Variant Chess

Founded 1990

The magazine to broaden your chess horizons

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Philatelic Variants - *by David Pritchard*

The first postage stamps to feature chess were a set of three issued by the U.S.S.R. in 1948 to celebrate the World Chess Championship in Moscow of that year. Since then, over a hundred countries have produced stamps with chess as the central theme - including Great Britain: the 11p value of 1976 depicts a woodcut from Caxton's *The Game and Playe of Chesse.*

The first stamp to feature a variant (xiangqi) was issued by China in 1955 with another design in 1959. Xiangqi was also the the subject of stamps from Taiwan (1984 and 1994) and, curiously, St. Vincent (1994) which shows two women playing the game. Changgi (Korean chess) was illustrated on a stamp of South Korea (1985) and another from North Korea (1995).

Other variants to have appeared on stamps are shogi (Japan 1994) and the Courier game (Paraguay 1978). The 27 peseta stamp of Spain issued in 1992 shows Great Chess from Alfonso X's *Book of Chess.* Handsomely produced sets featuring the Alfonso book have been issued by a number of countries: the Yemen (1967), Hungary (1974), Nicaragua (1975), Paraguay (1978), Laos (1984) and Afghanistan (1989). Designs have included Shatranj and Great Chess. It must be admitted that, with the exception of Hungary, these countries have in the past marketed many stamps aimed at the collector's market with the aim of raising revenue, and are not treated seriously by philatelists. Chess pieces, rather than chess games, have appeared on stamps of many countries. Some of the pieces can be linked to early variants. A stamp from Vietnam depicts a 16th century king and rook from sittuyin (Burmese chess) whilst other stamps in the same series include an early Russian rook (boat) and a king from India (elephant).

Variant Chess is the journal of the British Chess Variants Society

LOSING CHESS

THE FIRST UNOFFICIAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

by John Beasley

2001 saw the delightfully named "First Unofficial Losing Chess World Championship". This was organized by an *ad hoc* team consisting of Johan Bosman, Fabrice Liardet, Lenny Taelman, and Vincent van der Bilt, and took place at Utrecht over the four days July 26-29. The games were played at the excellent premises of the Netherlands Bridge Federation, and were at the entirely serious rate of two hours per player per game. There was some sponsorship, mainly from the Utrecht chess café "Ledig Erf", which created a reasonable prize fund, but there was no support for travel or accommodation. Losing Chess has an enthusiastic following on the Internet and most of the best European players were present, but understandably none of the Americans had travel(l)ed.

The championship was won by Tim Remmel of the Netherlands, who beat Fabrice Liardet of Switzerland in a play-off. Full scores (7 rounds):

1	Tim Remmel	NED	6
2	Fabrice Liardet	SWI	6
3	Andrzej Nagorko	POL	4½
4	Johan Bosman	NED	4½
5	Vincent van der Bilt	NED	4
6	Lenny Taelman	BEL	4
7	Peter Wood	GBR	4
8	Fredrik Sandström	SWE	3
9	Marten Wortel	NED	3
10	Johan Snuverink	NED	3
11	Kim Meulenbroek	NED	3
12	Dirk Kraaijpoel	NED	3
13	Jaap Kamminga	NED	1
14	John Beasley	GBR	1

The special prize for the best game was shared between Remmel-Liardet and Wortel-Bosman, and the prize for the best ending went to Sandström-Liardet. The rules for a tie stipulated a two-game play-off at 15 minutes per player per game, the previous individual result to decide the winner if these finished 1-1. In the event, Tim Remmel won the first play-off game, and as he had also won their previous game the second was not played.

Results round by round:

Re	+Sn	+Sa	+Me	+Li	+Na	-Bo	+vB
Li	+Be	+Wl	+Na	-Re	+vB	+Sa	+Ta
Na	+Ta	+vB	-Li	+Sa	-Re	+Wd	=Bo
Bo	-Wl	+Be	+Ka	-vB	+Kr	+Re	=Na
vB	+Wd	-Na	+Wl	+Bo	-Li	+Kr	-Re
Ta	-Na	-Wd	+Sn	+Me	+Wl	+Ka	-Li
Wd	-vB	+Ta	-Sa	+Sn	+Ka	-Na	+Be
Sa	+Ka	-Re	+Wd	-Na	+Me	-Li	-Kr
Wl	+Bo	-Li	-vB	+Ka	-Ta	-Sn	+Me
Sn	-Re	-Me	-Ta	-Wd	+Be	+Wl	+Ka
Me	bye	+Sn	-Re	-Ta	-Sa	+Be	-Wl
Kr	½	-Ka	½	+Be	-Bo	-vB	+Sa
Ka	-Sa	+Kr	-Bo	-Wl	-Wd	-Ta	-Sn
Be	-Li	-Bo	bye	-Kr	-Sn	-Me	-Wd

Dirk Kraaijpoel's absences from rounds 1 and 3 were for unavoidable professional reasons and he was credited with half a point for each round; the player left without a pairing for the round received the normal bye point. My own results were notable only for their consistency, but Peter Wood saved the reputation both of the British and of the older generation with an excellent 4/7. We may note that everyone except for Peter, Kim Meulenbroek, and myself appeared to be a regular Internet player.

A good example of what we had to contend with, and of the way the game has developed since the classic 1924 and 1954 games looked at in *VC* 35, is given by my first-round game against Fabrice Liardet. Fabrice opened 1.e3 e6 2.Qf3, which I hadn't played before, and 3.Qxb7 will be unpleasant. I temporized with 2...Ba3, which at least saved me from having to worry about b4 later on, and Fabrice replied 3.Nxa3 reinstating the threat. I was subsequently told that 3...b5 was now necessary, but I already had to calculate the consequences of two possible captures by my opponent and I didn't want to give him the option of two more. At any rate, I played 3...b6, and 4.Qxa8 Ne7 5.Qxb8 Ba6 6.Qxd8 Kxd8 7.Bxa6 Nc8 8.Bxc8 Kxc8 gave the position shown in the next column.

Unless White blunders, Black is now almost certainly lost. His position is completely passive, and White will gradually strip away his pawns and force his rook into the open. By carefully doing nothing, I managed to

hold out until move 36, but I suspect that the result was never in doubt and objectively the time might have been better spent by resigning at once and retreating to the bar. That said, readers who play through the rest of the game will find an excellent example of how to exploit a material advantage against a passive opponent.
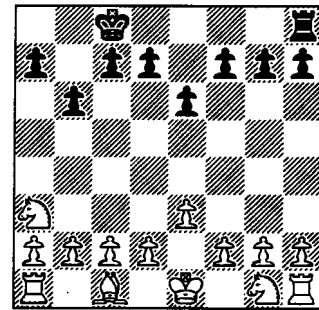
My own games apart, the tournament seems to have generated some of the finest Losing Chess ever played, and I have suggested to Paul that we print the games in full. The first three rounds therefore follow, plus the first game of round 4, and the remaining games will appear in *VC* 40. To help readers quickly find the games most likely to be rewarding, the names of players who scored over 50% are in **bold**. Those not wanting to wait for *VC* 40 will find the games in full, less two which appear not to have been recorded, on Fabrice Liardet's new web site (www.pion.ch). The two games which shared the best game prize are in the present selection; the best ending is not, but readers will find it on Fabrice's web site with extensive annotations.

Round 1

Taelman - Nagorko: 1.e3 b6 2.Ba6 Nxa6 3.b3 e6 4.Ba3 Bxa3 5.Nxa3 Nb8 6.h4 Qxh4 7.Rxh4 b5 8.Nxb5 a5 9.Nxc7 e5 10.Nxe8 h6 0-1

Remmel - Snuverink: 1.e3 a6 2.Bxa6 Rxa6 3.Qf3 Rxa2 4.Rxa2 c6 5.Qxc6 Nxc6 6.b4 Nxb4 7.Ra4 Nxc2 8.e4 1-0

Wortel - Bosman (*joint best game*): 1.c4 b5 2.cxb5 e6 3.b3 Ba6 4.bxa6 Nxa6 5.Ba3 Bxa3 6.Nxa3 Nb8 7.e3 Na6 8.Bxa6 h5 9.Qxh5 Rxh5 10.Bd3 Rxh2 11.Rxh2 Ne7 12.Bf5 Nxf5 13.Rh8 Nxe3 14.Rxe8 Qxe8 15.dxe3 Qh8 16.Kd2 e5 17.Ne2 Qh3 18.gxh3 g5 19.h4 gxh4 20.Rg1 Rg8 21.Rxg8

a5 22.b4 axb4 23.Ke1 bxa3 24.Nf4 exf4 25.exf4 f6 26.f5 d5 27.f4 1-0

Liardet - Beasley: 1.e3 e6 2.Qf3 Ba3 3.Nxa3 b6 4.Qxa8 Ne7 5.Qxb8 Ba6 6.Qxd8 Kxd8 7.Bxa6 Nc8 8.Bxc8 Kxc8 9.d4 e5 10.dxe5 d6 11.exd6 cxd6 12.Nb1 Kd7 13.Kd2 Ke6 14.Ne2 Kd7 15.Kd3 Ra8 16.Nd2 Rh8 17.b3 Rf8 18.Nc4 b5 19.Nxd6 Kxd6 20.c4 bxc4 21.bxc4 Ke6 22.a4 Ra8 23.Nc3 f5 24.g4 fxg4 25.Nd5 Kxd5 26.cxd5 g3 27.fxg3 a6 28.Kc4 Rg8 29.d6 g6 30.Ra2 Rh8 31.Ba3 Rg8 32.a5 Rh8 33.Rha1 Rg8 34.h4 Rh8 35.e4 Rg8 36.h5 1-0

Kamminga - Sandstrom: 1.e3 e6 2.Be2 Ba3 3.Nxa3 h5 4.Bxh5 Rxh5 5.Qxh5 b6 6.Qxf7 Kxf7 7.Nb1 g6 8.g4 Ne7 9.b3 Kg7 10.Ke2 Ng8 11.g5 Qxg5 12.Kf1 Qxg1 13.Kxg1 Ba6 14.d3 Bxd3 15.cxd3 d5 16.Nd2 Nd7 17.e4 dxe4 18.dxe4 Nc5 0-1

van der Bilt - Wood: 1.e3 b5 2.Bxb5 Bb7 3.Bxd7 Bxg2 4.Bxe8 Bxh1 5.Bxf7 Qxd2 6.Bxd2 Bd5 7.Bxg8 Bxa2 8.Rxa2 Rxg8 9.Rxa7 Rxa7 10.Ba5 Rxa5 11.Qd5 Rxd5 12.Kd1 Rxd1 13.Nh3 Rxb1 14.b4 Rxb4 15.c4 Rxc4 16.e4 Rxe4 17.Nf4 Rxf4 18.f3 Rxf3 19.h3 Rxh3 1-0

Round 2

Nagorko - van der Bilt: 1.e3 b6 2.Ba6 Nxa6 3.Qh5 c5 4.Qxh7 Rxh7 5.g3 Rxh2 6.Rxh2 Nh6 7.Rxh6 gxh6 8.Nh3 c4 9.c3 Nb4 10.cxb4 c3 11.bxc3 a5 12.bxa5 bxa5 13.Kd1 Ra7 14.Kc2 Ba6 15.c4 Bxc4 16.Nc3 Bxa2 17.Nxa2 Qc7 18.g4 1-0

Sandstrom - Remmel: 1.c4 e6 2.c5 Bxc5 3.b3 Bxf2 4.Kxf2 Qh4 5.g3 Qxh2 6.Rxh2 Kd8 7.Rxh7 Rxh7 8.Nh3 Rxh3 9.Bxh3 c5 10.Bxe6 dxe6 11.b4 cxb4 12.Na3 bxa3 13.Bxa3 Kc7 14.Bc5 Nc6 15.Bxa7 Nxa7 16.Qb3 Ne7 17.Qxe6 fxe6 18.Rh1 Ng6 19.Ra1 Bd7 20.g4 b5 21.Rf1 b4 22.a3 bxa3 23.e4 Nf8 24.d4 e5 25.dxe5 Bxg4 26.Rd1 Bxd1 27.e6 Nxe6 28.Kf1 Nf4 29.Kg1 Rh8 30.e5 Rh2 31.Kxh2 Nh3 32.Kxh3 Bg4 33.Kxg4 g5 34.Kxg5 a2 35.e6 a1R 36.e7 Rb1 37.Kf6 Nb5 38.Kf5 Rc1 39.e8N Nc3 40.Nxc7 Nb5 0-1

Wortel - Liardet: 1.c4 e6 2.c5 Bxc5 3.d4 Bxd4 4.Qxd4 Qg5 5.Bxg5 Kd8 6.Qxg7 e5 7.Bxd8 a6 8.Qxh7 Rxh7 9.Bxc7 Rxh2 10.Bxe5 Rxg2 11.Bxb8 Rxb8 12.Bxg2 d5 13.Bxd5 b6 0-1

Kraaijpoel - Kamminga: 0-1

Snuverink - Meulenbroek: 1.e3 b6 2.Ba6 Nxa6 3.Qe2 Nb8 4.h4 Ba6 5.Qxa6 Nxa6 6.Nc3 Nc5 7.b3 Nxb3 8.axb3 Rb8 9.Rxa7 Rb7 10.Rxb7 b5 11.Rxc7 Qxc7 12.Nxb5 Qxc2 13.Na7 Qxd2 14.Kxd2 g5 15.hxg5 Kd8 16.Rxh7 Rxh7 17.g6 fxg6 18.g4 Rh3 19.Nxh3 Bh6 20.Kd3 Bxe3 21.fxe3 g5 22.Nxg5 Kc8 23.Nxc8 d5 24.Nxe7 Nxe7 0-1

Beasley - Bosman: 1.h3 Nh6 2.e3 b6 3.Ba6 Nxa6 4.Qe2 Nc5 5.b3 Nxb3 6.cxb3 Ba6 7.Qxa6 Qb8 8.Qxa7 Rxa7 9.Na3 Rxa3 10.Bxa3 Qa8 11.Bxe7 Qxg2 12.Bxf8 Rxf8 13.Rh2 Qxg1 14.Ke2 Qxf2 15.Kxf2 Ng4 0-1

Wood - Taelman: 1.g3 g6 2.g4 b6 3.b3 Ba6 4.d3 Bxd3 5.Qxd3 d6 6.Qxd6 cxd6 7.Bh6 Bxh6 8.g5 Bxg5 9.f4 Bxf4 10.e3 Bxh2 11.Rxh2 g5 12.Rxh7 Rxh7 13.Ba6 Nxa6 14.Nh3 Rxh3 15.Kf1 Rxe3 16.b4 Nxb4 17.a4 Nxc2 18.Kg2 Nxa1 19.Nc3 1-0

Round 3

Meulenbroek - Remmel: 1.c4 c6 2.g3 Nh6 3.b3 g6 4.d3 Qa5 5.Bxh6 Bxh6 6.Nd2 Bxd2 7.Qxd2 Qxa2 8.Rxa2 g5 9.Qxg5 Kd8 10.Qxe7 Kxe7 11.Rxa7 Rxa7 12.Kd2 c5 13.b4 cxb4 14.g4 Rf8 15.e3 Nc6 16.Ne2 h5 17.gxh5 d5 18.cxd5 b6 19.dxc6 Bh3 0-1

Bosman - Kamminga: 1.e3 b6 2.Qh5 Ba6 3.Bxa6 Nxa6 4.Qxh7 Rxh7 5.b4 Rxh2 6.Rxh2 Nxb4 7.a4 Nxc2 8.e4 Nxa1 9.e5 d6 10.exd6 cxd6 11.Rh6 gxh6 12.a5 bxa5 13.d3 h5 14.Nh3 h4 15.Kd2 Nc2 16.Kxc2 Bh6 17.Bxh6 Nxh6 18.f4 Ng8 19.Nd2 d5 20.f5 f6 21.Ng5 fxg5 22.f6 exf6 23.g3 hxg3 24.Kd1 Kd7 25.Ne4 dxe4 26.dxe4 f5 27.exf5 Nf6 28.Ke1 Ke6 29.fxe6 Qd1 30.Kxd1 g2 31.e7 Rf8 32.exf8K Ng4 33.Ke8 a6 34.Kd7 g1B 35.Kd6 a4 36.Kc5 1-0

van der Bilt - Wortel: 1.e3 c5 2.Bb5 c4 3.Bxd7 Nxd7 4.c3 e6 5.a3 Bxa3 6.bxa3 Nc5 7.a4 Nxa4 8.Rxa4 Qxd2 9.Kxd2 h5 10.Qxh5 Rxh5 11.Rxc4 Rxh2 12.Rxh2 Kd8 13.Rxc8 Kxc8 14.Ne2 Kc7 15.Rh1 Nh6 16.Rxh6 gxh6 17.Kc2 e5 18.f4 exf4 19.exf4 Kd6 20.Nd2 Rf8 21.c4 Kc7 22.Nf3 Kd7 23.Kd3 Ke6 24.Nd2 Kd7 25.Kd4 Kc7 26.Ke5 b5 27.cxb5 a6 28.bxa6 Kb7 29.axb7 Ra8 30.bxa8R f5 31.Kxf5 h5 32.Nd4 h4 33.g3 hxg3 34.Ra6 g2 35.Ra7 g1N 36.Ne2 Nxe2 37.Ke6 Nxc1 38.Nb3 Nxb3 39.Ra5 Nxa5 40.Ke5 1-0

Wood - Sandstrom: 1.g3 b6 2.b3 g5 3.h4 gxh4 4.Rxh4 Bh6 5.Rxh6 Nxh6 6.g4 Nxg4 7.Nh3 Nxf2 8.Nxf2 e6 9.e3 b5 10.Bxb5 Rf8 11.Bxd7 Bxd7 12.Qf3 Ba4 13.Qxf7 Rxf7 14.bxa4 Rxf2 15.Kxf2 Qxd2 16.Nxd2 Nd7 17.Rb1 Kf7 18.Rb8 Nxb8 19.Nb1 Nd7 20.Nc3 h6 21.Nd5 exd5 22.c4 dxc4 23.Kf3 Kf6 24.Kg3 Nf8 25.Ba3 Nh7 26.Be7 Kxe7 27.Kf4 c3 28.e4 c2 29.e5 Kf8 30.Kg5 hxg5 31.e6 c1R 32.e7 Kxe7 33.a5 Rb8 34.a4 Rf1 35.a6 Nf8 36.a5 Rb7 37.axb7 a6 38.b8B g4 39.Bxc7 g3 40.Bxg3 Kd6 41.Bxd6 Rg1 42.Bxf8 Rg7 43.Bxg7 0-1

Liardet - Nagorko: 1.e3 b6 2.Qf3 Bb7 3.Qxb7 g6 4.Qxb8 Rxb8 5.c3 e6 6.Be2 Bb4 7.cxb4 Qh4 8.Bd1 Qxb4 9.b3 Qxb3 10.Bxb3 Ke7 11.Bxe6 Kxe6 12.Ne2 g5 13.f4 gxf4 14.exf4 Ne7 15.f5 Kxf5 16.Ng1 Kg6 17.Kf2 Ra8 18.Kf3 a5 19.g4 Kg7 20.d3 Rhe8 21.Bh6 Kxh6 22.g5 Kxg5 23.Kg4 Kxg4 24.Nh3 Kxh3 25.Rg1 Kxh2 26.d4 1-0

Taelman - Snuverink: 1.e3 e6 2.Ba6 Nxa6 3.h4 Qxh4 4.Rxh4 h5 5.Rxh5 Rxh5 6.Qxh5 g5 7.Qxf7 Kxf7 8.b4 Nxb4 9.a4 Nxc2 10.e4 Nxa1 11.f4 gxf4 12.g3 fxg3 13.Kf2 gxf2 14.Na3 fxg1K 15.Nc2 Nxc2 16.d4 Nxd4 17.Ba3 Bxa3 18.a5 Ne7 19.a6 bxa6 20.e5 Kf6 21.exf6 d6 22.fxe7 1-0

Round 4

Remmel - Liardet *(joint best game)*: 1.e3 e6 2.b4 Bxb4 3.Qg4 Bxd2 4.Qxg7 Bxe3 5.Bxe3 c5 6.Bxc5 b6 7.Bxb6 Qxb6 8.Qxh7 Rxh7 9.Nc3 Qxf2 10.Kxf2 Rxh2 11.Rxh2 Nh6 12.Rxh6 Ba6 13.Bxa6 Nxa6 14.Rxe6 fxe6 15.Na4 Kf7 16.Nb2 Kf6 17.g4 Nc7 18.Ne2 a5 19.Kf3 d5 20.Ng3 Ke7 21.g5 Na6 22.Nh5 Kf8 23.Ng3 a4 24.Nxa4 Nc5 25.Nxc5 Rxa2 26.Nxe6 Rxa1 27.Nxf8 Rh1 28.Nxh1 d4 29.c3 dxc3 30.g6 c2 31.Nd7 c1K 32.Kg4 Kd2 33.g7 Ke3 34.Nf2 Kxf2 35.Kf5 Kg2 36.Kg6 Kf3 37.g8R Ke3 38.Kf7 Kd3 39.Ke6 Ke3 40.Nb6 Kf2 41.Rd8 Kf3 42.Kd6 Ke3 43.Nc8 Kd3 44.Ne7 Ke3 45.Rc8 Kf3 46.Rb8 Ke3 47.Re8 Kf3 48.Kc5 Ke2 49.Kd5 Kd2 50.Rf8 Kc2 51.Nf5 Kb2 52.Rf7 Kc2 53.Ra7 Kb2 54.Rd7 Kc2 55.Rd6 Kd1 56.Rb6 Kc1 57.Re6 Kc2 58.Re4 Kb2 59.Rd4 Ka2 60.Rc4 Kb1 61.Rd4 Ka2 62.Ne3 Ka1 63.Rd3 Ka2 64.Rd4 Ka1 65.Kc4 1-0

(to be continued)

MODERN COURIER CHESS

by Paul Byway

For this article, and for the first time, I have synthesised a more or less satisfactory diagram font for Modern Courier Chess. I use the freeware True Type fonts designed by Armando H. Marroquin and available from the web site of the Nørresundby Chess Club (well worth a look!). The basic font is **Chess Adventurer***, with additions from* **Chess Leipzig** *(rook and bishop) and* **Chess Condal** *(courier).*
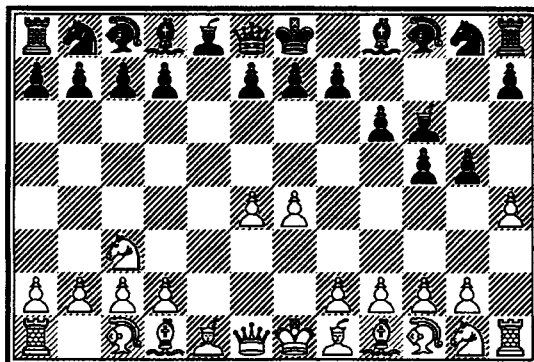
White: Paul Byway   **Black**: Roy Talbot

1.	g2-g4	e7-e5
2.	e2-e3	i7-i6
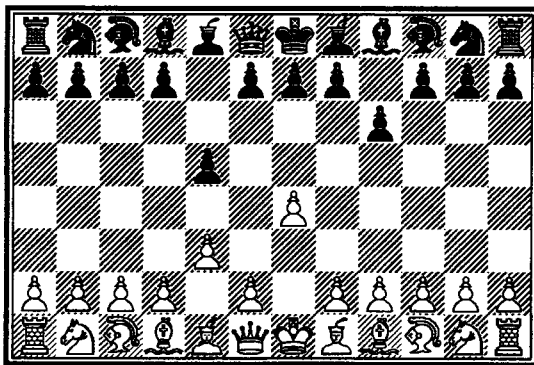
White intends to occupy the centre and 'hope that something will turn up'. Black's moves are individually good, but at the moment I don't see how to combine them in a coherent plan of development.
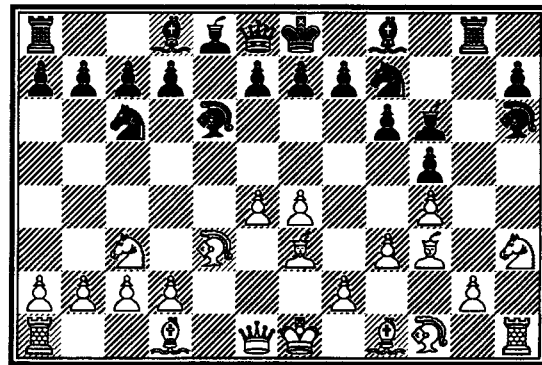
3.	f2-f4	e5xf4
4.	e3xf4	j7-j5
5.	Nb1-c3	k7-k5
6.	12-14	Fh8-j6

I think Black should have played ...k5-k4 - but then, perhaps White shouldn't have played 12-14.
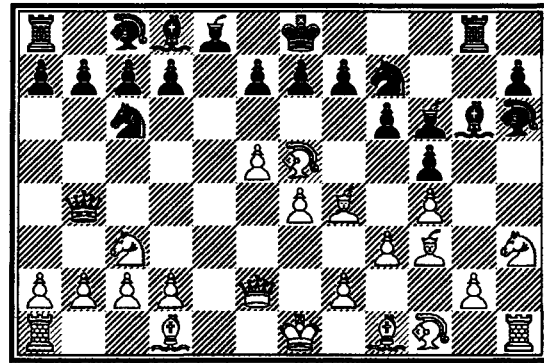
7.	14xk5	Fj6xk5
8.	Nk1-13	Fk5-j6
9.	j2-j4	Cj8-16
10.	i2-i3	Nk8-i7
11.	Cc1-e3	R18-k8
12.	Fh1-j3	Nb8-c6

|		
13.	Fe1-g3	Cc8-e6?

The biggest difference in the positions here is White's pair of central pawns, and now he intends to cash in.

14.	f4-f5	Ce6-c8
15.	Fg3-h4	Bi8-k6
16.	Ce3-g5	Qf8-c5+
17.	Qf1-f2	Qc5-b4

Things are not going well for Black. He lost two tempi and then made a poor bishop move, which had the unfortunate side effect of taking the knight's last escape square. When White wins it for a courier he will have a small material advantage. In addition the White queen has come, without loss of tempo, on to the same diagonal as the fers at h4 - with effects that will soon be seen.
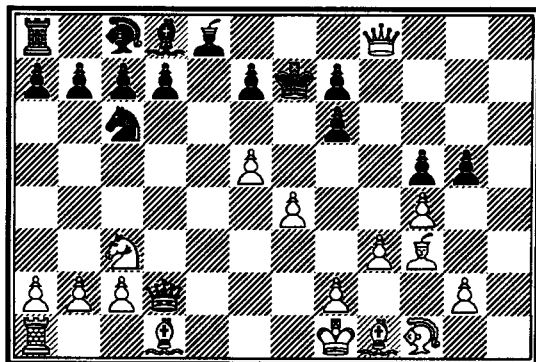
18.	Cg5xi7	Fj6xi7
19.	N13-k5	C16-j6
20.	Fh4-i5	17-16
21.	Fi5xj6	16xk5
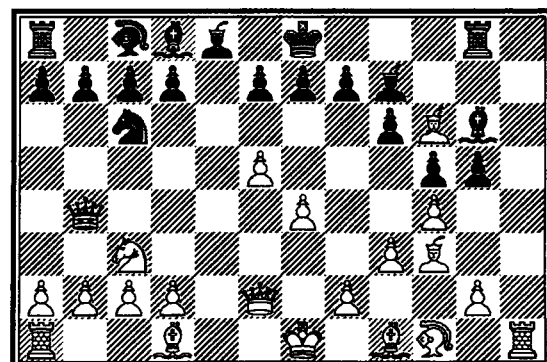
|		
22.	Fj6xi7	i6-i5

The diagonal march of the fers has generated significant threats. Here, instead of the pseudo-active ...i5, Black should cut his losses with ...Qd4.

23.	Qf2xi5	Qb4-d4+
24.	Kg1-h1	Qd4xd2
25.	Rl1-l8	Rk8-i8
26.	Rl8xi8+	Bk6xi8
27.	Fi7-h6	g7xh6
28.	Qi5xi8+	Kg8-g7

Complete destruction of the kingside. It's time to bring up the reserves.

29.	Cj1-h3	Qd2-e1+
30.	Kh1-i2	k5-k4
31.	Ch3xj5	k4xj3+
32.	k2xj3	Qe1-k7
33.	Bi1-14!	f7-f6
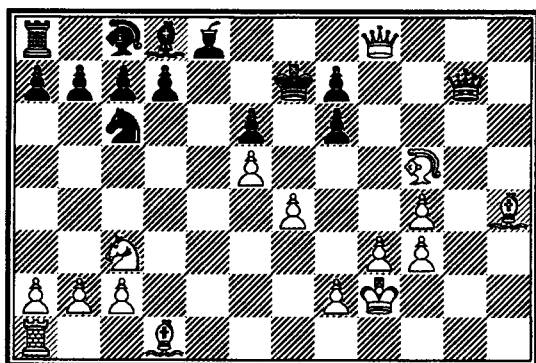
34.	Qi8-h8+	Kg7-f7
35.	Nc3-d5	Qk7-k2+
36.	Bl4-j2	Resigns

The game contains plenty of errors. Nevertheless, we can learn quite a lot from it. **(i)** In the opening 1.g4 e5 2.e3 looks like a reasonable sequence (control of h5!); maybe Black should try 2. ...f5. Alternatively 1. ...i5 and 2. ...j6 could be tried; the black bishop has two good diagonals and can be supported on j7 by ...Nl6. **(ii)** The central pawn pair retains its power in MCC. Whether there is enough counterplay to one side or the other of it remains an open question. **(iii)** There's a good example of the St. George attack (a line piece supports and propels a single-stepper) disrupting the opponent's position. Almost always seen in chess in the form of a rook supporting an advancing pawn.

LOONEY VARIANTS

by David Pritchard

But not quite as crazy as the above title might suggest - a couple of new commercial variants from Looney Industries Inc. of Maryland, U.S.A.; chief executive: Andrew Looney. Both variants share a unique theme (well, certainly unique to me). A piece is controlled by the player in whose half of the board it stands regardless of its initial affiliation.

MONOCHROME CHESS

Invented by Andrew Looney (copyright 1996). The men are set up on the board in the usual way except that they are all of the same colour (white or black, your choice). The inventor claims that this violates an age-old convention (probable) and that the game will confound and befuddle onlookers (without a doubt).

A piece is controlled by the player in whose half of the board it stands, as stated above. For example if, as first player, you have a pawn on e4 and move it to e5 it now belongs to the opponent and reverses direction.

Pieces are allocated values and the object of the game is to have the most points, in terms of pieces captured, when the game comes to an end. The end? That is when one half of the board is empty or when the players agree that there is no point in further play.

The king has no royal powers and may be captured like any other piece. However, castling is permitted but the rule that neither piece may have previously moved or, of course, that the king is in or passes through check, are abolished.

Values: King=10 points, Queen=8, Rook=5, Bishop=4, Knight=3, Pawn=1 point. Curious play is the rule. If you make a capture (you can only capture men in the opponent's half of the board) the opponent cannot recapture but gains a piece as the capturing man automatically changes sides. One wrinkle: advance a piece into the opponent's territory in order to capture it next move. Also, if you are ahead in points, move your last piece across to end the game. Understandably, you may not immediately reverse an opponent's move (picture a king being moved back and forth over the centre line - ten points at stake, probably a winning margin).

MARTIAN CHESS

Also by Albert Looney (1999). This is part of a commercial package which need not concern us. Played on a normal chessboard between two or four players (partnerships possible). Each player has nine pieces in the form of cones, three each of three different sizes. These represent respectively queens, drones and pawns. Set up: Qa1,b1,a2; Da3,b2,c1; Pb3,c2,c3 and similarly in the other corners. All men are of the same colour. You only control the pieces in your quadrant (in the two player game, only half the board is used.). Otherwise play and objective as in Monochrome Chess.

Values: Queen=3 points, Drone=2 points, Pawn=1 point.

CASTLES IN THE AIR

by Jed Stone

The BCVS Correspondence Games Section

Hello and welcome to the second opening of the Castle doors. For those of you who missed the first part of the show, behind this modest contribution to the world of literacy lies the passage way to the postally beating heart of the British Chess Variant Society. It's the command centre for its correspondence games section. I'm afraid it doesn't look much at the moment but the builders have only just left and the decorators are not due till at least a week Saturday. We are but a little acorn with ambitions to be a big tree. Please hop on and come along for the ride.

The initial article in VC 38 provoked the expected moderate response from a few people with differing interests covering a wide variety of chess variants. The bits and pieces have been pooled together and melded into something resembling organisation. I've actually managed to stick together two ladder leagues and, thanks to Peter Fayers, have a simple set of basic rules to go with them. They're rickety and a little short but they are there and ready to go.

Everything else has been packed onto the Notice Board. The first section lists the possible competitions and those who expressed an interest in playing in them. When enough people have signed up they will be upgraded to the 'active list'. The second section shows the games that someone has expressed an interest in. They possibly don't want to play in a formal event but may like a friendly game or two. If you see anything on there that you fancy trying just drop me a line. You can join any of the lists or challenge anyone on a list to a game of whatever they are sitting next to, or put forward an interest or competition of your own and see if there are any takers. If enough interest is shown in any competition I'll upgrade it to the 'active list'. If there is no interest after a few issues of Variant Chess I'll downgrade or remove it.

As we are playing by e-mail as well as by post I have put a bracket where relevant with an 'e' for e-mail and a 'm' for postal play next to the player or competition. An 'e/m' means willing to play by either and '?' means unspecified. If any of the information is out of date or wrong please let me know as soon as possible and I will change the record. This is all very *ad hoc* at the moment. As more players join I'll tighten up procedures and set the ground rules for competitions etc. There is no point in doing so at the moment as it may have to be changed in the near future.

Right, that's about it for now. The whole thing is being run through the pages of Variant Chess for the time being: when it gathers momentum I shall be issuing e-mail and postal versions of *The Castle* on a monthly basis again, but at the moment it's not really worthwhile. So first we have the rules for the Ladder Leagues and then on to the lists

themselves. Comments on these are welcome from anyone. Nothing as yet is carved in stone: there is room for adjustment and, of course, room for more players.

Contact :-

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E-mail: jedstone@talk21.com

Ladder Leagues

1) Players may challenge any player up to three places above or below them.
2) New comers may challenge any of the bottom three players.
3) If the lower player wins he moves above his opponent.
4) If the higher player wins he moves up one place.
5) Only one game per opponent may be registered as a league game.
6) Players may have more than one game on the go at a time. The results are processed in the order in which they arrive.

Active List

Alice Chess

Peter Fayers	(?)
Peter Coast	(m)
Jed Stone	(e/m)
George Davis	(m)

Games underway: J. Stone v G Davis

Hostage Chess

Peter Fayers	(?)
John Leslie	(e)
Peter Coast	(m)

Notice Board

Competitions

Alice KO competition(?)
> *Peter Coast, George Jelliss, Jed stone, Ivan Dirmeik*

Dynamo Chess KO competition (e)
> *George Jelliss*

Hostage All Play All(m)
> *Peter Coast*

Hostage All Play All(e)
> *John Leslie*

Interests

Avalanche Chess(m)
> *Peter Coast*

Hexagonal Chess(m)
> *Robert Reynolds*

XiangQi(m)
> *Robert Reynolds*

Modern Courier Chess(?)
> *Paul Byway, Robert Reynolds, Roy Talbot*

BCVS HOSTAGE 2000

by David Pritchard

The Hostage Chess tournament has now concluded. The players seem to fall into two groups. The first group are all prizewinners, with the worthy winner being Peter Coast.

1	Peter Coast	5
2=	John Leslie	4
2=	Allan Brown	4
4	Paul Yearout	2½
5=	George Jelliss	2
5=	Jed Stone	2
7	Ivan Dirmeik	1

Games from the tournament

White: A. Brown **Black:** G. Jelliss
BCVS Hostage 2000

1.	e2-e4	Ng8-f6
2.	e4-e5	Nf6-d5
3.	d2-d4	c7-c5
4.	c2-c4	c5xd4
5.	c4xd5	Qd8-a5+
6.	Bc1-d2	Qa5xd5
7.	Ng1-f3	b7-b5
8.	Bd2-e3	Qd5-e4
9.	Qd1xd4	Qe4xd4
10.	Be3xd4	b5-b4
11.	Bf1-b5	(P-P)*c2
12.	Nb1-d2	a7-a6
13.	P*c7	resigns

The threat was (Q-Q)*d8 mate
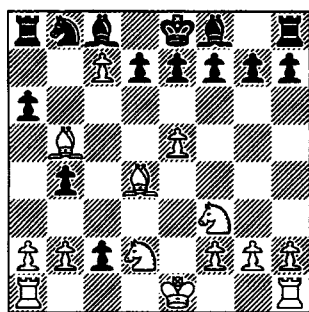
Black cannot escape with 13. ... f7-f6 14.e5-e6 because the d-pawn is pinned. Furthermore 14. ... Nb8-c6 15.Bb5xc6 Bc8-b7 16.Bc6xb7 is unnecessary because a second drop point has appeared: 15.(Q-Q)*f7 mate! The diagram makes an interesting study in comparative development.

White: A. Brown **Black:** J. Stone
BCVS Hostage 2000

1.	e2-e4	e7-e5
2.	Ng1-f3	Nb8-c6
3.	d2-d4	e5xd4
4.	Nf3xd4	Ng8-e7
5.	Bf1-c4	Nc6-e5
6.	Bc4-b3	d7-d6
7.	Nb1-c3	Bc8-d7
8.	Bc1-g5	c7-c6
9.	f2-f4	Ne5-g4
10.	h2-h3	Ng4-f6

...(P-P)*f2+ would have been interesting

11.	Qd1-e2	Qd8-c7
12.	Bg5xf6	g7xf6
13.	Qe2-c4	(P-P)*e6

Is this perhaps extravagent? ...0-0-0 14.Qxf7 (N-B)*g3 embarasses the rook. 15. Rg1 (P-P)*h2!

14.	0-0-0	(N-B)*e3
15.	Qc4-e2	Ne3xd1
16.	Rh1xd1	0-0-0
17.	Kc1-b1	Ne7-g6
18.	g2-g3	e7-e5
19.	f4xe5	f6xe5
20.	B*f6	Kc8-b8

Baffling! What's wrong with ..exd4 The rook drop on a8 perhaps

21.	Bf6xh8	Ng6xh8

White has a clear advantage

22.	Nd4-f5	f7-f6

Why? Is it because of pawn drops? Would ...Ng6 23.h5 Nh8 be better.

| 23.	P*e7	Bf8xe7
24.	Nf5xe7	Bd7xh3
25.	Ne7-d5	c6xd5
26.	Nc3xd5	Qc7-c5
27.	(P-P)*c7+	Kb8-c8
28.	c7xd8=R+	Kc8xd8
29.	(R-R)*g8+	Kd8-d7
30.	(N-N)*b8+	Kd7-e6
31.	(B-B)*c8+	

better was 31.Nc7 dbl ch Ke7 32.Re8 mate

31.	...	Ke6-f7
32.	Nd5-c7+	Kf7-e7
33.	Rg8-e8	mate

I am not sure if dropping a piece to gain the exchange is advantageous. The one who loses the exchange cannot negotiate a hostage exchange with the same pieces because he must offer at least equal value as part of the exchange. This is an advantage for the winner of the exchange, but it costs him a drop: his opponent can still drop his piece at will. (Allan Brown).

White: I. Dirmeik **Black:** G. Jelliss
BCVS Hostage 2000

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Bd2 Qb4 6.Bc1 Nc6 7.Nge2 e5 8.dxe5 Ng4 9.a3 Nxf2 10.Kxf2 Qh4+ 11.g3 Bc5+ 12.(P-P)*e3 Qe7 13.(P-P)*d4 Bb6 14.Nf4 Rf8 15.Bg2 Bd7 16.Rf1 P*e6 17.Kg1 f6 18.exf6 Qxf6 19.Nfd5 P*f2+ 20.Kh1 exd5 21.Nxd5 Qh6 22.(P-P)*h4 (N-N)*g4 23.Bh3 Qe6 24.N*f4 Rxf4 25.Nxf4 Qe4+ 26.Bg2 Qf5 27.h3 Nxe3 28.Bxe3 (N-N)*e4 29.Kh2 Ne5 30.(P-P)*d3 Nxg3 31.Kxg3 P*g5 32.hxg5 Qxg5+ 33.Kxf2 Bxd4 34.Qh5+ Qxh5 35.Nxh5 Bxb2 36.Kg1 (P-P)*f3 37.Ra2 Bc3 38.P*e2 (P-P)*f4 39.Bc5 P*d6 40.Bxd6 Bd4+ 41.e3 Bxe3+ 42.P*f2 Bxf2+ 43.Rxf2 (Q-Q)*e1+ 44.Q*f1 (P-P)*h2+ 45.Kh1 Qxf1+ and Black announced mate on his 50th move, whereupon White resigned.
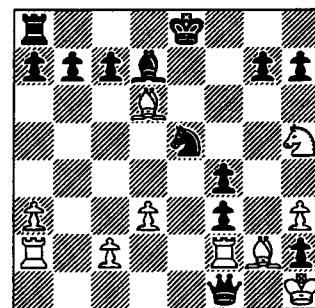
There follows:-

(a) 46.N*g1 Qxg1 mate

(b) 46.Bxf1 (Q-Q)*g1 mate

(c) 46.Rxf1 fxg2+ and now

  (c1) 47.Kxg2 (B-N)*h4+
       48.Kf2 (Q-Q)*e3 or
       48.Kh1(xh2) (Q-Q)*g2 mate

  (c2) 47.Kxh2 gxf1(N)+
       48.Kh1 (Q-Q)*h2 mate
       48.Kg1(g2) (Q-Q)*h2+
        49.Kxf1 (R-R)*g1 mate

(d) 46.Kxh2 (Q-B)*g1+
    47.Kh1 Bxf2+

  (d1) 48.Kh2 Qg1 mate

  (d2) 48.Q(N)*g1 Qxg1 mate

  (d3) 48.Bxf1 (R-R)*g1+
     49.Kh2 (P-P)*g3+
     50.Nxg3 fxg3 mate.

White: I. Dirmeik   **Black:** J. Stone
BCVS Hostage 2000

1.	d2-d4	d7-d5
2.	e2-e3	Nb8-c6
3.	Bf1-b5	Bc8-d7
4.	Nb1-c3	Ng8-f6
5.	Ng1-f3	e7-e6
6.	a2-a3	Bf8-d6
7.	Bc1-d2	Qd8-e7
8.	Qd1-e2	e6-e5
9.	d4xe5	Nc6xe5
10.	Bb5xd7+	Ne5xd7
11.	0-0	0-0
12.	Nc3-b5	c7-c6
13.	Nb5xd6	Qe7xd6
14.	Bd2-c3	Rf8-e8

Both players have been excessively cautious so far, which makes the next two moves all the more surprising.

15.	b2-b4	b7-b5
16.	Rf1-e1	

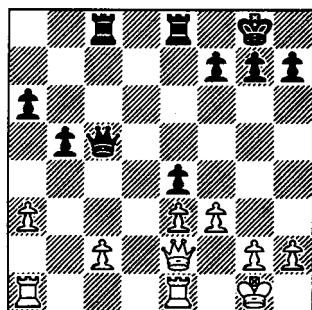*A mysterious rook move indeed (Ed).*

16.	-	Nf6-e4
17.	Bc3-d4	a7-a6
18.	Nf3-d2	Ra8-c8
19.	Nd2xe4	d5xe4
20.	f2-f3	

c4 seems to be more logical (Ed).

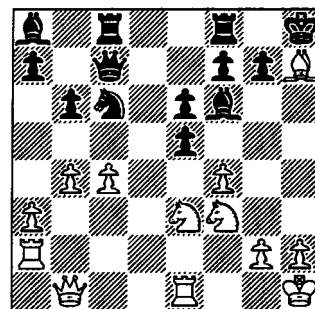|		
20.	-	c6-c5
21.	b4xc5	Nd7xc5
22.	Bd4xc5	Qd6xc5?

better would have been Rxc5

23.	(P-P)*d7	Qc5xc2

a further mistake

24.	Qe2xc2	Rc8xc2
25.	d7xe8=Q+	(B-B)*f8
26.	(N-B)*e7+	
	Resigns	

After Black's forced reply mate in two moves can not be avoided (Ed).

AUCTION TC

from Ivan Dirmeik

Here are some more games of Auction TC from Ivan Dirmeik. In this variant the back ranks are randomised (opposite colour bishops and no castling) beyond the control of the players, who bid for the right to be White or Black by offering *tempi* for the privilege. These must be used on the first move and one *tempo* translates into the right to move a pawn or to exchange a pair of pieces; bishops must remain on opposite colours. Note that the choice of White or Black has been separated from the right to first move: it is quite possible for Black to move first. I give some examples of bids and their meanings gleaned from a useful web site. It is **http://members.aol.com/tranchess**

P   If the first bidder passes then he gives his opponent the right to choose either side and to play first.
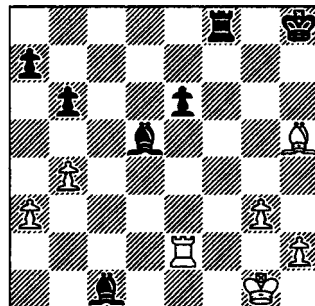
W(B)   The bidder wishes to have White (Black) without offering any tempi in exchange. If his opponent passes, the bidder takes the White (Black) pieces and makes the first move.

W1(B1) The bidder wishes to have the White (Black) pieces in exchange for one *tempo*. The opponent who accepts takes the Black (White) pieces and replies with his first move.

W2(B2) The bidder offers two *tempi* for the White (Black) pieces. The opponent who accepts takes the Black (White) pieces and replies with his first two moves.

In the games below the assigned layout is followed by the bidding sequence. After the initial moves the subsequent play is conventional.

Bids: Troup B1; Dirmeik B2.

White: P. Troup   **Black:** I. Dirmeik

1.	d1=h1	-
2.	e2-e4	a8=g8
3.	d2-d4	e7-e6
4.	c2-c4	c7-c5

5.	f2-f4	c5xd4
6.	Bg1xd4	Nd8-c6
7.	Nc1-e2	Nc6xd4
8.	Ne2xd4	Nb8-c6
9.	Nd4-f3	Bf8-e7
10.	Nd1-e3	d7-d6
11.	a2-a3	b7-b6
12.	b2-b4	Be7-f6
13.	Ra1-a2	Qe8-e7
14.	Bf1-d3	Qe7-c7
15.	e4-e5	d6xe5
16.	Bd3xh7	Rg8-f8

17.	Ne3-g4	Bf6-d8
18.	f4xe5	g7-g6
19.	Ng4-f6	Nc6xe5
20.	Nf3xe5	Bd8xf6
21.	Ne5xg6+	f7xg6
22.	Bh7xg6	Qc7xc4
23.	Qb1-d1	Qc4-h4
24.	Qd1-h5+	Qh4xh5
25.	Bg6xh5	Ba8-d5
26.	Ra2-e2	Bf6-g5
27.	Kh1-g1	Rc8-c1
28.	g2-g3	Bg5-d2
29.	Re1xc1	Bd2xc1

|		
30.	a2-a4	Bc1-a3
31.	h2-h4	Ba3xb4
32.	g3-g4	Bb4-c5+
33.	Kg1-h2	Rf8-f2+
34.	Re2xf2	Bc5xf2
35.	Kh2-h3	Bd5-c4
36.	Kh3-g2	Bf2xh4
37.	Kg2-f3	Bh4-g5
38.	Kf3-e4	Kh8-g7
39.	Ke4-e5	Kg7-f8
40.	Ke5-d6	Bg5-e3

41.	Bh5-g6	Kf8-g7
42.	Bg6-e4	Kg7-f6
43.	Be4-f3	Bc4-b3
44.	a4-a5	b6xa5
45.	Resigns	

Bids: Dirmeik B2.

White: R. Johnson Black: I. Dirmeik

1.	c1=g1	-
2.	b2-b4	d7-d5
3.	Nc1-b3	e7-e5
4.	e2-e3	Rd8-d7
5.	a2-a4	c7-c6
6.	g2-g3	f7-f5
7.	d2-d3	Bg8-f7
8.	c2-c4	d5xc4
9.	d3xc4	g7-g5
10.	b4-b5	Bf7-g6
11.	Nb3-c5	Rd7-e7
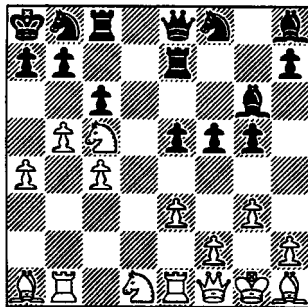
12.	b5xc6	Nb8xc6
13.	Ba1-c3	Nf8-e6
14.	Nc5xe6	Re7xe6
15.	Bh1-d5	Re6-e7
16.	a4-a5	e5-e4
17.	Qf1-e2	Bh8xc3
18.	Nd1xc3	Nc6xa5
19.	Qe2-a2	Na5-c6
20.	Nc3-b5	Qe8-d7
21.	Re1-d1	b7-b6
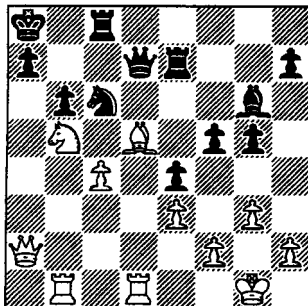
22.	Bd5xe4	Qd7-e6

23.	Be4-d5	Qe6-f6
24.	Nb5-d4	Bg6-e8
25.	Rb1xb6	Re7-b7
26.	Rb6xb7	Ka8xb7
27.	Rd1-b1+	Kb7-a8
28.	Qa2-a6	Rc8-c7
29.	Nd4-e6	Qf6-e7
30.	Rb1-b6	Resigns

Bids: Waldman W1.

White: J Waldman Black: I. Dirmeik

1.	-	c8=h8
2.	e2-e4	e7-e5
3.	Ng1-f3	c7-c5
4.	c2-c4	b7-b6
5.	d2-d3	Nd8-e6
6.	Nh1-g3	Ng8-e7
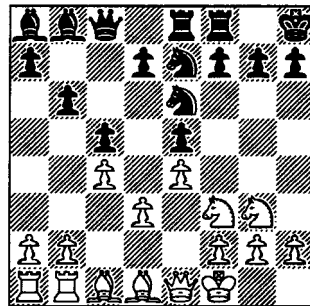
7.	Bc1-e3	

a3, then b4, looks promising

7.	-	f7-f5
8.	e4xf5	Ne7xf5
9.	Ng3xf5	Rf8xf5
10.	Nf3-h4	Rf5-f8
11.	Bd1-h5	Re8-d8
12.	Bh5-f3	Ba8xf3
13.	Nh4xf3	Ne6-d4

d7-d5 looks more dynamic (the move played looks fine to me - so long as an early d5 follows. Ed).

14.	Be3xd4	e5xd4
15.	Qe1-d1	

Surely e4 is a better square.

15.	-	d7-d5
16.	c4xd5	Rd8xd5
17.	b2-b4	Bb8-d6

Rd5-f5 or Rd5-h5 looks like a winning attack

18.	b4xc5	Qc8xc5

takes his eye off the kingside

19.	Rb1-c1	Qc5-b5
20.	Qd1-b3	Qb5xb3
21.	a2xb3	a7-a5

White's position has improved greatly
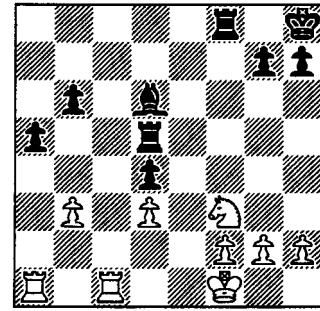
22.	h2-h4	

I don't understand this move

22.	-	Bd6-c5
23.	Nf3-g5	h7-h6
24.	Ng5-e6	Rf8-f5
25.	g2-g3	Rd5-e5
26.	Rc1-e1	Re5xe1+
27.	Ra1xe1	Kh8-g8
28.	Re1-e4	Rf5-d5
29.	Ne6xc5	

possibly premature

29.	-	Rd5xc5
30.	Re4xd4	Rc5-b5
31.	Rd4-d7	Rb5xb3
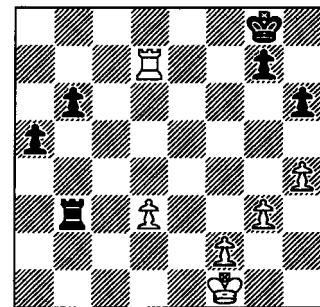
32.	Kf1-e2	a5-a4
33.	d3-d4	a4-a3
34.	d4-d5	a3-a2
35.	Rd7-a7	Rb3-b2+
36.	Ke2-e3	Kg8-f8
37.	d5-d6	Kf8-e8
38.	f2-f4	Rb2-b3+
39.	Ke3-e4	Rb3xg3
40.	Ra7xa2	Rg3-h3
41.	Ra2-a7	Rh3-g3
42.	Ke4-e5	Rg3-e3+
43.	Ke5-d5	Re3-d3+
44.	Kd5-c6	Rd3-c3+
45.	Kc6xb6	Rc3-b3+
46.	Kb6-c5	Rb3-c3+
47.	Kc5-d5	Rc3-d3+
48.	Kd5-e5	Rd3-e3+
49.	Ke5-f5	Re3-g3
50.	h4-h5	Rg3-g1
51.	Ra7-e7+	draw agreed

FROM KRIEGSPIEL TO TRIPOD CHESS

*by Jed Stone
with support from
Allan Brown and Cohn Muskett*

When Kriegspiel Chess was invented at the turn of the last century it leapt to the heart of the chess playing public immediately. It was the great equaliser. It created a level playing field on which the poorest of players could battle their betters with some measure of hope that the honours of the day would be theirs. Its popularity lasted to the edge of the fifties when it slipped quietly away to join the growing number of 'novelty' variants. Remembered; never forgotten. Played only when three like-minded players came together with nothing serious to do.

As the old century creaked towards its end, I decided to revitalise a passion from my youth and bring the game into the new century. The players were present, the interest was there, but we were postal players: could Kriegspiel be transferred to postal play'?

The mechanics of the game are ideal. You have three players using totally separate boards hidden from each other. On one board are the white pieces; on another the black, while the third player acts as an umpire and monitors play. He has a full set of pieces and all moves are processed through him. Perfect for postal play. Just take the 'normal' correspondence chess playing time, say a year at first class rates; add three or four months for back-and-forth between player and umpire; pitch in a sprinkling of holidays and there you are - or not as the case may be. Postal play is as unpredictable as people's lives. Did I really want to commit myself to a game that could take eighteen months to complete in a postal environment? I knew of no record of such a game. Only a rumor from NOST (Knights of the Square Table - an American postal chess club) that such a game took several years to complete! A new structure was needed. What was required was a Kriegspiel variant that would provide the enjoyment of the original game but not be too long winded.

The target time for completion of a game would be about a year. The traffic had to be player A to Umpire. Umpire to player B and back again. This could double the time for a move to be answered. The solution to this was multiple moves, which were to be accepted by the umpire whether they were playable, or not. You can, after all, learn a lot from a move that fails. Five moves were given to each player to set up their position at the start. No captures and no advance past the fourth rank allowed. That was just enough for a player to castle on the Queen's side if they so wished. After the setup moves each player would make three moves. The 'it's your turn' letter from the umpire could be turned to profitable use if information was passed on at the same time; but what information should be passed across?

In conventional Kriegspiel the Umpire and any spectators gain immense enjoyment from watching the main board where the two antagonists grope around improbable situations in their attempts to find each other. Spectator reaction and the interchanges between opponent and umpire provide a lot of subtle clues vital to the game. In postal play you're on your own, so all that sort of information is lost. Players are playing blind and for their own pleasure. The quality of the information provided by the umpire would therefore be crucial to the game. Slowly, as the idea began to take a definite form it slipped back to its roots as a war game played with chess pieces. The players became Generals who needed information on the disposition of the enemy forces before sending their troops into battle. They needed scouts or spies who could see the opposing forces.

In its time Kriegspiel had spawned a number of variants of itself, amongst them was 'Assassin' Kriegspiel by Hubert Phillips. In that variant, when a knight moved the umpire would pass the player a small piece of paper naming the pieces on the surrounding squares. This could be the answer, but using pawns as well as knights. The latter would see all surrounding squares while the former would only see the three squares in front of them. The umpire, however, would only say that there was an enemy piece on a specific square and not give any indication as to its nature. To ensure a constant flow of information the knights were to be immune to pawn capture. The final touch was to rule that a move that resulted in 'check' ended a player's move so that he could escape his fate safely. Thus the prototype, named 'Blitz' came into being.

The rules were passed to the other two, further minor adjustments made and as the century was born so the games began. We played a round robin. Each had one game as white, one as black and the third as umpire. It took approximately six months to reach a conclusion in the first game. A lot of correspondence went on outside the game as to the best form of score sheet to use. Three or four different ones were tried and applied while the games flowed smoothly along and in the end the games ran for less than thirty moves. There were two blips however. Stopping the game for a check didn't work at all well and having the knights immune to pawn capture caused confusion. The idea worked but changes were needed.

For a start the name was changed to 'Tripod Chess' as there are other variants with 'Blitz' in the title. The opening moves were dropped from five to three. The knight lost his immunity to pawn capture and 'Field Promotions' extended the power of the pawn. Now, instead of making a move a pawn could promote to a knight though no more than three knights were allowed per side at any one time. The idea of stopping the game because of a check was dropped. The game was to end with the actual capture of the King. It was hoped that by catching a check his position would be revealed and the opposing forces could move in for the kill. As the umpire was monitoring the game he had the right to call a draw if it started slipping

into a blind chase. To clarify the situation for the players they were to be told what their opponent moved but not necessarily in what order.

Another three games were set up. Again they worked but it soon became apparent that the unseen King would be too elusive and nearly impossible to capture. Adjustments were made to the rules that would allow checkmate to be achieved but none provided a satisfactory answer and two of the games slid into unsatisfactory silence. So, after much trial and experimentation what did we have? It wasn't postal Kriegspiel Chess. For that it was a game too far. It had developed towards a novelty game in its own right, but unfortunately one without a satisfactory ending. It was a tactical war game played on a chessboard but it needed a fixed target that could be aimed for rather than an elusive mobile one that had to be found and pinned down. In the moment of need inspiration arrived. The starting squares of the King and Queen became the Palace. The arrival of the opposing King or Queen on either square ended the game. The King was to become a humble player in the game and the Prince came on the stage. Now the plodding King could defend the Palace while the leaping Prince lead the attack on the enemy fortifications and the flying Queen stood ready to defend or attack at need. Three boards were set up in different rooms and a time scale for moves devised so a solo game could be tried. Adjustments became necessary. Field promotions were allowed as an addition to a move rather than a replacement for one. The 'blind' pieces were allowed to see their next target. Check and castling was abolished, as was the information about what an opponent had moved. A further battle was tried and 'Tripod Chess' came to life. It had become a tactical war game played on a chessboard. Not Kriegspiel chess and not a postal variant of the game, but a variant in its own right. It was a satisfying conclusion to an interesting battle.

The new rules were drawn up and passed round. Battle is at the moment underway. No further changes are expected to be necessary. The rules of war are clean and pure. Now is the time to work on tactics and openings.

TRIPOD CHESS

The Game
a) The game is played by three players. One plays white, one black while the third is the umpire.
b) All moves are processed through the umpire who passes to each player information concerning their opponents and their own moves.
c) The object of the game is to capture the opposing Palace.

The Palace
a) The two squares on which the King and Queen start the game are designated as 'The Palace'.
b) The Palace squares are part of the board and may be used as normal during the course of the game.

The Prince
a) The Prince is an extra piece that is placed on one of the squares of the Palace as soon one becomes vacant. (This does not count as a move.)
b) The Prince may move up to two squares in any direction though it cannot jump over other pieces.
c) The notation mark for a Prince is a W.

Method
a) At the start of the game, both players make their first three moves and send them to the umpire.
b) The umpire plays them out on his own board with a full set of pieces.
c) He then sends White any information gleaned by his pieces and play proceeds in the normal manner with the umpire processing all moves until one player wins.
d} The umpire, at the conclusion of the game, sends a full score sheet to each player.

Moves
a) Standard algebraic notation is used for general movement. e.g. B-f5
b) Captures are automatic and need not be specified by the players.
c) No piece may be moved twice. There is no castling allowed.

d) There is no check and the King may be captured by any other piece.

Information
a) At no point during the course of the game are the actual moves passed between the players.
b) All that is sent to a player is the nature of a piece captured and anything that can be 'seen' by his pieces.
c) Pawns can see any opposing pieces that are standing on any of the three squares directly or diagonally in front of them.
d) Kings, Princes and Knights 'see' anything on the squares immediately surrounding them.
e) Queens, Rooks and Bishops can 'see' anything up to and including any square they can move to.

Promotions
a) Pawns promote on reaching the opposing back rank to any piece.
b) In addition, before reaching the back line a pawn can also be granted a 'field promotion' to become a Knight.
c) A 'field promotion' does not replace a move and can be done before or after a move.
d) A player cannot have more than three knights at anyone time.

Winning
a) A player will be declared the winner if he gets one of the Royal Family (King, Queen or Prince) onto one of the squares of the opposing Palace or captures all the opposing Royal Family.
b) A pawn promoting to Queen directly onto either of the Palace squares is also an immediate winner.

Postal play
Postal play is in a 'Round Robin'. Each player plays one game as white and one as black while acting as umpire in a third game.

TRIPOD CHESS EXAMPLE GAME

The following game score perhaps needs some explanation. For each group of three moves is given (a) those pieces visible beforehand (in italics), (b) the moves, and (c) the pieces

visible afterwards (again, in italics). (a) and (b) are helpful but, strictly speaking, redundant. For the sake of clarity, I have not listed the pieces captured. (Ed.).

White 1-3
nil // a4; b4; c4 // nil
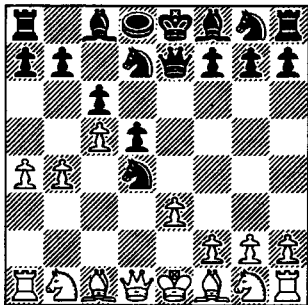### Black 1-3
nil // e5; d5; c6 // Pc4
White 4-6
Pd5 // c5; d4; e3 // Pc6,d5,e5
Black 4-6
Pc5,d4 // exd4(N); Qe7; Nd7; W@d8 // Pe3,c5 - trying for Qe1 wins.

A pawn has promoted to a knight after capturing on d4, and the Prince (W!) has appeared on d8, so this is a good place for a diagram.

White 7-9
Pc6;Nd4 // exd4; Bd3; Ne2 // Pc6,d5,h7
Black 7-9
Pc5,d4;Ne2 // f5; Qf7; Ne7 // Pc5,d4
White 10-12
Pd5,c6,f5 // Qc2; Be3; g3; W@d1 // Pd5,c6,f5
Black 10-12
Pc5,d4 // Nf6; g5; f4 // Be3;Pc5,d4,g3
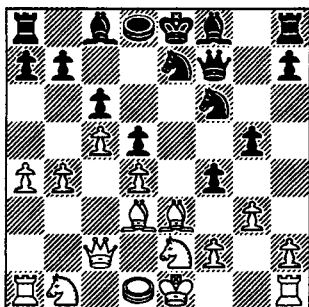
White 13-15
Pc6,d5,f4,h7 // Wc3; Kd2; gxf4 // Pc6,d5,g5,h7
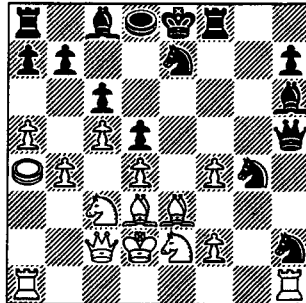### Black 13-15
Pc5,d4,f4 // g4(N); Qh5; Bh6 // Pc5,d4,f4,h2 - attacking the h-file

White 16-18
Pc6,d5,h7 // a5; Wa4; Nbc3 // Pc6,d5,h7 - attacking the a-file
Black 16-18
Pc5,d4,f4,h2 // Nxh2; Nfg4; Rf8 // Rh1;Pc5,d4,f4

White 19-21
Pc6,d5,h7;Nh2 // Ng3; f5; a5(N)xb7 // Pa7,c6,d5;Bc8,h6;Ng4,h2;Ra8 - searching out Black's defences.
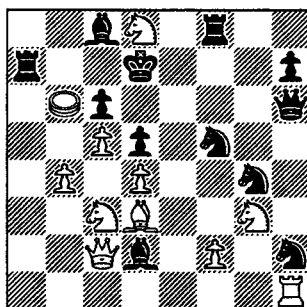### Black 19-21
Pc5,d4,f5;Be3;Nb7,g3 // Bxe3; Nxf5; Qh6 // Pc5,d4,f2;Kd2;Rh1;Nb7,g3
White 22-24
Pa7,c6,d5;Ra8;Bc8;Nf5,g4,h2 // Wb6; Rxa7; Nxd8 // Pc6,d5;Ra8;Ke8;Nf5,g4,h2;Bc8
Black 22-24
Pc5,d4,f2;Ra7,h1;Nd8,g3;Kd2 // Kd7; Rxa7; Bxd2 // Pc5,d4;Nc3,d8,g3;Rh1 - realising that the back door is open, the king moves to shut off the diagonal, but too late.

White 25-27
Pc6,d5;Bc8,d2;Kd7;Nf5,g4,h2 // Nxc6; Wd8 and White wins.

Black paid the penalty for not watching his own back door. He left the Prince and King on their starting squares where they protected nothing. His carefully planned attack by the Queen was foiled by a carefully positioned Knight that held him up long enough for the White attack on the opposite flank to go in unopposed.

EUROBUG 2001

by John Beasley

July 14-16 saw the holding of "Eurobug 2001" in Geneva, the latest in a series of meetings for Bughouse enthusiasts from all over Europe. This year, a home contingent of twelve was matched by seven from Germany, three from Russia, one from Sweden, and myself from England, and if some "foreign" players were CERN scientists living locally the majority had travelled specially.

The opening day featured a double-round all-play-all tournament with prizes, won by Andre Nilsson (Sweden) and Robert Huber (Germany) ahead of Marcus Mueller and Marc Deckert (Germany) and Fabrice Liardet and Jean-Pierre Vegh (Switzerland). Andre is considered to be the world's leading player, and the winners' score of 21/22 bore witness.

Sunday should have featured outdoor Bughouse using the giant boards in the park, but continuous rain kept the company indoors. Instead, there was a variety of friendly events, including an incredible simultaneous display in which Andre and Marcus took on ten opponents and won. Also played were Extinction Bughouse (you lose by losing your last man of a kind, be it king, queen, rook, or whatever), Berolina Bughouse (pawns move diagonally and capture straight forward), and I forget what else.

Monday did allow outdoor play, though it was necessary first to empty the accumulated water out of some of the men. But the need to run to the clock after each move makes giant blitz a game for the young and fit, and carrying captured men to partner adds to the burden. Initially the men were thrown, adding juggling ability to the skills required, but this was discontinued when it was noticed that one of the pawns was starting to come apart. And when chess palled, the even more exhausting game of circular ping-pong was available...
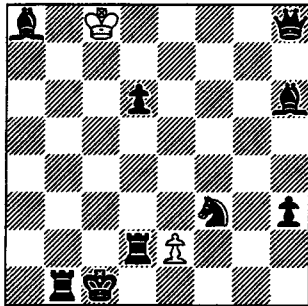
All in all, a chess meeting of the best kind, a much fuller report of which will be found on Fabrice Liardet's web site (www.pion.ch). Roll on Eurobug 2002!

THE END IS NIGH!

by Paul Byway

Unfortunately #100 from VC38 had a second solution. Everybody found it, and most missed the composer's intention. A corrected version is found below.

#100a Cedric Lytton (Correction)

Italian Progressive (series 13)

You may like to compare this with the following; one of the 2 studies that I know of; from about 20 years ago I guess. The Excelsior theme is combined with Italian mate. It's a pity that we do not have a unique sequence; and Black has taken only 12 moves to capture 14 pieces. The solution will be found at the end of the next section.

#101 A.Silli
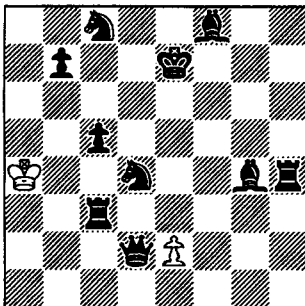
Italian Progressive (series 7)

SOLUTIONS

The endgames seem to have been well received, so I shall look out for more; but only one at a time I think!

#98 Solvers were divided on this one, but White wins after:-

9. Kf3, Kxg3, Kh3, Nb3, Nf7, Nxd8, Nf7, Nh6, Nxg8.
No one suggested the Black reply:-
10. Kd6, Kd5, Kc4, Kc3, Kxc2, Kxb3, Kc4, Kd5, Ke6, Kf7
which can be answered by
11. Nf6, Nxh7, Nf6, Ne4, Nc3, Nxb5, Nc3, Nb1, Kg4, Kf5, Pg4
and wins (just).

The actual game continuation was:-
9. Kf3, Kxg3, c4, cxb5, Nf7, Nxd8, Nf7, Nh6, Nxg8
10. Ke8, Kf8, Kxg8, Kf7, Ke6, Kd5, Kd4, Kd3, Kxd2, g6
11. Kg4, Kg5, Kh6, Kxh7, Kxg6, Kf7, Ke7, Kd7, Kc7, Kxb7, Kb6
and Black drew with series 12. If White's last move (Kb6) is replaced by Pb6 he must win, surely.

#99 Everyone agreed on a Black win, which indeed it was. In the game White could have promoted to a knight at series 13 and taken all the Black men. Instead he promoted to a queen and was mated. The clearest series is probably the following:-
10. Nf6, Ng4, Nxh2, Nf1, h4, h3, h2, hxg1(Q), Qg7, Qf7+
and although White can promote the a-pawn, the resulting position is hopeless.

While hacking his way through the jungle of variations, Fred Galvin came across the following curious position with White to play:
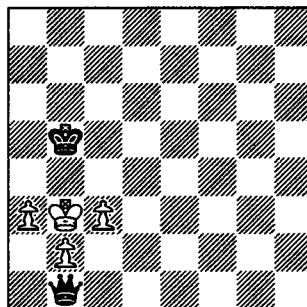
In *Italian Progressive* this is stalemate; but in *Scottish Progressive* White is in zugzwang: 1.c4+ is answered by ..Kc5, Qc1, Qxc4 mate, with an echo on the a-file. I don't suppose that zugzwang is *too* common in Progressive Chess.

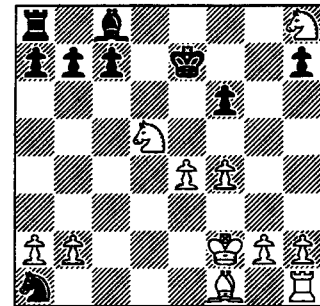**#100a** The composer's intention is

shown here. The solution is:-
13. Kd7, Ke6, Kf5, Kg4, Kxh3, Kg2, Kh1, e4, e5, exd6, d7, d8(Q), Qxd2 Italian mate.

#101 The king doesn't travel so far:
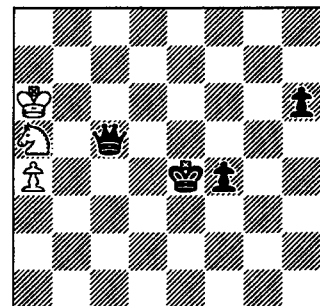7. e3, exd4, dxc5, Kb4, c6, cxb7, bxc8(N) Italian mate.
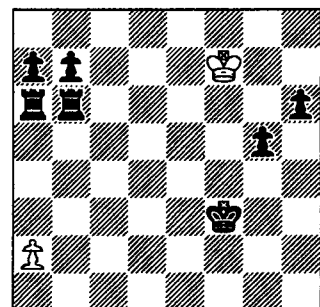
COMPETITION 15

#102 Gadzinsky - Gadzinskaya (1993)

Italian Progressive (series 8)
Win

#103 Paul Byway & Ronald Turnbull

Italian Progressive (series 9)
Draw

#104 Ronald Turnbull & Paul Byway

Italian Progressive (series 9)
(a) as the diagram Win
*(b) add black pawn g6 Draw*

PROBLEM PAGES

by Ronald Turnbull

The *Independent on Sunday* reports that chess players are brutal and aggressive, as rich in testosterone as mountaineers and racing drivers. Sadly, there weren't separate results for hormone levels of Variant players. And the researchers didn't measure us problem people at all. No doubt they would have found us melancholic, withdrawn and self-centred.

As usual, my contributors have provided plenty of the deviant, frustrating and downright beastly problems which make us that way. It is left to me to offer an easy starter problem to put, we hope, a small smile on. Don't worry. Numbers **353** onwards will soon wipe it off again...
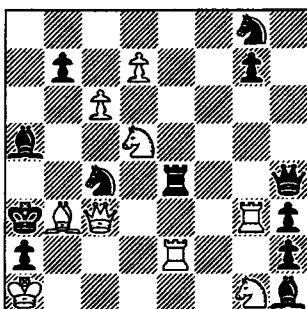
352 - R. TURNBULL
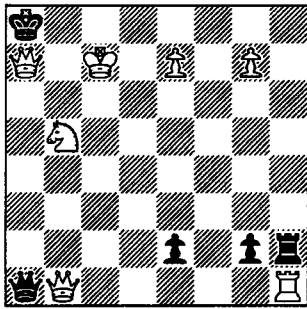
Mate in 2, Madrasi

352 is Madrasi - like units of opposite colours that attack each other are paralysed. So the Qs and Rs can't move, and Black isn't in check. In fact hardly anything can move - I did say this was easy - but note that it's even easier if *Black* only had the move...
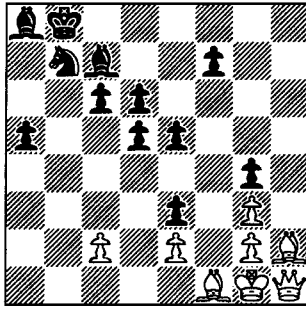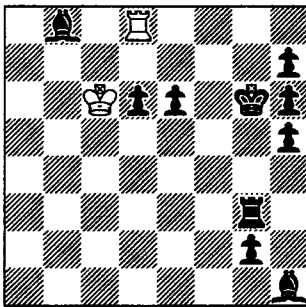
353 - R. MILLOUR

Mate in 2, Anticirce

Anti-Circe: a unit that captures is reborn on its game-array square; if that square is occupied the capture is illegal. In the categories above, **353** is 'frustrating', but not either beastly or deviant. It has something in common with **352**, though that something isn't easiness.

354 - C. REEVES


Helpmate in 5, Old Pawns

355 - C. JONES

Series mate in 16, Single Combat

The next two are deviant (rather than frustrating or beastly). **354** uses 'Old Pawns' - which as in pre-Staunton days may only promote to a piece already missing from the board. (So if Black plays to a1, he may not promote to Bishop.) Any pre-Staunton 'old reader' can perhaps tell us whether, if one's dark-square B had been captured, it was permitted to promote to a second light-square B. We'd like to know! **355** uses Single Combat (the unit that moved last time moves again if it legally can) and seriesmover (White moves 15 times, neither giving nor suffering check, then mates). This not only looks impossible: it is impossible. The Popeye program says so.

356 - C. LYTTON
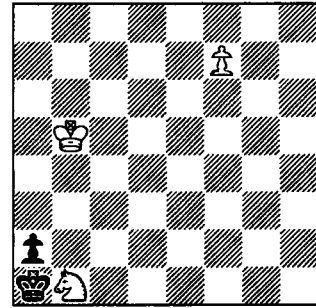
Helpstalemate in 2, b) helpdraw in 1½

356 is non-deviant in a strangely deviant fashion. It is Helpstalemate in 2 (the players collaborate, Black starting, so that White's second move stalemates) and Helpdraw in 1½ (the players collaborate, White starting, so that White's second move draws). Here 'draw' means 'the position is such that neither player could possibly ever give checkmate'. This is not meddling with the rules: Article 1.3 of the Laws of Chess states that in such a situation the game is drawn (Dead Game) and stops at once. It's all the other problems ignoring Article 1.3 that meddle with the rules.

357 - L. VITALE
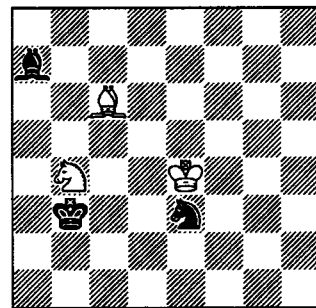
Helpmate in 3, b) helpstalemate in 3

358 - L. VITALE
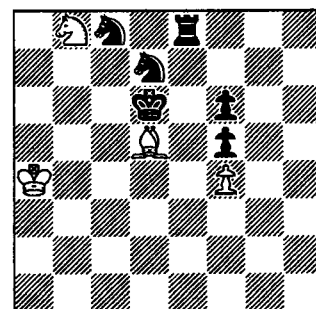
Reciprocal helpmate in 3½, 2 sols

Sr Vitale's two problems are perfectly straightforward in stipulation and do not play silly games with the rules. They are merely beastly difficult. Even my elderly computer says they're too hard and refuses to test them. In **358**, White starts, and after his third move Black can **either** give mate **or** move in such a way that White can give mate. And there are two such sequences to be found. Maybe **357** is slightly easier - the Compaq doesn't think so.

359 - R. MILLOUR
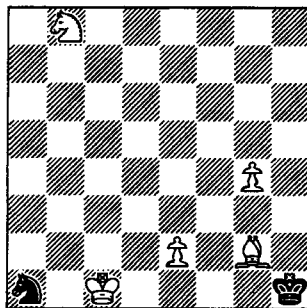
Monochrome Chess
Rooks died where? How?

359 would be perfectly aimiable - if only its composer hadn't described it as 'easy'. In Monochrome Chess, a move must start and finish on one colour of square. So Knights never move at all, and a pawn must capture four times (or six) on its way to promotion. e.p. capture and 0-0 are allowed. We ask: what units captured the 4 Rooks, and where?

360 - A. ETTINGER
In memoriam R. D. WERTHEIM
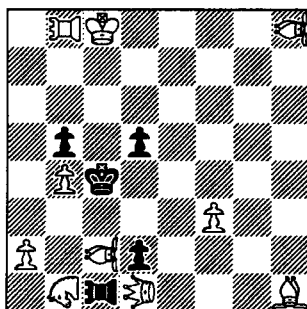
Chinese pieces; Helpmate in 2
(set-play) b) wPd5→d4

Alex Ettinger uses Chinese line-

pieces (which move as their orthodox counterparts but capture only on a square beyond some obstructing piece) and adds the 'Chinese Knight' or Mao: this moves and captures like N except that it can be blocked on the ortho-adjacent square. Mb1 could move to a3 and c3 but not back, and PAc1 blocks it from capturing on d2. **360** is dedicated in memory of RD Wertheim; the story behind the dedication would lead to the solution so will be told later. While the story is a sad one the problem should be found enjoyable, and of course (given the article elsewhere in the issue) terrifically easy. To appreciate the pattern, it's necessary to identify the 'threat' made by the first White move each time.

Having dealt with that lot, your hormones will be surging ready for some more adventure sport. Cho Oyu, anyone?

Solutions to *VC* 38

Solvers: Stephen Emmerson, CC Lytton, Ian Richardson

342 (Rice) 1.Rh3 (2.Rxh2(Bf8)) 1...Rc6/Rc7/Rc4 2.Re6/Re7/Rd4 and 1...Rxb5(Bf1)/Rxd5(Qd1) 2.Bg2/Ng3. Try 1.Rh4? Rc4! Any move of bR prevents the threat as the reborn bB gives check to White. bR on c6, c7 threatens to interfere with the check from wQ by capturing one of the g-pawns - RT. One of John's favourite themes: bR variations (here 5, without duals) CCL. A bit heavy in out-of-play pieces - SE.

343 (Vitale) Composer's diagram had 2nd wK on f4 which I amended to wN but there must be something else wrong... Composer 1.h3 Nxh3(h4) 2.Kg4 Bxe2 b) 1.Kxf4(Nc5) fe(d6)+ 2.Ke5 Nd7 c) 1.h3 Ng2 2.hg(Nh3) Bxe2(d1) but all solvers cooked a) 1.fg Ng2 2.- b) no solution c) 1.fg Bxe2(bN).

344 (Vitale) 1.Kh7 Kf6 2.Nf5+ Ke6 3.Kg6 ef and 1.Kh8 Kf6 2.Kh7 Kf7 3.Kh8 fg. A lovely sentinels problem - IR. Trickiest of the issue - SE. but with the repeated 1...Kf6 a blemish - RT.

345 (Emmerson) a) 1.nCe7[+bPb6] nCb8[+wPe7] 2.b5 e8Q+ 3.nCa5 Qe5 b) 1.nCf7 nCe4[+wPf7] 2.nCf1[+bPe4] f8Q+ 3.nCc2 Qf5.

Most elegant and most surprising orthogonal-diagonal transfer from one unit! - CCL. Both ideal pin-stalemates are on the topological edge of the board (as far as the Camel is concerned) - SE.

346 (Emmerson) 1.nCf2 nCg5[+wPf2] 2.nCd6[+bPg5] f3 3.g4 nCg5[+wPd6] 4.nCh8[+bPg5] fg4; 1.nCd4 nCe7[+wPd4] 2.nCf4[+bPe7] d5 3.e6 nCe7[+wPf4] 4.nCh8[+bPe7] de6. Diagonal echo of strategy rather than exact position: different move-order in the two lines stops it seeming mechanical - RT. Completely baffled! I look forward to the solutions - IR.

347 (Byway + RT) 1.LEb7 (2.LEe4 mate) 1...PAxg7 2.LExh7 and 1...VAxf3 2.LExh1. 'Not Novotny' - PB (composing) and SE (solving). (In orthodox Novotny the White would place an obstructing piece on b7 - but it wouldn't be the mating piece.) Mate transference after Finnish Novotny - CCL.

348 (Ettinger) 1.0-0-0 a8B 2.d5 cd e.p. As IR points out, I should have specified the Nao properly: moves as Nightrider, captures along NR lines on any square beyond some obstructing unit of either side. Valladao theme (castling, underpromotion and e.p.) with novel way to force the 2-up P move: 2.d6?? being self-check - RT. Good - SE. Nicely forced by Nao (has been done with Grasshoppers) - CCL.

349 (Richardson) 1.P(=B)f1 Ne6 2.P(=Q)f3 Bg6 and 1.Kd4 Bg6 2.Pc4 Ne6 but dual in the move-order; 1.Pc4 Bg6+ 2.Kd4 Ne6. Neat interchange of W moves but low on progressionivity - RT.

350 (Frankiss) This should be helpstalemate - sorry. a) 1.b177 77xh8= b) 1.ba77(77a8) 77h1= Good trick! Almost better with a) Circe b) Orthodox - SE.

351 (Frankiss) 1.h877+ Gxh8 2.g867+ Gxg8 3.ef57+ Gxf8 4.fe47+ Gxe8 5.d837+ Gxd8 6.c827+ Gxc8 Amusing if straighforward - CCL. Wot no promotion to (17)? - SE. This was composed under some pressure (from me) and has now expanded to involve (17) and (07) leapers - RT.

SE - 12; CCL 9½; IR 6½

Solutions from Alex Ettinger may still come (late receipt of *VC*38).

BCVS NOTICES

Members are reminded that nominations for office, and any resolutions for the 2002 AGM, should be received by John Beasley as secretary not later than **March 1**. Two nominators or proposers are required in each case. To the best of our knowledge, all those currently in post are willing to continue, but if anyone else wishes to join the team we shall be delighted to tell him what is involved.

CIRCULAR CHESS

I hear from John Beasley that The World Circular Chess Championship will be held at the same venue as last year (and very nice it was too); namely the **Bishop's Palace** adjacent to **Lincoln Cathedral**. The date to mark is Sunday 19th May 2002 (Whit weekend). For further details please get in touch with:-

Rob Stevens, Tel. 01552 532745
Chessnuttr@AOL.com

MSO CAMBRIDGE 2002

More information from John. I have played in the Mind Sports Olympiad before, but a regional event is new to me; (a contradiction in terms also, perhaps). Apparently it ran first last year and was a great success.

This mindsports event will be at **Parkside School in Cambridge on 4-6 May 2002.** The British Shogi Championship will be held there as well as Chinese Chess, a chess rapidplay, tournaments of 15 other games, and an overall 'Grantamind' prize. There will be many opportunities to learn new games. For a full schedule and online entry form see:-
http://www.gen.cam.ac.uk/msocam02/
or for more information contact:-

Paul Smith, Tel. 01223 563932
paul@andrea-paul.freeserve.co.uk

According to the web site there will also be: a draughts match (England v Czech Republic), The British Go Championship Challenger's Tournament, The Cambridge Regional Championship (Othello), The English 'Settlers of Catan' Championship, British Open Shogi Championships, and many others. It sounds tempting, I must admit.

GAMES STUDIES

from Ken Whyld

1) The International Society of Board Game Studies held its 4th colloquium, 'Board Games in Academia', in Switzerland during April 2001. All of the papers were in English, and several were related to chess, shogi, chaturanga, etc. R. Vasantha gave a paper on the subject of deciphering the board games depicted as murals on the walls of Mysore Palace, the inventions of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (1794-1868). Some new, some variants of existing games, they demand a knowledge of geometry, topology, logic, philosophy and military strategy.

The Society's journal, *Board Game Studies*, is published in English, French, or German, has rigorous academic standards, and is a valuable, albeit expensive, resource. Look at **www.BoardGamesStudies.org** or write to Dr. Alexander de Voogt, Okeghemstraat 10-2, NL-1075PM Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

2) *Schachspiele in Ostasien* by Peter Banaschak is a study of the history of East Asian forms of chess, and is the most significant publication on the topic, in a European language, for a century. Paper-back, 233 pages, price unknown. ISBN 3-89129-656-8.

XIANGQI

The 2001 UK Xiangqi (Chinese Chess) Individual Championships took place on 2nd September 2001 at the Vietnamese Community Centre in Lambeth. Those scoring at least 3/5 were as follows, in order of tie-breaking:-

4½　　Chen Fazuo, Guo Shulong
4　　La Khanh Hoa, Dong Jun, Paul Byway.
3　　Li Tak Kuen, Ngugen Van Duc, Quan Hanying, Zhang Xiaoping, Lim Chin Lee, Wu Caifang.

From Siegfried Huber I have a list of the results of the 2001 World Championships in Macau. I give the reults for the first four, selected others, and the GBR contingent (place, name, nationality, points and ELO rating).

1	Lu Qin	CHN	8 /9	2637
2	Hu Rong Hua	CHN	7½/9	2602
3	Wu Kui Lin	TWN	7½/9	2574
4	Trinh A Sang	VIE	6½/9	2476
28	Woo Wei Cheung		4½/9	2266
29	Hua Say Ty		4½/9	2147
37	Chen Fa Zuo		4 /9	2049
42	J. Schmidt-Brauns		4 /9	1755
43	Simon Henke		3 /8	1685
46	Karsten Hoffarth		3½/9	1664
47	Siegfried Huber		3½/9	1489
48	Claus Tempelmann		3½/9	1790
49	Michael Nägler		3½/9	1783
50	Lai Chi Kong		3½/9	1692
52	Rämö Jouni		2½/8	1447
56	Zhang Wen Bin		2 /8	1461
57	Dieter Knödler		3 /9	1349
59	Peter Wood		1½/5	1307
60	Rudolf Reinders		2 /9	1426

FRIDGECHESS

by David Pritchard

Fridgechess, as its name implies, is a chessboard you can stick on your fridge door. It comes with a sturdy set of chess pieces which you can stick on your board. There is one additional piece which says 'your turn' on a white background and the same message on the same piece, but upside down, on a black background. Any variant game can be played provided of course it is on the 8x8 board and uses the standard men. There is one obvious snag: you must have a resident opponent (spouse, cat, etc.). Players move when convenient, reversing the 'your play' sticker (a nice touch). For details write to Fridgeplay Ltd., P.O. Box 20198, London. W10 5ZR. Buy two games and you can play Alice Chess!