

Variant Chess

Journal of the British Chess Variants Society

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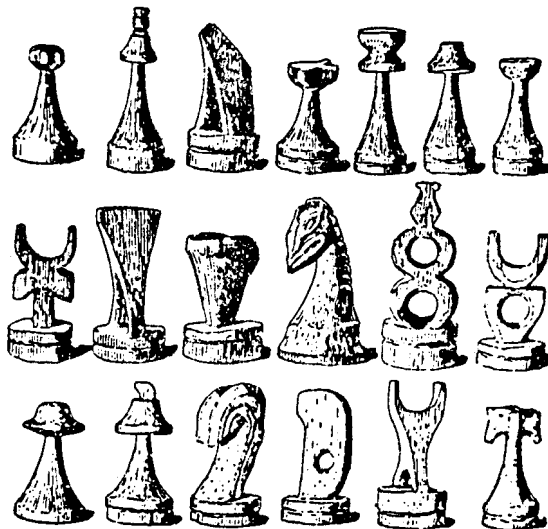
M. Horne

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Yakutat and Aleut chess: indigenous Alaskan chess variants?

by Lex Kraaijeveld

In his impressive 1913 work *A History of Chess*, H. J. R. Murray briefly discusses the possible existence of two indigenous Alaskan chess variants: Yakutat and Aleut chess. Murray mentions them at the end of the chapter on variants from Central and Northern Asia, of which he states that "this branch of chess reached its final limit in Alaska."



Murray's knowledge on Yakutat chess comes from Stewart Culin's work *Games of the North American Indians*, published in 1907. Figure 1089 of this book shows 19 pieces, allegedly from a set of 22, with varying, mostly abstract, shapes. One piece resembles the head and neck of an animal. Some look like pawns, but it is impossible to indicate what piece might be a knight, bishop, king, etc. No two pieces are exactly the same.

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Culin does not give any details on the size of the board, initial set-up of the pieces, rules of movement, etc. Given the scantiness of the evidence, Murray is careful in drawing any firm conclusions and says that "the shapes of the pieces show no trace of European influence and compel me to place this game beside those treated in the present chapter".

Murray had even less information on Aleut chess: "M. Savenkof states, on the authority of A. N. Maximof, that the inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands play chess. He quotes Benjaminof's *Among the Aleutian Islanders*".

Despite the lack of any firm evidence, the existence of an unusual form of chess played by the Yakutat has more or less slipped into some writings on chess variants as an established fact.

With 84 years having passed since the publication of Murray's work, and with the opportunities offered by the Internet nowadays, I decided to try and unearth a bit more about these possible chess variants.

Yakutat Chess?

With help of the Alaska State Library, I managed to get in contact with Dr. Frederica de Laguna, a professor of anthropology and one of the leading experts on Alaskan ethnography. She very kindly sent me all the information she had on the Yakutat game.

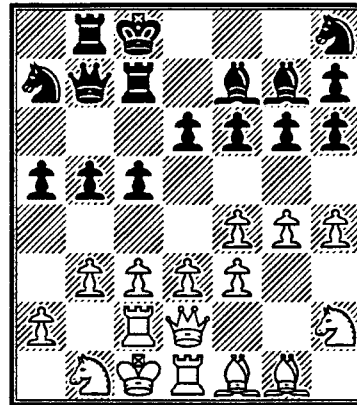
A full set apparently consists of 25 pieces, 12 'men', 12 'women' and one extra piece (in case of loss?). Pieces are carved to resemble objects, living things and persons and each of the pieces has a different name (just to give some examples: 'whale tail', 'cover for the smokehole', 'one on top of another'). Play is on the white squares of a chequered 8x8 board, one player playing with the 'men', the other with the 'women'. Initial placement and moves are similar to checkers and with each move the player names the piece he intends to move.

It may well be that the three-dimensional shape of the checkers in the Yakutat game has been influenced by chessmen, but without further evidence the existence of Yakutat chess (as opposed to Yakutat checkers) appears to be a myth.

Aleut Chess?

All I managed to find was a 1933 book by W. Jochelson: *History, Ethnography and Anthropology of the Aleut*, which allegedly contained some information on chess played by the Aleut. I owe the Carnegie Institution in Washington my thanks for

sending me a photocopy of the relevant pages. Jochelson gives a diagram of the board and initial set-up:



He states that "Chess was without doubt adopted by the Aleut from the Russians". He bases this conclusion on the Aleut names of some of the figures, which are clearly derived from their respective Russian names: Queen – fěrsix' (Russian 'fers', from the Persian); Bishop – slúnax' (Russian 'slon', elephant); Knight – kúnax' (Russian 'kon', horse) and Rook – lúdkax' (Russian 'ladya', boat). However, the King is called álix' ('old man') and the pawn layakúcan ('little boy'). The only other bit of information regarding the rules of the Aleut game given by Jochelson is that "the movements of the figures are the same as with us".

The first odd thing about Aleut chess as it is described by Jochelson is the board's dimensions: 7x8; unlike any regional variant. The second thing is the initial set-up of the pieces: as the starting positions are not the same for white and black, this suggests that the players are free (within certain constraints?) to choose the starting positions of their pieces as they see fit. In this, Aleut chess most resembles Burmese chess.

In summary, there doesn't seem to be any evidence for a variant of chess played by the Yakutat. On the other hand, Alaska does appear to have an indigenous chess variant. However, given the rather strange characteristics of the Aleut game as described by Jochelson, it would be good if some more and independent information on Aleut chess could be obtained.

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Free Programme Chess

by George Jelliss

This article is based on a small booklet which John Beasley found in Tel-Aviv recently, with the title *Free Programme of Chess*, containing the results of a tournament held at the Tbilisi Chess Palace, Georgia, from 30 May to 5 June 1995, and involving a group of very strong players of the orthodox game in a form of 'Free Chess' devised by Gela Guraspasvili.

There were 12 players, all from Georgia, including 2 grandmasters, 3 international masters, 2 FIDE masters and 5 national masters, with Elo ratings from 2000 to 2500.

Play was in two 6-player groups, each pair playing one game, the two top scorers in each group going through to the final, where each pair played two games.

The booklet, contains 40 of the 42 games, and is surprisingly written in English, though it would have benefited from the attentions of a better translator. The statement of the rules is confused. The following is my interpretation, deduced from the evidence of the actual play:

(1) *The game commences with an empty board. The players alternate in putting pieces on the board, each in their own half of the board. One bishop on each colour. Kings first.*

(2) *Pawns cannot be placed on the back rank, and only have the double move from the second rank.*

(3) *When all the pieces are in place movement proceeds, but White may not capture on the first move (i.e. 17th turn.) in this phase.*

There is an unclearly formulated rule that appears to permit a player to move a piece within his half of the board — or even perhaps to 'transfer' it to any other square — before all his pieces are placed. But pieces placed after the 16th turn can then only be entered on the back rank. This option is not used in any of the games, and seems an unnecessary complication.

There is no rule prohibiting a piece being placed where it would check the opposing king, though this

seems to be observed, perhaps as a matter of courtesy, in the games, in all of which the kings are always placed on the back rank.

If kings were placed on the third or fourth ranks and checks were allowed this could result in positions with K in multiple check from pawns or knights. On the other hand if checks were prohibited, placing the king in an advanced position would restrict the placement of the opponent's pieces, but probably any advantage in this is heavily outweighed by the danger to the king from his advanced position.

Almost all the games in the booklet regrettably contain misprints, some of which make the final stages of the games incomprehensible. My guess is that they have been produced direct from the player's hand-written score sheets, and that moves were not properly recorded when the players were caught in time trouble.

On the other hand, the games were played at a rate of 90 minutes for each player to complete all his moves, which one would have thought plenty of time to allow most games to reach a conclusion, yet the longest last only 39 to 42 moves (including the 16 placement moves) and none concludes with mate.

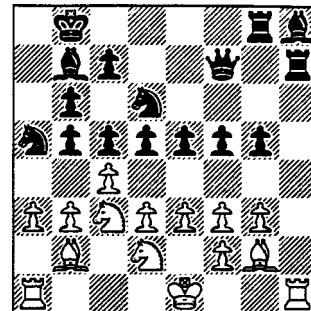
It is not made clear whether the final results were agreed, determined by the fall of the flag, or adjudicated. It may be that the final stages of the games were played at speed and that the moves were not recorded.

However this may be, here are some games from the Final. The four finalists were: Lasha Dzhandzhgava (alternatively spelt Janjgava) GM 2500, Tamaz Tabatadze IM 2450, Giorgi Bagaturov IM2460 and Alexandre Dgebuadze IM 2425.

In many cases I have used some guesswork in correcting misprints so cannot guarantee that the moves are exactly those played. Expert orthodox players may be able to deduce more likely lines of play.

Game 31: Bagaturov – Tabatadze.

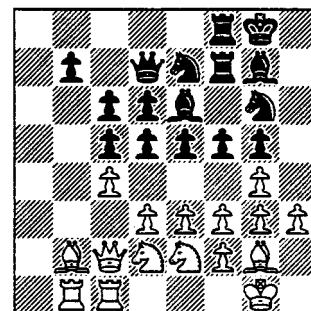
The pieces were placed in the sequence: Ke1, Kb8; Ra1, g5; Rh1, f5; Nd2, Bb7; Bb2, e5; c4, c5; e3, Rg8; Qc2, d5; d3, b6; f2, Rh7; g3, Bh8; Bg2, Nd6; f3, Qf7; b3, b5; a3, Na5; Nc3, c7; to give the position:



Play then continued: 17. b4 R×h1† 18. B×h1 b×c4 19. b×Na5 c×d3 20. Q×d3 c4 21. Qc2 d4 22. a×b6 c×b6 23. a4 d3 24. Qc1 e4 25. Ba3 Rd8 26. Rb1 Qh5 27. Bg2 e×f3 28. Bf1 f4 29. g×f4 g×f4 30. R×b6 f×e3 31. Qb2 e×Nd2† 32. Kd1 Qh1 33. B×Nd6† Ka8 34. K×d2 Q×f1 35. Ra6† B×Ra6 36. Qb6 R×Bd6 37. Q×Rd6 (0–1)

Game 34: Tapatadze–Dzhandzhgava.

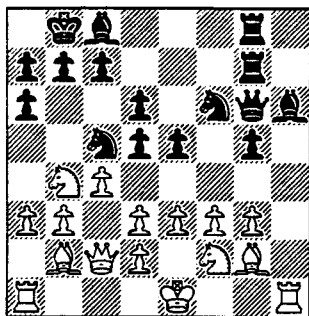
Placement: Kg1, Kg8; g3 d5; f2, e5; d3, Rf8; e3, c6; Rc1, Bg7; Bg2, Be6; Bb2, Rf7; Nd2, b7; c4, Ne7; Rb1, d6; f3, c5; Ne2, Ng5; Qc2, g5; g4, f5; h3, Qd7.



Play: 17. Rf1 b5 18. e4 f4 19. Nc3 d4 20. Ne2 Nc8 21. Rs1 Nb6 22. Rfb1 Ra8 23. R×a8† N×a8 24. Bf1 Nb6 25. Kg2 Rf8 26. Ra1 Qb7 27. Nc1 Ra8 28. R×a8 Q×a8 29. Be2 Bf6 30. Qb3 Nf8 31. Bd1 Qa6 32. Be2 Bd8 33. Kf1 Kf7 34. Qa2 Q×a2 35. N×a2 b×c4 36. d×c4 d5 37. c×d5 c×d5 38. e×d5 B×d5 39. Nc1 c4 40. Ne4 Ne6 41. Nd6† Kf6. (0–1).

Game 35: Bagaturov–Dzhandzhgava.

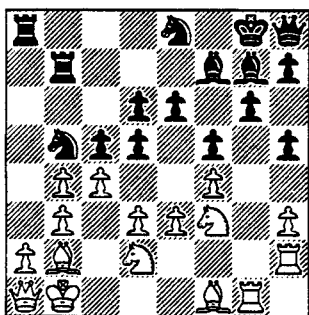
Placement: Ke1, Kb8; Ra1 d5; Bg2, e5; Bb2, c7; g3, Rf8; b3, b7; c4, a7; d3, Bc8; e3, Nf6; Nf2, a6; a3, Rf7; d2, d6; Rh1, Qg6; Qc2, g5; f3, Bh6; Nb4, Nc5. (The diagram in the booklet has WPe2, but WPD2 seems to be needed to support 20. Be3.)



Play: 17. Bf1 d4 18. e×d4 e×d4 19. B×d4 Re8† 20. Be3 a5 21. d4 Bf5 22. R×h6 B×c2 23. R×g6 B×g6 24. d×c5 a×b4 25. c×d6 b×a3 26. d×c7† K×c7 27. R×a3 g4 28. Bg2 a6 29. b4 g×f3 30. B×f3 Bh5 31. B×h5 N×h5 32. b5 a×b5 33. c×b5 Nf6 34. b6† Kc6 35. Rc3† Kb5 36. Rc5† Kb4 (K×b6? 37. Re4†). Draw. (½–½). (The final moves are given as 37. Rc4 Kb5 38 Rc5 Kb4, i.e. draw by repetition of moves, but Rc4 is unguarded so there is some error in the record.)

Game 36: Tapatadze – Dgebuadze.

Placement: Kb1, Kg8; Rg1, d5; b3, Bg7; a2, g6; Rh2, Rb7; e3, c5; f4, f5; d3, e6; Bb2 Bf7; Bf1, Ra8; Nf3, d6; c4, h5; h3, h7; Qa1, Ne8; b4, Qh8; Nd2, Nb5 (taking advantage of the rule that White cannot capture on the first move).

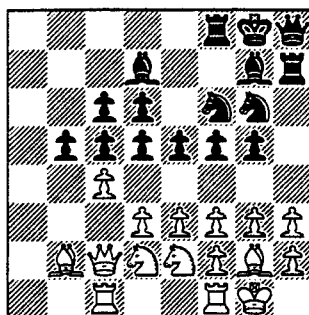


Play: 17. a4 Nc3† 18. Kc2 c×b4 19. d4 d×c4 20. B×c3 c×b3† 21. N×b3 b×c3 22. Ng5 Nc7 23. Bc4 h6 24. N×f7 K×f7. (1–0) (The move 21. Nb3

is missing from the text, and other moves are misprinted, so this reconstruction is conjectural.)

Game 37: Tapatadze – Bagaturov.

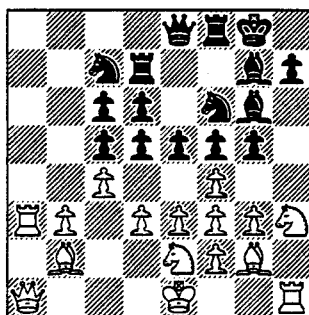
Placement: Kg1, Kg8; c4, e5; e3, f5; d3, Bg7; Rc1, g5; Bb2, Nf6; g3, Re8; Bg2, c6; Rf1 d6; h3, Bd7; Nd2, Ng6; Ne2, d5; f2, c5; Qc2, Rh7; h2, b5; f3, Qh8.



Play: 17. Rfe1 f4 18. d4 B×h3 19. Q×g6 B×g2 20. h4 g×h4 21. g×f4 e×f4 22. Q×g2 Rh6 23. e×f4 Qh7 24. Kh1 Qd3 25. Rg1 Nh5 26. Q×g7† N×g7 27. d×c5 Rf7 28. c×d6 R×d6 29. c×b5 c×b5 30. Be5 Rde6 31. Nb3 Q×f3† 32. Kh2 R×e5 33. Nbd4 Q×f2† Rg2. (0–1)

Game 38: Dgebuadze–Dzhandzhgava

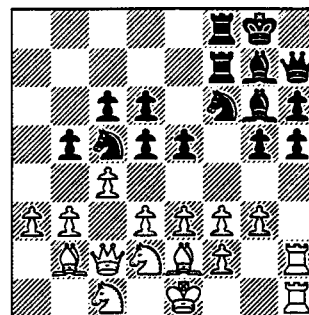
Placement: Ke1, Kg8; Bg2 d5; c4, c6; d3, Nf6; e3, Bg7; Rh1 h7; Bb2, Rf8; g3, Bd7; f2 e5, f4, g5; b3, Qe8; Qa1, d6; Ne2, f5; Ra3, Ng6; f3, Rc7; Nh3, c5.



Play: 17. Ra4 g×f4 18. g×f4 d4 19. f×e5 d×e5 20. Ba3 Qb8 21. Nc1 d×e3 22. Q×e5 e×f2† 23. N×f2 Re8 (0–1) The diagram in the booklet has three White knights and no Black rook; so a lot of reconstruction here which may not be correct.

Game 39: Bagaturov–Dgebuadze

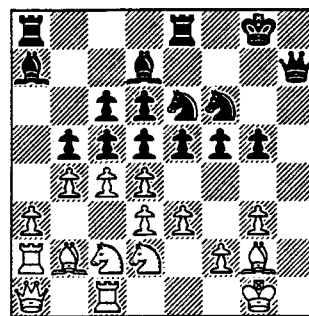
Placement: Ke1, Kg8; Bb2, Bg7; c4, d5; b3, c6; e3, e5; Qc2, Rf8; f2, Rf7; Nd2, g5; g3, Bg6; f3, h5; Be2, d6; d3, Qh7; Rh1, b5; Nc1, Nc5; a3, Nf6; Rh2, h6



Play: 17. g4 h×g4 18. f×g4 b×c4 19. b×c4 e4 20. d4 Nd3 21. B×d3 e×d3 22. Qd1 Ne4 23. 00 N×d2 24. Q×d2 d×c4 25. f4 g×f4 26. e×f4 Be4 27. f5 d5 28. Na2 Qg6 29. Rg2 Qg5 30. Q×g5 h×g5 31. Rd2 c5 32. d×c5 d4 33. Rc1 c3 34. N×c3 d×c3 35. B×c3 B×c3 36. R×c3 Rh7 37. Rc×d3 B×d3 38. R×d3 Rc7 39. Rd6 R×c5 40. Kf2 Rc3 (0–1)

Game 40: Dzhandzhgava–Tapatadze

Placement: Kg1, Kg8; Bg2 e5; d3, f5; g3, g5; f2, d5; e3, c6; Nd2, Nf6; Rc1, Bd7; Bb2, Re8; d4, Ba7; Qa1, c5; Nc2, Ne6; b4, Ra8; a3, d6; c4, b5; Ra2, Qh7.



Play: 17. a4 b×c4 18. d×c4 c×d4 19. b5 Kg7 20. b×c6 B×c6 21. Nb4 Bb7 22. Ra3 Rac8 23. Rb3 Ba8 24. c×d5 N×d5 25. R×c8 R×c8 26. N×d5 B×d5 27. Rc3 Rb8 28. Rc1 d×e3 (0–1)

For ideas concerning alternative rules see page 132. Players might like to specify this game on the BCVS 1988 Championship entry form sent to UK members with this issue.

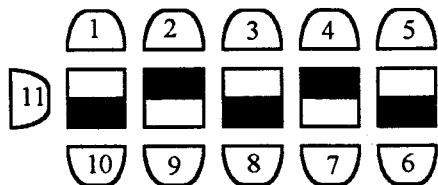
Running a Variant Chess Tournament

by John Beasley

Variant chess tournaments are becoming encouragingly popular. VC25 (page 94) reported a very enjoyable one organised by Mike Pennell at Hampstead, there was one after our own AGM, and the annual problemists' meeting in France has long featured one. Our Editor has therefore suggested to me that a few simple notes on running such tournaments might be of interest. Experienced readers should skip this article, because it will be very elementary. It covers three topics: (a) arranging the pairings; (b) choosing the variant or variants to be played; (c) dealing with illegal moves.

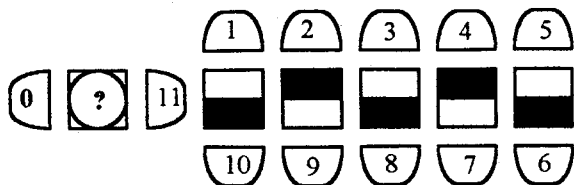
Pairings. Mike at Hampstead had more players than rounds, and used the normal Swiss system. It worked well in his expert hands, but an organiser less familiar with it might have had difficulty in announcing the pairings in time. Our own tournament and the French ones were all-play-all, and this can easily be set up even by a novice.

There are two cases, depending on whether the number of participants is odd or even. The odd case is slightly the easier to arrange, even though one player has to sit out each round. For the first round, set up the players and boards as follows (I assume 11 players for convenience):



In other words, 1 has White against 10, 2 Black against 9, 3 White against 8, and so on, and 11 sits out. For the second round, everybody moves one place left (so 11 has White against 9, 1 Black against 8, 2 White against 7, and 10 sits out), and so on until everyone has been right round. This simple scheme works for any odd number.

If the number of players is even, we add a player 0 to the above scheme, and the player who would otherwise have sat out now plays him:



In subsequent rounds, player 0 stays put, and the others cycle as before. Player 0 is given White or Black for his first game by a random choice, and his board is then turned round after each game so that he has Black and White alternately. The other boards always stay the same way round.

Choosing the Variants. The French choose a single variant which is used throughout, but this is perhaps a little dull. Mike, with a significant number of 'non-variant' players, chose three simple variants each of which was played twice, and this worked very well. But in regular 'variant' company a different variant can be played in each round, and this is surely the most interesting.

If the number of players is odd, there are as many rounds as players, so everyone can choose a variant. It may seem natural for the player sitting out a round to choose the variant for that round, but I feel that a man should suffer what he inflicts on others and it is perhaps preferable to nominate one of the Black seats as conferring the privilege of choice. One or two popular variants appear to give a significant advantage to White, so it should be a player of Black who chooses.

If the number of players is even, the number of rounds is one fewer than the number of players; who should be the person who never chooses? There are three natural possibilities: (a) the tournament organiser can avoid any ill-feeling by nominating himself as the non-chooser; (b) last time's winner, if playing again, can be the non-chooser; (c) player 0 (assumed to be chosen by lot) can be the non-chooser, but, as compensation, can be given White in most or all of his games.

As a matter of practical convenience, a list of suggested variants, somewhat longer than the number of rounds, should be supplied to each participant. The rules are now written down for easy reference, and misunderstandings are less likely. Both David Pritchard and George Jelliss have excellent lists which I am sure they are willing to supply on request, so there is no need to start from scratch. However, I can see no reason why a variant not on the suggested list should not be chosen provided that (a) everyone knows its rules and (b) nobody objects.

Illegal moves. These can play a disproportionate part, and care may be needed to avoid disputes and ill-feeling. Step one is for the organiser to obtain a copy of the official laws of chess (available from myself on request) and to make them available for reference. Illegal moves at fast time limits are covered by clause C3, and this can be applied to variants just

as to ordinary chess: "An illegal move is completed once the opponent's clock has been started. The opponent is then entitled to claim a win before making his own move. Once the opponent has made his own move, an illegal move cannot be corrected." Note that this covers both a king left in check (taking it should be treated as a claim of a win) and illegal moves of other kinds (for example, a king moving through check during a sequence of moves in Progressive or Marseillais Chess). It is true that not every player wants to claim a win in a good game just because his opponent has made an illegal move in an unfamiliar variant, and if he restarts his opponent's clock and invites him to substitute a legal move a charitable organiser may well turn a blind eye, but the only truly practicable rule is the harsh one that an illegal move entitles the opponent to claim the game.

All this being said, the best way to avoid trouble through illegal moves is to avoid variants in which they are likely to arise. At the most recent French meeting, we played Isardam (see VC23, page 55) in which a move which would leave two opposing men of the same kind attacking each other is illegal. This variant is enjoying a vogue in problems, but I doubt if anyone had actually tried to play it before. It proved amusing but gave a lot of trouble because players under time pressure made moves which are instinctive in ordinary chess but illegal in Isardam, and as an organiser I would think twice before trying it again. Other variants give just as much pleasure with fewer complications.

Variant chess tournaments are fun. I hope these simple notes will help those who have felt that such a tournament would enliven their local club, but have been deterred by lack of organisational experience.

BCVS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Another circular is being sent out to UK members with this issue inviting entries and suggested variants for a further round of postal-play Championships.

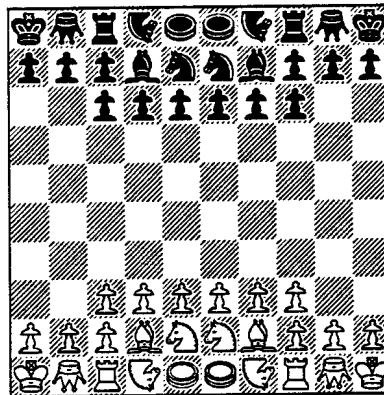
We already have games in progress in Progressive Chess, Extinction Chess and Alice Chess. The two preliminary heats of the Progressive Chess have now been completed and the Final is underway.

The scores in the Progressive Chess were as follows: Heat 1. T. Howes 6, P. Wood 3, P. Coast 2, D. Richardson 1. Heat 2: D. Pritchard 5, P. Byway 4, D. Tremayne 3, S. Boniface 0. The five players who scored three points or more qualified for the final. Thanks to all the participants and commiserations to those eliminated. The full cross-tables and scores of selected games will appear in the final report in due course.

Not for the Faint-Hearted

by Peter Wood


Hero Chess, which is being played through *Eteroscacco*, is another of the inventions of Michael Howe of Middletown, Connecticut, USA, some of which were mentioned in this department in VC23 p.51. This is another of the many games played on a 10×10 board.



The initial position is first rank DLRCHHCRLD; second rank = PPPBNNBPPP; third rank = 2PPPPPP2. Players are free to experiment with different initial positions.


The rules of orthodox chess are in effect in addition to the following rules. (1) The Grand Duke (♔♚D) moves one square in any direction, like a chess King. (2) The kingdom must always have at least one Duke and at least one subject. Therefore, to win, a player must first capture one of the opponent's Dukes and then checkmate or stalemate the other, (stalemate is a win, not a draw as in orthodox chess). A player can also win by reducing the opponent to one or two Dukes with no other friendly units. When a player has only one Duke remaining, the rules regarding check and mate are in effect for that Duke.

The other pieces move as follows: (3) The Rook (♖♜R) is an orthodox Rook. (4) The Bishop (♗♝B) combines an orthodox Bishop with a 1-square Rook. (5) The Knight (♘♞N) is a combined {2,3} and {3,4} leaper [*Zebra+Antelope in fairy chess terms*]. (6) The Cavalier (♞♟C) is a combined {2,4} and {2,5} leaper. (7) The Hero (♙♚H) has the combined moves of the R, B, N, and C in this game. (8) The Lion (♚♛L) may make one or two consecutive one-square moves in any direction or combination of directions, and it may pass over other units of either colour on the first move in order to reach a square beyond. It may capture on either or both parts of its move. The move is considered unitary, so that it may leave a Duke in apparent check if the Duke is out of check by the end of the move. (9) Pawns move one forward orthogonally or diagonally and capture one forward diagonally; no double-step or e.p.; promotion on the 10th rank to any piece except Duke. (10) There is no castling.



PROBLEM PAGES

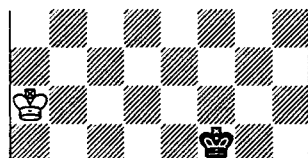
conducted by *Ronald Turnbull*
Highland Cottage, Gatelawbridge, Thornhill
Dumfriesshire DG3 5EA, Scotland



With nights getting longer and darker, and all outdoor sports in abeyance save the degenerate one of Christmas Shopping, why not stoke up the fire to a merry blaze and snuggle down with some nice fairy chess problems? Well, here are 15 reasons why not... Our contributors have offered, almost without exception, new and exceptionally twisted stipulations, often two or three deep. Well, that blazing fire will at least be a handy place to deposit the Winter Problem Pages, before reconnecting the e-mail for a nice game of Progressive Headbanger with the more straightforward souls who inhabit the outer pages of the magazine.

Perhaps the contributors have contributed complications as their reaction from the simplicities of the two-man-only theme tourney (27 entries so far). Problem (211) (anonymous till after the judgment) reminds you that there are still a few days left for eliminating cooks, finding the stamps, and sending in the entries — the Tourney closes with the old year.

(211)



Sensitive Sentinels
Series Selfmate in 10

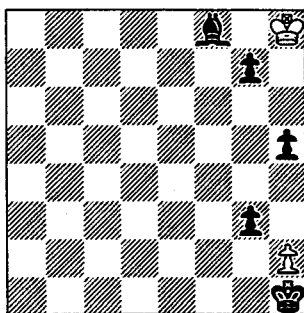
Sentinels: a piece (not pawn) moving (not from 1-rank, 8-rank) leaves an own-colour pawn on the

departure-square (unless 8 own-colour pawns already present).

Sensitive Kings (Bicolores) suffer check from units of either colour.

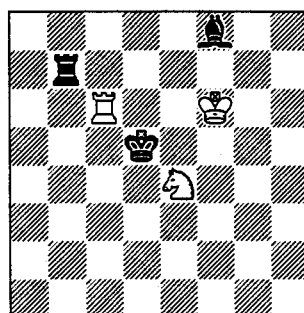
Follow-my-leader: if Black can legally play to the square just vacated by White, he will do so. Problem (212) is a straightforward example of a genre that is similar in many respects to Maximummer. More, please.

(212) Mario VELUCCHI



Follow-my-leader, Selfmate in 6

(213) Luigi VITALE



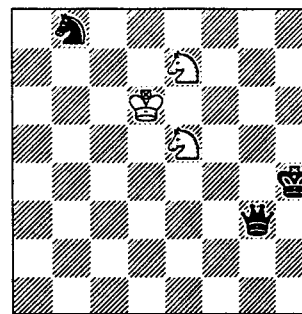
Andernach, Helpmate in 2, Duplex

Andernach: a unit that captures, changes colour.

Duplex: for the second part, White moves first and is mated.

While in **No-captures**, capture moves are illegal (except potential captures of Kings).

(214) Luigi VITALE



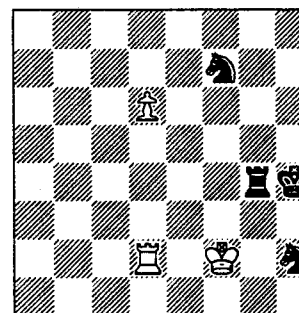
No-Capture, Helpmate in 3
(b) ♖b8 → c2

Problems (215) and (216) approach the orthodox unorthodox, as they're almost Circe!

Diagram Circe: a captured unit is reborn on the square it occupies in the problem diagram.

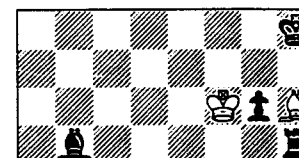
Clone Circe: A captured piece takes on the nature (but not the colour) of its captor, then is reborn. But unit captured by K is reborn as itself, not as an extra K. In (216), play could start 1:Rg5 B×g5(+bBf8).

(215) Valery NEBOTOV



Helpmate in 2 (a) Orthodox
(b) Diagram Circe

(216) Valery NEBOTOV

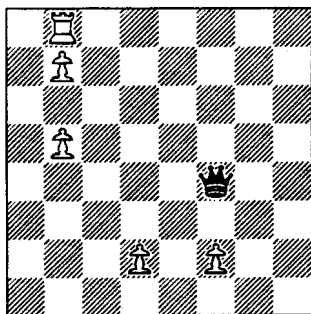


Helpmate in 2, (a) Orthodox
(b) Clone Circe

In **Maxi**, Black will always choose a longest move (measured between square-centres using, if necessary, the Theorem of Pythagoras).

Republican: if a King of the side to move can be placed where it would be in checkmate, then it is so placed. If Black could play 1...Qa4, a checkmated wK would appear on a8.

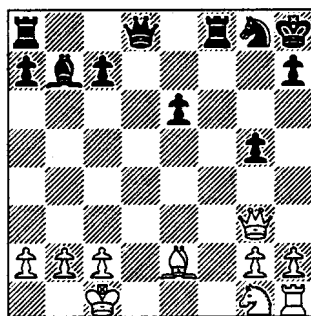
(217) Paul RAICAN



Republican Chess, Maximummer Selfmate in 3, 4 solutions

Extinction Chess is played but not, hitherto, problemised in. The aim is to capture not necessarily the opponents King, but the last of any one of the six species (KQRBSP). Kings are not special.

(218) Ian RICHARDSON

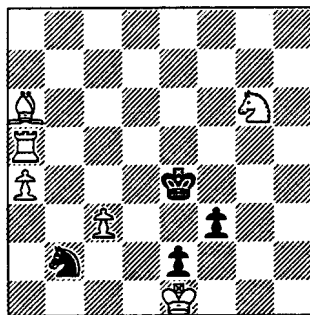


Extinction Chess
Side to play wins on 4th move.

Ian Richardson offers a gamelike position (218): Black could start 1:Rf1, threatening to extinguish either wK or final wS, with pin of wS against the final wR. The side to play wins (i.e.

extinguishes a species) on his fourth move. As a game, Ian writes, this is extremely lively, and his suggested strategy is to swap off one or two minor pieces, and then hunt the singletons, the knight being the most vulnerable.

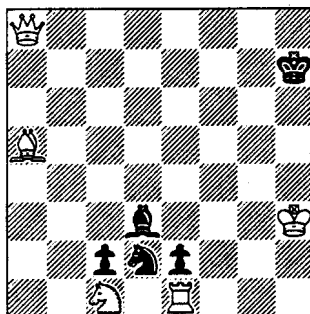
(219) Ronald TURNBULL



Extinction Chess, Mate in 2

Problem (219) attempts to present the idea in a more problemistic form. An attack on the final representative of any species is check — so we can refer to checkmate and stalemate, and Ian's problem would be a mate-in-three (duplex). With, incidentally, 'brutal' play involving multiple checks. I've assumed that play may start with a diminished chess-set, and that promotion to king is allowed. Thus, 1:Kf2 is stalemate, as any promotion on e1 leaves the remaining black pawn in check.

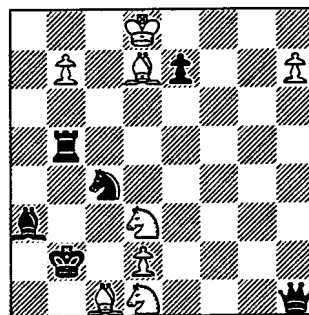
(220) Erich BARTEL
& Hemmo AXT



Isardam: Mirror Circe
Series stalemate in 5

Last issue Erich Bartel offered some Isardam which wasn't altogether simple, but it was just the start: (220). Still, stalemate will be easy with both the Black pawns already conveniently blocked... **Isardam**: positions where units of same sort but opposite colour attack each other are illegal. So neither side may play Sb3?? **Mirror Circe**: captured unit is reborn as if it were the other colour. So captures of bS, bB lead to self-check from f1, g1. In (221), the bK is not in check, as 1:BxK?? creates illegal Bishops.

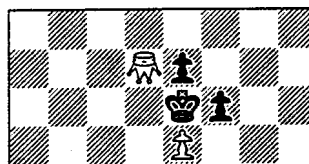
(221) Ronald TURNBULL
& Stephen EMMERSON



Isardam, Mate in 2

The **Grasshopper** of (222) is the issue's only fairy piece, hopping forlornly in a wide desert of fairy stipulation (it moves and captures on queen lines to the square immediately beyond one unit, e.g. 1:Gf5 or Gf7).

(222) Peter FAYERS

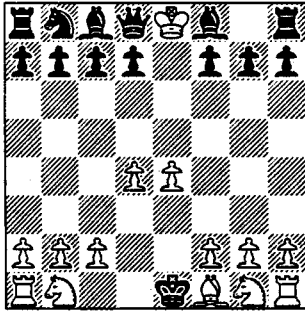


Grasshopper, Roi Transmuté
Helpmate in (a) 1 (b) 1½
(c) 2 exactly, (d) 2½ exactly

Roi Transmuté: King in check moves as the checking piece. Peter didn't want to set the first two

parts, considering them too obvious. At this point in the issue we could do with something obvious. If you want unobvious Rois Transmutés, just move on to Problem (223).

(223) Paul RAICAN

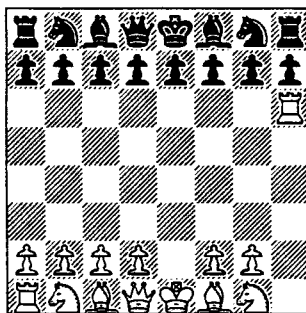


Rois Transmutés

Position after Black's 8th move.
Game so far?

Anticirce: the captor is reborn on its Circe rebirth square (which must be vacant, else capture is illegal). The captured vanishes, as in normal Chess. Here the White moves to the position suffer from arbitrary move-order, so we have the half-stipulation asking for the Black moves only. On the other hand, we have doubled solutions.

(224) Mario VELUCCHI



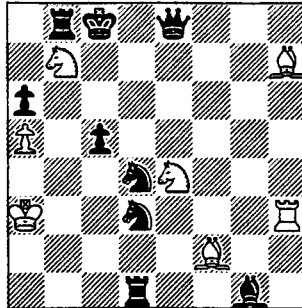
Anti-Circe

Position after Black's 4th move.
What were those 4 moves? 2 ways

As no-one has yet solved the Stein Kamikaze in VC25, I'll make this one slightly less difficult: the interest lies in the final move (which opens three lines) and the

final position — 'action at a distance' (impossible in the real world, says Einstein, but in fairy chess merely rather difficult).

(225) Irwin STEIN



Kamikaze Chess
Series selfmate in 14

This issue has too many helpmates, too much series play. For Christmas, please, I'd like a nice mate-in-two in each of the following: Ships & Dragons: No-capture: Diagram Circe: Republican Chess: Anticirce: Kamikaze.

Solutions to the Originals in VC25

Comments by: Stephen Emmerson, A. Ettinger, George Jelliss, Ronald Turnbull, Luigi Vitale

192 Simonet. 1:Qc6 Qb1/Qh7 2:Qf3†/Qc7. Neat variations (SE). A very nice work (LV, and I agree)

193 Rice. (try 1:Bc6 Q*h4/R*h4/B*c4 2:Sc1/Sc3/Qa4, but 1...Ra3.) 1:Sb4 (2:Qxa6) Q*h4/R*h4/B*c4 2:Bb3/Bd1/Sxc4. Nice half-battery shutoff changes, with Black making the battery, but try not prominent because of obvious refutation (SE). An astonishing problem! (LV). Arrival of WR a1 is the only Circic element in what is otherwise a nicely expressed orthodox 2-mover (RT). Only snag in this nice problem is the strong Black move 1...BxQ (AE)

194 Vitale. 1:Kg5 d7 2:Kh4 d8Q 3:S*d8 Q*g4 and 1:Sc7† d*c7 2:Kg5 c8Q 3:Kh4 Q*g4. Really one dualled solution (SE). But I think the separate

paths of bP justify (RT). Same mate delivered by newborn wQ from different directions - obviously possible only in CIRCE! (AE)

195 Turnbull & Velucchi. 1...g8 S† 2:Kg7 Sf6 3:Kh8 g7 and 1...g8Q 2:Ke7 Qe6 3:Kf8 g7. Good theme mates and perfect correspondence (SE). Such collaborations are one of the pleasures of editorship (RT).

196 Emmerson. 1:Kc2 (wK guards d2) 2:Kd3 (wS doesn't guard d3) 6:Kh4 (shields wK from check from h8 with bR on dk-sq) 8:Rh1 11:Kg1 Sg2. Very nice final position! (AE). Satisfyingly Martial, even with so few left on battlefield (RT). Equal in length to M Kerhuel *Phenix* 95 wK, Q, P b6, c5, d7 BKh3 SH=11 (11:Ka2 d8B) but better White economy! (SE)

197 Nebotov. 1:Qe1† Kxe1 2:Kg1(Qd1†) Kxd1 4:Ke1(Qb1†) Kxb1 5:Kd2(Qa2). Enjoyable because easy - the first C Parrain I've solved (SE). Simple and ingenious! (LV) AE solved within 60 secs, CHLOE (program) within 13.

198 Velucchi. 1:c5 a1B (a1Q?? self-check) 2:c4 Bxe4 3:c3 Bc2 =. Twin should be e4 c7, apologies. 1:c5 Kxc7 2:c4 a8Q 3:c3 Qh8 =. Three solvers correctly guessed correct twinning, but none found this solution, all seeking promotions to knight! (2...Sb6?? self-check).

199 Emmerson. (Black's final moves) e8S, Sc7, Sa6=; e8G, Gc8, Ga8=; e8S, Sd6, Sc4, Sa3=; e8Q, Qd7, Qc7, Qa7=. Shame about the repeated S-promotion (RT). AE adds selfstalemate in 7!

200 Turnbull. a)1:Qg6 Kf6 0-0 (Rf1?? self-check) b)1:Qh5 Bg5 2:0-0 (Rf1? 3:Bd2!) Interesting but incomplete (SE). I'm ashamed to say how long I took solving it (LV) - he obviously didn't notice that the solution was printed above the problem: for this was number 2:0-0!

201 Vitale. Black 1:Rf4 Be4 2:Qg6 Qxf4, White 1:Qf2 Qxh4 2:Kh2 Rxf2. SE let his computer do second part. Indeed, this would have more human-appeal with more thematic content (RT) These double check mates are not new (AE).

202 Bartel. 1... a8B 2:h1B Bf3 b) 1... g8Q 2:h1Q† Q×g3. Even I was expecting a R-promotion in b)! (SE) Simple and effective (RT). a) trivial, b) quite sophisticated (AE).

203 Emmerson. 1:Qa2 c8Q 2:Be2 Qc6, 1:Rh7 c8R 2:Ra7 Re8, 1:Bc4 c8B 2:Ba2 Bb7 1:a2 c8S 2:Sa3 Sd6. Very interesting AUW (AE). If this pair don't persuade to Isardam, what will? (RT).

204 Vasyuchko. 1:G×b4 Gf7 2:Sc×e4 G×b4 or 2:Sg×e4 Gh7, 1:G×h7 Gb6 2:Sc×e4 Gb4 or 2:Sg×e4 G×h7. An attractive piece of engineering, fulcrum e5 (GJ). SE disliked the switchbacks - 'they seem to invalidate the reasons for playing the first pair of variations, which is the fault of all duals'. Quite overcomes my dislike of the 'variations' stipulation (RT). Vasyuchko is in my opinion the best Russian composer of orthodox and fairy helpmates! (AE).

205 Richardson. 1:e3 Gh6 2:Gg3 Rh4† 3:Kf3 Gh3, 1:Gg3 Rh4† 2:Kf3 Gh2 3:e3 Rf3, a nicely contrasted pair of mates (GJ). Cooks by 1:Kg3 Rg1† 2:Kh2 Rg- 3:Kh1 Rh-. AE suggests all 1-sq left, +bPs h3, h5; SE suggests cure by all up 1-sq, +bBf1. Alternatively expand by all up 2-sq, +bGh1, with two added solutions 1:Kg5 Rg3† 2:Kh4 Rg1 3:Kh3 R×g1, 1:Kf5 Rh7 2:Gh8 Rg7 3:Gf6 Rg5. This latter is a new problem, with different virtues, and enters informal tourney as 'Emmerson, after Richardson'.

206 Jelliss. 3:Kd3 4:Jc2 5:Jc3 6:Jg2 7:Jd2 8:Je4 9:Jc6 10:Jc4 Je4. SE cooks by 3:Kc3 4:Jc4 5:Jc2 6:Kd3 7:J2c3 8:Jbc2 10:Jd2 e4, but reckons BKd3 is a sound seven-mover. Careful timing of Jg2 and Je4 to avoid check to White (GJ). After so much jabber-destruction, surely Stephen's ready for some Jabber-creation now?

207 Rice. 1:g4 = B for 2:B×h3, with six further mates. Trivial strategy, as with a lot of Anti-A, but a nice change after 1... Qg2 (SE). Plentiful play, not all of it present pre-key (RT).

208 Velucchi. 1:c3 Sc6 2:S×e7 S×e7 3:S×c3 Sc6 4:Sb8; 1:Sc3 Sd5

2:S×e7 S×e7 3:c3 Sd5 4:S×c3. Wonderful! Shergar is masquerading as the bqS in one line and the wqS in the other! Best of set! (SE). Two distinct, precise lines, remarkable (RT).

209 Nebotov. 1:Sg5P 5:gfS 6:S×h2B 7:B×g1R 8:Ra1B 9:Bf6S 10:Sg8P g7. Einstein would have liked this demonstration of Relativity: the piece accelerating to near the speed of light and back again experiences mass-increase (to R), time dilation (10 moves to 1 for the stationary observer), and Fitzgerald contraction (travels only one square)! Well, maybe this is a little forced [it is indeed, as it is the stationary observer for whom more time should pass - RT] but an amusing problem! I've yet to see an Einstein problem that's more than a simple demonstration of the piece-transformations (RT).

210 Stein. 1:f×e7 2:Be7 3:Sc5 5:Rg4 6:Sf4 7:Qh5 8:g6 9:Bh4 10:Kg5 11:Bf5 12:Sg6 13:Ke5 15:d6 f6. Black must mate with pawn-move, but a supporting bP on g7 can be blocked on g6, when, under Kamikaze, a Q on h5 prevents f×g6. So solution not quite so hard as it looks... Not much Kamikaze content

but a neat piece-shuffle (RT) Nice that Kamikaze appears right at the beginning and then again at the end negatively! (AE) A. Ingleton reports a cook: 1.Bd6 3.Sb7 4.Re4 5.Ke5 7.Sf4 8.Qh5 9.g6 10.f×e f6.

168V Raican. (Not included for solving points) a) 1:RBSb7 Qh1 2:BSf3 Qa1 3:BSd1† Q×d1 4:Kb8 Qd8; 1:RBSa5 Qh1 2:Kb6 Qa8 3:Ka6 Qh1 4:BSc6 Q×c6.

191 Emmerson. (solution not complete in VC25) 1.Bg1 Bd8 2.cdB Sb6, c7 3.B×S\$ d5\$ 4.b4\$ cb e.p. \$ 5.000(R\$) Ke2\$. Now if WQ on c7, not mate because 6.Qc3\$! Underpromotion, e.p. and castling.

For the composers, and for myself, your comments are the only assurance that you've enjoyed the problems. While if you haven't enjoyed them, please educate us that we may do better!

SCORES (max 21)	
Luigi Vitale	7
Mark Ridley	4
Stephen Emmerson	18½
George Jelliss	7
A. Ettinger	18½
Ian Richardson	13
A. Ingleton	16

	CUMULATIVE SCORES			
	previous ascents	after VC21	1997	new ascents total
M Ridley		88	21	109
V Crisan		77	30	107
V Krivenko		82	5	87
S Emmerson		10	66	76
A Ingleton	*	32	38	70
P Raican	*	11	36	47
G Jelliss		-	40	40
A Ettinger		137	39	* 26
P Fayers		17	7	24
I Richardson		136	38	* 24
L Vitale		2	15	17
E Bartel		139	28	* 17
J Lorinc		-	6	6
P Wood		-	3	3

Congratulations to new ascensionists Erich Bartel, Ian Richardson and A. Ettinger; to Vlaicu Crisan and Mark Ridley on hitting their centuries; and to our top scorer Stephen Emmerson. Thanks to all solvers, high- or low-scoring: your comments are always valued, specially when they arrive in time for publication. (That time is half-way between a solstice and an equinox, or the 7th days of February, May, August and November.)

T. R. DAWSON

His Less Well Known Inventions

by Mark Ridley and George Jelliss

Thomas Rayner Dawson (1889 – 1951) is well-known as the founder of many strongly established fairy forms, now so well known as scarcely to need defining: pieces such as the Grasshopper, Nightrider and Neutrals, or stipulations such as Seriesmovers and Maximummers. In this article, we look at some of his less well known ideas, rarely seen or even unknown today but which composers may like to develop further.

PART 1 — Problem Stipulations

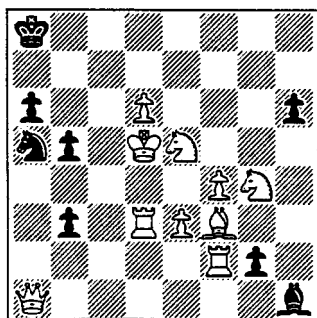
The zigzags were precursors of seriesplay problems, but demand more activity from the non-series player's pieces.

Checking Zig-Zag

Here Black must check when able, at his choice if he has more than one checking move, but otherwise he does not move at all. White does not check or capture. (However, check and mate to White are normal: no specific 'checkless + no-caps' fairy mates.)

(A) T. R. Dawson

British Chess Magazine 1921



Checking Zigzag
Selfmate in 5

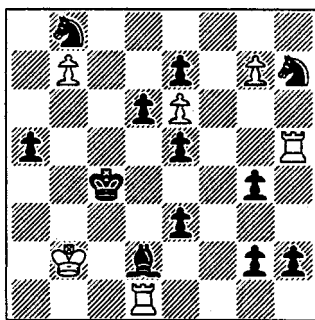
Problem (A) shows the now-popular 'Allumwandlung' (all the promotions) theme. After 1.Bd1, Black must promote with check. 1...g1Q 2.Sf3 Bxf3 3.Kc5 Sb7 4.Kd4 5.Sh2 Qg7† 1...g1R 2.Ke6 Bd5 3.Ke7 Sc6 4.Kf8 5.Sh2 Rg8† 1...g1B 2.Kd4 Sc6 3.Kc5 4.Rb2 Bxe3 5.Rd4 Bxd4† 1...g1S 2.Rg2 Bxg2 3.Bf3 Bxf3 4.Kc5 Sb7 5.Kd4 Se2†

Capturing Zig-Zag

As before, White does not capture or check, but this time Black must capture if able. Dawson defined two varieties, namely *Blackcap* and *Madcap*. In the former Black makes just one capture on his turn to play.

(B) T. R. Dawson

Schachzeitung 1912



Blackcap zigzag

Black must be made to capture a Rook on f5 after White's 6th move

Problem (B) has a rather makeshift stipulation. Here, for contemporary composers, is a rare opportunity to improve on Dawson! Surely it could be set as selfmate...?

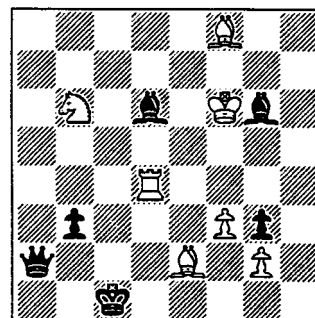
1.Rh1 leads to the Babson matching promotions: 1...ghQ 2.Ka3 Qxb7 3.g8Q 4.Qg6 5.Qb1

Qxb1 6.Rf5 (Qxf5). 1...ghR 2.g8R 3.Rg7 4.Rf7 5.Rf1 Rxf1 6.Rf5 (Rxf5). 1...ghB 2.g8B Bxb7 3.Bf7 4.Bg6 5.Be4 Bxe4 6.Rf5 (Bxf5). 1...ghS 2.g8S 3.Sh6 4.Sf5 5.Sg3 Sxg3 6.Rf5 (Sxf5).

In the Madcap form, Problem (C), Black runs riot, capturing with the same piece as often as he can before his turn ends.

(C) T. R. Dawson

Hamburg Correspondent 1927



Madcap Zigzag, Selfmate in 4

Dawson comments that (C) is 'a remarkable triple echo. I have spent over 100 composing hours trying to get the full fourfold effect, but in vain.' Can it be done? 1.Pf4 1...Bxf8 2.Bc4 Qxg2 3.Bf7 Bxf7 4.Re4 Qxe4xf4† 1...Bxf4 2.Bg4 Qxg2 3.Bf5 Bxf5 4.Sa8 Qxa8xf8† 1...Qxe2xg2 2.Bh6 Bxf4xh6 3.Rd6 4.Sd5 Qxd5xd6†

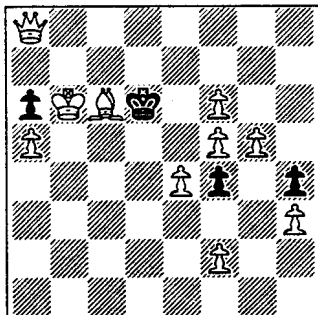
Watchtower Pieces

These pieces guard the normal squares, but do not move. (One could say they move only to capture a King.)

There is a philosophical question here as to whether such pieces are 'fairy pieces' at all or are simply orthodox pieces under a condition in the stipulation. If Watchtowers are combined with Circe, do they reappear on the first rank (as original pieces that have lost their mobility) or on the eighth rank (as fairy pieces that have appeared by promotion)? We favour the former interpretation.

Such pieces first appeared in problems where the stipulation is of the type: 'Mate in *n* without moving the X'. (D) is an example.

(D) T. R. Dawson
Reading Observer 27 Aug 1912



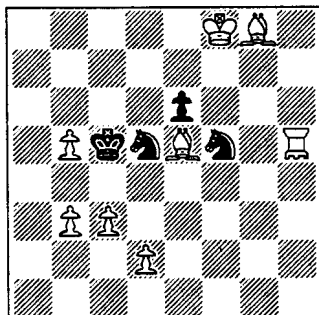
Mate in 8 with Q
without moving Q!

1.Ba4 Ke5 2.Kc5 f3 3.Be8
Kf4 4.Kd4 K×g5 5.Ke5 Kh6 6.Kf4
Kh7 7.Kg5 Kg/h8 8.Bg6‡

Watchtower pieces were re-invented by J. de A. Almay in *FCR* April 1940, where he gave them fanciful but unnecessary names: Atlantosaurus (King), Dinosaurus (Queen), Mammoth (Rook), Brontosaurus (Bishop), Hippopotamus (Knight). Anthony Dickins (*GFC* 1967) called them capturing-pieces.

The Rook must be the most authentic watchtower. Problem (E) is a later example.

(E) T. R. Dawson
Svenska Dagbladet 1937



Watchtower Rh5
Helpmate in 3 with set play

This example of 1/3-pin was dedicated to F. Lindgren on his

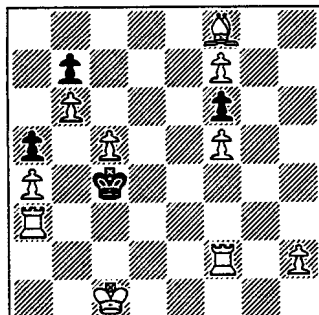
40th Birthday. Set: 1...B×e6 2.Sb6 Bc4 3.Sd6 Pd4‡ Play: 1.Bc7 Bh7 2.Sd6 Bd3 3.Bb6 Pb4‡.

(The watchtower device would seem a mere convenience for the sake of eliminating cooks: there is no - or almost no - specifically fairy play possible with a watchtower. RT)

Runaway Chess

This is another forgotten problem stipulation, like zigzags and maximuming, in which Black is restricted but not White.

(F) T. R. Dawson
Reading Observer
16 November 1912



Runaway Chess, Mate in 2

"The rule is that if any Black piece [not a pawn] moves onto one of the six central squares of either long diagonal it must at once move to one end or other of that diagonal, at his own choice. [Disregarding any pawns on the diagonal] ... If the second part [of this compound move] is illegal, the first part must not be made, and the King may not move into check at either part."

1.Re3 1...Kb5/Kd5-a8/Kd5-h1
2.Rf4/Re8/Re1 1...Kd4-h8/Kd4-a1
2.Rh3/Ra3‡

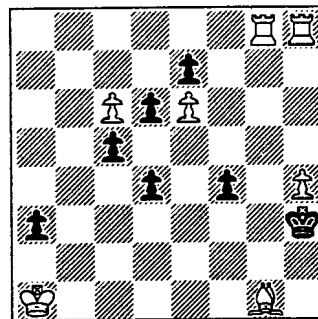
PART 2 — Fairy Pieces

So far the ideas have been essentially designed for problem composition. The following examples can occur in games play.

Leaper Pawns

Pawns promote to leapers, of any length of leap (promotion to Q, R, B being abolished).

(G) T. R. Dawson
Eskilstuna Kuriren
4 November 1922



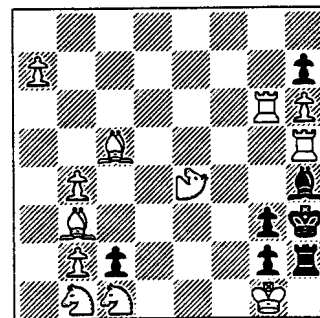
Pawns promote to leapers
Mate in 3

Solution: 1.c7 a2/d3/c4/d5/f3 2.c8= root 37/25/17/13/41 leaper any 3.Lb2/Lc3/Ld4/Le5/Rg3‡ In terms of coordinates the leapers are {6,1}/ 5-leaper /{4,1}/{2,3}/{5,4} the 5-leaper having the two types of leap {5,0} and {4,3}.

Five-Rider Pawns

There are five riders that can operate on the orthodox board: these are Rook, Bishop, Nightrider, Camel-(1,3)-rider, and Zebra-(2,3)-rider. A five-rider pawn can promote to one of these only.

(H) T. R. Dawson
BCF Awards 1936



Five-rider Promotion
Zebra-rider e4
Selfmate in 3

This problem is one of the earliest 'Super-Babsons' that Mark, who has made a special study of this subject, is aware of. 1.R6g5 b1 = R/B/N/CR/ZR 2.a8 = R/B/N/CR/ZR promoted piece moves and is captured forcing 3...Rh1† (each piece captures the other except in the line 2...ZR×h5 R×h5 when ZRa8 guards g4)

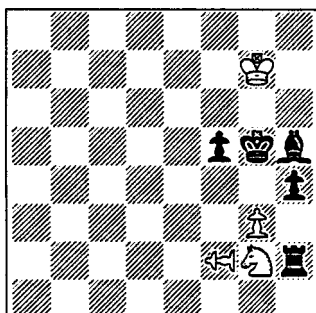
The elimination of the Q-promotion makes AUW efforts easier, even as the increase from four to five possible lines makes them harder.

For games play, George Jelliss proposes that the Queen be eliminated altogether by playing 'Five-Rider Chess' in which the back row is, say, CR, N, B, CR, K, B, ZR, R (where there are two CRs since like the two Bs they run on the different colours).

The Dragon

Knighted pieces have a long history. The R+S and B+S first occurring in Carrera's Game on the 8×10 board published in 1617. The history of these knighted pieces and their many names has been discussed several times before in these pages. (e.g. see VC2 page 20, or VC6 pages 67-71.). Dawson seems to have been the first to use the knighted pawn, which he named the Dragon.

(I) T. R. Dawson
Reading Observer 1912



Dragon f2, Mate in 2

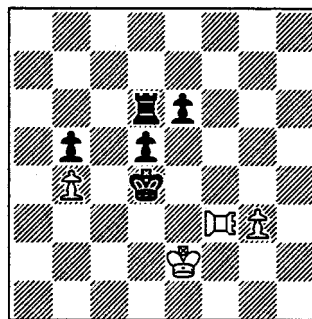
The original Dragon had no power to promote the pawn component, or to move as a pawn from the first rank (but later composers have tried these alternative rules).

Solution: 1.g4 (threat 2.Df3†) 1...B×g4/fg4/R~ 2.Df4/De4/Dh3†

The Ship

The Dragon can be regarded as either a knighted pawn or a pawned knight. Dawson worked with one other pawned piece, the P+R which he called a Ship.

(J) T. R. Dawson
Reading Observer 1912



Ship f3, Mate in 2

Solution: 1.Kd2 (threat SHf4†) Kc4/e5/Ke5 2.SHc3/SHd3/SHf4†

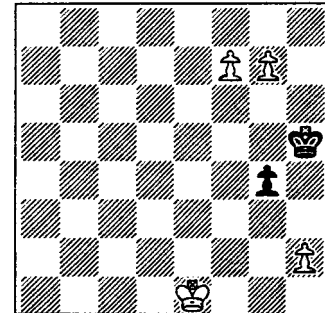
Ghost Chess

In Ghost Chess ('Phantom') captured pieces reappear on the capture-square, after the departure of the captor, as ghosts. They are then invulnerable to capture by living men. However ghosts (we believe) can capture ghosts.

At the end of his series of articles on 'Caissa's Playthings' in the Cheltenham Examiner 1913 Dawson wrote; 'I can only hint vaguely at such things as the Ship, the Ghost, the Phantom, etc, which form further arrows in my quiver, leaving them all to some future consideration.' What the difference was between ghosts and phantoms we know not, and Dawson doesn't seem to have published anything

until some examples appeared posthumously in FCR in 1952-3.

(K) T. R. Dawson
Fairy Chess Review
December 1952



Ghost Chess, Mate in 3

1.g8=Q Kh6/g3/Kh4 2.Qg6/Qg5/Q×g4† K×Q 3.f8S/h4/h3†

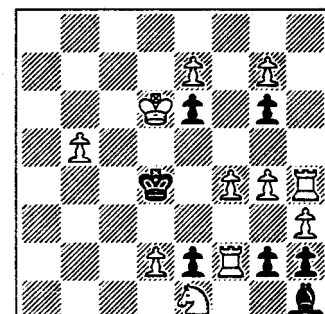
There is currently a tourney in the Romanian magazine Quartz for Ghostly problems of any type. The judge is Paul Raican, and entries should go to Vlaicu Crisan, str Closca 2, RO-3400 Cluj, Romania, by 31 April 98. (The tourney announcement does not permit ghosts to capture one another.)

The example in Quartz, is a helpmate.

Reversible Pawns

Dawson experimented with a number of enhanced pawns.

(L) T. R. Dawson
Deutsche Schachzeitung 1911



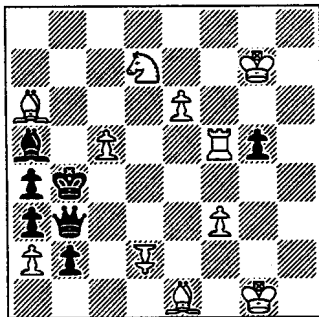
Pawns can move straight and capture diagonally backwards
Mate in 2

Solution: 1.g4-g3 (thr. f4-f3)
1...Ke4 f5 1...e5†/g5 2. f×e5/f×g5
1.../e3/h×g3 2.f×e3/f×g3.

Side-Moving Pawns

The stipulation to this problem was that (all) Pawns may move one square either side as well as forwards, but it seems sufficient to have only Pd2 with this power.

(M) T. R. Dawson
Bolton Football Field
27 December 1913



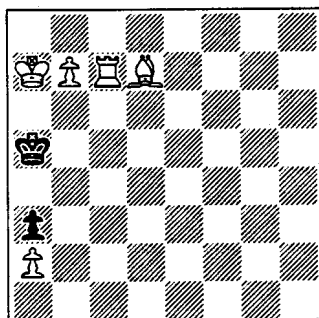
Side-moving pawn d2, Mate in 2

Can this extended 'Albino' (pawn-field task) be set without the multirex device? 1.Sb8 (for Sc6†) Q×e6/Qe3†/Q×f3/Qd5/Qc3†/Q×a2 2.Pe2/×e3/d3/d4/×c3/c2†

For game-play purposes one could begin, say, with the king and queen pawns having this enhanced power.

X-Ray Pieces

(N) T. R. Dawson
Reading Observer
18 January 1913 (version)



Line pieces act through any number of obstructing men. Mate in 2.

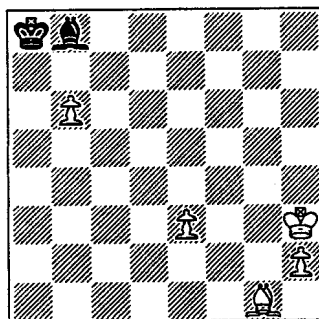
The name 'X-ray pieces' was not used by Dawson in 1913, but the stipulation to the preceding problem (one of three composed at the same time) has the same effect as the 'X-ray pieces' proposed by E. Feigin and N. Givoli in *FCR* August 1951.

Solution: 1.b8S Kb4 2.Sc6†

Pivoting Pieces

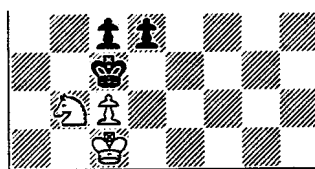
The original stipulation of the next two problems was 'Mate in 2 halves!' But this is too obscure for modern tastes. Instead we specify that they use Pivoters: pieces that can turn at an angle when half-way through a move, provided each of the two whole moves would have been legal.

(O) T. R. Dawson
Wiener Schachzeitung 1912



Mate in 1
Pivoting Bishops

(P) T. R. Dawson
Cheltenham Examiner
21 August 1913



Mate in 1
Pivoting Knight

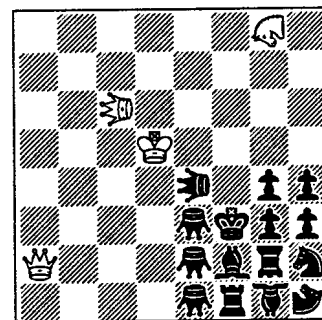
Solutions: (O) 1.Bg1-g2† (turns half-way to f2) Bb8 cannot interpose since the moves Ba8-b7 and Bc8-b7 are illegal (two Black

pieces on a8, WK check c8). (P) 1. Na2† (turns half-way to a4).

The Original Kangaroo

We conclude with an extravaganza from the newspaper column run by Henry Tate who coined the term 'Fairy Chess', later taken up by Dawson.

(Q) T. R. Dawson
The Australasian
10 October 1914



Grasshoppers e1,e2,e3
Giraffe g8, Camel h1
Dabbaba g2, Alfil g1
Kangaroos c6, e4, Mate in 2

"We let the Kangaroo, as he is a great jumper, spring to any square in his half of the board, either the lateral half or the vertical half." 1.Qa4 (1.Qc4? Gb5). "Did you ever see a problem with 32 cross-checks before?"

This 'Kangaroo' differs from the modern variety which is a hopper along queen lines to the first square beyond two pieces.

We hope these inventions of Dawson's will be of interest to readers of today. Sometimes the best new idea is an old one!

The Editor hopes to follow this article with a series of shorter items on other 'Pioneers of Variant Chess' who have contributed new ideas to the subject. Suggestions and examples for inclusion would be welcome from readers.

THE END IS NIGH
by Paul Byway
20 The Finches, Hertford
Hertfordshire SG13 7TB

Losing Chess

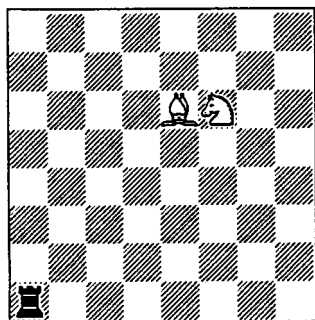
A lot of material, you may recall, was held over from the last issue. John Beasley asks me to point out that his 10-page listing *Published Material on Endgame Theory and Endgame Studies in Losing Chess* is available free to anyone who asks.

He also recommends to our attention the following study and writes: "This composition may have quite a short solution, but it is in a different class from most Losing Chess studies".

(Solutions to the studies are on the next page.)

#26

R. Sekhar & R. Shankar
Commend. *Eterosacco* 1987



Losing Chess. Draw
(I have reversed the colours)

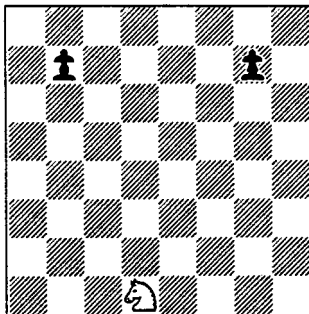
The next two studies are by John, and he describes them as follows: "They are theoretical studies: the positions are natural (or at least simple) and the solutions are strategically motivated, but the play is not unique. An unmoved knight's or rook's pawn wins against a knight, so Black will hope to advance one pawn, force White to capture it, and then win with the other: moving it one square or two as appropriate and

winning by promoting to bishop. It follows that White must force the second pawn to commit itself before he captures the first."

king can be kept on the first rank by a knight on the fifth. The Q+N v K ending never wins for Q+N, well almost never ..."

#27

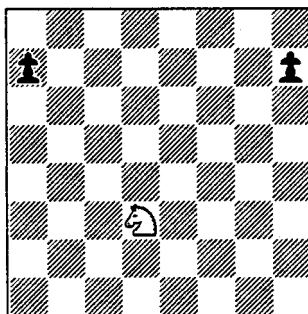
J. D. Beasley (original)



Losing Chess
White to move wins

#28

J. D. Beasley (original)

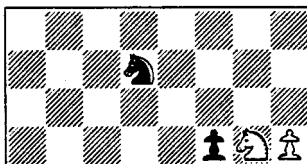


Losing Chess
White to move wins

I remind readers that Fabrice Liardet (address in previous issue) is interested in any material for his forthcoming book on Losing Chess. Meanwhile, here are two more studies by Fabrice.

#29

F. Liardet (original)

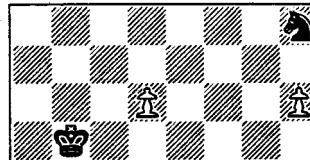


Losing Chess
White to play and win

Of the first he writes as follows: "What must be realised is that the R+N v K ending is a draw, unless the

#30

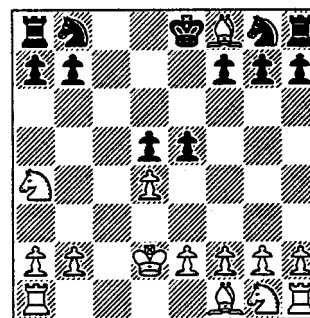
F. Liardet (original)



Losing Chess
White to play and win

Competition 2

The competition for this issue is based on the following position in Italian Progressive Chess. (See next page for results of first competition).



This arose after 1. d4 2. d5, e5 3. Bg5, Bxd8, Bxc7 4. Bf5, Bxc2, Bxd1, Ba4 5. Nc3, Kd2, Bd6, Bxf8, Nxa4 in the game Pritchard - Byway from the BCVS qualifying competition. Let me say at once that I don't believe David Pritchard gains any advantage from having seen this position before. He was heavily involved in another qualifying competition at the time, as well as the Mind Sports Olympiad — and you have AGES to mull over the position.

The task is this:- to give a plausible series 6 which is answered by mate in 7. I seem to remember tripping over several of these, but can't remember what they were: but I'm sure there was an Italian mate among them. So how many 'essentially different' mates can you find? Bonus points for a viable Black defence by the way!

Result of Competition 1

The idea of a competition was originally suggested by Peter Wood. He was quite justified, for the response to the first was better than I expected. The intended solutions to the Progressive Chess position are:

(a) 8. Kc7, Rxb8, Rxa8, Bb7, Bxe4, Bxg2, Bxh1, h6.

(b) 9. Kf4, e5, e6, exd7, Bb7, Bxa6, Ke5, Kd6, d8Q Italian mate.

(c) 9. Kf3, Kg3, Kxh2, Kg3, Kg4, Bb7, Bxa6, Bb7, Bd5†

I apologise for the fact that the move Rxh1 was missing from series 8 in part (c) of the question: this caused David Pritchard to give a correct solution to the wrong position. I don't see why he should be penalised for this so he and Fred Galvin, who gave a text-book answer, score 6 points.

Ian Richardson gave, for part (a), the solution 8. Kc7, Kxb8, Bf1, Bxg2, Bxh1, Bxe4, Bxa8, h6 after which I think that 9. a3, Nf3, Ng5, Nxf7, Nxh8, Nf7, Nxh6, Nf5, Nxg7 will win. In part (b) however, Ian offers two variations as well as the intended answer. First we have 9. Kd2, b4, b5, b6, b7, e5, e6, exd7, d8Q Italian mate: here the b-pawn takes the bishop's part. Secondly we have 9. Kf4, Ke5, Kd6, Bb7, Bxa6, e5, e6, exd7, d8R Italian mate: this I allow not because of the under-promotion but because the king must take an active part in the mating net, instead of merely moving to the d-file. On balance I judge that Ian should also score 6 points.

Solutions to Studies

#26. Black threatens 1...Ra2 and 1.Ba2 leads to a lost N v R ending, hence 1. Nd5. Black's only safe reply is 1...Ra2 and now White must play 2. Bg8! and not 2. Bf7 when 2...Rh2 3. Bh5 Rxb5 wins for Black. Black must go back, 2...Ra1, and now White still cannot play 3. Bf7 because of 3...Rh1 etc. and must play 3. Be6; draw by repetition.

#27. 1. Ne3 and now two lines:
 (a) 1...g5 2. Ng2 g4 3. Ne1 g3 4. Nd3 g2 5. Ne5 b6 6. Nf3! g1(any) (6...b5 7. Nd2) 7. Nxg1 b5 8. Ne2 b4 9. Nc3.
 (b) 1...b6 2. Ng2 b5 (2...g6 3. Ne3 g5 4. Ng2 g4 5. Nf4 g3 6. Nd3) 3. Ne3 with the echo line 3...b4 4. Nd1 b3 5. Ne3 b2 6. Nd5 g6 7. Nc3! b1(any) 8. Nxb1 g5 9. Nd2 g4 10. Nf3.

#28. 1. Ne5 h6 2. Nc4! a6 (2...a5 3. Nxa5 h5 4. Nc4 h4 5. Ne3 h3 6. Ng2) 3. Ne5 a5 4. Nd3 a4 5. Ne5 a3 6. Nd3 a2 7. Nc1! a1B (7...h5 8. Nxa2 h4 9. Nc1 h3 10. Ne2 h2 11. Ng1) 8. Na2 Bc3 9. Nxc3 h5 10. Ne2 h4 11. Ng3.

#29. This is such a difficult position that I had better give the solution of Fabrice in full. 1.h6! (a) 1.Nh3/e6?? f4 2. Nxf4 Nf8! 3. Ne6 Nxe6 4. h6 Ng7‡. (b) 1.Nf3/f7? Ne5 2. Nxe5 f4 ... and 5...f1K draw. For instance 3. Nc4 f3 4. h6 f2 5. Ne5 f1 6. h7 Kg1! (c) 1. Nh7? Nf8 2. Nxf8 f4 ... and 5...f1K draw. The white knight being too far, the R + N v K ending will be a draw: for instance 3. h6 f3 4. h7 f2 5. h8R f1K 6. Ne6 Ke2 7. Rh4 Kd2 8. Rf4 Ke1! 9. Ra4 Ke2 etc. (d) 1. Ne4? fxe4 2. h6 e3 3. h7 Nf6! 4. h8B e2 5. Bxf6 e1K draw. 1...f4 Otherwise 2. Ne4 f/Nxe4 3. h7, and there is nothing against 4. h8R and White wins. 2. Ne4 (2. Nh7? Nf8 is the same as 1. Nh7?) If now the Black N does not sacrifice itself, there follows 3. Ng3 fxg3 4. h7 and h8R White wins, except after 2...Nb8!? 3. h7 f3 4. h8R! Nc6 (4...f2 5. Nxf2! N~ 6. Rb8 and wins N v N) 5. Rb8 Nxb8 6. Nc3 f2 7. Ne4! f1B (only) 8. Nf2 and the Black B must sacrifice itself, and again White wins the N v N ending.

Two variations remain:

(A) 2...Nf6 3. Nxf6 f3 4. h7 f2 5. h8R! In spite of the excellent position the White N will have on d5, promotion to Q does not win: the Black K stays on e1 and f1 (if necessary g1), and White cannot make any progress. White N moves would have allowed 5...f1B draw (not 5...f1R? 6. Nf6 Rxf6 7. h8B White win). 5...f1K 6. Nd5! and wins: for instance 6...Kg2 7. Re8 Kh3 8. Rf8

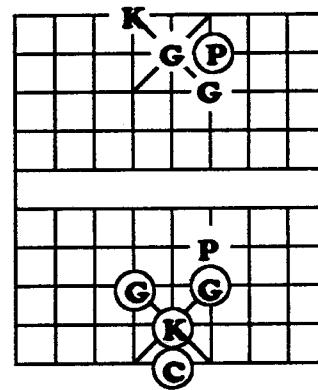
Kh4 9. Rf6 Kh3 10. Rf5 Kh2 11. Rf4 Kh1 12 Rf3 White wins.

(B) 2...Nc5 3. Nxc5 f3 4. h7 f2 5. h8Q! (5.h8R?? f1R Black wins) 5...f1K 6. Qh6! Reciprocal zugzwang. 6...Kg2 7. Qh1! Kxh1 8. Ne4 White wins.

#30. After 1. h7! Black has four ways to force a unique promotion by White. (a) 1...Ng6 2. h8 (any!) Nxh8 3. d7 Ng6 4. d8R! Nh4 5. Re8 and 6. Re2 White wins the Black knight. The K + N v R ending is usually a draw, but the king and knight lose if they are disconnected. (b) If on the third move Black chooses 3...Kb6 we have 4. d8K! Kc5 5. Kd7 Kd4 6. Kd6 Ke3 7. Ke5 Kf2 8. Kf4 Kg1 9. Kg3 White wins. The K v N ending is an elementary win. (c) 1...Kc5 2. d7 Kd5 3. d8B! White wins, e.g. 3...Ke4 4. Bc7 Kd3 5. Bb6 Kc2 6. Ba5 Kb2 7. Bd2 Ka2 8. Bc1. (d) 1...Kb6 2. d7 Ka5 3. d8K! Kb4 4. Kd7 Kc3 5. Kd6 Kd2 6. Kd5 etc.

Corrections

Due to postal delay of 11 days some proof corrections did not get into the last issue. In the text following the Modern Courier Chess position from play the following moves were misprinted: 56. Fg2; 68. Fi2; 69...Kj6; 82.Cxj7. The Xiangqi position should be as follows:



A HISTORY OF CHESS

Lex Kraaijeveld pointed out some time ago that a facsimile edition of H. J. R. Murray's work is published by Benjamin Press, Northampton, Massachusetts, USA (Tel: 00-1-4135866272). The price was \$39.95 plus \$4.85 (p&p, surface mail). The facsimile edition is a well produced hardback with dust-jacket.

Xiangqi with a German Accent

by Peter Wood

Xiangqi-Kurier

While at the Mind Sports Olympiad in the summer I saw for the first time the above magazine. I have since acquired all issues of it, which, since it was founded in 1994, have so far amounted to seven.

The magazine is produced by Claus Tempelmann of Braunschweig in Germany. Issues are usually of 28 pages in A5 (BCM) format. A small print size is used, which means that a lot of information can be crammed on each page. The magazine is well produced, is in German, and has the odd photograph. The notation used is algebraic; the diagrams are Chinese. Issues come out approximately every six months.

It is a magazine I like. There is a lot of information about Xiangqi in Germany naturally, but there is also news about other European events and World Championships. Detailed results tables are given. In the absence of any *UK Chinese Chess Newsletter* since 1995 this is currently the best source for European results and events. News of English local events is scarce, possibly because of lack of information from the *UK Chinese Chess Association* and because many events are organised at fairly short notice.

X-K devotes many pages to analysis of positions from games, 'find the continuation' type features and endgame positions. There is at least one closely annotated game involving one of the German players and several other unannotated games, which are often from top Chinese events. Other features are reviews of Xiangqi computers and computer programs, solving competitions and contact addresses. I recommend *Xiangqi-Kurier*, although it would be helpful if one had a reasonable knowledge of the German language. Going through the games and positions would certainly improve

one's strength at Xiangqi. It clearly has for the German non-asians.

The subscription price is given as 10DM for two issues of the magazine, to which one could perhaps add a couple of extra marks for the magazine to be posted to the UK.

To subscribe, write to Claus Tempelmann, Lubeckstrasse 48, 38108 Braunschweig, Germany.

Comparisons

How does *Xiangqi-Kurier* compare with David Woo's American-published *Xiangqi Review*? Very well in my opinion. There is much better coverage of European events, and there are more positions to solve or analyse. It also scores well in endgame instruction.

Xiangqi Review has more detailed news of Chinese events, and gives many more annotated games which almost exclusively involve the top Chinese players. As with *X-K* there are positions to analyse and solve and there is much on the endgame. There are articles about the opening, and much on repetition rules — two areas which *Xiangqi-Kurier* has so far ignored. The magazine is written in English. The notation used is Chinese.

Xiangqi Review remains the top choice for UK readers — deservedly so. But readers wishing to improve at Xiangqi should consider subscribing to both magazines. They will not be disappointed with *Xiangqi-Kurier*.

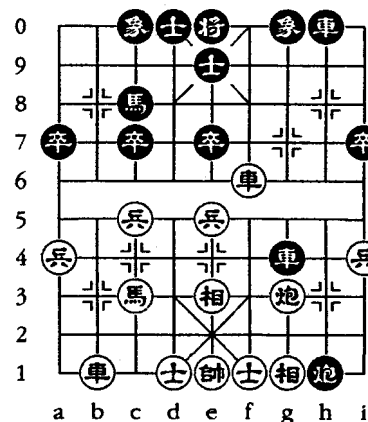
Here is a game from *Xiangqi-Kurier*. It was played on the Internet on 27.1.1996, and was part of a Europe v. Canada match. Black was the current Ladies' Champion at the time.

Stefan Scholz – Huang Yu Ying

Annotations by Stefan Scholz, translated from German.

1.Che3 Ng8 2.Ng3 Rh0 3.Rh1 Nc8 4.c5 g6 5.Rh7 Ra9 (5...C i8 is more usual.) 6.Nc3 Rd9 7.e5 Gfe9 8.Ca3

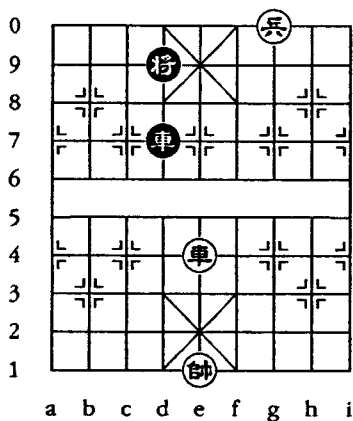
Cb4 9.Rb1 Rd4 10.Ce4!? (To 10.Rg7?? there would follow 10...C:g4) 10...C:e4 11.Ng:e4 Nf6 12.Ng3 g5 (Black wants to unpin his Cannon on h8.) 13.Rh6 g5:g4 14.R:f6 g4:g3 15.C:g3 Ch1 16.Bce3 Rg4 (Red's position is somewhat under pressure; it is essential for him to be accurate in defence. The weak point of the Black position is the Knight on c8.)



17.Ne2! (Probably the only move. So long as Red controls the point f2, little danger is threatened. Losing pretty quickly are 17.C f3? Rh2 followed by Rf2, and 17.C i3 Rh3!. The weaknesses of the red position are the points f1 and f2.) 17...Bge8 (Preparing for the exchange of Rooks. The vital question for Black is whether he gets any clear threats after the unavoidable (for Red) Rook exchange. Red had taken a lot of time over his 17th move and had taken into account Black's moves from the Rook exchange up to Red's vital 20th move. In the game Red decides that after the Rook exchange Black had no threats.) 18.Rb8 (At last Red finds time for counter threats.) 18...Rf0 19.R:f0+ K:f0 (The threat is now Rf4, with mate to follow: 20.R:c8?? Rf4 21.Nc3 R:f1+ 22.Ke2 Rf2 mate. For this reason the next move is forced.) 20.Cf3! Rg2 21.Nc3 (Because of the threat Rf2 there is still not time for 21.R:c8.) 21...Ch8 22.Rb7 Ch7 23.Rb8 Ch8 24.Rb7 Rg4 (The manoeuvre Rg4-g2-g4 has cost Black two tempi; meanwhile Red has played 21.Nc3.) 25.R:c7 R:i4 (The position is now almost level with

just a small advantage for Red. The black Cannon and Knight are tied down.) 26.Nd5 (If Red plays 26.a5, then 26...Rg4 would follow and the red pieces are as much tied down as Black's, so that the pawn i7 can be set in motion.) 26....a6 27.N:e7! (The alternative is to go for a win with 27.e6 e7:e6 28.Nf4+ Ke0 29.N:e6, or 27.c6 Rd4 28.Nb6 Nb0, in each case leading to a small red advantage; but Red only sees the liquidating exchanges, and does not make the attempt to win.) 27....N:e7 28.R:e7 i6 29.Rf7+ Ke0 30.Rf6 i5 31.Rh6 Cg8 32.R:a6 Re4 33.Ra7 R:e5 34.Rg7 Cg0 35.Rg5 R:g5 36.B:g5 Drawn.

Now an endgame position from the May 1994 issue. In this Rook and pawn ending Red is to play and win.

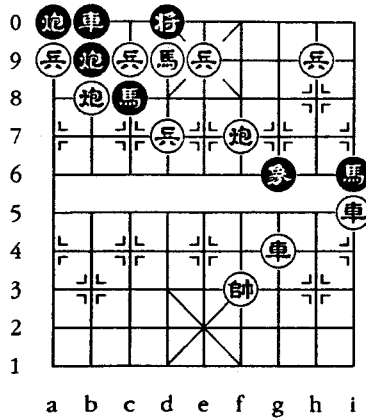


1.f0 Rd6 (Black's Rook is tied to the d-file because of Red's mate threat on that file.) 2.e0 Rd7 3.Re9+ Kd8 4.d0 Rd6 (If the Rook leaves the d-file, Re4 would immediately force it back again.) 5.c0 Rd7 (If Rc6, there would follow Re0, as in the game.) 6.Re0 1-0

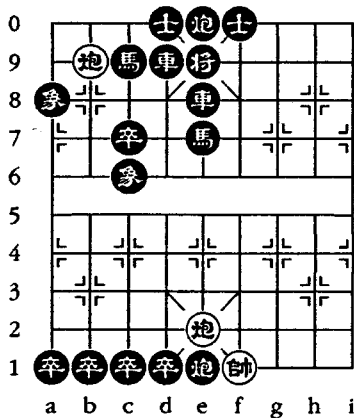
There is no defence to Rd0 mate. One should note how important it is to transfer the pawn to c0.

And now a couple of positions from the composer Udo Marks, which are taken from the latest (July) issue.

In the first, Red to move and mate in two moves. (Well worth solving. The solution will be given in the next issue in case we compromise the solving competition in X-K.)



In the following constructed position all 16 black pieces are stalemated by just three (!) red pieces.



WEHR-SCHACH
by Peter Wood

Continuing the German theme, in the April 1992 issue of *The Chess Collector* under 'Auction News' there is an account of an auction sale at Phillips in London where one of the items was a German game called **Tak-Tik**. The game was played on an 11x11 chequered board. I quote: "The set with the original box, board and instruction sheet, dating from about 1937 and with pieces 4.2 cm to 4.5 cm, (was) sold to a commission bidder for £871."

There is a photograph of the board and game box in the magazine, and from this I recognised the game as **Wehr-Schach** (not too difficult as **Wehr-Schach** is written on the box!), details of which are given in David Pritchard's *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*, page 339. However a

difference from the board that is shown in *ECV* is that on the black squares in the middle file — on ranks 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 — there is a vertical white line. This is in addition to the long diagonal markings which represent a highway and a river, and the two lakes elsewhere on the board. In addition the name **Tak-Tik** is not mentioned in the *ECV* entry. I wrote to David Pritchard concerning these differences enclosing a photocopy of the relevant page in *The Chess Collector*. Here is his reply:

David Pritchard: "In the *ECV* I indicated that **Wehr-Schach** enjoyed considerable popularity. Since the game was widely sold I am surprised that it fetched so much since I feel sure many sets must survive complete in Germany and Austria. The first edition of the booklet on the game (1938: I believe 1937 in the *CC* is wrong) does not mention the name **Tak Tik** nor is there a line marked on the central file. This, presumably the official booklet, was published by Richter in Frankfurt-am-Main and is the edition I took as the authority for the *ECV*. It runs to 48 pages. Another edition was first published in 1939 by Die Wehrmacht in Berlin. This was presumably some army publishing house so perhaps the game was encouraged for training purposes? Anyway, the second *Wehrmacht* edition (1940) has **TAK TIK** as a logo below the title from which, interestingly, the hyphen has been dropped. So it seems very likely that the game was marketed later as **TAK TIK** when, to judge from your picture, the hyphen reappeared in **Wehr-Schach**. It would be interesting to know the name of the publisher of the *CC* set? Probably a third publisher in Munich or Bremen!!"

Mike Pennell, the editor of *The Chess Collector*, later sent me an extract from an old issue with an account of an auction sale at Phillips in 1995. I quote: "...a German 'Wehr-Schach Tak-Tik' chess-type game with an Eagle lacking from each side, which had been a regular feature of Phillips sales for some time at an ever-reducing estimate, finally found a buyer for the princely sum of £71.."

Xiangqi Results

by Peter Wood

Forshang Cup: The extremely strong Forshang Cup tournament, reported on in *VC25*, duly took place in September at Las Vegas. There were 24 participants. It was an 8-round Swiss tournament. First was **Lu Qin** (China), second Wu Kuilin (Taiwan), third Wong Wanheng (West Malaysia). C.K.Lai was the UK entrant. (Source: *Xiangqi Review*).

5th World Championship: This 9-round tournament took place in Hong Kong from November 19th to the 23rd. About 80 players took part from over 20 countries, including five from the UK. Confirming his World Number One status was **Lu Qin** (China), who won the tournament ahead of Xu Yinchaun (China) in second place and Wu Kuilin (Taiwan), who was third.

Success for Guo Shulong: The Ladies' World Championship was a big success for European Xiangqi. The winner was **Lin Ye** of Italy, who, C.K.Lai informs me, was also champion in 1981. In second place was Gao Yiping (China), and in bronze medal position, Guo Shulong (UK). This was a great triumph for Guo Shulong, who has won the UK Championship twice in recent years (both men and women compete on equal terms in this).

The sixth World Championship will be held in Macao in 1999, while the seventh will be held in Paris in 2001. This is the first time the Xiangqi World Championship will have been held outside of the Far East, and it is hoped that this will give a strong boost to Xiangqi in the West, and in particular Europe.

This information on the World Championship comes from a lecture given by C.K.Lai at the Torriano Meeting House in Kentish Town, north London. This was organised by John Rety. Anyone in the area who fancies a friendly game of Xiangqi, or would like to hear of future events at the Meeting House, please contact John at 99 Torriano Avenue London NW5 2RZ.

Fischereactions

The following extracts from *Sumo* (which is a games zine I believe, not one on wrestling) were noticed by our correspondent Derick Green. The views expressed seem to have been stimulated by an earlier reference to Fischerandom.

Alan Parr: The very first issue of *Hopscotch* had a chess variant which still gets pulled out from time to time, and I think David Pritchard did actually include it in his book. It did indeed randomise the pieces on each player's backrow. But there are lots of slightly different ways to implement the setup (e.g. are pieces placed at random, or do players alternately position them one at a time? Do both players have the same setup, and do the two bishops have to be on opposite colours? I've even seen a variation where the pieces are initially set up in a reserve area and then played onto the board.)

The Hopscotch variant had another rule, to make sure the game played fast, which was that all turns were two-move turns, so the whole game didn't take 50 turns or more. [*MS (editor of Sumo): I sense a rant coming on...*]

So when I read about the game in one of the broadsheets I was very interested to know what rules Fischer was advocating. But what I found hugely depressing was the response of the paper's chess writer. I can't remember whether it was Hartston, or Keene, but it was someone of that ilk. His response — yes, all very interesting, but the idea was totally wrong, because it meant players cutting themselves off from hundreds of years of chess experience and history.

Yes, indeed — that's exactly what's right about the idea — that instead of having to learn the first twenty moves of ten thousand standard games the players would actually have to rely upon their own ideas and insights from the very first move. A pretty obvious quality of a good game really. I should have thought. What a sad response from the chess establishment! Am I over-reacting, but it does seem rather like the secret society syndrome at work. We've studied this game for forty years, so we're the ones who know about it, and we can't have any Tom, Dick or Bobby being allowed to enjoy it without playing (figuratively and literally) to our own rules.

Actually I've written before about the defects of chess. What, honestly, would you say about it if Go or Mancala were the focal game of our civilisation, and you saw chess for the first time on Death Row at Olympia? A game that

takes ages to read and learn the rules. Where you have several different pieces, one of which is so badly designed it can access only half the squares? Where another — but only one — can move across occupied territory? Where you have another totally different set of pieces, and these ones, unlike all the others, take differently from the way they move? Where the whole game is so slow that we need to introduce a fix to allow these pieces another move on their first turn — but wait a minute, that means another couple of bugs that need their own fixing, so we have en passant capture, but no double-square first move capture. And the game's still so slow that we'll have another fiddle rule, castling, and this one in turn needs special exception rules about castling through, into, and out of check. And when you've got all of this sorted out, you still find the game is so flawed you need a whole further set of extra rules about game ends, to allow for stalemate, draws by repetition of position, 50-move rules, and so on — what a mess! So there's an idea for a new game, let's have a games consultant's response to being sent the first copy of Chess for critical evaluation.

Eddy Richards: I also don't think that Chess is a particularly good game — what would be the reaction if it was brought out nowadays? I can see the reviews — "nice pieces, but they all move and attack differently and the game is too difficult to learn, each game takes far too long, too indecisive with many draws, as all the information is available to both players it is completely analysable, though as it is also complex only sad anoraks would bother, no multi-player option, could be tweaked to make it more interesting, e.g. by randomising the initial positions of the pieces but as it stands has not been developed enough."

VC - BOUND VOLUMES

Volume 1 (issues 1/8) costs £10 (UK), £11 (\$17) (Europe, and Surface worldwide), £13 (\$20) (Airmail worldwide). **Volume 2** (issues 9/20) costs £17 (UK), £18 (\$27) (Europe, and Surface worldwide), £21 (\$33) (Airmail worldwide). Postage is included.

Bound volumes of *VC*'s pre-cursors *The Games and Puzzles Journal* 1987-9 (1 vol £17.50) and *Chessics* 1976-86 (2 vols £15) are also available from George Jelliss, who is now up to the third issue of a new volume of the *G&P Journal*.

All the above are now in plastic comb binding. Addresses on front cover.

Free Programme Chess

Alternative Rules

At the end of the booklet on Free Programme Chess (described on pages 115-6) there is a comment from the winner, Lasha Dzhandzhgava, suggesting that doubled pawns should not be permitted and that a longer time limit is needed. The former point is certainly valid and a rule that one pawn be placed in each file can easily be incorporated.

I would also question the placing of the kings as the first move. The evidence from the games is that this results in the line pieces being set up in massive batteries directed towards the king's field, with a consequent tendency to rather unsubtle direct attacks and rapid exchange of major pieces. It seems to me that placing the kings last could be more entertaining, keeping the opponent guessing where it might go, and encouraging a freer deployment of the line pieces.

It also occurred to me that if the pieces were required to be placed in a definite sequence, there would be no need to give the placement moves as well as a diagram of the position reached: the moves could all be deduced from the position.

The obvious sequence is: Ps Ns Bs Rs Q K. The pawns being placed from each player's left to right (i.e. a to h for White, h to a for Black) and the first N, B and R being placed on white, the second on black.

Another alternative would be a rule that no man may be placed where it attacks or is attacked by an opposing man. This would ensure that there are not multiple choices of pawn-captures on the first move and that the line-pieces tend to be placed behind the pawns. — GPJ

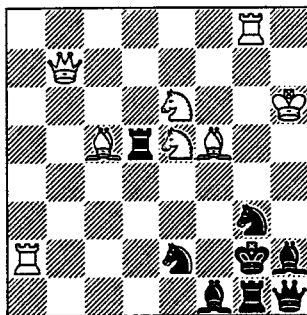
Courier Chess Boards

Paul Byway has had made some vinyl 12x8 Courier Chess boards. He is selling these for £8 plus post and packaging. As Paul says, this price is designed to be 'fiscally neutral', i.e.: he will not be making any money out of it! For those interested write to Paul at: **20 The Finches, Hertford, SG13 7TB.** — PCW

Chess Ultimates

Thur Row (112 Behrens Drive, Edwardsville, Illinois 62025 USA) issued vol.4 no.1 of this irregular series in June 1997. It consists of four A4 sheets with 34 diagrams of one-move construction problems, all showing 'let-moves' or 'stalemate releases'. One of 19 originals:

Thur Row, #22
Chess Ultimates 1997



62 White let-moves, Legal position
Original 16 Officers only

Many of the examples have very extensive conditions (such as whether promoted men or promotion in play are or are not allowed; dualled or dual-free, legal or illegal, etc.) which in my view detract considerably from the attraction of these types of construction task, but probably the maxima achievable in the simpler tasks have all been reached. — GPJ

Chess Variant Design Competition

Hans Bodlaender is currently having a small competition on his 'Chess Variant Pages' website, namely to *design a chess variant on a board with 38 cells* (for his 38th birthday). Readers who have no Internet access can send their submissions on paper, before 31 January 1998, to: Hans Bodlaender, Nedercamp 26, 3992 RP Houten, Netherlands. Internet: WWW: <http://www.cs.ruu.nl/~hansb/d.chessvar/> or hansb@cs.ruu.nl for e-mail.

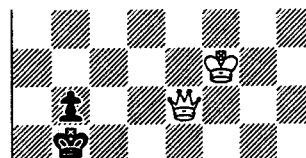
Those with a PC or Macintosh but without Internet access can obtain most files of the Chess Variant Pages on six floppy disks (specify your operating requirements), price \$10 or equivalent, or an exchange of chess or games materials.

Generalised Generals

Just too late for the article in the last issue we received a note from George Hodges who tells us that the Wood General (*Moku-sho*) is the (23) piece, and the Clay (or Tile) General (*Ga-sho*) is the (25) piece. The name for the Iron General is *Tes-sho*, while the Middle-man should be *Chu-nin* and the Ferocious Leopard *Mo-hyo*. He also mentions an Earth General which can be (15) or (125).

British Endgame Study News

As last year, John Beasley is producing a variant chess special number with the December BESN, and he is offering copies without charge to BCVS members on request (his address is on our front cover). The 8 pages include articles on the Losing Game, Marseilles Chess, Endings with variant stipulations such as 'White to retract and win' or 'Add WK so that White cannot draw', and lastly the unsolved mathematical question of how many knights are needed to trap a king on increasingly large, or even infinite boards. The following Marseilles endgame is illustrated on the cover, quoted from the book by Alessandro Castelli reviewed in VC25 p.112.



Marseilles Chess
White to play and win

Solution: 1. Qd2/Ke2 Ka1/b1Q
2. Qd3/Qa3† Qa2† 3. Kd3/Qc1†
Qb1† 4. Kd2/Qa3† Qa2†
5. Kc1/Qc3† Qb2† 6. Qxb2†.

Editorship of Variant Chess

Is there anyone out there who would like to take on the editorship of volume 4 of *Variant Chess*? The present editor, George Jelliss, may have to step down due to other commitments. Use of a PC with Lotus software or compatible systems would help. Further details on request.