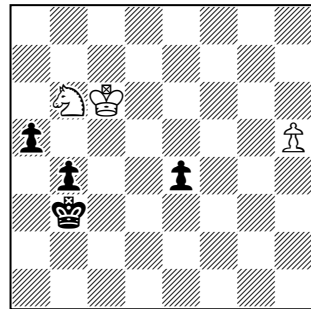
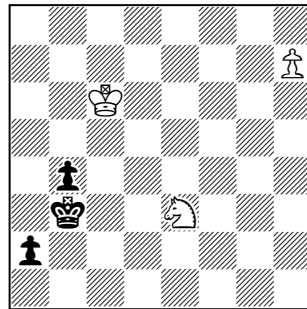


Gordon Davies 1935 - 2016

Gordon Davies died on the first day of 2016. He did not start composing endgame studies until he was well into his seventies and Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database V" contains only four studies by him, but they had a touch of character and well exemplified the principle that "one good one" is a sufficient justification for having taken up the hobby. Like Paul Byway, he played for Hertford C.C., and there cannot have been many occasions in recent years when, as happened in May 2009, an issue of the *BCM* contained two original endgame studies by members of the same club.



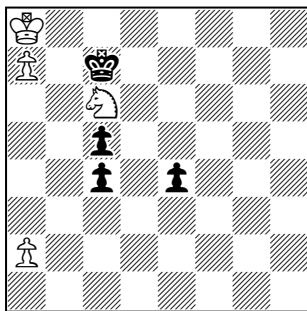
1 - White to play and win



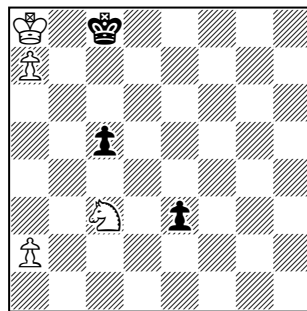
1a - after 4...a2

1 was Gordon's contribution (it had been left as the "Answer next time" item in March). 1-3 h8Q e1Q is only a draw, but 1 Nd5 stops the e-pawn; which of the others should Black run? If he runs the a-pawn, White's 2-4 h8Q will cover a1. If he plays 1...Kc2 to run the b-pawn, White has 2 h6 b3 3 h7 b2 4 Nc3! Kxc3 5 h8Q+ and he will win without difficulty. But if Black interpolates 1...e3! 2 Nxe3 and then runs the a-pawn, 2...a4 3-4 h7 a2 gives 1a, and 5 h8Q a1Q 6 Qxa1 will be stalemate. White must take a bishop, 5 h8B!

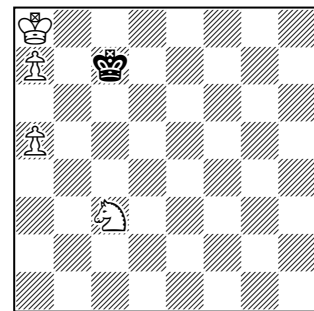
But surely this finish is ancient? Indeed it is, but in most previous examples (I think I found eight in "Endgame study database III", which was the standard reference collection at the time) the knight is occupying its crucial position at the outset. Gordon brought it in from further away than any of his predecessors had done, with the little Black sacrifice 1...e3 to spice the dish, and this seemed to me to be a more than sufficient justification for publication.



2 - White to play and win



2a - after 3...e3



2b - after 10...Kc7

2, from the March 2010 *BCM*, is based on the fact, noted with interest by every beginner, that if a king is trapped in a corner ahead of his own rook's pawn, even an extra knight will not serve to extricate him unless the right player is to move. Here, White has to make a tempo move with his rear pawn no fewer than four times in order to achieve this.

Play starts 1 Ne7, and 1...c3 (here and later, alternative Black moves are no better and usually worse) 2 Nd5+ Kc8 3 Nxc3 e3 gives 2a. White's knight can now do no more until Black's king moves to a square of the same colour. Hence 4 a3! (one) c4 5 a4 (two) Kc7 6 Nd5+ Kc8 6 Nxe3 c3 7 8 a5 (three) Kc7 9 Nd5+ Kc8 10 Nxc3 Kc7 (see 2b, and now we want the Black king on a square of different colour) 11 a6 (four), and we see why 4 a4 wouldn't have worked. Neatly done, and, in its four-fold form, apparently new.

Thank you, Gordon. You leave a very pleasant memory.