

Variant Chess

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CHANGING OF THE GUARD

After five years as our editor, **Paul Byway** is standing down. As everybody who has tried to do it knows, the labour of magazine copy preparation and camera-ready typesetting cannot easily be accommodated on top of family commitments and a full-time job, and a promotion last year added to Paul's professional responsibilities. We are very grateful to him for having shouldered the burden for so long, and for having consistently produced a magazine of high quality. I have invited him to continue writing "The End Is Nigh" and to make other contributions as the spirit moves, and I hope he will be able to accept both invitations.

Paul and I were in agreement as to how most things should be done, and I do not expect the change in editor to result in any major change to the magazine. However, the cessation of the Problem Pages has released space for other purposes, and I propose to use some of this by instituting a regular column "In the Library" in which somebody - perhaps George, perhaps myself, perhaps someone else - writes about one of the books or other items in our possession. The magazine of the British Chess Problem Society has carried such a column since I became its librarian in 1993, and it appears to have become one of the sections to which readers turn first. Our own library is more modest in size, but it contains some first-rate material which is not easily found elsewhere, and I am sure readers will like to hear about some of its contents.

The present issue starts a new volume, and I am taking the opportunity to reissue "Issue 00". The games we feature most frequently have changed in the five years since the original version was produced, and readers whose filing systems are anything like mine will long since have mislaid it anyway. The new version has been restricted to one page, the essential rules of other games being given in full each time they appear, and the saving in cost may enable it to be reissued more frequently in future.

ALICE CHESS

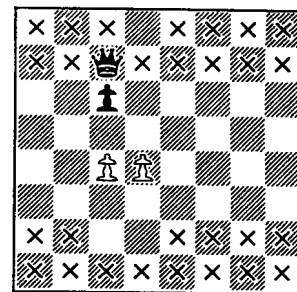
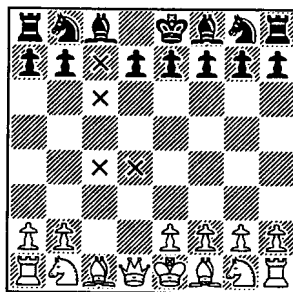
material from Peter Coast, text by JDB

Alice Chess (rules in issue 00, see above) attracts even those like myself who play it only occasionally and uncomprehendingly. Peter Coast plays it rather better; he is one of our strongest exponents, and several of his games have appeared in *VC* (see *VC* 35-36). He has recently sent me some more material, with annotations, and I have found it very enlightening; perhaps readers will also.

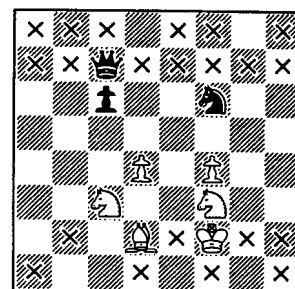
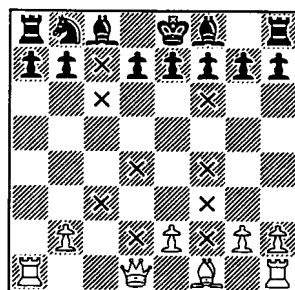
The following was one of Peter's early games, played in a BCVS postal tournament some years ago. There are errors by both sides, as always when the players are trying something new, but there are also points of elegance and subtlety. Comments in quotation marks are Peter's, as are exclamation and question marks. Crosses indicate squares which are occupied on the other board. Peter says that

when playing by correspondence he uses coins to mark these squares, and I am sure this leads to a higher standard of play.

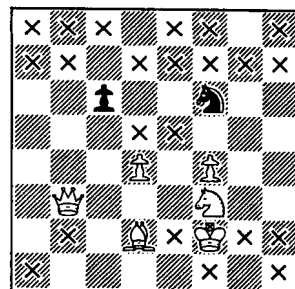
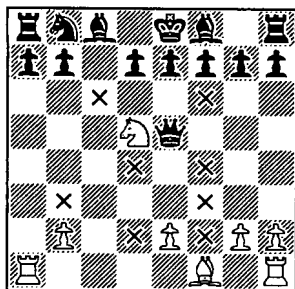
1 c2-c4>B c7-c6>B 2 d2-d4>B Qd8-c7>B! :



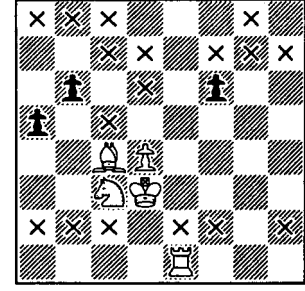
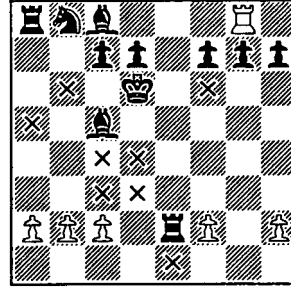
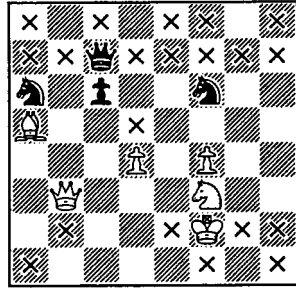
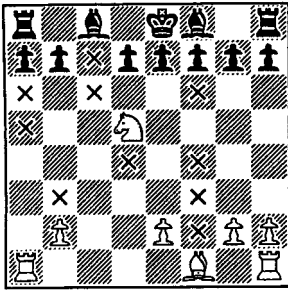
"Black is threatening 3...Qa5>A mate, and it is surprisingly difficult for White to do anything reasonable about it. For example, 3 Bd2>B Qa5>A+ 4 Bc3>A QxB>B. Perhaps the best is 3 Qd2>B Qa5>A+ 4 Kd1>B, but then 4...Qa4>B+ wins the pawn on c4. I chose to give my king some air." 3 f2-f4>B Qc7-a5>A+ 4 Ke1-f2>B Qa5xa2>B+ 5 Bc1-d2>B Qa2xc4>A. "I am not doing too well: two pawns down in five moves! Fortunately, Black is not threatening too much at the moment, so I must rely on continuing my development." 6 Ng1-f3>B Ng8-f6>B 7 Nb1-c3>B Qc4-c7>B :



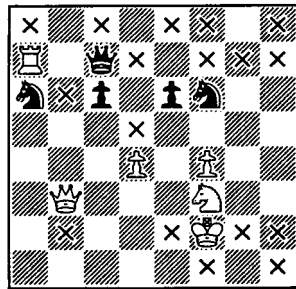
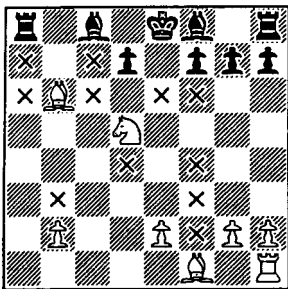
"This threatens 8...Qxf4>A. It is not much of a threat, however, and fails to improve Black's position." 8 Nc3-d5>A Qc7-e5>A? "Black persists in making short-term threats with his queen, to the neglect of his development." 9 Qd1-b3>B :



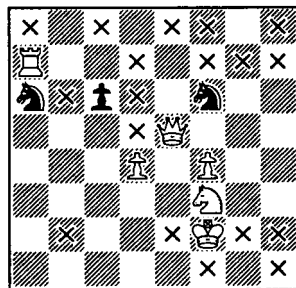
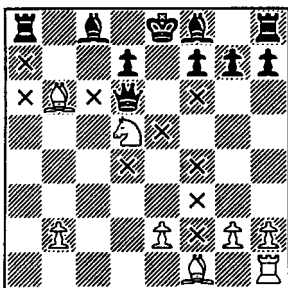
"White is beginning now to generate some counter-chances. 10 Rxa7>B, for example, is possible." (This can happen even in the opening, where 1 a3/a4>B threatens 2 Rxa7>B winning a pawn at once, but the natural developing move 1...Nc6>B provides a sufficient counter.) 9...Nb8-a6>B 10 Bd2-c3>A Qe5-c7>B 11 Bc3-a5>B :



"I was planning 12 Nxe7>B if the queen moves. Black's king would be in danger because it lacks flight squares." 11...b7-b6>B 12 Ba5xb6>A. "I can now repeat the above idea with 13 Ba5>B." 12...e7-e6>B 13 Ra1xa7>B :



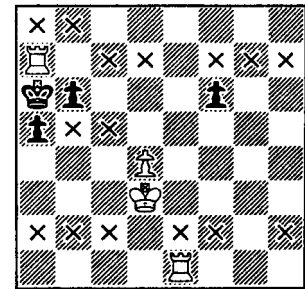
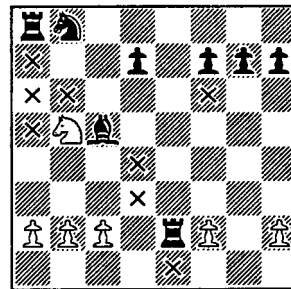
13...Qc7-d6>A 14 Qb3-e3>A+ e6-e5>A 15 Qe3xe5>B :



This threatens 16 Qe4>A, which is mate because an attempted interposition such as ...Be7 will simply transfer the man to B. Peter describes the move as "obvious, but [it] needs careful calculation to make sure that Black does not have an effective counter-attack." In fact he doesn't, and the game ended 15...Ra8-a2>B+ 16 Kf2-g1>A! Qd6xb6>B (creating a flight square for his king, but it is to no avail) 17 Qe5-e4>A+ Ke8-d8>B 18 Qe5-e7>B mate. A better defence would have been 16...Be7>B, when the equivalent attack 17 Qe4>A+ Kf8>B 18 Qe7>B is impossible because e7 on B is already occupied, but I suspect it would have made no difference in the long run. Lack of development is no less a disadvantage in Alice than it is in any other game, and Black's king will surely succumb to White's attack in the not too distant future.

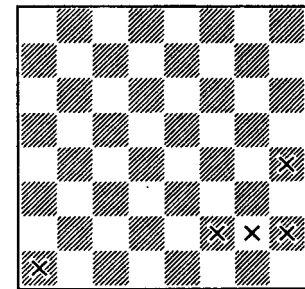
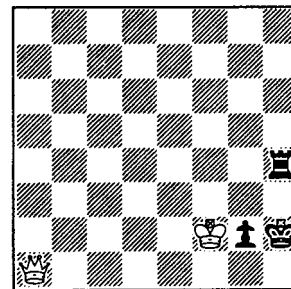
This was one of the games and positions cited by Peter in a series of articles in *Abstract Games* some two or three years ago. Another position he cited was that below, which was quoted in VC 29 but which I repeat for the sake of Peter's commentary. It occurred after Black's 15th move in a game played by David Pritchard, who as White announced mate in eight.

Play continued 16 Nc3-b5>A+ Kd6-c6>B 17 Rg8xc8>B+ Kc6-b7>A 18 Bc4-d5>A+ Kb7-a6>B 19 Nb5xc7>B+ Ka6-a7>A 20 Nc7-b5>A+ Ka7-a6>B. "At first sight it seems that nothing has been gained by the last two moves, but the square c7 is now free, and this allows a sacrificial conclusion to the game." 21 Bd5-b7>B+ Ka6xb7>A 22 Rc8-c7>A+ Kb7-a6>B 23 Rc7-a7>B mate :



"In the final position the White Ra7 is protected by the Nb5, which in turn blocks the Black King! King hunts of this sort occur frequently in Alice games. I think there are two reasons for this. The first is that the increased space available for the pieces gives greater freedom for the attacking force and allows it to cover (on one board or another) more squares of the opposing King's field. The second reason is that in chess-like games attack is easier than defence. Alice games are still being played at a primitive strategic level, and this gives a natural advantage to the attacker. We have only to think of the prevalence of successful sacrificial attacks in expert Chess games of the Nineteenth Century to realize that we still have a lot to learn about effective defensive play."

Peter also sent me a splendid two-move problem by Ronald Turnbull and himself, and while we no longer have a dedicated problem section I remain more than willing to print problems which enrich articles on games.



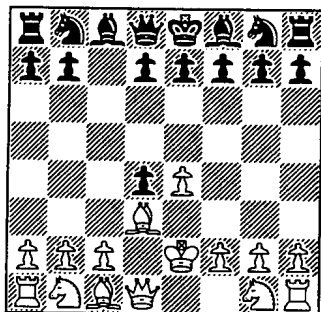
All the men are on board A, and White is to play and mate in two against any defence. Answer on page 15.

PROGRESSIVE CHESS

by John Beasley

Peter Fayers has been Googling, and he has come across the games in the final stage of the 1996 "First World Internet Progressive Chess Championship". I don't think these have appeared previously in VC.

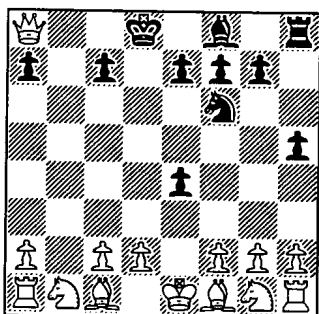
The tournament was played to "Scottish" rules (giving check before the end of a turn is permitted, but terminates the sequence), and was won by Fred Galvin, a very familiar name in "The End Is Nigh". His game against Scott Gordon had an unusual finish. 1 d4 2 c5 cxd4 3 e4 Bd3 Ke2 :



4 dxe3 e.p. Qc7 Qf4 Qxf2 mate!

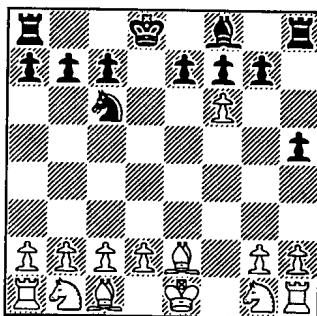
Legal? Yes, says the *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*: "An e.p. capture is admissible on the first move of a turn only. Any pawn that made a two-step move during the previous turn sequence is liable to capture e.p. unless it was then moved again."

Hugh Brodie's game against Norbert Geissler made me think. 1 e4 2 Nc6 d5 3 Qg4 Qxc8 Qxd8+ 4 Kxd8 dxe4 Nf6 h5, and why not the apparently obvious 5 b4 b5 bxc6 cxb7 bxa8Q+, or 5 d4 and the same? The diagram shows the case 5 b4 :



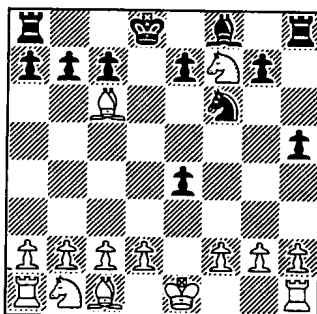
No doubt experienced players will

find the answer at once, but I did not. The answer to the actual 5 f3 fxe4 e5 exf6 Be2 is perhaps easier :



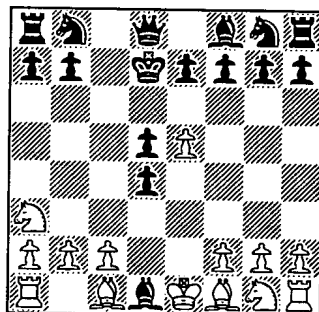
Answers to these questions will be found on page 15.

So White must find something else, and Peter Coast suggests that perhaps 5 Bb5 Bxc6 Nf3 Ne5 Nxf7+ is good :



"There seems to be no mate for Black, and his K will be in great danger on White's 7th move."

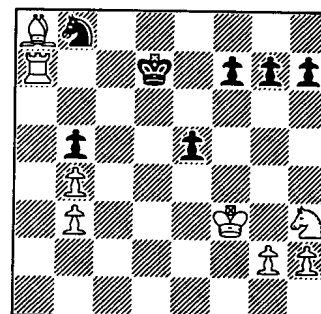
Fred Galvin and Noam Elkies both reached the same position against Juraj Lorinc. 1 d4 2 c5 cxd4 3 e4 e5 Na3 4 d5 Bg4 Bxd1 Kd7 :



Answer again on page 15 (they both found the same one).

They had a tougher time when they met each other. Fred Galvin was White. 1 d4 2 c5 cxd4 3 e4 e5 f4 4 e6 d3 dxc2 cxd1/Q+ 5 Kxd1 f5 fxe6 e7 exd8/Q+ (bPe6 stops 5 Kxd1 Nf3 Ng5 Bc4 Bxf7 mate) 6 Kxd8 d6 dxe5

b5 Kc7 Bg4+ 7 Be2 Bxg4 Bf3 Bxa8 Ke2 Nc3 Nd5+ (having no forced mate, White goes for material) 8 Kd7 Nf6 Bb4 Rc8 Rxc1 Rxa1 Nxd5 Nf4+ (Black does the same) 9 Kf3 a3 axb4 b3 Ne2 Nxf4 Nh3 Rxa1 Rxa7+ :



Black's pawns can now do nothing, and Kd6, Nxa7, Nxa8, Nxb3 lets White's g-pawn capture and run. He actually tried 10 Ke6 Kf5 Nc6 Nxa7 Nc8 Nb6 Nxa8 Nb6 h6 e4+, and resigned after 11 Ke3 Nf2 Nxe4 Nc3 Na4 Nxb6 Na4 Nc3 Ne2 Kf3 h3.

There will be more in future issues, and readers who do not want to wait can type "WIPCC" into Google and follow the links given. Our first game appears as "Galvin-Gordon", but the tournament cross-table suggests that it should be the other way round.

MAGNETIC FOOLERY

material from Ian Richardson

My made-up Magnetic Chess game in VC 44 prompted Ian Richardson to try and find the "Fool's Mate" in this genre. The rule in Magnetic Chess is that when a man lands on any square, the nearest men on the same rank or file are magnetized, enemy men being attracted as far as possible and the player's own men being repelled (unlike poles attract, like poles repel). Kings are excluded. So the ordinary moves 1 g4 e5 2 f3 Qh4 don't result in mate because Black's 1...e5 has attracted wPe2 forward to e4.

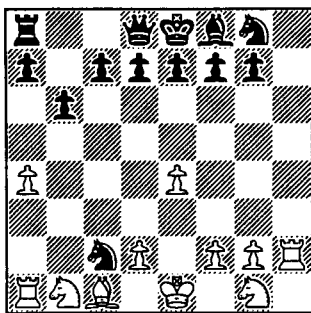
All the same, Ian was able to find a way of giving mate on Black's second move, which he sent with some diffidence: "you probably know this already". Well, I didn't, nor did David Pritchard, and we think you will enjoy working it out. Answer on page 15.

LOSING CHESS: WHAT IF ...

by John Beasley

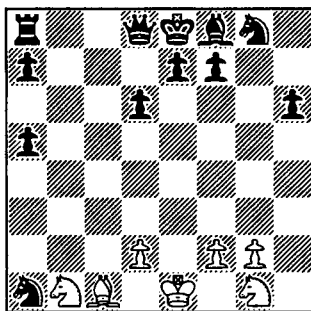
Here is another selection of games from the 2001 "First Unofficial World Championship", with analysis by Stan Goldovski's program *Giveaway Wizard*. Paul Byway would have been willing to continue this series under his editorship, so I see no reason not to do so under my own. Answers are on page 15.

From Round 3. White **Johan Bosman**, Black **Jaap Kamminga**.
1 e3 b6 2 Qh5 Ba6 3 Bxa6 Nxa6
4 Qxh7 Rxh7 5 b4 Rxh2 6 Rxh2
Nxb4 7 a4 Nxc2 8 e4 :



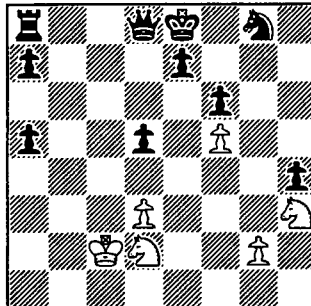
and why not 8...Nxe1? The king is a strong piece, and taking it is normally a good idea.

Black actually took the rook, 8...Nxa1, and play continued 9 e5 d6 10 exd6 cxd6 (other moves lose off-hand) 11 Rh6 gxh6 (11...Nxb6 loses off-hand) 12 a5 bxa5 and now White missed a difficult forced win :

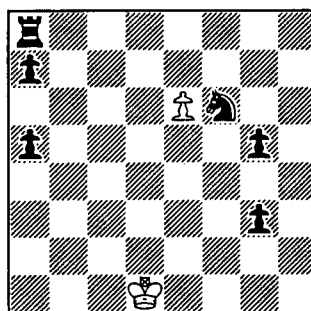


In practice he played 13 d3 to rid himself of his bishop, and play continued 13...h5 14 Nh3 h4 (other moves lose at once) 15 Kd2 Nc2 16 Kxc2 Bh6 17 Bxh6 Nxh6 18 f4

Ng8 (there appears to be no tactical need for this, and relinquishing space is not normally good) 19 Nd2 d5 20 f5 f6 and again White missed a difficult forced win :



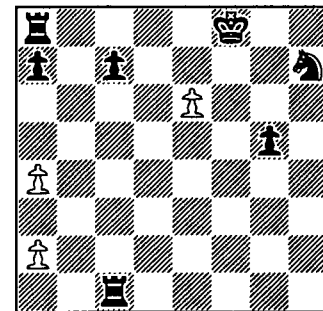
His actual line was 21 Ng5 fxe5 22 f6 exf6 23 g3 hxg3, and *Wizard* now thinks that 24 Kc3 is good for White though there is no forced win within my computer's horizon. The threat is 25 c4 dxc4 26 Kxc4 Qxd3 27 Kxd3 with an inevitable king giveaway, and 24...Kd7 can be met by 25 Ne4 dxe4 26 dxe4 f5 (else an immediate loss) 27 exf5 Ke6 (ditto) 28 fxe6 Qd2/..d4 (again ditto) 29 KxQ. But White preferred 24 Kd1 threatening 25 Ne4, with sequel 24...Kd7 25 Ne4 dxe4 26 dxe4 f5 27 exf5 Nf6 28 Ke1 (threat 29 Kf2 etc) Ke6 29 fxe6 Qd1 30 Kxd1 and we have an endgame in which Black's proliferation of pawns will surely stand him in bad stead :



Black does his best, 30...g2, but after 31 e7 Rf8 32 exf8K White's kings will be able to give themselves away to Black's pawns. The actual conclusion was 32...Ng4 33 Ke8 a6 34 Kd7 g1B 35 Kd6 a4 36 Kc5 and Black resigned.

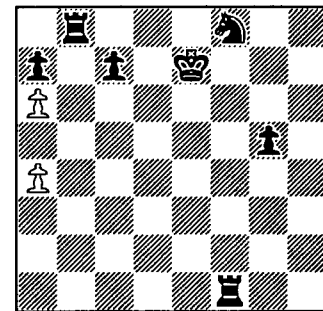
I don't think White can be blamed for missing the forced wins in the middle game, because the play is complicated, but they do show Black to have been lost as far back as 9...d6.

Another instructive Round 3 ending was won by **Frederick Sandstrom**. After Black's 31st move :



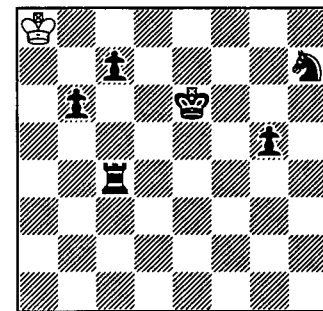
Black can hope to block his a-pawn, but his other men must be given away.

White actually played 32 e7 Kxe7 33 a5, and Black marshalled his men by 33...Rb8 34 a4 Rf1 35 a6 Nf8 :



Now 36 a5 can be met by 36...Rb7 37 axb7 a6, and all promotions lose.

Nor can White do better. 32 a3 merely wastes time; if he tries 32 a5, the computer gives 32...Ke7(!) 33 a6 Kxe6 34 a4 Rb8 35 a5 Rb6 (35...Rb7 no longer leads to a win within my computer's horizon) 36 axb6 axb6 37 a7 Rc4 38 a8K (other promotions allow six immediate giveaways) :



Now Black has 38...Re4 39 Kb8 (39 Ka7/Kb7 c5 etc) b5 40 Kxc7 Kd7, with ...Re7, ...Nf6, ...b1R, and a win with rook against king. Endings like this occur quite frequently.

EXCAVATIONS

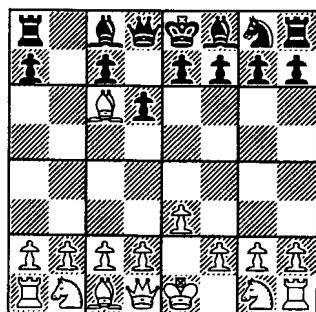
started by Peter Fayers...

Plaid Chess (Bill Rawlings, 1974)

Starting an occasional series where we go digging deep into the *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants (ECV)*, unearthing treasures that you may not have noticed.

Hidden deep away between Plague Chess (don't even ask!) and Plex we find a short entry (half a column-inch) on Plaid Chess, a hybrid combining Scottish Progressive (checks are allowed mid-sequence, but bring the sequence to a premature end), and Grid Chess (a grid divides the board into 2 x 2 regions, and moves are only legal if they cross a gridline). Hence "Plaid" = Scottish Grid, a nice touch.

The grid constraint limits close-range movement, particularly of the Kings. *ECV* quotes this blunder from a postal game: 1 e3 2 d6 Na6 3 Bxa6 Bxb7 Bc6# :



It is mate: neither the Bc8 nor Qd8 can interpose, as the move would not cross a gridline. Note that bPe7 is not blocking the black King - even if it weren't there, it would still be mate.

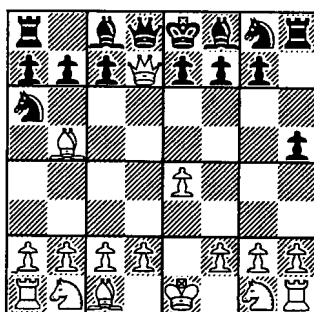
Well, at least the (anonymous) players didn't spend too much on postage.

Although this type of constraint on the defending pieces will enable some sharp tactical possibilities in the initial stages, there would appear to be a drawback in the middle-game (if you ever get that far). The inability of pawns to march straight forward and promote will make it increasingly difficult to force mate as the other pieces are eliminated in the early stages.

...continued by others...

John Beasley, George Jelliss, and David Sedgwick tried this variant out after the AGM, but the play said more about the inexperience of the players than about the variant, and John has suggested that it might be better to suppress the blunders and to report some post-meeting musings. JDB:

"Half our games started 1 e4. This doesn't threaten the normal 3 Bc4 Qh5 Qxf7 (there being no grid line between f7 and e8, this isn't even check), but black must do something about the threat of mate by 3 Nc3 Nb5 Nxc7. If he defends c7 by 2 Na6, he takes a guard off d7, and if he couples it with a nothing move such as h5 then white can mate by 3 Bb5 Qg4 Qxd7 :

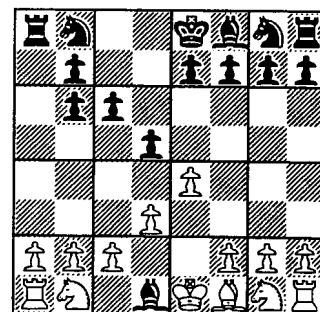


So if black plays 2 Na6, he must accompany it with either Nf6 to restore the guard on d7 or c6/e6/f5 to block access to it. Black's move d6 in the *ECV* game probably had a similar purpose, since Bb5 is now check and ends the turn, but we have seen what it allowed instead.

"George Jelliss had a better idea: 2 c5 Qb6. This stops immediate mate on c7, and if white blindly takes the queen with his knight, 3 Nc3 Nd5 Nxb6, black can (and did) mate on c2. However, white can take the queen another way, 3 d4 dxc5 cxb6, and now his king has a flight square at d2. Black can continue 4 d5 Bg4 Bxd1 taking white's queen in turn, but the fourth move of his sequence must be something like Nd7 to prevent the mating reply 5 Nc3 Bh6 Rxd1 Nxd5 Nc7.

"A variation of the same idea is 2 c6 Qb6. The only safe queen capture is now 3 d3 Be3 Bxb6, to which black can reply 4 d5 Bg4 Bxd1 axb6 and he appears to be standing

quite well :



Black's rook threatens to get into play along the a-file, while white's development is hampered by his immobile pawn on d3. Try 5 Nc3 Na4 Nxb6 Nxa8 to get rid of the rook, coupled with say Kxd1 - no, 6 h5 Rh6 Re6 Nf6 Nxe4 Nxf2 is mate; if Rxd1 instead of Kxd1, 6 e5 Ba3 Bxb2 Bc3 is mate; and even the attempt to waste a black move by Nc7+ fails because 6 Kd8 Bg4 e5 Ba3 Bxb2 Bc3 is mate. The diagram might be a good starting point for further investigation.

"Another possible defence is 2 d5 dxe4 giving a flight. Now 3 Nc3 Nb5 Nxc7 is only check, and after 4 Kd7 Nc6 etc it is white who is mated."

...and summarized by Peter

It wasn't a tournament, merely a set of friendlies, but George Jelliss picked up the idea more quickly than anyone else, and I think we should record that he scored 5 out of 6.

It appears that the perceived drawback of static pawns in the middle game is not really a problem - the middle-game was never reached!

The opening needs a lot of care; from the game array white has the threat of mate on series 3: Na3, Nb5, Nxc7#. So on his first move black must either create a flight (d8 or d7) or guard c7. However, black in the first example did both, and look what happened to him!

Conclusion: Good fun, worth a try.

This was a splendid idea of Peter's, and more such contributions will be welcome. If you have been digging around in ECV and found something you like to play, please let us know what and why, and send us a couple of your game scores to print. - JDB

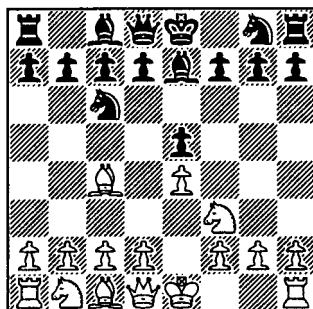
HIERARCHICAL CHESS

by John Beasley

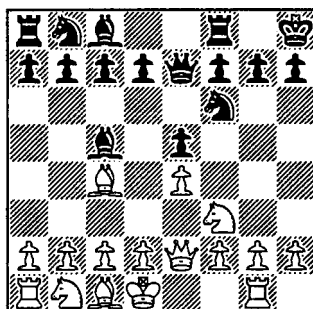
It is no secret that I go to the annual French problem meeting at Messigny for the food and not for the chess. That said, one of its most attractive features is the blitz tournament on the Sunday afternoon. This year, we had no fewer than 14 competitors.

After a brief look at Kamikaze Chess (the captor vanishes along with the man captured), which is used in problems but proved quite unplayable as a game, we decided on something which I had not met before: on your first move you play a pawn, on your second a knight, on your third a bishop, and so on round. I failed to catch its name, but John Rice, whose ears are sharper, reported it in *The Problemist* as Hierarchical Chess. If you have men of the kind due to move and cannot move any of them, you lose; if you no longer have men of this kind, you move a man of the following kind instead (so if you lose your knights your sequence becomes PBRQK, and if you lose your bishops as well it becomes PRQK). This is complicated and the Extinction Chess rule might seem more natural (if you lose all your men of a kind, you lose the game), but in practice it seems to work. Check is normal, and must be countered by a man of the kind which is next to move; castling counts as a rook move.

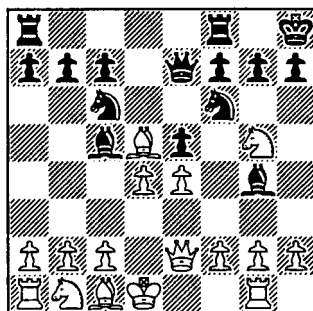
The writing down of five-minute games during play is quite impossible, and what follows will consist of reconstruction and example. Let me start with a typical howler. We had played something like 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4, and in an absent-minded moment I played 3...Be7 (diagram at top of next column) instead of the natural and correct 3...Bc5. As always, there was a reason; I felt like a change, I wanted b4 for my knight (we had already discovered that a knight on its fifth rank could threaten an unstoppable check), and of course I did not want to play ...Bd6 and block my d-pawn. So I blocked my queen instead, and all I could do was laugh and resign (4 Rg1 Rb8 5 Qe2 ???).



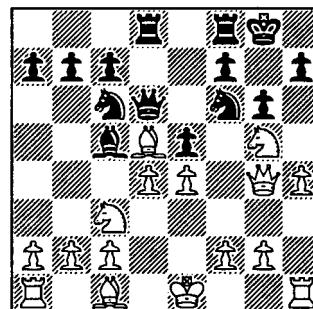
To get a deeper feel for the game, let us play through something more sensible. 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 Rg1 (White likes to keep his king in the centre) 0-0 (Black prefers to castle) 5 Qe2 Qe7 6 Kd1 Kh8 :



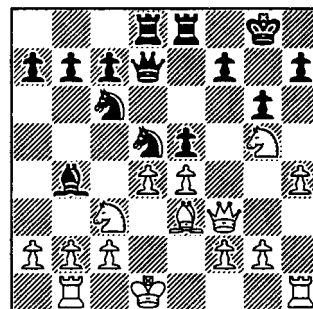
7 d4 (when playing a new game, space and mobility in the immediate future are likely to be more valuable than an extra pawn later on) d5 (Black agrees) 8 Ng5 (White has visions of Nxf7+ at move 20, after Black has played 12...Kg8 and 18...Kh8) Nc6 (the knight at f6 must stay put to stop Qh5) 9 Bxd5 (this being so, White reckons he can safely take this pawn) Bg4 :



Ouch! In ordinary chess, White would interpose on f3, but here the queen will have to move before the pawn or knight and its move Qf3 will block this square. Never mind. 10 Rh1 Rad8 11 Qxg4! (pardon?) Qd6 12 Ke1 Kg8 13 h4 g6 (trying to give his king some air) 14 Nc3 :



Too late, Black sees that his intended 14...Nxg4 will allow 15 Bxf7, which is mate (it is check and the check cannot be cancelled by the bishop, which is the next piece to move - this is why White didn't capture it at move 13). He therefore plays 14...Nxg4, but after 15 Be3 Bb4 16 Rb1 Rfe8 17 Qf3 Qd7 18 Kd1 he resigns :



His next move will put his king on a dark square, and White will have an unanswerable knight check at move 20.

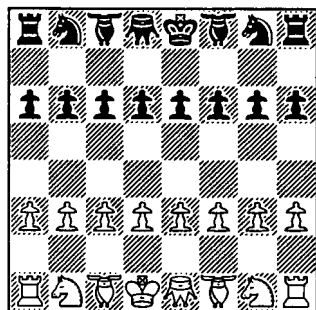
It's a curious game, usually decided by a snap attack on the king, and a development such as White's Ng5 above is standard practice. However, there is a fundamental asymmetry in that Black must answer a queen move by a queen move whereas White answers one by a king move, and this would appear to give White a massive advantage (he can give a next-square check with an undefended queen, Black cannot); I suspect that a White win from the game array may be provable by computer. That said, in our present state of knowledge the game is good fun. For the record, the tournament was won by Eric Huber with 11 out of 13, ahead of Joachim Iglesias and Alain Villeneuve (author of the standard French textbook on orthodox chess endings, and always charmingly willing to have a go at something new).

KRAMNIK PLAYS MAKRUK THAI

material from René Gralla

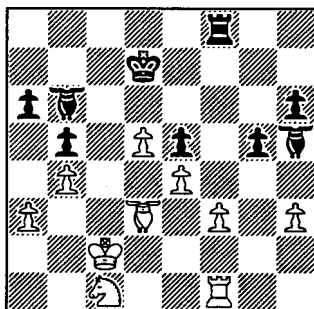
A recent post brought a press release: "World Sensation - Chess World Champion Kramnik playing Makruk Thai!" Like most journalists, I normally put such things straight into the bin, but I am always sympathetic towards a leading player who is willing to try something different. As the Good Companion Chess Problem Club wrote when Capablanca first accepted an invitation to take part in one of its solving tourneys, "The master is a good sport as most professionals would have refused the test." So I ignored the hype and read on, and I am glad I did so; I found the material to be of genuine interest.

Makruk (*Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*, pages 184-6) is Thai Chess. King ("Khun"), rook ("Rua"), knight ("Ma") as in our chess, but no castling; queen ("Met" or "Pit") one square diagonally; bishop ("Khon" or "Thon") one square diagonally or forward; pawn ("Bia") as in our chess, but starting on the third rank (no double-step move) and promoting to queen on the sixth. Readers will notice immediate similarities with other historical and present-day forms of chess, and *ECV* points out some more. Initial array (note that the kings are on d1/e8):



Peter Fayers tells me that he has a genuine set, but the game can be played with ordinary chess equipment, and so I am using ordinary chess symbols, inverting them when the moves are different from those to which we are accustomed.

Kramnik's game in the press release was played against Gralla himself. Apparently he was in Bonn for a simul and had expressed interest, and the game was played as a result of an interview. It was not written down, but Gralla later reconstructed the start and finish. Play started **1 c3-c4 f6-f5 2 Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 3 Ng1-e2 Nb8-d7** (Kramnik had White), and after "tough fighting" the following position was reached:



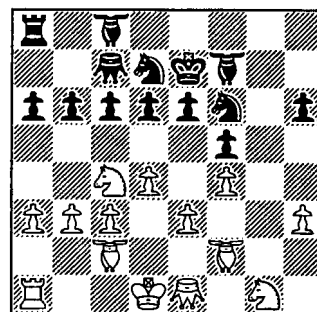
"Now Black could have held the balance by 1...Bh4 2 Be2 Rf6 3 Rh1 Kd6 threatening 4...Bg3" (Gralla, abbreviated). Instead, Black played **1...g5-g4**, and after **2 h3xg4 Bh5xg4 3 Rf1-h1 Rf8xf3 4 Rh1xb6 Rf3-f2+ 5 Kc2-c3** he resigned (either material goes or the d-pawn will promote).

Gralla reports Kramnik as wanting to play a home-and-away match against the current Thai champion, Tor Pagnaam, and *ECV* quotes an estimate that two million Thais know at least the moves. So Tor Pagnaam is champion of a population of fair size, and a match against him will be something to look out for. I hope somebody will tell us if it materializes.

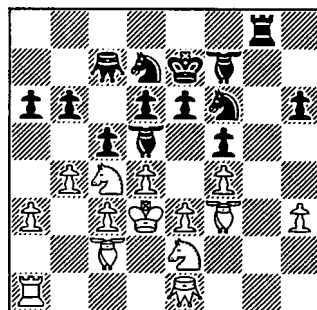
There are three full-length games in *ECV*, and Gralla gives a further game which players of our chess wanting to try their hand may find instructive. He played it as Black in a Hamburg training tournament earlier in the year. Notes based on Gralla's.

1 d3-d4 f6-f5 2 Bc1-c2 Ng8-f6 3 Nb1-d2 Bf8-f7 4 Nd2-c4 (Gralla criticizes this as a waste of time, since the knight eventually has to retreat without having achieved anything) **4...Qd8-c7 5 Bf1-f2 Nb8-d7 6 f3-f4** (pawn weaknesses are just as damaging as in our own chess and Gralla gives this move a resounding

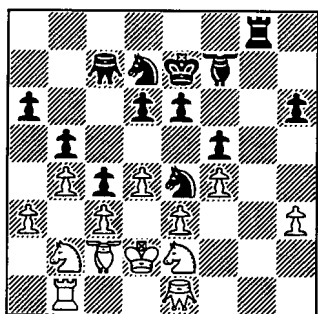
question mark, saying that the leaving of the hole on e4 "seems to be the decisive strategic miscalculation") **Rh8-g8 7 Ng1-e2 g6-g5 8 Rh1-g1 g5xf4 9 g3xf4** (my instincts would be to play **9 exf4**, liquidating the backward pawn on e3 and giving myself a little more space to breathe) **Rg8xg1 10 Ne2xg1 Ke8-e7**:



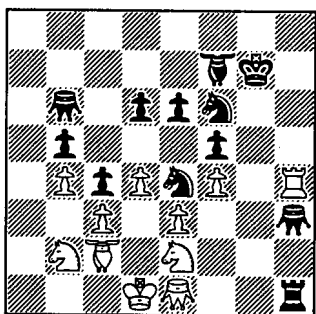
11 Bf2-f3 (both sides start to focus on the hole at e4) **Bc8-b7** (the Black bishop may seem far away, but it will soon get there) **12 Ng1-e2 Ra8-g8** (White's backward development has given Black the g-file) **13 Kd1-d2** (a more natural development would appear to be **Bd3** and **Kc2**) **c6-c5** (opening up the bishop's route to e4) **14 Kd2-d3** (the king looks horribly vulnerable here, and duly proves to be so) **Bb7-c6 15 b3-b4** (weakening another light square) **Bc6-d5!**:



Now Black threatens **16...b5** and **17...c4+** (he could in fact have played it last move), and there is not much that White can do about it. **16 Ra1-b1 b6-b5** (showing the folly of **4 Nc4**) **17 Nc4-b2** (if **17 Na5** then **17...Qb6**, while after **17 Nd2** the White king is trapped in the middle of the board and **17...c4+** wins a knight) **c5-c4+ 18 Kd3-d2 Bd5-e4** (as Gralla neatly puts it, the Saint goes marching in) **19 Bf3xe4 Nf6xe4+** and the knight has achieved an ideal position:



The rest was easy. 20 Kd2-d1 Rg8-g2 21 a3-a4 Qc7-b6 (to keep the White rook out of a5 later) 22 a4xb5 a6xb5 23 Rb1-a1 Rg2-h2 (Black calculates that White's Ra8 will lead nowhere) 24 Ra1-a6 (and White doesn't play it anyway) Rh2xh3 25 Qe1-d2 h6-h5 26 Ra6-a8 (too late now) h5-h4 27 Ra8-h8 Rh3-h1+ 28 Qd2-e1 h4-h3Q 29 Rh8-h7 Ke7-f6 30 Rh7-h8 Kf6-g7 31 Rh8-h4 Nd7-f6 and White resigned :

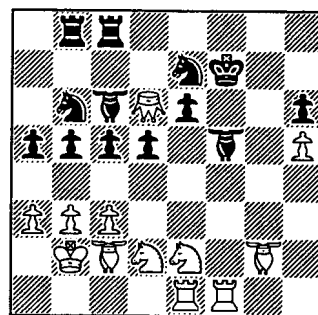


He is totally paralyzed, and 32...Ng4 will lead to his complete destruction.

Gralla makes the point that you will find an enhanced welcome in Thailand if you are able to play its local chess. So if you are on a business or backpacking trip and find yourself invited to play, how can you avoid making too great a fool of yourself?

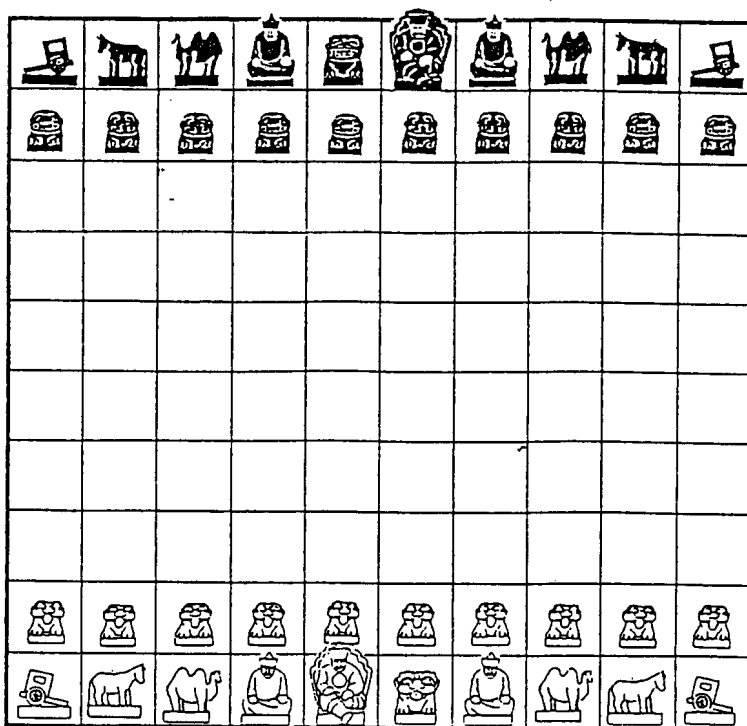
Playing with genuine men will help you to get used to the moves (you will find that the bishop makes an excellent short-range bludgeon), and the slower initial engagement reduces the risk of blundering into an opening trap. Pawn play carries over, and the later stages are similar to rook endings in our own chess. As for middle-game strategy, the game above shows what not to do, and the games in *ECV* give the other side of the picture. Let's look at the first of these. 1 Nd2 Bf7 2 Ne2 Ne7 3 Bc2 Nd7 4 Qf2 Qc7 5 h4 b5 6 g4 a5 7 Kc1 Bb7 8 Kb2

Nb6 9 Bg2 c5 10 g5 Bc6 11 gxf6 Bxf6 12 e4 Rb8 13 Qe3 d5 14 d4 Qd6 15 Rae1 Kf7 16 Rhf1 Rhc8 17 h5 g5 18 e5 Qxe5 19 dxe5 Bxe5 (*ECV* says that the queen is worth about two pawns) 20 f4 gxf4 21 Qxf4 Bf6 22 Qe5 Bf5 23 Qd6 and we have the diagram on the right. Push the pawns forward to gain space; develop the pieces behind them; free the back rank for the rooks; probe forward with the queen, which is expendable; blast a hole with the pawns as soon as opportunity arises, and let the pieces



pour through. For the rest of the game, which had a pretty finish, see *ECV*.

And happy travelling!



SHATAR AND HIASHATAR

by David Pritchard

Shatar is Mongolian chess (as described in the *ECV*) but according to Lev Kisluik, quoting a Japanese source, the kings face the queens in the array. This may simply be an alternative arrangement.

Hiashatar, or Mongolian Great Chess, is played on an uncoloured 10x10 board with 20 pieces a side (see diagram above). The two extra pieces, which sit on either side of the king and queen, are bodyguards. A bodyguard moves up to two squares

in any direction. It also exercises a baleful influence over the squares (up to eight) immediately surrounding it. A piece cannot capture a bodyguard directly but must first alight on a square adjacent to it. The piece (Q, R, B) can now only move one square on its next move and if that move places it on a square adjacent to a bodyguard (the same piece or a different one) then the same move restriction applies to its next move (no information is available on the move of the knight in these circumstances). Notice that this move limitation applies regardless of whether the bodyguard is hostile or friendly. A bodyguard cannot give check. It is not known to what extent the game is now played, if at all.

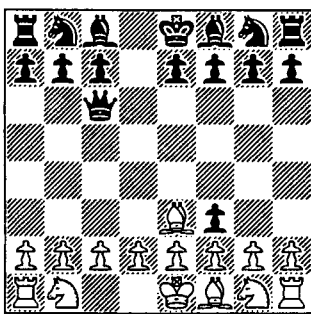
PROOF GAMES

by Peter Fayers

So far we have kept things rather simple (believe it or not), by only using single-move variants, those where only one piece at a time moves on the board. Things get more complex, and proof games increasingly difficult (both to compose and to solve), when a move on the board can cause several other pieces to change places. A Magnetic Chess proof game of mine has been published both in the Romanian problem magazine *Quartz* and in the French *diagrammes*, but no-one has managed to solve it yet. And it is only after White's 5th - a mere nine half-moves long.

I won't inflict that one on you (yet) but instead look at Dynamo chess (see articles by George Jelliss in VC 36-37 and VC 40-41). Here units can push or pull other units along their line of action, so (usually) two pieces on the board move with every turn. Couple that with the ability of units to voluntarily move from the board, and the possibilities multiply.

8 - Jürgen Tschöpe
Problemkiste 1995

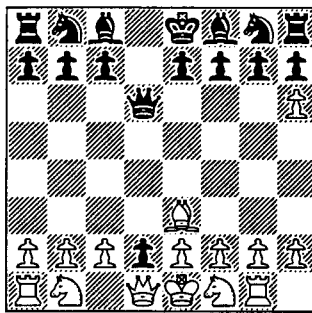


After White's third. Game score?
Dynamo Chess

Where do we start with 8? Normally we'd expect the d2 Pawn to have to move to allow Bc1-e3, but in Dynamo the Bishop can just shove it out of the way. But to where? Given that it has to get back to d2, it needs to be somehow pulled back to the d-file later on. The presence of the black Queen on c6 looks a likely candidate

for achieving this, so for the moment let's try 1 Be3(Pd2-h6). Black's first move, to comply with our hypothesis, must bring the Queen to d6 so we can drag the wP over next time. But in turn this must move Pd7 somewhere down the d-file, to a square where it can be pushed or pulled to f3. Examining this file square-by-square, we notice d2 as a possibility, with Nb1 capable of pushing a pawn from there to f3. So we try 1...Qd6(Pd7-d2)+ (Check, no less!)

The position after one move each:

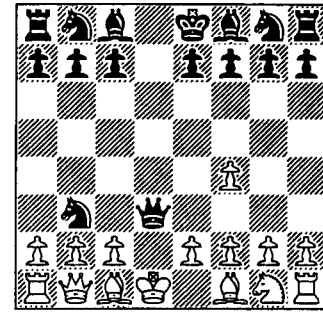


Now it falls into place; Nb1, without moving, can push the bP over to relieve the check. The bQ then, as planned, moves over to c6 bringing the wP back to the d-file, then the wQ commits hara-kiri, leaving the board to bring her pawn home. The solution finishes: 2 Nb1(Pd2-f3) Qc6(Ph6-d6) 3 Qd1*(Pd6-d2). Easy, wasn't it?

With Dynamo chess, you can get some spectacular results. Those of you who remember my "Turbulent Priests" article in VC 31 can imagine how impressed I was when I first saw the next one. Back in 1985, composer Manfred Rittirsch had produced a Dynamo proof game - after white's sixth - where the position could only be reached by swapping over the white Bishops. Although each was apparently on its home square, they had been transposed. Unfortunately, this problem was found to be cooked, Manfred couldn't fix it, and it was not until some years later that Paul Raican came up with a problem, not only showing the same effect, but in fewer moves (see top of next column).

I wouldn't expect you to solve this one without some help, so here are some clues. The white Bishops, as I have said, have swapped places. This was done by the black Knight on b3,

9 - Paul Raican
dedicated to Manfred Rittirsch
1st prize, Phénix 1990-1992



After Black's fourth. Game score?
Dynamo Chess

which pulled the f1 Bishop out to d2 and, later, pushed the original c1 Bishop from d2 over to f1. The third knight is promoted, which means the black P was pushed down the d file. WPd2 had to get out of the way, also Bc1 has to move to let the Queen past. In fact, the first two moves are similar to the previous problem.

Next we try to promote the pawn by using the bishop to push it back to c1, a single knight-leap from b3. Trial and error reveals that this doesn't leave white enough moves, while black has plenty of time. So we instead promote the pawn on b1, by retiring the white Knight and dragging the pawn there.

See if you can take it from there.

VC 44 solutions. 4 (PF, Hostage Chess, wPe2 on e3, bQ on d5, after Black's 3rd): 1 e4 d5; 2 exd5 Qxd5; 3 (P<>P)P*e3 P*d7.

5 (PF, Hostage Chess, bBB on b1/f1, wNb1 on c8, wBf1 on f8, bPh7 in White's PoW camp, after Black's 7th): 1 Nc3 h5; 2 Nd5 h4; 3 Nxe7 h3; 4 Nxc8 hxg2; 5 (P<>P)P*e7 gxf1=B; 6 exf8=B P*e7; 7 (B<>P)P*g2 B*b1.

6 (Michel Caillaud, Andernach Chess, wNg1 off, bPd7 off, after Black's 3rd): 1 Nf3 Nc6; 2 Ne5 Nxe5=w; 3 Nxd7=b Nb8.

7 (Thomas Brand, Kölnische Kontakt, wPe2 on e4, bPe7 on e5, bPh7 on h3, after Black's 5th): 1 Nf3 h6; 2 e4 e5; 3 Ng5 h5; 4 Nh3 h4; 5 Ng1 h3. The non-thematic moves 2 e4 e5 were required to avoid a cook; without them white could have started with 1 Nh3.

IN THE LIBRARY

by John Beasley

Schweizerische Schachzeitung, issue for December 1914 (photocopy)

This was a donation from Jurgen Stigter, which hasn't yet been passed on to George and so isn't in the catalogue. In 1914, *Schweizerische Schachzeitung* devoted a complete forty-page issue to Kriegspiel; would we like a photocopy? Yes, of course, I said, and he took the opportunity to pass it over while he was in London last year.

In Kriegspiel, a player sees only his own men, and at each turn he tries out moves in turn and an umpire says "No" until one is possible. The umpire also announces checks and captures. The game is now just over a century old (the *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* gives its date as 1899) and in its early years it appears to have been something of a craze; *ECV* gives an extensive list of references from the period up to 1916. Subsequent interest was not as great, but the game has always retained a quiet but steady popularity, and most chess players are aware of its existence.

A symptom of this early flood of interest was the devoting of all forty pages of the December 1914 issue of *Schweizerische Schachzeitung* to the game. This started at square one, and covered a great deal of ground: introduction, general description, elementary endings, problems, actual game endings, and complete games. The text is in German, a language which I don't read, but most of the content is obvious from the diagrams and the moves, and Chris Feather has been kind enough to clarify a few passages where an understanding of the detail seemed essential.

The rules expounded appear to be the original ones, a player asking "Any?" to find out if he can make a pawn capture. When we play at Messigny, the umpire gives this information automatically: "White has moved, capture by a pawn now possible" (or whatever). This isn't among the variations given in *ECV*,

but it saves time and seems to me to be preferable; I am quite prepared for traditionalists to disagree.

The author, M. Henneberger of Basel, says that when he started playing he favoured the approximate equivalence table

- 1 knight = 1 pawn
- 1 bishop = 2 pawns
- 1 rook = 3 pawns
- 1 queen = 4 pawns

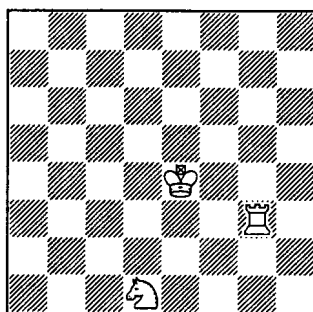
but that in the course of time he ceased to regard this as wholly valid, and at the beginning of the game he now commends the simpler rule

1 man = 1 man !

It's "Stein = Stein" in the German, which irresistibly brings to mind one Gertrude of that ilk: a Stein is a Stein is a Stein...

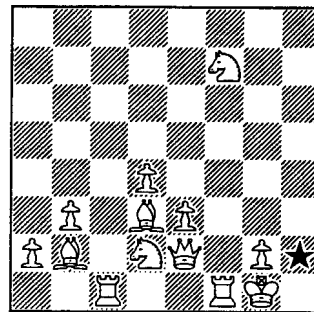
The section on elementary endings demonstrates wins with $K + 2Q \text{ v } K$ and $K + 2R \text{ v } K$, and states the endings $K + Q \text{ v } K$, $K + R \text{ v } K$, and $K + 2B \text{ v } K$ to be winnable although the process may take more than 50 moves. As regards $K + R \text{ v } K$, a systematic winning procedure was expounded by H. A. Adamson in the *Chess Amateur* in 1923 (issues October to December, pages 28-29, 59-60, 92-93). Would VC readers be interested in a summary sometime, or does every modern Kriegspiel player know how to do it?

There are also six problems, and you will enjoy solving this one :



You have heard the umpire announce 15 captures, so you know that Black is down to a bare king, and on playing $Nf2$ you hear "Check from a knight". After Black replies, force mate in four more moves; answer on page 15.

Introduction, endings, problems; what about games? There are sixteen complete or substantially complete game scores, played at the Basel Chess Club earlier in the year, and here I did find that my understanding suffered from my lack of knowledge of the language. However, even I was able to see what was going on here :



White, who has made three captures, hears "Black has moved, capture on h2, check on the short diagonal". Should he attempt to recapture, or try his luck on h1, or run to f2?

If the check has been given by a guarded queen, he will have no choice but to go to f2, but if it is by a bishop he will be at least temporarily safe on h1 whereas on f2 he risks walking into a mate by $Qg3$. In the event, he played $Kf2$, the check was indeed by a bishop, Black's queen was on c7, the mate by $Qg3$ was possible, and . . . Black played something else, and White escaped to e1 and eventually won. Yet the author said that as Black he would probably have done the same; he would have judged a queen move to g3 as incurring too much risk and having no point.

But this was exceptional, and I must confess that I found this section rather disappointing. Of course I was handicapped by being unable to read the notes, but there were moves quite incomprehensible to me for which there was no note to read. The trouble is that a bare Kriegspiel game score tells only part of the tale; at least as important are the moves which were attempted and refused. Most Kriegspiel now appears to be played over the Internet with a computer as umpire, and the umpire program can record the moves rejected as well as the moves actually played; but this was not practicable in 1914.

CASTLES IN THE AIR

by Jed Stone

Morning,

The last year has been rather quiet in the world of postal chess. The periods of silence have been long and drawn out. From my side events transpired to smother enthusiasm for a while and the out tray stagnated. On the other side of the coin there has been little coming in though there are still signs of life. I have three new results for the **Alice Chess** Ladder and four new games have started while the **Hostage** Ladder has two new results in and in the last few months, six new games have started. The Ladders have been duly updated and I would be grateful for any new information that needs to be added.

The **Hostage** and **Alice KO** Tournaments, which started a while ago, have been stationary while the last games finished. I shall give these two competitions a prod in due course to see if there is any life left in them. The second **Progressive** Tourney has been far more successful. Though a number of game results have yet to be sent in there can be no doubt that Paul Byway is the ultimate winner as he has beaten all those who stood against him. I shall draw the final threads of this competition together as soon as possible. The **Hexagonal** Tournament that started last year is also still in progress though with several results now in the end is nearly in sight.

At the other end of the scales, a new **Modern Courier** competition has just started. Having beaten Roy Talbot and Robert Reynolds the first time round, Paul Byway has reset the competition to give them a chance to gain revenge. As it has been popular for the last two years another **Progressive** Tournament will be started in September so anyone interested please let me know. This time the scoring will be the standard three points for a win, one for a draw (!) and zero for a loss.

Other competitions will be started as interest warrants. **XiangQi** and **Random Chess** have been suggested. If you are interested in either let me

know. Any ideas for other future tournaments are always welcome. And John Beasley is seeking an opponent for further exploration of **Plaid Chess** (see page 6). If you are interested please apply directly to John.

Ladder updates. **Alice**: Jed Stone 1083 (+/-PY, +GD), Paul Yearout 1036 (+/-JS, +ID), Ivan Dirmeik 1001 (-PY, +AB), Mike Nowicki 1000, Dale Sullins 1000, Allan Brown 956 (-ID), George Davis 953 (-JS). **Hostage**: John Leslie 1094 (+/-PY, +AB, +ID, +JS), Paul Yearout 1085 (+/-JL, +/+JS, -ID), Allan Brown 1013 (-JL, +ID), Peter Coast 1000, Ivan Dirmeik 940 (-JL, +PY, -AB), Jed Stone 883 (-JL, -/-PY).

Till next time...

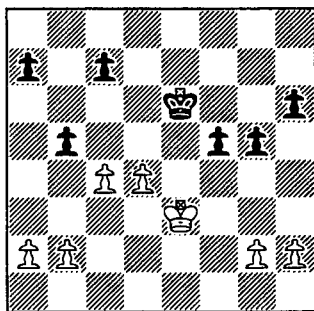
Cheers Jed

FAST PHILIDOR

by John Beasley

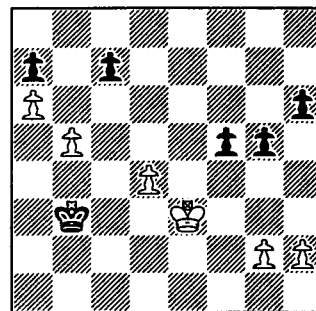
One of the games we played after the AGM was "Fast Philidor". "Philidor" is essentially "The Pawns Game (II)" of the *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* (kings and pawns only, normal initial positions) except that the game is won by the first player to promote. In "Fast Philidor", suggested to us by George Jelliss, the pawns can make a two-step move at any stage, *en passant* naturally being allowed in reply.

This ought to help the attacking side. David Sedgwick against myself: 1 e4 e5 2 Ke2 Ke7 3 Ke3 Ke6 4 d4 d5 5 f4 exf4+ 6 Kxf4 dx4 7 Kxe4 f5+ 8 Kf4 h6 9 c4 g5+ 10 Ke3 b5 :



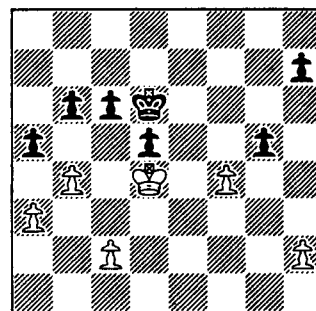
This would normally be silly; at Fast Philidor, where my K-side majority is closer to promotion, it seemed worth trying. However, I had miscalculated: 11 cxb5 Kd5 12 a4 Kc4 13 b3+!

(the biter bit) Kxb3 14 a6 and it is White who wins :



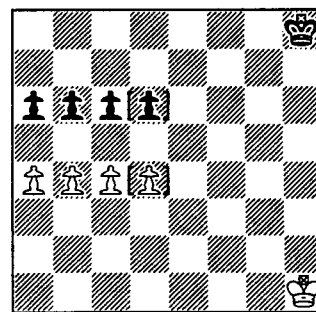
If 14...Kc4 then either 15 b7 cxb6 e.p. 16 d6 etc or 15 d6 cxd6 17 b7.

I got my revenge next game. 1 e4 e5 2-3 Ke3 Ke6 4 d4 exd4+ 5 Kxd4 c6 6 b4 d5 7 e5 b6 8 f4 a5 9 a3 f6 10 exf6 gxf6 11 g4 Kd6 12 g5 f6g5 :



In ordinary chess, this is drawn; at Fast Philidor, 13 f6 wins at once.

Yet it is not always the attacking side which profits from the two-step pawn move. The famous 3 v 3 and 4 v 4 sacrificial endings



are only drawn at Fast Philidor. With only three pawns a/b/c, 1 b5 cxb5 and if 2 a5 then 2...b3 and Black promotes first; with four pawns a/b/c/d, 1 d5 cxd5 and if 2 a5 then 2...d3 similarly.

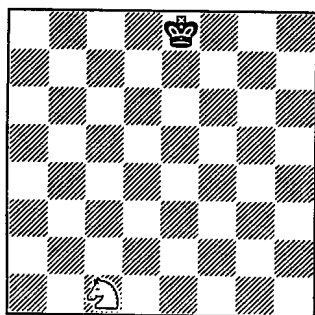
It's an attractive little game, which can easily be extended to exploit alternative starting positions. Gentle but good fun.

FOUR DIMENSIONS (AND MORE) ON THE CHESS BOARD

by John Beasley

In *Chessics* 13 and 14 (1982), George Jelliss discussed the representation of multi-dimensional cubes on the chess board using generalized leapers of various kinds. George was concerned only to demonstrate the patterns, but a little while ago I stumbled on a problem whose solution led automatically into one of them, and it occurred to me that this might be of interest; it showed how an apparently obscure and artificial geometrical figure could turn up in a very simple and natural context. The exposition that follows has already appeared in the French composition magazine *diagrammes*, but *VC* and *diagrammes* have few readers in common and I think I can fairly repeat it here.

George Jelliss, version by JDB
The Games and Puzzles Journal 2003



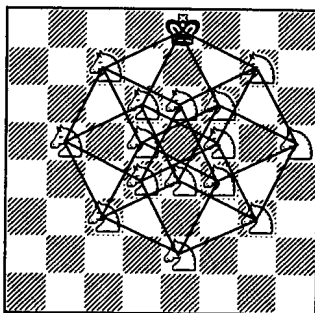
White to try and reach the palace
(see text)

In this simple problem, White's task is to reach the Black palace (the square e8), and Black seeks to stop him by sowing mines. At each turn, he places a mine on an unoccupied square, and this square becomes permanently unavailable to the knight.

Exposition in chess terms

White starts by playing 1 Nc1-e2, after which he has 24 ways of reaching e8 in four more moves (see

the diagram below): c3-b5-c7-e8, c3-b5-d6-e8, c3-d5-c7-e8, c3-d5-f6-e8, c3-e4-d6-e8, c3-e4-f6-e8, d4-b5-c7-e8, etc. Black's best defence is to mine the squares c7/d6/f6/g7 which are immediately adjacent to the palace. He can mine these squares in 24 different orders (c7/d6/f6/g7, c7/d7/g7/f6, etc). White has 24 potential lines of attack, Black has 24 different ways of setting out his defences; who is going to prevail?



Each White path contains four moves in different directions: two squares to the left and one forward (-2, +1), one to the left and two forward (-1, +2), one right and two forward (+1, +2), and two right and one forward (+2, +1). Each Black defence cuts out one of White's potential final moves; for example, if Black mines c7, White cannot make his final move in the direction (+2, +1). All right, let White move in this direction straight away: 1...c7 2 Ne2-g3! And if Black continues 2...d6, which prevents White from making his final move in the direction (+1, +2), White chooses this as the direction of his next move: 3 Ng3-h5. And so it goes on; if Black plays 3...f6, preventing a final move in the direction (-1, +2), White replies 4 Nh5-g7 moving in this direction at once, and Black cannot place a mine on g7 since the White knight is already there. No matter in which order Black sets his traps, White, by moving immediately in the direction which has just been forbidden as his final move, will reach his goal.

Geometrical interpretation

In the diagram above, the 15 knights and the Black king behave like the vertices of a cube in four dimensions

(strictly speaking, a "hypercube"), and the lines representing knight moves behave like the edges of this cube. To cross a cube from one extremity to the other, it is necessary to make one step in each dimension. The same applies here. The four directions (-2, +1), (-1, +2), (+1, +2), and (+2, +1) represent the dimensions, and a trip from e2 to e8 is equivalent to a crossing of the cube. If we ignore the men and just look at the lines, we find we have a projection of a four-dimensional cube on to a plane just as appears in books on geometry.

Five dimensions, and more

The problem given above leads to a four-dimensional cube in a manner which is completely simple and natural. If we set the same problem on a 15 x 26 board using a "five-leaper", which can jump (0,5) or (3,4) in any direction, we get a five-dimensional cube. The palace is at h26, the leaper starts at h1, its first move is h1-h6, and its subsequent journey involves one leap in each of the directions (-4, +3), (-3, +4), (0, +5), (+3, +4), and (+4, +3). I give the resulting picture in *diagrammes*. It has 32 vertices and 80 lines and is inevitably complicated, but its underlying structure soon becomes clear.

And of course we can generalize. All we need is a leaper which can jump in n different directions and a journey from A to B which consists of a jump in each of these directions, and the realization of an n -dimensional cube in concrete terms has been rendered simple and straightforward.

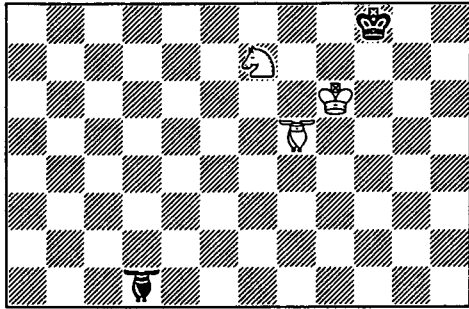
It is an interesting question as to whom this little puzzle should be attributed. George put just my name above it when publishing it in *The Games and Puzzles Journal*, but I think this was slightly misleading; all the mathematics had been demonstrated by George in *Chessics*, and my contribution was cosmetic at most. On the other hand, the cosmetics of a problem are important. When writing it up for *diagrammes*, I initially put "JDB after GPJ", but eventually I decided that "GPJ, version JDB" was more appropriate.

THE END IS NIGH !

by Paul Byway

Modern Courier Chess (see issue 00 for the rules). Two more examples of the ending given on VC 44 page 52.

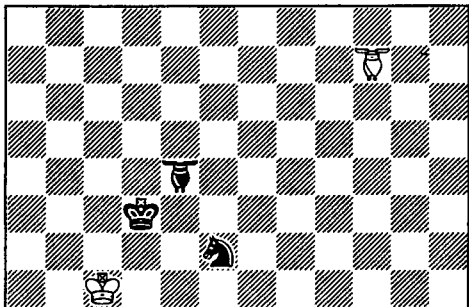
#126 Paul Byway (2003)



White to play and win

1 Kj6 Fe2 2 Fi6 Kk8 3 Fj7+ Kl7 4 Ni6 Ff3 5 Nj8+ Kl6
6 Fk6 Fg4 7 Nh7 Fh5 8 Ni5 Fi6 9 Nk4 mate.

#127 Paul Byway (2003)



White to play and draw

1 Fi6 Kc3 2 Fh5 Fd3 3 Kb1 Fc2+ 4 Ka2 Nd3 5 Fg4 Nc1+

6 Ka3 Fb3 7 Ff3 Nd3 8 Fe4 Nb4 9 Fd3 Nd5 10 Fc2 Kxc2 stalemate.

(Note by JDB: MCC is a good game - more about this next time - and the natural way to play is to take two ordinary sets and to use the second pair of bishops and knights as ferses and couriers, differentiating them in some way. So I am departing from our previous practice, and am showing ferses and couriers by inverted bishop and knight symbols.)

Italian Progressive. Solutions to competition 20. #122 9 Kd3 Nf4 Nc3 Ncxd5 Kc4 Kxc5 Bb2 Bxf6 Nb6 Italian mate; #123 9 Ke3 Kf4 Nc4 b4 Nf3 Rg1 Rg8 Rb8 Nfe5 Italian mate; #124 9 Bf6 Nf4 h4 h5 h6 h7 h8Q Qxh1 Qxc6 mate. The current scores:- FG 61, IR 58, DP 41, CL 24, RT 19, PW 14, JB 9, NE 2, SB 2.

More than half the solutions were new to science, but few of you having found one found another. Fred Galvin was the exception and found a whole list. It was difficult to decide which mates were independent and which were minor variants - so I just doubled the usual 3 points. The second solution to #122 is:- 9 Kf1 g4 g5 gxf6 f7 fxe8R Bg5 Nf4 Rd8 mate.

Here are (some of) Fred's solutions to #123:- 9 Ke3 Nf3 b4 bxa5 Rb1 Rb7 Nb5 a4 Rxc7; 9 Ke3 Nf3 Rd1 Rxd5 Kxe4 Nc4 Nfd2 Nb3 Nbxa5; 9 Ke3 Nf3 Rd1 Rxd5 Kxe4 Nc4 Ng5 Ne6 Nd8; 9 Ke3 Kf4 Nf3 Nc4 Rd1 Rxd5 Rb5 a4 (or Rg1 Rg8 Rb8 b4) Nfe5 (Italian); 9 Ke3 Nf3 Rg1 Rg8 Rxh8 Rb8 b4/Kd4 Nb5 Ne5. There was no second solution for #124, except that PW has Ng5 instead of Nf4. I tend to disregard variation of this kind for it is difficult to avoid.

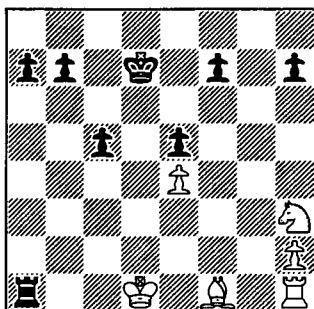
FG gives a crisp solution to #118c:- 12 Kc5 Kd5 Nf6 Nh5 Nxf4 Nh5 Nxf4 Ne2 Ne3 Nxa2 Nc3 Ne4 and victory is assured. The solution to #125, which wasn't part of the competition, depends (as you all realised) on blockade followed by the win with KBN v K which is always possible for Black. The ending was discussed in VC 21. An example from FG:- 10 Be5 Bxh2 Bc7 Kd6 Ke5 Kxe4 Kf5 Kg5 Kxh5 Kg5. IR finds a different route to the same end:- 10 Kd6 Nd7 Nf6 Nxf5 Be5 Bxh2 Be5 Bd4 Ke5 Nf4+. Not quite so clinical is 10 Be5 Bxh2 Be5 Kd6 Nd7 Nf6 Nxf5 Nf6 Nxf5 Nf4+ (DP, JB).

Competition 21

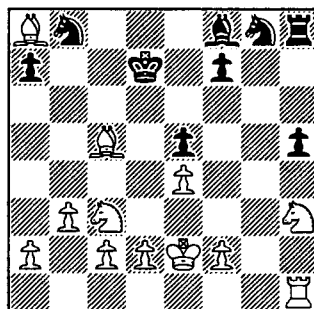
#128 Castelli - Galimberti (1978)

#129 Davide - Erveti (1987)

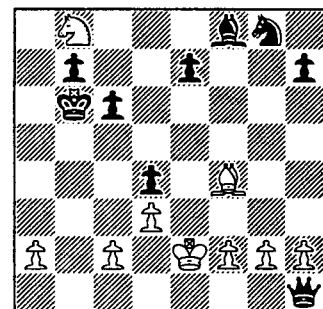
#130 after Sarale - Carfora (1982)



White wins (series 9)



Black wins (series 8)



White wins (series 9)

SOLUTIONS

Alice Chess (see page 3). Let me give the logic as expounded by Peter.

1. In a mate, the White queen and the Black king must be on the same board.

2. If White starts by moving his king, he leaves his queen on A. Any Black rook or pawn move will now leave his own king on A, and a White queen move will transfer the queen to B. This won't be check, let alone mate.

3. So White must start with a queen move. This transfers the queen to B.

4. If Black replies with a king move, this transfers the king to B. Now a second White queen move will transfer the queen back to A, and again this won't even be check.

5. So White must make a queen move to which Black cannot reply with a king move, and the only possibilities are 1 Qh8/f1>B (Black's replies 1...Kh3 and 1...Kh1 would both put the king in check on B) and 1 Qh1>B (1...Kh3 again puts the king in check on B, and 1...Kh1 is ruled out because h1 on B is occupied).

6. Let's try 1 Qh8>B. A Black rook move upwards (1...Rh5/./h7>B) leaves the rook open to capture on B, and this capture transfers the queen back to A. This is mate. Any other rook move (1...Rg4/./a4>B, Rh3>B) can be met by 2 Qh4>A, occupying the square that the rook has just vacated and leaving the rook curiously helpless. However, Black also has 1...g1>B (the promotion doesn't matter), and now there is no mate.

7. If we play 1 Qf1>B, we can meet 1...g1>B by 2 Qg2>A, but there is now no answer to 1...Rh5/./h8>B and 1...Rg4/./a4>B.

8. So the key must be 1 Qh1>B, when 1...g1>B can again be met by 2 Qg2>A occupying the square just vacated by the pawn, and once more we have 1...Rh5/./h8>B 2 QxR>A and also 1...Rg4/./a4>B 2 Qh4>A occupying the square just vacated by the rook (note that this doesn't work after 1...Rh5/./h8>B because Black has the defence 2...Rh3>A, bypassing the mating piece on board B and

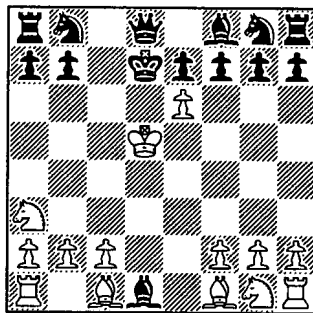
popping down on the intervening square). However, after 1...Rh3>B the move 2 Qh4>A is no longer available because the rook on h3 blocks the queen's move from h1 to h4. Fortunately there is an alternative: 2 Qg1>A, exploiting the fact that the king cannot run to h3 because this square is now occupied on B.

It's a lovely little problem, with a piquant solution which is accurate in all lines, and the paradoxical nature of Alice Chess could hardly be better demonstrated.

Progressive Chess (see page 4). Bridie-Geissler, why not 5 b4 etc? 6 Kd7 e3 e2 Ne4 Ng3 exf1Q mate. If 5 d4 etc then 6 Kd7, Nc3, Rd1.

Same game, after 5 f3 etc: 6 Nd4 Nxe2 Ng3 Rh6 Rxf6 Rf1 mate.

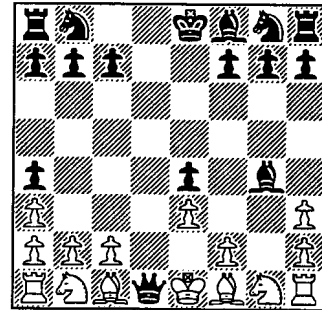
Galvin/Elkies-Lorinc: 5 Kd2 Kd3 Kxd4 Kxd5 e6+!!



Each of Black's four legal moves now terminates his turn and allows a short mate: 6 Ke8+ 7 Kc5 Bd3 Bg6 Bxf7, 6 Kc7+ 7 Kc5 Bb5 Bd7 Nb5, 6 Kc8+ 7 Kc5 Bd2 Ba5 Rxd1 Rxd8, 6 fxe6+ 7 Kc5 Bf4 Bxb8 Nb5 Nd6 Bb5.

In practice, Black appears to have resigned both times. Noam Elkies commented as follows: "At last I have a legitimate reason to win this way... Clearly Black has only four legal moves, all of which are cross-checks. Three allow easy short mates [...] but for a while I thought that after 6 fxe6+ seven moves would not suffice and I would have to force a second cross-check with either 7 Ke5 h4 Rh4 Rc3 Bb5+ or 7 Kd4 Nb5 Nf3 Ne5+ to win. But I later did find a few 7-move mates [...] I wonder if there are any examples before the 'endgame' where either one side survived a forced cross-check or someone had to win by forcing two cross-checks in a row."

Magnetic Foolery (see page 4). Play 1 d3 (attracting bPd7-d4) Bg4 (repelling bPd4-a4 and also attracting wPg2-g3) 2 e3 (repelling wPd3-a3, also wPg3-h3, and attracting bPe7-e4) Qxd1! :



As David says, this is the sort of thing that makes variant chess attractive. We may also note that whereas the ordinary "Fool's Mate" can be played in several equivalent ways, the magnetic version appears to need complete precision - or is there something we have missed?

Losing Chess (see page 5). **First diagram** (Bosman - Kamminga, after 8 e4, what if 8...Nxe1?) White can give everything to the knight, 9 Rh3 Nxe2 10 Rh4 Nxe3 11 Nf3 Nxf3 12 d4 Nxd4 13 f3 Nxf3 14 Bg5 Nxe5 15 Ra3 etc; alternatively, 9 Rh4 Nxe2 10 Bb2 Nxe4 11 Bxe7 and Black has a rampant bishop.

Second diagram (after 12...bxa5). White wins by 13 Nf3, threatening 14 Ne5/Ng5. Play might continue 13...d5 (the nastier threat was 14 Ne5 releasing the queen, and if 13...Qb6 then 14 Kd1 Qxf2 15 Kc2 etc) 14 Ng5 hxe5 15 f4 gxf4 16 g3 fxg3 17 Na3 (threatening 18 Nc2) Nc2 18 Nxc2, and now White can follow Kf2 with Ne1. Nf3 also wins at move 12, though a5 is simpler, and at move 14.

Third diagram (after 20...f6). Can White risk 21 g3 hxe3 22 Nf2 gxf2 23 Nf3 threatening 24 Ne1 etc? Yes, he can; 23...e6 24 fxe6 Kf7 delays the win but doesn't prevent it, because after 25 exf7 the pawn will be able to give itself away. 21 Kd1 also leads to a forced win, but is much less clear.

Kriegspiel (see page 11): 1...Kh2 (the only possibility) 2 Nh1! Kxh1 3-4 Kf2 and 5 Rh3.

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A rare mixture this time, with games from far and wide. My thanks to all who have contributed material or ideas. The byline "by John Beasley" above many of the articles merely acknowledges responsibility for the write-up; others have sent in or drawn my attention to the material, and I have just done a routine editorial job of selection and presentation.

The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants. As far as possible, VC is written to be a self-standing magazine, but there are inevitably frequent references to David Pritchard's *ECV*. Copies of this are still available from him at £21.99 including postage to any UK or surface mail destination (£3 extra for air mail to Europe, £5 elsewhere); **banknotes** for 35 euros (air mail E40) or US \$40 (air mail \$49) are also accepted. There are also a very few copies of a numbered and signed special edition at £5 above the regular price. Write to him at the address below.

BCVS NOTICES

2 Members are reminded that the
2 **Library** contains some excellent
4 material, and that it is there to be
4 used. The catalogue is available free
5 of charge on our web site, and printed
6 copies can be made available on
7 request. Loans are a matter for the
8 Librarian's discretion and we reserve
9 the right to ask for a deposit, but
10 requests will normally be granted
11 unless we ourselves are in possession
12 of the material only on loan. Apply to
12 the Librarian.

13 It has been suggested that we
14 should seek to affiliate to the **British**
15 **Chess Federation**, always assuming
that the BCF would accept an
affiliation from us. The affiliation fee
would amount to around 50p per
member per year, or £1 per UK
member if it were thought appropriate
to recover the cost from UK
subscriptions alone, and it appears
that if we were to receive any
significant benefit from our affiliation
we would need to appoint a delegate
to the BCF Council and to budget
for some administrative, travel, and
lobbying costs. In return, we would
hope for BCF publicity for ourselves
and our events and perhaps for some
more explicit support as opportunity
might arise, though the BCF's reply to
my preliminary enquiry was carefully
and explicitly non-committal.

If you have an opinion on the
matter, whether for or against, please
send it to me as secretary. If there are
a significant number of voices in
favour, we will put a resolution on the
matter to next year's AGM, and let the
meeting decide whether or not we
should go ahead.

CALENDAR

XiangQi. This year's "Shunde Cup"
UK XiangQi Championship will be
held at The Bowl Chinese Restaurant,
318a-320 St Albans Road, Watford,
Herts, on **Sunday 26 September**.
Entries by September 20; entry fee
£10; details on the UKCCA web site
<www.ukcca.org>, together with more
news and some problems for solution.

Notices for VC 46 should be in my
hands by **September 15**. There is no
charge and no account is taken of
whether an activity is being pursued
for commercial profit, but all
insertions are at our discretion and we
reserve the right to edit and select.
Readers are asked to note that we rely
wholly on the representations of the
notice givers, and that no liability can
be accepted either by the BCVS or by
anyone involved in producing or
distributing this magazine.

All of which just leaves room for a
puzzle sent in by George Jelliss.
A "three-leaper" jumps three squares
in any horizontal or vertical direction,
irrespective of the occupancy of the
intervening squares (for example,
from d4 to d7, a4, g4, or d1). The task
is to place the largest possible number
of three-leapers of the same colour on
a chessboard so than none guards any
other. How many geometrically
distinct patterns are possible?

Answer and background next time.
George suggests trying the problem on
a 4x4 board first, and then going
straight to the 8x8; counting the
numbers of distinct patterns in the
5x5, 6x6, and 7x7 cases is much more
difficult. Conversely, the 9x9 case is
trivial.

Variant Chess is the journal of the **British Chess Variants Society**

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