

VARIANT CHESS

Founded by George Jelliss

THE MAGAZINE TO BROADEN YOUR CHESS HORIZONS

Volume 4, issue 29

ISSN 0958-8248

Autumn 1998

Contents

The future of VC	
What can we expect from a new chess variant?	
Alice Chess	
Italian Progressive Chess	
Extinction Chess	
Points from near and far	
(Yakutat Chess, randomization, exchange difficulties, chiral knights)	
Xiangqi	<i>Peter Wood</i>
Review page: games, books, programs, databases	
The End Is Nigh !	<i>Paul Byway</i>
Variant Chess two-man problem tourney award	
	<i>Stephen Emmerson</i>
Problem Pages	<i>Ronald Turnbull</i>
News, notices, solutions	

Games, please!

- 1 Contributions to VC are always welcome. Endgame studies
 - 2 and analyses of endings in variant play go to Paul Byway,
 - 3 problems to Ronald Turnbull, everything else to the editor.
 - 4 English is preferred, but we will accept any language for
 - 6 which we can find a translator. What are we looking for?
 - 7 Anything which is entertaining, which is instructive, which
 - is informative, which will give pleasure to our readers.
- In particular, **please send us interesting games or positions from games** which you have played or which you have seen played by others. Friendlies and tournament games alike are grist to our mill; all we ask is that the play be entertaining. Enclose a label with the winner's name and address (and one for the loser as well, if he wants it), and if we print the game or its climactic combination we'll send him the issue of VC containing it.

© 1998 rests with authors

Unattributed material is the responsibility of the editor

The future of VC

Following George Jelliss's retirement, John Beasley is temporarily holding the fort as editor, but Paul Byway has joined the team and it is intended that he will take over as soon as circumstances permit. Others are involved as well, and VC is now very much a joint effort.

We have decided only to produce 16 pages per quarter in future (if this leaves us with an embarrassing financial surplus at the end of the year, we will put a motion to the AGM extending the subscription period), but we trust that these 16 pages will be of a high standard. This issue features articles and games in Alice Chess, Progressive Chess, Extinction Chess, and Xiangqi, together with endgames, problems, and the usual miscellaneous snippets; something for everyone, we hope.

If you want something different, please tell us. In the meantime, we hope the expert and the merely curious alike will continue to find VC an enjoyable and stimulating read.

Treasurer's records

The transfer of the treasurer's records is now complete, and Peter Fayers has asked us to print the following notice.

"If you retrieve the envelope that this magazine came in, wipe the marmalade and coffee-grounds off it, and open it out, you will notice a number in the top-right corner of the address label. (Those with the letter C or E can skip the rest of this.)

"This number is the issue with which your subscription will expire. Please check it against what you think it should be, and let me know if I have anything wrong.

"Also, those of you with the number 29 will also have a reminder letter in with this magazine - please renew your subscription early, to save us the expense of sending out chaser letters when the next issue comes out.

"Finally, those with the number 30 will realise that their subscription runs out with the next issue. If you would like to renew earlier, it would save us sending you a reminder as well."

Do please help Peter by doing this. He has the most thankless task of all, and every little helps.

VARIANT CHESS is the journal of the British Chess Variants Society

President: David Pritchard, Badgers Wood, Hascombe Road, Munstead, Godalming, Surrey GU8 4AA

Editor and Secretary: John Beasley, 7 St James Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4NX

Assistant Editor: Paul Byway, 20 The Finches, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7TB

Treasurer: Peter Fayers, 2 Beechwood Avenue, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 2PA

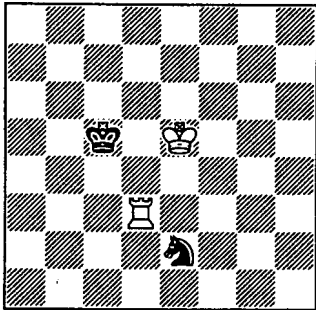
Endings Editor: Paul Byway **Problem Editor:** Ronald Turnbull

Subscription rates (one year, four issues): UK £8, Europe £9, Rest of World £9 surface mail, £11 air mail

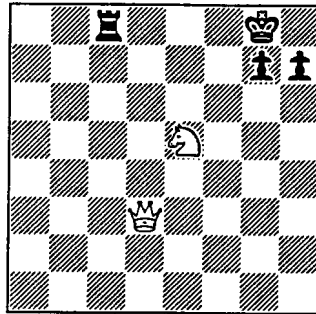
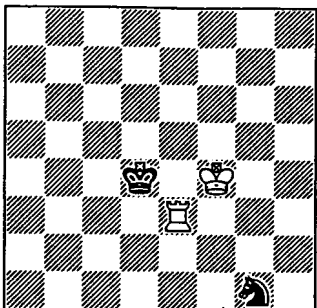
Cheques payable to "British Chess Variants Society", please

What can we expect from a new chess variant?

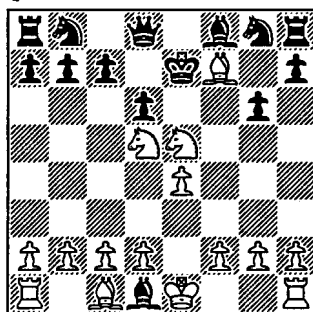
When I started trying to list the published endgame studies in Losing Chess, I was immediately struck by their limited range. Yes, there were some splendid discoveries among them, but as a whole we seemed to have progressed only to the point reached by Stamma and the Italian masters of the 18th century. Yet Losing Chess is one of the more widely played and explored of chess variants, with a literature of published positions going back to 1901. If even a relatively well-explored variant has progressed no further than this, what can we expect of a brand new one?



Let's look at ordinary chess, and see what was discovered early in its life. One of the most delightful paradoxes of chess is the reciprocal zugzwang, and the position above is quoted in Murray's *A history of chess* as by the Arab master ar-Razi (fl. 850). 1 Re3 forces 1...Ng1, and now not the natural 2 Kf4? after which 2...Kd4 puts White in zugzwang (see below) and the knight will escape, but 2 Kf5! (threat 3 Kg4 and 4 Re1) Kd4 (nothing better) 3 Kf4 and we have the same position with Black to move. The position is well over a thousand years old, but White's little sidestep with the king still gives pleasure.



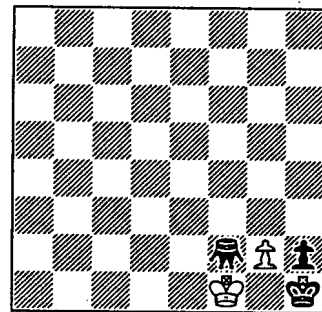
Everybody knows this next position, and some of us have even brought it off over the board; it's the so-called "Philidor's legacy" 1 Qd5+ Kh8 2 Nf7+ Kg8 3 Nh6++ Kh8 4 Qg8+! Rxg8 5 Nf7#. The reason I include it here is that it comes *not* from Philidor but from Lucena's book of c. 1497 (in a slightly different form, but the essentials are the same), not many years after the invention of the new queen. It can fairly be called the first classic of the new chess, and I can well imagine the thrill it gave when it was first brought to light.



And what about openings? This is the Legall mate from 1750: 1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 d6 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 Nc3 g6? 5 Nxe5! Bxd1 6 Bxf7+ Ke7 7 Nd5#. Again, many of us have brought it off in play, but it still sparkles. (Note: "Legall" with a double "l" and no accent. The commonly quoted "Légal" is quite wrong. Ken Whyld once told me that the late Harry Golombek was most distressed when a well-meaning editor inserted an accent after he had signed off the proofs: "My French friends will think I am ignorant," he complained.)

A modern variant invention is the grasshopper, which moves along Q-lines but must hop over one man and

land on the square beyond (a G on an empty board cannot move). It is an eminently playable piece which adds a new dimension to the game, though the initial array must be redesigned; if we simply put grasshoppers for queens, an opening 1 Gf3 by White is far too strong. However, a more suitable starting position is easily found (see *The Encyclopaedia of Chess Variants*, page 130).



But the G is usually seen only in problems. T. R. Dawson invented it in 1913, and by 1929 Valerian Onitiu had produced the mate in 6 above (Black Gf2): 1 g3 Gh4 (the only legal move) 2 g4 Gf4 3 g5 Gh6 4 g6 Gf6 5 g7 Gh8 and now the climax: 6 gxh8G#! Sheer perfection.

Ordinary chess is not a bad game, and all the best and most accessible of it is here: a delicate endgame based on reciprocal zugzwang, a smashing middlegame mating attack, an unobtrusive opening blunder spectacularly refuted, a witty (variant!) problem. All are piquant, *all were discovered early*. A brand new variant cannot be expected to show gems of all these kinds, but it ought to show at least one of them.

David Pritchard has told me that a game must be played for 200 hours in good company before its viability can be assessed. Not every game featured in VC has passed this test, and indeed one of our functions is to present new games for readers to try. But one thing that any new variant must offer, if readers are to try it out, is *something subtle, sparkling, or amusing which cannot be done in ordinary chess*: something to reward the player for the trouble of learning its rules.

Alice Chess

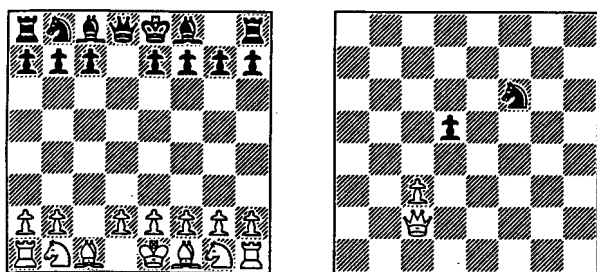
The 1997-98 BCVS Alice Chess postal tournament was won by Peter Coast with David Pritchard a close second, both well ahead of the field. Results in full:

	C	P	T	J	
P Coast	--	10	11	11	5
D Pritchard	10	--	1½	11	4½
D Tremayne	00	½0	--	01	1½
G Jelliss	00	00	01	--	1

Toby Howes failed to finish his games (only one was reported complete, a win by George Jelliss) and only the results between the other players were counted.

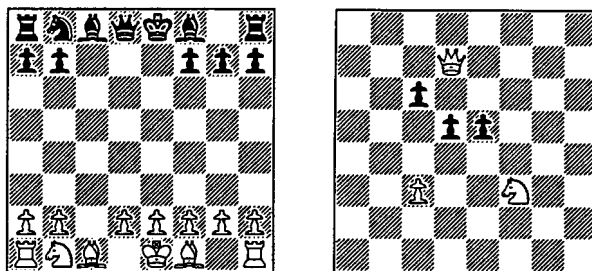
The complete set of games has been sent to the competitors and is available from myself on request, but I think most readers will prefer just to see some of the highlights. The rule of Alice Chess is that there are two boards side by side, board B being initially empty, and immediately a move is played the man passes "through the looking glass" into the corresponding square on the other board, which must be vacant. Once a player has men on each board, he may move on either, but his move must be legal on the board on which it is played and the subsequent transfer of the man to the other board must not leave his king in check. In our scores, moves on board B are marked "/A" to indicate that the piece is transferred back to board A, but transfers from board A to board B are taken as read.

Alice Chess has been played for many years, but David Pritchard comments in *The Encyclopaedia of Chess Variants* that "Alice-vision" is not easily acquired, and even the tournament winner wrote, "Alice Chess is quite hard work, and somewhat mind-bending. I'm not sure the games are of very high quality - we are not yet, I think, entirely fluent at it." It certainly offers traps to the unwary, and one game contained two instructive mistakes in quick succession. After 1 c3 d5 2 Qc2 White threatens mate by 3 Qa4/A (the Black king will have no legal move on his own board, and interposition will be useless because the interposing man will be transported to the other board), but Black hoped to counter the threat by playing 2...Nf6:



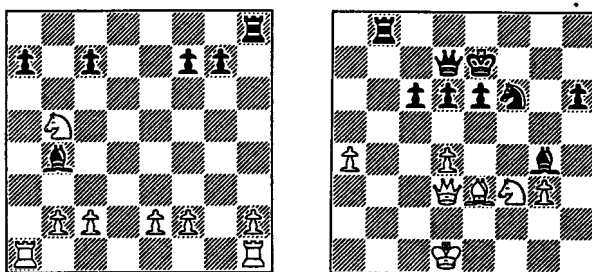
Now 3 Qa4/A+ could be met by 3...Nfd7/A, the move being played on board B and putting an interposing man back on A. However, White simply continued 4 Qxd7, pocketing a knight for free and escaping to board B.

But Black fought back, and after 4...e5 5 Nf3 c6 (see diagram) he was threatening to win the queen by 6...Be6:



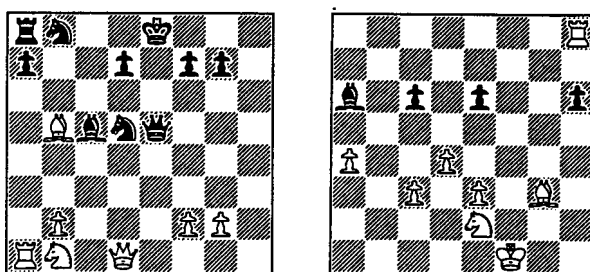
White overlooked this threat, and indeed it is not easily countered (a retreat to say h3 puts the WQ back on board A to be captured at once). Best is probably 6 e4, defending d5 on board B. Now 6...Be6 can be met by 7 Qxd5/A, since if Black plays 7...Qxd5 his queen goes to board B and 8 exd5/A will capture it. Is your mind duly bent?

Tremayne-Coast included a true piece of Alice tactics. White's 13th move gave the position below, and in Peter Coast's words, "it looks like trouble now [White threatens 14 Rxa7 pinning BQ on board B], and it took me some time to find a suitable counter."

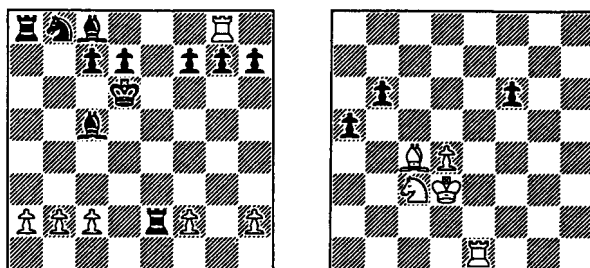


The answer? 13...Rba8/A, to meet 14 Rxa7 by 14...Ra1#!

Let's see some more of the experts at work. In Coast-Jelliss, White had a mate in 6:



and in Pritchard-Tremayne, White announced mate in 8 (when did you last see this in ordinary chess?):



If you don't want to work out how, the answers on page 16.

Progressive Chess (Italian rules)

The 1997-98 BCVS Italian Progressive Chess postal tournament was won by **Paul Byway**, narrowly ahead of David Pritchard. Results in full:

Heat 1

	H	W	C	R	
T Howes	--	11	11	11	6
P Wood	00	--	10	11	3
P Coast	00	10	--	10	2
D Richardson	00	00	10	--	1

Heat 2

	P	By	T	Bo	
D Pritchard	--	10	11	11	5
P Byway	10	--	10	11	4
D Tremayne	00	10	--	11	3
S Boniface	00	00	00	--	0

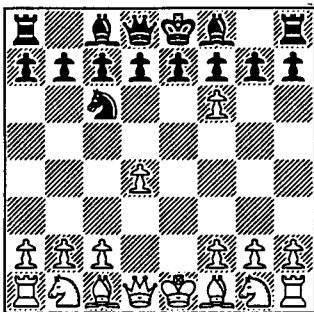
Final

	B	P	W	T	
P Byway	--	10	½1	11	4½
D Pritchard	10	--	11	01	4
P Wood	0½	00	--	11	2½
D Tremayne	00	01	00	--	1

Toby Howes failed to finish his games, and only the other results in the final were counted.

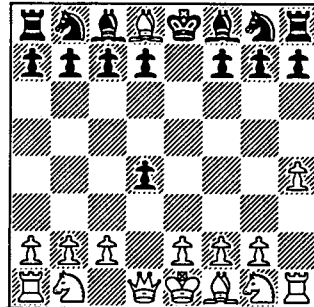
The complete set of games has been sent to competitors, and a copy will be sent to any reader requesting it. Some highlights follow. The "Italian" rule is that a player may not give check before the end of his sequence; if his only escape from check would give such a check, he is mated.

We start with a couple of opening blunders instructively punished. Won by Toby Howes: 1 d4 2 Nc6, Nf6 3 e4, e5, exf6?, Black to play series 4:

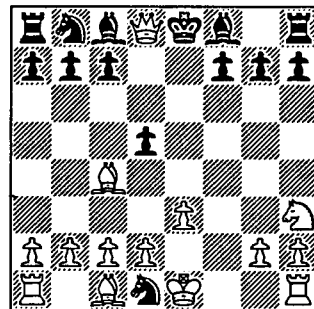


The answers to this and subsequent "what next?" diagrams will be found on page 16.

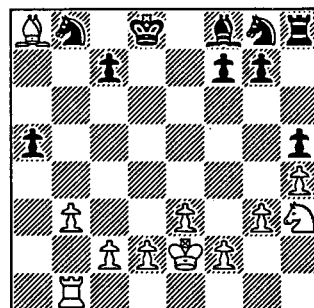
Won by Dave Tremayne: 1 d4 2 e5, exd4 3 Bg5, Bxd8, h4?, Black to play series 4:



Several games ended with fine mating sequences. Richardson-Wood: 1 e3 2 e6, Nf6 3 Nh3, Bc4, Nc3 4 Ne4, Nxc3, Nxd1, d5 5 f4, f5, fxe6, e7, exd8Q+. Black to play series 6:

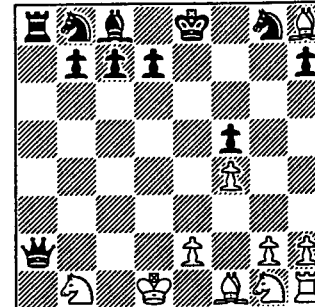


Richardson-Howes: 1 e3 2 d5, e5 3 Qg4, Qxc8, Qxd8+ 4 Kxd8, e4, a5, h5 5 h4, Nh3, b3, a4, Bb2 6 b5; bxa4, a3, axb2, bxa1Q, Qxb1+ 7 Ke2, g3, Bg2, Rxb1, Bxe4, Bxd5, Bxa8. Black to play series 8:

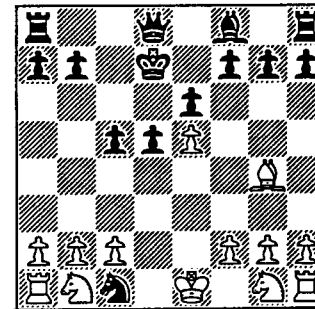


Pritchard-Tremayne (heat): 1 d4 2 e5, exd4 3 Bg5, Bxd8, f4 4 d3, dxc2, f5, cxd1Q+ 5 Kxd1, Be7, Bxf8, Bxg7, Bxh8 6 a5, a4, a3, axb2, bxa1Q, Qxa2. Black sees that to finish this series by Qxb1+ would allow

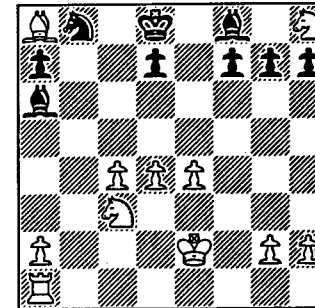
7 Kd2, Bf6, g4, g5, g6, gxh7, hxg8Q mate, but what actually happens is just as bad. White to play series 7:



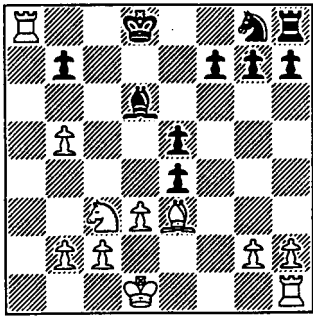
Byway-Pritchard (heat): 1 d4 2 d5, Nf6 3 e4, e5, Bb5+ 4 c6, Ne4, Bg4, Kd7 5 Bd3, Bxe4, Bf3, Qe2, Bxg4+ 6 e6, c5, Nc6, Nxd4, Nxe2, Nxc1. White to play series 7:



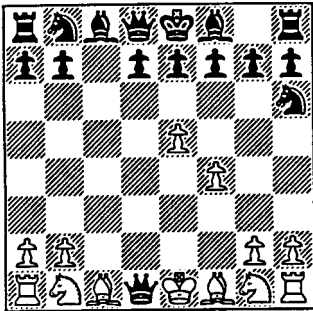
Wood-Byway: 1 e4 2 e5, Nh6 3 d4, Bg5, Bxd8 4 Ng4, Nxf2, Nxd1, Kxd8 5 Ba6, Bxb7, Bxa8, Kxd1, Ke2 6 c5, c4, c3, cxb2, bxa1Q, Ba6+ 7 c4, Nc3, Nf3, Rxa1, Nxe5, Ng6, Nxh8. Black to play series 8:



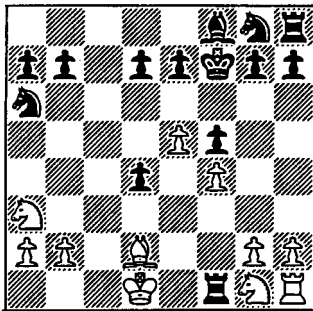
Wood-Pritchard: 1 e4 2 d5, Nc6 3 f4, f5, Bb5 4 Bxf5, Bg4, Bxd1, Kd7 5 Kxd1, Nf3, Nd4, Nxc6, Nxd8+ 6 Kxd8, e5, dxe4, c6, cxb5, Bd6 7 d3, Be3, Nc3, a4, axb5, Rxa7, Rxa8+. Black to play series 8:



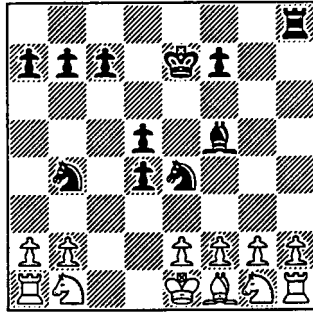
Byway-Tremayne (final): 1 d4 2 c5, cxd4 3 e4, e5, f4 4 Nh6, d3, dxc2, cxd1Q+. White to play series 5:



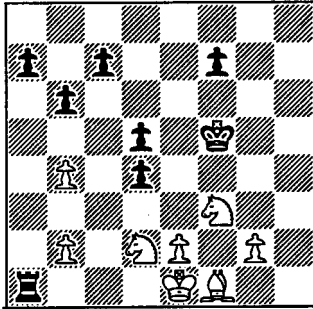
Byway-Pritchard (final): 1 d4 2 c5, cxd4 3 e4, e5, f4 4 Qc7, Qxc2, f5, Qxd1+ 5 Kxd1, Na3, Bd2, Rc1, Rxc8+ 6 Kf7, Na6, Rxc8, Rc3, Rf3, Rxf1+. White to play series 7:



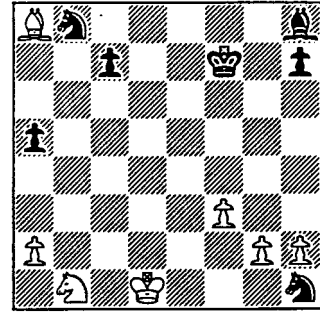
And two of the longer games. Coast-Wood (notes by Peter Coast): 1 d4 2 e5, exd4 3 Bg5, Bxd8, Qd3 (The idea is to make it expensive in moves to capture the WQ) 4 Kxd8, Nf6, Nc6, Bb4+ 5 c3, cxb4, Qxh7, Qxg7, Qxh8+ (This sequence avoids mate and creates as much mayhem as possible) 6 Ke7, d5, Bf5, Rxh8, Ne4, Nxb4 (diagram at top of next column) (White is well up materially, but Black is very well developed. My difficulty now is finding a sequence which does not leave me open to mate. Examples that don't work are 7 Na3, Rb1, f3, fxe4, exf5, Nf3, Nxd4; 7 a4, Ra3, Rh3,



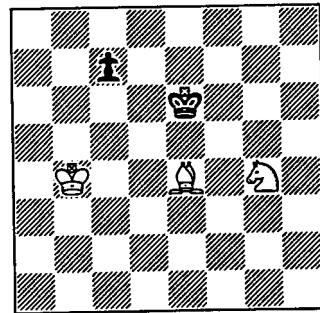
Rxh8, f3, fxe4, exf5; 7 f3, fxe4, exf5, a3, axb4, Rxa7, Kd2 - this was quite promising except for 8 d3, dxe2, exf1Q, Rxh2, Rxh1, Rxg1, d4, Qd2#) 7 f3, fxe4, exf5, a3, axb4, Nd2, Ngf3 (As long as there is no mate, I should be OK, as I am 4 units ahead) 8 Rxh2, Rxh1, Rh6, Ra6, Kf6, Kxf5, b6, Rxa1+. White to play series 9:



Byway-Wood (notes from both players): 1 d4 2 e5, exd4 3 Bg5, Bxd8, Bg5 (PCW: The Magari Attack, which has been strangely neglected for the last 10 years) 4 f6, d3, dxc2, cxd1Q+ (PCW: This is cited as the best line in Dipilato's book on 1 d4 openings) 5 Kxd1, Bxf6, Bxg7, Bxh8, e4 (PVB: Another time I might prefer 5 Kxd1, h4, Bxf6, Bxg7, Bxf8. According to Peter, e4 was new here; e3 had been played before) 6 Ba3, Bxb2, Bxa1, Bxh8, a5, Kf7 (PCW: Dipilato's line that could lead to a draw is 6 Ba3, Bxb2, Bxa1, Bxh8, Nf6, Kf7, but this is where White has played e3 in sequence five instead of e4) 7 Bb5, Bxd7, Bxc8, Bxb7, Bxa8, Nh3, f3 (PVB: I thought I was winning easily here and didn't give f3, Nh3 the attention I should have. It may be that h3, Nf3 would have been better) 8 Nf6, Nxe4, Ng5, Nxb3, Nf4, Nh5, Ng3, Nxb1 (diagram at top of next column) (PCW: I thought White was winning after his sequence 7. I found a continuation however that



spreads Black's pieces sufficiently to make it difficult for White to achieve all of his aims, eg. taking Black's pieces, setting up a Nc6/Ba8 fortress, preventing the 'h' pawn from queening etc) 9 f4, f5, f6, g3, Bxh1, Kc2, Kc3, Be4, Bxh7 (9 Kd2, Kd3, Ke4, h3, Na3, Nb5, Nxc7, Na6, Nxb8 produced conflicting annotations, but I think PVB's assessment that 10 Be5, Bxb8, Bd6, Be7, a4, a3, h5, h4, Ke6, Ng3+ must give Black good winning chances is right) 10 Bg7, Bh6, Bf4, Bxg3, Bxh2, Kxf6, Ke6, Nc6, Nb4, Nxa2+ (PVB: Removing all my pawns at series 10 was very good. White cannot win with just B+N; this was covered in detail in VC 21 and unfortunately Peter knows this well) 11 Kb2, Kxa2, Ka3, Ka4, Kxa5, Kb4, Nd2, Nf1, Nxb2, Ng4, Be4 (PVB: Some positions with B+N v P can be won. Alas! this is not one of them)

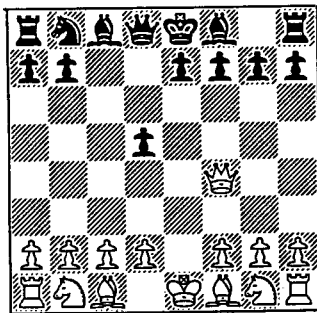


12 K--e7, c5+ (PVB: As a matter of technique, with this bishop it would be better to leave the pawn on a white square - but it's drawn anyway) 13 K--f4, B--c4, N--d5+ agreed drawn (PCW: The black King can always find a safe square: e7, g5, d2, or b4). And the prize for "annotation of the year" must surely go to David Pritchard, who inadvertently played 1 e4 2 d5, Nc6 3 b4, b5, bxc6?: "Oh dear, comes from playing out of one's head. I thought I had opened 1 d4!"

Extinction Chess

Here are some more games from the BCVS 1997-98 Extinction Chess postal tournament (see VC 27 p 152 and VC 28 p 167). In this game, a player wins by capturing the last opposing man of a particular kind. There is no check, and castling away from or across an attacked square is allowed.

Most variant tournaments produce some quick losses because players unfamiliar with the game overlook tactical finesses right at the start, but only one game in the present tournament came into this category. A game won by Ian Richardson went 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 Qf3 Nxd5 4 Bc4 c6? 5 Bxd5 cxd5, and now 6 Qf4 won the other knight and the game:

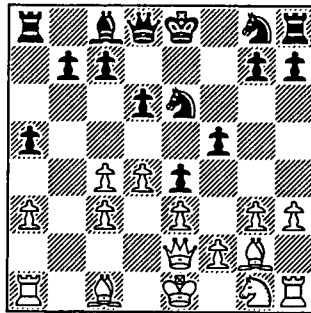


Wherever the attacked knight moves, 7 Qa4 forks or skewers it against BK.

One of the secrets of successful play at Extinction seems to be to make good use of the rooks. *The Encyclopaedia of Chess Variants* says that games "tend to be brief and often go critical in the early stages with the minor pieces most at risk," and at this year's French problemists' meeting at Messigny, where we played Extinction at the Sunday five-minute tournament, I played openings like 1 a4 e5 2 Ra3 in the hope that my extra minor piece might be more useful than his extra rook. This policy was not entirely successful, but I would probably have lost anyway. Robert Reynolds preferred to place his rooks on open files and to attack with them as in ordinary chess, and I suspect this is much the better plan.

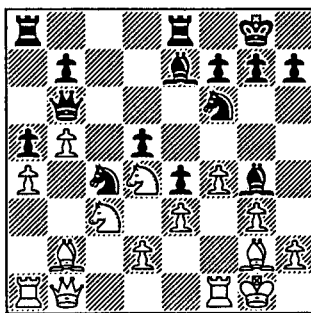
For example, Reynolds - Jelliss went 1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 a5 3 g3 Na6 4 Bg2 Bb4 5 e3 d6 6 h3 Nc5 7 Qe2

f5 8 d4 Ne6 9 a3 Bxc3 10 bxc3 e4:

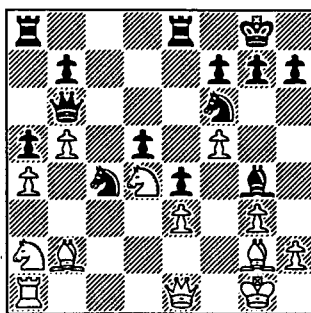


The b-file was now open, and Black underestimated its dangers: 11 Rb1 c6? (hindsight suggests 11...b6) 12 Rb3! d5 13 Qb2 Rb8 14 Rb6 dxc4 15 Rxc6 Nc7 16 Qb6 and Black resigned. One might almost be watching a normal game.

D. Richardson - Tremayne took an interesting course. White chose to open 1 b4, and after 1...e5 2 a3 a5 3 b5 Be7 4 a4 Nf6 5 Bb2 d6 6 g3 0-0 7 Bg2 c6 8 c4 Qb6 9 Nf3 e4 10 Nd4 d5 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 0-0 Re8 13 e3 Nbd7 14 Nc3 Ne5 15 f4 Bg4 16 Qb1 Nc4 it looks as if Black is having very much the better of things:

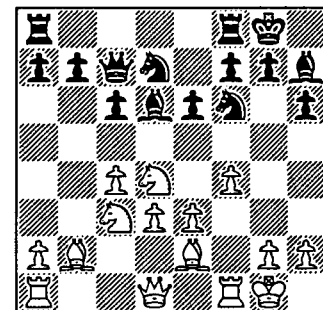


But White hung on, 17 Rf2 Bb4 18 Na2 Bxd2 19 Rxd2 Nxd2 20 Qe1, and after 20...Nc4? 21 f5! the boot was suddenly on the other foot:

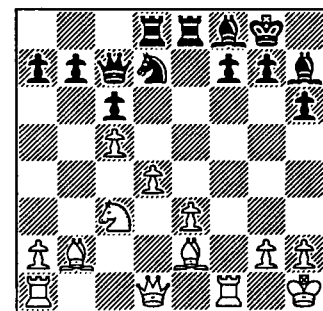


The bishop is trapped, and if the knight tries to sacrifice itself instead by 21...Bh5 22 h3 Ng4 we have 23 Qe2 (a line given by Peter Wood).

Piece sacrifices at Extinction are almost as rare as king sacrifices at ordinary chess, but Reynolds - Tremayne featured a rook sacrifice. Play started 1 Nf3 d5 2 b3 Nf6 3 Bb2 Bf5 4 e3 h6 5 c4 e6 6 Be2 Bd6 7 d3 0-0 8 0-0 dxc4 9 bxc4 Nbd7 10 Nc3 c6 (RR: "both players are playing cautiously") 11 Nd4 Bh7 12 f4 Qc7:



"I was beginning to worry here. e5 is coming, my king seems to look vulnerable and I have a build-up of pieces on the a1-h8 diagonal." 13 Kh1 e5 14 fxe5 Bxe5 15 Nf3 Bd6 16 d4 Rfe8 17 c5 Bf8 18 Ne5 Rad8 ("if Nxe5 I intended Rxf6!") 19 Nxd7 Nxd7 ("now ...Rxe3 is a strong threat"):



Now came 20 Rxf7 ("I'm not entirely sure that this is sound, but I think I'm forced into it") and White soon won (20...Kxf7 21 Qb3 Kg6 22 Bd3 and Black resigned). Had Black played 21...Ke7, White intended 22 Bg4 Nb8 23 Qa4 a5 (say), when Black is very cramped and White can attack by Ba3-b4-a5; there is no clear win, but White's position is surely very strong.

Points from near and far

Yakutat Chess (VC 26 p 113-4 and VC 27 p 147). Lex Kraaijeveld sends copies of page 421 and table 34 from *The Tlingit Indians* by George Thornton Emmons and Frederica de Laguna (University of Washington Press, 1991), with the comment, "... the book I got most of my information on Yakutat 'chess' from. ... I would be the first one to encourage someone to prove me wrong in considering Yakutat 'chess' a form of checkers, and to come up with positive evidence for it really being a chess variant. However, based on the evidence that I have at the moment, the conclusion must be that it is a form of checkers. Except for the pieces having a three-dimensional shape, there is no positive evidence for the 'chess'-hypothesis."

Randomization. Several points here.

1. In respect of "full" and "balanced" randomization (VC 27 pp 136-8 and VC 28 p 173), perhaps the experience of draughts (checkers) players is relevant. On the evidence of Millard Hopper's *Win at Checkers* (Dover, 1956), draughts players have been randomizing openings in championship play for over a century. The first three moves (B, W, B) are chosen at random, and two games are played. Even though the players take both Black and White from the resulting position, it has been found necessary to bar many of the openings: "about one quarter ... were ... so weak that ... a player had ... what amounted to a losing game" (Hopper, p 95).

Imbalances caused by random moves are greater than those caused by randomizing the back row. Even so, this seems to support David Pritchard's contention that only balanced randomization is feasible in expert company. It will be interesting to see if any serious imbalances have arisen in our current postal tournament.

2. I think Peter Fayers's procedure for **Lottery-based postal randomization** (VC 28 p 173) is worth giving in detail. I condense slightly.

(a) Agree a date, and check the National Lottery draw for the day. Put the six numbers into ascending order.

(b) Label the four dark squares on the back row (a1, c1, e1, g1) as 0, 1, 2, 3. Take the first lottery number, divide by 4, and place a bishop on the square denoted by the remainder.

(c) Divide the second lottery number by 4, and use the remainder to place the light-square bishop.

(d) There are now six empty squares on the back rank. Number them 0 to 5, divide the third number by 6, and place the king.

(e) Divide the fourth number by 5, and place the queen.

(f) Dividing the fifth and sixth numbers by 4 and 3 respectively will position the two rooks,

(g) ... and the knights go in the two empty squares. (You can decide which way round they go by whether the bonus ball number is odd or even.)

If 'Balanced Random' is being played, then this is enough – just place the Black pieces opposite their White counterparts. If 'Unbalanced Random' is required, reverse the sequence of the six numbers and repeat the process for Black (light-square bishop first).

Peter remarks that purists will rightly argue that this will not give a truly random result, but so what? – it should be good enough for the purpose in hand.

3. It occurs to me that **Peter's method can be used even without Lottery numbers**. All that is wanted is a set of 6 random integers in the ranges 1-4, 1-4, 1-6, 1-5, 1-4, 1-3. So let the players agree on a date, and let each send a set of such numbers to his opponent. It doesn't matter if the letters aren't exactly simultaneous, provided that they cross in the post. On receiving his opponent's letter, each player adds his opponent's numbers to his own, wrapping round if necessary (if a number 1-4 is required, a sum of 5 wraps to 1, 6 to 2, and so on), and then uses Peter's method to select the squares.

The point is that each player can ensure that the sums are "random" simply by randomizing his own component (say by throwing a die until a suitable number appears). If X is a random number equally likely to

take each of the values $1...N$, so will be "wrapped $X+Y$ " however Y is chosen.

Treasurer Loses Exchange. From David Pritchard: "Peter Fayers bought an onyx-and-marble chess set in a charity shop recently. When he got home he found he was missing a white rook but had an extra white knight instead. Placing the third knight on a1, he asks, 'A new variant? The extra flexibility White has in the opening must give him a significant advantage, but is it enough to compensate for being the exchange down in the middle-game, if Black can last that long?' Where did that extra knight come from? Answers on a postcard, please."

Chiral Knights. From Paul Byway: "We all owe a great deal to George Jelliss for raising the production values of VC to such a high level. The following little piece is offered as a tribute to his achievement.

"George once observed that wazir, fers, dabbaba and alfil are related as follows: start with wazir (move length 1). If you rotate the move 45 degrees and increase its length by the square root of 2 you have the move of the next piece in the series: that fascinating little fact stayed with me. Note that each piece can move to only 4 squares. Later, while reading an article on 'Generalised Leapers' by Vaclav Kotesovec ('Vlad the Impala' to his friends), it occurred to me that the knight can be regarded as combining two pieces of the sort given above, each covering four squares only. These two pieces are 'chiral' knights i.e. they come in left-handed and right-handed forms. From d4 the left-handed knight covers c6, f5, e2, b3 while the right-handed knight covers e6, f3, c2, b5. The move length is the square root of five, and it takes five of them to cover every square on the board. The corresponding figures for the list are 1, 2, 4, 8. I haven't found a use for these 'chiral' knights yet – but perhaps George would like to take them on tour."

Xiangqi by Peter Wood

Editor's note. I have decided to use a "traditional" rather than a "chess" notation for Xiangqi pieces: General, Mandarin, Elephant, Horse, Rook, Cannon, Soldier (game array back row RHEMGMEHR). In this issue, as an experiment, the first diagram uses pictorial symbols, the second the characters used in actual sets; comments welcome. A leaflet "Chinese Chess Explained" is available - JDB.

The **Yongcheng Cup** tournament took place at the Man Fu restaurant in Enfield over the weekend of June 20th and 21st. Eight players took part in this round-robin event. The joint winners were Chen Fazuo and David Young - both beat all the other players and drew with each other to finish with 6½ points. These were fine performances, as the tournament was far from weak. Third was Guo Shu Long with 5, and fourth Wang Shunqi with 4. These were followed by Paul Byway and C. K. Lai with 2, Chiang Wing Fok 1½, and Loa Kanh Hua ½.

C. K. Lai has a new address: 12 Haslam Street, London SE15 5GD.

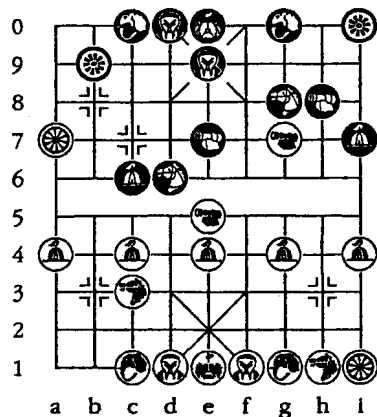
From my own experience I know that it is difficult for new players to the game to enter tournaments of an appropriate strength. Although the organisers positively encourage new and inexperienced players to enter events, when one does he can soon lose heart in the face of a string of humiliating losses. Many have entered just one event, and are never seen again. The quick time limits do not help either - 45 minutes for all moves is quite normal. This rate of play is fine for experienced players, but not for the novice who wishes to improve at the game.

One solution is to play Xiangqi by correspondence. The extra time available can enable new players to delve deeper into the intricacies of the game and even occasionally play a decent game. A case in point is the following game which I played against Andrew Pereira of Singapore in 1993. I was very much an inexperienced player then (I have not really

progressed that much since!) and this was the first postal game that I ever won. This of course greatly enhances the beauty of the game for me, but I think readers may find it interesting nevertheless.

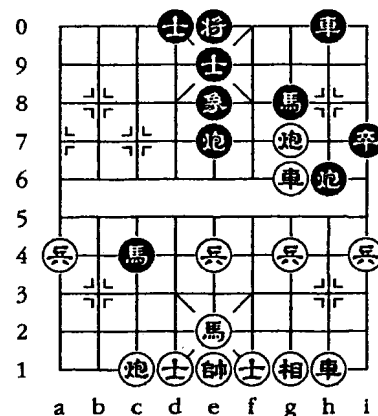
Andrew Pereira - Peter Wood (casual notes by Malcolm Horne, with a comment by me, marked PW).

1 Cbe3 Cbe8 2 Hc3 Hc8 3 Rb1 Ra9 4 Rb7 Sc6!? (Either 4...Sg6 or 4...Rf9 is normal here; but 4...Sc6 looks plausible to me) **5 Cxe7+!?** Mfe9 (5...Hxe7! 6 Rxe7 Hg8 7 Re5 also seems quite okay) **6 Ce5 Ce7** (This looks a bit odd) **7 Cg3 Hg8** (7...Che8 is more consistent) **8 Cxg7!?** (This looks greedy. Straight development is probably better) **8...Hd6 9 Rxa7 Rb9** (Red is three soldiers up, but Black has a lot of initiative. PW - I started this game just after returning from the 1993 Exmouth XQ tournament. I had been impressed by the play of the winner, Xu Juemin of Norway. While going over one of his games he had said that soldiers are worth much less than the initiative. I was taking his advice to the extreme!)



10 Rc7 Ege8 (Not wishing to give up a fourth!) **11 Hg3 Rb3** (The initiative is starting to tell) **12 Rh1 Rh0 13 Hge2** (This passive set-up [Ge1, Md1,f1, He2] is frequently seen in novice games, less in master games. It is okay if you can soon move your horse away, but frequently fatal if you can't!) **13...Hxc4 14 Ceg5!?** Eg6 (14...Rxc3! 15 Rxe7! Hxe7 16 Hxc3, and Red has brighter prospects than in

the game) **15 Rxc6!?** Rxc3 **16 Ce5** (Looks lethal [threatening mate and the rook] but...) **16...Ece8 17 Re6** (17 Cxc3! [17 Rxg6! similar to the game] 17...Exc6 18 Cxc6 Ee8 19 Ce6 is rather unclear. Red has three soldiers for the horse) **17...Ch6 18 Rxg6 Rxc1** (Intending Ha3 and Hc2#) **19 Cxc1** (Novag [top level] plays 19 Rgxh6! when Rxh6 20 Rxh6 Hb2 [20...Ha3 21 Cd5!]) 21 Rd6 Rxc5 is unclear. Red has three soldiers for a horse)



19...Ha3!! (I tried to find a flaw in this, but couldn't. The mundane 19...Exg6 [Novag] is unclear again) **20 Rd6** (Forced) **20...Che6! 21 Rxh0+ Hxh0 22 Ee3** (If 22 Cc3 Cxe4+ 23 Ce3 Cc4! and Black wins) **22...Cxe4** Red resigns. (0-1)

(If 23 Rd3 then 23...Hc2+ 24 Rd2 Cxe3#. Even after the desperate 23 Cc0+ Exc0 24 Ce7+ Cxe7 Red is still perfectly paralysed, and has only delayed mate.)

Solutions. VC 26 (p 130), Udo Marks, #2, 1 Ce7. VC 27 (p 148), Wang Gao, #2, 1 Cee9 G- 2 Ceh9; Nastasio, #3, 1 Sc9+ Gd0 2 Sc0+ Gd9 3 Cg9; Xiangqi Review, #3, 1 Sc9+ Gd0 2 Sc0+ Gd9 3 Ch9. As was noted in VC 28, the soldier on h3 in this last problem should be a cannon.

Stop press. Peter reports a fine problem success for British Xiangqi players: Paul Byway and C. K. Lai took first and second places in the recent "mate in 2 or 3" tournament of Scacchi e Scienze Applicate. Positions next time - JDB.

Review page: games, books, programs, databases...

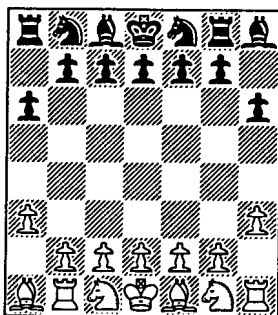
Games are normally reviewed by David Pritchard, books and computer material by whichever of our contributors appears to be most expert in their particular field. Unattributed reviews are by the editor.

The attention of those submitting games for review is drawn to the entry "Designing a variant" on page 84 of *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*.

Games by David Pritchard

Desi Chess. The All-India Correspondence Chess Federation bulletin of February 1998 gives the rules of Desi (Indian style) chess in the interests of preserving Indian cultural heritage. Normal board but any orientation, usual set up but with Ks facing Qs. No pawn-two move; no castling but K can move once as N provided it has not been checked. Promotion to file piece but illegal if original distribution (e.g. one Q, two Rs) would be exceeded. Two bishops on like-coloured squares permissible. Last remaining piece apart from K cannot be captured. Either player starts. V. D. Pandit, the editor of the AICCF bulletin, wrote to me (1989) that the rules of the game varied from place to place and from time to time. Hardly surprising.

Virtual Chess. This game, previously called Cubic Chess, was reviewed in VC 24. However, the inventor, Dr. Pribylinec, has now had second (well no, third) thoughts and has changed the game again. The board is enlarged to 7x8 and four extra pieces per side have been added. The basics of the game remain the same (see VC 2 as amended by VC 24) but with a curious new rule. You win by capturing the opponent's K or if you can get your K into an opponent's corner square (thus a8 and g8 for White) unless your K is then immediately captured. The initial array (looks a bit like Randomized Chess) is shown (*top of next column*). An advantage of this new game is that draws, we are told, are practically eliminated. I have some game scores if anyone is interested.



Sets can be obtained from the inventor: Dr. V. Pribylinec, Zavodna 460, 027 43 Nizna, Slovakia.

Knightmare. *Chivalrous Attrition*, reviewed in issue 27, must have been invented, in one form or another, a score of times. It is pre-dated by at least six published games in which knights are moved around the board voiding squares that they visit, usually with the object of depriving the opponent of a legal move. A version has even been marketed (*Pferdappel*, invented by Alex Randolph and published by Bütthorn Spiele, 1981).

Books

No new book is to hand this time, but two books previously reported deserve a further mention.

Figured Tours (Jelliss). An editor cannot carry a critical review of his own work in his own magazine, and the report of George Jelliss's *Figured Tours* in VC 28 could be no more than a bare descriptive summary. The book deserves better. Reviewing it for *The Problemist* earlier in the year, I wrote, "... essential reading for knight's tour specialists, and will be read with interest by others," and by this I stand. The book is available from George at Top Floor, 63 Eversfield Place, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex TN37 6DB at £3.50 (UK) and £4.00 (elsewhere), and all interested in the subject should obtain a copy.

The Genealogy of Chess (Li). The author's spirited letter in VC 28 should not distract attention from the

main point at issue. Peter Banaschak criticized the apparent lack of adequate sources for the author's statements, and such a criticism, if unfounded, can be refuted by simply listing the sources actually used. The author does not do so, and indeed he does not even address this point in his letter to us (and hardly at all in his letter to *The Chess Collector*, of which Mike Pennell has kindly sent me a copy). On this evidence, the only possible conclusion is that the criticism is justified, and that *The Genealogy of Chess* is a work of speculation and conjecture and not a substantiated historical exposition.

Programs and databases

Losing Chess. Laurent Bartholdi has now created a database of all three-man endings in Losing Chess, with and without pawns. It is designed for use with his program *Iznogoud* and comparison with my existing pawnless database is difficult (moves are counted to the end of the game and some positions are stored in multiple to simplify retrieval, so the raw database statistics are not directly comparable) but my checking so far has shown no discrepancy.

There is no separate database interrogation program, but Laurent tells me that *Iznogoud* runs on the Free Internet Chess Server and may be consulted from the Web. Laurent himself may be contacted by e-mail at Laurent.Bartholdi@unige.ch.

Fabrice Liardet has found an unfortunate error in my document *Three-piece endings in Losing Chess* (a position of reciprocal zugzwang, renormalized by hand from computer output, was renormalized wrongly) and I have produced a revised version in which this error has been corrected. I have retitled it *Three-man pawnless endings in Losing Chess* to clarify its scope, and have included a copy of all relevant computer output as generated by the machine so that the correctness of manual renormalizations can be verified. It is available from myself without charge.

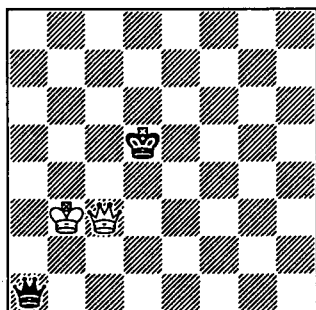
The End Is Nigh ! by Paul Byway

20 The Finches, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7TB

Shatranj

The late David Hooper left us *The Oxford Companion to Chess*, his collaborative work with Ken Whyld. I came across the first edition of this fascinating book at a friend's house, and discovered perhaps the best endgame study of all time - and it's a variant study (these days anyway). The position is given below.

#44 Shatranj



White to play and win

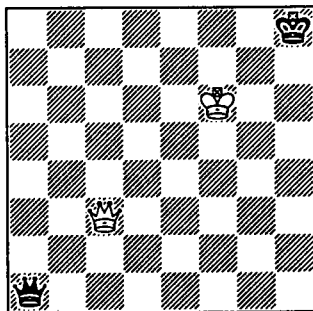
The composer was as-Suli (854-946), the strongest player of his day. When I played through the printed solution it seemed to me to be incomplete. I can't resist a challenge and decided to see if it could be cracked. In fact I never did 'solve' this study: I deduced the solution from an exhaustive examination of the alternatives, and the manner in which they failed. What gradually became clear was that Black could defend by maintaining the same relationship between the kings' positions as that between the firzans' positions. Once this is realised the winning method is not hard to find. Here it is. White must find a way to force Black to release the co-ordination.

- | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | Kb3-b4 | Kd5-d6 |
| 2 | Kb4-c4 | Kd6-e6 |
| 3 | Kc4-d4 | Ke6-f6 |

This is the move that was not analysed in the first edition of the 'Companion'. If Black passes the

move to White with 3...Kf5 then 4 Fb4 Ke6 5 Kd3 Kd5 6 Kc2 Kc4 7 Fa3 Kb5 8 Kbl Ka4 9 Ka2 and wins.

- | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| 4 | Kd4-d5 | Kf6-f7 |
| 5 | Kd5-e5 | Kf7-g7 |
| 6 | Ke5-e6 | Kg7-g8 |
| 7 | Ke6-f6 | Kg8-h8 |



Black has been backed into a corner and after White's next move he will be unable to maintain the co-ordination. The position we have reached is actually given in Murray's 'History of Chess'. The only other F v F ending in that work also occurs in the solution to #44. I take this curious coincidence to mean that the solution to #44 was in fact well known a thousand years ago.

- | | | |
|----|---------------|---------------|
| 8 | Kf6-f7 | Kh8-h7 |
| 9 | Fc3-b4 | Kh7-h6 |
| 10 | Fb4-a3 | Kh6-g5 |
| 11 | Kf7-e6 | Kg5-f4 |
| 12 | Ke6-d5 | Kf4-e3 |
| 13 | Kd5-c4 | Ke3-d2 |
| 14 | Kc4-b3 | Kd2-c1 |
| 15 | Kb3-a2 | wins |

A beautiful solution - and found after a thousand years! Imagine my delight. Alas! John Beasley soon informed me that the solution had been published by Averbakh in 1986. I'd been pipped at the post by six years after a millenium. Boy, was I mad! John, by the way, generated a computer solution that was one move shorter; but the method given is better suited to the human brain. You can find the computer solution in a revised

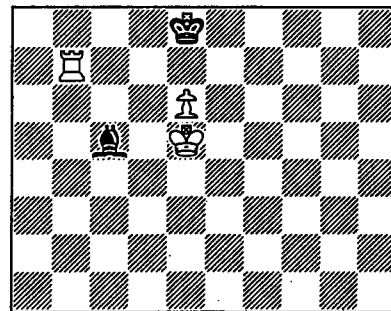
entry in the second edition of the 'Companion'. as-Suli was proud of his endgame - and rightly so. As Averbakh said:- 'It is a creation of genius.'

Modern Courier Chess

David Hooper also gave us *A Pocket Guide to Chess Engames* (Bell,1970). It sits on my shelf right next to 'Fine' and gets far more use. This handy compendium of critical positions was consulted again for this piece - on the endgame R+P v B.

I'm concerned here mainly with the case of a white pawn on the sixth rank. In orthochess it's sometimes a win, and sometimes a draw. In MCC there is a clear general result:- draw! Once again it is seen that a bishop gains most from the wider board. Of the six cases only a knight's pawn wins - sacrificing itself to leave the bishop in a corner of the wrong colour.

#45 MCC



White to play: draw

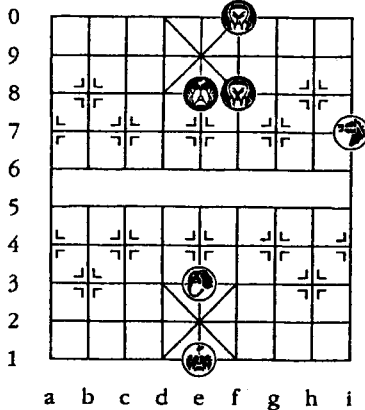
This case is a win study on the chessboard (von Guretzky-Cornitz, 1860) but here Black draws after 1 Kd5 Bf2 2 Rb2 Bg3 3 Rb3 Bf4 4 Rb4 Bg3 5 Rg4 Bh2 6 Rg2 Bi1 7 Ri2 Bg3 8 Ri3 Bh2 etc.

There are another six cases to consider: in these the pawn has got ahead of its king but is only on the 5th rank. A modification of Chess endgame theory may be required here as well - but that's a task for another issue.

Xiangqi

In the last issue I rashly expressed the hope that I had finished with the single horse ending. Shortly afterwards the following position came to my attention; it shows how a horse can sometimes win against two mandarins. (See page 8 for notation - JDB.)

#46 Xiangqi

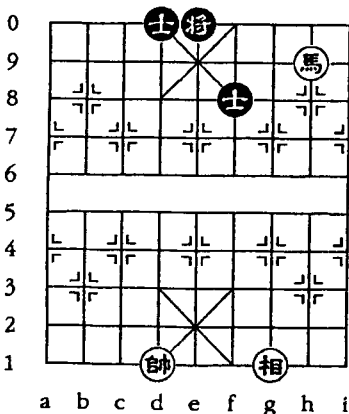


White to play and win

1 **Hi7-h9** **Mf0-e9**

After 1...Mf8-e9 2 Ge1-d1 immediately wins a mandarin.

2 **Ge1-d1** **Me9-d0**
 3 **Hh9-g7+** **Ge8-e9**
 4 **Ee3-g1** **Ge9-e0**
 5 **Hg7-h9**



5 ... **Md0-e9**

After 5...Mf8-e9 6 Gd1-e1 wins by stalemate, now that the elephant has cleared the centre file.

6 **Gd1-d2**

A tempo move by the general wins the

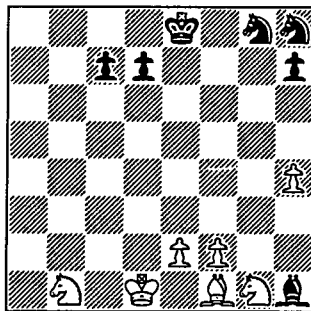
mandarin at f8, after which White wins simply with H v M.

- 6 ... **Me9-d0**
- 7 **Hh9xf8+** **Ge0-e9**
- 8 **Hf8-d9** **Ge9-f9**
- 9 **Gd2-e2** **Md0-e9**
- 10 **Hd9-e7+** **Gf9-f8**
- 11 **He7-c8** **Me9-d8**
- 12 **Hc8-d6** **Md8-e9**
- 13 **Hd6-f7** **Me9-d0**
- 14 **Hf7-h8** **Md0-e9**
- 15 **Hh8-g0+** **wins**

Competition 5

Progressive chess this time (Italian rules). In the following pair of positions White eventually won - but in each case he missed a mate in nine moves from the diagram. The first is from the recently concluded BCVS postal championship. Pritchard-Boniface, 1997/8.

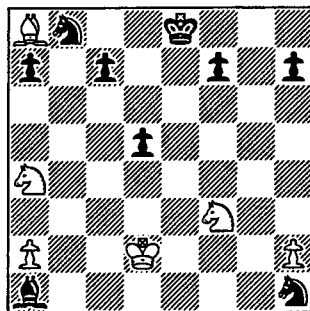
#47 Italian Progressive



White to mate in 9

The second is from a game Kocan-Berner, 1995.

#48 Italian Progressive

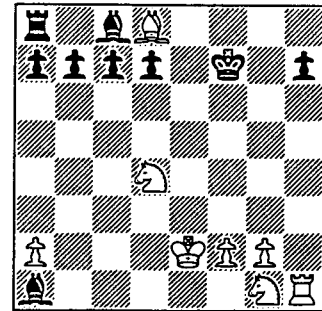


White to mate in 9

The third position is from Zima-Sarale, 1988 after Black's series 8. White actually lost this one - but he

did have a winning series 9. What was it?

#49 Italian Progressive



Win: series 9

Solutions to Competition 4

The solutions to the Losing Chess positions from the 4th competition are given below. Ian Richardson (1pt) and David Pritchard (2pts) had a go without getting right to the bottom of them. They were actually extremely hard. In these solutions an exclamation mark indicates a unique optimal move.

#42: 1 Ne2? loses after 1...Nb6 2 Nxc1 Na4 and White can never give away his knight. Only a draw can come from 1 Nh3? Ba3! 2 Nf4! Bc5(b4,e7) 3 Ng6(h3,g2,e2) Bb6(a7,g1) 4 Nf8! Bc5! etc.

1 Nf3! Ba3! 2 Nd2! Bd6! 3 Nb3! Bg3 4 Nc5! Bb8 5 Ne6! and a sacrifice next move.

#43: All the moves are unique in this solution. 1 Kh4! Qa1! 2 Kg3! Qc1! 3 Kh3! Qa1! 4 Kh4! Qb2! 5 Kg4! Qa1! 6 Kf3! Qa5! 7 Kg2! with a sacrifice after the next move. After White's 5th move we have returned to the starting position, but with Black to play.

As with the Problem Pages, my apologies to competitors for the early copy date I had to give our columnists.

The difficulty of these endings does not surprise me. I remember Gyorgy Evseev's computer-generated 11-move win with Nb1 v Na6/Nh8 being set as a solving challenge at the international problemists' meeting at Bonn in 1992. None of us got near it - JDB.

Variant Chess two-man problem tourney award by Stephen Emmerson

I must start by thanking Ronald Turnbull for doing me the honour of inviting me to judge the first theme tourney of *Variant Chess*. I was informed of the theme after I had accepted, and I must confess to being somewhat worried originally that the limited scope would not bring many entries of worth. However, a little research in the field threw up over 100 problems in existence; and the response from composers has been most gratifying in that I have received 65 problems for consideration, though cooks have eliminated 5 of these and duals done damage to the chances of others. Fairy chess has certainly been enriched, with the new problems as well as some good new forms, although some of these need heavier settings to do them proper justice! Popeye has benefited too, from some re-programming to test these problems! Many thanks to the composers for making this job so enjoyable.

Some further statistics; of the 60 cook-free entries, there were 7 problems in construction (force added to the 1 or 2 units specified) as well as 5 one-man (a K in every case) problems. Of the two-man problems, there are 18 new KK (fairy legal!) ones including 6 retros; 13 used one K, 8 used none and 12 used fairy kings. Altogether, 7 featured direct or self-play, there were 7 retros, and 38 with series or help play. Only 3 used small boards, all of them with Haaner as well. Haaner was used in 3 further problems, but Sentinels was the most popular fairy condition, being used 16 times. One point about the two-man problems: they all qualify automatically as asymmetrics; all, that is, but the symmetrical problems, and a couple that added special squares to the board.

The usual criteria for awarding Commends (expression), HMs (idea) and Prizes (both) were applied, but it was difficult to fault many entries on originality, nor on construction! But, in some, there were many fairy conditions laid on top of one another with very restrictive effect; in others, the stipulations were contorted in order to disallow inherent duals in the idea. I think little was gained by these devices, and some good ideas have been left out in the hope that they will find a better realisation in other places, perhaps with as many as three pieces! I have had to regretfully leave out many other nice thoughts: perhaps even two-man problems can be too slight. But I hope these unrewarded problems will still

see the light of day. My main rationale, especially in giving the prizes, was to choose entertaining problems that used any fairy elements well, and also showed interplay between the pieces. Here then is my award:

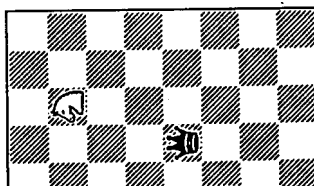
1st Prize: Ronald TURNBULL



Sentinels, Sensitive Kings
Series selfmate in 10

A very satisfying puzzle, easy but still with intriguing tries. The Bicolores element is used well in both the play and the mate, which is ideal. The natural stipulation appealed. Bicolores, or "Sensitive Kings": Ks suffer check also from their own units. (*Definitions in VC 28 are not repeated here - JDB*)

2nd Prize: Juraj LORINC



Maorider b6; Rose Lion e5
Help double stalemate in 2½
(b) - (d) bRLe5 to h5, e7, h7

This type of 4-corner echo has been worked before, I know, but this is special: the twinning in a rectangle either side of the 6th rank introduces a new type of asymmetry; and the attractive interplay of the pieces, the 'big arcs' and the tempi, especially in part a), make this one to be enjoyed. (Moarider: as nightrider but can be obstructed on certain intervening squares: the one on b6 can reach h3 but would be blocked by a unit on c5, e4, g3. Rose: Moves like knight but continues around a circle: one on a1 could move to b3, d4, f3 etc. Rose lion: as rose, but only to square beyond some obstruction. Double stalemate: Both sides are stalemated simultaneously.)

3rd Prize: Allan BELL,
Ronald TURNBULL



Neutral Kc7; All-neutral sentinels
Help double-mate in 3

An unmined seam, the double-mate:

this example shows good play with 3 promotions and an ideal, if not pretty, mate. Since I modified Popeye to test all-neutral sentinels, Norbert Geissler came up with other examples; this mate can be echoed by starting on e4 for h##4½. Another example has nKa1; so I played Cupid to show AUV by the surprise expedient of a duplex stipulation! (Bell, Emmerson, Geissler, Turnbull, nKb7, h##3½, duplex.) (All-neutral sentinels: neutral piece deposits neutral pawn. Double-mate: final move is a self-check such that both sides are checkmated. All other self-checks remain illegal.)

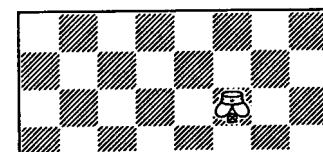
4th Prize: Paul RAICAN



Add wKBP, bKPP for Illegal Cluster

It took me a long while before deciding to allow constructions, especially as the announcement was perhaps not as clear as it should have been, but I did want to reward this problem. There are several different last-move sequences, depending upon which piece is removed. (Illegal cluster: illegal position that becomes legal on removal of any unit except a king.)

Special Prize: Ronald TURNBULL



Neutral Kf6; All-neutral sentinels;
Isardam; Series self double-mate in 7

For other problems in this Award Popeye was modified to test Isardam + Neutrals, and fixed to test correctly double-mate with a neutral King. By a strange quirk, the way it does this will allow double-mate Isardam to be tested, but not the combination of all three! I think my mistake was in informing the director of this loophole... But the reason it gets a special prize is that the mating move is illegal by 'standard' rules; at least, if the Isardam standard parallels the Madrasi standard, where the pawn which double-steps is paralysed for half a move while the other side decides whether to exercise the right of e.p. capture. It is only in series movers or with neutrals that one could ever notice the paralysis! But a good series, even if the rules are wrong! (NB: in

the original Madras Chess, both Ps were paralysed in this situation, so this doesn't work in 'Sardam' either. What about Osardam? (Isardam: moves leading to a Madrasi-type paralysis are illegal)

1st Honourable Mention, Erich Bartel: wPh5, b Royal Antelope d3, helpstalemate in 3, (b) h5 to g5, (c) then d3 to d8, (d) then also d8 to h2.

Four promotions elegantly achieved, even if the W play is unexciting. Can the wP be moved up one rank in a fifth part for the Q promotion? (Antelope: 3,4 leaper)

2nd HM, C C Lytton: w Gnu h5, bGNa1, Haaner Chess, Losing, last move bxa1GN, win in 2, (b) to (e) after keys of (a) to (d). The solution to each part must also allow solutions to subsequent parts.

Quite a bizarre idea, this, but a satisfying puzzle if rather more mathematical than chessic. The most successful entry in making a virtue out of the 'cooks' of the component problems (which could also be stipulated as Reflex-capture in 2) by making a meta-problem with good successive tries. The hole b2 detracts. (Gnu: 1,2 + 1,3 leaper, GNa1 can play to b3,b4,c2,d2. Haaner: piece that moves leaves a hole that may not be moved to or across. This problem has unusual twinning: 1 GNf6 solves a) but allows no solution to b), etc)

3rd HM, Juraj Lorinc: wKd4, bBb3, board 8x6 (a1-h6), Maximummer, Haaner, selfmate in 7, (b) remove g/h files.

One of only a few with uncooperative play: a good twin with the K in both parts having to contribute to the marshalling of the B.

4th HM, Noam Livnat: wKh3, (a) add men to give a legal double stalemate with 15 White men and 1 Black, (b) can it be done with 10 White and 1 Black?

Two constructions which are pleasant to solve, and an 'only just' negative answer to the natural question asked in the second part.

5th HM, Allan Bell: wRe5, neutral Kb8, own-colour sentinels, helpmate in 2, (b) wR to a6, (c) wR to e8, two solutions in each part.

Impressive variety in balanced twins, though lacking a theme. (Here the neutral king deposits W,B pawns according as W,B moved it.)

6th HM, Ronald Turnbull: wKb5, bKb3, Rois Transmutés, White and Black retract so that Black can help White mate in 1, (b) wK to a5.

A good KK retractor; not too easy and quite unexpected play, though the fairy retraction and extra Transmutés effect in b) outshine the play in a), whose solution

is not dissimilar to that of A H Kniest, Ks g6, a4 (same stipulation), Comm *feenschach* 1997, which is therefore a partial anticipation. (Rois Transmutés: K in check moves as checking piece)

7th HM, Ronald Turnbull: wNb2, bNc4, Koko, selfstalemate in 7 (*please note that Variant Chess now uses N for knight throughout the magazine - JDB*)

More self-play, though more systematic than in the 3rd HM. Nice circuits, and two lines ending in opposite corners. (Koko: move must be to square adjacent to some piece.)

8th HM, Juraj Lorinc: wKh1, bKe8, Anti-Circe, White and Black retract so that Black can help White mate in 1.

Another good fairy retractor, with an excellent surprise mid-board mate.

Special HM, Noam Livnat: wKa1, bKc6, shortest retraction, White starting, to a position with all castlings possible, with fewest uncaptures.

Special HM, Allan Bell: wKc6, bKc8, Sentinels, Oscillating kings (change places after every White move), helpmate in 3, (b) wKc7, bKa8, helpmate in 2. W must not be in check before the oscillation - and not after it either, of course.

Neither of these works quite in the way it was sent, but the ideas shouldn't be lost. (Livnat) The only really orthodox entry (excluding partial positions); a pity we can't be completely accurate with the uncaptures. (Bell) This form should get more attention. I thought I'd put these two together. (Originally two separate problems.)

1st Commendation, Peter Fayers: w Royal knight a2, bRNd2, actuated revolving centre, helpstalemate in 2 with set play.

An amusing idea, simply presented: one would normally say White must start, and the stalemate would be in the corner: but with the ARC Black may start instead and White gains a tempo on the roundabout, while in the set-play Black is staled in the middle instead! (ARC: the four central squares revolve 90° clockwise whenever a piece enters or leaves them. If 1 bNe4, bN revolves to d4.)

2nd Comm, Ian Richardson: w Grasshopper b1, bKc2, White, Black, White retract in turn so that White can mate in 1.

A good puzzle with a long range key. Personally, I don't find any need to worry as to how this diagram arose from the starting array: the solution is quite clear. Good use of grasshoppers.

3rd Comm, Ronald Turnbull: wKd2, bKf7, King Circe, White, Black, White retract in turn so that White can mate

in 1, duplex (BWB retract for B mate).

The tourney did well for retractors. These two lines are symmetric, though. (King Circe: Circe rebirth also of Kings. Check only if K's home square occupied)

4th Comm, Ronald Turnbull after Allan Bell: Neutral Ka3, Neutral sentinels, return to bare king as soon as possible, (b) White to move.

An interesting stipulation, and a good puzzle.

Also Commended:

Paul Raican, Vlaicu Crisan: bKe4, bQf3, Haaner Chess, Magic square b3, series helpmate in 5, two solutions. The only one-colour entry with 2 men. Nice echo: a pity the K doesn't move. (A unit that moves into the magic square changes colour, but not Ks.)

Erich Bartel: wKd3, bKd8, Sentinels, Bicolores, play one White move then series helpmate in 3, two solutions. Along with all-neutral pawns, the Bicolores stipulation is a way of getting Sentinels to play an active part in the final position. It would have been better to set with bKe8 for a single asymmetric solution.

Erich Bartel: w Chameleon-promoter Pawn a7, b Royal Pawn a2, White maxi, White edgemover, series double stalemate in 4. Fairy conditions by the lorryload, RT's counting system might put this at 32 men! Of the type I'd hoped to avoid, but this is a task (AUW + 4 corners), and cunningly contrived at that. How does piece-economy compare with stipulation economy elsewhere - and can anyone offer a one-piece setting? (Chameleon: changes its species after moving, along chain N>B>R>Q>N. Chameleon-promoter Pawn promotes to Chameleon, initial species chosen at will. Edgemover: all moves must be to board edge.)

Juraj Lorinc: w Mao f3, bKd3, Sentinels, helpmate in 4, two solutions. Good mates, one ideal. (Mao: as knight, but can be obstructed on adjoining square. A unit on f2 would block this one from moving to e1, g1.)

Juraj Lorinc: w Royal Knight f4, b Royal Rook b5, Koko, Sentinels, helpmate in 4, (b) rotate 90° clockwise. How anybody thinks up problems like this is a mystery to me. The mates certainly can't be envisaged from the diagram; how can the diagram be envisaged from the mates? The mates here have interesting fairy content.

Our thanks to Stephen for his judgement. Readers are invited to solve the problems, and to send solutions and comments to Ronald Turnbull (see "Problem Pages"); answers next time - JDB

Problem pages by Ronald Turnbull

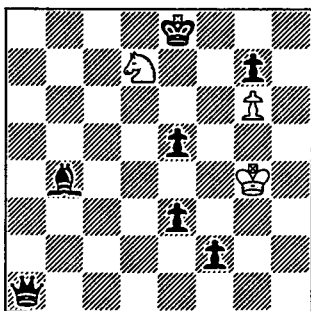
Highland Cottage, Gatelawbridge, Thornhill, Dumfries and Galloway DG3 5EA

It gives me great pleasure to see the results of our first Theme Tourney, for two-man problems. Stephen Emmerson gives us a considered, interesting and rapid judgment, for which I thank him. He has also gone well beyond the normal tasks of a judge - themselves arduous enough. Not only has he computer-tested most of the entries, but he has written new code into Popeye in order to do so. And Circe Retractors are not straightforward programming.

I was delighted by the number and quality of the entries. I have enjoyed solving them, removing composers' names and sending them on to Stephen. Should VC's readers be deprived of the solving pleasure of this most entertaining pile of problems? Indeed, no! So the solutions are held over to the next issue (they will be supplied on request to editors of sister magazines). Solutions and comments are invited as for any other originals in the magazine (except for the 1st Prize, already published as 211 in VC 26). Problems not honoured are at the disposal of their composers - many of them are eminently publishable.

A selection of three-men-or-more problems completes this issue's solving. Plenty of very solvable stuff in the Theme Tourney: but I'll start here with two easy ones anyway.

(259) Arthur WILLMOTT

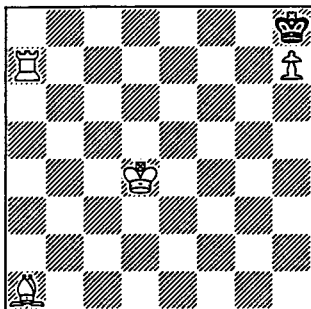


Series mate in 10, Circe

In Messigny Chess (260), instead of a normal move one may swap the positions of two like units of different colours. Thus if White tries 1 Ke3+, Black simply swaps the Kings $K \leftrightarrow K!$ A player may not immediately reverse the swapping move. More Messigny in the next issue - including, I hope, some more originals, and a ruling on castling. Also in VC 30 there will be Dragons (Dragon has power of N + P: of normal N on 1-rank, 8-rank); and Scorpions (King with added power of

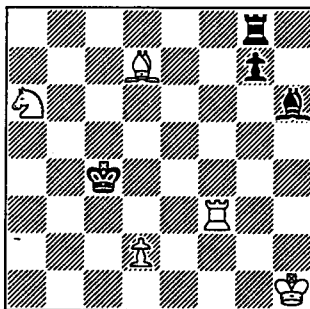
Grasshopper.) Your stinging and biting originals will be particularly welcome for that rather dangerous issue.

(260) Fabrice LIARDET



Mate in 2, Messigny Chess

(261) Peter FAYERS

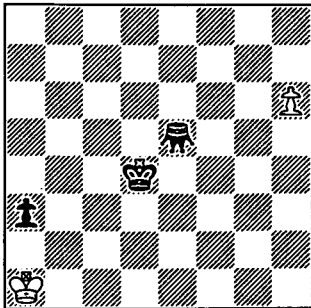


Helpmate in 2

(b) Helpmate in 1, Marseilles Chess

Marseilles Chess is a fine playing variant. After an initial single move by W, each player has two moves in each turn. If the first move gives check, the second is lost. Check must be escaped from on the first move (so checkmate is conventional). So in part b) of 261, the move-order will be BBWW (unless someone gives premature check).

(262) Erich BARTEL

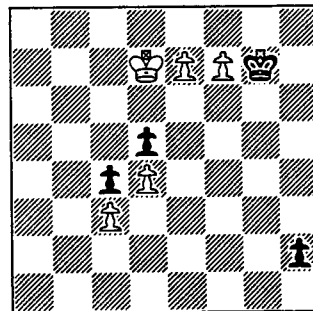


Helpmate in 3, Checkless Chess

It was no surprise to find Erich Bartel

featuring in the awards of the Theme Tourney. Here he offers a small grasshopper problem and a Circe one that is light in setting but not in idea. (Checkless Chess: checking moves are illegal, except in the case of mate.)

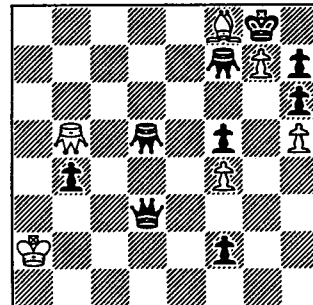
(263) Erich BARTEL



Helpstalemate in 3, duplex, Circe

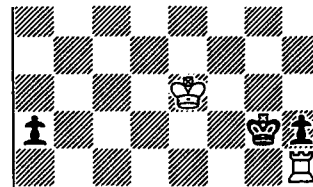
Sheer generosity on the composer's part gives us four different solutions to 264. And as the tourney has exercised our backwards-fairy muscles, here's a tough one to flex them over.

(264) Arthur WILLMOTT



Helpmate in 2, 4 solutions

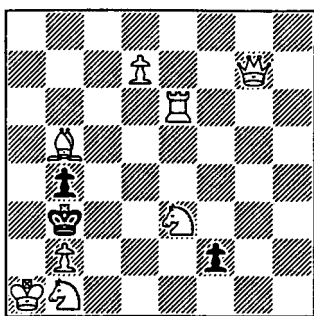
(265) Paul RAICAN



White and Black retract for help-stalemate in 1, Anti-Circe, 2 solutions

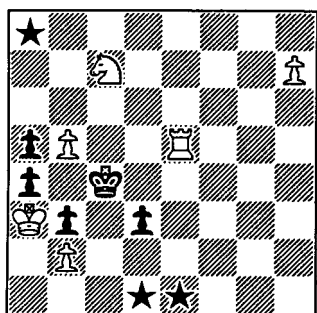
After exercise, sink gratefully into a warm bath: Eureka! (266) is mate in two, but in what fairy form? (267) is selfmate in 3, maxi, with unknown pieces (B or W, orthodox or fairy) on a8/d1/e1. The first W move is h8Q, the second always (or only) Re2. What are the mystery pieces?

(266) EUREKA!



Mate in 2 by 1 Qf7: what fairy form?

(267) EUREKA!



Selfmate in 3, Maxi (see text)

My historical imagination may have run away with me here. Almost certainly, Archimedes bathed in nasty cold water... NB: 255 from the previous issue is offered for solving again. Black KQRP on d8,f3,d6,e7: White RKR at home, QP on c6,c2. Selfmate in 4, Follow-my-Leader. In this problem, after W castling B must move to the rook-square if possible.

Composers: With a new editor of the magazine the Problem Pages are being pruned back - which should, as any gardener knows, result in more abundant flowering and greater vigour. I shall be more selective of originals for publication. In VC 31 (issue after next, Spring 99) I aim to seduce non-problemist readers of the rest of the magazine. I therefore seek straightforward but interesting direct-mates or selfmates (no help or series play) each with a single fairy condition or with a single type of fairy piece. If the seduction is successful, such problem policy may continue indefinitely.

Solutions to VC 28

Solvers: Erich Bartel, Aubrey Ingleton, Cedric Lytton, Ian Richardson, Mark Ridley.

244 (Willmott) 1...Ra3 2 Be6 Bc6+ 3 Kc4 Nxe6 and 1...Nf5 2 Kc5 Re4 3 Bd5 Re5 and Ba6 2 Be6 Nxe6 3 Kc6 Rd4. After the rather nice pinstalemate, other two are more difficult (CCL). Where (as here) no particular theme is apparent, we

look for (and in this example, find) a real precision and elegance of construction. Three solutions is one more than I'd expect with this material.

245 (Willmott) 3 Rxc1 4 Kb2 5 Ra1 6 c1R 8 Bb1 10 Kd1 11 c2 12 c3 Kf2. Despite new label, not a particularly original bottle, but good solving (CCL). An awkward little exercise in shutting-in-the-box. Shame the wB was needed.

246 (Vitale) Kxh2 Rg5 2 c1Q+ Rxc1 3 Kh3 Rh1 or 3 Qb6; c1N Kd5 2 Rxf5+ Ke4 3 Kg4 Rg2 or 3 Re5. Best Circe element is Black mate in a), others being orthodox. However, the promotions unify, and I found it terribly difficult ... (CCL). Defending units play no part in any of the 4 mates - normally a defect, here the feature is shown with such intensity as almost to amount to theme!

247 (Muller) 3 Ke7 4 KAa7 8 Ka3 9 KAA2 10 KAA1 11KAA4 12 KAA5 14 Kc5 15 KAf5 16 KAB5 18 Ka5 Nc6 and b) 1 Kc3 2 KAb2 3 Kb4 then as before (reflected in a8-h1). Second solution not fully different but good to have it there at all (RT). It looked rather difficult, and it was (A Willmott)

248 (Raican) Kc7 2 Kd4 d8Q 3 Ke5 Qg5 and Ke8 2 Ke5 d8N 3 Kd6 Nce6 but unfortunately the cook-stop pawns didn't do their job: bKc7 for d8Q (IR,EB) and the nice Ke7 2 Kc6 d8R 3 Kc7 Ne6 (EB)

249 (Crisan) 1 Kd6(+bP) Kc7(+wP) 2 Kb6(+bP) Kb7(+wP) 3 Ka8(+bP) dc= 1 Ke6(+bP) Kf7(+wP)+ 2 Kg6(+bP)+ Kg7(+wP) 3 Kh8(+bP) ef= 1 Kf6(+bP) Kg7(+wP)+ 2 Kg6(+bP) Kxg7(+wP)+ 3 Kh8(+bP) f7=

Remarkable to get three well-differentiated solutions out of thin air.

250 (Raican) bPg7A; wKf7B, bPh6B - b)wKh5A, bPg7A; bPh6B. Neatest and most piquant of twinings, and solutions matching by a sort of shift-reflection. Surprisingly simple, once realised that same square can't be occupied on both boards and that Ks may not adjoin on either board. An introduction to the interesting complexities of Alice Backwards.

251 (Raican, Crisan, Turnbull) Kf8(+bP) g7 presumed captured earlier) 1 Kg6(+wR) Ke7= and Kf6 2 Kh6(+wB) Bg6=. AI offers short cook: 1...K- (ghost wQ h5)! But our reasoning (admittedly unreasonable) was that the sceptical enquirer would deny the existence of a ghost that fails to manifest itself in the play...

252 (Crisan) NB: no lurkers under the unmoved bP. 1 Ke6(+wN) Nd6(+bB) 2 Be8(+wR) Kd4= and b) 1 Kd5(+wR) Rc6(+bR) 2 Rd6(+wN) Kf4=. Always nice to see added Black force in stalemate problem. Here bR, bB blocked in mid

board.

253 (Shvichenko) 1 Bxe4+ Bf5+ 2 Rxf5 Rc5 b) Rxe4+ Rc4+ 2 Bxc4 Be6. I wish I could compose a helpmate with such perfectly matched solutions! (IR) A well-constructed ortho-diag echo and an enjoyable solve. The white check was a surprise (RT).

254 (Shvichenko) 1 Rxh1 Rxh8 2 0-0 Ne7 and 1 Rxa1 Rxa8 2 0-0 Nb6. Each captured wB does work in the other solution. Pity about b4, d3 (CCL). Two lovely demonstrations of Andernach (AI). Given the Andernach castling convention (which I personally would happily do without) this pleasant setting is not too obviously symmetrical, with nice corner play.

255 (Richardson) Last-minute uncook by me was spectacularly unhelpful - sorry. Please move the bK to d8, add bPe7, and try again (solution next time).

256 (Brada) Try Nf8 (2 Be4) Qe6/Nxf5 2 Ncb6/e4 but Nf7! Try Qg6 (Ncb6) Qe6/Nxf5 2 Ndb6/Qxf5 but Qf7! Key c7 (Ndb6) Qe6/Nxf5 2 Be4/Qxg8. But IR cooks 1 Nxf6+ g2 Qd7. Threats and replies to Qe6 form 3x2 Lacy, throw in replies to Nxf5 to get 3x3 Zagoriuko. Note that after 1 c7 Qe6 2 Be4, Black does not have 2...Qxe4 as this would be an illegal mate to White (mate by unattacked Black unit) - RT. This position is very difficult to understand - composer!

257 (Turnbull) 1 0-0 and 2 Qd7 or Qf8. Not 1 Rf1? 0-0-0! Unusually light setting of "either can castle but not both" position. If Black can castle, his previous was bxa6. From game-array, game could start 1 f3 f5 2 Kf2 f4 3 g3 (Bf1 now paralysed) fg. What beautiful history in Meredith! Reminiscent of some beautiful Monochrome retractors (CCL).

258 (Turnbull) 5 a8R 6 Re8 (not paralysed) 7 Re7. b)1 e7 2 c8N 3 Ne7 4 d8B 5 c7 6 c8R (3-cycle guard, nothing paralysed) 7 Rc7 Black K merely to eliminate a dual (RT) Delicacy with 4 pieces - (Miroslav Brada)

- A very good issue with splendid problems (L Vitale - but he sent no solutions...)

Scores: CCL 11, AI 8 (+1 c/f for 255), EB 8, IR 5½ (+1 c/f), MR 3. Solutions to this issue by 1 November, please.

240 (Willmott): composer clarifies, "no captures except B final move" should have been included in stipulation.

241 (Velucchi): composer adds wPe2. (Position now: Game Array less pawns a2,g2,b7,e7,h7; after White's 9th: Single Combat.) If now sound a nice addition to VC's collection of proof games and an inspiration for the *feenschach* journey.

News, notices, solutions

BCVS Notices

We are still looking for a **tournament controller** to take charge of our postal tournaments. Until a volunteer comes forward, individual tournaments will be organized on an *ad hoc* basis (see "Forthcoming events"), but this is not really satisfactory. Previous experience is not essential; common sense should suffice. Assume a commitment of an hour a week, though in practice it will be very patchy.

News

The annual French problemists' meeting at Whitsun included a five-minute **Extinction Chess** tournament, won in splendid style by our reader Fabrice Liardet with a clean score ahead of a field including leading French orthodox chess players Alain Villeneuve and François Chevaldonnet. My own results were almost as consistent. Afterwards there was some lighthearted **Kriegspiel Madras** (like-moving pieces paralyse each other). I do seriously recommend this game; it is one of the most amusing forms of chess I know.

Our early copy date for this issue has prevented coverage of the **Mind Sports Olympiad** in London and also of the **Losing Chess** weekend in Geneva, but there will be a report on both in VC 30.

Forthcoming events

We hope to repeat the BCVS Alice, Extinction, and Italian Progressive postal tournaments in 1998-99. Entries for the Alice tournament to **David Pritchard**, Badgers Wood, Hascombe Road, Munstead, Godalming, Surrey GU8 4AA, for Extinction to **Robert Reynolds**, 2 Manor Farm Road, Tyseley, Birmingham B12 2HU, and for Italian Progressive to **Peter Coast**, 2 Finchcroft Lane, Prestbury, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 5BG; all by **October 31**, please.

If any reader would like to see a postal tournament in any other variant, let him please write to me, and I will put a notice in VC 30. See also the next items.

Malcolm Horne asks me to announce that the BCCA (British Correspondence Chess Association) are considering running some **variant postal tournaments**, and are currently asking members for input, to see if there is any demand for variants,

and if so which ones.

They are experimenting with **Fischer Random Chess** "trios" starting this autumn. A trio means that each person plays two games against each of two opponents, i.e. four games in all. Players can enter more than one trio, and there is no entry fee.

If you live in the UK, and would like to enter, please write promptly to the BCCA membership officer, Dr. Bernard Armitage, at 105 Bramcote Drive West, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1DU. The annual subscription is £8 and includes a good quarterly magazine.

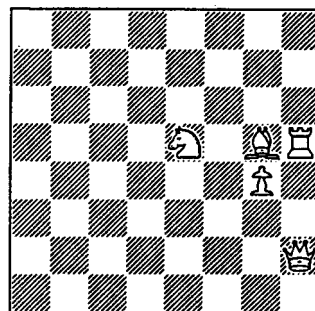
Malcolm also asks me to say that the other major UK postal organisation, the BCCS, already runs a **pocket knight** tournament. Contact Stephen Ruthen at Forge Barn, Mill Road, Wyverstone, Suffolk IP14 4SE. The annual subscription is £12 and includes six magazines a year.

Ronald Turnbull asks me to print some notices about **problem tournaments**. Last issue he mentioned *The Problemist's* McWilliam Tourney for Schiffman defenses - "a defending piece pins itself, but in such a way that the threat would unpin (and so allow the defending piece to do its defending)." The judge of the fairy section (John Rice) now broadens this to allow the defending piece to immobilise itself in any way whatever, and invites "ingenious and Fairy-specific interpretations which nonetheless preserve the essential character of Schiffman defences." The closing date is extended to **30 September 1999**. Entries to Mark Ridley, 59 Otterburn Avenue, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE25 9RQ, England.

The German magazine *feenschach* announces its 50th birthday tourney, with 3 fairy sections: for proof games with at least one fairy element, for directmates in 3 or more moves with at least one fairy element, and for series helpmates in 10 or fewer moves. Entries to Hans Gruber, Schlörstrasse 11, D-80634 München, Germany, by the **end of 1999**.

Our own Theme Tourney Two is for Zvolen's Chess - "a unit defended by its own side is paralysed, and loses all powers including that of defending its own side. However, reciprocal or cyclic guards do not paralyse unless one of the units is paralysed from outside the cycle." Miroslav Brada and Ronald have agreed some examples to elucidate the paralysis cycles. In the diagram that follows, R<Q

is reciprocal and R>Q>N>P is a cycle, so B alone is paralysed. With Bf3, no unit is paralysed. With Bd1, P is paralysed, breaking both the cycles, and so N is paralysed by Q and by R.



Solutions

Alice Chess (page 3). Coast - Jelliss actually finished 13 Rg8/A+ Ke7 14 Rxa7+ Kf6/A 15 Bh4/A+ Kg6 16 Qg4+ Qg5 17 Rg×g7#, but I think 15...Kf5 would have held out one move longer. I can find nothing better than 16 Qh5+ Qg5 (16...Ke4/A 17 Qf3/A#) 17 g4+ Ke4/A 18 Qh1/A#.

Pritchard - Tremayne: 16 Nb5/A+ Kc6 17 Rxc8+ Kb7/A 18 Bd5/A+ Ka6 19 Nxc7+ Ka7/A 20 Nb5/A+ Ka6 21 Bb7+ Kxb7/A 22 Rc7/A+ Ka6 23 Ra7#. A real Alice lesson!

Italian Progressive (pages 4-5). These were the sequences actually played. In several cases there are other ways to win.

Howes: 4 exf6, Ne5, Qe7, Nf3# (double check).

Tremayne: 4 d3, dxc2, cxb1Q, Bb4# (WQ is pinned).

Richardson - Wood: 6 Kxd8, Nc3, Bxh3, Bxg2, Be7, Bh4#.

Richardson - Howes: 8 a4, axb3, bxc2, cxb1Q, Nh6, Ng4, Nh2, Qf1#.

Pritchard - Tremayne (heat): 7 Bf6, Be7, Nc3, Nd5, e3, Be2, Bh5#.

Byway - Pritchard (heat): 7 Kd2, Kxc1, Kd1, Bf3, Bxd5, Bxb7, Bc6# (Italian mate).

Wood - Byway: 8 g5, g4, g3, gxh2, h1R, Rf1, Bh6, Bxc4#.

Wood - Pritchard: 8 Kd7, Nf6, Rc8, Rxc3, Rxc2, Bb4, Ng4, Nxe3#.

Byway - Tremayne (final): 5 Kxd1, Kc2, Nc3, Nd5, Nc7# (Italian mate).

Byway - Pritchard (final): 7 Ke2, Nb5, Nc7, Nf3, Nh4, Ng6, Nxh8#.

Coast - Wood: 9 Kf2, Kg3, Kh4, Kh5, e3, Bc4, Bxd5, Ne4, g4#.