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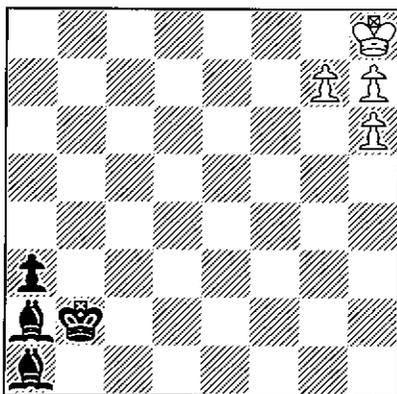
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Some studies by

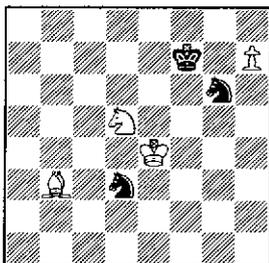
John Roycroft



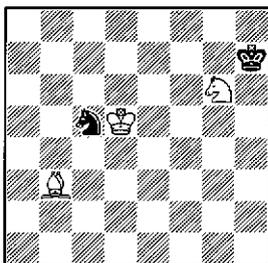
As set, P=R draws but P=Q loses
Without wPh6, P=Q draws but P=R loses!

Some studies by John Roycroft

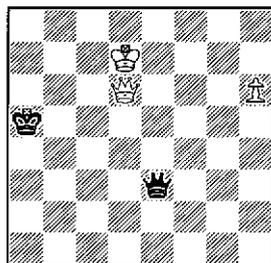
In his book *Test tube chess*, John Roycroft identifies the impresario as one of the participants in the study world, and I have little doubt that this is the principal role in which he sees himself. However, he has been known to compose as well, and Harold van der Heijden has no fewer than 37 studies (including joint compositions and variant settings) under his name. John gave me a selection of 18 for use here, but three have already appeared in our "British studies" special numbers: 5th Prize "Golden Fleece" 1986 in special number 15 (see also September 1999 page 113), 2nd HM "Boris" 1993 in special number 6, and 2nd HM Dobrescu-60 1994 in special number 3. If I refrain from repeating these I shall have more space for the rest, but readers should realise that they are among John's own favourites. John also composes occasional things of other kinds, and he is particularly proud of being the only one to answer a 1988 *BCM* construction challenge: create a position, all 16 pieces but no pawns, in which each side's men guard each other in a chain (A guards B which guards C...) but none attacks an opposing man. Try it for yourself (answer on page 8).



1 - win



1a - after 3...Kxh7

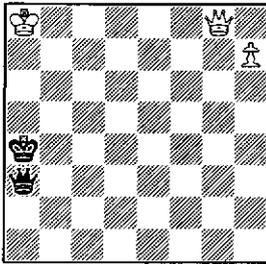


2 - win

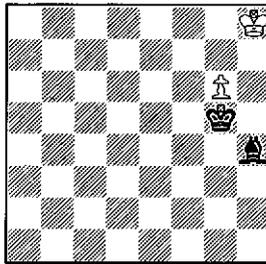
One of John's first studies was **1**, which gained 2nd prize in the *New Statesman* tourney of 1954. Note the line-up of wB, wN, bK, which will recur. **1 Nf4+ Kg7 2 Nxb6 Nc5+ 3 Kd5 Kxh7** gives **1a**; now, can White capture the fleeing bN?

A necessary first step is **4 Bc2** (second line-up of wB, wN, bK). **4...Nd7** gives no trouble, but Black's other moves demand delicate play: (a) **4...Nb7 5 Ne5/7+ Kg7 6 Nc6** (bN is trapped) **Kf7 7 Ba4!** (threatening Bb5 and Ba6) **Ke8** (bK hurries to the rescue, only to walk into a third line-up) **8 Na5+**, and (b) **4...Na6 5 Kd6** (restricting bN to ...Nb4 and ...Nb8, after which wK will be well placed) **Nb4** (**5...Kg7 6 Ne5** will transpose, because White threatens **Nc6**) **6 Bb1** (again bN is neatly restrained) **Kg7 7 Ne5 Kf8** (else Nd7 will keep bK at bay) **8 Nd7+ Ke8 9 Nc5** (a charming echo of the position after **4...Kb7** and **6 Nc6**) **Kd8** (still trying to link up bK with bN) **10 Bf5** (but this threatens **11 Bd7** with mate, so bK must go back again) **Ke8 11 Ne6 Kf7 12 Bb1 Kf6** (**12...Na6 13 Nd8+ K-- 14 Nc6**) **13 Nc7** and **14 Kc5**. The computer confirms.

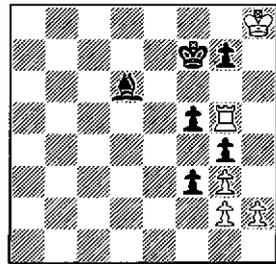
At the time, **2** (R. Fontana and AJR, 1 Pr British Chess Federation 1957), was a significant contribution to chess theory. The computer has now found some alternative wins, but they are far from clear and I think the study should remain in the



2a - after 6...Qa3



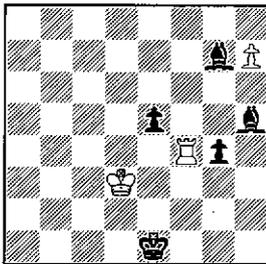
3 - win



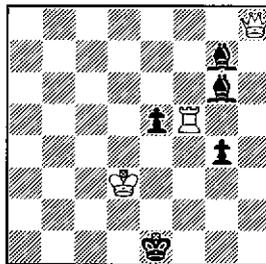
4 - win

literature. **1 h7** is natural and best, though some other moves also win, and we have **1...Qh3+ 2 Kc6 Qc3+ 3 Kb7** (3 Qc5+ Ka4! and 4 Qxc3 is stalemate) **Qh8 4 Qd5+** (simplest) **Ka4 5 Qg8** (the computer thinks 5 Qc4+ Ka5 6 Qe4 wins more quickly, though it is less natural) **Qb2+ 6 Ka8 Qa3** (see 2a) **7 Qf7** (7 h8Q allows perpetual check, one of the points of the study) **Kb5+ 8 Kb8** (quickest) **Qd6+ 9 Kc8** and wK will eventually find refuge on h6. There is extensive analysis in *Test tube chess*.

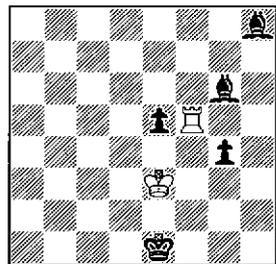
3 (*Die Schwalbe* 1975) is the lightest of all John's studies. The natural **1 g7** fails (**1...Kh6 2 g8Q Bf6+**); White must play **1 Kh7** first. The extended **4**, by D. Godes and AJR, obtained 3rd Special HM in the 1984 Belokon Memorial Tourney: **1 gxf3 g6 2 fxg4 Kf6 3 h4 Bxg3 4 gxf5 Bxh4 5 fxg6 Kxg5** and we have **3**. "Slalom by wP", said the judge, but whether it is really an improvement is perhaps a matter of taste.



5 - draw

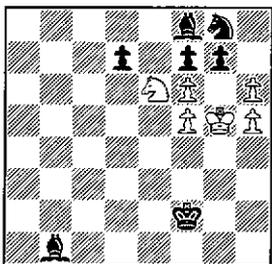


5a - after 2 h8Q

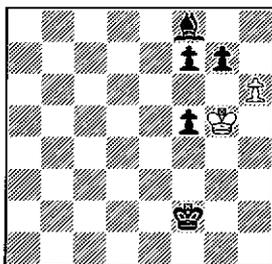


5b - 2...Bxh8, after 3 Ke3

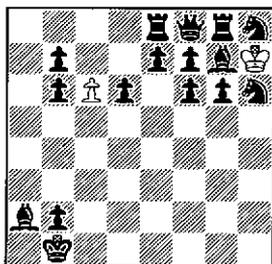
5 was originally published in the *New Statesman* in 1958, but was excluded from the tourney due to a misunderstanding; furnished with some additional analysis, it was invited to compete in the Boris II tourney of 1998, where it received a Special Commendation. The main line runs **1 Rf5** (a quiet move inviting a pin) **Bg6 2 h8Q** (see 5a) and either **2...Bxf5+ 3 Ke3 Bxh8** stalemate or **2...Bxh8 3 Ke3** (see 5b) **Bg7 4 Rg5** (a second quiet move inviting a pin by the other bishop) and **4...Bh6** will again be stalemate. Black can try **3...Kd1 4 Rg5 Bb1 5 Rxg4 Kc1**, since 2B + P normally defeat R, but **bBh8** is poorly placed and White has the initiative. *EG* gives **6 Rc4+ Bc2 7 Rc6 Bg7 8 Ke2 Kb2 9 Rb6+ Ka3 10 Kf3 Bd3** (10...e4+ **11 Ke3**) **11 Re6 Bc4 12 Re7 Bd5+ 13 Kg4 Bf6 14 Ra7+ Kb4 15 Kf5**, and John has given me answers to **7...Kd1/Kb2** and also an alternative line **9 Kf3 Bf5 10 Rc7 Bh6 11 Re7 Bf4 12 Rf7**.



6 - draw



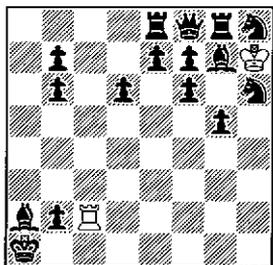
6a - after 5...exf5



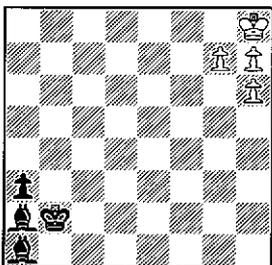
7 - draw

6 took 3rd prize in the BCF tourney of 1957. 1 h7 Nx6 2 h8Q dx6 3 h6 Nh7+ (3...Ne4+ 4 Kg4 exf5+ 5 Kxf5 g6+ 6 Ke5 and Black has nothing) 4 Qxh7 Bxf5 (4...Be7+ 5 Kf4 Bd6+ 6 Kg5) 5 Qxf5+ exf5 (see 6a) 6 h7 Be7+ 7 Kf4 (7 Kxf5 g6+ 8 Ke5 Ba3) Bf6 8 Kxf5 Bb2 (for 9 h8Q g6+) 9 h8N! g6+ 10 Nxc6. If 9...f6, White will have the run of the light squares, and will be able to capture one bP and catch the other: 10 Kg6 (10 Nf7 also draws) Kg3 11 Nf7 (for 12 Nd6 and 13 Nf5 with an iron blockade) Ba3 (11...Be5 12 Kxg7) 12 Kxg7 f5 13 Kg6 f4 14 Kf5 Be7 (else 15 Ng5) 15 Ne5 (for 16 Ke4 and 17 Nf3 with another iron blockade) Bd6 16 Nf7 Be7 17 Ne5.

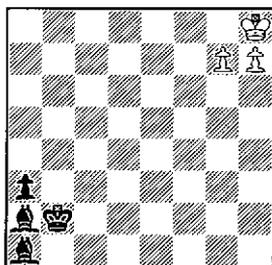
7 (BCM 1957) also shows two promotions, but this time they are in different lines and the setting is a "one pawn against the world" grotesque. After 1 c7 Black can play 1...f5 threatening 2...Bc3 and 3...Qg7 mate, but White has 2 c8Q and Black cannot avoid a stalemate sacrifice (2...Bc3 3 Qxf5+ etc). But Black also has 1...g5 opening the diagonal b1-h7, when 2...Ka1 and 3 b1Q is an even more vicious mating threat. White's answer is 2 c8R, meeting 2...Ka1 by 3 Rc2 (see 7a). If c2 were a queen, 3...b1Q would force mate next move; as it is, 3...b1Q will give stalemate, and the rook is threatening to become a desperado. *Test tube chess* gives the threat 4 Rxb2 etc (not 4 Rc1+, when 4...b1Q+ wins), the counter 3...Bc4 met by 4 Rc1+ Ka2 5 Ra1+ Kb3 6 Ra3+ Kc2 7 Rc3+ Kd2 8 Rc2+ etc, and a second counter 3...Ng6, threatening a new mate on h8 but blocking the diagonal b1-h7 so that now 4 Rc1+ *does* draw!



7a - 1...g5, after 3 Rc2

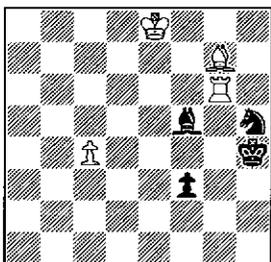


8A - draw

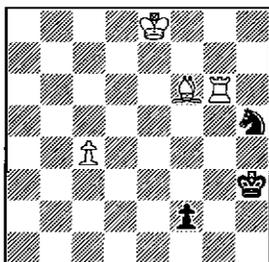


8B - draw

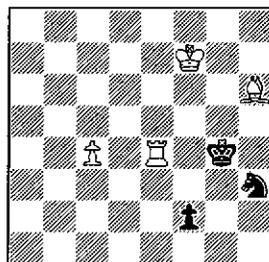
8 shows the same pair of alternate promotions in twin form. In 8A, we have 1 g8R and draws (1...K-- 2 Rg7 and the stalemate prevents Black from making progress); if 1 g8Q then Black has 1...Kc1+ 2 Qg7 Bb2 forcing 3 Qxb2+, and he will win



10 - draw

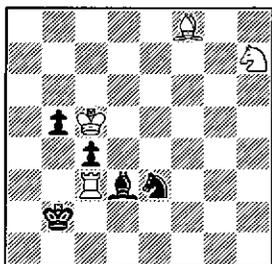


10a - after 3...f2

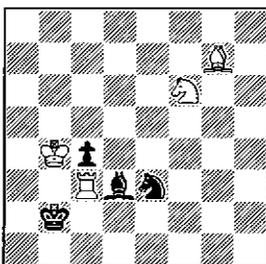


10b - after 11 Re4+

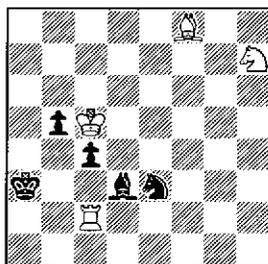
White would like to get at the f-pawn in 10 (4 Pr *American Chess Quarterly* 1962), but 1 Rg1 is met by 1...Nxf7+ and Black's B + N + Pf3 will be too strong for White's R + Pc4. Correct is **1 Bf6+ Kh4 2 Rh6 Bg6+ 3 Rxf6 f2**, and the threat of promotion has become acute (see 10a). Play continues **4 Rh6 Kg4** (R + B draw v Q) **5 Rg6+ Kf5** (5...Kf3 6 Rh6 Ng3 7 Bd4) **6 Kf7 Nf4** (6...Ke4 7 Rg4+ Kf3 8 Rh4 and either 8...f1Q 9 Rxh5 or 8...Ng3 9 Be5) **7 Rg5+ Ke4 8 Re5+ Kf3 9 Bg5** (if 9 Rf5 intending 10 Bg5 then 9...Kg4 10 Rg5+ Kh3 wins, but now 10 Rf5 is a threat) **11 Re4+** and Black must allow perpetual check (see 10b): **11...Kg3 12 Re3+ Kg4** (12...Kg2 13 Re2) **13 Re4+ Kh5 14 Re5+ Kg4 15 Re4+**.



11 - win



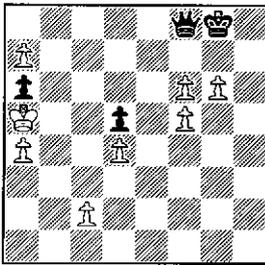
11a - after 3...Kb2



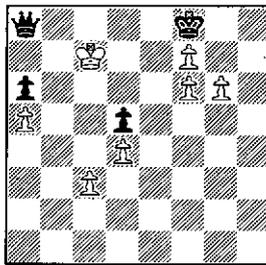
11b - win (see text)

11 (*EG* 1965) appears to have been John's favourite study, at least to the extent that he used the key position from it on the cover of *Test tube chess*. **1 Bg7 Kb1/Ka2 2 Nf6** (Black threatened 2...b4 3 Kxb4 Nd5+) **b4 3 Kxb4 Kb2** gives 11a, and now we have the point: **4 Bh8!** White wants Black to move, and no other waiting move is available. But now White will be able to extricate his rook, because 4...Nd1 allows 5 Ra3 and if Black tries **4...Nc2+ 5 Ka4 Kxc3** he will find that **6 Ne4** is mate.

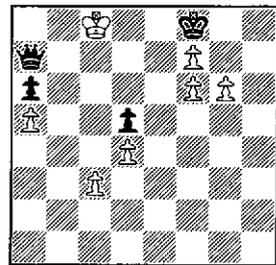
In *Test tube chess*, John says that "the only drawback is that the white rook does not move into its Black Hole of Calcutta but is already imprisoned there when the curtain rises", and he recounts how a mention of the difficulty to Vladimir Korolkov produced the extension 11b by Korolkov and Lev Loshinski (**1 Rc2+ Kb2** etc). The analysis justifying these moves can be found on pages 235-6 of *Test tube chess*. It is horrendous, but my computer has yet to refute it; would anyone else's like to take up the challenge?



12 - draw

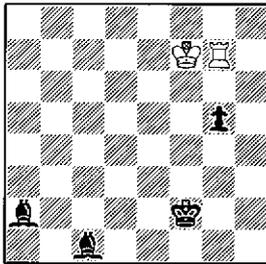


12a - after 7 Kc7

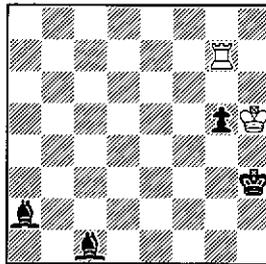


12b - after 8 Kc8

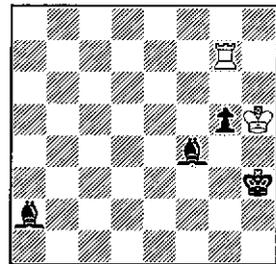
12 (2 Pr *The Problemist* 1976) is nominally by John and myself, though the key positions **12a/12b** were wholly John's. Play starts **1 f7+ Kg7 2 Kb6** (not **2 Kxa6** because we shall need a6 to be blocked in the final position) **Qc8** (for **2...Qa8** see below) **3 a5** (to fix the pawn on a6) **Kf8** (intending **4...Ke7** etc) **4 f6** (oh no you don't) **Qa8** (what else?) **5 c3 Qc8** and a wP will fall. However, **6 a8Q Qxa8 7 Kc7** brings us to **12a**, which is a most unusual near-domination of the Black queen: **7...Qa7+** (Black's only move) **8 Kc8** (see **12b**) **Qa8+** (again Black's only move) **9 Kc7** and a draw by repetition. If **2...Qa8** then **3 a5 Kf8 4 f6 Qc8 5 c3 Qa8 6 Kc7 Qxa7+** brings the same finish one move sooner. It looks at first like an ordinary perpetual check, except that it is the side which is trying to *win* that finds itself doing the checking.



13 - draw



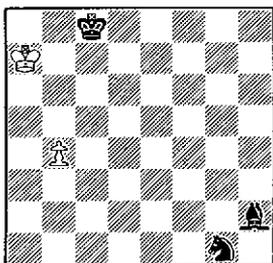
13a - after 2...Kh3



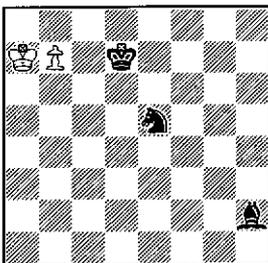
13b - after 5 Rg7

13 (*Chess in Israel* 1999) is John's most recent study at the time of writing. **1 Kg6 Kg3 2 Kh5 Kh3** gives **13a**, and now **3 Rxc7** fails against **3...Bf7+**: **4 Rg6 Kh2** (the only move, Black must release the stalemate) or **4 Kh6 Be8** (again the only move, if say **4...Kh4** then **5 Kg7** attacking bB7). So White attacks bBc1, **3 Rc7**, and we have **3...Bd2** (**3...Be3 4 Rc3** pinning, **3...Bf4 4 Rg7** as below) **4 Rd7 Bf4** (**4...Be3 5 Rd3**) **5 Rg7** giving **13b**.

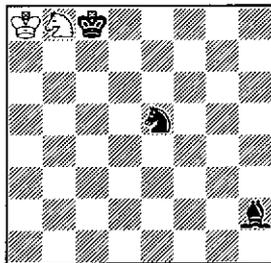
A move of **bBf4** will now be met by another attack from above (**...Be3** can no longer be met by a pin on the rank, but **...Re7** is just as effective) and a **bK** move will allow **Rxc7**, so Black must move his other bishop: **5...Bd5** say. But it is to no avail, because White has **6 Rxc5** in any case; if Black tries **6...Bf7+** hoping for **7 Rg6 Kh2** as before, White has **8 Kg4** with an attack on **bBf4**. The bishop has escaped harassment by **wR** only to find itself within range of **wK**.



14 - draw?



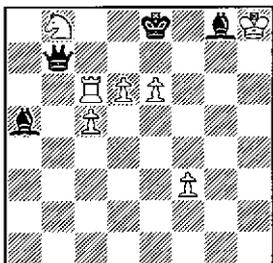
14a - after 3...Kd7



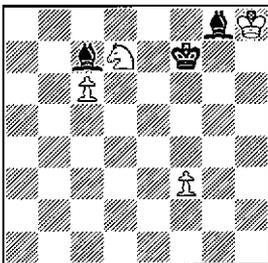
14b - after 5 Ka8

Professionally, John worked with computers, and he has taken a great interest in the creation of definitive endgame databases by computer. It is entirely characteristic of him that this selection should include a study of his which a database demolished.

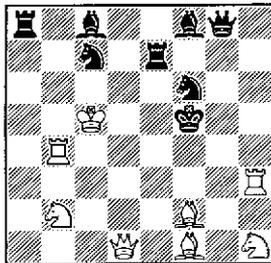
The intention in 14 (*Problem* 1960) was **1 b5 Nf3 2 b6 Ne5 3 b7+ Kd7** (see 14a) **4 b8N+**, and in 1960 everyone said "draw". But **4...Kc8 5 Ka8** leaves White badly placed (see 14b), and in 1989 came news of some unexpected and difficult wins with **B + N v N**. John investigated, and found this to be one of them. It takes 37 moves to capture the knight, and John plays out an interesting line in the February 1991 *BCM*.



15 - draw



15a - after 6 c6



16 - see text

15 (*Bent Jubilee Ty* 1989, corrected by David Blundell in *EG* 102/I 1991) exploits a computer discovery more conventionally. The unlikely point here is that everything apart from **wN** and **bBB** will vanish, and **2B v N** is now known to be a win; how can White find an exceptional position which is only drawn?

Play starts **1 Rc8+ Qxc8 2 d7+ Qxd7 3 exd7+ Kf7** (bQ has gone, but Black can try for mate) **4 d8N+ Bxd8 5 Nd7 Bc7** (Black cannot allow **Nc5+**) **6 c6** (see 15a). Now White gets rid of his pawns, **6...Bf4** (say) **7 c7 Bxc7 8 f4 Bxf4**, and this lets him play **9 Nf6**: if Black replies **9...Be5** to save **bBg8**, it is stalemate.

And the answer to the challenge on page 2? Try 16 (*BCM*, October 1989)!

My thanks to Harold van der Heijden and the library of the British Chess Problem Society for material, and to John himself for many illuminating comments. I should nevertheless stress that while the studies given here have been selected by John, the responsibility for the accompanying text rests wholly with me. - JDB