

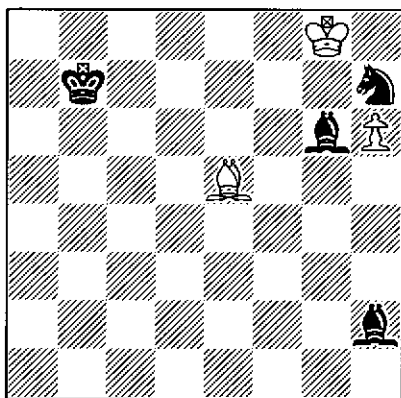
British Endgame Study News

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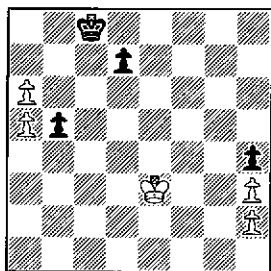
Some British studies from 1950-59



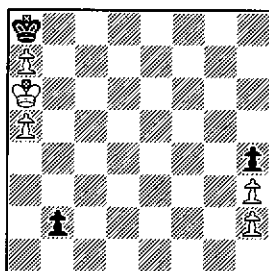
5...Bxe5 stalemate, or 5...Bf7+ 6 Kxh7 Bxe5 stalemate,
or 5...Bg1 6 Bd4 and the same

Some British studies from 1950-59

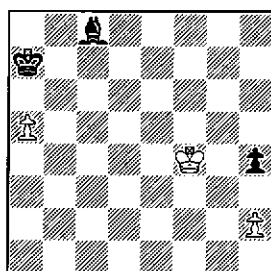
The principal British outlet for original endgame studies during the 1950s was the *BCM* column, initially in the hands of Richard Guy (who had taken over from T. R. Dawson at the beginning of 1948) and from mid-1951 in those of Hugh Blandford. It therefore seems appropriate that we start with some of their work.



1 - draw



1a - after 8 Ka6



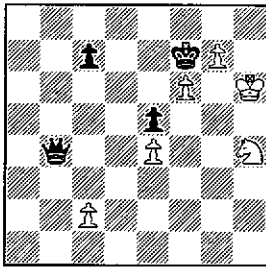
1b - after 13 Kf4

Richard Guy is best known in the field of recreational mathematics, in which he has made many discoveries (he was one of the authors of the two-volume classic *Winning ways for your mathematical plays* of which a second edition has just appeared), but he was more competent than most as a composer of endgame studies. 1 appeared in *Suomen Shakki* in 1956. Play starts **1 Kd4** (going for the b-pawn) **d6** **2 Kc3 d5**, after which the Black pawns are level and an attack on either will be met by advancing the other. What can White do now?

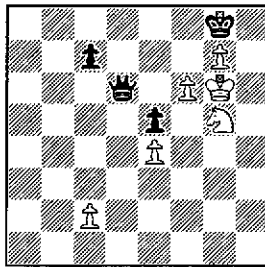
He switches his attention to the d-pawn, and after **3 Kd4 b4** he takes it: **4 Kxd5!** This lets the b-pawn run, but after **4...b3** we have **5 Kc6** (threat 6 a7) **Kb8 6 Kb6 b2 7 a7+ Ka8 8 Ka6** (see 1a) and we see the point: promotions to queen and rook give stalemate, and **8...b1N** doesn't win either (for example, 9-11 Kd5 Nxh2 12 Ke4 Nf1 13 Kf3). This leaves only **8...b1B**, but White can force the Black pawn forward to h3 and then reach a book draw; given is **9 Kb6 Bf5 10 Kc5 Bxh3 11 Kd4 Bc8 12 Ke3 Kxa7 13 Kf4** (see 1b) **h3** (White threatened 14 h3 Bxh3 15 Kg4) and **14 Kg3 Ka6 15 Kf2 Kxa5 16 Kg1 Kb4 17 Kh1 Kc3 18 Kg1 Kd2 19 Kh1 Ke1 20 Kg1** and Black is getting nowhere. A mate is possible with this force (with wKh1, bKf3, bB on the diagonal e4-a8, play ...Kf2), but it can be reached only if White co-operates.

The original version of Hugh Blandford's 2 took 3rd Honourable Mention in the 1954 Rinck Memorial Tourney. **1 Nf3** threatens **2 Ng5+ Kxf6 3 g8N** mate, and the only sensible answer is **1...Kg8**. Now **2 Ng5** threatens mate by **3 f7**, and Black must pin the pawn: **2...Qd6** (**2...Qb6** proves to be no better). White defends his pawn by **3 Kg6**, and we are at the heart of the study (see 2a).

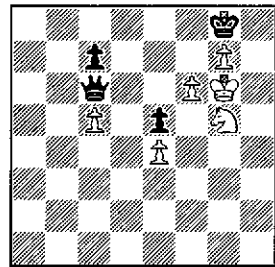
White threatens **4 Nf7** and **5 Nh6** mate, and Black can defend only by putting his queen on c6 or b6 (**3...Qc6 4 Nf7 Qxe4+**, **3...Qb6 4 Nf7 Qg1+**). But White can outwit him: **3...Qc6 4 c3! Qb6 5 c4 Qc6 6 c5** and Black has no good move (see 2b), or **3...Qb6 4 c4** and the same.



2 - win



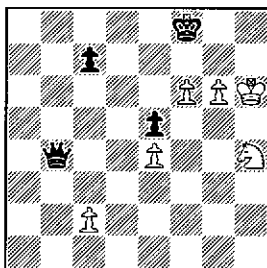
2a - after 3 Kg6



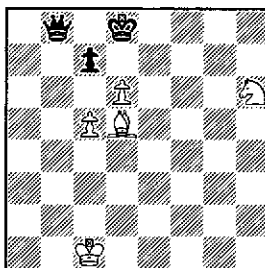
2b - after 6 c5

Blandford's actual setting had the Black king on e8 and the White pawn back on g6, with opening play 1 g7 Kf7 and we have 2, but I have taken off this first move to cut out a line pointed out by John Nunn: 1 Kh7 (threat 2 f7+ Kf7 3 Kg7 etc) Qxe4 2 Kg7! (an immediate 1 Kg7 could be met by 1...Qf8+, but now it is playable) Qxh4 (2...Qf4 doesn't seem to help, 3 Ng2 Qf2/Qf3 4 Ne3 and if Black insists on not taking the knight it will get into the fray with advantage) 3 f7+ Kd7 (nothing else is better) 4 f8Q e4 5 Qf5+ Ke7 6 Kg8 and at the very least White seems to get an extremely favourable queen and pawn ending. John didn't claim this as a definite bust, but I suspect that future computers will prove it to be one. I therefore cut the study back to 2 to ensure that what I was presenting was sound, but having done so I wondered about 2c, which is Blandford's position with the Black king on f8 instead of e8. True, 1 g7+ can now be met by 1...Kg8 instead of 1...Kf7 and Black is a tempo ahead, but what can he do with it? White again plays 2 Nf3, this time threatening 3 Ng5 and 4 f7 mate, and positive action by Black will precipitate disaster (2...Kf7 3 Ng5+ Kxf6 4 g8N mate, 2...Qxe4 3 f7+ Kxf7 4 Ng5+). So Black can only wait, and White will play Ng5 and Kg6 and win as before.

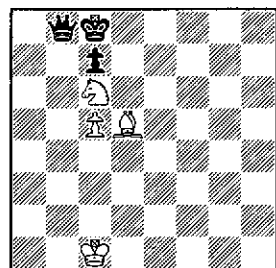
Or am I being blind as usual?



2c - see text

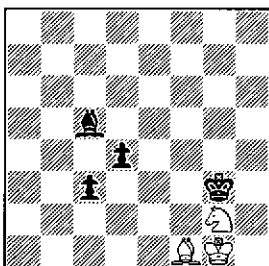


3 - win

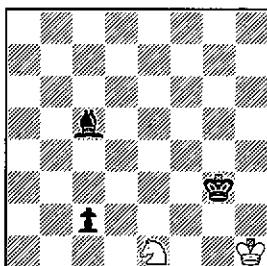


3a - after 4 Nc6

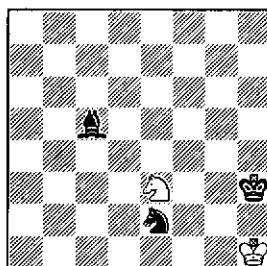
By comparison with all this, Hugh's 3 (*BCM* 1958) is extremely straightforward: 1 Nf7+ Ke8 (1...Kd7 2 c6+ and 3 d7+, 1...Kc8 2 Be6+ and 3 d7) 2 d7+ Kxd7 3 Ne5+ Kc8 (3...Ke8 4 Bf7+ and a fork) 4 Nc6 (see 3a) and the Black queen is dominated: her only safe move 4...Qb7 allows 5 Be6 mate.



4 - draw

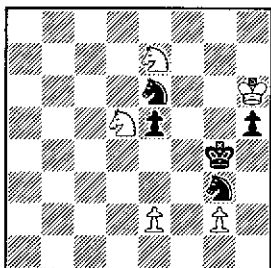


4a - after 4 Ne1

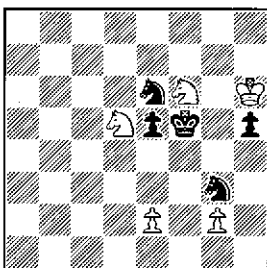


4b - 5 Nc2, after 6...Kh3

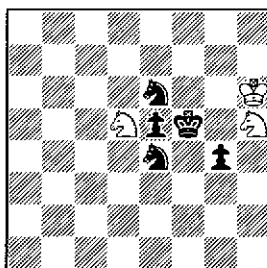
The 1950s were still colonial times, and the March 1950 *BCM* contained a trio of originals by one C. M. Bent of Johore, Malaya, "a rubber planter who does not appear to have composed before". (Mike has done many things, as those who have been privileged to visit him at **Black Latches** will know.) 4 is a version of one of the set. **1 Bd3** stops the c-pawn but at the cost of the bishop, **1...c2 2 Bxc2 d3+**, and **3 K-dxc2** will surely leave White helpless. Not so: **3 Kh1 cxd2 4 Ne1!** (see 4a) and the natural promotions to queen and rook will give stalemate. Nor will a bishop serve a useful purpose; we now know that two bishops win against a knight, but not when they run on squares of the same colour. What about **4...c1N**? B+N v N is normally a draw, but here the defenders are badly placed. In fact the "safe" moves **5 Nc2/Ng2** both lose (for example, **5 Nc2 Ne2 6 Ne3 Kh3**, see 4b, or **5 Ng2 Ne2 6 Ne3/Ne1 Kh3**), as of course does **5 Nf3 Kxf3**, but the fork **5 Nd3** gives Black the choice of yielding a piece or giving another stalemate. The Black bishop was originally on b6, but the computer has now shown that in this case even **5 Nd3** eventually loses; fortunately Timothy Whitworth was able to suggest a simple remedy.



5 - win

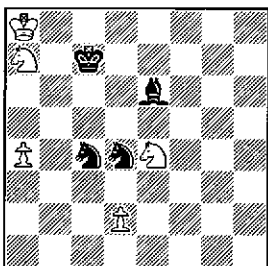


5a - after 2...Kf5

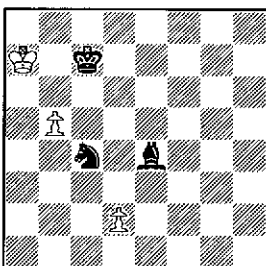


5b - after 5 Nh5!

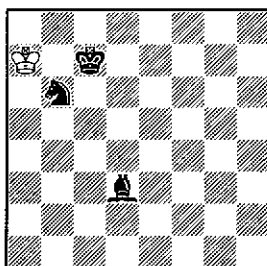
5 was another from this first set. **1 Nf6+ Kf4 2 Ned5+ Kf5** gives 5a, and another knight check will allow **3...Kxf6**. So we bring the pawns into play, **3 e4+ Nxe4 4 g4+ hxg4**, but now the pawn checks are exhausted also. Never mind; White has **5 Nh5!** (see 5b) and there will be a mate however Black plays. This was an early example of what was to become one of Mike's favourite themes: Black is strong and continuous checking appears necessary, but the sequence runs into the ground, and White has to make an unexpected non-checking move to deliver the final blow.



6 - draw

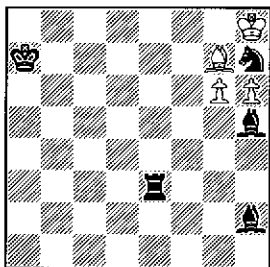


6a - after 3...Bxe4

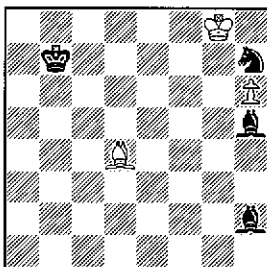


6b - 5...Nxb6 stalemate

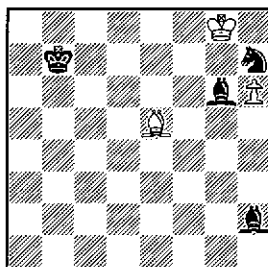
But Mike's first love has always been the stalemate. 6 appeared in the *BCM* in April 1951. White's material disadvantage seems insignificant, but his king is badly placed and Black threatens both 1...Nb6 mate and 1...Be4+ etc. Never mind, a badly placed king can sometimes be turned to advantage... 1 Nb5+ Nxb5 2 axb5 removes one attacker, and leaves Black nothing better than 2...Bd5+ 3 Ka7 Bxe4 giving 6a. True, Black is now two pieces up and in addition he threatens mate in three by ...Bb7, ...Nb6, and ...Nc8, but the fork 4 d3 gives him no time for this; he must take the pawn by 4...Bxd3, and 5 b6+ forces 5...Nxb6 stalemate (see 6b). Diagram 6a suggests that the corner square a8 will be guarded by the bishop at the end, but the bishop is actually switched to another diagonal, and it is the knight that looks after a8.



7 - draw



7a - after 4 Kxg8

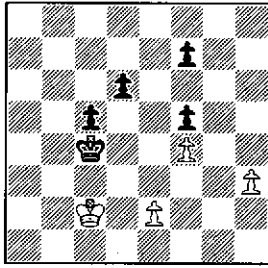


7b - after 5 Be5

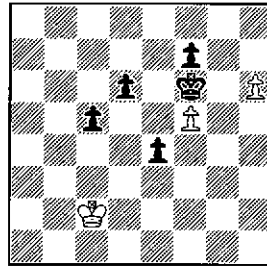
In 7, which appeared in May 1956, the opening fork 1...Bd5+ is obvious enough, but after say 1...Kb7 the capture 2 Bxe4 loses; Black plays 2...Bxg6, and two bishops and knight will win easily enough against a lone bishop. Instead, White must play 2 g7, and the reprieved rook immediately takes the opportunity to escape: 2...Re8+. There follows 3 g8Q Rxcg8+ 4 Kxg8, and we have 7a.

Black now has three pieces against one, but his knight is attacked and 4...Ng5 will allow 5 h7. Hence 4...Bg6, and 5 Be5 puts him in trouble (see 7b). The capture 5...Bxe5 gives stalemate, and if 5...Bg1 then 6 Bd4 asks the same question. All right, 6...Bf7+, sacrificing a piece before capturing. This is fine if White takes the bishop, but if he takes the knight, 7 Kxh7, the capture 7...Bxd4 gives another stalemate!

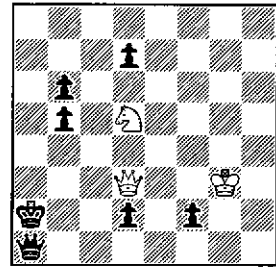
"Best wishes to our new contributor," wrote Richard Guy when publishing Mike's first group, "and may we enjoy his studies for many years." We have.



8 - win



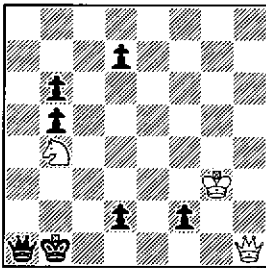
8a - after 5 f5



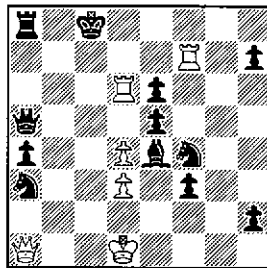
9 - win

The 1950s saw the first compositions of Claude Sansom (see special number 32). Experienced readers will have no trouble with 8 (23 July 1956), 1 e4! fxe4 2 h4 Kd5 3 h5 Ke6 4 h6 Kf6 5 f5 and White can play out the win with K v 3P (see 8a), but the timing must be right: 1 h4 Kd5 2 e4+ Ke6! 3 h5 Kf6 4 exf5 Kg7 and it is Black who wins. The combination of bKf6 etc on one wing and K v 3P on the other dates back to Kling and Horwitz, but I think the sacrifice on e4 added a touch of novelty.

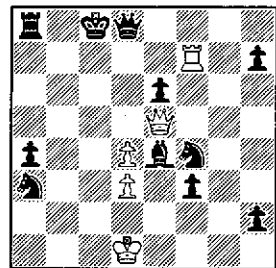
Sansom took a particular delight in staircases, and 9 is a version of a study dated 26 December 1958. 1 Nb4+ Kb2 2 Qd4+ Kb1 3 Qe4+ Kb2 4 Qe5+ and upstairs to 10 Qh8+ Kb1, then 11 Qh1+ (see 9a) and 11...Kb2 loses quickly (12 Nd3+ Ka2 13 Qd5+ and either 13...Ka3 14 Qa8+ or 13...Kb1 14 Qb3+). So a pawn must go: 11...f1Q (11...d1Q is no better) 12 Qxf1+ Kb2 13 Qf6+ (we cannot usefully play Nd3+ unless wQ has access to d5) and upstairs again to 17 Qh8+ Kb1, then 18 Qh1+ (9a without bPf2) d1Q 19 Qxd1+ Kb2 20 Qd4+ and up a third time: 28 Qh8+ Kb1. Now 29 Qh1+ gives 9a without d2/f2, and Black must allow 29...Kb2 30 Nd3+. I have added the pawns 9a on d7/b6 to eliminate some short cuts later in the play.



9a - after 11 Qh1+

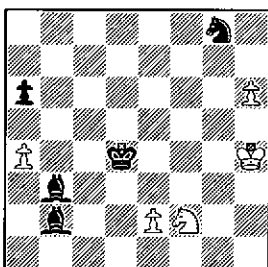


10 - win

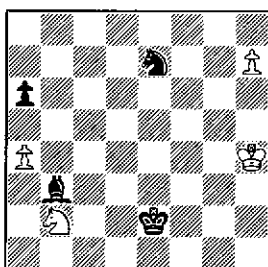


10a - after 7 Qxe5+ Kc8

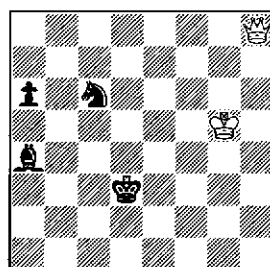
10 (15 February 1959) was Sansom's most exotic staircase creation. 1 Qc1+ Kb8 (sacrificing the knight doesn't help) 2 Rd8+ Qxd8 3 Qb2+ Kc8 4 Qc3+ and up to 6 Qc5+ Kb8 7 Qxe5+ Kc8 (see 10a), then 8 Qc5+ and back down to 12 Qc1+ Kb8 13 Qxf4+ Kc8 (10a with wQf4), 14 Qc1+ and up to 18 Qc5+ / 19 Qe5+ / 20 Qxe6+ / 21 Qe5+ Kc8 (10a without bPe6 and bNf4), 22 Qc5+ (22 Qxe4 h1Q+, so bPh2 must go as well) and down to 26 Qc1+ / 27 Qf4+ / 28 Qg4+ / 29 Qg3+ / 30-31 Qxh2+, and finally 32 Qh3+ and back up to 35 Qf4+ Kc8 36 Qxe4 with mate soon to follow.



11 - win



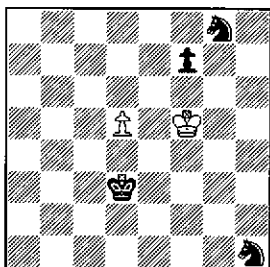
11a - after 3...Nh7



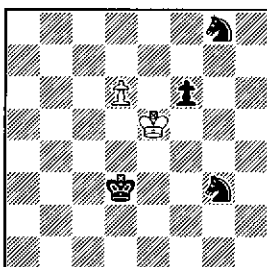
11b - 4 Kd3, after 6...Nc6

I haven't forgotten John Roycroft, whose first studies appeared during this period, but we gave a selection of his work in special number 21 and if we avoid duplication we shall have room for something else (all back numbers of *BESN* are still available). 11, from *Time and Tide* 1953, was sent to me by Paul Valois. It was ostensibly by "B. H. White", a name known to neither of us, but it is hardly a typical beginner's effort and Paul suspects the use of a pseudonym by the column editor Brian Harley.

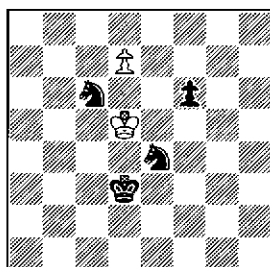
1 h7 Ke3 2 Nd1+ Kxe2 3 Nxb2 Ne7 gives 11a, and the clever 4 Nd3 forces the pawn through (4...Ng6+ 5 Kg5 Nh8 6 Nc1+ etc, or 4...Kxd3 5 Kg5). Unfortunately it does not win the game; after 4...Kxd3 5 Kg5 Black can play 5...Bxa4 6 h8Q Nc6, and he has a fortress with B+N+P v Q (see 11b). The correct move order is 4 Kg5 Ng6 5 Nd3 (5 Kxg6 Bc2+) Bc2 6 Nf4+ Nxf4 7 h8Q, after which the a-pawn will soon go and White will have a book win.



12 - draw

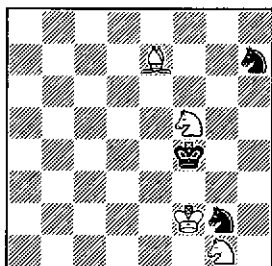


12a - after 2...f6+

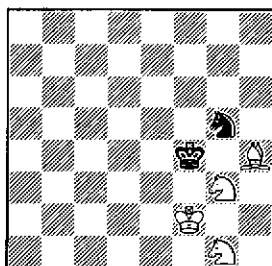


12b - after 6 Kd5

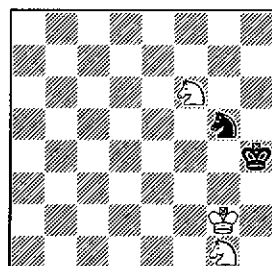
I take "R. Hutton" to be British from his name, but 12 is from the 1955 tourney of the Argentina Chess Club (it obtained 7th Prize) so perhaps I am wrong. Be that as it may, the study shows some neat manoeuvring, and if it is indeed a stowaway we need not begrudge it its place. 1 d6 Ng3+ 2 Ke5 f6+ gives 12a, and 3 Ke6 will lead to 3...Ne4 4 d7 Nc5+. Hence 3 Kd5, after which White genuinely threatens 4 d7. The only answer is 3...Ne4 (controlling c5/d6 and overprotecting f6) 4 d7 Ne7+, because now 5 Ke6 can be met by 5...Nc6. But White has 6 Kd5 (see 12b), after which 6...Nd8 gives stalemate and 6...Ne7+ 7 Ke6 merely repeats. Black has 6...Nc5 threatening 7...Nxd7 and after 7 Kxc5 Nd8 there is no stalemate, but it is to no avail: 8 Kd6 Ke4 (what else?) 9 Ke7 and a man will go.



13 - win

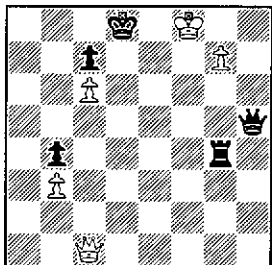


13a - after 2...Ng5

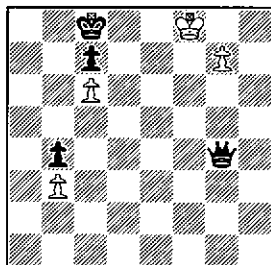


13b - after 5 Kg2

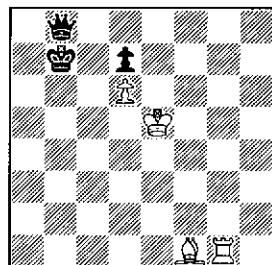
The neat little 13, by J. Glaser, competed in the 1957 *New Statesman* Tourney. 1 Kxg2 Kxf5 is only a draw, but 1 Ng3 controls e4 and 1...Ne3 will be met by 2 Ne2+ etc. (1 Nd6 also controls e4, but it blocks the bishop and 1...Ne3 2 Ne2+ Ke5 3 Kxe3 Ke6 leads to a draw.) But Black also has 1...Nxb4, because after 2 Bxb4 Ng5 the bishop is shut in (see 13a). In fact it cannot be saved (3 N3e2+ Kg4 4 Bg3 Ne4+), but so what? White can get a good price for it, 3 Nh5+ Kg4 4 Nf6+ Kxb4, because 5 Kg2 forces mate next move (see 13b). Glaser died tragically in a road accident some years later (*EG* 5, quoting the June 1966 issue of *Chess*).



14 - win



14a - after 2...Qxg4



15 - win

Two amusing trifles to finish with. David Joseph's 14 appeared in *Chess Life and Review* in 1954. 1 Qd1+ Kc8 2 Qxg4+ Qxg4 is obvious, and surely 3 g8Q Qxg8+ 4 Kxg8 is won? Indeed it is, but what about 3...Kd8? The correct move is 4 g8R.

Finally, back to Hugh Blandford (*The Field* 1952). White would like to play 1 Rb1+, but the bishop is in the way, and after 1 Bg2+ Kc8 it is once more in the way. But 2 Bb7+ Kxb7 gets us back to the starting position without the bishop, and now it's easy: 3 Rb1+ Kc8 4 Rxb8+ Kxb8 5 Kf6 with a standard win.

My thanks to Paul Valois, to the BCPS Library, and to Harold van der Heijden's invaluable "Endgame study database 2000". Our next special number of this kind is scheduled for March 2004, and will cover studies from 1937-49. As usual, please will readers draw my attention to studies that they would like to see included, and to any from 1950-95 which should have appeared but have been overlooked. - JDB