nf2+ 8 Kh5** (8 Kg5 Nf7+ etc) **Nfe4 9 Kh6 Nf6** (see **1a**) **10 Kg7! h5** (10...Nde8+ 11 Kh6 Nd6 12 Kg7 repeating) **11 Kxf6 h4 12 Ke5 h3 13 Kxd6 h2 14 b7 h1Q 15 b8Q+** (see **1b**). Now we see why White lured Black's king to the b-file at move 2. Similar play follows 6...Nd4+ (7 Kg4 Nf2+ 8 Kg5/Kh5 Ne4(+) 9 Kh6 Nf6 10 Kg7 h5 11 Kxf6 h4 12 Ke5 h3 13 Kxd4 etc), but an attempt to do the same after 4 b6 fails (4...Nf5+ 5 Ke5 Ne7 6 Kf6 Nc6 7 Kg5 Ne4+ 8 Kh6 Nf6 9 Kg7 h5 10 Kxf5 h4, and the second Black knight is safe on c6).

Earlier this year, Harrie Grondijs published a book entitled *About a theoretical ending* which looked at some historical work on the ending K + R + B v K + R, in particular at the analyses of Kling and Kuiper, and compared it with the definitive computer results now available. When examining pre-1850 British work for special number 53, I discounted Kling and Kuiper on the grounds that their analyses had appeared in the French periodical *Le Palamède* and that Kuiper, from his name, was presumably Dutch. Not so, says Harrie; like Kling, he was a German *émigré* who had settled in England. I did summarize their findings (with attribution to Kling alone because this was Staunton's attribution in his *Handbook*), but I would have gone into the matter in much greater detail had I known the true facts. Harrie's book was published in a very limited edition (the copy he sent me was the last one), but a reprint is planned for later in the year. In the meantime, he gives the references as *Le Palamède*, 1846, pages 440-455, 489-501, 529-539, and *Schachzeitung*, 1846, pages 13-15, and 1848, pages 8-28, 169-170, and 194-204, and all are in the British Library.

Harrie subsequently wondered what would happen if the dimensions of the board were different, so I put him in touch with Marc Bourzutschky. Marc duly found some interesting results on boards up to 12x12, which he has kindly allowed me to quote.
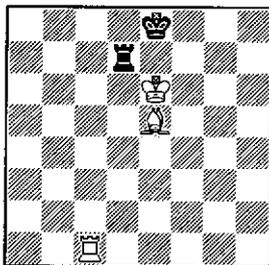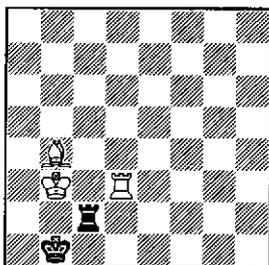
2 - win, draw on 9x9　　**3** - draw, win on 8x7 (a1-g8)　　**3a** - after 16 Be1
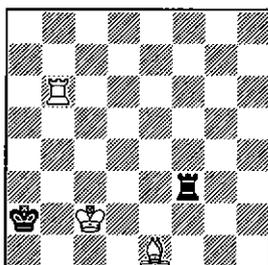
Unsurprisingly, more space helps the defender. Philidor's position **2** becomes a draw if there is an extra rank at the bottom. Lolli's position **3** becomes a win if there is no h-file (Marc gives the illustrative line 1 Rd1+ Rc1 2 Rd2 Rc7 3 Rg2 Rc8 4 Rf2 Rc6 5 Rb2+ Kc1 6 Rg2 Kb1 7 Bc3 Rb6+ 8 Kc4 Rb8 9 Kd3 Rf8 10 Rg1+ Ka2 11 Kc2 Rf2+ 12 Bd2 Rf8 13 Rg7 Rf3 14 Rb7 Rg3 15 Rb6 Rf3 16 Be1, when we have **3a** and only 16...Rh3 draws, anything else losing rook or king within five moves).

On the 8x8 board, there are 17 positions of reciprocal zugzwang (Black to play loses, White to play cannot win). Six of these are reciprocal zugzwang on boards 9x9 through 12x12 and appear to remain so on all larger boards,

Kd3, Rb3, Bc2 / Kc1, Ra1　(1)	Kb1, Rb2, Bb4 / Kd1, Ra4　(3)
Kb1, **Rg7**, Bb2 / **Kh8**, **Rh6**　(2)	Kf3, Rb2, Ba3 / Kc1, Rc1　(4)
Kf1, Rc2, Ba4 / Kd1, Rd3　(2)	Kc3, Rc2, Bd3 / Ka1, Rb1　(8),

and a seventh is reciprocal zugzwang on boards 10x10 and 12x12 and appears to remain so on all larger boards with even sides:

Kc2, Rc3, **Bg3** / Ka2, **Rh3**　(13).

The men in bold must retain their positions relative to the nearest corner, so on a 10x10 board the second position becomes Kb1, **Ri9**, Bb2 / **Kj10**, **Rj8** and the last position Kc2, Rc3, **Bi3** / Ka2, **Rj3**. The figures in brackets give depths to capture, which in these cases are independent of the board size.

Additionally, there are two positions which are White wins with or without the move on an 8x8 board but reciprocal zugzwang on boards 9x9 through 12x12,

Kc1, Rb4, Bb1 / Ka1, Ra7　(24 on 9x9, 23 on 10x10 through 12x12)
Kc2, Rc5, Bd1 / Ka2, Ra4　(19 on 9x9, 18 on 10x10, 20 on 11x11 and 12x12),

and one which becomes reciprocal zugzwang only on a 12x12 board:

Kc1, Rf3, Bj3 / Ka2, Rl3　(3).

These all seem likely to remain reciprocal zugzwang on larger boards (boards of even side in the last case, White's rook always being on the leftmost of the two centre files).

Once again, Marc, thank you.

News and notices

Meetings. The next **Pushkin House** meeting will be on **Friday October 2** at 6.00 pm (offers of talks to roycroft@btinternet.com please). 5A Bloomsbury Square, London (Holborn tube, Bloomsbury Way, SW corner of the square).

3-6 man zugzwangs. Guy Haworth has listed the 3-6 man reciprocal zugzwangs in full on the ICGA web site <www.icga.org> (look for Game-Specific Info, Western Chess, Chess Endgames). The site offers various options including a 58.8MB download file, which when unzipped presents a set of Excel spreadsheets containing the positions in FEN format with associated information. Among the frills is a differentiation according to whether the side to move has an *en passant* option. I might perhaps have chosen a data format different from FEN, but the key step has been to make the positions available; reformatting them to taste is routine hackwork.

Spotlight continued. Regarding the "Baxter, version by Beasley" study which I quoted last December, Harold van der Heijden and Paul Valois have drawn my attention to the version by André Chéron which appeared in 1961 in both *Journal de Genève* and the *New Statesman*. In the latter, he described it as *"cette monumentale étude qui est la plus profonde que j'ai composé ..."*, and the editor describes the complete analysis as taking up "27(!) pages of closely typed foolscap". The main line as given in the *New Statesman* is **1 Kf2!** (Chéron's exclamation marks throughout) **Kc7 2 Ke3 Kd6 3 Kd4 Bc6! 4 h3!! Be8 5 Bg2!! Bc6 6 h4!! Ba8 7 Bf1 Bc6 8 e3!** and we have the position after Baxter's first move, and much if not

by André Chéron
White to play and win

all of the analysis appeared in *Journal de Genève*, which is now accessible on-line at <www.letempsarchives.ch> (issues of 4/18 April, 2/16 May, 20 June, 4/25 July, 1/15/29 August, 12/26 September, and 10 October, with preliminary material on 4/17 January and 7 February). We may note that the move ...Ba8 is incorporated in the main line instead of being used to refute a White mistake, and that there is no question of a possible alternative win by playing Kc3.

But yet... Yes, an analytic *tour de force* such as nobody else could have attempted (one sideline goes to move 42), but in truth it is no more than a lengthy if subtle introduction to the Baxter, and I have to say that I prefer my studies short and piquant. It may be *lèse majesté* to say so, but I still think my little version is worth having.

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