# VARIANT CHESS

Founded by George Jelliss

## THE MAGAZINE TO BROADEN YOUR CHESS HORIZONS

## Contents

## This issue

A sad feature of chess magazines is the way in which the "general" and "problem" sections tend to degenerate into separate entities each with its own readership. One of my objectives as editor of *Variant Chess* has been to try and reverse this trend, and to integrate the problem material more closely with the rest of the magazine. Ronald Turnbull has given me enthusiastic support in this, and as part of the process he has asked me to print the adjoining invitation. I am happy to do so. There will always be readers who take no interest in the artificial positions which tend to be created by problem composers, but I cannot help feeling that there are many who would enjoy an occasional dip into our problem pages and do not take one.

This apart, we have reports on the recent Mind

## An invitation *by Ronald Turnbull*

I am convinced that if I were to study the doctrines of Theosophy or Confucianism I would find them mysterious but also very dull. Possibly some readers of this magazine may harbour the same suspicions about the Problem Pages at the end. In *VC* 30 we shall be offering Problem Pages aimed specifically at those who feel that way. In the meantime, the diagram below is an invitation: it can be reached (in only one way) at the end of Series 4 in a game of Progressive Chess. (In other words, after W; BB; WWW; BBBB.) How did it happen?



The answer is on the aforesaid Problem Pages: and there you will find another Progressive Problem, and two diagrams which may be used to flex your Alice fingers without serious risk of breaking the brain.

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Sports Olympiad in London and the Losing Chess meeting in Geneva, a survey of practical results with the most frequently played openings in Progressive Chess, the first of what I hope will be a series of contributions concerning variant chess activities and facilities on the Internet, and all our usual features and snippets.

And XiangQi enthusiasts will notice that I have not continued the notation I used in *VC* 29, but have reverted to RNBGKCP as used hitherto.

# The second Mind Sports Olympiad *by Peter Wood*

The second Mind Sports Olympiad took place in London at the Novotel, Hammersmith, from August the 24th to the 30th. The given reason for moving it from last year's Royal Festival Hall was to increase the available space, but it is doubtful if that was the real reason. This is not to say that the Novotel was not roomy - it was - but it is located in a rather uninteresting part of London on what is in effect a giant traffic roundabout, the meals and snacks were expensive, and there were few interesting places in the vicinity to escape to. To suggest, as the organisers did, that it was a more suitable venue than the RFH was ludicrous.

The event had the same format as last year - there were four-hour playing sessions in the morning and afternoon, with 78 separate events on the programme. Some events of last year were cut out including Mah Jong and Jigsaw Puzzle Solving (where your reporter won a glorious bronze medal). Among those sports new this year were Lines of Action, which is played with draught pieces on a 8x8 chessboard (I well recommend this game, it is easy to learn, the equipment is cheap, and games do not last too long - AISE and NOST have been running postal tournaments for some years now), and Hexdame (draughts on a hexagonal board - this is an invention of Christiaan Freeling and he was understandably very enthusiastic about the game. He considers that despite many people's efforts, chess does not really work on a hexagonal board; but he assures me that draughts does.). Christiaan Freeling also had on display two sumptuous wooden Grand Chess boards (10x10), with accompanying pieces. He told me that GC will be a Mind Sport in next year's event (see *VC* 19 and 24 for details of this variant).

The number of contestants was I believe up from last year, but not by much. It is difficult to be clear about how popular the event was because Tony Buzan, one of the main organisers, throughout the week kept announcing optimistic projections of the number of contestants still to be expected - over-optimistic projections. What is clear is that although much sponsorship was obtained (from British Airways, Swindon Borough Council etc.) the main sponsor of last year, Skandia, was lost. This meant that economies had to be made, and the most important economy was that there was no prize money for the events. In particular this hit the chess (western) events hard where, apart from juniors, few really good players competed. The French Chinese Chess players in fact wanted to withdraw from the two tournaments they had entered, but, as they could not obtain refunds of their entry fees, decided in the end to play.

The playing conditions were generally very good, and the organisation was absolutely first class. I would single out in particular Tony Corfe and his team on the front desk for dealing with huge numbers of fresh entries each day, answering queries, photocopying game scores, dealing with results, and I am sure much else as well, all with great patience and efficiency. Dan Glimne was a joy to behold in preventing unauthorised entry - he is a great games enthusiast and told me he has a collection of some 50 variant chess games.

As I said when reporting last year, the event deserved many more people - it is highly enjoyable to compete in, or just to attend. There were beginners' events in bridge and backgammon for the casual visitor, and one could learn how to play many other games. At tables Go was being taught and played, nearby a smartly dressed American was demonstrating Megachess and draughts - three-player variants ('Good quality plastic'), Oware was again being taught. There was ample space for friendly play. One could even get paid for playing for England! True. Thirty pounds were offered to competitors who wished to play Stratego and make up a 10-person team to play matches against Germany, Holland and Belgium. Only four of these places were filled.

The result of the main four-day Shogi tournament was: 1st. **Larry Kaufman**, 2nd. **Mamabu Tenao**, 3rd. **Eric Cheymol**. Larry Kaufman in an American - he is also a strong Go and Chinese Chess player (he told me it was a toss-up whether he entered the Shogi or Chinese Chess event; he also said he was the leading CC player in the US). The Saturday 10-minute Shogi event was won by **Dennis Hassabis** in front of second-placed **Hideki Tanaka**, with **Fassil Bekele** third.

I will give a detailed account of the Chinese Chess tournaments in my XiangQi article. Suffice to say that leading Chinese Grandmaster **Liu Da Hua** won the 5-day event ahead of ex-Ladies' World Champion **Hu Ming**, also from China. The weekend European Championship was won by the Frenchman **Woo Wei Cheung** ahead of **Chen Fa Zuo** of England.

Again I urge all game lovers to turn up for next year's event. It needs more numbers or the event will die. In fact Tony Buzan assured everyone at the Closing Ceremony that there would be *three times* the amount of competitors next year - which makes one wonder whether this could be the last year of the MSO! I trust not - it deserves to continue. It is a great event.

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## The Genealogy of Chess

David H. Li writes to take issue with my commentary in *VC* 29 (p 9), and draws attention to favourable reviews of his work in *Chinese American Forum*, April 1998 ("a comprehensive survey supported by 130 references in Western languages and 54 references in the Chinese language"), by John McCallion in *NOST*, Sept-Oct 1998 ("It is a provocative, fascinating, and convincing volume"), and by our own Peter Wood in *VC* 27. Some other people, rightly or wrongly, have not found it so convincing. The matter will no doubt continue to be discussed in circles frequented by chess historians, but I do not think *Variant Chess* is a suitable venue for such discussion and I do not propose to publish further contributions on this topic. - JDB

# PRBASE Version 3: a survey *by Paul Byway*

PRBASE is a compendium of some eleven thousand games of Progressive Chess, compiled by A.I.S.E. and available from its president, Alessandro Castelli, at 62010 Villa Potenza, Macerata, Italy. I originally intended to get it in time for the BCVS Progressive Chess Championship - but it didn't happen. I had to form my opening repertoire from back issues of *VC*, a report of the 1996 Internet Championship, and a few other scraps of information. After the event I went back and did this survey: there were several surprises. My hope is that this article will give some idea of the latest trends in Progressive Chess openings. This is particularly important for those of us, and there are some, who take part in postal international events.

PRBASE version 3.0 comes as one hundred and sixty spiral-bound A4 pages (it's also to be had on disc) containing games up to April 1994. Both Scottish and Italian varieties are represented. There are four supplements (3.1 to 3.4 which I will usually combine as 3.x) bringing the coverage up to December 1997 - over eleven thousand games in all.

**GAMES**

| Version | 1 d4 | 1 e4 | Cut-off |
|---------|------|------|---------|
| 3.0 | 3042 | 4974 | APR '94 |
| 3.1 | 379 | 552 | DEC '94 |
| 3.2 | 395 | 296 | DEC '95 |
| 3.3 | 448 | 424 | MAR '97 |
| 3.4 | 317 | 390 | DEC '97 |
| 3.x | 1539 | 1662 | DEC '97 |

In the table we can detect a swing to 1 d4 in recent years. No doubt this is because overall results are much better with 1 d4 than with 1 e4. So much was stated in an early issue of *Variant Chess* and will be confirmed by the data presented here.

I have examined all the games beginning with 1 e4 or 1 d4 and classified them by Black defence. All defences with twenty or more examples were included, although not all of them will be listed here. This accounted for about 80-90% of the database: the top half of each list

accounted for about 90% of that.

**GAMES WITH 1 d2-d4**

| Black Defence | White Score | in v3.0 | in v3.x |
|---------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| 2 d5,Nc6 | 49% | 557 | 471 |
| 2 c5,cd4 | 57% | 401 | 381 |
| 2 d5,Nf6 | 65% | 617 | 121 |
| 2 e5,ed4 | 62% | 242 | 46 |
| 2 d5,e5 | 63% | 202 | 51 |
| 2 Nc6,Nf6 | 62% | 212 | 20 |
| 2 d6,Nf6 | 60% | 99 | 68 |
| 2 c6,d5 | 60% | 58 | 73 |
| 2 c5,d5 | 56% | 89 | 42 |

The list is ordered by total number of games. For a better idea of current trends you should examine the last column. A total of 307 games covers the next eight defences, from 57 games (3.0+3.x) down to 24. Results are not likely to be reliable for such a small number of games. The influence of a single player can be marked and short opening traps can easily give a dozen examples of the same game. There are also early retirements and false results. I have ignored the first and emended the second if a winning line is given by the annotator. The White score in these less popular defences ranged from 58% to 79%, except for the 'Double Dutch' defence 2 f5,Nf6 which I shall examine in *VC* 31, for White only managed 33% !

## Remarks

For a defence which has kept its popularity over time 3.x should show about half the games that 3.0 does. The last two columns show that the first rank defences have gained or lost popularity in line with their results. The top choice is one I had hardly even considered, and the results for no other defence even came close. One can say with reasonable confidence that best play is 1 d4 2 d5,Nc6.

Black had very poor results with 2 d5,Nf6 and it will surely lose further support. The second rank defences posted mediocre results and suffered accordingly. The third rank defences all scored better and gained popularity, except that the best of them (d5,c5) only just maintained its support: it deserves better.

The data suggests that Black should adopt d5,Nc6 (49%) as his main defence, with d5,c5 (56%) or c5,cd4 (57%) for variety. It might well be worth experimenting with f5,Nf6. It scored 33% !! but this is based on a mere 24 games and caution is in order.

The next table is bigger: not only because more games have been played with 1 e4, but also because there is no very clear break between the more popular defences and the less.

**GAMES WITH 1 e2-e4**

| Black Defence | White Score | in v3.0 | in v3.x |
|---------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| 2 e5,f6 | 49% | 1249 | 112 |
| 2 d5,Nc6 | 40% | 894 | 417 |
| 2 d5,e5 | 51% | 425 | 230 |
| 2 d5,de4 | 58% | 513 | 48 |
| 2 d5,d4 | 35% | 154 | 308 |
| 2 d5,Bd7 | 50% | 197 | 10 |
| 2 e5,Nh6 | 46% | 128 | 65 |
| 2 e5,f5 | 53% | 161 | 3 |
| 2 e6,Nf6 | 47% | 53 | 76 |
| 2 e5,Qe7 | 51% | 97 | 32 |
| 2 d5,Nf6 | 67% | 117 | 7 |
| 2 e6,Be7 | 70% | 39 | 63 |
| 2 d5,f5 | 67% | 79 | 19 |
| 2 e6,f6 | 58% | 44 | 47 |

Ten more defences account for a further 385 games and have scores around the 60-70% mark.

## Remarks

It's no surprise that the Sienna Defence (2 d5,Nc6) has been the most popular in recent years, but the best figures go to d5,d4 which has made spectacular progress and could be number one before long. This is another defence that I was not aware of. The 'classical' defence e5,f6 has suffered unjustly, while d5,e5 seems to be slightly over-rated. A better pair of back-up defences would seem to be e5,Nh6 and e6,Nf6. The latter has made particularly good progress. The worst results were posted by the reasonable-looking e6,d5 at 80%. A final curiosity is this:- e6,Bb4 (48%) sank from 66 games (v3.0) to one (v3.x) while the dreadful e6,Be7 (70%) rose from 39 games to 63. There's no accounting for taste.

# Losing Chess in Geneva

Fabrice Liardet hosted a most enjoyable Losing Chess weekend in Geneva during September. It was proudly announced as "the first International Losing Chess meeting", and it may even have been that; it was certainly successful. The list of participants showed four visitors, from Holland, one from Germany, one across the border from France, and myself from England, and there were several from Geneva and from elsewhere in Switzerland.

Apart from the obligatory eating and drinking, the programme contained a simultaneous display by the Dutch expert Joost Beltman (+9, −1), a pair of consultation games in which teams of experts took on the computer (+1, −1), a session of 20-minute talks, and a 15-minute "Open" tournament (13 participants, 7 rounds, Swiss system). This last was won by Fabrice himself with a clean score. I think to his mixed pleasure and embarrassment. All participants subsequently received an excellent meeting report containing all the games and the text of most of the talks.

Most of us play Losing Chess purely for fun, a purpose to which it is admirably suited, and our ideas of strategy amount to little more than a realization that a rampant bishop can be extremely dangerous to its owner. Fabrice therefore circulated some notes on basic principles of play, and these are reproduced in the meeting report. I think it worth giving them here as well (my translation).

- It is necessary to be very careful indeed about letting a bishop loose. It is known that the moves 1 e4, 1 d4, and 1 d3 lose by force, and there are many other such traps in the opening.
- The opening move 1 e3 is almost universally recognized as the best. Its purpose is to release some pieces without weakening the pawn structure.
- Unless there is a forced win, it is quite wrong to think that a player should get rid of as many pieces as possible. In fact, to have a material superiority is almost always an

advantage. The king, in particular, is an extremely strong piece, and even the pawns are often useful to gain space and restrain the opponent.

- The object of play in the middle game is therefore to gain space or material, with the object of immobilizing the opposing forces. If this can be achieved, it is usually possible to win by "encirclement".
- Matters change when the ending is reached, that is when all pieces have become mobile and only a few pawns are left. At this point it becomes imperative to advance these pawns as quickly as possible, since a laggard pawn can often be made to capture all the pieces of a pawnless adversary.

One of the most interesting games was that played by six Dutch/Swiss experts against Stan Goldovski's program *Giveaway Wizard*, running on a Pentium 133 with 32Mb of RAM. A standard opening was chosen (**1 e3 e6 2 Ba6 Nxa6 3 h4 Qxh4 4 Rxh4 Ba3 5 Nxa3 h5 6 Rxh5 Rxh5 7 Qxh5 Nb4 8 Qxf7 Kxf7 9 Rb1 Nxc2 10 Nxc2**), after which the players tossed for sides and the human team gained White. Subsequent play was nominally at one minute per move, but the mechanics of consultation often caused the human players to over-run. Notes by Fabrice, from the meeting report; my translation.
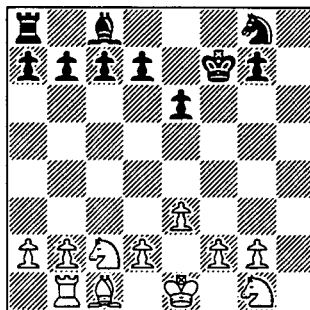


White's extra knight gives him a small advantage. **10...Ne7 11 Ke2** The standard move in this position, allowing Nc2 to move to the K-side via e1 and g2. **11...b5** A good move which gains space on the Q-side, even

if at first sight it seems risky. **12 Na1?** The human team allowed themselves to be seduced by the thought of luring the bP to its doom by a4, Nb3, and Kd1-c2. The natural and good move 12 Ne1 obtained only two votes out of six. **12...Nc6!** Not 12...b4? 13 b3! after which the threat of 14 Ba3 and 15 Rb2 appears unanswerable. But the arrival of the cavalry is sufficient to meet the direct threats, and the White Q-side is choked and immobile (that poor Na1!).
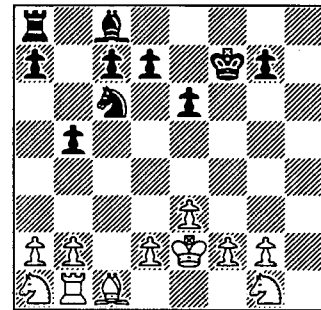


**13 e4** To displace bN, which would become very strong after the natural continuation 13 a4 bxa4 14 Nb3 axb3 15 Kd1 Nb4! (threat 16...Nd3). However, even if it is no worse than 13 a4, the move played is nevertheless illogical; the sole purpose of 12 Na1? was to set up threats against bPb5, threats which are now definitely lifted by Black's strong reply. **13...Na5!** Prevents 14 a4 bxa4 15 Nb3 on account of 15...Nxb3! followed by the fatal opening of the b-file by ...a3. **14 g4** Trying at least to gain a little space on the K-side. **14...g5 15 Kd1?!** Hoping to play 16 f4, but this will be prevented. Note that the human team were already well aware of the difficulty of their position; this move was chosen only after three and a half minutes of discussion. Nb3 was also considered, now and at the next move, and would at least have rid them of that dreadful knight in the corner. **15...e5! 16 Ne2 Nb3** Preparing the escape of bB, which will release bRa8. **17 axb3 Ba6** Even with so few pieces, Black's pressure is extremely strong. The human team, seeing that they would be forced sooner or later into a fatal promotion of wPe4, decide

to commit positional suicide on the K-side. **18 f4 exf4 19 Nxf4 gxf4** This bP is particularly strong, as the sequel will demonstrate. **20 e5 Rh8 21 Kc2?** After the sacrifice of the knight on e2, the wK is White's only remaining mobile piece, and just watch him go to the wrong side. The only chance of further resistance was 21 b4 (also considered, but voted down), hoping eventually to release wN via b3. Now it's a textbook win for Black.
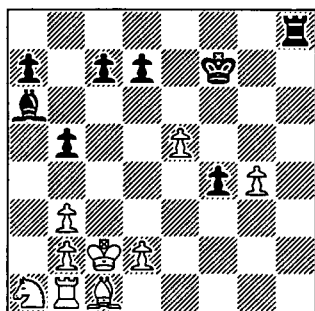


**21...Kf6! 22 exf6 Re8!** The sacrifice of bK has opened the e-file, and there is no defence against 23...Re3. **23 Kd3 Re4** and White resigned.

This was a most impressive win by the computer, though the human team clearly helped by playing 12 Na1. In my experience (this is now JDB speaking again) it never pays to play an anti-positional move against a computer in the hope of a tactical gain. If the computer offers you the opportunity, the gain won't be there.

The humans got their own back against Johan Bosman's program *Pindakaas*, but that was a much less interesting game. The computer found itself out of its depth and started playing pointless waiting moves, and it was the humans who gradually built up overwhelming pressure.

The decisive game in the Open tournament was the third-round clash between Joost Beltman and Fabrice Liardet. Again I use Fabrice's notes. **1 e3 b6 2 Ba6 Nxa6** (as an exercise, try refuting 2...Bxa6: answer on page 32) **3 Qg4 g6 4 Qxg6 fxg6 5 b3 e6 6 Ne2?!** A slight error, 6 Ba3! being normal. **6...Qg5! 7 b4** This gives Black the edge on the Q-side, but it appears necessary in view of 7 g3 Qxe3 8 dxe3 Ba3 9 Nxa3 b5 10 Nxb5 Nb4! 11 Nxc7 Nxc2 12 Nxe6 Nxe1

winning wK. **7...Bxb4 8 g3 Qxe3 9 fxe3 Bxd2 10 Nxd2 c5 11 Nf1 c4 12 Nf4 g5** This P controls wBc1 and cramps White a little. **13 Nxe6 dxe6 14 h4!** Eliminating bPg5; seemingly risky because wPh4 is exposed, but White can pull through. **14...gxh4 15 gxh4 Nh6?!** The natural move, again controlling wBc1 and putting pressure on wPh4, but nothing like as strong as it looks. **16 Ng3! Ke7**
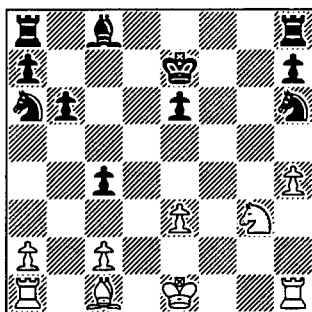


**17 Ke2?!** 17 Rg1! would have restored the balance, Black having to watch for the threat 18 Nf5 exf5 19 Rg6 hxg6 20 e4. **17...Kf6!** Threatening to win by 18...Kg5. **18 Nf5?** 18 h5! appears necessary, but Black would have stood better after 18...e5! virtually forcing White to release wBc1 by 19 Rh3 Bxh3 20 Nf5 Kxf5 21 e4 Kxe4 22 Bxh6. Black would then have had several ways of obtaining the better ending. **18...exf5** Now the threats 19...Kg5 and 19...f4 20 exf4 Ke5 cannot be met. 18...Kxf5 also wins. **19 e4 fxe4 20 Bxh6 Rf8** and Black won.

As happens in Losing Chess at all levels, there were some instructive endings among the games. I suppress the names of the players, because they were misplayed in time scrambles.
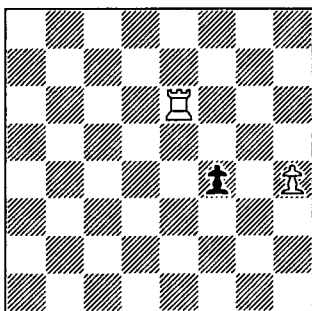


In this position, White played 1 h5 (it is normally correct in endings to push

any remaining pawns as fast as possible), and play continued 1...f3 2 h6 f2 3 h7 f1R? (3...f1B would have drawn) 4 Rf6 Rxf6 and we have a well-known one-against-one position in which 5 h8B is the only promotion to win. In the event, White's flag fell before he could play it! But for once, pushing the pawn was wrong. The winning plan is to leave wP on h4 and play wR to e5, say 1 Re8 f3 2 Re7 f2 3 Re5:
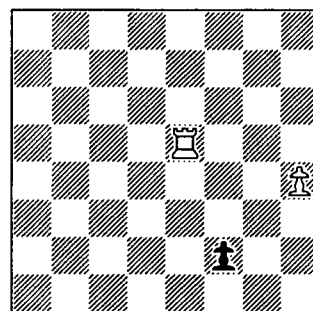


Now 3...f1Q/R/B lose off-hand, and 3...f1N is met *not* by 4 Re3 (4...Nxe3 5-7 h7 Ng8) but by 4 Rf5 N-- 5 Rf1 Nxf1 6-9 h8B. This leaves 3...f1K, met by 4 Ra5 and promotion to R or B as appropriate.
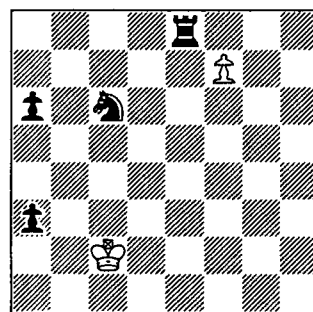


In this second example, White played 1 fxe8R, which should have lost off-hand. The natural move is 1 fxe8K, which does indeed win, but there is a quicker way. Answer on page 32.

All in all, it was a most successful meeting, but there was a cautionary tale. A friend of Stan Goldovski's had recently been staying in Moscow, where there is a keen Losing Chess group. At home, he is thought to be tolerably strong; in Moscow, he was being thumped at clock odds of five minutes against a minute and a half. It sounds as if we still have some way to go.

# Letter from Hyperspace *by Fabrice Liardet*

This first *Letter from Hyperspace* was originally intended to be a survey of all the Internet sites dealing with chess variants. But as those readers who have been on the web will realize, this is not something feasible within a single column. So for the moment I shall present only the most important sites, and shall worry about the others in future *Letters*.

## The Chess Variants Pages

The *Chess Variant Pages*, run by Hans Bodlaender, are by far the most comprehensive site about chess variants on the web. It is the place to visit to find information about chess variants, because it not only contains a gigantic collection of variant rules (ordered both alphabetically and by categories, making retrieval easy), but it also links to almost all other sites concerned with chess variants.

Even those who are not looking for rules of chess variants will find a lot of interesting and varied material, as for instance a complete computer analysis of endings with kings and two fairy pieces on the board. The only thing which seems to be missing is a collection of annotated games.

Two indices testifying to the quality of this site are that it is always being updated (on average, one item is added each day) and that it gets a huge number of visitors (on average, 150,000 hits per month!).

## The chess servers

Reading is fine, but playing is better! The main interest of the Internet for the variant enthusiast is that chess variants can be played on chess servers, which means that it is possible to play on-line with other players worldwide.

Such places have existed for several years. Most of them use a text-only interface, but there are a lot of free "client" interfaces allowing you to play on these servers using a nice-looking board.

The number one site for playing regular chess on-line is the *Internet Chess Club* (*ICC*). It is the most interesting one for the regular chess player because it has the largest number of chess grandmasters and other strong players, but it is a pay server with a fee of $49.00 per year. Variants played on *ICC* are Kriegspiel and Bughouse (the partnership game played on two boards at lightning speed). I think "Tandem Chess" is the usual English name for this variant, but on the Internet it is always called by its American name.

The other servers are free, and the one with the most players (usually 200-300 players on-line) is the *Free Internet Chess Server* (*FICS*). Apart from regular chess, it features Bughouse and Losing Chess (here called "Suicide"). The world's best players in these variants play on *FICS*.

On *FICS* and *ICC* one can also find some "wild games", which are variants based on a different starting position. It has to be said that most of them are of little interest. As far as I know, the only one enjoying any popularity is the game with reversed black and white starting positions (all pawns being one square away from promotion).
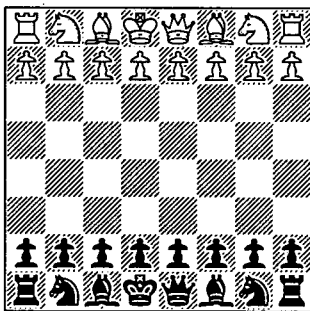


You are White !

Perhaps the most interesting place for the variant player is the *Wild Internet Chess Server*, usually called *MEWIS*. This server is based in Sweden - whereas *ICC* and *FICS* are located in the United States - and is particularly variant-oriented. Here it is possible to play not only Bughouse and Losing Chess, but also Chessgi, "Atomic Chess", Thai Chess, and some others. Hopefully classics like Extinction Chess and Marseillais Chess will be implemented as well.

One of the most popular variants on *MEWIS* is a pretty stupid game called Quantum Chess (at least your correspondent found it stupid after ending last in his first tournament). Quantum Chess is just regular chess, but played at quantum time controls like 5 or 10 seconds for the whole game. When playing on a computer interface, it is necessary not only to be "de fastest mouse in all of Mexico" but also to anticipate de moves of de opponent. Here is a sample game between two strong players (names unknown), with 10 seconds per player for the whole game: **1 e3 Nc6 2 d3 Nf6 3 b3 e6 4 Bb2 Bc5 5 Bxf6 Bd4 6 Nf3 Bxf6 7 Ne5 Nxe5 8 Be2 Nf3+ 9 Bxf3 Bxa1 10 Bc6 Bc3+ 11 Nxc3 bxc6** Typically, both players are one move behind the course of the game. **12 Ne4**:
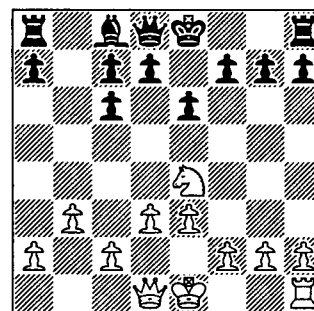


**12...Qf6** Obviously Black didn't anticipate White's last move. **13 Nxf6+ gxf6 14 Qf3 Ke7 15 Qh3 f5 16 Qh6 Ke8 17 Qh4 Rf8 18 Qh6 f6 19 Qxh7 Rf7 20 Qg6 Ke7 21 Qg8 Rf8 22 Qxf8+** and Black's flag fell while White still had two seconds left on his clock.

## Addresses

# Points from near and far

**Knight-Relay Chess** (*VC* 28 p 156). Two points from George Jelliss. "Paul Yearout points out that in the comment at the end of the Jelliss-Andreotti game, 12 f2xh1® is illegal, since pawns cannot relay to the first or eighth rank. It is easy to forget this.

"Both Paul and Jens Bæk Nielsen query rule (c), 'Knights do not relay knight moves'. The purpose of this is to cover situations where one knight guards another of the same colour. Thus with wNd8/f7 and bKh6, bK is not in check, though he would be if any other White man were substituted for the knight on f7. Rule (c) is *not* implied by rules (a) and (b)."

**The meaning of "Blitz"**. Jeremy Morse, now better known as a researcher into problem task records, tells me that Progressive Chess (*VC* 29 p 4-5, see also page 19) was the subject of his first published article on chess (with D. A. Tidmarsh, *BCM* May 1965 pp 141-2). They subtitled their article "alias Scottish Chess or Blitz", a usage of "Blitz" which I remember from my 1950s schooldays, and I think some of our older generation use the word in this sense even now. However, in America Blitz has long meant "five-minute" chess, which it describes most graphically, and the advent of the Internet has strengthened the trend towards U. S. terminology. I am afraid we goddam Limeys have just got to get used to the fact that our glorious language is becoming little more than a quaint archaic dialect of American. Anyone for Blitz Suicide Bughouse?

**Alice Chess** (*VC* 29 p 3, see also page 30). This game, first known in this country through Dennison Nixon's 1954 *BCM* review of Joseph Boyer's *Nouveaux jeux d'échecs non-orthodoxes*, appears to have made a lasting appeal both to players and to problemists. Fabrice Liardet tells me that they had an Alice tournament at Geneva earlier in the year, and Cyprian Stockford writes from Downside Abbey, where he used to teach mathematics: "... I used to play Alice in the school Chess Club in the 70's quite a bit and I've kept a position which I thought very interesting ..." Cyprian had White against C. E. Hutchinson, and threatens numerous mates on the back rank (for example, Qh8>A). Can Black escape? Answer on page 32.
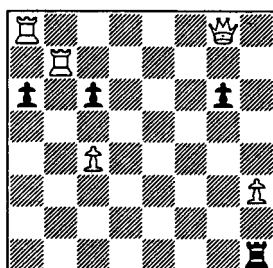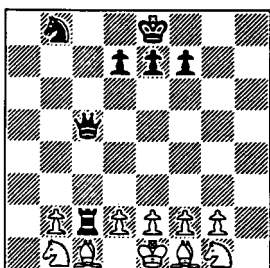


As for problems, there was an initial spate in the *Fairy Chess Review* in 1954-55, the French magazine *Rex multiplex* held an Alice tourney in 1985, and there has been a steady trickle of isolated compositions. An article in the Winter 1997 issue of the French-language Rumanian composition magazine *Quartz* reproduces some of them.

**Mini Moments**. From David Pritchard: "*Schema*, a magazine devoted to board games I mentioned in *VC* 24, edited by Michael Waitsman and published in Chicago, survived just two issues (Summer & Fall 1981). The first issue had two trivial games on 3x3 boards. **Hexapawn** was invented by Martin Gardner as a game which could be 'learnt' by a simple computer made of matchboxes(!) (*Scientific American* March 1962). Board 3x3 with three White pawns facing three Black pawns with an empty rank between them. The pawns behave normally except there is no double leap. The object is to be the first to get a pawn to the opponent's starting rank or alternatively to leave him without a move. The 'game', if it can be called that, is described by the editor as 'an interesting game in its own right'. Since the second player wins in at most three moves it is difficult to see where the interest lies. Gardner himself had no illusions.

"The second game, **Tick-Tack-Chess** was invented by Waitsman and is marginally more interesting. Board 3x3; each player has K, Q & R. There is no check and no capturing and any piece can leap over an opponent's piece in any direction provided the square beyond it is vacant; otherwise the pieces behave normally. There is one further rule: a piece cannot be moved back to the square it came from on the player's last turn. The board starts empty, each player entering a piece in turn on a vacant square. Play then alternates. The object is to get your three pieces in a straight line either orthogonally or diagonally. (If you suspect a link to Noughts-&-Crosses you could be on the right track.)

"A game score given is *Placement*: 1 Ka1 Kb2 2 Ra3 Qa2 3 Qc2 Rb3 *Play*: 1 Kb1 Qa1 2 Rc3 Kc1 3 Kb2(??) Rb1 wins."

**Running a variant chess tournament**. My remark in *VC* 26, that an organizer unfamiliar with the Swiss system might have difficulty announcing the pairings in time, has brought strong disagreement from David Pritchard and Fabrice Liardet. Both tell me that they find no difficulty, and David modestly says that if even he can do it others should be able to as well. David organizes without taking part himself (he normally has competitors who are unfamiliar with some of the variants being played, so he finds it prudent to stand aside and be able to act as an independent arbiter should need arise), but Fabrice has equipped himself with a computer program and this enables him to take part with little detriment to his own performance. He did this at the Losing Chess meeting in Geneva, and it was a most impressive demonstration; he just typed in the results, and out came the pairings for the next round and a printed table giving everybody's current standing. With such equipment, running a Swiss is clearly no more trouble than running a simple cyclic all-play-all.
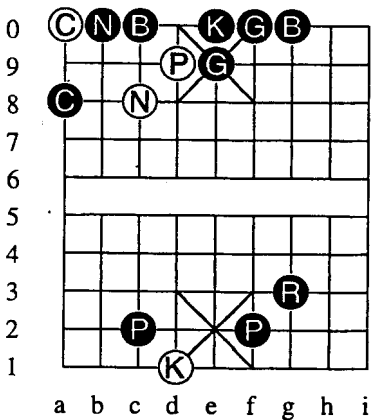
# XiangQi *by Peter Wood*

Here are the winning problems in the contest organised last year by *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate*. All are mate in 3. Solutions on page 32.
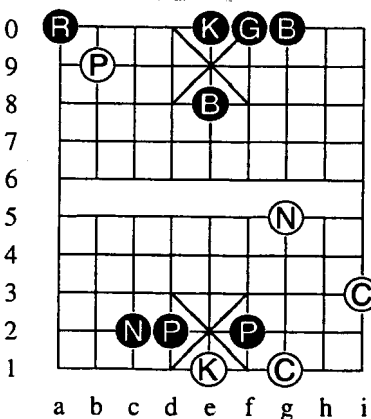
**1st Prize - P. V. Byway**

```
0
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
  a  b  c  d  e  f  g  h  i
```

**2nd Prize - C. K. Lai**
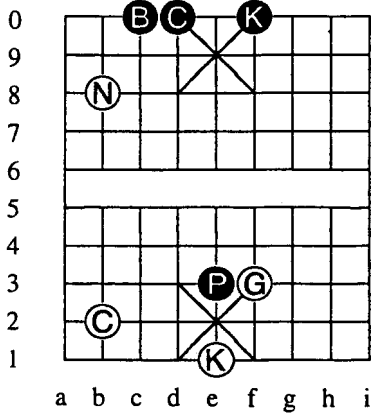
```
0
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
  a  b  c  d  e  f  g  h  i
```

**3rd Prize - M. Gandolfo (Italy)**

```
0
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
  a  b  c  d  e  f  g  h  i
```

**Tournaments**. The 5-day 9-round **MSO International Tournament** was one of the strongest XiangQi tournaments ever held in this country. The star entrants were of course the three Chinese: Liu Da Hua, one of the world's top Grandmasters and holder of the record for simultaneous blindfold XQ play; Hu Ming, ex-Ladies' World Champion; and Zhu Bao Wei, a leading trainer and author. From France came Dang Thanh Trung, the leading European and several times European Champion.

Liu Da Hua was held to three draws, but a fine win over Hu Ming in round 4 ensured the gold medal on tie break. Hu Ming won 7 of her 9 games; her only draw was against Chen Fa Zuo. Dang Thanh Trung had a splendid tournament. He drew against Liu Da Hua, and had he won against Wing On Cheung he would have been level with the top two Chinese. This game ended with both players in great time trouble, and a lengthy argument about the repetition rules (and who should hold the clock while it was resolved!). After the acrimony the players shook hands and agreed a draw. Chen Fa Zuo fully deserved his fourth place.

1. **Liu Da Hua** (China) 7½; 2. **Hu Ming** (C) 7½; 3. **Dang Thanh Trung** (France) 7; 4. Chen Fa Zuo 5½; 5-9. Zhu Bao Wei (C), Wing On Cheung (Netherlands), David Young, Wing Sang Ng (NL), Phung Kim Dang (F) 5; 10-12. C. K. Lai, La Khanh Hoa, Wang Shunqi 4½ (18 competitors).

**1998 European Championship.** This 2-day 7-round tournament took place over the weekend at the end of the MSO. 21 players took part, down by over a third on last year. In addition to all the strong Europeans in the MSO tournament came Woo Wei Cheung, Hua Say Ty (last year's Champion) and Chen Te Chao, all from France, a strong German contingent, and others.

After a hard-fought contest **Woo Wei Cheung** came half a point ahead of **Chen Fa Zuo**, with **Chen Te Chao** third. It was unfortunate that first and third did not meet. Wing On Cheung came fourth, equal on points with Chen Te Chao, and David Young had a splendid tournament to come fifth - he beat Hy Say Ty and Dang Thanh Trung in successive rounds, no mean feat indeed. Dang Thanh Trung lost to David Young in round 3 and Chen Te Chao in round 4, then dropped out.

Playing conditions were not ideal. The boards were next to the chess weekend quickplay tournaments. Here opening moves were rattled out so speedily that the first half minute of each round was like machine gun fire, while every 20 minutes there was loud excited conversation as games ended.

Chen Fa Zuo is now clearly established as this country's top player, and one of Europe's too. It is a great shame that he was not invited to represent us in the Forshang Cup in Hawaii.

**2nd Forshang Cup.** This strong International Tournament was held in Hawaii from September 12 to 18. The result was: 1. **Lin Jian Zhi**, 2. **Liu Kuo Hua**, 3. **Wu Kui Lin** (all Taiwan), 4. He Rong Yao (W. Malaysia), 5. Mou Hai Qin (USA) (35 competitors). The Chinese delegation withdrew after 4 rounds because they objected to the Taiwanese flag being displayed. Guo Shulong (UK) was 28th, and C. K. Lai 30th. The highest European was Woo Wei Cheung (France, 11th). Prizes ranged from $40,000 (1st) to $1,000 (20th), total $150,000.

Next year's event will be held in Lausanne. The first choice was Liverpool (!) - but this was changed after 45 minutes of (secret?) consultation.

**Books. C. K. Lai** has just published **Aloa Lei and XiangQi**, a book on the Forshang Cup tournament in Hawaii. Includes 82 games. The book costs £6.50 and can be obtained from him at 12 Haslam Street, London SE15 5GD.

*Peter himself is publishing a book containing 40 games from the MSO tournament, including all by Liu Da Hua and Hu Ming. Publication is hoped for December, price £3.50 (£5 airmail outside Europe). Orders to him at 39 Linton Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1TW - JDB.*

**Four Great Games** by Tony Hosking. In my review in *VC* 28, I said that David Woo may have written some sections in the XiangQi part. Tony Hosking tells me that although David Woo sent him a few notes, the XiangQi section is entirely his own.

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

## Games *by David Pritchard*

**Merlin et Mat**. This game was published by René-Pierre Ragosa and Pascal Fauvet (presumably the inventors?) in 1995. Board chequered 12x12 with eight squares (b7, c7, c6, d6 & h7, i7, i6, j6) coloured red. Each player has 25 pieces; usual men plus a Merlin and eight extra pawns. A Merlin moves up to three squares in any direction including the knight's move. All the pieces behave in an orthodox manner but the pawns differ. They move straight forward one square only or backwards diagonally one square. Pawns capture and promote normally. The red squares are barriers and may not be occupied and may only be crossed by a knight's move (N or Merlin). To start, a barrier is placed across the board centre and the players assemble their forces in their own half of the board with two restrictions: no man may be placed on the rank containing red squares and the Merlin must be placed adjacent to the king. The barrier is lifted and play is now normal with the object being checkmate.

**Bosworth** is a 2-4 player card game. The board is Bosworth Field (where Richard went round offering his kingdom for a knight, remember?). It is made up of a 4x4 central area with extensions of four squares on each side (i.e., a 6x6 board with the corners removed). The extension squares are the players' 'field camps' or bases. Each player has a pack of 16 attractively designed cards in a distinctive colour, representing the usual chessmen. Preparation consists of placing four pawns face up in your field camp, shuffling your remaining cards and then taking the top four cards into hand. Whenever a square in your field camp is vacated you must play a card (of your choice) into it and replenish your hand to four cards. The men all move as in chess (but no pawn promotion) except that there is no check, so kings are captured like other men. Described as 'the game you already know how to play', the object

is to be the last king left on Bosworth Field.

When a king is captured, that player's men are removed from the game and the captor is rewarded with the vanquished queen which at once comes into play. The rule has two objections: it is too generous, thereby unbalancing the game, and, a trivial objection, it is of the wrong colour. If a prize must be given, I would suggest that the victor is rewarded with any card previously lost which must then be placed at the bottom of his pack (or in hand if the pack is exhausted).

The four-player game is mayhem, often starting with the end pawns which are all en prise to one another (b1/a2 etc). Unless you are a genius or an idiot you don't play out your king until the end. The game was displayed at the Essen Games Fair in October where it proved very popular: three tables were fully occupied throughout the four days of the fair.

The essence of this game is entertainment: it makes no pretence at profundity. And fun it is: most moves are captures so a game is soon over. The inventor is Mark Osterhaus and the game is available from Out of the Box Games, 2722 Oakridge Avenue, Madison, WI 53704, U.S.A.

## Books

**Synthetic Games** by George Jelliss (22 A4 pages, comb binding). Another of George's monographs, neat and scholarly as always. This one covers the task "play a legal game so as to reach such-and-such a conclusion". There is a historical discussion (Loyd, Dawson, and Locock are highlighted) followed by some notes on theory (stressing the fact that few such tasks have a unique solution) and 250 examples using normal or variant play. Try this as a taster if you haven't seen it before: "Both sides maximumming, play to a mate on Black's fifth move" (Bonsdorff and Makihovi, 1960). Answer on page 32.

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). If, like me, you regret his departure as editor of *VC*, here is a chance to renew the acquaintance.

**New Rules for Classic Games** by R. Wayne Schmittberger (John Wiley & Sons). From David Pritchard: "The contents of this outstandingly original book (250 pages!) by the former Editor-in-Chief of *Games* magazine are exactly described by its title. There are 26 chess variants, a few of which were invented by the author. Most readers will probably have the book but the good news for those who haven't is that Bibliophile is offering it at the incredible price of £3, a small fraction of its original (1992) cost. Write to Bibliophile Books, 5 Thomas Road, London E14 7BN or 'phone 0171-515-9222 (24 hours) and quote reference 30165." (They add £2.50 UK postage and packing per order; even so, superb value, particularly for those like myself whose interests extend beyond chess. - JDB)

**Sinister Gambits** edited by Richard Peyton (Souvenir Press, 1991, 318pp). Not so much a book on variant chess as a variant book on ordinary chess: a collection of eighteen chess-based mysteries by authors ranging from Dunsany and Zweig to figures much less well known. Chess fiction easily becomes pretentious and some of these stories are no exception, but I enjoyed more than I disliked. The book was recently available from Tony Peterson, 30 Grosvenor Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 8EN at £8 plus £2 packing and UK postage, and I think he has some left.

## Computer programs

**Dabbaba** (see *VC* 19 p 196). Jens Bæk Nielsen has a new version which plays a few more variants (other pieces for Q/N, and one or two newly invented). It is available from him free of charge at Daltoften 15, 8600 Silkeborg, Denmark, and also via the Internet. On my machine, the screen brightness has to be turned right up.

# The End Is Nigh ! *by Paul Byway*

20 The Finches, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7TB

## Shatranj

My piece on the As-Suli composition in the last issue prompted a letter from Ken Whyld, enclosing a short piece from Grand master Yuri Averbakh (he is investigating the development of Shatranj). The Grand master cites an interesting smothered mate in Shatranj from the Cotton MS as showing that 'Philidor's legacy' was already known in the XIIIth century. Ken is of the opinion that more is required than a smothered mate - i.e. a forcing check from the protected queen, which can only happen in the modern game. Despite this the self mate is interesting and "...shows how under-valued shatranj is in modern eyes."

#### #50 (Murray p585)
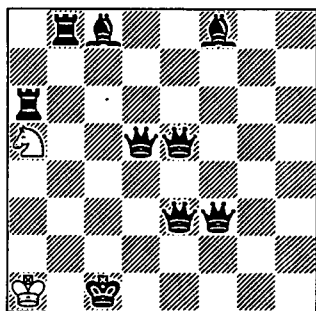
Black to play and force White to mate

Here is the solution. Only Black's moves are given, for White has no choice:- **1 Rb1+ 2 Fc4 3 Rb2 4 Kb1 5 Ka1 6 Fd3 7 Fc2 8 Fb1 9 Fd2 10 Fc1 11 Fd4 12 Fe3 13 Fe4 14 Ff3 15 Ad6 16 Ae6 17 Ra2+ 18 Rb6+ 19 Fb2+ 20 Rb3+:**
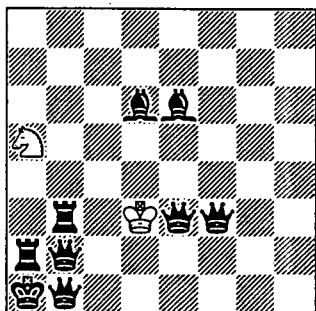
and White is forced to play Na5xb3.

It will be seen that the 13th and 14th moves of Black effectively do nothing. This may be the evidence of a hidden error: perhaps a Black Fers should be moved from f3 to f5.

## XiangQi

The Italian international review *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate* has organised a number of composition tourneys. Vol. 15 No. 17 reports the results of a tourney for 2 or 3 move problems in XiangQi. The outcome was an excellent one for the British XiangQi community: the prizewinners will be found elsewhere in this issue. The competition was well supported, my own favourites being the compositions of David Woo - the editor of *XiangQi Review* - on the basis of realism and difficulty. The judge was Lin Ye. Here is a nice example with a light touch.

#### #51 David Woo
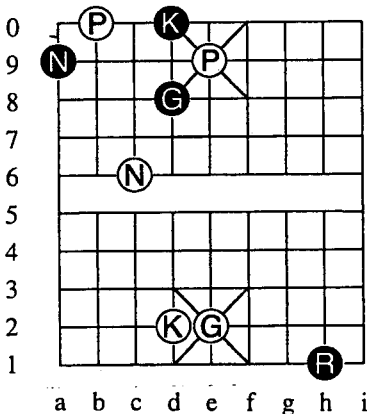
Mate in 3

The solution will be given at the end.

I hope to show some of the other entrants at a later date. There is another competition running at the moment, for anyone who wants a challenge: the stipulation is mate in 2 or 3 moves. Send your entries (2 copies) on diagram with complete solution and address to Lin Ye, via Don Gnocchi 20/D, I - 20075 Lodi (LO), Italia. Closing date is the 31st January 1999.

## Losing Chess

In our first example the struggle to sacrifice is complicated by the fight for parity: remember that N v N on the same colour squares is a win for the player to move. Solution at end of article.
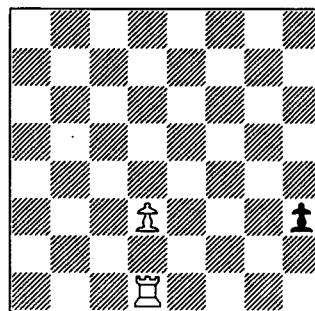
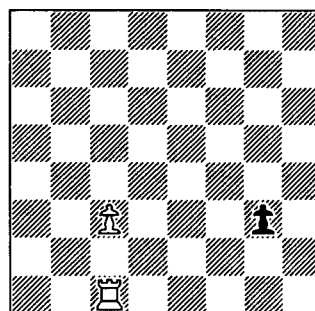#### #52 John Beasley
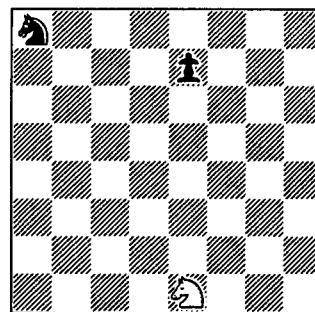
White to play and win

The next three compositions are set for our Competition this time. They are originals from Fabrice Liardet. The first two form a twin, the second position being the first shifted one file to the left.

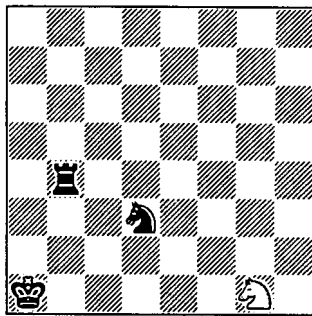#### #53a Fabrice Liardet

White to play and win

#### #53b Fabrice Liardet

White to play and win

#54 Fabrice Liardet



White to play and win

Entries to reach me by **January 31**, please.

## Solutions to competition 5

#47) 9 Nh3,g5,h7,f8,g6; h5,h6,h7, hg8Q.

#48) 9 Nc5,a6,b8,c6,e7,g6; Nd4,e6; Bc6.

#49) This position yields a plethora of solutions, the most popular being 9 Ke1,e2; Rh3,g3,g8; Ngf3,h2,g4, h6.

Fred Galvin found:-

(a) 9 Ke1,e2; Ne6; f4,f5; Rh3,g3,g8, f8;

(b) 9 a4,a5,a6,ab7,bc8R; Bg5; f4,f5; Rh7;

(c) 9 Rh3,g3; a4,a5,a6,ab7,ba8Q; Qe4,e7.

Ronald Turnbull found:-

(d) 9 Nh3; Ra1,c1,c7,c8,a8,a7,b7,b3; - the only materialist solution - as well as:-

(e) 9 Rh3,g3,g8; a4,a5,a6,ab7,ba8B; Bd5;

(f) 9 Ke1,e2; Ne6; Nh3,f4; Rh3,g3, g8,f8;

and just for the hell of it I add:-

(g) 9 Nf5; Be7; Nh3,f4; Rh3,g3,g8,f8;

(h) 9 f4,f5,f6; Rh3,g3,g8,h8; Ngf3,e5;

(i) 9 Kd3,c4,d5; Rh3,g3,g8; Nf5,h6.

Scores for this round are therefore :-

| | |
|---|---|
| Ian Richardson | 3 |
| David Pritchard | 3 |
| Ronald Turnbull | 5 |
| Fred Galvin | 6 |

### Solution to #51

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Nc6-a7 | Rh1-c1 |
| 2 | Na7-b9+ | Rc1-c9 |
| 3 | Pb0-c0 | mate |

## Solution to #52

Let's try a few lines. If Black replies to 1 Nc2 or Ng2 by 1...e5, 2 Nd4 or Nf4 wins at once; if he replies similarly to 1 Nd3 or Nf3, 2 Nxe5 gives a winning N v N endgame. What happens after 1...e6 is more interesting, and the following is a typical line of play:-

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ne1-c2 | e7-e6 |
| 2 | Nc2-e3 | e6-e5 |
| 3 | Ne3-f5 | e5-e4 |
| 4 | Nf5-h4 | e4-e3 |
| 5 | Nh4-f3 | e3-e2 |
| 6 | Nf3-h2 | e2-e1B |
| 7 | Nh2-f1 | |
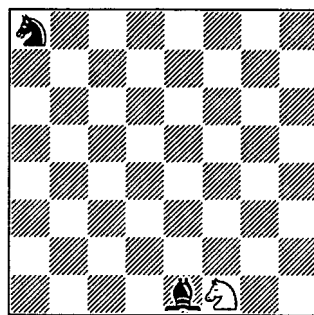


and the knight will sacrifice itself on d2 or g3 unless the bishop does so first - but White wins the N v N position which results. There is a similar win if Black plays 1...e6 after any other knight move.

So whatever White plays, Black's first move is restricted to 1...Nb6 or 1...Nc7. He now has two methods of defence.

(i) Try to play ...e5 while bN is on a dark square, e.g. 1 Nf3 Nc7 2 Ne1? e5. Now Black wins. If White tries to repeat the pawn chase above, say by 3 Ng2 e4 4 Nh4 e3 5 Nf3 e2 6 Nh2 e1B 7 Nf1, he finds that this time 7...Bd2/Bg3 8 NxB gives him a *lost* N v N ending (after 7 Nf1 we have the diagram with bN on c7 instead of a8), and nothing else is any better.

(ii) Try to play ...Nd6 while bP is still at e7, e.g. 1 Nf3 Nc7 2 Nd4 Ne8 3 Ne2 Nd6 and White is running short of squares.

Now let us look at the four White moves.

(a) **1 Nc2** Nc7 2 Ne3 wins (see below) but **1...Nb6!** and 2 Na3(e3) allows two sacrifices, 2 Nd4(a1,e1) allows 2...e5 and 2 Nb4 is answered by 2...Nc8 and 3...Nd6.

(b) **1 Nd3** Nb6 2 Nf4 wins (see below) but **1...Nc7!** and 2 Nc5(f4) allows 2...Ne6 and stalemate to follow, 2 N~ allows ...e5 and 2 Nb4 allows 2...Ne8 and 3...Nd6.

(c) 1 Nf3 fails to both Black knight moves.

(d) This leaves

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Ne1-g2! |

as the answer. White can now meet 1...Nb6 with 2 Nf4! and 1...Nc7 with 2 Ne3!

In each case White threatens to sacrifice on d5, and if Black sacrifices first White captures with a standard N v N or N v eP win (say 1...Nb6 2 Nf4 Nd5 3 Nxd5 e6 4 Nf6 e5 5 Nd5 e4 6 Nf4 e3 7 Nd3 e2 8 Nf4 e1B 9 Ne6). Black must therefore retreat. His knight is now back on a light square, as in the line we played through earlier, and White wins by chasing the pawn, e.g.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ... | Na8-c7 |
| 2 | Ng2-e3! | Nc7-a6 |
| 3 | Ne3-g4 | e7-e6 |
| 4 | Ng4-f6 | e6-e5 |
| 5 | Nf6-h5 | e5-e4 |
| 6 | Nh5-f4 | |
| | etc | |

(3...e5 4 Nxe5 here is an N v N win for White), or the following:-

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ... | Na8-b6 |
| 2 | Ng2-f4! | Nb6-c4 |
| 3 | Nf4-h5 | e7-e6 |
| 4 | Nh5-f6 | e6-e5 |
| 5 | Nf6-h5 | e5-e4 |
| 6 | Nh5-f4 | e4-e3 |
| 7 | Nf4-h3 | e3-e2 |
| 8 | Nh3-f4! | e2-e1B |
| 9 | Nf4-e2 | **and wins** |

but not the tempting 8 Nf2? on account of 8...e1B 9 Nd1 Ne3! and it is Black who wins.

This is essentially a strategic ending and there are many alternatives later in the play, but White's first two moves are unique.

# The geometry of overloading

This page was originally earmarked for an article by Ronald Turnbull on neutral pieces, but Ronald's article came to two full pages and it would have been sheer vandalism to cut it. I have therefore put it back to a future issue, and have looked through my library for a replacement topic.

### 1 - T. R. DAWSON
Caissa's Fairy Tales 1947
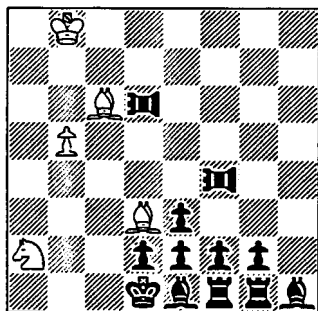


Wazirs d6, f4; mate in 3

The wazir is a "0,1 leaper" which moves one step sideways (the knight is a 1,2 leaper), and the key here is 1 Be8. There are now four potential mating manoeuvres, 2 b6 and 3 Ba4, 2 Bf7 and 3 Bb3, 2 Bg6 and 3 Bc2, and 2 Bh5 and 3 Bdxe2, and each uses a different one of the diagonals e8-a4, f7-b3, g6-c2, and h5-d1. None is available at present because a black wazir can intervene, but every wazir move will uncover one of them, so White simply waits for Black to move and then chooses accordingly.

In *Caissa's Fairy Tales*, Dawson attributes this problem "Cheltenham Examiner, 24.4.1913", but while that issue of the *Cheltenham Examiner* certainly contained an article on wazirs the cutting in the BCPS Library does not include this problem. I have therefore attributed it to *CFT*. But I haven't checked at Colindale, and the BCPS does not hold some material which may have appeared in the issue of 25 December 1913.

In this example, each wazir guards two diagonals in the diagram, but a waiting move forces it to relinquish one of them. Our next example shows a defender being decoyed away by a threat.

### 2 - after W. JACOBS
Fairy Chess Review 1937
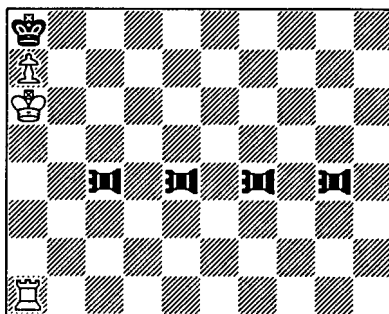


Wazirs c4, e4, g4, i4; mate in 4
without making a capture

This is a multi-part story. Suppose for a moment that we have just the a-c files. Black can now hold out indefinitely; his wazir opposes the rook on the b- or c-file as necessary, and if White tries 1 Ra5 to get behind the defence Black replies 1...Wc5 and he can still keep wR at bay.

Now let us add the d-file. The black wazir is now overloaded, and White can mate in three: 1 Rb1 Wb4 2 Rd1, or 1 Rd1 Wd4 2 Rb1. Duals of this nature tend to be intrinsic to the theme, and can reasonably be ignored.

Now let us look at the actual position. On the face of it, this gives a mate in six by successive decoy: 1 Rb1 Wb4 2 Rd1 Wd4 3 Rf1 Wf4 4 Rh1 Wh4 5 Rj1, or 1 Rj1 etc. But White can do better: 1 Rf1! If Black replies 1...Wef4, the wazir on c4 is overloaded and White can play 2 Rb1(d1) etc; if 1...Wgf4, the wazir on i4 is overloaded and White has 2 Rh1(j1). It is mate in four only.

And this clearly generalizes. On a 22-file board (10 wazirs), White can mate in five; on a 46-file board (22 wazirs), in six; and so on. It is reminiscent of one of the well-known procedures for catching a lion in the Sahara Desert (build a fence across the desert, then build a fence across the half with the lion in, and so on).

Jacobs had a different setting, with black pawns and multiple white rookhoppers (avoiding the need for the condition "without making a capture" at the cost of a less elegant position), but the logic was the same.

### 3 - W. JACOBS
Fairy Chess Review 1937
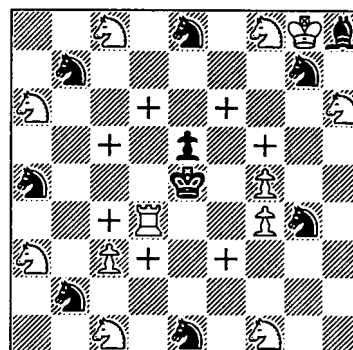


Mate in 4

Our last example contains both waiting and threat play. No unorthodox men here (the plus signs are merely markers), just a 9x9 board and rather a lot of knights.

There are seven potential mating squares, shown by the plus signs in the diagram, and we see that each mating square is attacked by one white knight and guarded by two black knights, and that each black knight guards two squares. The mating squares thus form a heptagon, with a white knight attacking each vertex and a black knight defending each side.

The key is 1 Ki8 waiting, and a black knight must move. Suppose it is that on e1. This breaks one side of the heptagon, and reduces it to the open line d3-c4-c6-d7-f7-g4-f3. Now we have six knights trying to guard seven squares, which can't be done. Sacrifice on the middle square, 2 Nd7+; one of the defending knights must capture, let us suppose that on e9. This reduces the right-hand line to f7-g4-f3, two knights trying to guard three squares; sacrifice on the middle square, 3 Ng4+, and mate on whichever square is left unguarded. No duals this time. The position has complete topological symmetry, all the mating squares and guards being equivalent, so all the variations follow the same pattern.

This was dedicated to TRD "with birthday greetings", and was printed with a very warm note of thanks. I can imagine how he must have felt on receiving it in his morning post.

# Two-man problem tourney solutions *(see VC 29 pp 12-13)*

1st Prize (Turnbull) 1 Kb2(+P) 2 Ka1(+P) 7 b8R 8 Rb2 9 Rh2(+P) 10 Rh1(+P)+ K any. Solvers' comments in *VC* 27.

2nd Prize (Lorinc) a) 1...Mc4 2 La5 Md2 3 Lb7 Ma8

   b) 1...Mf4 2 Lc7 Me2 3 Lg7 Mh1

   c) 1...Md5 2 Lb4 Me7 3 Lg2 Mh1

   d) 1...Mf8 2 Lf2 Md7 3 Lb2 Ma1.
Solvers realised MOArider, not MAOrider (*sorry!* - JDB). Impressive, I'd have expected 2 solutions with this force (RT). Evergreen 4 corner echo, done here without need for any further condition (Peter Wong frequently used royal pieces) and twinning by shifts of RL only. No trivial symmetry among the solutions. On the other hand, working forwards from diag and backwards from the mate makes this just sufficiently easy for my taste (C C Lytton).

3rd Prize (Bell, Turnbull) 1 Kb7(+P) c8R 2 Ka7(+P) b8N 3 Ka8(+P) abQ. Pure luck! (RT). Version (Bell, Emmerson, Geissler, Turnbull) 1...nKc7 and as before; duplex (B starts) 1...Ka7(+P)+ 2 b8Q Qh2 3 Ka7(+P) Ka8(+P) 4 Qc7(+P) h1B. CCL points out that eminent publications such as *feenschach* and *The Problemist* have repudiated the double-mate with its palpably illegal moves.

4th Prize (Raican) 6BN, 7p, 6kP, 4K1pp, 32. Retract N to f7? unpromote it to g7? both retro-stalemate, whatever B unit uncaptured. Remembering some of the great Illegal Clusters from *Fairy Chess Review* days (W Cross, W H Reilly), find it hard to get enthusiastic; chief virtue here is the near tries - only unique last-move sequence is after –h7 (CCL). Composer cooks by 6kN, 5PBp, 4K1pp, 40 and corrects by bPh7 to h5.

Special Prize (Turnbull) 1 Kf5 3 f8B 5 Bh8 6 Ke5 7 Kf6 g5 dbl mate

1st HM (Bartel) a) 1 Aa7 h6 2 Ae4 h7 3 Aa1 h8A

   b) 1 Ag7 g6 2 Ac4 g7 3 Ag1 g8B

   c) 1 Aa4 g6 2 Ae7 g7 3 Ab3 g8N

   d) 1 Ad5 g6 2 Ag1 g7 3 Ac4 g8R.
Puts to shame many weightier settings of the multiple promotion idea. An enjoyable solve, not too hard (RT). We don't need the powerful Q-promotion. Similar solving to 2nd Prize, but this time c), d) do show similarity in the zig-zag A manoeuvre (CCL).

2nd HM (Lytton) White GN wins from a4, c3, d1, de6, f456 (or b2, blocked). Tries:

   a) GNf6 b) ?

a) GNf4 b) GNe6 c) ?

a) GNf4 b) GNc3 c) GNd1, a4 d) ?

a) GNf4 b) GNc3 c) GNd6 d) GNf5 e) ?
Solutions a) GNe6 b) GNf4 c) GNc3 d) GNd6 (GNd1,a4?) e) GNf5. Positively Baroque edifice (RT). Stipulation so complicated that I was not tempted; my loss, perhaps (JDB, having seen the answers).

3rd HM (Lorinc) 1 Ke5 Be6 2 Kf6 Bh3 3 Kg6 Bf5+ 4 Kh6 Bb1 5 Kg5 Be4 6 Kh4 Bh1 7 Kh5 Bf3 while 3...Bf1 4 Kg5 Ba6 5 Kg4 Be2+ 6 Kf4 Bb5 7 Kf5 b) 1 Kc3 Be6 2 Kc2 Bc4 3 Kb2 Bf1 4 Ka3 Bd3 5 Kb4 Bf5 6 Ka5 Be4 7 Ka4 Bc6. Tough and austere (RT). It is a pity that there are two lines in one part and only one in the other (JDB).

4th HM (Livnat) Yes: 5kBN, 5PRQ, 5PRB, 6P1, 6PB, 6PK, 6PP, 8

   b) No! 6kB, 6P1, 6P1, 6PB, 6PK, 6PP, 8 and 6k1, 6P1, 6PB, 6P1, 6PB, 6PK, 6PP, 8 are illegal because wPa2 had no capture left to promote to dk-sq Bishop

5th HM (Bell) Kc7 Kb7 2 Ka8 Ra5 and Ka7 Kb6 2 Ka6 a8Q

   b) Kb7 Kc7 2 Kb8 Ra8 and Kc7 Re6 2 Kc8 Re8

   c) Kb7 Ka6 2 Ka7 b8Q and Kc7 Kd6 2 Kd7 c8Q. 6 solutions from 2 pieces is remarkable economy indeed (RT).

6th HM (Turnbull) Retract wKa6(+R) Rb4(+R) for 1 Ka4 Ra5

   b) wKd2(+Q)+ Qa3(+B) for 1 Kb2 Bc3.

Kniest (actually from 1977): 1 Kb1(+B)+ Be8(+B) for 1 Bb5 Bc2

7th HM (Turnbull) 1 Nd3 Nd2 2 Nc1 Nb1 3 Na2 Na3 4 Nb4 and stay 1-sq NE of bN for 7...Nh8=, except if 4...Nb5 5 Nc6 Nc7 6 Nb8 Na8=; 1... Ne3 2 Nf2 Ng2 3 Nh3 Nh4 4 Ng5 Nf5 (Ng6 5 Nh7 Nh8=) 5 Ne4 and 7...Na1=. Is this a problem to read rather than solve, or am I just being lazy? (JDB)

8th HM (Lorinc) wKg2 bKe2(+Re1)+ for 1 Kf2+ Re8 - with wK on c2,

Black can retract Kd2(+R) for 1 Ke2+ or Kd2(+Q) for 1 Ke1+!

Special HM (Livnat) Place all Ks and Rs ready for castling, and wN or wR on c6 or d7. 1 0-0-0 Rxh1 2 Rxh1 Kd7 3 Kb2 Kc6 4 Ra1 Rxa1 5 Kxa1.

Special HM (Bell) 1 Kd8 Kb7(+P)+ 2 Ka8 cb7 3 Kc7 b8B b), remove B for 1 Ka7 Kc6(+P) 2 Kc5(+P) c8Q

1st Comm (Fayers) Play 1 Nb3 Nc3 2 Na1 Ne4(d4)

Set 1...Nc3 2 Ne4(d4) Ne4(d5,d4)

2nd Comm (Richardson) Retract wGh7 bKb1(+Q)++ Qd3(+G) for 1 Qa3#.

A splendid puzzle, difficult, surprising, and elegant (JDB). Attractive double-check, and battery mate, initial non uncapture a surprise. But even with this slender force, would really like two solutions (RT).

3rd Comm (Turnbull) Retract wKd1 Ke8(+Q)+ Ke2(bKe1) for 1 Qe8# and bKf8 Ke1(+B)+ Kf7(wKf8) for 1 Be8#

4th Comm (Turnbull after Bell) 1 Kb2+ Kb1 2 ab Kxb2

   b) 1...Kb3 2 Kc2+ Kc1 3 a2 ab 4 bc Kxc2

Comm (Raican, Crisan) Qf5, e5, f4, e3, b3 for wQc4; Note f4 must be blocked! Qf4, e3, d4, d3, b3 for wQe6. Easy but pleasing (RT).

Comm (Bartel, d3/d8) 1 wKe3(+P) Ke7 2 bKe6(+P) 3 Ke5(+P) d4 and 1 Kc3(+P) Kc7 2 bKc6(+P) 3 Kc5(+P) d4.

Comm (Bartel, a7/a2) 1 a8B 2 Bh1=R 3 Rh8=Q 4 Qa1=N

Comm (Lorinc f3/d3) 1 Kc4 Md2 2 Kd5 Mb1 3 Ke5 Mc3 4 Kd4 Ma4 and 1 Ke4 Mh4+ 2 Ke5 Mg2 3 Kf5 Me3 4 Kf4 Mf1

Comm (Lorinc f4/b5) 1 Rf5 Ng6 2 Rh5 Ne5 3 Rh6 g7 4 Rh7 g8Q b) 1 Re3 Nf4 2 Re5 Ne2 3 Rd5 Ng3 4 Rd4 Nf5

Overall, my reaction is to regret the number of problems which are "two-man problems" only in the narrow sense of having but two men in the diagram. Out of 24 honoured problems, only three (2HM, 3HM, 7HM) are genuine one-against-one duels (JDB).

## 1998 solving (see page 31)
\* represents a ladder ascent (150 points)

| | year start | late scores 1997 | this year | total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| S Emmerson | 76 | | 46 | 122 |
| M Ridley | 109 | | 10 | 119 |
| A Ingleton | *70 | 2 | 38 | *110 |
| E Bartel | *17 | 16 | 27 | *60 |
| C Lytton | | | 55 | 55 |
| I Richardson | *24 | | 22 | *46 |
| P Fayers | 24 | | 17 | 41 |
| A Ettinger | *26 | | 8 | *34 |
| L Vitale | 17 | | 5 | 22 |

Congratulations to our new top man, who has scaled heights despite being debarred from scoring in the Theme Tourney; to AI on also reaching the hundredth rung, in his case for the second time; and to the year's top scorer CCL, making a commanding leap upwards from ground level.

# Problem pages *by Ronald Turnbull*

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

Alice Chess was played in a recent BCVS tournament, and was found pretty puzzling. For once, problems may be found to have some relevance to the Real Game: solving **268/269** may sharpen Alice-awareness. The game features two boards side by side. After a move, the man moved is transferred to the same square, which must be vacant, on the other board. A move must be legal (not self-check) on the board it's played on, and the transfer must not give self-check either.

In **268**, board B is empty. 1 Rf8>B would be silly in orthodox: in Alice it is stalemate! For bK is not in check - wR on B cannot capture bK on A. bK may not move to d7 or e7 (check from wK on A), nor to d8 or f7 (check from wR after bK's arrival on B). Finally, bK may not move to f8 as this square is occupied on B by wR itself.
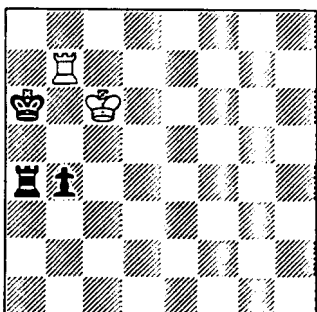
### 268 - John BEASLEY
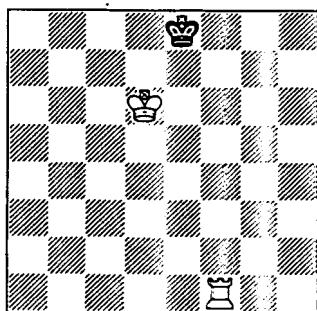


Alice Chess (B empty): mate in 3

In orthodox, **268** has a set play (1...Kd8 2 Rf8#) and solves by 1 Rf2. In Alice the set 1...Kd8>B 2 Rf8>B still works, but the waiting move puts wR on the wrong board... My **269** builds on a different idea of JDB's.

### 269 - Ronald TURNBULL



Alice Chess (B empty): mate in 2

Page 17 featured a "proof game"

problem in Progressive Chess. The solution is about to be given - if you haven't done it, turn back quickly!

The following moves have taken place: W BB WWW BBBB. The missing bP and bN have to be off by the end of series 3, and the missing wN must have made an even number of moves, and so been captured on a light square. This can only happen if the missing bN was the one on g8!

Now we have the four white moves: N from b1 captures e7 and g8. However, even with the N-transfer from b8 to g8, Black only appears to have made five of his six moves. But there is one way for Black to waste a move, and the game so far is, precisely, 1 Nc3 2 c6, c5 3 Nd5, Nxe7, Nxg8, 4 Nc6, Ne7, Nxg8, Ke7.
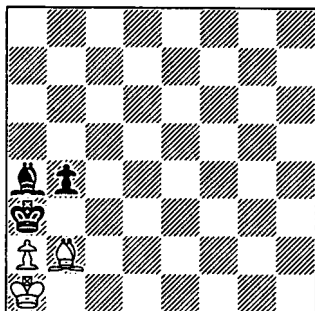
### 270 - John BEASLEY
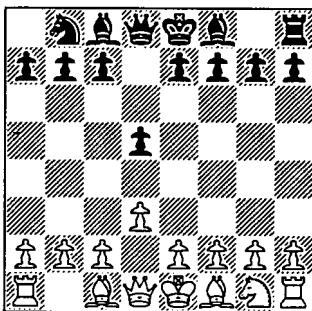


Progressive Chess, after series 5; death-squares? (b) wPd3>d4

This was by JDB. In his **270**, the sequence of moves is not completely determined, but the death-squares of the missing units are. And a quite new set of death-squares arises in part b).

### 271 - Stephen EMMERSON



Messigny Chess; helpmate in 3

Regular readers will know my prejudice against the single line helpmate - so how did **271** get in?

Solve it and see - it's not quite as easy as it looks, but then it looks very easy indeed, as White appears to have already achieved his desired mating position. (In Messigny, a permitted move is to exchange the positions of two pieces of the same sort but opposite colours. The opponent may not immediately swap them back.)

### 272 - Erich BARTEL
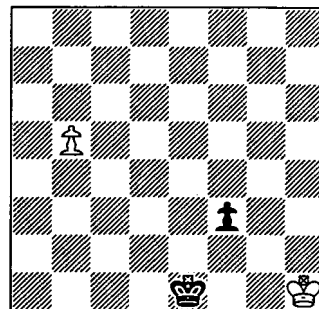


Glasgow Chess, Mars Circe
Helpstalemate in 2, (b) wKh1>c6

We finish with some problems for specialists. In Glasgow Chess, promotion takes place on the enemy pawn-rank (so bPf3 will promote on f2). **272** has the added condition Mars Circe: a unit captures from its game-array square, rather than the square it stands on. So 1 f2=R would be check from h8 (rook on dark square assumed to come from the dark square h8.) The wPb6 attacks a3 and c3. In **273** we have the following animals: c4 Camel (1,3 leaper), g8 Antelope (3,4 leaper), c1 Giraffe (1,4 leaper), d1 Flamingo (1,6 leaper); g2 Zebrarider (2,3 rider); and c2 Equihopper which leaps to the square directly opposite some piece. If White promoted 1...a7=EQ, that could move 2...EQe1 over the Camel.

### 273 - Erich BARTEL
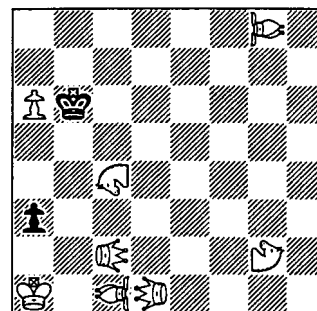


Glasgow Chess, Menagerie (see text)
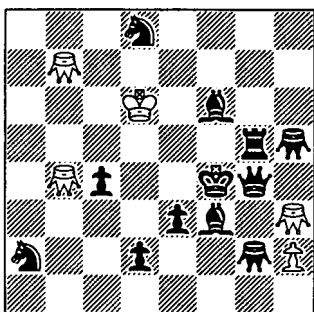Helpstalemate in 2, 4 solutions

## 274 - Ian RICHARDSON, R T
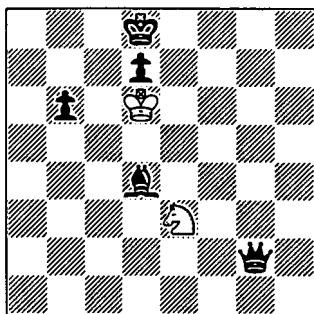
Follow-my-Leader
Selfmate in 8, (b) wNe3>f1

In Follow-my-Leader, if Black can move to the square just vacated by White then he must. Check is normal.

## 275 - Juraj LÖRINC

Grasshoppers
Helpmate in 3, (b) bGg4

In *VC* 31, and possibly thereafter, I shall be thinking of the readers of the rest of the magazine rather than at my few but faithful problem specialists. Composers: I seek, for the time being, solving pleasure rather than complexity or difficulty. I shall be accepting few if any multiple stipulations, few if any helpmates. For those who love the helpmate, 275 is a last toughie to help them through the dry times ahead.

## 276 - EUREKA!
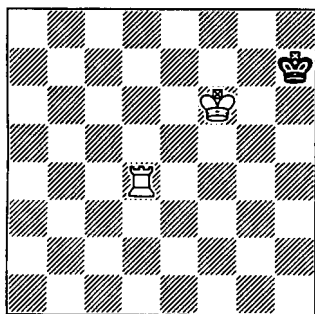
(a) Re4, (b) Rd8; fairy conditions?

Following the lack of enlightenment over my Eureka last issue, here is one that is certainly simple (even if not completely easy). The twin is by change of fairy condition, and keys do not state any consequent births. (a) is common in *VC*, (b) elsewhere.

Solutions by **January 31**, please. Paul Raican corrects his **242**: n7, 1P4P1, **4K3**, 8, 7k, R6P, 4Pb2, 4B3, maximummer selfmate in 8. Please try again for 2 (two!) big solving points.

I am very happy to have secured the kind agreement of Hans Gruber of Germany to judge our 97/98 originals.

*VC* **29 solutions.** Solvers: Stephen Emmerson, Aubrey Ingleton, Cedric Lytton, Ian Richardson, Mark Ridley.

**255v** (Richardson) 1 Qc4 Qc6 2 Qc3 Qc4 3 Qd2 Qc3 4 0-0-0 Qa1 and 1...Rc6 2 Qh4 Rc4 3 Qf2 Rh4 4 0-0 Qh1/Rh1. An enjoyable puzzle, with good correspondence, wQ forming shields for castling, but bR not needed in the first mate (SE). In *phénix* 65 (p 4077) it is suggested that castling is a move of the king rather than of both king and rook, and the touch-and move rule, as applied to illegal castling attempts, lends this some credence. To me it is altogether natural to regard castling as a move of two pieces at once.

**259** (Willmott) 3 N*a1 5 N*b4 7 N*f2 9 N*e4 ef. Neat walling-in, shame about the two unused bPs (RT). Isomorphic to travelling-salesman problem. No wN mate possible (CCL, but what is travelling-salesman problem?). A bit basic (SE).

**260** (Liardet) 1 K<>K+ K- 2 K<>K. checking key gives 3 flights! Delightfully simple demonstration (SE). Shows the idea... (CCL). Very droll (AI), who points out that the move leading to the diagram definitely wasn't K<>K ... though I think a K-swap key is allowable except where we can show that the move to the diagram definitely was K<>K. 260 has inspired composing efforts by SE, IR, RT already!

**261** (Fayers) 1 Rd8 Bc6 2 Rd4 Rc3 b) B: Be3 Bd4 W: Rb3 Be6. Paradoxical stipulation induces interesting line-openings (RT). wPd2 is a pity (CCL).

**262** (Bartel) 1 a2 Kb2 2 a1G h7 3 Gc3 h8G. Neat one-liner (in two ways!) (SE). Tableau! Is 5 units the record for P=G twice? (CCL). Despite what I've said elsewhere in this issue, and previously, the single-line helpmate can sometimes offer both charm and thematic interest, and this is a clear example with its double G-promotion and washing-line ending (RT).

**263** (Bartel) 1 h1R e8R 2 Rh8 Rg8+ 3 Kh7 f8Q and with W starting 1 f8R h1Q 2 Rd8 Qh3+ 3 Ke8 Qc8. Major-piece promotions by defending side, followed by not capture but Circe-block in first part, Circe-pin in second. Very impressive (RT). Reciprocal promotions - is it possible to achieve with reciprocal pinning also? (SE). Two good Circe finales, not so familiar, with critical play by each promoted wR adding great unity (CCL).

**264** (Willmott) 1 Qc4+ Gb3 2 Qxf4+ Ge6 and 1 Ga5 Ge2 2 Qb5 Qg2 and 1 Qe4 Ge5 2 Gf3 Gg3 and 1 Gg5 fg 2 hg Gxg5 The first and most interesting line is similar to a *Problemist* original by Nagnibida, who after three corrections has three such lines from a single diagram (RT). Solutions here are more of a mish-mash (SE).

**265** (Raican) wRh1 has just arrived there by a capture that could have been made on any vacant light square. Retract wRe8*Ra8(Rh1) bRh1*Bb1(Ra8) for 1 Rg1 B*a2(Bf1) = and Retract wRh8*Ng8(Rh1) bNg1*Qe2(Ng8) for 1 Kh1 R*h2(Ra1)=. But SE cooks: Retract wRa1 bKf1 (W previous a R-capture) for 1 h1R/S Kf3, CCL finds wRa1 bKg1+ and 1 Kh1 Kf2,f3, composer himself cooks by wRa1 bPh3 for 1 Kh2 Kf2,f3 and suggests replacing wKe3 with wNd3, curing all at the cost of a palpably illegal position (which does matter rather in a retractor).

**266** (set by Peter Fayers) The fact that W appears to have 1 Nd2 mate provides a clue. In Anti-Circe and Isardam 1 Qf7 solves, and Nd2 isn't mate because bK has flights, but there are cooks. In MADRASI 1 Nd2 is refuted by 1...f1N! After key 1 Qf7, 1...f1Q/R/B/N 2 Nd2/Rf6/Ra6/Rc6. Lots of Madrasi effects and good light construction, typical of composer Norman Macleod (*Problemist* 1989).

**267** (Set by RT) As White's second move is unique, Black's first move is probably unique also. Ignoring unknown units, Black's first move would be 1...d2: and if this is indeed the first B move, it would explain why White's 1 h8Q and 2 Re2 have to be in that order. In which case Black cannot move the mystery units, which are accordingly White or else Black Grasshoppers. Now if e1 is White, Black's second moves will be promotions, including promotions to the mystery fairy units.

SO: bG a8 (guards a4), wG d1 (guards d4 then d3), white Camel e1. The Camel is the tricky one: as far as the other five promotions go, any white unit could stand on d1. But only promotion to Black Camel makes necessary the Q-promotion on move 1. 2... deG 3 Rh2! is nice. Not solved - too hard? (*Yes! - JDB*) Christian Poisson, *diagrammes* 1990.

Allan Bell corrects his oscillating kings two-mover (**232**, *VC* 27) to 8, 1p6, pR6, P1K2k1p, 7P, 3P2P1, 3P1N2, 8: a) osc after B, 1 Rf6+; b) osc after W, 1 Sd1; c) osc after both, 1 Ne4+.

Scores (max 10): SE 8 CCL 7½ (+6 Theme Tourney) AI 3½ (+3) IR 3 MR 2. Also SE 5 for *VC* 28. Table on page 29.

# News, notices, solutions

## BCVS Notices

*VC* volume 3 (see *VC* 28 p 176). Comb-bound sets of Volume 3 (*VC* 21-28) are now available from George Jelliss, Top Floor, 63 Eversfield Place, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex TN37 6DB, at £13.50 UK (£14.50 rest of Europe and surface mail elsewhere, £17 air mail elsewhere).

1999 AGM. Members are reminded that nominations for office and any resolutions for the AGM should be received by me as secretary not later than March 1. Two nominators or proposers are required in each case. To the best of my knowledge, all the existing officers are willing to continue (except that I intend to stand aside as editor as soon as Paul Byway is ready to take over), but if any-one else wishes to join the team we shall be happy to tell him what is involved.

## News

David Pritchard tells me that the Third World Chess Tournament was recently held in Japan. It featured twelve kinds of chess: 'orthodox' chess, shogi (Japanese), xiangqi (Chinese), changgi (Korean), makruk (Thai), sittuyin (Burmese), shatar (Mongolian), hyaashatar (Mongolian on a 10x10 board), chu shogi (a 12x12 shogi), tori shogi (a 7x7 shogi), wa shogi (an 11x11 shogi), shatranj (Arabic). All are in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Variants*. Sadly, David doesn't have any results; it would have been interesting to correlate the performances in the different games.

Variant endgames. In my personal capacity, I announce that the December issue of *British Endgame Study News* is again accompanied by a special number featuring endgames in chess variants (this year, Losing Chess, Progressive Chess, and the problem of Q v R on a 12x8 rectangle). Those who asked for a copy in previous years should already have re-ceived one (please tell me if it has failed to arrive), and I shall be happy to send one to other *VC* readers without charge.

## Forthcoming events

Postal tournaments. There have been too few entrants to repeat our Extinction and Progressive tournaments this year, though doubtless we shall return to these variants in future years. The Alice tournament will go ahead, but is being delayed in the hope that one or two more will come forward. Contact David Pritchard by January 31,

please (address on front page).

Other variants. In his personal capacity, Paul Byway makes a number of suggestions. "I'd like to put my name down for XiangQi if enough people are interested. There are always two of us ready for Modern Courier Chess *(see for example VC 27 pp 153-5)* but this is potentially two years for a game. I suggest (and would play in) Progressive Leo Chess *(Leo moves as Q, but can capture only if there is precisely one man between it and its target)*. With the Q replaced by a Leo, its capturing power is diminished, so stereotyped Q-grabs in the opening might decrease. No opening theory databases! Interesting choice of R or L promotion. Stereotyped pawn promotion runs might also decrease. A friendly postal game against Ian Richardson proved the concept. I would also consider Losing Chess (rather than Vinciperdi) *(being stalemated wins in Losing Chess, only draws in Vinciperdi)*."

If you are interested in any of these, please contact Paul at 20 The Finches, Hertford, Herts SG13 7TB. Two make a game, three or more make a tournament; but in the latter case it will be helpful if somebody other than Paul can volunteer to act as tournament controller, since he will be increasingly heavily committed in the editing of *VC*.

Seeking an opponent? We will print your ad (no charge). Please state variants of interest and your approximate strength.

Problem tournaments. *Problemkiste*'s 19th Theme Tourney is for miniatures ($\leq 7$ men) with AUW (promotion to QRBN + any fairies in diagram) and Excelsior (P from home to promotion). Send to Erich Bartel, Rockensteinstrasse 37, D - 86156 Augsburg, Germany by April 30.

Peter Coast sends word via Ronald of a tourney of *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate* for mates in 2 in Avalanche Chess. Entries to Romano Bellucci, Castello 5449, I - 30122 Venezia, Italy by January 31. Rules: After a normal move, you pull an enemy pawn one square forward, unless all enemy pawns are blocked. Check may be given with either or both parts of the move, but must be countered with the first (orthodox) part of the reply. No e.p. capture. A pawn pulled to the last rank promotes immediately at its owner's choice. If pawn-pulls exist but are all illegal because of self-check, the side moving loses by self-mate. Peter sends an illustrative mate in 1 (solution at end).
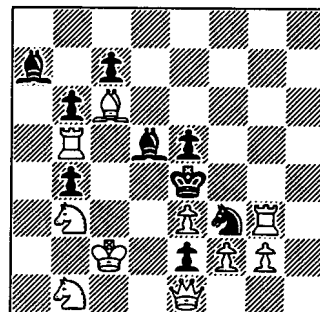


Finally, let your imagination run riot! Vladislav Buňka announces a tournament on the theme "my idea of the problem at the turn of the millenium" in which he calls for the exercise of imagination and fantasy in an orthodox composition with any stipulation. Entries to him at Pod Barborou 31, CZ - 284 01 Kutná Hora, Czech Republic, by September 9. I have sent him a wholly frivolous "computer-tested" entry in which the computer is suffering from the millenium bug and thinks that i9 is the same as a1...

## Solutions

Losing Chess (p 21). 1 e3 b6 2 Ba6 Bxa6?: 3 c4 Bxc4 4 Qf3! Bxa2 5 Qxa8 Bxb1 6 Qxb8 Qxb8 7 Rxa7 Qxa7 8 d3 (8 e4 also wins) and now it's easy.

Ending: quickest is 1 fxe8B! A bN move loses immediately and 1...a2 2 Bxc6 a1K/B/R/Q 3 Bb5 and 1...a5 2 Bxc6 a4 3 Bxa4 a2 4 Kb1 are little better, so Black's best chance is to move each pawn once: say 1...a2 2 Bxc6 a5. Black now threatens 3...a1B drawing, so 3 Kb1 is forced, but it is enough: 3...axb1N 4 Be4 a4 5 Bxb1 a3 6 Bc2, or 3...axb1K 4 Bd5! Kc1 (4...Ka2 5 Bxa2 a4 6 Bb3) 5 Bc4! and wBc4 dominates bKc1 and bPa5.

Alice Chess (p 23). Black escapes by mating in two: 1...Rd1>A+ 2 Kxd1>B Rxc1>B. It isn't very often that a game is sent in by the loser!

XiangQi (p 24). Byway: 1 Nd9+ Ke0 2 Cb9 Pe2+ 3 Gxe2 stalemate. Lai: 1 Pd0+ Gxd0 2 Cxc0+ Ge9 3 Nd0 mate. Gandolfo: 1 Cxg0+ Ke9 (1...Ge9 2 Ci0#) 2 Nf7+ Kf9 (2...Kd9 3 Pc9#) 3 Cf3 mate.

Double maximumming to mate (p 25): 1 Nc3 Nf6 2 Nb5 *Ng4* 3 Nd6+ *exd6* 4 Nf3 *Qh4* 5 Ng5 *Qxf2*. Moves in italics are unique, in bold are forced.

Avalanche Chess (above). Bxd5(c6)? Rxb4(b5)? N3d2? (self-mate by ...b3) Qxb4? (self-mate by ...e1N) Rg4? Kf5(g3)! gxf3? Kf5(f4)! Solution N1d2+ (...Nxd2(f3), ...Kf5(e4) both self-mate).