

# British Endgame Study News

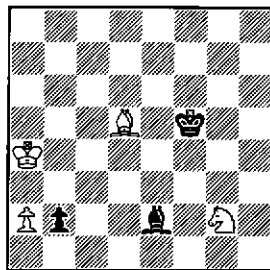
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by Paul Michelet  
White to play and draw

**Final year.** I shall be 70 by the time this appears in print, and as has long been my intention I shall cease producing *BESN* at the end of the year. People have been kind enough to express regret, but I am unrepentant. I have seen too many people go on too long, the quality of their work gradually dropping away and everything eventually petering out rather untidily. It doesn't always happen, by any means - when I went to see Wallace Ellison some years ago, he was still extremely sharp at nearly 85, and I was fully stretched trying to keep up - but it is far better to come to a tidy halt while things are still going well and to leave the field clear for somebody else.

I shall of course be delighted to see a successor, and will be happy to advise on practicalities. The name is not for sale - I am sure that the editor of any successor will want to do things differently, so please will he or she call it something else - nor is the subscription list, but if anyone producing a successor, either before *BESN* terminates or subsequently, cares to send me an appropriate number of copies of the first issue plus a sum sufficient to meet the mailing costs, I will gladly send them out to my mailing list accompanied by whatever personal endorsement I think appropriate.

**This issue.** The special number looks at Jan Marwitz, and try Paul Michelet's latest before looking inside (1 Bg8 Kg6 2 Nf4+ Kg7 3 Nxe2 b1Q is a Black win).

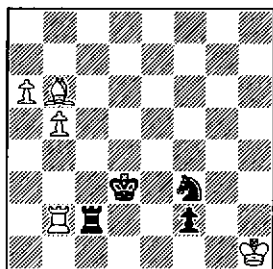
My usual March book list is enclosed, but this operation too will cease at the end of the year; **please note that stock now sold will not be replaced.**

**Spotlight** (see also back page). My apologies to David Blundell and to readers for reversing the kings in last time's front-page diagram. The diagram inside was correct, but by that time it was too late.

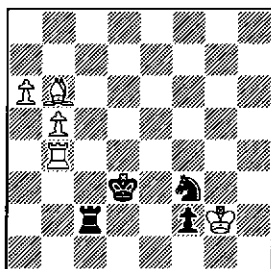
Ian Watson was the first to point out that Orrin Frink's 2 in special number 61 is an almost complete anticipation of a famous Grigoriev study (*Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1932, White Kg6, Pa2, Black Kf3, Pc7, win by 1 Kf5 Ke3 2 Ke5 and as in the Frink). This adds yet more weight to the contention that Frink has been undeservedly overlooked.

**Large print copies.** Readers are reminded that I can supply *BESN* in large print, and any reader who would prefer to receive it in this form is asked to tell me.

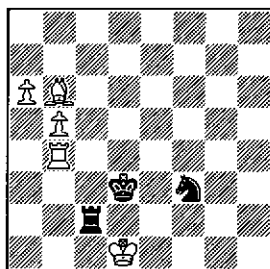
## Recently published British originals



1 - win



1a - after 3 Kg2

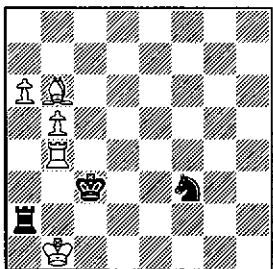


1b - after 6 Kd1

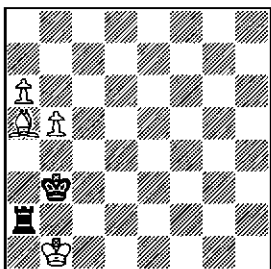
Yochanan Afek may have passed on his column in *The Problemist*, but he continues to be active in other respects, and **1**, a joint composition with Jacob Aagaard of Scotland, gained an HM in last year's Tel-Aviv-100 tourney. To quote the tourney award, "No single move is spectacular but the overall flowing effect is pleasing".

Play starts **1 Rb3+ Ke4** (1...Ke2 2 Re3+ and 3 Rxf3), but an immediate **2 Kg2** fails (2...f1Q+ 3 Kxf1 Nd2+) and interpolating **2 Re3+** doesn't help (2...Kf4 3 Kg2 Nh4+ 4 Kf1 Nf5 with ...Ng3+ to follow). The move to interpolate is **2 Rb4+**, and if 2...Ke5 then 3 Kg2 Ne1+ 4 Kf1 Nd3 5 Rb1 and wins. Hence **2...Kd3**, and **3 Kg2** gives **1a**.

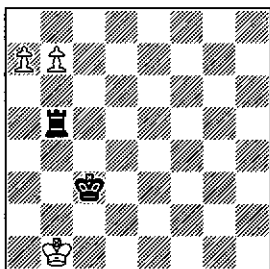
Black's pawn now goes, but **3...f1Q+** drags White's king back to the bottom rank: **4 Kxf1 Nh2+ 5 Ke1 Nf3+ 6 Kd1** (see **1b**). Can Black continue with 6...Rd2+? Not usefully; the checks end after 7 Kc1 Rc2+ 8 Kb1 Nd2+ 9 Ka1, and White will soon clinch the win (given is 9...Kc3 10 a7 Nb3+ 11 Rxb3+ Kxb3 12 Kb1). But **6...Ra2** threatens mate, and after **7 Kc1** (7 Rb3+ Kc4 8 Rxf3 Kxb5) **Kc3 8 Kb1** we have **1c**.



1c - after 8 Kb1

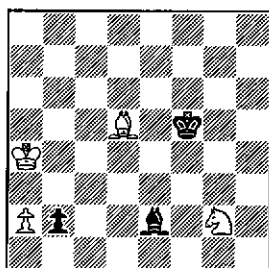


1d - after 12...Ra2

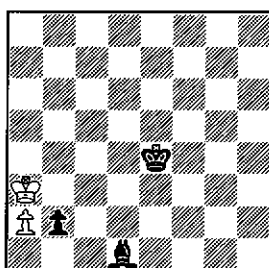


1e - 13 b6, after 15...Kc3+

If now **8...Rh2** then **9 a7 Nd2+ 10 Ka1 Nb3+ 11 Rxb3+ Kxb3 12 a8Q**, and the new queen guards the mating square h1. This won't work after **8...Re2**, and White must play **9 Ba5**. Now **9...Nd2+ 10 Ka1 Nb3+ 11 Rxb3++ Kxb3 12 Kb1 Ra2** gives **1d**, and if **13 b6** then **13...Rxa5** and Black will draw by perpetual check or mate threat (given is a line starting **14 b7 Rb5 15 a7 Kc3+**, see **1e**). But White has the subtle **13 Bc7**, and after **13...Rf2 14 Kc1 Rc2+ 15 Kd1 Rxc7 16 b6** Black is finished.



2 - draw



2a - after 4 Ka3

Paul Michelet's 2, from the January *BCM*, is much more condensed, and may have greater popular appeal. The natural try is 1 Bg8 for 2 Bh7+, but it fails (1...Kg6 2 Nf4+ Kg7 3 Nxe2 b1Q and the computer says "mate in 35") and the true answer is 1 Ne3+ Ke5/Kf4 (else 2 Be4) 2 Be4! (anyway) Kxe4 3 Nd1!! Bxd1+ (3...b1Q 4 Nc3+) 4 Ka3 giving 2a. Now 4...b1Q/R give stalemate, and if 4...b1N+ then 5 Kb2 Nd2 6 Kc1 wins a piece. The stalemate is well known and the knight sacrifice on d1 has been seen before, but the preliminary bishop sacrifice on e4 appears to be new.

## Computer miscellany

Eiko Bleicher and Guy Haworth have been testing the six-man or lighter positions in the main lines of all the studies in Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database III" against the definitive Nalimov tablebases, and Marc Bourzutschky has been testing some of the seven-man positions against his own tablebases. They have found what to me is a surprising number of cases where a position claimed as "won" is not won or vice versa. I understand that Harold, Eiko, and Guy will report in *EG*.

Last time, I reported on the work of Guy Haworth's colleague Giuseppe di Fatta in presenting the reciprocal zugzwangs with up to six men in a PGN file. Not fully agreeing with how it had been done, I took Guy's spreadsheets and produced my own file, and having done this I asked Eiko and Marc if it was possible to do the same for the positions where White takes at least three moves longer to win with the move as without it. Eiko duly ran some programs supplied by Marc to trawl the tablebases and extract the positions, and I did the programming to convert the results into PGN files. Eiko has posted the results on his web site, and I hope readers will enjoy browsing through them (to download, go to <[www.k4it.de/egtbf/files](http://www.k4it.de/egtbf/files)> and click on the links).

Eiko has also posted my PGN file of reciprocal zugzwangs. It omits all duplicated positions, and takes no account of the possibility of an opening capture *en passant* (Guy has drawn attention to Kc2/Rb1/Pb4 v Ka2/Pa3/Pa4 and Ka1/Pa2/Pb3/Pc4 v Ka3/Pb4, where White can win only if Black is to play and has a capture *en passant*, and to Ke2/Bd1/Pb4 v Kc1/Pc4/Pb5, which is a half-point zugzwang if Black to play has a capture *en passant* and a full-point zugzwang if he hasn't). Each of these is in Giuseppe di Fatta's file, though the version of ChessBase on my own machine refuses to allow the captures to be made, but only the full-point version of the last is in mine.

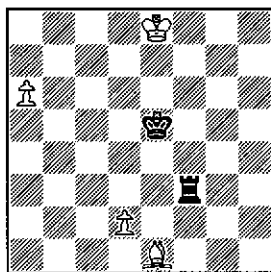
## From the world at large

Chess composition politics remain sadly unedifying. The former FIDE Permanent Commission for Chess Composition got off to an inauspicious start in its new guise by failing to agree on a name; some favoured "International Chess Composition Union", others favoured "Association", and neither party could raise the necessary two-thirds majority. No, this isn't a satire by a latter-day Jonathan Swift; according to the report in the November issue of *The Problemist*, it is what actually happened.

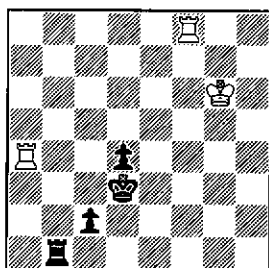
Worse was to follow. Readers will recall the disputes and ill-feeling over the study section in the most recent World Chess Composition Tournament. This year, the delegates were asked, "Is there good ground for re-opening the WCCT question?" Given the depth of previous misunderstanding revealed by Paul Valois and reported on page 426 of our June issue, the only possible answer would seem to have been Yes; even had a re-opening eventually produced the same result, that result would have been reached in a defensible manner, and a very considerable blot on this body's record would have been erased. In the event, as reported in the November *Problemist*, a mere five delegates voted Yes; seven delegates, for whatever reasons, saw fit to vote No; and an incredible 11, out of 23, simply abstained. Far be it from me to criticize anyone for declining to vote on a matter which he does not understand, but the utter unsuitability of a meeting of problemists, as a forum for deciding a matter relating to endgame studies, could hardly have been more vividly demonstrated.

Shortly afterwards, FIDE itself announced a first "FIDE World Cup of Composition". I decided not to advertise this in *BESN* - I may have become very far from an admirer of the erstwhile PCCC, but I saw no reason to lend my name to the machinations of a rival - but I was interested to see that it included a section for "fairies". This neatly abandoned the one incontrovertible ground on which FIDE's abolition of the PCCC could have been defended, namely that it had been awarding FIDE titles for activities which did not observe the FIDE Laws of Chess, and reduced the matter to what seems from this distance to be merely a political manoeuvre by disaffected individuals.

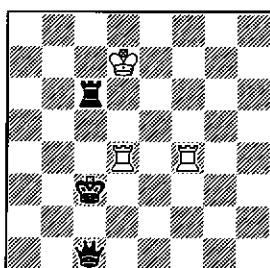
Enough of the politics; let's have some studies. I was recently going through back issues of *Nost-algia*, the magazine of a once very lively American postal chess club, and came across Troitzky's 1 (*L'Echiquier*, March 1929). 1 a7 Ra3 2 Bf2 fails, though not to the apparently natural 2...Ke4 which is given in the original source (White can win by 3 Bc5 Ra~ 4 d4); but Black has alternatives which do work, the simplest probably being 2...Kd6 going for the corner (3 Kd8 Rf3 4 Ke8 Ra3 with a draw by repetition). The solution is 1 d3!! with an elegant domination of rook by bishop after 1...Rxd3 2 Bb4. Black cannot now get his rook to the a-file (...Ra1 will allow a fork), and if he plays for a spear check on g8 or h8 the bishop will interpose on f8.



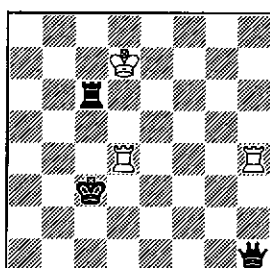
1 - win



2 - draw



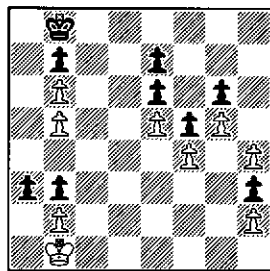
2a - after 5 Kd7



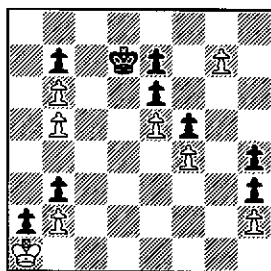
2b - 5...Qh1, after 6 Rh4

Studies ending in “positional draw” often lack the climax inherent in “mate” or “decisive gain of material”, but this is not true of David Gurgenzidze’s 2 (Sp Pr *Shakmatnoe obozrenie* 2003). 1 Rf4 prepares to meet 1...c1Q with 2 Raxd4+ and perpetual check or win of the queen, and the most interesting line turns out to be the not too obvious 1...Kc3. Now, after 2 Raxd4 (we shall see later why this is the rook to choose), Black has 2...Rb6+ with 3...Rc6 to follow, and White will have no check on c4. However, he has 3 Kf7 Rc6 4 Ke7/Ke8, and after 4...c1Q he can attack the Black rook by 5 Kd7 (see 2a).

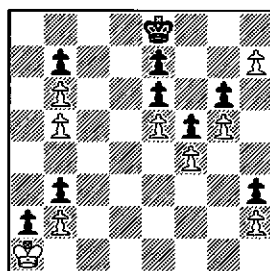
There are now two lines. If Black plays 5...Rc5 to save his rook, then 6 Kd6 Rc8 7 Kd7 and the rook will be hounded for ever. If instead 5...Qh1 to defend it then 6 Rh4 (see 2b), and it is the queen that will be hounded (6...Qg2 7 Rhg4 Qf3 8 Rgf4 etc). But had White used the f rook at move 2, 5...Qh6 would have won for Black.



3 - BTM, White wins

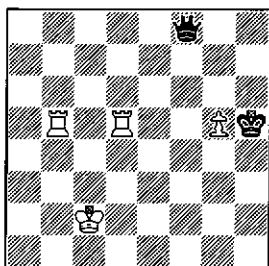


3a - 3...gxh5, after 5...Kd7

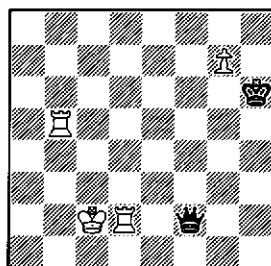


3b - 3...Kd7/Kd8, after 5 h7

Mikhail Zinar’s 3 appeared last year in *Uralsky Problemist*, and was quoted by Paul Valois in November in our own *Problemist*. I might have omitted the opening moves 1...a2+ 2 Ka1 Kc8, but these things are a matter of taste. 3 h5 is now forced, and again there are two lines. If 3...gxh5 then 4 g6 h4 (playing ...Kd7 first makes no difference) 5 g7 Kd7 gives 3a, and only 6 g8B wins; a rook or queen will give stalemate, and a knight will quickly be captured. If instead 3...Kd7/Kd8 then 4 h6 Ke8 5 h7 (see 3b), when 5...Kd7 demands 6 h8N (this time a bishop will be captured whereas a knight can escape) and 5...Kf7 demands 6 h8R (neither knight nor bishop can escape, but there is no longer a stalemate). It is a simple and elegant realisation of the always popular “three underpromotions” theme.



4 - win

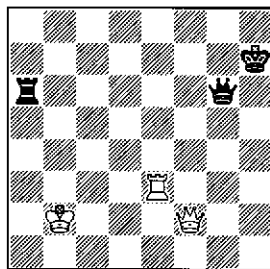


4a - after 3 Rd2

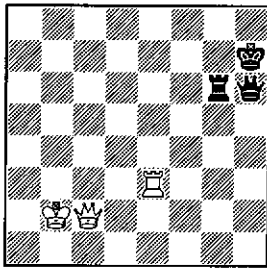
Yakov Konoval's 4, from the January *BCM*, shows "three moves, three different underpromotions" using a mere six men. **1 g6+ Kh6** (1...Kxg6 2 Rg5+ etc) **2 g7 Qf2+** (nothing else is better) **3 Rd2** gives 4a, and the key moves are 3...Qf4/Qf3/Qf1. Now 4 g8Q again lets Black sacrifice for stalemate or perpetual check, but 2R + B, 2R + N, and 3R will all win against Q once they have consolidated, and we have 3...Qf4 4 g8B (4 g8R Qc4+, 4 g8N+ Kh7 5 Rb7+ Kh8 6 Rdd7 Qc4+ 7 K~ Qxg8), 3...Qf3 4 g8R (4 g8B Qc6+, 4 g8N+ Kh7 5 Rd7+ Kh8 6 Rbb7 Qg2+) and if 4...Qc6+ then 5 Kd1 Qh1+ 6 Ke2 and Black's checks will eventually run out in all lines, and 3...Qf1 4 g8N+ (4...Kh7 5 Rb7+ Kh8 6 Ne7 Qc4+ 7 Kb2). This was another example showing "composition" as scientific discovery. Yakov recalculated the database for 2R + P v Q with various promotions banned, and saw where it made a difference.

A study like 4 could only have been found by a computer search and most of us now use computers at least to check our analyses, but the remarkably talented Mario Matouš prefers to do the work himself. We saw his 5 (4HM, "Quiet Move" tourney of *EBUR*, 2002) in March 2004, but it bears repetition, particularly since it was quoted in the January *Československý šach* with a perceptive commentary by Jaroslav Polášek which picked up some points I had missed.

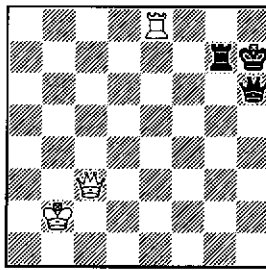
**1 Qh2+!** "Only thus! After 1 Qh4+? Qh6 2 Qe4+ Rg6 the queen would block the rook's path to e7; the tempting 1 Rh3+?! with an apparent gain of the queen is refuted by a perpetual rook check on the sixth rank." All exclamation and question marks are Jaroslav's, and quotations are in my translation. **1...Qh6!** "After 1...Kg7 2 Rg3 Rb6+ the White king can hide from the checks on g2" (a specimen line is spelt out). **2 Qc2+!** "Pinning the queen still doesn't work: after 2 Rh3?! Rb6+ 3 Kc3 Rc6+ 4 Kd4 Rd6+ 5 Ke5 Re6+ 6 Kf5 Rf6+ 7 Kg4 Rg6+ 8 Kf3 Rf6+ 9 Kg2 Rg6+ the White king can certainly hide from further checks by 10 Kh1, but Black can draw either by the "counterpin" 10...Qxh3! 11 Qxh3 Rh6 or the positional 10...Rc6!; and after 2 Re7+?! Kg8 3 Qb8+ Qf8 4 Re8 Black has the combinational escape 4...Rb6+!" **2...Rg6!** "Black keeps his men together even at the cost of having his rook pinned. After other moves, White roots the Black king out of the corner and wins easily" (two specimen lines are spelt out). We are now at 5a, shown at the top of the next page.



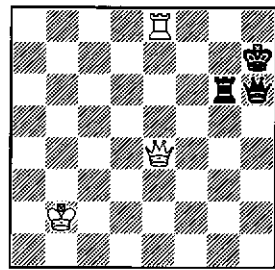
5 - win



5a - after 2...Rg6



5b - after 6...Kh7



5c - after 11...Rg6

**3 Re7+ Kh8 4 Qc8+!** “4 Qc3+? Rf6! 5 Re8+ (5 Rf7 Qh2+) Kh7! 6 Qc7+ Qg7! draw, 7 Re7? Rf7+.” **4...Rg8 5 Qc3+ Rg7.** “The winning method consists in transferring the queen to e4, so as to cover h1 and allow a tempo move by the king.” **6 Re8+ Kh7** (see 5b) **7 Qd3+.** “At this point, for the first time, a cautionary note is necessary against uncritical use of the database, which here shows two winning moves, 7 Qd3+ in 39 moves and 7 Qc2+ in 44. But 7 Qc2+ is not a dual, merely a blind alley - White must manoeuvre back to the same position, and then play Qd3+ if he is to make progress” (I have slightly simplified this last sentence). **7...Rg6 8 Re7+ Kh8 9 Qd4+.** “Here also the database shows two winning moves, but 9 Qd8+ is not a dual, merely a loss of time: after 9...Rg8 10 Qd4+ Rg7 we have the same position as after 9...Rg7 in the main line.” **9...Rg7.** “9...Rf6 10 Rf7!” **10 Re8+ Kh7 11 Qe4+ Rg6** (see 5c). “The queen covers h1.” **12 Kb1!!** “The climax. A quiet move by the king puts Black into zugzwang.” A few more moves are needed to mop up, but we saw some specimen lines in March 2004 and I think we can leave it there.

“An analyst today does not work without the six-man databases. How much more credit is due to Mario Matouš, who composed his study without their help!”

This leaves me space to mention *Le mat de la tour et du fou contre la tour / par Chapais* by Harrie Grondijs. This is an annotated transcription of the relevant section of the Chapais manuscript of c. 1780, and complements his book *About a theoretical ending* which I mentioned in September. Jean Mennerat described this important manuscript in his 1992 monograph *Un manuscrit méconnu* and gave some specimen positions from each section, but there has been no published transcription of the whole. Harrie has now provided one for the R + B v R section, including move-by-move comparison with the definitive results now available in the Nalimov tablebases.

Like its predecessor, *Le mat de la tour et du fou contre la tour* is beautifully produced, and I suspect that it too is available only in a very limited edition. I do have one regret, though it applies to *About a theoretical ending* rather than to the present book: Harrie's extensive bibliography curiously omits John Nunn's 1994 book *Secrets of pawnless endings*. This does not mention Chapais, but it certainly includes positions by Kling and Kuiper, and it makes comparisons with the definitive results now available in the same way as Harrie does. John used the original Thompson five-man databases rather than the Nalimov tablebases used by Harrie, but this is a distinction without importance; all the won-or-not-won verdicts are identical.

## News and notices

**Other magazines.** Readers may subscribe to *EG* for 2010 by paying £20 in sterling to myself (cheques payable to "J D Beasley" please). The British Chess Problem Society's primary concern is with problems, but its magazine *The Problemist* includes endgame studies; sadly, its formerly excellent second-hand bookselling service is currently non-operational. The subscription for 2010 is £25 (under 21 £12.50): Sally Lewis, 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 9QA.

**Outlets for original composition.** I do not normally publish originals in *BESN*, but I am always glad to receive new discoveries, whether conventionally composed or computer-generated, for the *BCM*. Ian Watson (Parapet House, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent ME17 2QJ, ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk) accepts originals for *Correspondence Chess*, and Sergiy Didukh (Zelena 6, s. Andrievka, Buskiy r-n, Lvivska obl, 80563 Ukraine, myseds@i.ua) now receives them for *The Problemist*. There are also outlets abroad, and my old column at *diagrammes* is now in the care of Guy Sobrecases, 83 Bd Port Royal, 75013 Paris, sobrecases@yahoo.fr (English spoken).

**Meetings.** The next **Pushkin House** meeting will be on **Friday April 9** 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).

**Spotlight** continued. Several notes from Alain Villeneuve. In the little trifle by John Roycroft that I quoted in December, there is a further twist: if White tries 1 Kc1, the winning reply is 1...d2+, and after 2 Kc2 d1Q+ 3 Nxd1 Nxd1 the White king is again on a square of the wrong colour.

In the Lowenthal study two pages later, I took the refutation of 4 Kf3 for granted, but Alain observes that it contains a neat point: after 4...Kd6 5 Ke4 Ke6 6 b5 Nc3+ 7 Kf4 White threatens Kg5, and the winning line is not 7...Nxb5 but 7...Kf6 8 b6 Nd5+ and 9...Nxb6. The purpose of the fork on c3 is not to take the pawn on b5, but to prepare a second fork to take it on b6.

And with respect to Frink's 1 in special number 61, Alain draws attention to the two pawn studies by H. A. Adamson from 1915 which appeared in our very first special number. Truly, many people have worked on this idea, though I think each added something of his own.

Finally, while preparing last time's special number, I came across a note in the *Chess Amateur* (May 1927, page 202) that **Franz Sackmann**, the subject of special number 59, had died of influenza at the age of 39. This confirms my belief that the date "1898" for study 2 in that special number was a finger-slip for "1909".

*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.*