VARIANT CHESS

Founded by George Jelliss

THE MAGAZINE TO BROADEN YOUR CHESS HORIZONS

Contents

This issue

We are truly "from near and far" this time. In *VC* 30, Fabrice Liardet guided us around hyperspace; now Lex Kraaijeveld takes us into outer space, with a game which may have fictional origins but which people actually play. Also being played, but without quitting the Galaxy or even the country, is Circular Chess, as is described alongside. Possibly to be played in the future (by men) is Magnetic Chess, a new game described by David Pritchard; probably to be played by computers is just about everything, as Fabrice Liardet explains. The rest is conventional in form, if perhaps not in content. Progressive Chess fans will find food for thought in Paul Byway's Double Dutch notes, while the problems feature the usual delightful exotica.

And there is a very sad postscript to the Losing Chess meeting in Geneva.

Circular Chess in Lincoln

In 1983, David Reynolds, who modestly describes himself as a Lincoln painter, decorator, and historian, came across a picture in a book of a circular chess board in use in medieval times. He was sufficiently intrigued by this to make his own board out of cardboard and to take it along to his local pub, where it seems to have attracted a fair amount of curiosity and some genuine interest. The book gave an opening layout but did not say how to play (more of this anon), so he adapted modern rules in a natural way and found that they made a playable game. He and his friends now play regularly in the "Tap and Spile" in Hungate, Lincoln, and Sue and I spent a delightful evening with them in the New Year.

They play on attractive wooden boards about 55 cm in diameter with a red cross and gold fleur-de-lys in the middle (the days of cardboard are long gone), and the central area makes a convenient repository for captured men. All play is with clocks, typically to ten-minute or five-minute rules, and we were told that it was the adoption of clocks which had really made the game come alive. The opening layout is as shown below:
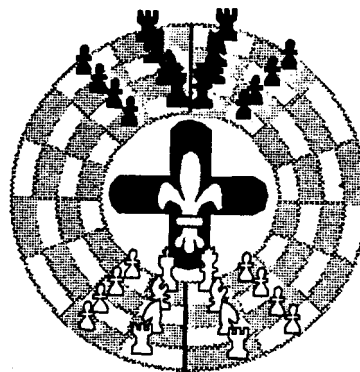
and the pieces have their natural moves: king one square as usual, knight two and one, rook along a spoke or round a ring, bishop "diagonally" until the edge is reached (reflecting bishops were tried but found impracticable), queen as rook plus bishop, pawn as normal with promotion

on the nearer of the opponent's piece rows (so there are only the normal six steps to promotion). The pawn can move two steps at its first move, but there is neither *en passant* nor castling. Null moves (taking a rook or queen all the way round and putting it back where it started) are banned.

As regards strategy and tactics, one evening's experience hardly entitles me to speak, but some things became clear at once. The rook is very strong, the bishop relatively weak, and in one of my games I had four pawns for a bishop and thought I was doing well (in ordinary chess, I would have been); but his king and bishop could sit in the middle and defend both sides at once, whereas my king could only attack on the side it happened to be... At any rate, I lost. The lack of corners means that king and rook against king is only a draw, though king and queen still win, and king and any defended pawn (even a side pawn) win against a bare king because there is no stalemate defence. Rook and pawn against rook might seem to be drawn because the rook can sacrifice itself for the pawn, but it isn't as simple as this; put the rook behind the pawn and the king nearby, and if Black attacks the pawn on the file White swaps off rooks round the board and wins the pawn ending, while if Black attacks from the side the pawn simply advances. Queen and pawn against queen? The king can hide from Black's checks, as in the position below (for the convenience of my computer, I give the board in two halves, but note that a1 is a light square): **1 Kc4 Qa6+ 2 Kb4 Qb7+ 3 Kc3**. But whether White can use the breathing space to advance his pawn is another matter.
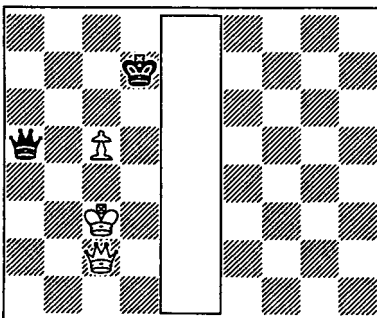
We played ten-minute games, and the audience might be described as "ethically ribald": proper quiet was normally observed and blunders such as leaving a man to be taken by a "round-the-board" rook move were not pointed out, but the right was reserved to roar with laughter when the opponent duly took advantage. To finish, apparently following regular club custom, we had a session of five-minute games in pool-table style, the winner remaining in play but taking Black against the next challenger, and the consumption of liquid refreshment was not wholly overlooked. All in all, it was a most pleasant evening.

All this is modern reconstruction, and by no means the first of its kind. What of the history of the game?

David Reynolds told me that the book which first aroused his interest was a "history of England" published around 1870. I have not attempted to trace this book, but from his description I suspect that the pictures were based on those in Joseph Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801 with later editions). There is also a reference in Twiss's *Chess* (Volume 2, 1789, pp 9-11), which includes a knight's tour: "This I found after four or five hours trial on a slate at different times; it probably has never been done before, and will be found much more regular than any of the like marches on the square board." Readers may care to have a go; Twiss's solution is on page 48.

Of the game itself, Twiss says that "there is no account", but "I caused a board to be made to try its effect". He adopted the natural moves, much as at Lincoln but allowing castling, but added the comment, "Perhaps it was not intended that the Pawns be metamorphosed in this game." He remarked that it appeared to be very difficult to bring the game to a conclusion, and without pawn promotion this must indeed have been true.

But all these appear ultimately to depend on the "Cotton" chess manuscript (BL Cotton Lib., MS. Cleopatra, B. ix), and the British Library was kind enough to let me examine this. It is a lovely thing, dated by Murray to around 1273, but the workmanship of the relevant page (f. 9) strikes me as both different from and inferior to that of adjacent pages and inevitably I wonder: does this merely indicate a different hand, or has an unrelated leaf become bound in? I am unfamilar with such material, and would welcome a more expert view.

Be that as it may, the leaf depicts a board, once with text above and below, with the pieces of one side arranged as shown by Strutt. I read their names as *rei, fierce, alfin, chivalir, roc, paun* (undotted i's, and there is a blob after "fierce" which I have ignored). The accompanying text is described by Murray as "completely erased" (*A History of Chess*, p 343), but this is misleading; it is not erased, merely obliterated, and a fair amount remains visible. Sadly, "visible" does not mean "intelligible", at least not to me - for an analogy, consider someone unfamiliar with German trying to sort out *mnu* etc in a Gothic typeface - but I think someone familiar with the handwriting of the period and the language used, backed up by the scientific tools now available to bring out and enhance hidden images, might well be able to recover something of interest. (Van der Linde claimed to have read five words in Latin, but Murray could not see them and neither can I, and the rest of the chess material in the manuscript is in 13th-century Anglo-French.) If anyone with the relevant knowledge should happen to be reading these notes, I hope he will be willing to try.

Back to Lincoln, and the present. For some years, there has been an annual "World Championship" (see page 48) which has been featured in the national Press (Paul Byway and I are hoping to take part this year), but Sue and I passed through on an evening which was not even a regular club night. But there is a club noticeboard in the pub, with a newsletter and a ladder of some fifteen names; no doubt the last half-dozen rarely play, but such things are a sign of a thriving group. Long may it prosper. This is a true club, set up to provide friendly competition among fellow enthusiasts, not merely a group of paid professionals who come together only to play matches against other such groups. - JDB

# Progressive Chess: the Double Dutch Defence *by Paul Byway*

As I remarked in *VC* 30, this defence (1 d4 2 f5,Nf6) is worth examining in view of White's score against it (33%). The whole picture will be on view and the main outlines are:-

(a)	3 Bf4,Bxc7,Bxd8	+1	-2
(b)	3 e4,e5,exf6	+2	-2
(c)	3 Nc3,Bg5,Bxf6	+1	-4
(d)	3 Nc3,Ne4,Nxf6+	+5	-3

There was also a single Black win for each of:-
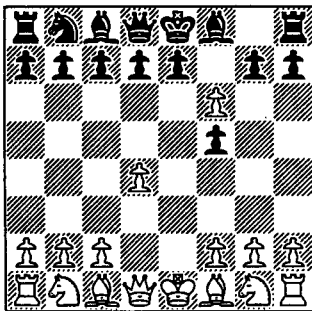
(e)	3 e3,f4,h4
(f)	3 Bf4,e3,Nh3
(g)	3 Nc3,e3,Nf3

(a) 3 Bf4,Bxc7,Bxd8
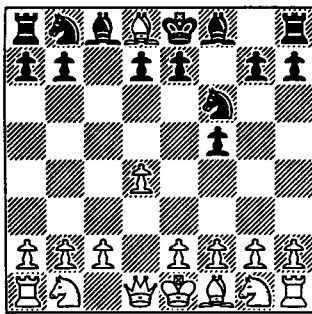
4 Kxd8,Ne4,Nxf2,Nxd1
4 Kxd8,Nd5,Nc3,Nxd1
5 Kxd1,Kd2,e4,exf5,h4
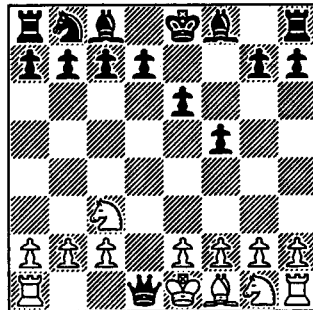5 e4,exf5,Nc3,Rxd1,Nf3
6 e5,exd4,dxc3,Be7,Re8,Bh4++

(b) 3 e4,e5,exf6

4 e6,Qxf6,Qxd4,Qxd1+
4 e5,Qf6,Qe6,exd4+
5 Be3,Bc4,Bxe6,c4,a4
6 dxe3,e2,d6,Bd7,Bxa4,exd1Q++
5 Kxd1,Ba6,Bxb7,Bxa8,Ke2
5 Kxd1,Bd2,g4,gxf5,fxe6
6 dxe6,g5,g4,g3,g2,gxf1Q+
6 Ba3,Bxb2,Bxc1,Bb2,Bxa1,Ba6+
6 Bb7,Bxa8,Bxg2,Bxh1,h5,Kf7
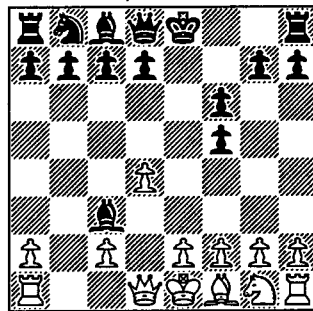*7 Bg5,Bd8,Nf3,Nc3,Ne4,Nf6, Ne5++*
7 Kf3,g4,gxf5,f6,fxg7,c3,gxh8Q+

(c) 3 Nc3,Bg5,Bxf6

(c1) 4 e6,Qxf6,Qxd4,Qxd1+

5 Kxd1,Kd2,e4,e5,h4
5 Kxd1,e4,exf5,Nge2,a4
6 exf5,Kf7,Bb4,Bxc3,Bxb2,Bxa1
6 b6,Bb7,Bxg2,Bxh1,Bb4,Bxc3+
6 f4,f3,fxg2,gxh1Q,Qxg1,Qxf2+
7 Kd3,Ke4,Bb5,Rd1,Rxd7,Nd5, Nxc7++
7 Kxc3,b4,Rd1,Rxd7,Rxg7,Rxh8+
8 Kd7,Bd5,Bxa2,Kc6,Nd7,Nc5, Rd8,Na4++ ·

(c2) 4 exf6,Ba3,Bxb2,Bxc3+

5 Qd2,Qxc3,Qxc7,e3,Qxd8+
5 Qd2,Qxc3,Qxc7,Nf3,Qxd8+
6 Kxd8,b5,b4,b3,b2,bxa1Q+
7 Kd2,e4,Ba6,Bb7,Bxa8,Rxa1,Ke2
8 Re8,Re5,Rd5,Rxd4,Na6,Nb4, Nc2,Ba6++
6 Kxd8,b5,b4,b3,b2,bxa1Q+
7 Kd2,Ba6,Bxc8,Bb7,Bxa8,Ne2, Rxa1
8 Ke7,Nc6,Rxa8,Nxd4,Nxe2,Rb8, Rb1,Rxa1

(d) 3 Nc3,Ne4,Nxf6+

### (d1) 4 exf6,d5,Nc6,Bb4+
(diagram at top of next column)

4 exf6,Ke7,c5,cxd4
5 Bf4,e4,Bc4,Qh5,Qf7++
4 exf6,d5,h5,Nc6
5 e3,Bc4,Qf3,Qxd5,Qf7++
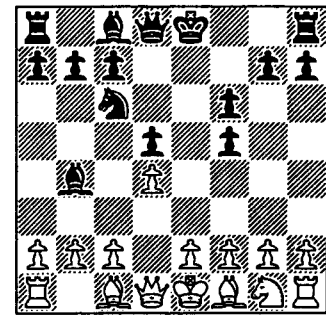
5 Bd2,Bxb4,Be7,Bxd8,f4
5 Bd2,Bxb4,Be7,Bxd8,Bxc7
6 Nxd4,Nb3,Kd7,d4,d3,d2++
5 Bd2,Bxb4,Be7,Bxd8,Nh3
6 Kf7,Kg6,Kh5,Nxd4,Re8,Rxe2++
5 Bd2,Bxb4,Be7,Bxd8,Nf3
6 Ne5,Kf7,Kg6,Kh5,Kg4,Nxf3++
5 c3,Bg5,Bxf6,Bxd8,Kd2
6 f4,Bf5,Nxd4,Nb5,Nxc3,Nxa2++
6 Nxd8,g5,gxf4,f3,fxe2,exd1Q+
7 Rxd1,Bd3,g4,g5,g6,g7,gxh8Q+
8 Ke7,Nf7,Nxh8,c5,c4,cxd3, dxc2,cxd1Q+
9 Kf2,Nf3,Rxd1,Rc1,Rxc8, Rxh8,Rxa8,Rxa7,Rxb7+ and wins

(d2) 4 exf6,Kf7,d5,Bb4+ (diagram)

4 exf6,Kf7,Qe8,Bb4+
5 Qd2,Qxb4,Qxb7,Qxc8,Qxe8+
6 Rxe8,Re6,Rd6,Nc6,Nxd4,Nxc2++
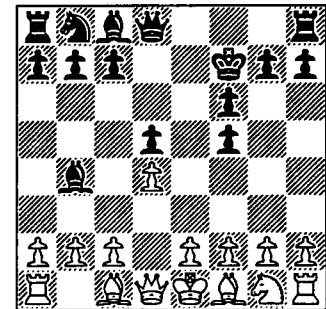
5 Bd2,Bxb4,Be7,Bxd8,f4
6 Rxd8,Rd6,Ra6,Rxa2,Rxa1,Rxd1+
and White gained the advantage in two games as follows:-
7 Kxd1,Kd2,h4,Rh3,Ra3,Rxa2,Rxa1
7 Kxd1,e3,Nf3,Ba6,Bxb7,Bxa8, Bxd5+.

On this evidence the Double Dutch defence looks like a good choice, well worth experimenting with, but not quite as good as the score line suggests. I have some reservations to do with Black's backward development, which is also a problem with the normal Dutch defence. Time will tell.

Klin Zha - the Klingon equivalent of chess *by Lex Kraaijeveld*
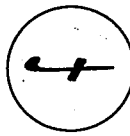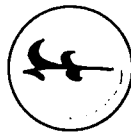
Fencer   **Lancer**   **Swift**   **Flier**   **Vanguard**   **Blockader**

Many readers of *Variant Chess* will know of the 3-D version of chess played in the sci-fi series *Star Trek*. In addition to this future chess development, mostly played by humans, two more strategic board games, played by some of the other races, feature in the series. The Romulans play *Latrunculo*, the rules of which are remarkably similar to the Roman board game ludus latrunculorum. The Klingons are proud of a board game, called *Klin Zha* in their language; 'zha' is Klingonaase for 'game', hence the Klingons refer to chess as Hum Zha ('human game') and latrunculo as Rom Zha ('romulan game').
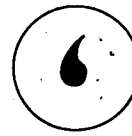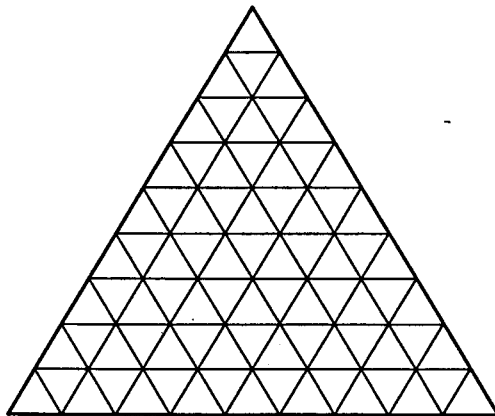
Klin Zha plays a significant role in the novel *The Final Reflection*, written by John M. Ford. The book does not give a complete set of rules, but Leonard Loyd worked out playable rules for Klin Zha, based on the novel, and these have become the officially accepted rules of the game.

Klin Zha is a game for two players (traditionally 'gold' and 'green'), played on a triangular board of 81 'triangles', 9 per side. Each player has 10 pieces and the object of the game is to capture the opponent's 'Goal' or to make it impossible for the opponent to move (i.e. stalemate is a

win for the player forcing it). At the beginning of the game, the first player sets up his or her pieces, other than the 'Goal', in any arrangement in one of the three corners of the board, followed by the second player. After both sides have placed their pieces, the 'Goals' are placed with "carrier" pieces (explained below). The player setting up first, moves first, but setting up first is a disadvantage, as it conveys some of the strategic plans.

The pieces are one 'Fencer', one 'Lancer', one 'Swift', two 'Fliers', three 'Vanguards', one 'Blockader' and the 'Goal'. The moves of the pieces (see foot of page) are:

'Fencer' (Fe): 1 to 3 triangles in any direction or combination of directions.

'Lancer' (L): 1 to 3 triangles straight in any direction.

'Swift' (S): 2 to 4 triangles in any direction or combination of directions.

'Flier' (Fl): 3 to 6 triangles straight in any direction; can jump over all other pieces.

'Vanguard' (V): 1 triangle in any direction.

'Blockader' (B): 1 or 2 triangles in any direction; opposing pieces cannot enter or pass any of the three triangles next to a 'Blockader' (indicated by a bold 1 in the diagram), nor can a 'Blockader' move to a triangle occupied by or adjoining an opposing piece; opposing 'Blockader' zones of control cannot overlap; one of the consequences of these rules is that 'Blockaders' cannot capture or be captured.

The 'Goal' cannot move by itself, but it can be carried by a 'Fencer', 'Lancer' or 'Vanguard'; not by a 'Swift', 'Flier' or 'Blockader'. The 'Goal' may also be left alone on a triangle. It may not come within the protection of a 'Blockader'. When left alone on a triangle, it can be picked up again by any of the three pieces allowed to carry it; a 'Goal' alone does not pose an obstruction to the movement of any piece.
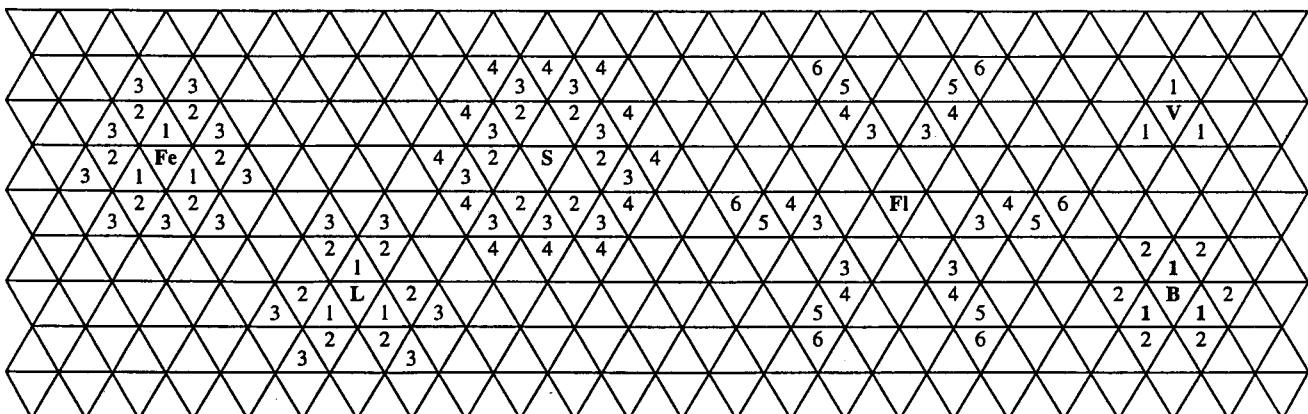
Beyond its appeal to *Star Trek* fans, Klin Zha has several things to offer to the chess variant enthusiast. Although fictional in origin, it is undoubtedly a playable chess variant in its own right; in my opinion even more so than the most famous fictional chess variant, *Jetan*. A piece like the 'Blockader' is not to be found in any other chess variant. But more importantly, the 'Goal', the actual 'king' piece, has the peculiarity of not being able to move by itself, but has to be carried by another piece. Another way of looking at this is that the 'king' piece, the piece that has to be captured to win the game, can change identity during the game. This makes for a very different kind of game.

A sample game follows. Each triangle is indicated by a letter (A-I) for its row plus two numbers (1-9) for its two diagonals. The piece carrying the goal is underlined. A move carrying the 'Goal' to another triangle is indicated by +G; if it leaves the 'Goal' behind, it is shown as -G. Initial set-up (green men in capitals in the diagram):

	Green (Riann'on)	Gold (Dax)
V	H67 / G69 / H79	G13 / H24 / I34
S	G47	H45
Fe	H68	G24
Fl	G58 / I56	G35 / I22
B	H56	H35
L	I67	F25
G	H67	G13
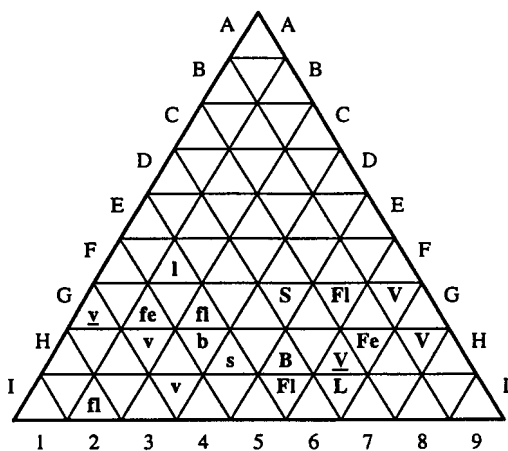
1 B(H56) - G57 {the goal is not under attack from the gold Swift as the Swift would have to pass through a Blockader field to get to it}, L(F25) - F37; 2 Fl(I56) - I23 {attacking early on}, V+G(G13) - H13; 3 Fl(I23) - I11, V+G(H13) - H23 {carrying the Goal out of any Flier lines of attack for now}; 4 L(I67) - I77, Fl(I22) - I44 (*diagram at top of next column*) {setting up an exchange of Fliers to remove Green's threat}; 5 Fl(I11) x I44, V(I34) x I44; 6 V+G(H67) - I67, S(H45) - I55; 7 Fl(G58) - I56 {blocking the gold Swift's attack}, Fe(G24) - F26 {preparing the attack on the pinned green Flier}; 8 Fe(H68) - H57 {the battle for control of the centre begins}, B(H35) - H45; 9 S(G47) x F26, L(F37) x F26; 10 V+G(I67) - H67, Fl(G35) - F37 {remember the Flier
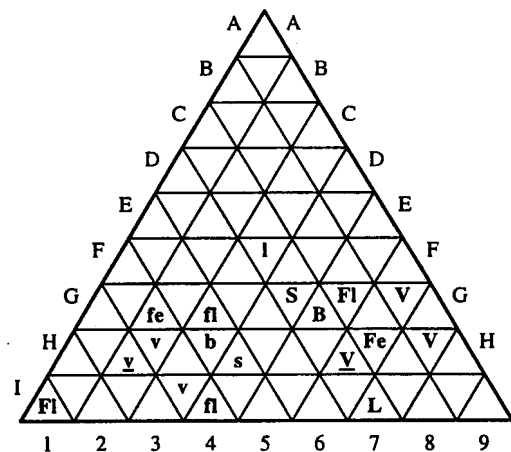
can jump over any number of pieces, including Blockader fields}; 11 V+G(H67) - H68, L(F26) - F25; 12 V+G(H68) - H78, B(H45) - H46 {this position shows the effect of the Blockader-controlled triangles}.
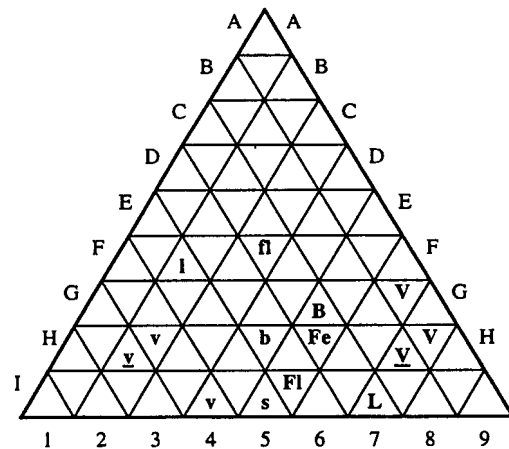
13 L(I77) - I66, Fl(F37) - D38; 14 V+G(H78) - I78, Fl(D38) - F58 {gold's crucial mistake}; 15 Fl(I56) x F58, L(F25) - G35; 16 Fl(F58) x I55, L(G35) - I45; 17 Fl(I55) - G25, V+G(H23) - H13; 18 L(I66) x I45, V(I44) x I45; 19 Fl(G25) x I45, down to two Vanguards, gold resigns ...

Instead of saying "checkmate", a Klingon announces his victory with "Zha riest'n, teskas tal tai-kleon." (A pleasant game, my compliments to a worthy opponent.)

Several ways of playing of Klin Zha exist. Blind Klin Zha is the equivalent of Kriegspiel and in the 'Reflective Game' only one set of pieces is present on the board, moved in turn by the two players. On the Internet, Kevin Geiselman maintains the Authorized Klin Zha Homepage, which contains a lot more information on the game (http://www.fyi.net/~kordite/klinzha.htm). Most of the information in this article has been taken (with Kevin's permission) from this web-site; he can be contacted via e-mail at kordite@fyi.net.

A shareware program, allowing people to play Klin Zha against a computer opponent, can be downloaded from http://hometown.aol.com/TOMTOYS/index.html.

Zillions of Games ! *by Fabrice Liardet*
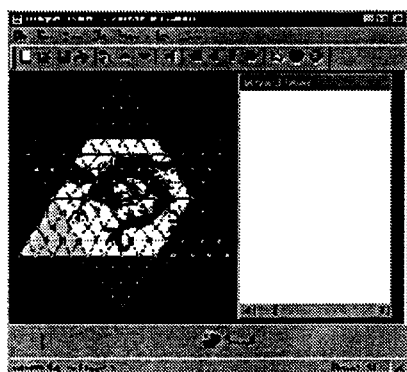
Chinese Checkers
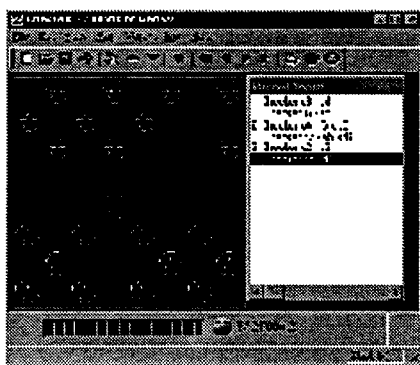
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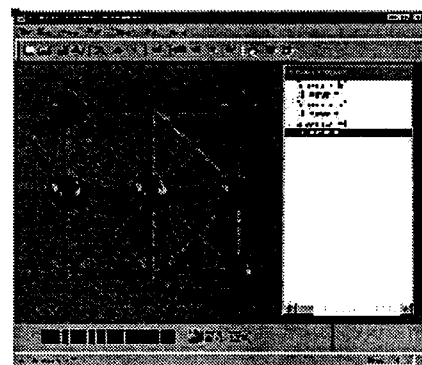
« Picaria »

While almost every chess player has at least one terrific playing program, most variant players are still seeking. It sometimes looks as if we have to content ourselves with some poorly-interfaced programs each playing a single variant, and some more user-friendly but terribly weak programs.

This may change with the incredible *Zillions of games*, developed by Jeff Mallett and Mark Lefler. It is a commercial program, for the moment sold only over the Internet on the *Zillions* web site (see the address below). This software seems to be the ultimate answer to our wishes. Not only is it able to play 56 chess variants (mostly interesting ones) but also a lot of other two-player games on nice-looking boards (see the screen shots above). (*I hope these come out all right; the originals are coloured, which has created problems. - JDB*) But the most stunning is still to come: *Zillions* plays all these games with the same playing engine!

How is this possible? The program uses a reasonably simple scripting language especially designed to code game rules. It is then able to derive from these rules the evaluation function that it will use in its search for the best move.

This means that *Zillions* is infinitely expandable. Users reasonably familiar with computer programming can add almost any two-player board game they like, and the engine can then play the new game. Some games like *Abalone* have already been programmed, and are available on the *Zillions* web site with the latest releases of the program.

This sounds a bit like a dream, but it actually works. Some testing seems to show that *Zillions'* playing strength is about 1900 in chess and probably about the same in most chess variants (as far as rating comparisons between variant chess and orthodox chess make sense), which is certainly very impressive. It must be said however that the playing engine seems to be fairly chess-oriented, and can appear out of its depth when playing games whose strategy differs markedly from chess strategy. For instance, the program uses a special (very strong) engine for playing Reversi, without which it would not even realize the importance of taking a corner square.

Still, the achievement of this "universal gaming engine", as the authors call it, is undoubtedly a much closer step towards artificial intelligence than the widely publicized *Deep Blue* win against the world chess champion.

Zillions offers a good interface (game listing, game saving, etc.) and also a facility to play on-line games with other players ; as this requires fixing an appointment with the opponent and doing some tuning, I have not tested this feature yet. The help menu is somewhat incomplete, but all necessary technical support is provided on the web site.

Here is a sample game I played against the program at Extinction Chess, giving it 15 seconds per move and using about the same myself. It gives a fair idea of its level of play. The program held the white pieces.

1 Nf3 e5!? I don't know whether this pawn sac is sound or not, but it gains some time and opens the e-file for a Black rook. 2 Nxe5 d5 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nc3 *Zillions* tends to expose its knights too early in the game. 4...Bb4 5 Nd3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 0-0 7 e3 Re8 8 f3 Qd6 9 g4 Nbd7 10 a4 c5 11 g5 Nh5 12 Nf2 Nf4 13 Bb5 Ne6 14 dxc5? After this the black queen becomes very active. 14...Qxc5 15 c4 d4 16 Bxd7+ Not 16 e4 ? d3+ 17.Nh3 (17.Nxd3 Qd4#) Nxg5+! 18.Bxg5 Nf8+ 19.Nf4 Qe3#, as *Zillions* points out! 16...Bxd7 17 exd4 Qxc4 18 0-0 Nf8 19 Nh1 Rad8 :
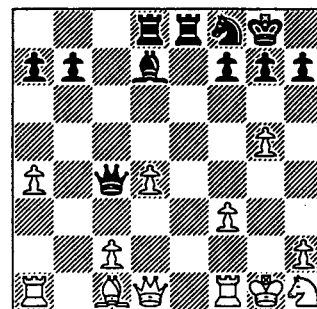
White's position is a bit messy, and indeed he is already lost. 20 Rf2 This resists longest. 20...Bc8 21 Rd2 Re3 Now its 15 seconds were enough for *Zillions* to recognize defeat. 22 Nf2 Rde8 23 Re2 Rxe2 24 Nh1 Re1#.

The program:
Zillions of Games!, running under Windows 95/98, 8MB RAM required, $29.95 + $10.00 shipping & handling.

The address:
Zillions web site : http://www.zillions-of-games.com.

Points from near and far

What should we regard as a "chess variant"? From time to time, readers (most recently, Mike Pennell) raise the question: should established and widely played games like XiangQi and Shogi be regarded as "chess variants"? The answer is of course not; they are no more variants of chess than chess is of them, and I am not surprised their adherents take offence at any suggestion that they are. But if it is then asked whether they should be featured in *VC*, I would say, just as uncompromisingly, Yes. *VC* is a journal for players of ordinary "Western" chess who wish to broaden their horizons, and an acquaintance with the chess games of other countries is a natural and indeed important part of this process. To enthusiasts of these other games, I say: I apologize for the unfortunate connotations of our title and I realize the offence it may cause, but I still think your game has a place in our pages.

Transcendental Chess (*Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*, pp 319-20, randomized chess by post with the right to transpose one pair of men on the first move). Ivan Dirmeik, a keen postal player who is trying to arouse interest in variants in the stony wastes of South Africa, asks me to print his wholehearted and unreserved recommendation to members to join in this game. The address to write to is TC/Lawrence 1502, 1655A Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11210, USA. I quote from his letter: "Max Lawrence's club is <u>extremely</u> good: he is very strict, but he does seem to be fair."

Other people's postal tournaments. Paul Yearout, among others, makes the entirely reasonable point: instead of promoting our own postal tournaments and trying to drum up enough competitors to make them viable, should we not draw attention to tournaments already being run by others?

Writing as BCVS secretary rather than as editor, I think we should do both. Some people prefer a local tournament, with not too many games to play and no international postal delays, and as long as there is a demand for such tournaments I shall be happy to see us promoting them. But yes, we should also draw attention what is available elsewhere, and in particular this means the Italian AISE (write to Alessandro Castelli, C. da Potenza 11, 62010 Villa Potenza (MC), Italy) and the American NOST (John McCallion, 42-65 Kissena Boulevard (Apt. 324), Flushing, NY 11355, USA). I am not myself a postal player, but I understand that both offer an excellent range of activities.

And of course there is also the possibility of play over the Internet, as outlined by Fabrice Liardet in *VC 30*. Truly, the keen player is embarrassed for choice!

What's in a name? Miss E. L. Webster, whose father contributed to *Fairy Chess Review* in the 1940s, has sent me the men which he and his brother made to represent the composite pieces R+N and B+N: two squat and sturdy rooks with knights' heads which they called "Wardens" (they are fearsome-looking beasts which would terrify any intruder) and two knights with bishops' mitres which they called "Abbots". These names seem far better than the colourless "Empress" and "Princess" standard for so long; what a pity these are too entrenched for change.

The "advantage" of the exchange at Extinction Chess (see *VC 29 p 6*). Fabrice Liardet has sent me the score of a game he won at Messigny last year which bears on this point. Play went **1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qa5 4 a3 e5 5 b4 Bxb4** (see diagram on left below) **6 axb4 Qxa1 7 Bc4 Nf6 8 Ba2 0-0 9 Nge2 Rd8 10 Bc4 Nc6 11 b5 Nd4 12 0-0 Nxe2 13 Nxe2 Rd4** and White resigned (see diagram on right). This was a five-minute game reconstructed from memory, but he thinks it correct apart perhaps from the last two or three moves.
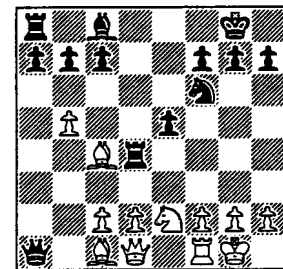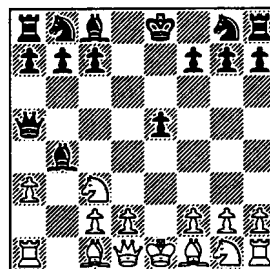
Fabrice gave no notes apart from a question mark after 8 Ba2, and I asked him about the sequence 5...Bxb4 6 axb4 Qxa1: was White mad, or was Black? He replied, "Although winning the exchange is usually bad, I think this particular opening favours Black. White underestimated the effect of the pin on the first rank, and also the rapid arrival of the Black rook on the d-file" (my translation). We may notice that it is the bishops which White finally loses, even though he still has both when he resigns.

Stan Goldovski

Stanislav ("Stan") Goldovski died in January, from cancer. A most pleasant and talented young man, he can only have been in his middle twenties.

Stan was born in St Petersburg, but moved to Köln around 1992. He was a student of computer science and an enthusiastic player of Losing Chess, and his competence in both fields was shown by the performance of his program *Giveaway Wizard* against the assembled experts at Geneva in September (see *VC 30 pp 20-21*). If any reader wishes to perform a small act of remembrance, I suggest getting out a board and playing through this game; a program which can find a move like 11...b5 is a formidable opponent.

Our deepest sympathy to Tatjana, and to his family. - JDB

Magnetic Chess *by David Pritchard*

This is probably the best variant of the decade and is almost certain to become a favourite. But don't take my word for it; here is John McCallion, boardgames editor of *GAMES* magazine: 'the most exciting concept I have seen in ages'. Magnetic Chess has three claims to fame: unlike the usual variant, it is not contrived but is governed by a simple scientific principle; it is highly original; and games are never less than exciting. It must surely, too, be a wonderland for composers.

A primary principle of magnetism is that unlike poles attract and like poles repel. This is the essence of Magnetic Chess. On the conclusion of a move, pieces or pawns of either colour nearest to the piece moved and on the same rank or file (but not diagonals) are affected. Hostile men are attracted to the square(s) adjacent to the moved piece and friendly men are repelled to the farthest vacant square(s) along the rank or file. The kings are not affected nor do kings attract or repel when moved. Shielded men also are not affected. There is no *e.p.* and a pawn repelled to the first or second rank retains a two-square move option. Castling magnetizes the rook.

A simple example: place a WBa1, WPc4, WRd8, WNd6, WKd2; BQg4. If White now plays Bd4, the Q is attracted to e4, the P is repelled to a4 and the N to d7, whilst the K is unaffected. Notice that if the K was on d3 the move would be illegal as it would put the K in check. Of course, a move may result in no man being affected, or perhaps just one man. It is as simple as that.

, The effect on play is extraordinary. For example, if White opens an orthodox d4 or e4 this attracts the corresponding hostile pawn and passes the initiative to the second player. Although not strictly necessary, hereon I give the moves of magnetized men in parentheses.

Another, slightly more complicated example (diagram at top of next column). White (to play) could try 1 Qh1 (Bg1-d1) Qd2+ 2 Kb1 when
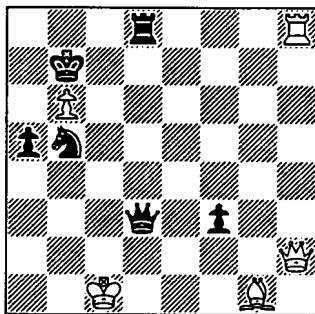

Black cannot play 2...Nc3 (f3-h3)+ since this would expose the black king to check. After 2...Qxd1 (Qh1-e1)+ 3 Qxd1 (Rd8-d2) Rxd1+ 4 Kc2 Rd7 White must play Rf8 (f3-f7) to prevent Black queening with ...Rf7 (f3-f1=Q). Notice that Black cannot play 1...Rxh8 since this would attract the WQ to h7 giving check. White could instead play 1 Qd6 (Rd8-d7, Qd3-d5, b6-a6)+. The Q, thrice attacked, is immune from capture since this would draw the pawn from a6 to c6 and the king would still be in check. But alas it is not checkmate as Black has 1...Qc6 (a6-b6)+ and after 2 Qxc6+ Kxc6 White will have to play 3 Rf8 (f3-f7) or Bf2 to stop the pawn queening. Notice that the pawn a5 stops Black having the defence 1...Qa2 or Na3.

Magnetic Chess was invented by Joao Pedro Neto and Claude Chaunier at the end of 1996 but with the stipulation that there was no check etc. and you won by capturing the opponent's king. The game was first published as far as I am aware in Hans Bodlaender's Chess Variant pages on the Internet. Jim Aikin of NOST modified the game by reverting to orthodox chess (i.e., checkmate the king to win) and I admit to preferring this version. Here is an example of play from a recent correspondence tournament. The game was won by Tony Gardner who also won the tournament. 1 Nf3 (f7-f4) Nf6 2 a4 (a7-a5, f4-b4) c5 (c2-c4) 3 b3 (Nf3-h3) Ng4 (g2-g3, c4-f4, g7-g8)? 4 Bb2 g7 5 f3 (b3-a3, f4-f7)+ Kxf7 6 Ng5 (g7-g6, c5-f5)+ Kg8 7 Bxh8 e6 (e2-e5, g6-h6) 8 Qb3 hxg5 9 Ba6 (Ra8-a7, e6-b6)+ Kxh8:
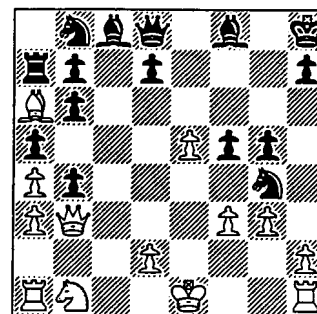
10 Be2 (d2-a2, e5-e8=Q)!! Resigns. A pretty finish. If 10...Qxe8 (Be2-e7, Bf8-g8) 11 Qb2 (b4-b3)+ Nf6 (b6-a6, f5-f4) 12 Qxf6 (a6-e6, f4-f5)+ Qf8 (Qf6-f7) 13 Bf6+. However, after 10...Qf6 (b6-a6, f5-f4) or Nc6 (b6-a6) the ending is not altogether clear, at least to me, but then it rarely is in Magnetic Chess which is part of the beauty of the game.

A reversal of fortune is a common occurrence as in this encounter between the inventors, won by Neto (checks abolished): 1 Nf3 (f7-f4) Nf6 2 Nc3 (c7-c4, Nf3-h3) e5 (e2-e4) 3 Bxc4 (Bc8-c5) Ng4 (g2-g3, g7-g8) 4 Qxg4 (g3-g1, g8-g5) h5 (g5-f5, Nh3-h4) 5 exf5 (Bf8-f6, h5-g5) gxh4 (h2-h3) 6 Qg6 Ke7 7 Qf7 Kd6 8 Nb5 (b7-b6, b2-b1) Kc6 9 Qd5 (d2-d1, d7-d6) Kd7 10 Qe6 (10 Qb7 Ke8 11 Qf7 (a7-e7) gives the king a flight square!) Kc6 11 Bd5 Kxb5 12 a4 (f4-b4, a7-a5) Ka6 13 g2 (f2-d2) Qe7 14 Bc4 (h4-d4) Ka7 15 Qxe7 (e5-e6) Bxe7 (e6-e2) 16 Rg1 (g2-g8=Q) exd1=Q 17 Kxd1 Rxg8 (Rg1-g7) 18 Bxg8 (Nb8-f8, Rg7-g1) Bh4 (d4-c4)! 19 Rg4 (c4-f4) Bg3 20 Rg7 (Bg3-g6) Kb8:
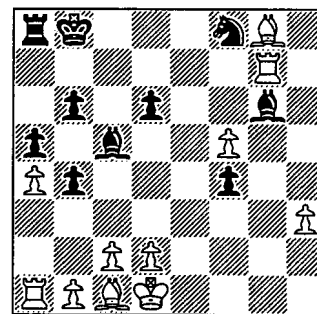
21 c3 (Bc5-c4) Bxf5 (f4-f1=Q) wins. White has no good defence. If 21 fxg6 (d6-f6) f5 (f4-f1=Q) and 21 Rxg6 (d6-f6) b5 (b4-b2, Bc5-e5)!

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

This is only a part of our review material this month, because the computer program **Zillions of Games**, brought to my attention by Fabrice Liardet, seemed to demand a full-page article rather than a half-column review. I therefore suggested to Fabrice that he devote his "Letter from Hyperspace" to it, and there is no "computer" section on the present page. In the same way, **Magnetic Chess** seemed both to David Pritchard and to me to deserve the full-length article which appears opposite.

Games are normally reviewed by David Pritchard, other items by whichever of our contributors appears to be most expert in their particular field. Unattributed reviews are by the editor. Material for review may be sent to any member of the editorial team.

Games *by David Pritchard*

Kilyow. This is a shogi variant meaning The Dominion Game. Usual shogi pieces and setup but names and some moves changed. The lance is now Blue Bay and has the option of moving laterally on its first move only. The knight is called Red Fire and appears to be an orthodox shogi knight. The silver general is renamed White Phoenix and moves as its shogi equivalent but can also advance two squares. The gold general (Black mountain) seems to be orthodox. The pieces promote respectively to Eastern Spring, Southern Summer, Western Spring, Northern Winter (I am not sure why as they all seem to have the same move: one square in any direction except straight backwards). The bishop (Eternal Camp) is conventional except that it can also move one square straight forward as well as one square sideways on promotion (Phoenix Reply). The rook (Heavenly Camp) is also orthodox and can move additionally one square diagonally forward on promotion to Dragon's Reply. The Pawn (Samurai Origin) is a western pawn and promotes to Great Official (gold general). The piece descriptions sound

fanciful to us but not, I suspect, to the Japanese. Rules on capturing and re-entering are not clear. All of which I owe to Peter Blommers who kindly sent me details. It is always difficult to evaluate strategy games like this without in-depth testing so I won't attempt an opinion. However, it is clear that the pawn move alone would invalidate all known shogi openings and the lance's usefulness is considerably enhanced.

Books

Reform Chess by Laszlo Polgar (Konnemann Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, no price given). From David Pritchard: "This large, handsome, heavy (over one-and-a-half kilos) volume is a sort of corollary to the author's *Minichess* reviewed in *VC* 20. It is orthochess confined to four specific board sizes: 8x6, 5x8, 9x6 and 6x8. For each board the reader is offered a symmetrical and asymmetrical starting position with move adjustments (eg to castling) where necessary.

"The book has virtually no text. Instead there are some 2,650 diagrams; roughly 2,100 for the 8x6 board, and 550 for the other three configurations. About a quarter are game positions and the rest problems, all with solutions. Most of the game positions are fairly simple, which is clearly the author's aim (easier-to-learn chess, simpler and quicker to play). All but a few of the problems and studies which make up almost three quarters of the book could offend the purist. Turning over the pages is a walk through the halls of fame: Stamma, Baird, Loyd, Kubbel, Shinkman, Rinck - the list of well-known composers would fill this page. Clearly the author has trawled all those problems that can be accommodated without alteration within his chosen board sizes.

"A board, adaptable to all four sizes, and a push-out set of chessmen accompanies the book. A collector's item but of little value to serious variant players."

International XiangQi Tournament 1998 by Peter Wood. £4 plus postage from the author at 39 Linton Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1TW. From Paul Byway: "This is an A5 booklet of 35 pages, contents, list of competitors, crosstable and an informative and well written preface. Many such booklets are produced on matters chessical, but this is the highest quality production of this type that I have seen. The tournament took place at the 2nd Mind Sports Olympiad: super-Grandmaster Liu Da Hua and twice Ladies World Champion Hu Ming headed a very strong field. By dint of hard work Peter managed to rescue more than half the game scores, recorded here in Chinese descriptive notation in the style of *XiangQi Review*. I know the care that went into this because Peter managed to rectify one of my mangled game-scores! Recommended."

(If you are unfamiliar with descriptive notation, an algebraic crib to the game on page 13 of the book will be found in this issue of *VC*. And without detracting in any way from Peter's achievement, I do find it extraordinary that the organizers of a tournament involving some of the world's leading players did not require game scores to be kept and handed in, and that the production of anything approaching a tournament book was left to private enterprise. - JDB)

Long days in Lakeland by Ronald Turnbull (Grey Stone Books 1998, ISBN 0-9515996-7-4, £17.95 from your local bookshop). Should we review non-chess books by our columnists? Possibly not, but he who is good at one thing is often good at another (one of my predecessors as *BCM* endgame study columnist was a world authority on Persian carpets) and those who share my taste for Ronald's gently piquant phrases will find that hill walking gives even more scope for his literary skills than does chess. £17.95 is not cheap, but it buys 192 large pages with proper covers, good writing, and some nice pictures; there is much to be enjoyed here.

XiangQi

Peter Wood's column for *VC* 30 originally included the game between Hu Ming and Liu Da Hua in the 1998 MSO tournament, but I held it over hoping to get some explanatory notes. This has proved harder than expected (I suspect people felt as I would if asked to annotate a Kasparov game), but Paul Byway has kindly supplied some with the rider, "I would want to add a note saying that I would be happy to stand corrected by a more expert player." Thank you, Paul; point taken.

I am devoting the whole of this month's column to the game; as Paul says, it's not every day we have two of the world's best players on our doorstep. It is in algebraic notation; if you prefer descriptive, get Peter Wood's tournament book (see page 41). - JDB

Red: **Hu Ming**; Black: **Liu Da Hua**; Mind Sports Olympiad, London 1998, round 4. Brief notes by Paul Byway.

1	c4-c5	Cb8-c8
2	Ch3-e3	Bg0-e8

Pawn versus Short Cannon Opening: I could find no example of 2...Bge8 in recent issues of *XiangQi Review*, but 2...Bce8 3 Ng3 c6 4 Rh1 cxc5 5 Na3 is quite common.

3	Nb1-a3	Nb0-a8
4	Ra1-b1	Ra0-a9
5	Nh1-g3	

Interesting that Red declines to win three pawns with 5 Cxe7+ Gde9 6 Cxa7 Rd9 7 Cxg7.
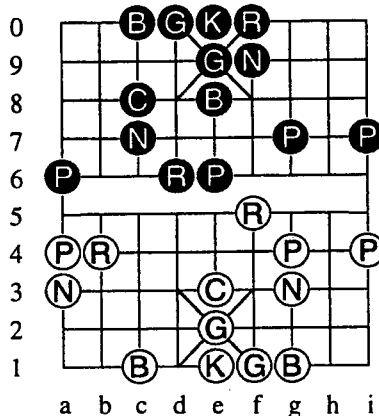
5	...	Ra9-d9
6	Ri1-h1	a7-a6
7	Gd1-e2	Gf0-e9
8	Cb3-d3	Rd9-d6

Black persists in offering the centre pawn for more active pieces - and Red declines. Accepting the pawn is thought to favour Black.

9	e4-e5	c7-c6
10	Rh1-h5	Nh0-f9
11	e5-e6	e7xe6
12	c5xc6	Be8xc6

12...Rxc6 13 Cd9 looks embarrassing.

13	Rh5-f5	Ri0-f0
14	Rb1-b4	Bc6-e8
15	Cd3-c3	Na8-c7

Activating the knight.

| 16	Cc3xc8	Ch8xc8

17	Ce3-f3	e6-e5!
18	Rf5xe5	

Discretion. Red would not enjoy 18 Rf7 Nd5 19 Rd4 Rc6 and she cannot even win the knight (20 Cxf9 Cc9). Black has emerged from pressure with a secure position and better knights.

18	...	Nf9-h8
19	Re5-e4	g7-g6
20	Cf3-d3	Rf0-f6
21	Bg1-e3	Rd6-d5
22	Re4-e7	Rf6-c6
23	Rb4-e4	i7-i6
24	Re7-h7	Nh8-g0

Black has pinned back the Red knights and activated his own rooks. Now it's time to improve the co-ordination of the Black knights.
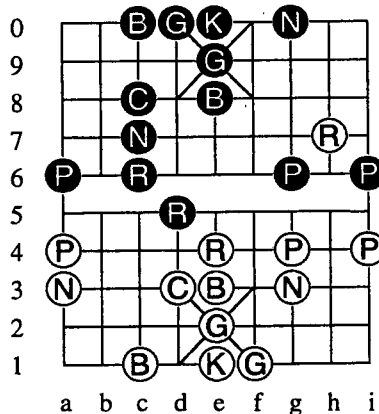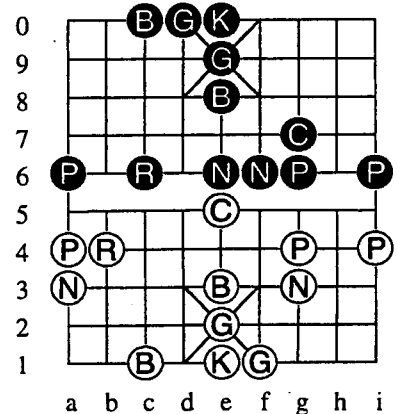
25	Rh7-e7	Ng0-f8
26	Re7-e5	Rd5xe5
27	Re4xe5	Nc7-e6
28	Re5-e4	Cc8-c7

This is very instructive. Keeping everything tight, Black now improves the cannon's prospects.

29	Cd3-d5	Cc7-g7
30	Ng3-h1	Cg7-i7
31	Nh1-g3	Nf8-h7
32	Cd5-e5	Nh7-f6

33	Re4-b4	Ci7-g7

Putting pressure on the left wing now.

34	Rb4-f4	Nf6xg4
35	Ng3-i2	g6-g5
36	Ni2-h4	Cg7-e7

The Red cannon is pinned.

37	Na3-c4	Ce7-c7
38	Nc4-b2	Rc6-c2

Switching back to the right and cramping the knight: Nimzovich would approve of Black's manoeuvring skills!

39	Nb2-c4	Cc7-b7
40	Nh4xi6	
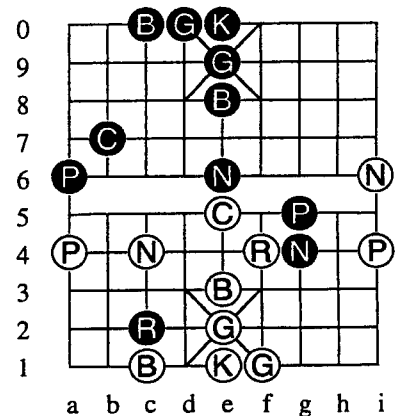
40	...	Cb7-b4
41	Nc4-d6	Cb4-b1+
42	Ge2-d1	g5-f5
43	Rf4xg4	f5xe5
44	Rg4-c4	Rc2-d2

Black breaks into the palace by threatening to win a knight. 44 Rb4 looks better, but 44...Ca1 45 Rb1 Ca2 (threat ...Rc6) keeps the initiative.

45	Nd6-b7	Rd2xd1+
46	Ke1-e2	e5-f5
47	Nb7-c9+	Ke0-f0
48	Rc4-h4	

This is just too slow!

48	...	Ne6-d4+

and Red resigns (49 Kf2 Rxf1 mate).

The End Is Nigh ! *by Paul Byway*

20 The Finches, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7TB

Alice Chess

I fancy this is the first time that Alice Chess has featured in the column. I must draw your attention to #268 on page 30 of *VC* 30. The set mate is a reflection of the actual mate and the solution requires that the initial position be reflected. Nothing could be more thematic!

Here is another pleasant result of discussions between John Beasley and Ronald Turnbull on this topic. John tells me it will appear in an article Ronald has written for *diagrammes*.

#55 Alice Chess
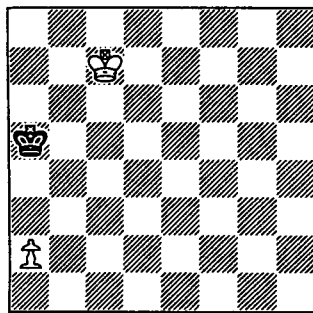
It's White to play and win, and board B is empty. Moves made on board B will be given in italic.

1	a2-a4	*Ka5-a6*
2	*a4-a5*	*Ka6-a7*
3	a5-a6	*Ka7-a8*
4	Kc7-b6	*Ka8-b8*
5	*a6-a7+*	Kb8-a8
6	*Kb6-c5*	Ka8-b7
7	a7-a8Q	Kb7-c7
8	*Qa8-a7*	*Kc7-c8*
9	Kc5-d6	mates

An idea: put a White pawn at e5/A and a Black king at h5/B and we have a reciprocal zugzwang. Can anyone make a study out of this?

Bughouse Chess

Every year the Hertford chess club holds a Christmas handicap tournament. At the last one, after the serious fun was over, I found a couple of youngsters playing Double Bughouse chess: two pairs play, one of each pair taking Black and the other White. Anything you capture is passed to your partner to be 'dropped' on his board. So if you are threatened by mate, and have time in hand, you can wait until your partner captures the piece you need for your defence. This was played as 5-minute chess!!

Now Fabrice Liardet sends an ending composed with Chris Ferrante, who has a Bughouse site on the Internet.

#56 Bughouse
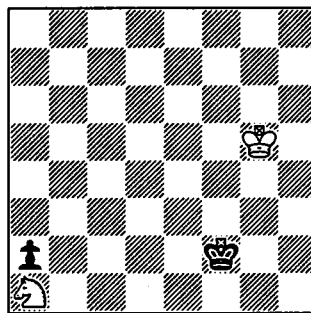
White has a pawn, and Black has a bishop, in hand.

Fabrice gives the winning plan as follows:-

First White wins the Pa2, then forces Kd7,Ne6 and then drops the pawn on b7 or g7, depending on the position of Black's king. This forces Black to drop his bishop, which is then cut off from the queening square. An early bishop drop is always losing, unless Black can win the knight and promote his pawn quickly, because White will drop the pawn on the 7th rank and the same colour as the bishop. The first part goes as follows:-
1 Kf4 Ke2 2 Ke4 Kd2 3 Kd4 Kd1 (Bc3+ 4 Kc4 Bxa1 5 Kb3) 4 Kd3 Kc1 5 Kc3 Kb1 6 Kb3 and Black must leave because of Kxa1? 7 Kc2!
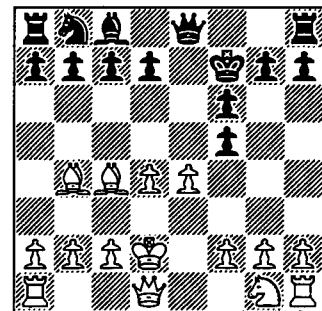
The rest is easier.

Competition 7

In the following position from Italian progressive, it's Black to play and mate in six. As a follow up, reverse the colours and find at least one mate in six for the (new) Black and at least

#57 Ian Richardson
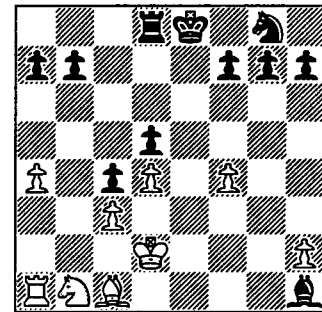
one mate in seven for White: one point for each mate found.

#58 JDB-PVB (corr.)

This comes from a discussion of the Double Dutch defence and arises after 1 d4 2 f5, Nf6 3 Nc3, Ne4, Nxf6+ 4 exf6, Kf7, Qe8, Bb4+ 5 Bd2, Bxb4, e4, Kd2, Bc4+ Now what should Black play?

Solutions to competition 6

#53a 1 Ra1! (1 d4? h2 2 Rd2 h1K! or 2 Rd3 h1N!) h2 2 Ra4 h1B (h1N 3 Ra5! or h1K 3 d4 Kg2 4 d5 Kf3 5 Ra1! Kf4 6 d6 Kf5 7 d7 Ke5! 8 Rb1 and promotion to rook or bishop) 3 Ra8 Bxa8 4 d4 wins.
#53b 1 c4 1 Ra1 g2 2 Ra4 g1B or 1 Rd1 g2 2 Rd4 g1K) g2 2 Rc2! (2 Rc3? g1N! 3 Rc1 Nf3 4 Rc3 Ng1) g1K (g1N 3 Re2 Nxe2 4 c5, 5 c6, 6 c7, 7 c8N) 3 Rh2 Kxh2 4 c5, 5 c6, 6 c7, 7 c8R wins.
#54 1 Ne2! Nc1(Rd4 2 Nxd4 Nb2 3 Nc2! and 4 Nxa1) 2 Nxc1 and now Rb3 3 Nxb3 or Ka2 3 Nxa2 winning in either case.

The scores are now:-

Ian Richardson	20
Fred Galvin	15
David Pritchard	11
Ronald Turnbull	5
Stefano Bruzzi	2

Dragons and scorpions *by Ronald Turnbull*

A Scorpion is a King with the added power of a Grasshopper (moves along a Q-line to the square immediately beyond some other piece of either colour.) A Dragon is a Knight with the added power of a pawn. A nice name isn't necessarily the making of a new chesspiece - but it helps. In the Chess Variant "Sting", Kings are Scorpions. Problem **1** certainly has a sting in it!
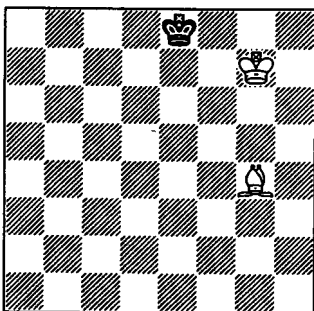
1 - RT
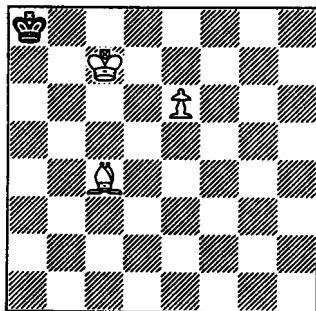
Sting (kings are scorpions); mate in 3

With orthodox kings, **1** is solved by 1 Kb6 Kb8 2 e7 Kc8 3 e8Q. With Scorpions this doesn't work as bK escapes by 3...Kc3! But we find a new and surprising solution: 1 Kb6 Kb8 2 Ba6 Ka8 3 Bb7! (The sole function of wP now is to stop the cook 1 Be6.)

2 - Ian RICHARDSON

Sting; helpmate in 4½, 2 solutions

I am grateful to Ian Richardson for that bare-bishop mate, which he exploits in a helpmate: the two sides collaborate, White starting and mating on move 5. The solutions take us to opposite corners of the board: 1...Kg3 2 Ke7 Be2 3 Ke1 Bf1 4 Kg1 Bh3 5 Kh1 Bg2 and 1...Bc8 2 Kb8 Bd7 3 Ka8 Kc7 4 Ka7 Bc8 5 Ka8 Bb7.

Ian also offers **3**, where it is hard to see how White can make any use of his pawns. Here Black starts, as usual in helpmates, and helps White mate on

move 3. **3** is an original for solving.

3 - Ian RICHARDSON
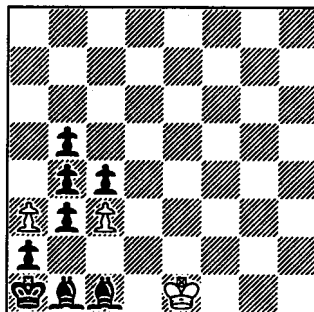
Sting; helpmate in 3, 2 solutions

Sting is being played as I write. The main strategic issue will be in deciding when to deploy the Scorpion as an aggressive piece. Some endgame wisdom will turn into folly, though much will remain sound. In **4**, play starts crudely as 1 Rf6+ gains the Queen. White's 6th move is the climax. This also is for solving.
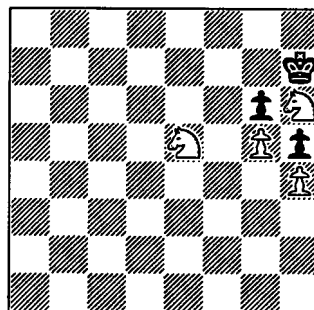
4 - Ronald TURNBULL
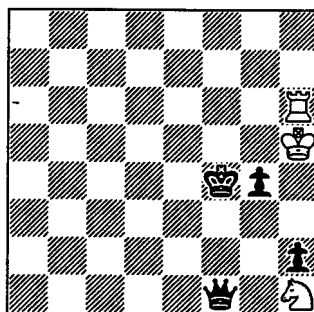
Sting; win

The Dragon combines the moves of Knight and Pawn: a dragon on rank 1 or 8 moves simply as a knight. (A dragon cannot be taken en passant.)
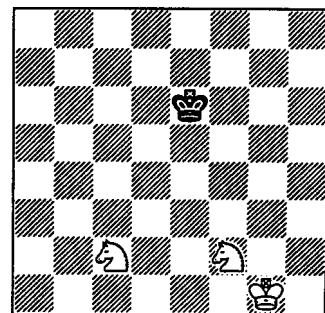
5 - T R DAWSON (version RT)

Dragons (no wK); mate in 4

The Dragon was invented by T. R. Dawson, and **5** is adapted from one of his ideas. With Black to move, White

mates at once: 1...Kh8 2 DRxg6. So to solve, the Dragon must make a move that doesn't change its square-colour: a pawn-two. 1 DRd3 Kh8 2 DRf2 Kh7 3 DRf4 etc. Ian's **6** (for solving) should now prove fairly simple.

6 - Ian RICHARDSON

Dragons; helpmate in 2½, (b) wK b8

"Ravage" would be the variant with Dragons for Knights. In the opening, they come into play at once, with devastating effect. In the middle-game the Dragon is superior to a Rook. But in the ending, it is weaker - so winning rook for dragon is bad now, but gives an endgame advantage. The ending K+Dragon vs King is a draw. However, there is a win from **7**.

7 - RT
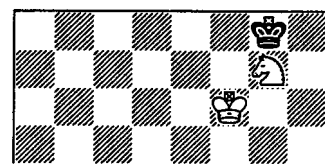
Dragons; mate in 8

Answer on p 48, instructive if not exciting. I had intended to finish with a composite DR+S problem, but it proved unsound. My thanks to Mark Ridley for providing **8** at short notice.

8 - Edgar HOLLADAY
Kennst du die Bibel? 1966

Dragons; helpstalemate in 2, 3 sols

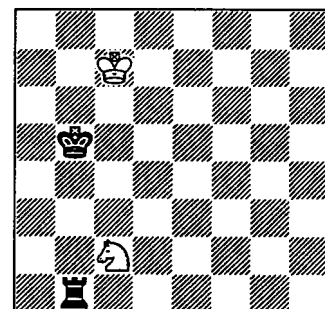# Turbulent priests *by Peter Fayers*

"Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" King Henry II is reputed to have said back in the twelfth century, referring to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas A'Becket.

Some of his knights took this for a non-too-subtle hint, and went and murdered the unfortunate cleric in Canterbury Cathedral; not what the King had really intended at all. At least, if we are to believe that well-known authority on medieval English history, Hollywood.

Nonetheless, we can see the King's point of view. In those days it was difficult enough to rule a nation in any case - particularly one so unruly as the English (things haven't changed much) - that the monarch has a right to feel a bit miffed if the church prelate starts getting in his way instead of helping.

Which brings us to chess problems, and a particular fairy idea that has interested me ever since I first sat at a chessboard - why should bishops be restricted to squares of one colour?

I have been experimenting with fairy forms that enable bishops to change coloured squares. Specifically, the black King is mated in a corner by a bishop on the long diagonal, with one or both of his flights blocked by friendly bishops, where at least one, and preferably all three bishops have had to change parity to achieve this.

1 - Peter FAYERS
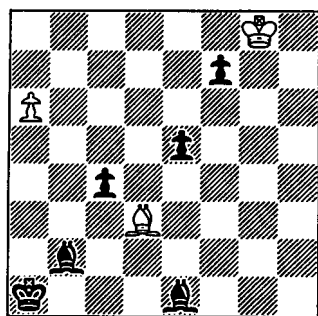
Magnetic Chess; series helpmate in 6

1 uses Magnetic Chess (see page 40). If I told you that, after six black moves his King is still on a1, and white mates by Bd4!, you would find it difficult to believe. But watch what happens as black marches his f-pawn

down the board. 1 f6 draws the wP over to block the upcoming check on the a2-g8 diagonal. 2 f5 3 f4 send the two black pawns over to the a-file out of harms way. 4 f3 gets the wB onto dark squares, and 5 f2 and 6 f1B sends the black bishops over to block in the monarch.

All 3 bishops have changed square-colour for the desired effect, and now 6...Bd4#. Note the promotion to B is forced; if (eg) 6 f1N Bd4+; 7 Nd2 (Bd4-d3) defends.

2 - Ronald TURNBULL
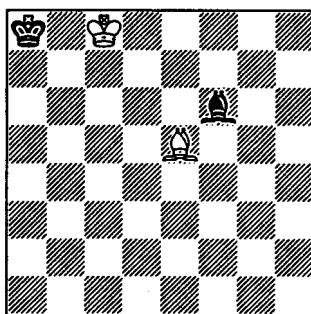
Circe Parrain
Helpmate in 2½, two solutions

Now some for you to solve. In Circe Parrain, a captured unit is not reborn immediately, but only after the next move - it is reborn a distance from its capture square equivalent to the length and direction of that move.

Were White to start 1 Bxf6, the forced response Ka7 would cause the black Bishop to be reborn on f5, giving check.
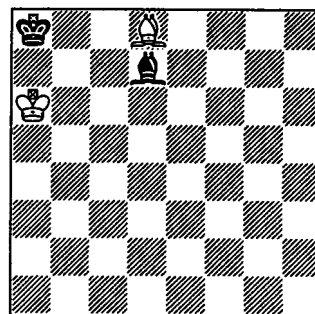
3 - Peter FAYERS
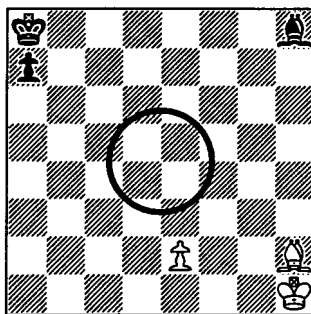
Actuated Revolving Centre
Helpmate in 2½

An Actuated Revolving Centre is the group of squares de45, which forms a turntable and revolves 90° clockwise, with all its occupants,

whenever a unit moves on to or off it. 1...Be5 puts wB on e4, giving check; 2 Be5 moves wB on to d4 and puts bB on e4, and now it is wK in check.

4 - Ronald TURNBULL

Messigny Chess; series helpmate in 6

In Messigny Chess a player may, as his turn, swap over any two units of the same type but opposite colours. These may not be immediately swapped back by the other player.

Black may create immediate turbulence by swapping the Bishops over straight away, leaving wB on d7, bB on d8.

5 - Peter FAYERS
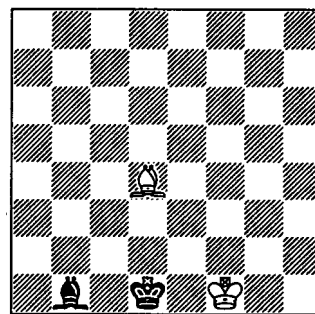
Vertical Möbius Strip
Helpmate in 1½, duplex

A Vertical Möbius Strip is like a Vertical Cylinder, except that the board is given a half-twist first so a3 is adjacent to h6, etc. In **5** Black could start 1 Bg5 (via a2 & h6).

(This doesn't quite tie in with the precise definition of a "Turbulent Priest" problem, as there are no corners for the bK to be mated in, and all the diagonals are of equal length. But the principle is the same!)

*Problems **2-5** will count for ladder points (answers next time). Please send solutions and comments to Ronald in the usual way. - JDB*

Problem pages *by Ronald Turnbull*

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

For the next issue or two, I'm trying to tempt those who are principally over-the-board players. I'll be trying to offer problems that are lucid, cleanly-constructed, without the more devious tricks that problemists delight in.

Berolina Pawns move diagonally, capture straight. So a White BP on a2 could move to b3 or c4, capture on a3, and be captured en passant at b3 by a Black BP on b4. According to David Pritchard's *Encyclopedia*, this leads to lively and interesting games with few draws. In endings with two pawns, one or both will usually promote. The study is by Em Lasker, no less. With ordinary pawns, 1 Qd3 wins at once: the Berolina solution is at the end.
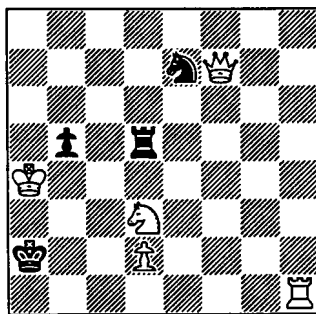
1 - Emanuel LASKER
Funkschach 1926 (v?)
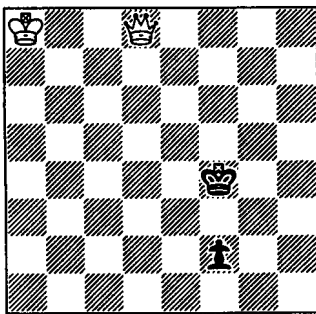
Berolina, White to play. Can he win?

While I was in the *Encyclopedia* I came across this neat demonstrator:

2 - Cedric LYTTON
### Encyclopedia of Chess Variants 1994

Berolina, mate in 2

The keymove 1 Qf2 unpins bR, but sets up mates using all five moves of the Berolina Pawn: Rf5/Re5/Rxd3/Rc5/Rd4+ 2 BP to f4/e3/xd3/c3/b4.

277 is for ladder points. Mate in 8 is an intimidating prospect, but here the bK must be kept under close control in the corner. Beginner and expert alike are invited to send me their solutions, with comments, by **1st May**.

3 (277) - Ronald TURNBULL
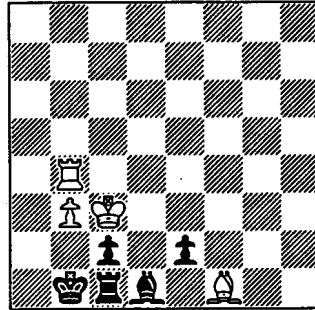
Berolina, mate in 8

In **Circe**, a piece captured is 'reborn' on its game-array square. Rs, Ns on the square of same colour as capture-square, Ps on the same file. If the rebirth-square is occupied, the piece leaves the board as in orthodox.

The best problem variant lets us carry over instincts and prejudices from orthochess, while allowing those instincts to be frequently confounded! Circe is such, and has been continuously entertaining for thirty years.

4 (278) - Ronald TURNBULL
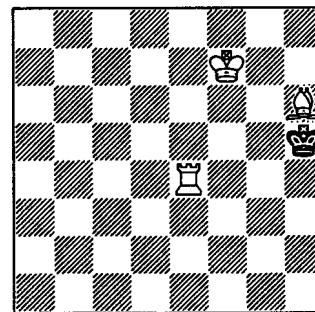
Circe, mate in 2

In diagram **278**, Black is in stalemate: 1...Kxh6?? is illegal self-check after rebirth of wB on c1. 1 Rh4+ isn't mate as the wR, captured on a dark square, is reborn on a1. If you can't solve this in five minutes, I, as column editor, am completely out of touch.

Diagram **5** solves by 1 Rg7 (no threat). 1...Rh6 etc 2 Ra7. 1...Rxh7/ Bxh7 (wR reborn a1) 2 Be7/Bb2. Diagram **6** is not so simple, but the name assures its quality. Do give it a bash if you're feeling confident.

5 - Michael MCDOWELL
The Problemist Supplement 1992
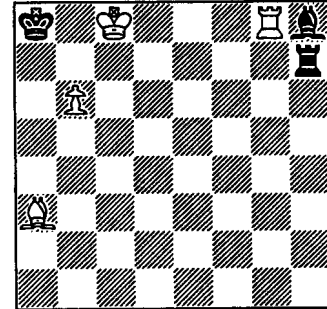
Circe, mate in 2

6 - Norman MACLEOD
Prize, BCM 1980-2
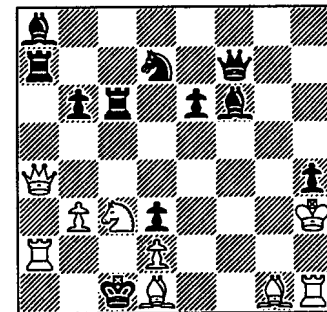
Circe, mate in 2

The keymove 1 Bg4! vacates rebirth square of wQ and so threatens 2 Qa3 (2...Rxa3?? now self-check after rebirth.) But White is not threatening mate by moving the Bg1: Black can reply by capturing wNc3! Black defends by attacking b3, for a capture will stop mate by putting the pawn back on b2. Alternatively, by capturing Nc3 to create a flight on b1. 1...Nc5/e5/Rxc3/Bxc3 2 Bd4/Bc5/ B*b6(bPb7)/Bf2. (Note: check is only assessed after all new rules have been applied. In the diagram, add bRh8: White may play 1 Kxh4(+bPh7), without self-check.)

7 (279) - Ronald TURNBULL
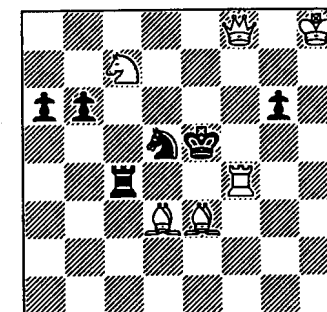
Circe, mate in 2

Diagram **279**, for ladder points, has a "give-and-take" key: an obvious advantage for White but also an obvious disadvantage.

In **Andernach Chess**, a unit that captures changes colour (not Kings).

8 - John RICE
The Problemist Supplement 1992
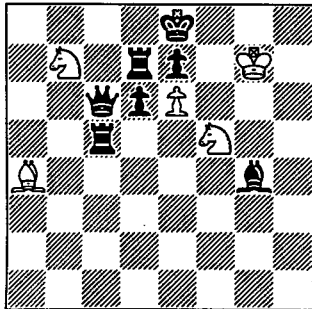
Andernach, mate in 2

Key 1 Kg8! threatens 2 Ng7. Simple defenses by capture: 1...Rxf5=wR/Bxf5=wB give mates by the new piece 2 Rf8/Bg6. 1...Rxb7=wR gives 2 Rb8 and, more subtly, 1...Qxb7=wQ gives 2 Qc8 (as 2...Rxd8=wR?? doesn't avert the mate.) The mechanism with the wB is called "half-pin".

9 - M. CAILLAUD, C. POISSON
1 Pr Andernach 1993

Andernach, mate in 6

A mate-in-six is usually unpleasantly tough, but not this one, which shows Andernach strategy. wQ cannot bash through to get at bK, so one of the Black blocks must be upgraded so that it can move away. 1 Qe4 c5 2 Qe1 e4 3 b8=R e3 4 Rb3 e2 5 Rxg3=bR! R any 6 Qg3 mate. Black rook cannot capture back because of self-check. Play after 1...c6 is given at the end.

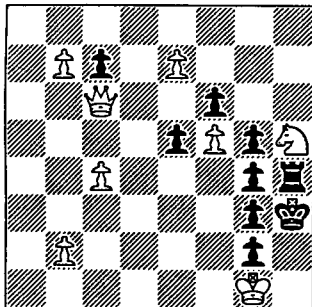Sorry the originals are all by me: composers sent me no directmates at all. There are more originals in the articles on Scorpions & Dragons (all but the last being moderately easy)

and on Turbulent Bishops (tough, for the experienced). Also for the experienced is the following Eureka: 1 b7 threatens 2 a8B. Black's only defence, a pawn-move, is followed by 2 a8N. (These moves exclude consequences such as rebirths.) What fairy form? Note that the Eureka in *VC* 30 was mate in two - sorry. I'll credit ladder point to solvers who re-do this before turning to the *VC* 30 solutions below. Composers: *VC* 32 will have some seriesmovers, maxi, grasshoppers, nightriders.

10 (280) - EUREKA!
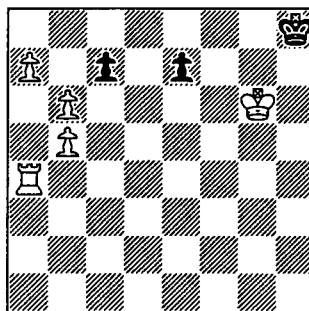
Mate in 3 (see text); what rules?

Solutions. 1 (Lasker): White wins by 1 Qd1 Kg3 2 Qh1 and now wK can approach - 2...Kf4 3 Kb7 Ke3 4 Qd1 etc.

9: 1 Qe4 c6 2 e8=B c5 3 Qe2 e4 4 Bc6 e3 5 Bxg2=bB! B any 6 Qg2.

VC **30**. Solvers: Mark Ridley, Aubrey Ingleton, Ronald Turnbull, George Jelliss, John Beasley, Cedric Lytton, Peter Fayers.

268 (Beasley) 1 Ke6>B Kd8>B 2 Rc1>B Ke8 3 Rc1. Reflected and board echo from set to actual - CCL. Really "through the Looking Glass", claims JDB.

269 (Turnbull) 1 Ra7>B (2 Ra8) 1...Ra1/a2/a3>B 2 RxR and 1...Ra5>B 2 Ra4! bR on a5 can't interpose on a5. Unsound: all solvers found "no solution", with Ra1 and Ra5 offered as refutations, but only CCL gave the correct error: after 1...Ra3>B 2 RxR>A Pxa3! Rotate 270° to correct. (*This was actually Ronald's original version, but I suggested it would be better rotated... Sorry. - JDB*)

270 (Beasley) 1 Na3 2 Nf6 Nd5 3 ...Nxa8 4 ...Nxa8 Nb6 d5 5 Pd3 Be3 Bxb6 Be3 Bc1. Captures on a8, a8, b6 b) 1 Nf3 2 Nc6 Rb8 3 ...Nxc6 Nxb8 4 d7-d5 ... Ng8xb8 5 d3 d4...Ng1. Captures c6, b8, b8. Ns on both sides have changed array squares! This technique fails in part a) as White would lack a fifth move for series 5. Excellent part b), neat twinning, just a pity couldn't have precise play as well - RT. JDB has an excellent touch with short Proof Games - CCL.

271 (Emmerson) 1 B<>B+ (forced!) Kb1 2 Bc1 Ka1 3 Bb2+ B<>B. Automatic but amusing - JDB. Not easy but most amusing - MR. No escape this time! AI.

272 (Bartel) 1 f2=N b6 2 Nd1 b7=Q b) 1 f2=B b6 2 Bg1 g7=R. The easy AUW where B has the minor promotions, but unusual new format for Wenigsteiner (4 units only) - CCL. Allumwandlung (all four promotions) conjured out of thin air - AI. I've seen Wenigsteiner AUW in Circe, Rois Transmutés also - RT.

273 (Bartel) 1 a2AN a7CA 2 ANd6 CAxd6 and 1 a2ZR a7FL 2 ZRg6 FLxg6 and 1 a2EQ a7GI 2 EQe6 GIxe6 and 1 Ka5 a7R+ 2 Kb6 Rxa3. Basic mechanism is 1 a2X a6Y; 2 Xz6 Yxz6 - PF. First 3 sols very satisfying and complete. Is there really a fourth? AI. Composer makes a virtue of necessity with one orthodox promotion where B must find 2 waiting moves. Fairy units depend on the geometry of controlling a7 and a5, but it's a new aspect and none the worse for that - CCL. One wouldn't wish to damage the excellent economy (every unit is thematic!) to eliminate 4th sol - RT.

274 (Richardson, RT) N to f1, d2, f3, g5, h3, f4, d3 (bBf4+), e5 (bQd3 mate) b) N to e3, c4, d2, b3, c1, d3, e4 (bQd3+) d5 (bBe4 mate) very geometrical, keymoves reversing the twinning - RT. Church and State swap roles - AI. Shame it couldn't be done with R instead of Q - PF. Brilliant pinmates. IR is having good ideas in this genre. Not too easy, either CCL. Best problem. Nice twin. Hope it's sound - GJ. (C-tested on assumption that if B has three or moves, then no solution can follow.) GJ asks "what if B has no F-m-L move?" Then B may make any move.

275 (Lorinc) 1 Qf5 Gb3 2 Gg6 Ge1 3 Bg4 Gh6 b) Ge4 Ge7 2 Ghe2 Gf7 3 Rg4 Gf1 Neat modal relationship between the solutions - GJ. Attractive idea (immobilisation of the hurdle) and a nicely built diag-orthog transformation - RT. A near masterpiece, excellent last breakfast before we are condemned to do without helpmates for a time - CCL.

276 a) is Sentinels: 1 Re4(+wP) Kh8(+bP) 2 Re8 b) orthodox, only spotted after publication of a) by composer Jacques Rotenberg.

242V (Raican): Spring 98, wK > e6. I've discarded the original solution! And it's too hard for me! I'm writing to Paul.

SCORES Max: 13

MR 1, GJ 8, AI 6½, CCL 9, PF 6.

Corrections etc: Paul Raican indicates that **249** (Crisan, *VC* 28) is anticipated by our former problem editor, S Pantazis: 3 PR USPB 1993, nKd5, helpstalemate in 4, Circe Sentinels.

News, notices, solutions

BCVS Notices

The **1999 AGM** will be held at Badgers Wood, Hascombe Road, Munstead, Godalming, Surrey at 1130 on **Saturday June 12**, and will be followed by a buffet lunch and the now traditional **rapid-play tournament** (probably finishing around 1630-1700). Do come and introduce yourselves. UK members will find a formal notice with this copy of *VC*.

Subscribers to *VC* are automatically members of the BCVS and have voting rights unless they choose to waive them, and any member who lacks a copy of the society's constitution is reminded that one can be obtained on application to the secretary.

News

The **1998 UK XiangQi** championship, held in London in December, was won by Chung Wen Sung from Northampton with 4½ out of 5, ahead of Wang Shunqi and Chen Fa Zuo.

Forthcoming events

Circular Chess (see pp 33-4). This year's Circular Chess World Championship will be held at Lincoln Castle on **Sunday May 16** at **1000** hrs (probably finishing around 1830). Contact David Reynolds, 11 North Parade, Lincoln LN1 1LB.

I think most of our readers who are problem fans also take a specialist problem magazine, but any who do not may wish to know that there is a series of spring **problemists' meetings**: the British at **Kingston, Surrey** from **April 9-12** (for details, contact John Rice, 9 Manor Crescent, Surbiton, Surrey), the German at **Andernach** on the Rhine from **May 13-16** (again contact John Rice), and the French at **Messigny** near Dijon from **May 21-24** (contact myself). The British meeting usually features a mixture of orthodox and "fairy" (variant) activity; the Andernach concentrates on fairies, and is very highly spoken of by those who attend; the Messigny features a mixture of orthodox and variant as far as the problems are concerned, but also offers a five-minute all-play-all variant tournament (and the cheese board at mealtimes is superb).

The colloquium **Board Games in Academia III** will be held in Florence from **April 12-15**. I have a bare announcement, which says that registrations should be addressed to Niek Neuwahl, PO Box 15, Bagno a Ripoli 50012, Italy, e-mail nffx@fol.it, but gives neither closing date nor price. This appears to be for general games enthusiasts rather than "chess" specialists, though I understand Ken Whyld will be giving a paper on an 18-century Italian chess manuscript.

Postal play

Ivan Dirmeik, PO Box 263498, Three Rivers, 1935, South Africa, would like to try **Alice Auction** chess (Alice and Auction combined, see *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* pp 3-5 and 13), and offers a formal challenge to a two-game match. Will anyone take him up?

AISE, NOST, and TC run **postal tournaments** in many variants. See page 39 for addresses.

Looking for a postal opponent? We shall be happy to print your ad here. Please state the variants of interest to you and your approximate playing strength.

Solutions

A **circular knight's tour** (p 34) is not as easy as it might seem. Much of the general theory of tours on a 4 x *n* rectangular board carries across (for an exposition, see *Chessics* 22 (1985), p 68); in particular, the board consists of 32 "edge" squares and 32 "internal" squares, every tour must start and finish on an edge square, every move but one must be between an edge and an internal square, and there is a single move between internal squares halfway through. A tour is possible between any two edge squares of opposite colour, but there is no re-entrant tour. Twiss starts and finishes on an outside edge:

1	32	51	46		17	2	47	50
52	45	16	31		48	33	18	3
15	30	53	44		19	4	49	**64**
54	43	14	29		34	63	20	5
13	28	55	42		21	6	35	62
56	41	12	27		36	61	22	7
11	26	57	40		23	8	37	60
58	39	10	25		38	59	24	9

Perhaps more elegant is to start and finish at the inner and outer ends of the same spoke. George Jelliss's general method for a 4 x *n* board (*n* ≥ 5) provides a way of doing this (see the article in *Chessics* cited above), but such a tour is necessarily asymmetric, and on a circular board we can achieve a symmetry impossible on an ordinary rectangular board. In the systematic "forward, across, forward, across" tour below, the point midway between 22 and 43 acts as the "centre" of the tour: if we go a certain number of squares "clockwise" and "out", and the same number of squares "anticlockwise" and "in", the resulting numbers always add up to 65:

34	45	24	3		56	35	14	25
13	2	55	44		15	4	57	46
54	33	12	23		36	47	26	5
1	**22**	**43**	**64**		27	16	37	58
42	53	32	11		48	**59**	**6**	17
21	10	63	52		7	28	49	38
62	41	20	31		60	39	18	29
9	30	51	40		19	8	61	50

The point midway between 59 and 6 acts as a centre in the same way.

A tour symmetrical about such a pair of "centres" is possible whenever the starting and finishing squares are on opposite edges. Here is one in which the knight goes round seven and a half times, finishing on the spoke diametrically opposite to that on which it started:

1	18	43	60		9	26	51	34
52	35	10	27		42	**59**	8	17
19	2	61	44		25	16	33	50
36	53	28	11		58	**41**	**24**	7
3	**20**	**45**	62		15	32	49	40
54	37	12	29		48	57	6	23
21	4	63	46		31	14	39	56
38	55	30	13		**64**	47	22	5

This time the "centres" are midway between 20 and 45 and between 41 and 24.

I do not expect any of this to be original.

Dragons and scorpions (p 44). **3, 4, 6**, are for ladder points. **7**: 1 DRe6 Kh8 (1...Kh7 allows mate in 7) 2 Kg5 (oddly, 2 Kg6 takes a move longer) Kh7. This position, with the enemy king boxed in the corner, is the key to all won DR vs K endgames. wK can now lose a move by visiting h5 - this is what makes the position winnable. 3 Kh5 Kh8 4 Kh6 Kg8 5 Kg6 Kh8 6 Kf7 Kh7 7 DRg5+ Kh8 8 DRg6 mate.

8: 1 Ka4 Kc6 (tempo!) 2 Rb6+ Kxb6, 1 Ka5 DRc3 2 Rb7+ Kxb7, 1 Ka6 DRc4 2 Rb8 Kxb8, a delicious triple echo.