Variant Chess

THE MAGAZINE TO BROADEN YOUR CHESS HORIZONS
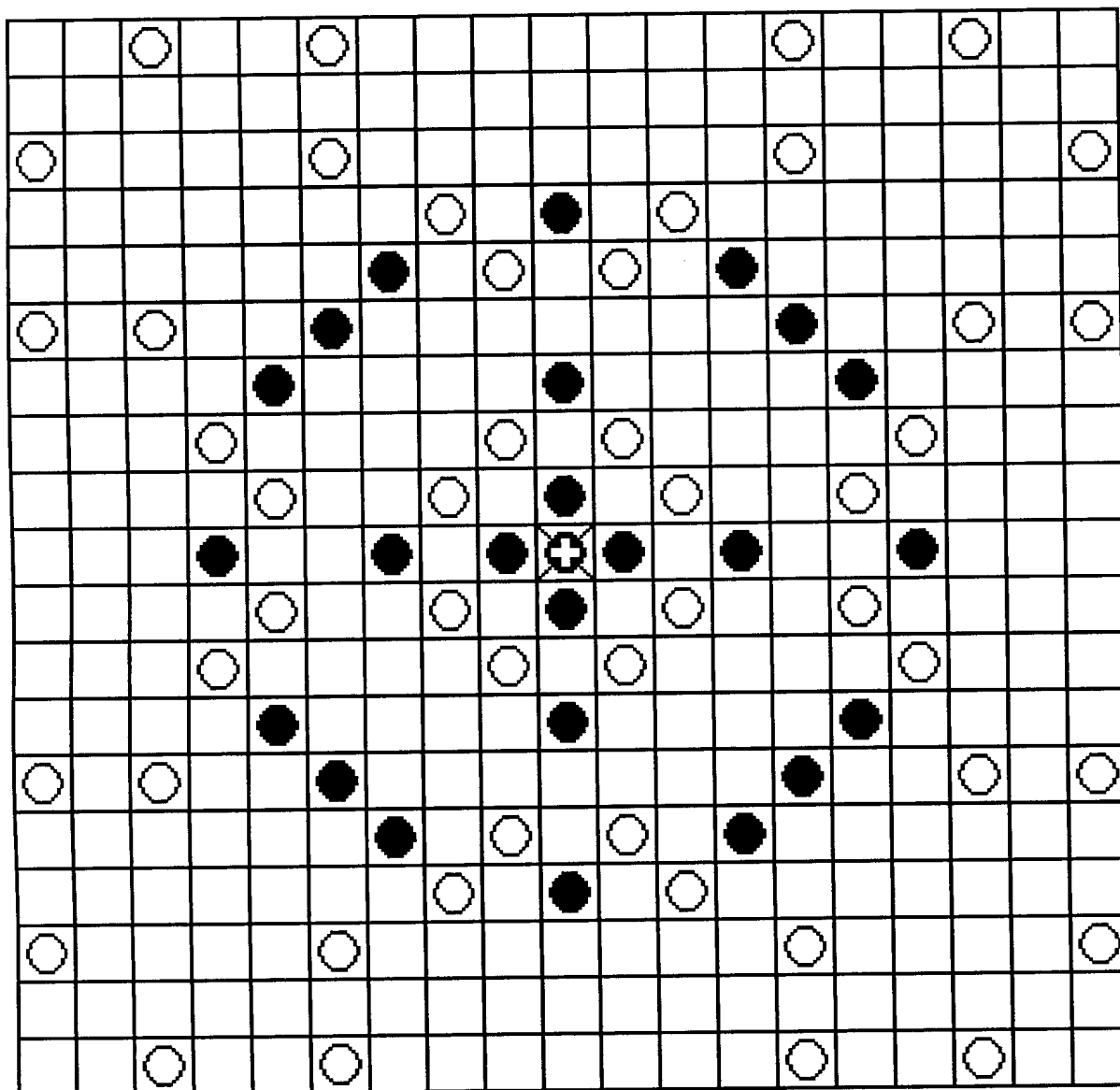
The Biggest Hnefatafl

English Progressive Chess   Marshall and Cardinal

GRAND CHESS

I am not a great enthusiast for games whose main difference from orthodox chess lies in the addition of knight power to rook or bishop, and those who enjoy such games may feel that they have been rather under-represented in recent issues of *VC*. But a recent browse through David Pritchard's copies of *Nost-algia* drew my attention to a "first Cyberspace **Grand Chess** World Championship" held in 1998, which included two fine wins by R. Wayne Schmittberger. It seemed to me that they were well worth reproducing here, and perhaps this will help to restore the balance.

Grand Chess is a Christiaan Freeling game featuring Marshall (R+N) and Cardinal (B+N) :
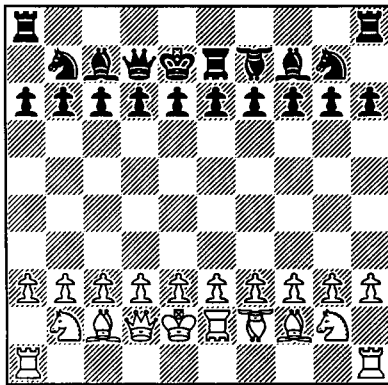
Pawns promote optionally on ranks 8 and 9 and compulsorily on rank 10, but only to replace a piece already captured; if no replacement piece is available, a move to the tenth rank is illegal. Normal pawn-two with *en passant*; no castling.

Wayne Schmittberger was White in the first game. Notes in quotation marks are by him.

	1	e3-e5

The men on files a-e are the same as in orthodox chess, so that these moves at least have a familiar feel.

1	...	i8-i7
2	f3-f5	h8-h6
3	Nb2-c4	Ni9-h7
4	d3-d5	d8-d7
5	g3-g4	Bc9-g5
6	Bh2-f4	Nb9-d8
7	Ni2-h4	e8-e6
8	Bc2-e4	a8-a7
9	Ke2-d1	
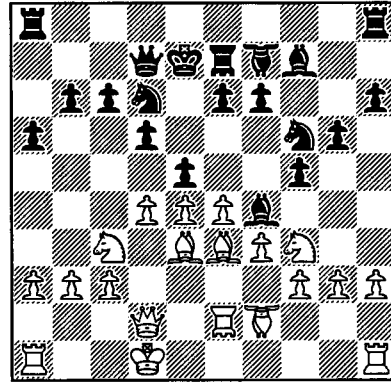
This is effectively going to be part of 0-0 by hand, and I wonder whether it might not have been worth borrowing an idea from Paul Byway's Modern Courier Chess (and from several older games) and allowing an unmoved king a double move.

| 9	...	Bg5xf4
10	Cg2xf4	Nh7-g5
11	Be4-g2	g8-g7
12	Kd1-c2	e6xd5
13	Bg2xd5	Bh9xd5
14	Cf4xd5	Cg9-f7
15	Cd5-f4	Nd8-c6
16	Rj1-e1	Ke9-f10
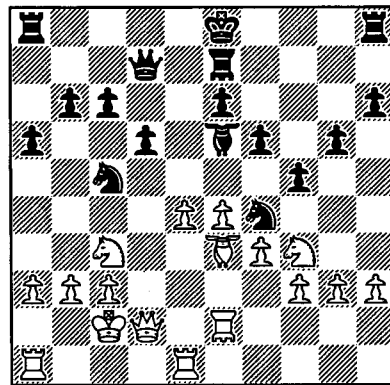
Black's position does not seem too bad, but as we shall see he has left his king in the centre just a little too long.

17	e5-e6	d7xe6

With hindsight, ...Ce8 or even ...Ce9 might have been better, since after the exchange of queens White's second rook will occupy the d-file with gain of tempo.

18	Qd2xd9	Mf9xd9
19	Ra1-d1	Md9-f9
20	f5xe6	Cf7-e8
21	Nc4-d6	

"The start of an overwhelming cavalry charge involving all four of my Knight-moving pieces."
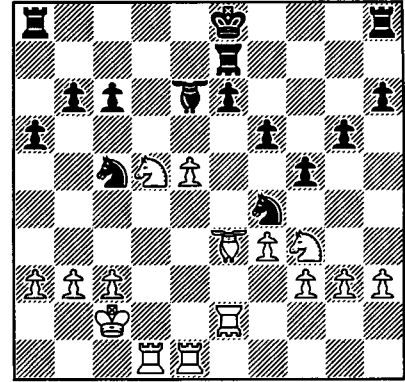
21	...	Ce8-f6
22	Cf4-g6	

White despises the mere capture of the pawn on c8, and goes for the jugular. The immediate threat is Ne8+ forking K and C, and if
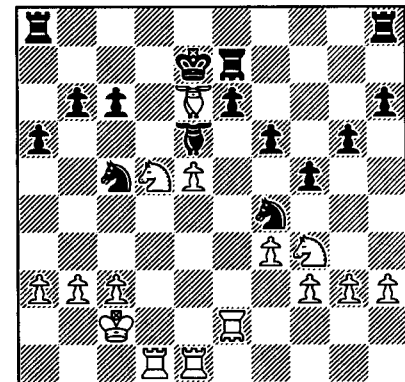
22	...	Cf6-e7

to avoid this then

23	Cf6-e8+

forks K and M instead.

23	...	Kf10-e9

24	Nh4-g6

Again adding to the pressure rather than taking material at once. Black's game is resignable, but he keeps going for a few more moves.

24	...	Ce7-d8
25	Ce8xf9	Cd8xf9
26	Nd6xc8+	Ke9-f10
27	Mf2xf8	Kf10-g9
28	Rd1-d9	

and Black did resign. The elementary textbooks of my youth would have tut-tutted over his unmoved rooks.

The reverse game was described by John McCallion as "My favorite game. After White sacrifices a pawn to gain the advantage of two Bishops, Black follows a Steinitzian pattern of play, returns the pawn at an opportune moment and, in an exciting ending

with White one move away from crushing his King, delivers mate. A game worthy of a World Championship which will surely become a classic!"

1	d3-d5	f8-f6
2	Nb2-c4	Ni9-h7
3	Ni2-h4	g8-g7
4	g3-g4	Nb9-c7
5	d5-d6	Nc7-e6
6	e3-e5	d8-d7
7	Nh4-g6	
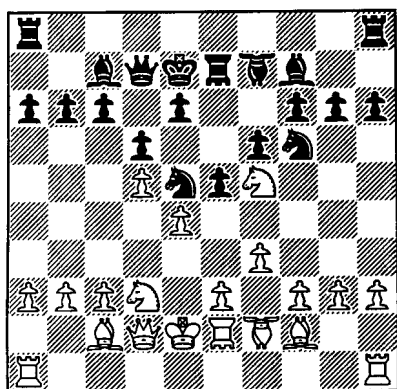
"A complete surprise" (RWS, as are subsequent quotations), and my own instincts would certainly have been to give higher priority to development and king safety. White has already moved his knight on g6 twice, contrary to normal tenets, and that on d3 will have to move again if his bishop is to have any scope. As for the king, its natural home would seem to be on c2 or b2 behind unmoved pawns, so a natural K-side development for White would seem to be Pd3 up, Nb2 to c4, Bc2 out, and K to c2 or beyond.

| 7	...	f6xe5
8	Nc4xe5	c8-c7
9	Ng6-e7	
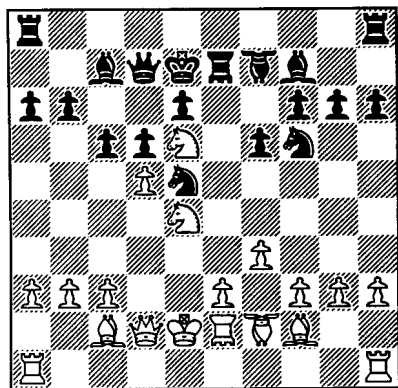
"Another surprise: either a '!?' or '?!' move, but I am not sure which." On

the larger Grand Chess board, "having the two bishops" is likely to be even more advantageous than in ordinary chess, but whether it is worth a full pawn is perhaps another matter.

| 9	...	Bc9xe7
10	d6xe7	Mf9xe7
11	Ke2-f1	

White's K-side being compromised, he takes his king to the other wing, but we shall see that it is not really safe there either.

11	...	Me7-c8
12	Kf1-g1	Ne6-f8
13	f3-f5	Rj10-f10
14	Bh2-f4	Cg9-i10
15	c3-c4	Ke9-f9
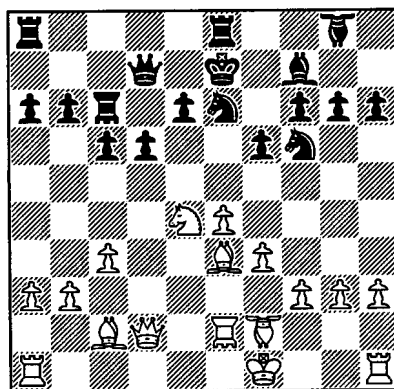
"Embarking on a 'safety first' plan and hoping eventually to neutralize White's Bishop pair and use my extra pawn in the ending."
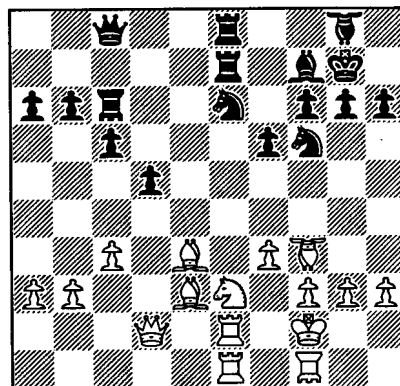
16	Bc2-e4	Kf9-g9
17	Kg1-h2	d7-d6
18	Ra1-d1	Qd9-c10
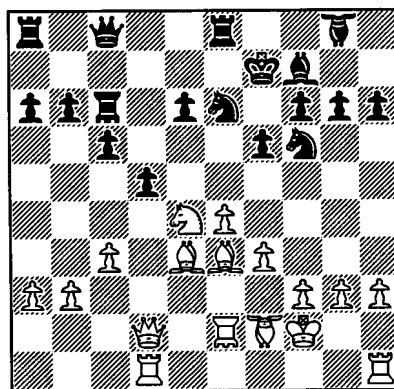
"This proves to be a very good square for the Queen: it operates effectively here for the next 23 moves!"

19	Ne5-f3	e8-e6
20	f5xe6	Nf8xe6
21	Bf4-e3	Ra10-a9
22	Cg2-h4	Ne6-f8

| 23	Rj1-f1	Ra9-f9
24	Mf2-h1	Kg9-h10
25	Rf1-f2	Kh10-i9
26	Rd1-f1	

Development is essentially complete, and both sides have set out their stalls for the next phase. We may notice, however, that whereas White's king's position is a little loose, with the open f-file perilously close, Black's is tight and well organized, with the knight on h7 holding things together just like a knight on f6 in ordinary chess.

26	...	b8-b7
27	Nf3-g5	Bh9-g8
28	Ng5xh7+	Nf8xh7
29	Rf2xf9+	Rf10xf9
30	Rf1xf9+	Bg8xf9
31	Mh1-f1	
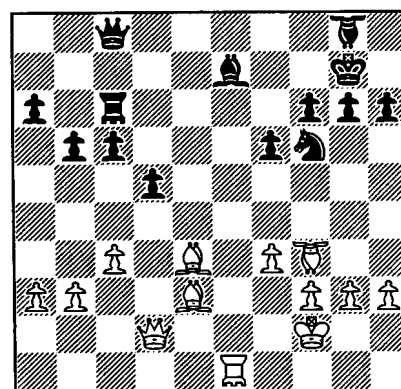
| 31	...	Mc8-f8

"It has been hard to find safe squares for my Marshall because of White's Bishop pair and well-posted Cardinal. Passive moves are bound to be bad. This costs my j pawn but I get lots of compensation: Marshalls off the board, one of the Bishops traded and, most importantly, activity for my Cardinal to support the advance of my d pawn while menacing the White King."
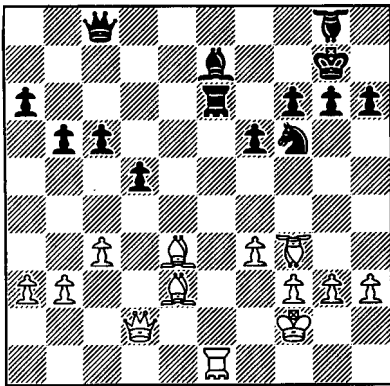
32	Mf1xf8	Nh7xf8
33	Be4-d5	Bf9-g8
34	Bd5xg8	Ci10xg8
35	Be3xj8+	Ki9-h9
36	Bj8-e3	
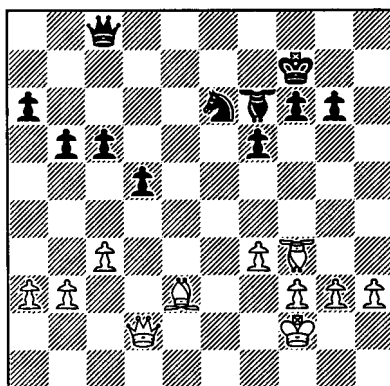
We are now down to the endgame. White has bishop for knight, but in all other respects the position would seem to favour Black. Black's half-passed pawn is well advanced, White's is sadly backward; White's king's position is still a little loose, Black's is relatively secure (his knight will soon return to its excellent station at h7); and Black's advanced pawn is distant from White's king, so that he has two widely separated points of attack which White may be hard pressed to counter.

Particularly important is the relative looseness of White's king's position. Endings in ordinary chess tend to be all about position and material, the occasional mate being a tactical surprise rather than a primary objective of play. Here, the power of Q + C working together means that mate can be an objective even with so few men left.

36	...	Cg8-f7
37	Qd2-f2	Nf8-h7
38	i3-i4	c7-c6
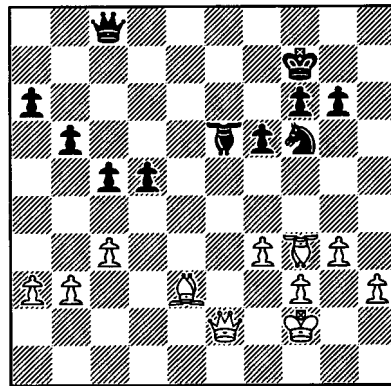
| 39 | Qf2-f5 | |

"Starting an assault that just falls short, but I had already won our other game and White was in no mood to try the passive defence of blockading my d pawn." In truth, I suspect that White's attack was largely a matter of desperation (I would not expect an attack with pieces alone to break down a solid defensive position such as Black has here), but a sustained defence after Black's ...d5 would have been long, difficult, and almost certainly unsuccessful.

| 39	...	d6-d5
40	Qf5-j5	Kh9-i9
41	Ch4-i6	Cf7-d6+
42	Kh2-g1	Qc10-e8
43	Be3-j8+	Ki9-h9
44	Bj8-d2	d5-d4
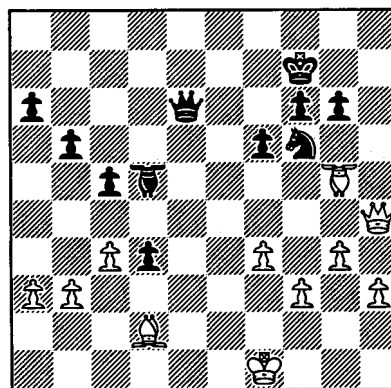
No doubt White had been hoping for 44...Ki9 45 Bj8+ with a draw by repetition, but Black has calculated that White's checks will soon run out. His threat is not so much 45...d3M (not Q, because promotion is possible only to a piece that is currently off the board) as 45...Qe3+ 46 Bxe3 dxe3Q+ (possible now), winning a piece with check and in fact forcing mate in three (47 Kf1 Cg3+ 48 Kg2 Qf2 mate, or 47 Kg2 Qe2+ 48 Kg1 Qh2+ 49 Kf1

Cg3 mate, or 47 Kh1 Cg3+ 48 Kg2 Qf2 mate). Passive defence is clearly useless (45 Qf5 may perhaps avoid the immediate mate, but after 45...Cxf5 46 fxe5 Qe3+ 47 Bxe3 dxe3Q+ the piece is again lost and the helpless pawns on the left-hand side will soon follow), and White tries the checks for lack of better alternative.

| 45 | Qj5-j9+ | Kh9-g8 |

Not of course 45...Ni9, when White has 46 Cj8+ and the knight will be captured with check.
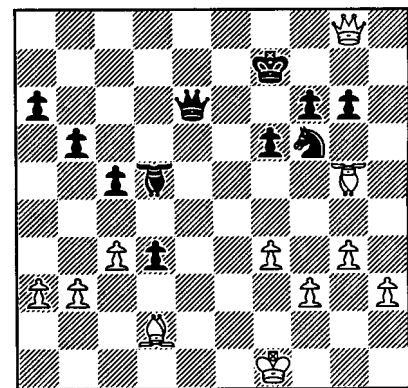
| 46 | Qj9-i10+ | Kg8-g9 |

| 47 | Qi10xi8 | |

47 Qj9+ Kf8 would have left White with no further check (and we notice that the knight on h7 has performed one final service by preventing 47 Qi9+). White can now meet 47...d3M by 48 Cxh7+, but of course this was not Black's primary threat.

47	...	Qe8-e3+
48	Bd2xe3	d4xe3Q+

and White **resigned** because of the mate in three which we saw in the note to move 44.

To some extent, the "exciting ending" may have been illusory, because I imagine that Black had calculated through to 47 Qj9+ Kf8 before playing 44...d4, but it was still an impressive performance.

Large-board variants can play slowly because the two armies start a long way apart. Grand Chess, with the main armies on ranks 2 and 3, the back rank left clear for the rooks (shades of Thai Chess), and pawn promotion on rank 8, tackles this problem in an imaginative and intelligent manner. It is perhaps as good as any of the added-knight-power games, and is certainly better than most.

THE BIGGEST HNEFATAFL

by Andrew Perkis

Tafl (pronounced tabl) was the older, and Hnefatafl the later name of a board-game which was already played by the Scandinavian peoples before A.D.400. It was carried by the Norsemen to Iceland, Britain, and Ireland, and spread to Wales. It was the only board-game played by the Saxons. After the introduction of chess into England in the eleventh, and Scandinavia in the twelfth century, hnefatafl fell out of use except in remote and isolated districts: the last mentions of the game as still played are from Wales, 1587, and Lapland, 1732.

H. J. R. Murray, *A History of Board Games other than Chess*, 1952.

Hnefatafl has, following Murray, become the generic name for a group of games, which, it seems, evolved in distinct and localised (and locally named) forms. The degree to which they differed from each other is unknown and it may well have boiled down to different preferences with regard to board size. Hnefatafl is also the best candidate we have for a contemporary generic name, though we have no idea how widely it may have been used. Most readers will have some knowledge of the game. The 11x11 game, with a relatively modern rule set, has attained a degree of popularity - even making it onto the front cover of *Variant Chess* (Issue 59, January 2009). The focus in this article is the quest to find a playable rule set for 19x19 Hnefatafl. At the outset, a quick review of the difficulties that have been encountered in trying to reconstruct the game - on board sizes 7x7, 9x9, 11x11, 13x13, and 19x19 - will clarify what this quest entails.

Hnefatafl was a long dead game, and the rules long lost, when scholars began to study the older Icelandic literature, and discovered references to an unknown board game. Although many guesses were made as to its identity with known games, these were all disproved by Willard Fiske (*Chess in Iceland*, 1905). Fiske, however, was not able to recover the game. It was Murray's "chance discovery of an account of the Lapp game by Linnaeus that gave the clue, and the description of hnefatafl which I gave in my *History of Chess* (1913) has been confirmed by later discoveries" (Murray 1952). The 'hnefatafl' referred to here is Tablut, a living game among the Sami of Lapland until at least the late nineteenth century - though this was only brought to light by fairly recent research (see Mike Sanderson's article, *Tablut: a Sami Game*, in *Abstract Games* 16, Winter 2003).

Murray's assumption that the rules of the 9x9 Tablut can be generalized to other board sizes, is, in my opinion, legitimate, despite the patchy success rate of attempts to do it. David Parlett (*The Oxford History of Board Games*, 1999) gives a good overview of the attempt to reconstruct these games. "Information on the play of Tafl games is widespread but disparate. Remains and fragments of gaming equipment tells us the size and patterning of various boards and the design of the individual pieces, but nothing of their initial arrangement and powers of action. Some written records imply the initial arrangement or powers of action, but rarely both, or without eliciting unanswerable questions. On the other hand, such rules as can be inferred from known sources are so consistent with one another that it is possible to reconstruct an archetypal Tafl game from which no individual game is likely to have deviated to any significant respect."

This archetypal game would be played on boards with an odd number of squares (except when played on the points!). At start of play, the King would be placed on the centre point surrounded by a number of defenders placed in radially symmetrical positions. The attacker would have twice as many pieces as the King has defenders, and would place them symmetrically around those defenders at start of play. All pieces would have the move of the Rook, and capture would be by orthogonal interception (sometimes called custodian capture or 'sandwiching'). The object for the attacker is the capture of the King, by surrounding him on four sides; the object for the defender is to move the King off the board.

Although there has been a lot of 'fit' in the piecing together of various bits of evidence (as described by Parlett), some commentators have nevertheless professed skepticism that all these differently sized variations of "hnefatafl" are really one and the same game. There is no way of knowing - but if we consider only 9x9, 11x11, and 19x19, enough probably is known to assume that the same game was played on all these board sizes - just as Go is commonly played on 9x9, 13x13, and 19x19. I should mention that these waters are considerably muddier for researchers than I have been able to indicate here. Boards for standard Hnefatafl were almost certainly used for other games too, some of which may have outstripped Hnefatafl in terms of popularity, and some of which may have been a development from it. A probable example is Tawlbwrdd ("Throw-board"). This is 11x11 Hnefatafl, but, according to R. C. Bell (in *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, 1979) was probably a variant that used dice.

The biggest Hnefatafl : *Alea Evangelii* ?

We are lucky to have evidence even for the existence of the 19x19 game. Only a few fragments of probable boards have been recovered. The principal source for this game is an English manuscript from the reign of Athelstan (924-40) which calls it *Alea Evangelii* and describes it in terms of a Christian numerological symbolism which is not integral to it. Within this system it seems that the positions - and not the differentiation - of pieces was seen as significant. At any rate, no differentiation is shown. Murray (1952) chose an obvious patterning suggested by Tablut, and to which no good alternative has ever been published. This is probably because no attempts have been made to play the game in an organised competitive fashion, otherwise better starting positions would - as we shall see - almost inevitably have been proposed.

19x19 was probably the largest board size to be used for Hnefatafl. R. C. Bell, an "inspired restorer of lost rules of

play" (Parlett 1999) called the game Saxon Hnefatafl and gave a rule set based on Tablut, using the starting position proposed by Murray and shown below. The game was played on the points, so the board, of 19x19 lines, was essentially the same as is used for Go. Readers with a Go set can use it to play the game.
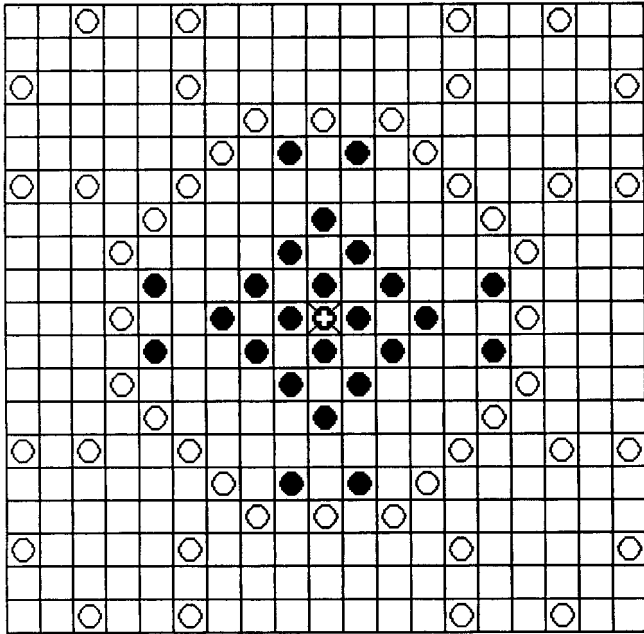
Alea Evangelii has, since Murray, become the default name for the game. I have resisted using it as it seems fairly improbable that this was a name used by players of the living game.

Balancing the game

Although a degree of bias in favour of one side or another is natural in a game of unequal forces, Tablut as reconstructed by Murray, and the 11x11 game (using any of the three starting positions that have been proposed) show a huge bias in favour of the royal player. A pertinent question, a couple of decades ago, among those wishing to reconstruct or develop the game, was whether to accept that the game as originally played was badly tilted or not. Accepting that it probably was, leaves one totally at liberty (while retaining the basic idea of Hnefatafl) to use any means to come up with a better balanced game. This, I believe, was the - perfectly reasonable - approach taken by the developers of the 11x11 "Viking game" in the early 1990s.

A number of new rules were introduced at this point, all of them related to the basic leap - of introducing a new, and more difficult, objective for the royal player. The King was now required to reach a corner, rather than an edge, square. Some commentators even claimed that this was a proper reconstruction of, at least, certain versions of the game. This is hard to disprove, but there is enough evidence to make it highly doubtful. Anyway, the ruling is clear in Tablut: the royal (or "Swedish") side wins as soon as the King reaches a square on the periphery of the board. Also there is a reference in Frithiof's Saga (Iceland, thirteenth

century) to the warning terms that the royal player must use: "Raichi", when there is one clear route to a side; "Tuichi" when there are two, and hence a won game. So, even if there were a variant of the game with such a ruling, it would have been an exception to the basic pattern of play.

A justification for regarding the new objective as a recovered rule is that several boards and board fragments - of different board sizes - have been found which have specially marked squares or points. Specially marked squares, which are not believed to be integral to the game, occur frequently in other positions too, but, nevertheless, it is impossible to prove that these corner markings did not indicate the King's hoped-for destination in certain variants of the game (though these may only have been variants using dice). A little more likely, in my opinon, is that these corners were marked off for the opposite reason. When making my own board, I coloured the corner points a relatively inconspicuous gold, not to show any significance, but, rather, their not being goal points for the King, by whom they could never be reached in the lifetime of a game.

We found that 19x19 Hnefatafl, when played according to the general interpretation of the rules as handed down since Murray, can easily be won by the royal player, even, as it turns out, if the more difficult objective of reaching a corner point is adopted.

Fortunately, around about the time I started to try the game out, I discovered that a recent re-reading of Linnaeus' rules had ditched the assumption that the King may take part in capturing. Tablut, using this new interpretation of the rules, had become popular on the BrainKing website. As reported by Michael Sandeman (2003) with games using this rule, any bias "is more apparent than real". He compares games on BrainKing between lower rated players, in which a significant majority of games were won by the royal side, with games among players with established ratings. In the latter games the disparity was much reduced - to the point where a majority of players preferred to play the role of attacker. Sandeman's personal view is that "in an ideally played game" the attacker has the advantage, but (and I think this has parallels in *several* games of unequal forces) it may only take one error to let the King through the net.

This sounds convincing and, although game-scenarios differ in the larger game, the King-can't-capture rule does produce a game with (barring blunders) only long and unstraightforward paths to victory available to either player. As long as the royal player makes an aggressive start, it looked as if we had a worthwhile version of the game. Unfortunately, there is another approach which the royal player can choose, which can make the game totally unplayable.

Opening arrangements

The opening position for the biggest Hnefatafl, as reconstructed by Murray, and generally accepted since, has one serious flaw. As Alain Dekker has pointed out, Black can easily construct a fortress around his King during the

first few moves of the game, and there is nothing White can do about it.

Here is an example of such a game.

1	e7-i7	j9-j8
2	o7-k7 (xj7)	i10-h10
3	m14-m11	k10-l10
4	m5-m9 (xm10)	j11-j12.
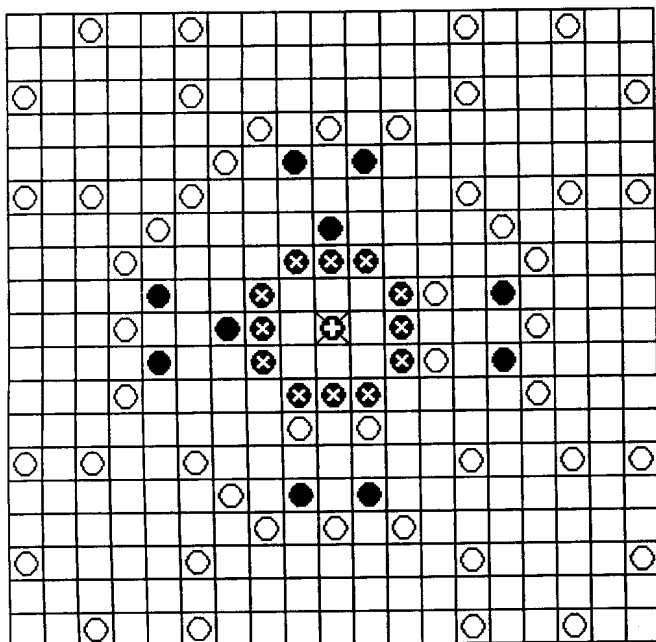
Now the marked defenders can never be captured, and the King can move to and fro indefinitely within them.

Alternative arrangements

Since the position, but not colour, of the pieces is known, an improved start position should be achievable, though finding one which purports to replicate the original start is somewhat more of a challenge. At first I wanted to swap round as few pieces as possible, and tried this position :
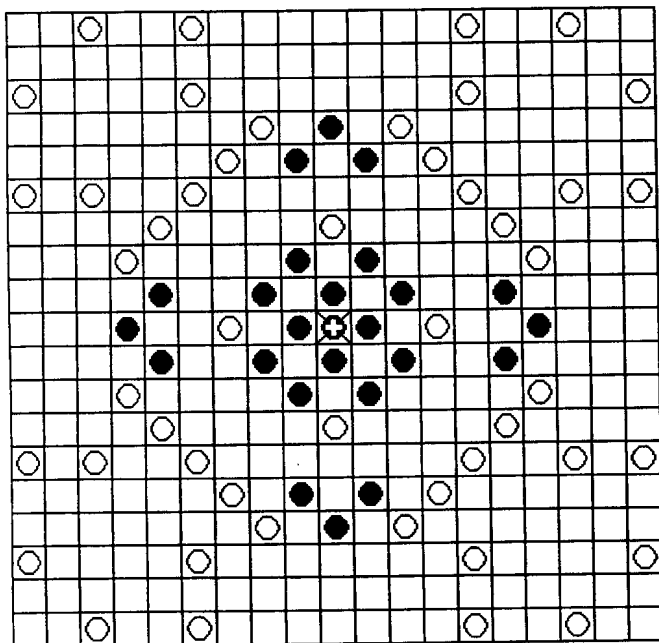
I leave it to readers to find out for themselves how the royal player can still set up a fortress from this position, despite the attackers' best efforts (it is not too difficult).

Eventually I came up with the position below :
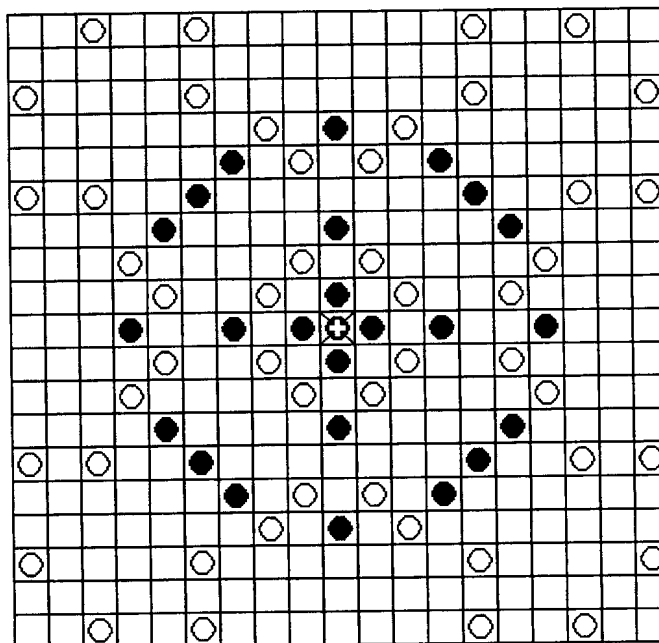
Here the forces interleave in an attractive way. Visually it is comparable with Tablut due to the cross formation of the black pieces. The extra black pieces give an impression very much like a Celtic cross, which could account for the game being described as *Alea Evangelii*. Finally Black's chances of setting up a successful fortress are so reduced that it would probably never occur outside of a composed game or a co-operative venture. Also, as I hope to show in a further article, the opening play can be quite exciting.

I hope readers will try out the game with this start position too. Here are the rules I propose :

1. The two forces begin in the positions shown in the diagram above.
2. White moves first and then players move alternately.
3. Any piece can move any distance orthogonally along a line of vacant points.
4. Captures are by orthogonal interception (sandwiching) but the King cannot take part in capturing moves.
5. A piece may move onto a point between two enemy pieces without being captured.
6. Once the King has left the centre point, it may not return to it. No other piece may land on this point, but all pieces may travel over it.
7. The attackers win by capturing the King, either by enclosure (surrounding on four sides) or by surrounding on three sides if the King is adjacent to the centre point.
8. The King wins by reaching a point on the perimeter of the board.
9. When, after a move, the royal player leaves a clear route for his King to reach a perimeter point, he must warn his opponent by shouting "Raichi!"
10. Draw by agreement or perpetual Raichi.

POLGAR SUPERSTAR CHESS : Q V R

We saw some Polgar Superstar games last time. Árpád Rusz has now sent me some delightful studies based on the ending of queen against rook.

These are based on the fact that the queen cannot win if the defending king is in a side corner and the rook commands the file across its entrance. This is a key position :
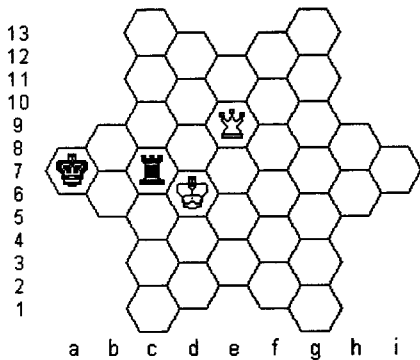
White must capture the rook if he is to bring his king close enough to mate the Black, but either KxR or QxR will give stalemate. Nor does it help White to squeeze the rook away from c7, say by checking on d10 and then playing a waiting move to e11 :
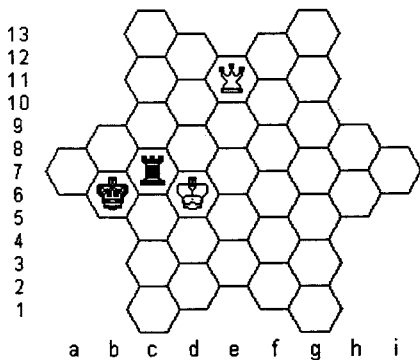
Black's rook must now move, but it will be safe from a fork on c3, it will also be safe on c9 since capturing it there will give another stalemate, and it will move back to c7 as soon as it can safely do so.

White can of course try other squeeze configurations, putting his king on d8 or his queen on a different file, but none leads anywhere.

However, if White can occupy the corner cell with his queen, he will be able to force a win. Consider this position :
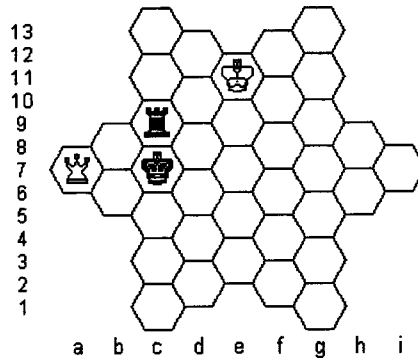

White to move here plays 1 Kd12 forcing 1...Kd8, and after 2 Qb8 Black's only safe moves are with his rook. If 2...Rc7, 3 Qd10+ forces his king to the e-file, after which White's king and queen can gradually drive him to the bottom of the board and his rook will be powerless to intervene (play might continue 3...Ke7 4 Ke11 Rc13 5 Qd4 Rc7 6 Kd10 Rc13 7 Qd8+ Ke5 8 Ke9 Rc11 9 Qe7+ etc). And if Black plays 2...Rc3 or 2...Rc1 instead of 2...Rc7, 3 Qd10+ again forces his king to the e-file since 3...Kc7 would allow a skewer.

This leaves 2...Rc5, after which Qd10+ no longer works. However, White has 3 Qe5 :
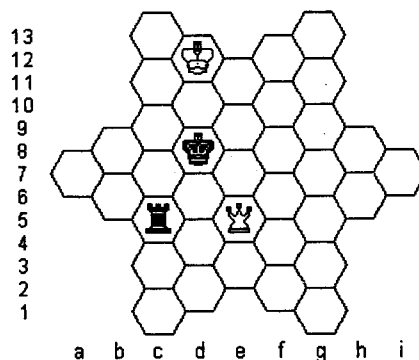

If now 3...Kc9 attempting to gain the corner, White has 4 Qd6 Rc3/Rc1 (4...Rc7 5 Qd10 mate) 5 Qd10+ Kc7 6 Qc11+ with a skewer; if instead 3...Rc9 then 4 Qf6+ Kc7 5 Kd10 Rc13 (5...Kb6 6 Kxc9) 6 Qc3+.

If it is Black's move at the top of the column, he can play 1...Rc11, and it looks as if he can keep this up for ever (Kd12 Rc9, Kd10 Rc13, Ke11 Rc11). However, White can bring his king down to d4, when Black must play his rook to c9 to avoid a skewer :
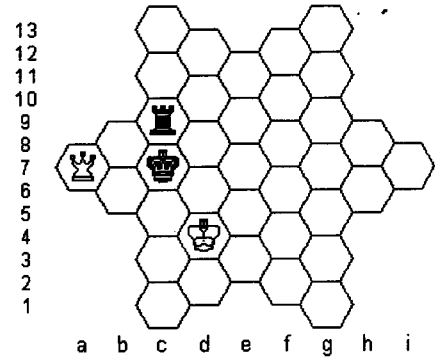
White now has two ways to win. One is to play 1 Ke3, and then to walk back up the board always putting himself a multiple of three ranks away from the Black rook (the longest line is 1...Rc13 2 Kf4 Rc11 3 Ke5 Rc9 4 Kf6 Rc13 5 Ke7 Rc11 6 Kf8 Rc9 7 Ke9 Rc11 8 Ke11 with 8...Rc13 9 Kd10 or 8...Rc9 9 Kd12). The other is to play 1 Kc3, and to meet 1...Kd8+ by 2 Kd2. Black can only play 2...Kc7 if he is to regain the c-file, and 3 Kd4 completes the triangulation and puts him in zugzwang.

All this has been basic theory. The position below is a study by Árpád.
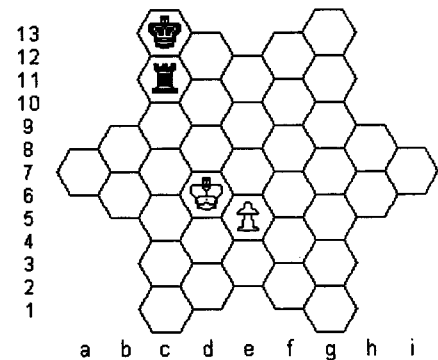
Black threatens ...Kd12 and ...Ke11 drawing, so White's king must play to e9, but if he goes via e7 Black will play 1...Rc1 and reach the side corner in time: 2 Ke9 Kc11 (or 2 Kd8 Kd12 3 Ke9 Kc11) 3 Kf10 Kc9 4 e9 (White's e-pawn, being still unmoved, can make a double step, but it doesn't help) Kb8 5 e11Q+ Kb6 and Black has his draw.

1 Kd8, therefore, and if again 1...Rc1 then 2 Kd10 wins off-hand. Hence 1...Kd12 2 Ke9, and now 2...Rc1 can be met by 3 Kf10 Kd10 4 e9+ Kc9 5 e11Q+ K~ 6 Qa7 and White has his win.
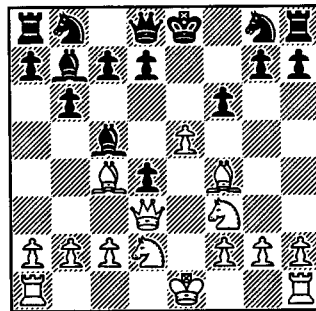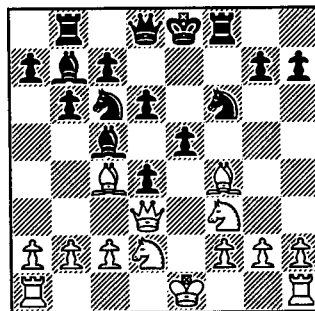
But Black can do better, 2...Rc9 :

This blocks the line from e11 to a7, and if White continues as before, 3 Kf10 Kd10 4 e9+, Black can play 4...Kd8 5 e11Q Kc7 and reach safety (White can try 6 Ke9 hoping for 6...Kb8 7 Kd8, but Black has 6...Kb6 and 7 Qxc9 will be stalemate).

So White must think of something else, and the answer is the single-step move 4 e7 :

A king move will be in the wrong direction, and a rook move will open the line from e11 to a7 and allow the previous line to work: 4...R~ 5 e9+ Kc9 6 e11Q+ K~ 7 Qa7.

With this in mind, the study below, by Csaba Schenkerik and Árpád, may not be too difficult. This time White has the rook, and he is trying to draw.

Answer on page 171.

ENGLISH PROGRESSIVE CHESS

Philip Cohen's "Olla Podrida" column in *Nost-algia* 282 introduced English Progressive to NOST. In this variant, a player cannot move a man a second time within a turn until no other man is free to move. Similarly, no piece may move a third time until the second sequence is finished. This seems simple enough, but he remarks that "a few exegeses are needed". In particular, each sequence is independent, so if a piece has been immobile for several sequences and then is freed, it does not make several moves in a row to catch up (*Nost-algia* 282, page 16).

Several English Progressive games appeared in *Nost-algia*, and in *Nost-algia* 358 Philip quoted one between Alessandro Castelli and Aldo Kustrin which illustrates this last point.
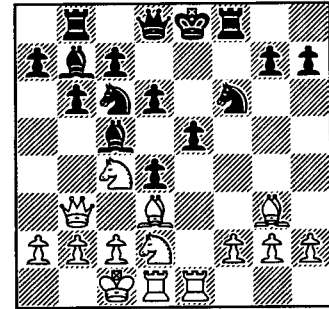
1 e4
2 e5 Bc5
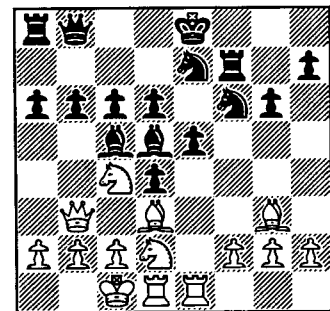3 d4 Nf3 Bg5
4 exd4 f6 b6 Bb7
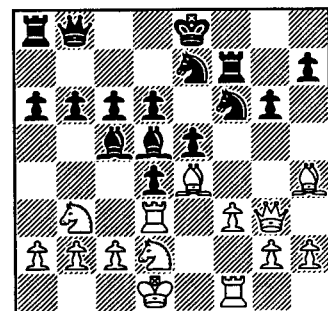5 e5 Bc4 Qd3 Bf4 Nbd2

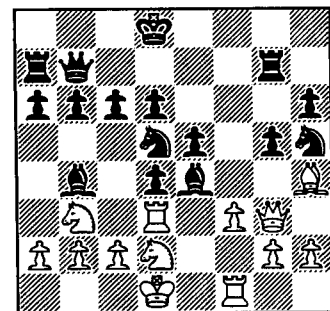6 fxe5 Nf6 d6 Nc6 Rb8 Rf8

7 0-0-0 Re1 Bg3 Qb3 Bd3 Nc4 Nfd2

8 Ne7 Bd5 c6 a6 Ra8 Qb8 Rf7 g6
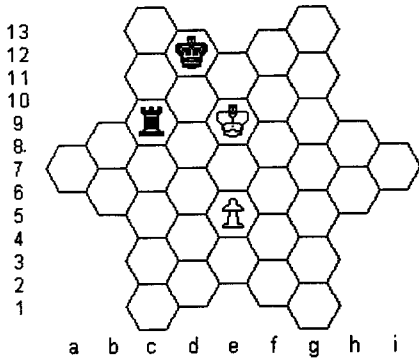

9 Be4 Bh4 Qg3 f3 Nb3 Rd3 Ncd2 Rf1 Kd1
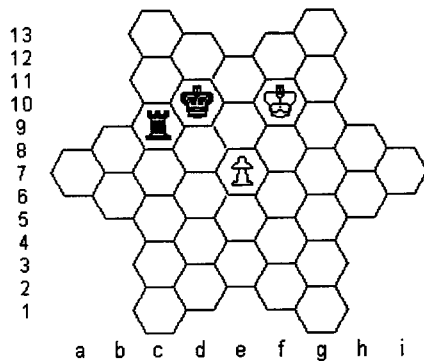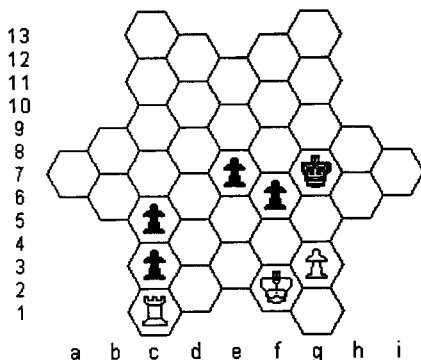

10 Bxe4 Ra7 Qb7 Kd8 Rg7 Nh5 h6 g5 Ned5 Bb4

With 13 White men still on the board, Black must have felt quite safe; how could eleven of these men each moving once only possibly give mate?

He was to be rudely awakened. Answer on page 171.

LOSING CHESS

A final selection of positions from the 2001 championship (*VC* 39/40). As usual, the analysis is by Stan Goldovski's *Giveaway Wizard* (see the back page).

The normal rule in the endgame is to promote to a rook if you want to win, and to a king if you are trying to escape with a draw. But immediate tactical considerations may overrule these, and in the position below, from Vincent van der Bilt's Round 6 game against Dirk Kraaijpoel, something quite different was needed.
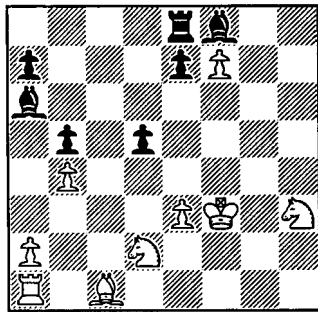
Black has just played **21...Re8**, and promotions other than **22 fxe8N** lose at once (if 22 fxe8K then 22...Bc8! giving Black an alternative capture so that 23 Kxe7 can be met by 23...Bxh3 24 Kxf8 a5 etc). Black tried **22...Bg7**, but after **23 Nxg7 d4 24 exd4 e5 25 dxe5** his remaining bishop had to come out into the open :
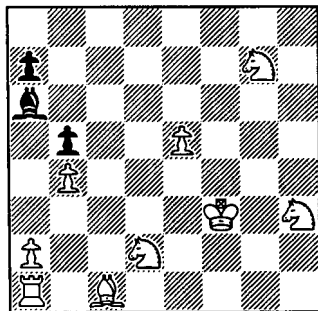
However, White still had to get rid of his dark bishop, which only the pawn on a7 could feasibly take, and the final stage was neat: **25...Bb7 26 Kg2 Bxg2 27 Nf5 Bxh3 28 Ne4 Bxf5 29 Bg5! Bxe4 30 Rb1 Bxb1 31 Bd8 Bxa2 32 e6 Bxe6 33 Bb6.**

Nor would different giveaways at moves 22-24 have helped, and Black

was in fact lost from before the first diagram.

In this game, it was Black's light bishop which was eventually forced out into the open. More usually, it is a rook that is forced to come into play. The game in Round 5 between Fabrice Liardet and Vincent van der Bilt came down to this position :
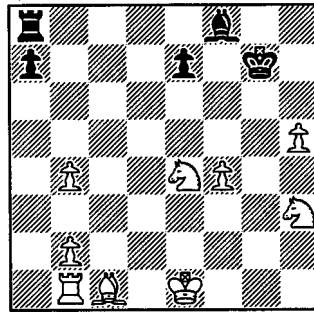
White has just brought his knight to e4, threatening to give it away on f6 with various unpleasantnesses to follow, and Black is lost. He tried **22...Kg6 23 hxg6 Bh6** to give himself an alternative capture on f4, but **24 Neg5** shut this off (the computer thinks that 24 Nd6 would have won more quickly, but 24 Neg5 is quite good enough and a sensible human player chooses the line which offers his opponent the fewest options), and after **24...Bxg5 25 fxg5 e5 26 b5** we have had reached this position :
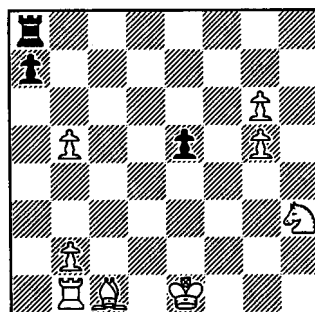
White now threatened 27 b6 forcing open the a-file, and if 26...Rc8 then 27 Ra1 Rxc1 28 Rxa7 Rxe1 29 Ng1 etc. So Black hid his rook by **26...Re8**, but it was to no avail: **27 b6 axb6 28 b4 Rb8 29 Bf4 exf4 30 Nxf4 b5 31 Kf2** and the rook had to show itself. Black made things a little easier for his opponent by playing 25...e5, but White could have forced a win anyway.

Fabrice's first-round game against myself had a similar theme. We looked at the opening in *VC* 39, so let us take up the game from there.
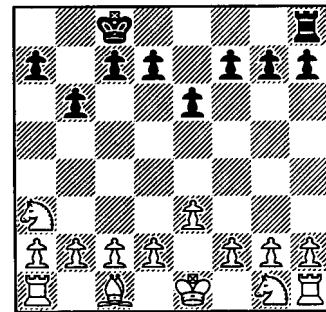
Play continued **9 d4 e5 10 dxe5 d6 11 exd6 cxd6 12 Nb1** (else Black can give White a rampant knight) **Kd7 13 Kd2 Ke6 14 Ne2 Kd7** (Black is already beginning to noodle rather pointlessly, but it wasn't apparent to me at the time what else he could usefully do and even now it still isn't) **15 Kd3 Ra8 16 Nd2 Rh8 17 b3 Rf8 18 Nc4 b5 19 Nxd6 Kxd6 20 c4 bxc4 21 bxc4** (*Wizard* would have played Kxc4, and I must confess that so would I – left on the b-file, the b-pawn would surely have been useful in helping to prise open the a-file) **Ke6 :**
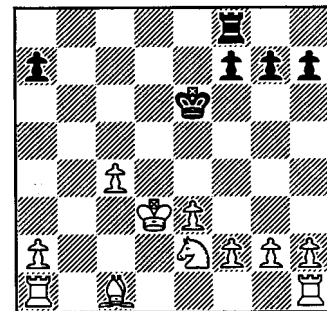
22 a4 (*Wizard* would have played Rb1, forcing ...Rb8 either at once or after a preliminary ...Kd5, but while this reduces Black to a few pawns and perhaps a king, there is no forced win within my computer's horizon, and the move is quite contrary to White's strategy so far) **Ra8 23 Nc3** (giving the option of Nd5 forcing off Black's king) **f5** (I may have had visions of bringing White's bishop into play, but this was easily circumvented and the move merely loosened my position) **24 g4 fxg4 25 Nd5 Kxd5 26 cxd5 g3 27 fxg3** and we have the position at the top of the next page :
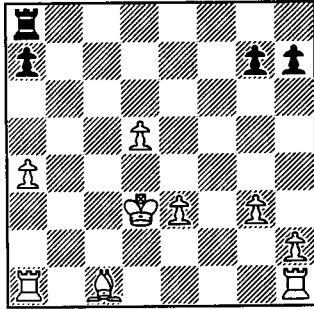
Play continued **27...a6 28 Kc4 Rg8 29 d6 g6 30 Ra2 Rh8** (if the Black rook goes to the seventh rank, White can play d7 followed by Rd1) **31 Ba3 Rg8 32 a5**, and now the a-file was barred to Black :
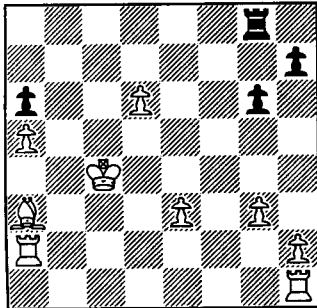
**32...Rh8 33 Rha1 Rg8 34 h4 Rh8 35 e4 Rg8 36 h5** and I gave up. It was a textbook demonstration of how to strangle a passive opponent.

Another instructive ending occurred in the Round 4 game between Andrzej Nagorko and Fredrik Sandström. Endings like this often let the stronger side marshal his men so as to meet any promotion with a mass giveaway, but here the pawn was too close to promotion for this to be possible.
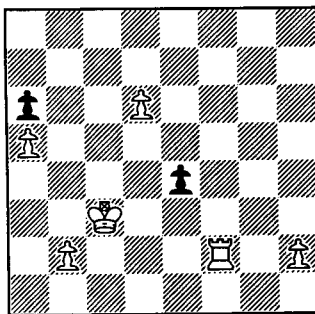
Play continued **39 d7 e3 40 Rf8 e2 41 d8R e1K**, after which three men went, **42 Rd1 Kxd1 43 Kc2 Kxc2 44 h4 Kxb2**, and White would get another rook :
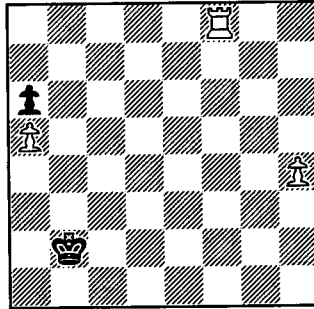
Rooks on f8/h8 against a lone distant king give a standard win, and though the a-pawns complicate matters they make no difference in the end. **45 h5 Kc3 46 h6 Kc4** (going for the e-file won't help) **47 h7 Kc5 48 h8R Kc6** (nor will a giveaway on b6) **49 Rh4 Kb7 50 Ra8 Kxa8 51 Rh5 Kb8** :
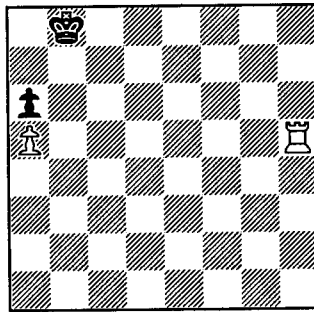
52 Rb5 (simpler was 52 Rd5 Ka8 53 Rc5 Ka7 54 Rb5 axb5 55 a6, but the game continuation is good enough) **axb5 53 a6 Kc7 54 a7 b4 55 a8B** (the only promotion to win) **Kd8 56 Bc6 Ke8 57 Bxe8 b3 58 Bf7 b2 59 Be6 b1N 60 Ba2 Nd2 61 Bb1.**

Vincent van der Bilt's last-round game against Tim Remmel produced yet another interesting ending.
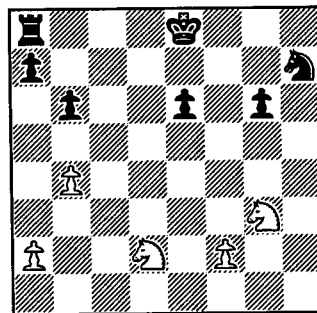
White could clearly get rid of all his king's side men; could he also get rid of his queen's side pawns?

Not if he throws his king's side men away first. 21 Nf5 (this may or may

not be playable) gxf5 22 Ne4 (but this certainly isn't) fxe4 23 f3 exf3 :
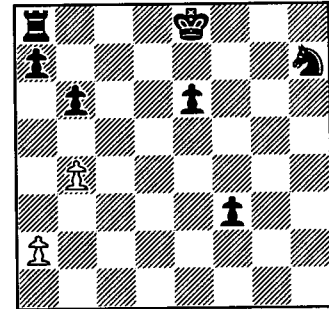
A typical line is now 24 b5 Rc8 25 a4 a6 26 bxa6 b5 27 axb5 f2 28 a7 Nf6 29 a8K (29 b6 Ra8 30 b7 Rxa7 etc) Rxa8 30 b6 Rc8 31 b7 Rc6 (simplest) 32 b8K Rc8+ 33 Kxc8 Kd8 34 Kxd8 35 Nd7 Kxd7 36 f1R and 37 Rf5.

So the queen's-side pawns must be brought forward first. Try 21 b5 Kd7 22 a4 – no, 22...Nf6 gives Black an alternative capture on e4, and if White still tries 23 a5 bxa5 24 b6 axb6 25 Nf5 gxf5 this alternative gives Black a win (26 Ne4 Nxe4 27 f4 e5 28 fxe5 Kc8 29 e6 Kb8 30 e7 Ra7 31 e8K Rd7 32 Kxd7 Nd6 33 Kxd6 Kc7 34 Kxc7 f4 and 35-37...f1R etc, or 27 f3 Nc3 28 f4 and much the same).

The game continuation was **21 a4 b5 22 axb5 a6 23 bxa6 Rxa6** :
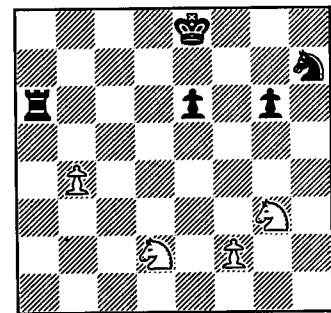
White now tried his luck with **24 Nf5 gxf5 25 Ne4**, and it was a fatal miscalculation: **25...fxe4 26 f3 exf3 27 b5 Rc6 28 bxc6 f2 29 c7 Nf8** and he gave up (30 c8N Ke7 31 Nxe7 Ng6 32 Nxg6 e5 33 Nxe5 f1N and wins with N v N, or 30 c8K Kd8 31 Kxd8 Nd7 with ...f1R and ...Rf5). Black had a clear advantage from the start, his king being much more flexible than White's pawns and knights, but after 24 Nb3 or even 25 Nb3 there is no forced win within my computer's horizon.

MODERN COURIER CHESS

by Paul Byway

Fers (inverted B in diagrams) moves one square diagonally, Courier (inverted N) leaps two squares orthogonally or diagonally. Unmoved K or F can make a double move, but not to capture nor through check. - JDB

White **Paul Byway**, Black **Roy Talbot**; from our recent correspondence tournament.

1	e2-e4	i7-i6
2	Nk1-j3	Nb8-c6
3	h2-h4	h7-h5
4	Cj1-h3	Nk8-j6
5	Nb1-c3	Nj6-i4

6	i2-i3	

6 Cxh5 ixh5 7 Bxh5 Nh6 isn't attractive. Black perhaps threatens 6...Ch6, ...g5.

6	...	f7-f6

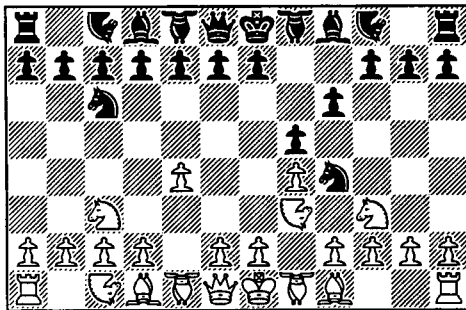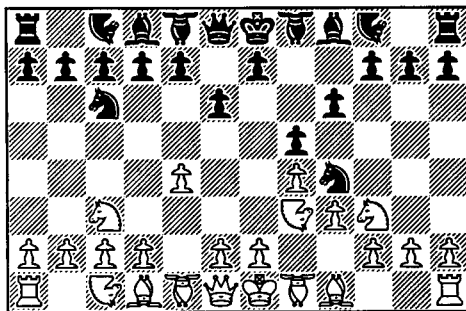For this tournament I decided to experiment, reserving e3,h3 for the courier instead of the fers. Black occupied the hole at i4 but weakened h5. After ...f6 he threatens ...g5 so I resolved to sacrifice courier for two pawns - something of a theme in this tournament. I think I get full value for the piece, but here (and in other games) I lose a tempo because the only safe square for the bishop is the one it came from. In such a case I think the sacrifice not quite good enough.

7	Ch3xh5	i6xh5
8	Bd1xh5	Ni4-j6
9	Bh5-d1	Qf8-f7

Without a courier to hold everything together my kingside feels weak on the white squares and this determines my next few moves.

10	g2-g4	e7-e5
11	Fh1-h3	Cj8-h6
12	Qf1-g2	
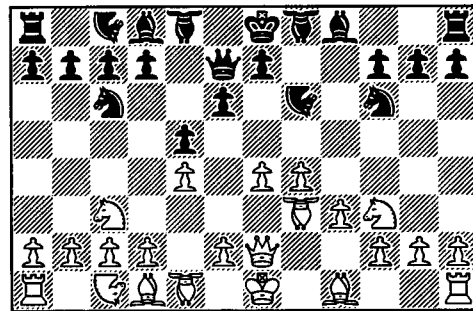
12 Qg2 is a strong move, the queen being active in several directions. My main concern was to defend the second rank.

12	...	Ch6-f4
13	d2-d3	g7-g5
14	h4-h5	Fh8-h6
15	Fe1-e3	d7-d6
16	Nc3-e2	Fe8-e6
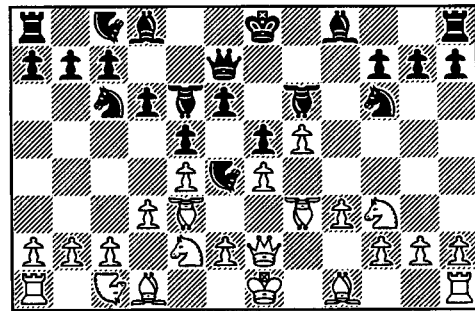
Decision time. I can play Ng3 to support i3-i4, or c2-c3 for Bb3, but the Cf4 is oppressive so I decided to break the blocked centre.

17	Fe3xf4	e5xf4
18	Ne2xf4	g5xf4
19	Bi1xf4	Fh6-g5

The material balance is now 4P/N+F (4 = 2.5+1.5) which is reasonable, but the lack of two minor pieces might tell in some circumstances.

20	Bf4-d2	Nj6-h7
21	f2-f4	j7-j6
22	f4xg5	f6xg5
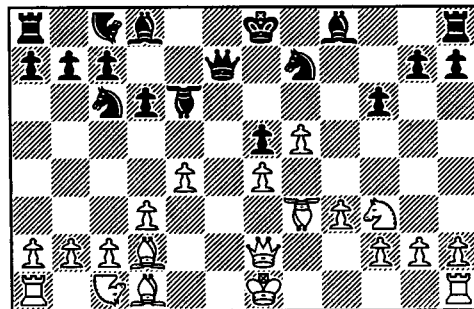
Now we have 3P/N. This should be a definite advantage

for the pawns in many positions, and equal even so early in the game. I'm happier to be only one minor piece adrift.

23	Cc1-e3	Bd8-f6
24	c2-c3	Cc8-e8
25	Bd1-e2	Qf7-g7
26	Ce3-g3	Fe6-f7
27	Fh3-i4	Kg8-e7
28	Fi4-j5	Ce8-g8

Perhaps Black feared 29 Fi6, but that was never my intention. I have established a picket against the opposing bishop, so that I can safely play Ki2, and if ...Bl5 then k2-k4.

29	Kg1-i2	Bi8-j7

30 Nh4 is very interesting, but ...Fe6 might be sufficient reply. It's time to attack his king on the Q-side.

30	d3-d4	Ke7-d7
31	d4-d5	

One might expect White to push the e-pawn, but this way Black must sacrifice N for C (I think it is a sacrifice at this stage) or interfere with the development of his Q-rook.

31	...	Nc6-d8

Now three black minor pieces want to use the square e6, but cannot.

32	Bd2-e3	k7-k6
33	Fj5-i4	R18-i8
34	Ra1-d1	Ra8-b8
35	Bd3xa7	Rb8-a8
36	Ba7-d4	Bf6xd4
37	c3xd4	c7-c6

White is not afraid of opening lines on the Q-side. Black declines to recapture his pawn, and I am mean enough to hang on to it. There's no hurry.

38	a2-a3	Ra8-a5
39	Nj3-h2	Ff7-e6

With Nh2 I safeguard g4, i4 and free the queen.

40	d5xc6+	

It would be a big mistake to free Black's minor pieces by dxe6+.

40	...	b7xc6
41	Be2-f3	Kd7-c8
42	Qg2-d2	Ra5-b5
43	b2-b4	Cg8-e8
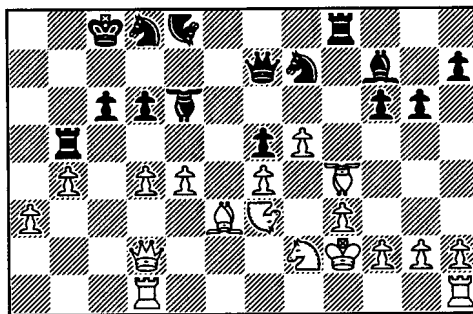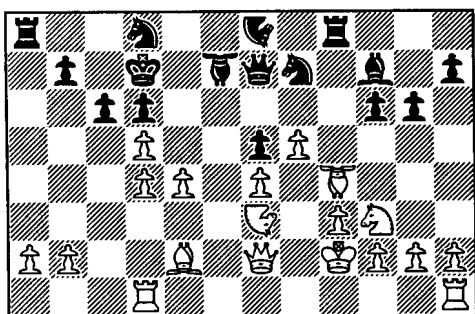
44	d4-d5	c6xd5
45	e4xd5	Fe6-d7
46	a3-a4	Rb5-b7
47	b4-b5	Kc8-b8
48	a4-a5	Fd7-c8
49	a5-a6	Rb7xb5
50	Rd1-b1	Rb5xb1
51	R11xb1+	
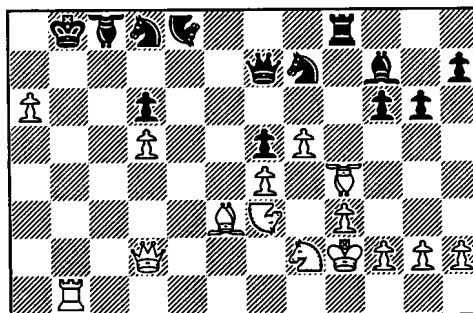
Black has too much firepower locked up on the Kingside while his minor pieces still trip over each other. White can think of bringing his attack to a conclusion.

51	...	Fc8-b7
52	Qd2-b4	Qg7-f6
53	Qb4-b6	Nh7-f8
54	a6-a7+	Kb8-a8
55	Qb6-c7	Ka8xa7

56 Rb5 Cc8 57 Ra5+ Ca6 58 Be2 Rxi4 59 Rxa6 mate.

ExCaVations

Emperor King Chess is one of the more exotic inventions of R. Wayne Schmittberger. The game is orthodox except that a king can jump to any empty or enemy-occupied square on the board, capturing anything it finds there. However, it can only capture the enemy king when the latter is undefended. The name is derived from the Emperor in Tai Shogi, which apparently has a similar move.

Nost-algia 358 featured the first nine moves of a game between Tony Gardner and John McCallion. Notes in quotation marks are by the latter, notation converted, as are question and exclamation marks.

    1   **e2-e4**   **d7-d6**
    2   **Ng1-f3**   **Bc8-g4**
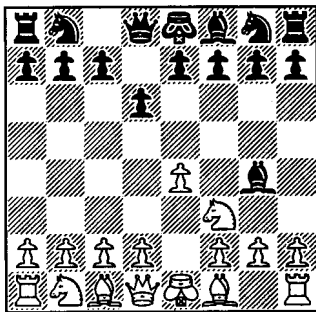
"Now ...Bxf3 would force capture by the pawn or King, for Qxf3?? loses to ...KxK!!"

    3   **Bf1-e2**

"A good, solid move."

    3   ...   **Ng8-f6**
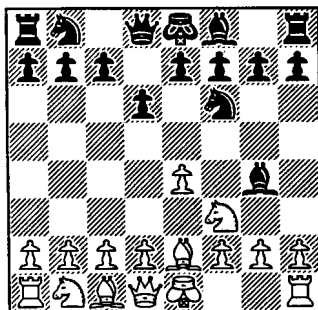
"This would now permit ...Kxe4 because the King would be defended from capture by the White monarch and able to jump safely behind the lines on the next move!"

    4   **Nb1-c3**   **c7-c6**
    5   **h2-h3**   **Qd8-b6? (!)**
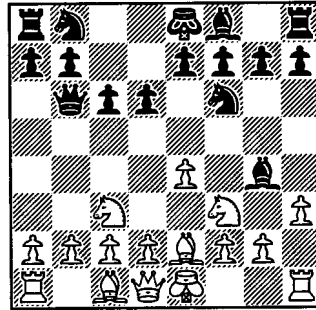
"We both lapsed into orthochessic patterns at this moment for, whilst we agreed that 6...Qxf2+ 7 Kxf2?? led to the capture of the King, we forgot that it could have jumped to the very safe square b1! This would have left Black with only two pawns and a lot of prayer for the Bishop."

    6   **d2-d4?**   **Bg4xf3**
    7   **e4-e5!?**
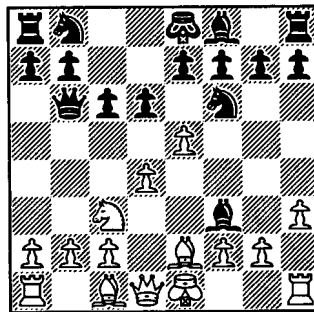
"A vigorous attack on the King! It is entertaining to note that 7...Bxg2 would threaten ...Kxh1!!"

    7   ...   **Bf2xe2**
    8   **e5xf6**

"Threatening 9 KxK wins!"

    8   ...   **Nb8-d7**
    9   **Nc3xe2**   **Nd7xc6**

and the game eventually ended "in a drawn K, R and P v K endgame".

The latter cannot be correct as stated, because the lone king would have been captured, but that the eventual ending was drawn does not surprise me. Endings in ordinary chess work because the king has a relatively weak move. Here, the object is not to capture the king itself but to remove its last defender, very probably a rook, and this isn't going to be so easy. So I fear we may have another game which is fun in the early stages, but becomes unplayable in good company because a player cannot clinch victory in the ending unless his material advantage is overwhelming.

The same players also tried **Bicolour Chess**, where a king cannot stand in "check" from its own men. In the array, swap Nb8/Qd8 and Nb1/Qd1.

    1   **g2-g3**   **c7-c5**
    2   **Bf1-h3**
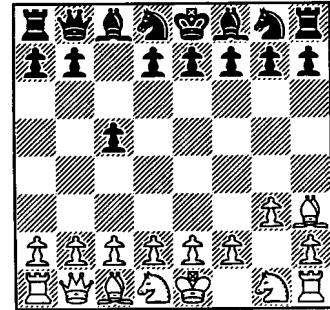
"Already threatening Mate, for 3 Bxd7 could not be met without the Black King being in 'check' from its own Bishop."

    2   ...   **e7-e6**
    3   **c2-c4**   **Qb8-d6**
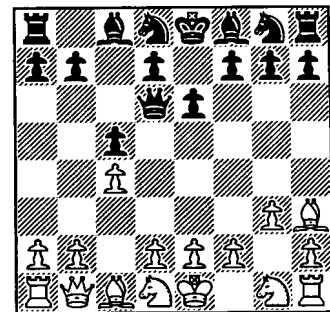
"Similarly threatening Mate with ...Qxd2."

    4   **Qb1-d3**   **Qd6xd3**
    5   **e2xd3**   **f7-f5**
    6   **Nd1-c3**   **Nd8-c6**
    7   **Nc3-b5**   **Nc6-b4**
    8   **Nb5-c7+**   **Ke8-d8**
    9   **Nc7xa8**
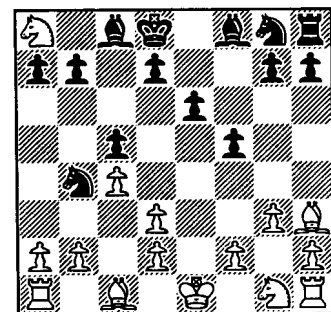
"This later proved somewhat useful to Black, for the Rook's disappearance allows the QB to develop more

quickly!"

	9	...	Nb4xd3+
	10	Ke1-d1	
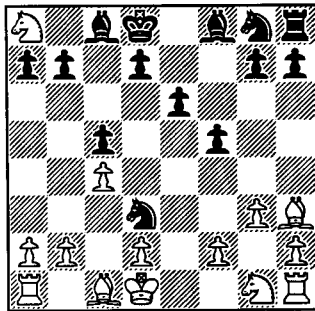
"Alas! The only move: the ortho-chessic flight squares e2 and f1 are covered by White pieces."

	10	...	Nd3-f2+
	11	Kd1-e1?	

"Kc2 was imperative."

| | 11 | ... | Nf2xh3! |
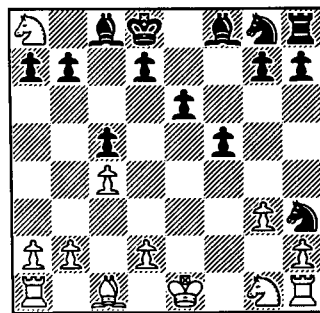
"The g1 Knight, which cannot re-capture because the Rook on h1 would 'check', is doomed."

	12	a2-a4	Ng8-f6
	13	Ra1-a3	Nh3xg1
	14	Ke1-f2	Nf6-e4+
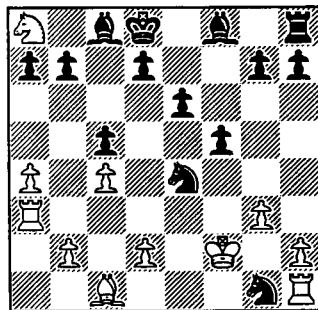
"It amused both Tony and me that here, and on several subsequent moves, he attempted to capture the irritating Knight embedded in his position – but the King would have been 'checked' by its Rook." No more moves were given, just "Black won".

Nost-algia 361 included an article on Edward Jackman's **007 Chess**. This game was briefly featured in *VC* 19, and we saw it in Progressive form in *VC* 53 and *VC* 54. The idea, in the "Balanced" form which seems to have become standard, is that Black starts by playing a legal move for White, White replies by playing a legal move for Black and then one for himself, and then each player in turn makes three moves: one for himself, one for his opponent, and one more for himself. This is the e-mail game between the inventor (White) and J. Hunter Johnson that featured in *VC* 19, moves in square brackets [...] being made for the opponent :

	1	...	[f3]
	2	[h6],e4	
		e5,[g4]	,Qh4+
	3	Ke2,[Qh3]	,Qe1
		Be7,[g5]	,Qe6
	4	gxh6,[g5]	,Bh3
		Qc4+,[Ke3]	,Bc5+
	5	d4,[d6]	,Bxc8??
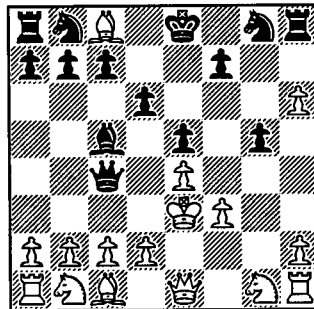
Black mated by **5...Rxh6,[Qe2],Qd4** neatly using his "White" move to block the king's flight square.

It will be noticed that no player moves the same man twice, and that he never uses his third move to capture the opposing man that he has just moved. Both these are forbidden in what the inventor's rule sheet calls the "Detante" version, which rapidly became the most played (*ECV 2* alters the name to "Detente", but I don't know if the inventor sanctioned the change). One change that the inventor apparently did sanction, on the evidence of the article in *Nost-algia* 361, was to allow the owner of a pawn to decide how it promotes (originally, if a player promoted an opposing pawn, he himself decided what it promoted to).

The inventor's original rule sheet included three specimen games, that above being one, and the article in *Nost-algia* 361 added a fourth. Sadly, none is of high quality, though they do illustrate the character and perhaps the weakness of the game. The game in *Nost-algia* 361 came down to this position :
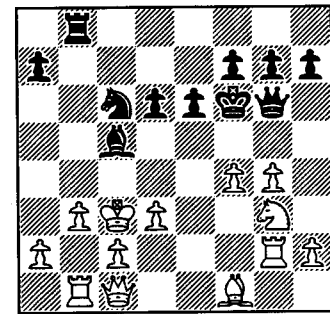
Here Black missed an immediate mate by Bb4+,[Kc4],d5 (or Bd4+ and the same), playing **Qxg4,[d4],Bb4+**, and after **Kd3,[h5],h3** he missed another :
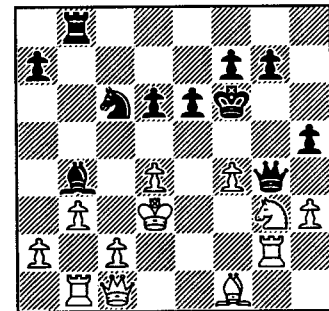
No self-respecting problemist would miss the pin-mate Qxf4,[Kc4],Ne5.

But it isn't just tactical oversights like this that make me think the play of poor quality (I have committed far worse myself), it is the apparent lack of strategic insight. It seems to me that if your king has been pulled to the third rank in the early middle game, you *must* be in trouble, and hence that this should dominate strategic thinking to the exclusion of almost all else. So, between experienced players, I would expect the game rapidly to descend into a repetitive pattern where White (say) used his "opponent" move to pull Black's king forward, forcing Black to use one of his "own" moves to pull it back, Black promptly did the same to White, and so on. This would seem to make the game very dull.

Am I being naïve?

BOYER'S "NOUVEAUX JEUX D'ECHECS INTÉRESSANTS"

Last time's remarks about the scarcity of Boyer's "Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Intéressants" have caused me to reflect that we might be performing a service for future generations by transcribing David Pritchard's copy here. There is no evidence that the copyright holders have been trying to exploit it in recent years (if they had been, it would not be scarce), so it seems unlikely that they will object. I have followed exactly the typography of the original, which was done using a fixed-pitch typewriter, and have deliberately reproduced its occasional errors; I hope I have added none in transcription.

<u>NOUVEAUX JEUX D'ECHECS INTERESSANTS</u>

Circulaire complémentaire aux deux ouvrages :

1°) - Les jeux d'échecs non orthodoxes, de Joseph BOYER (J.E.) 1951
2°) - Nouveaux jeux d'échecs non orthodoxes de Joseph BOYER (N.J.) 195
(David's copy is a carbon, and when a line goes close the edge of the page the last character or two appear sometimes to have been lost. Here, the final digit of line 2 is invisible.)

<u>ECHECS A LA GRILLE</u> de W. Stead. L'échiquier est divisé par des lignes formant grille en 16 carrés de 4 cases. Position initiale orthodoxe, mais une pièce ne peut se déplacer, prendre ou faire échec qu'à travers au moins une ligne de la grille. Original et très attrayant.

<u>ECHECS AUX CHASSEURS</u> de K. Schülz. Dans la position initiale orthodoxe, les 2 T sont remplacées par 2 chasseurs, les 2 F par 2 faucons. Le chasseur marche comme T en avant (mais non latéralement), comme F en arrière. Le faucon a la marche inverse comme F en avant, T en arrière (non latéralement). Voir les caractéristiques de ces pièces dans N.J. page 58. Pour faciliter le dégagement des chasseurs, la D, comme le R est autorisée à roquer avec un chasseur, d'où 4 roques possibles : O.O.R. - O.O.O.R. - O.O.D. - O.O.O.D. Très intéressant, riche en combinaisons.

<u>ECHECS BILLARD</u> de J. Berthoumeau. Règles parues dans N.J. page 76, mais simplifiées ainsi pour le jeu pratique :
    1 - une prise sur une case de bande peut être suivie d'un ou plusieurs rebondissements, mais une seule prise est autorisée à chaque coup ;
    2 - Un rebondissement ne peut ramener une pièce à sa case de départ, sauf si une prise a été effectuée ;
    3 - une pièce ne commande pas les cases au delà d'une pièce adverse qu 'elle pourrait prendre sur la bande ;
    4 - le R ne peut passer en échec au cours d'un rebondissement
    5 - le C peut rebondir dans un angle (ex. Cc7 - a8 - b6) et avoir un double rebondissement (ex de b4 à c6, via à 6 et b8 avec prise sur une de ces 2 cases). Jeu captivant.
(Line 6 is not wholly clear in David's copy, being on a well-worn fold which is now separating, but I think the reading is correct.)

<u>ECHECS AUX SUPERPIONS</u> de N. Voss. Les 2 PR et D de chaque joueur sont des superpions pouvant se déplacer et prendre sur les 3 cases en avant et sur les 2 cases latérales. Stratégie bouleversée ; très curieux.

<u>ECHECS AU LOUP</u> de A.V.Wilpert. Sur échiquier 8x10, met en action des <u>pièces uniques</u> pour chaque sorte, dont un loup (T+C), un renard (F+C), un C de la nuit. Les P sont renforcés par 4 sergents pouvant jouer et prendre sur les 3 cases en avant. Très captivant par les combinaisons variées des 10 pièces différentes. Règles sur demande.

Boyer's "Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Intéressants" continued.

ECHECS AUX SAUTERELLES (Grasshoppers) de J. Boyer. Chaque joueur a
8 sauterelles placées sur le 2e rang. Les P, placés sur le 3e rang
n'avancent que d'un pas au 1er coup. Promotion du P en pièce ortho-
doxe ou Sauterelle. Très attrayant, grande variété de nouvelles
possibilités.

ECHECS SANS EQUIVOQUE (U. Chess) de M. Charosch-Fondé sur la notation
descriptive anglo-américaine. Un coup ne peut^être joué que si, dans
cette notation, il peut être désigné, sans ambiguîté, par 3 symboles
ou moins : ex D4C, FxC. Curieux, plein de surprises. Règles dans
Fairy Chess Review, oct. 1953.

(end of page 1)

ECHECS AVEC RESERVES de E. Slater. Initialement, seuls le R et les
P sont à leur place orthodoxe. Les D,T,F et C sont hors de l'échi-
quier, en réserve, et peuvent être, sans obligations, placés, au
cours du jeu, sur une case vide quelconque de la 1ère rangée. Une
seule pièce est placée à la fois, ce placement tenant lieu d'un
coup joué. Intéressant.

ECHECS LIBRES de E. Slater - Au début du jeu, seuls les P sont
posés. Puis, alternativement, chaque joueur place, à volonté, une
figure sur une case vide quelconque du 1er rang, Le jeu commence
quand le placement est terminé. Pas de roque. Le placement demande
de judicieuses réflexions. Plus de théorie des débuts ! grande
richesse des milieux de partie.

ECHECS EQUIDISTANTS de J. Boyer. Comme dans les échecs marseillais,
chaque joueur exécute deux mouvements à chaque coup, soit avec la
même pièce, soit avec deux pièces différentes. Mais le 1er mouve-
ment doit être obligatoirement de même longueur que le 2e mouvement
précédent de l'adversaire. Très attrayant.

ECHECS MARSEILLAIS EQUILIBRES de R. Bruce. Jeu marseillais ou à deux
mouvements (voir J.E. chap. 16) mais les deux mouvements ne com-
mencent qu'avec le 1er coup des N. Au 1er coup, les Bl ne font plus
qu'un mouvement. Règle judicieuse supprimant le gros avantage du
trait et équilibrant sensiblement les possibilités.

ECHECS PERMUTANTS de J. Berthoumeau at R. Loiseau. Le R peut, 4 fois
de suite, permuter avec une figure, mais dans l'ordre obligatoire
avec un C, puis un F, puis une T, puis la D. La disparition d'une
pièce n'empêche pas le cycle de permutation : ainsi, les Fayant
disparus, on peut permuter dans l'ordre C,T et D. Il y a un seul
cycle de permutation. Une permutation tient lieu d'un coup joué.
Elle peut s'exécuter même si le R est en échec : c'est parfois le
seul moyen d'y échapper. Elle ne doit pas mettre ou remettre le R
en échec. Jeu pratique valable. Intéressants problèmes possibles.
(Line 4 is affected by the same separating fold as affected line 6 of "Echecs Billard", but the word
"Fayant" is just decipherable. David's copy has a pencil stroke between "F" and "ayant".)

LES ECHECS AU SPHINX OU A LA 4e DIMENSION de V.R. Parton. Jeu très
original, joué sur 9 petits échiquiers de 4x4 cases, disposées sur
3 rangées de 3 échiquiers. Les pièces jouent normalement sur les
petits échiquiers ou passent d'un échiquier à l'autre, selon leur
marche, sur une case correspondante. Règles sur demande.

Boyer's "Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Intéressants" continued.

ECHECS AU REFUS de F. Galvin - Le joueur, à chaque coup, exécute un mouvement, mais celui-ci peut être refusé par l'adversaire. S'il y a refus, le joueur reprend son mouvement et en exécute un autre qui, cette fois, ne peut être refusé. Jeu psychologique, original et profond, mais difficile.

ECHECS AU COMPROMIS de F. Galvin - Jeu voisin du précédent, quoique assez différent, plus pratique pour le jeu par correspondance. A chaque coup, le joueur propose à son adversaire une alternative de deux mouvements. L'adversaire choisit le mouvement à exécuter. Ainsi au premier coup, les Blancs proposeront 1 e4ou d 4. Les Noirs choisiront par exemple : 1 e 4, puis proposeront : 1... e 5ouC5, et les Blancs choisiront, etc. La proposition de 2 mouvements à choisir est obligatoire même si l'on fait échec ou si l'on est en échec. Toute fois, si le joueur ne peut exécuter qu'un seul mouvement légal, il le joue. Deux promotions différentes d'un même P peuvent être con-sidérées comme deux mouvements différents à proposer. Particularit´ originales et curieuses. (In line 6, "ouC5" has been squeezed in later, and partially overwrites ", et". Any hyphen that may have been typed at the end of line 8 is not visible in David's copy. At the end of the penultimate line, "Particularit'" is all can be read in David's copy.)

(end of page 2)

ECHECS BICOLORES DE G. Authier - Le R doit éviter de se mettre en échec, non seulement des pièces adverses, mais aussi de ses propres pièces. Jeu dynamique, rapide, riche en curieuses com-binaisons.

ECHECS DEGRADES de V.R. Parton - Version améliorée des Echecs revenants (J.E. chap. 18) qui, avec un très bon jeu des 2 côtés, peuvent être sans issue. Comme dans ce dernier jeu, toute pièce prise est replacée aussitôt, en gardant sa couleur, sur une case vide, mais elle perd de sa valeur : la D replacée devient T, la T devient F, le F devient C, le C devient P. Le P seul, après capture, n'est pas replacé. Ainsi, le jeu peut aboutir à une conclusion, tout en conservant les intéressantes combinai-sons du replacement.

ECHECS MARSEILLAIS SANS ECHECS de F. Galvin - Comme aux échecs marseillais, les joueurs exécutent 2 mouvements à chaque coup, soit avec 2 pièces différentes, soit avec la même pièce. Toute-fois, pour atténuer l'avantage du trait, les Bl. ne font qu'un mouvement au 1er coup. Il n'y a plus d'échec et le R est une pièce semblable aux autres : il peut donc jouer ou prendre en passant sous l'attaque d'une pièce adverse. Le gain s'obtient par la prise du R. Jeu très attrayant et très vivant, attaques et contre-attaques alternant du début à la fin.

ECHECS SPOUTNIK de J. Berthoumeau et R. Loiseau - La ligne de séparation des 4e et 5e rangs partage l'échiquier en 2 zones. Lorsque une T, un F ou un C pénètre dans la zone adverse il devient spoutnik. Il cesse de l'être s'il revient ensuite dans sa zone primitive. La D, les P et le R ne peuvent être spoutnik et restent toujours pièces normales. A chaque coup, le joueur peut jouer une ou plusieurs de ses pièces spoutnik, puis une pièce normale (D, P, R ou T, C ou F non spoutnik). Un mouvement de spoutnik est toujours facultatif, le mouvement normal est

Boyer's "Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Intéressants" continued.

toujours obligatoire et ne doit s'exécuter qu'après le ou les
mouvements des spoutniks. Jeu très vivant où l'habilité
consiste à entraver la formation de spoutniks adverses et à
utiliser au mieux les mouvements supplémentaires des spoutniks
pour l'attaque. (The text originally lacked the words "Jeu très vivant où l'habilité
consiste à entraver la formation de spoutniks" and the full stop preceding them, and the words
were typed at the bottom of the page with an asterisk indicating where they should be inserted.)

ECHECS BIPLACE de B. de Beler – Une pièce peut, en se déplaçant,
se placer sur la même case qu'une autre de même couleur, mais
elles ne sont pas combinées et se déplacent individuellement.
Toutefois, elles peuvent être prises toutes deux à la fois par
une pièce adverse. Il ne peut y avoir plus de deux pièces sur
la même case. Les pièces à marche rectiligne, D, T, F peuvent
traverser sur leur ligne de marche, une ou plusieurs pièces
amies, pour se poser sur la case de l'une d'elles ou sur une
case vide, ou jusqu'à la rencontre d'une pièce adverse qu'elles
peuvent prendre. Elles peuvent faire échec également à travers
des pièces amies. Le P peut avancer de 2 cases par dessus une
pièce amie. Original, riche en possibilités.

ECHECS au C de la NUIT de V.R. Parton – Dans la position initiale
orthodoxe, les C sont supprimés et leur case reste vide. La D est
aussi supprimée et remplacée sur sa case par un C de la Nuit, ceci
pour obtenir un jeu bien spécifique où celui-ci est la plus
forte pièce. Pour empêcher une attaque trop rapide de C de la
Nuit, les P sont placés au 3e rang et n'avancent que d'un pas
au 1er coup. Promotion obligatoire en C de la Nuit seulement.
Très attrayant.

(end of page 3)

ECHECS AU LION de J. Boyer – le R, les C et les P, sauf le PR,
ont leur marche orthodoxe. Mais la D devient un Léo (=Lion), la
T un Pao (= canon du jeu chinois), le F un Vao. Léo, Pao, Vao
(désignations des problémistes féériques) ont leur marche ortho-
doxe, mais ne peuvent prendre ou faire échec que par dessus un
sautoir, celui-ci étant une pièce amie ou adverse. Le PR est
imprenable jusqu'à sa promotion et prend normalement. S'il se
bloque avec le PR adverse, il peut exceptionnellement, jouer
sans prendre à un pas en diagonale. Les P sont promus en Léo,
Pao, Vao ou C. Le PR peut, en outre, être promu en pièce ortho-
doxe, règle remédiant à la faiblesse des pièces sauteuses en
fin de partie. Très attrayant.

ECHECS SANS RECUL de VR Parton et J. Boyer – Voir N.J. p. 97.
Ajouter : une pièce de promotion peut faire échec en arrière sur
sa case de promotion. En quittant le rang de promotion, elle
peut prendre ou jouer en arrière, une fois seulement. Original
et intéressant. (In line 1, a full stop has been squeezed in between "V" and "R".)

ECHECS SPHERIQUES de H.D.Greyber – La sphère est divisée par des
méridiens et parallèles, en 64 cases. Les pièces adverses sont
placées aux 2 pôles. Mais la sphère reste imaginaire : comme
les Echecs cylindriques, le jeu est joué sur l'échiquier normal
par adaptation visuelle. Règles sur demande.

Boyer's "Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Intéressants" continued.

<u>ECHECS RETRECISSANTS OU PEAU DE CHAGRIN</u> de J. Boyer - Voir N.J.
p. 97 - ajouter : quand le 8e rang disparaît, les Bl. n'ont plus
de promotion possible. De même pour les N. après disparition
du ler rang. Le jeu peut rester entièrement orthodoxe si le mat
survient avant tout rétrécissement. Pour éviter ce fait, on peut
décider de partir d'une position de partie de maîtres au 15e ou
20e coup, deux parties étant alors jouées avec changement de
couleur. Finales très originales et curieuses. (In line 5, damage to
David's copy has removed the final letter of the word which I have rendered as "peut".)

<u>KRIEGSPIEL par correspondance</u> de F. Galvin - Règles sur demande.

<u>ECHECS PARTONIQUES</u> de V.R. Parton - Dans la position initiale,
inversions des P, placés au ler rang, et des figures placées au
2e rang. Toutes les figures, comme les P, ne peuvent jouer qu'en
avançant, non en arrière, ni latéralement. Les P peuvent avancer
de 2 cases au ler coup. Plus d'échec, ni de mat : le R est une
figure comme les autres et perd ses caractères spéciaux. La
prise, non orthodoxe s'effectue de plusieurs manières :

       1 - <u>encadrement</u>, sur une même ligne droite, par <u>2 pièces
amies</u>, d'une ou plusieurs pièces adverses qui sont capturées ;
       2 - placement d'une ou plusieurs pièces amies, sur une
même ligne droite, entre <u>2 pièces adverses</u> qui sont capturées.
Gain par la capture du R adverse. Jeu de position très spécial
et très hétérodoxe. (At the end of line 3 of paragraph 1, "en" is just readable.)

<u>ECHECS AUX RETTAHS</u> - Voir N.J. chap. 22 - adopter la règle :
Toute pièce faisant échec à un rettah doit être prise ; lalprise
par le rettah n'est obligatoire que si aucune autre pièce ne
peut prendre. (In line 2, the second "l" of "lalprise" is fainter but definitely there.)

<u>LA COURSE DES ROIS</u> (Racing Kings) de V.R. Parton. Les joueurs
jouent sans P, avec seulement les 8 figures placées ainsi du
même côté, au départ de la course.

(end of page 4)

    <u>Blancs</u> Rh2, Dh1, TG2 et G1, Ff2 et f1, Ce2 et e1 ;
    <u>Noirs</u> Ra2, Da1, Tb2 et b1, Fc2 et c1, Cd2 et d1. Le R ne peut se
mettre en échec et les pièces adverses ne peuvent lui donner
échec. La prise des pièces adverses est possible. Les R s'ef-
forcent d'atteindre la 8e rangée. Le ler qui y parvient gagne.
Si c'est les blancs, les noirs ont un coup supplémentaire. S'ils
y parviennent aussi, la partie est nulle. Fantaisie attrayante,
qui a ses subtilités. On peut convenir d'une course aller et
retour.

<u>LE JEU DES CIRCUITS</u> de J. Boyer - Au début, échiquier vide.
Chaque joueur dispose de 2C et de 3OP de couleur quelconque.
Alternativement, chacun pose un C puis l'autre. A chaque coup
ensuite un C quelconque est déplacé et un R inamovible est
posé sur la case évacuée où le passage est désormais interdit.
Le terrain se restreint de plus en plus pour les mouvements des C. L
Le ler qui ne peut plus jouer a perdu. Variations multiples de jeu
possibles en utilisa nt d'autres pièces normales ou féériques pour
les circuits : ex pour chaque joueur, C et T ou 2T ou C et R ou

Boyer's "Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Intéressants" concluded.

```
C et 2 Sauterelles, etc...
```
(In line 4, David's copy definitely reads "R" and not "P" as would have been expected, and the surplus "L" at the end of line 6 is likewise definite.)

```
COMBINAISONS DE JEUX - de très intéressantes combinaisons de
deux jeux ont été spontanément réalisées par des joueurs.
Exemples : échecs cylindriques battu-battant, cylindriques à la
grille, battu-battant aux chasseurs, libres cylindriques, écossais
au tir, écossais revenants. La série n'est cartainement pas
close.


JEU PAR CORRESPONDANCE

        Des tournois internationaux par correspondance à 3 joueurs
ou des Matches de 2 joueurs sont organisés sur les jeux ci-dessus
et d'autres jeux non orthodoxes intéressants publiés dans J.E.
et N.J. Inscription gratuite. S'adresser à Joseph Boyer, 3, rue
Leconte-de-Lisle, Paris (16e). Les 2 ouvrages J.E. et N. J. sont
en vente à la même adresse, chèque postal 3550-67 Paris, au prix
de 400 Fr chacun (435 Fr franco), les 2 ensemble : 835 Fr franco.
```
(The symbol which I have rendered as "Fr" in this last line is a single composite symbol apparently not realisable on my computer.)

(end of document)

David's files also contain an unprovenanced single-sheet document produced on a different typewriter :

```
        Modification au projet de jeu hexagonal De Vasa, pages 81 et 82

        Addition d'une 9ème ligne d'hexagones, soit en tout 81 hexagones,
dont 27 blancs, 27 noirs, 27 bruns.

        Disposition dans le même ordre, sur cette 9ème ligne, des Figures
noires (R, D, T, F, C), les Pions noirs restant sans changement sur la
7ème ligne.

        Disposition des Pions blancs sur la 3ème ligne, les Figures blanches
(R, D, T, F, C) restant sans changement sur la 1ère ligne.

        Suppression de la faculté des Pions de prendre à un pas de Fou en
avant; pour le reste, ils conserveront leurs deux avancements et leurs
deux prises à droite et à gauche, ainsi que la faculté d'avancer de 2
cases au premier coup, de même que celle de la prise en passant, légère-
ment modifiée par la suppression de leur 3ème prise en avant.

        Les deux roques, p.ex. pour les Blancs, seront les suivants:

        Les cases étant vides entre la Ta1 et le Rf1, la position de ces
pièces, après le grand roque, sera: Rc1, Td1.

        Les cases étant vides entre le Rf1 et la Ti1, la position de ces
pièces, après le petit roque, sera: Rh1, Tg1.
```

This document appears to have been produced using a Roneo or similar duplicator, and a note

```
        (Le circuit du Cavalier peut aussi être réalisé sur cet échiquier)
```

has been typed at the bottom of David's copy using yet a third typewriter.

ISOLATED PAWNS

Nam Dinh Chess (see *VC* 61 and 62). Mats Winther has made a Zillions implementation, and to my embarrassment he reports that the game collapses because White has a forced mate in two (from the game array, d2-c3 forces ...Kc5xe3, and e1-d2 puts Black in check and leaves him no way out). Clearly something has gone wrong somewhere.

My first thought was to check my reading of the rules, but they seem clear enough. Rule 7.1: Men manoeuvre on the board, but do not take each other. Rule 7.2: Only a king can take an enemy man, and this in only one way, by a leap over its own man (a piece of the same colour) which stands on a neighbouring point, beyond which on a further point in a direct line is an enemy man [...]. Admittedly these are my translations, but I am willing to send a copy of the original page to any reader who is interested, and I do not think the words can be read in any other way.

So, assuming that the game is a genuine one and that we are dealing only with a corruption of detail somewhere along the way, what are its true rules? Has the initial array been wrongly reported? It seemed possible and Mats tried removing the men on the middle rank, but there seemed to be no way of forcing a win: "even if one party loses material, he can just go back and forth and nothing happens". He also tried allowing the ordinary men to capture, but this doesn't work either: "this results only in exchanges and the outcome is a sure draw". Another possibility might be to allow the king to capture by jumping over an enemy man as well as over a friendly man, despite the explicit prohibition of this in the rules as given, or simply to prohibit the kings from checking each other.

Whatever the truth may have been, I hope a reader will be able to devise workable rules for the game. Often, when a game is defective, it seems to play well enough until players have acquired sufficient skill to reach the ending, when hitherto unsuspected deficienices show themselves. Here, we have the reverse; the ending makes excellent sense, as we saw last time, and it is in the opening that the game is defective.

Andrew Perkis accompanied his article on 19x19 hnefatafl with a comment that in **Modern 11x11 Hnefatafl** as described in *VC* 59 the royal side can set up a simple fortress at once (in the diagram on the front page of *VC* 59, play say g5-h5 and g6-g5 to create a two-square haven, and then play Kf6-g6-f6 indefinitely). It may also be possible to set up a fortress up around a King placed on an edge square, since in this variant reaching such a square does not end the game. Since Peter Kelly's experience as reported in *VC* 59 was that the current Shetland version of the 11x11 game favoured the royal side, such fortresses are perhaps unlikely to be a problem in practice, but the possibility is a little disconcerting. I asked Andrew whether it might be possible to set up a fortress and gradually manoeuvre it to the edge, testudo style, but he thought it would probably get frayed at the edges.

It should perhaps also be noted that according to Murray's *History of Chess*, page 409, the word "alea" always implied the use of dice (and I have seen similar statements in other sources, for example in an article in *The Playing-Card*, volume 38, number 2, pages 92-118). This would seem to imply that the 19x19 version of hnefatafl was originally a dice game (or at least that the principal surviving source for it happens to refer to a dice variant). It is of course entirely reasonable to try to reconstruct it as a non-dice game, but starting positions suitable for a dice game may be less suitable for a game without dice, and vice versa.

Rugby games. The "play to the edge" objective of hnefatafl has caused me to have another look at Rugby Chess and its derivatives. The basic property of these games is that one side has a man with a ball, its objective is to get the ball to the opponent's back line, and instead of a normal move it can pass the ball to another man which is further from the objective than the man passing. The original Rugby Chess, with two men against one on an 8x8 board, was developed for a meeting held by Anthony Dickins in 1979 to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the birth of T. R. Dawson, and was described in *Chessics* 18 (now available on the Internet, see *VC* 62 page 140). A later version, with four men against four but with the limitation that each man was paired with a specific opposing man and it was only the man paired with the man carrying the ball who could move, was described in *Abstract Games* 8, and proved to yield some pleasantly paradoxical positions where the defenders could be induced to block each other or to capture one attacker so as to clear a path for another. Further analysis, if correct, has shown that the particular starting position used there should there always lead to a win for the side with the ball, but the analysis is routine rather than sparkling and I have no plans to publish it.

Experience has shown that games of this apparently simple kind can be unexpectedly subtle. I am sure that many other versions could be produced, and they might be particularly well suited to boards larger than 8x8. An advantage, for those of us who tend to prefer analysing games to playing them, is that you are in the endgame straight away; there are no boring opening and middle-game phases, the board cluttered with idle and irrelevant pieces, that so disfigure normal varieties of chess...

Vladimír Pribilynec has sent me a computer program to play his **Passion Chess**, which differs from orthodox chess only in allowing a two-step pawn move at any stage (no *en passant* capture). He claims the program as showing "strong artificial intelligence" and it was certainly good enough to beat me in a quick trial, but nowadays this proves little. He is <v.pribylinec@centrum.cz> if you want to inquire (English spoken). The idea of allowing pawn-two at any stage is of course not new (see for example George Jelliss's "Fast Philidor" in *VC* 45), and I cannot help feeling that the removal of *en passant* is a backward step.

Chess and points. When reviewing Shuuro last time, I realised that it might have been useful to have grouped games which use points (or money, or whatever) separately in the *Classified Encyclopedia*. For the benefit of future reviewers in *VC* or elsewhere, let me list them now.

ECV 2 lists various games in which points are used when setting out the men:

David Moeser's **Chazz** (page 60).

The anonymous **Game of Calculation** reported in 1806 and its modern recreation (page 77).

Bruce Gilson's **Free Choice Chess** (page 187).

We can now add **Shuuro** (*VC* 62 page 133). All these games have the property that there is a pool of men each having a point value, each player starts with a certain number of points, and he chooses his own army from the pool subject to not exceeding this point value.

ECV 2 has three further games in which points or money are used during play:

David Pritchard's **Token Chess** (page 54).

David Moeser's **Bankhouse Chess** (same page).

Rob Callender's **Turbo Chess** (page 100).

To these, we can now add two more:

Ralph Betza's **Taxi Chess** (*VC* 56 page 23).

The recent **Bidding Chess** (*VC* 57 pages 42-44).

These games are quite different both from the first group and from each other.

There are also games in *ECV 2* where point scoring is the objective or one of the objectives of play:

David Moeser's **Pinochle Chess** (page 284).

The 1893 **Game of Ramparts** (page 303).

Bruce Trone's **Numericron** (same page).

Maureen Hiron's **Benighted** (pages 303-4).

Rainer Knizia's **Re** (page 304).

Andrew Looney's **Monochrome Chess** (page 304) and **Martian Chess** (page 353).

Francis Lumière's **Proteus** (page 304).

Additionally, there are the ancient **Rhythmomachia** and **Wuterich's Game**, pages 305-6, where numerical or other values are assigned to the men and used in the course of play, but Rhythmomachia is perhaps near to the boundary of "chess and points" and Wuterich's Game beyond it.

If I have overlooked any other game that is in *ECV 2* or has appeared in *VC*, please will readers say so.

Tempête sur L'échiquier (*ECV 2* page 283). I obtained a pack of these cards some years ago (I think they were on sale at one of the French problemists' meetings at Messigny) and have thumbed through them from time to time with amusement, but have never actually played the game. It is essentially chess plus disturbances; each player receives five cards from the pack, which he can play at any time during an otherwise normal game of chess to change the position on the board in some more or less drastic way (there are some delightful illustrations in the original *Encyclopedia*). Having played a card, he draws another from the pack to replace it.

Philip Cohen played against Michael Keller and Kevin Moroney at a get-together in June 1996, and reported in *Nost-algia* 356. He described the game as "wild and woolly", a description which will cause little surprise, and continued with a comment which I found of interest: "I played Michael with cards hidden and Kevin with cards visible to both players; I prefer the latter version, which I think is more strategic."

This lines up with the experience of patience (card solitaire) players, some of whom prefer to play certain games with the stack inverted so that they can see the identity of the next card to be drawn while they are deciding how to handle the present card. This gives a much greater opportunity for the exercise of skill, and hence makes the game more interesting.

Book Review

Rose Board Recipes – new games and old to play your way by Michael Jameson for St Albans Cathedral, 2009. ISBN 978-0-9564066-1-3, A5 paperback, 194pp, £5 plus postage and packing, or £10 for a signed copy ("please state words required"). On sale from St Albans Cathedral Bookstall, or contact <www.boardgamerecipes.com>.

This is a difficult book to review, because its primary objective is religious and such a matter is outside *VC*'s remit, but it contains rules for a large number of games which can fairly claim consideration irrespective of the context in which they have been presented.

The unifying feature is the use of the so-called "Rose Board", which is a 91-cell hexagon. Chess games are presented on this board both with a forward rook move and with a lateral rook move, for two players and for three. Equivalent games are presented on the "Rose Credo" board, which is a 169-cell hexagon less the six corner cells. There is a Rose Chinese Chess on each board, with a three-player version on the smaller board. There is a Rose Shogi, with an invitation to invent derivatives. There are boards wrapped round to form a cylinder or superimposed on a sphere, with games for two players and in some cases for three. You name it, and there seems to be a game for it.

Yes, but... In general, the more new games an inventor presents at once, the less he has explored any particular one. In "Rose Chess", the pieces have the same moves as in many other hexagonal chess variants, but the move of the pawns appears to be new. I therefore asked for some specimen game scores between players of reasonable competence so that I could compare the game with the hexagonal chess variants already in existence, and was told that none was available. I have little doubt that the same is true of all or nearly all the games described in the book.

The writing of the book has clearly been a labour of love, done without thought of personal profit. It appears to have been produced as part of an attempt to spread the author's personal religious faith, and perhaps it should not be judged from any other standpoint. From the point of view of the games enthusiast, however, it would have been much more valuable to have presented a single one of these games and explored it in depth, instead of adding yet more to the myriads of games which have been invented but rarely if ever seriously played.
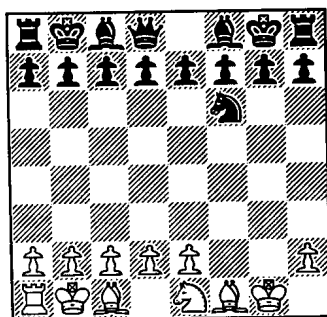
PROOF GAMES

by Peter Fayers

We saw Knightmate Chess last time (royal N e1/e8, plebeian K b1/b8, g1/g8). Alain Brobecker and his computer immediately found some synthetic games, and I couldn't resist trying a proof game.

92 - Alain Brobecker, original.
Knightmate Chess. Find game scores ending (a) 3 a4 mate, (b) 3...Ne8 mate (two solutions), (c) 4 Ba6-e2 mate.

93 - PF, original

After Black's 7th, Knightmate Chess

Knightmate proof game techniques are very similar to those of Losing Chess – there is a need to move pieces along defined paths without leaving them *en prise*. (In Losing Chess, a man can be left *en prise* if another friendly unit is also capturable.) The expert in Losing Chess Proof games, as we saw last time, is Bernd Gräfrath. For those of you who enjoyed last time's offerings, here are some more.

94 - Bernd Gräfrath
The Problemist, 2003
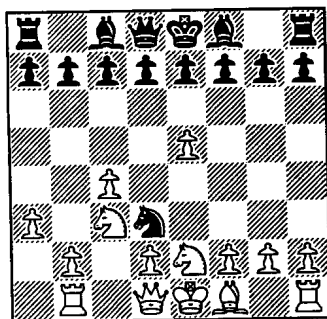
After Black's 8th, Losing Chess

95 - Bernd Gräfrath
Probleemblad, 2003
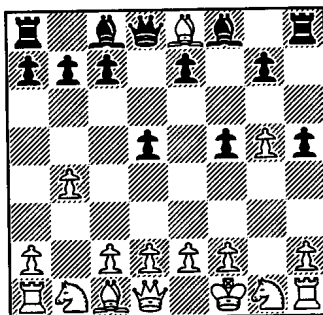
After White's 10th, Losing Chess

96 - Bernd Gräfrath
The Problemist, 2008
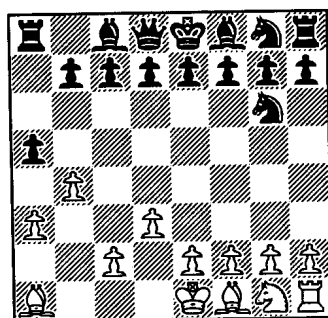
After White's 10th, Losing Chess

97 - Bernd Gräfrath
feenschach, 2002
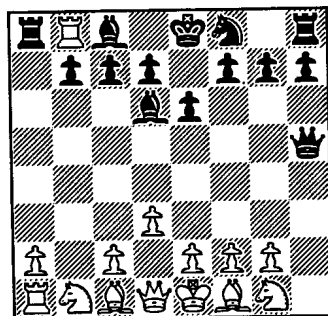
After White's 10th, Losing Chess
(b) remove Ra8, after White's 11th

VC 55-56 contained some problems in HAP (Human, Animal, Pawn) Chess, where the solver was told only the nature of the men moving and captured and whether the move was check, and had to deduce the full score. The Retros Corner has recently been exploring CCC Chess, where Check, Castles, Capture are similarly disclosed. Here are two examples.

98 - Mario Richter
The Retro Corner, October 2009

1	move	move
2	capture	move
3	capture	move
4	capture and mate.	

Full game score?

99 - Nikolai Belukhov
The Retro Corner, November 2009

1	move	move
2	capture	check
3	move	capture, check
4	move	capture, check
5	move	capture, check
6	move	check
7	move	check
8	move	check
9	move	check, draw

Full game score?

Fill-up-the-page time again, so here is another problem from Bernd, but in a different genre. In Bichrome chess, all moves must be from a black square to a white, or vice-versa. So Knights are unaffected, Bishops immobile (hint). In **100**, it is obvious that White has castled. Except that castling is illegal in Bichrome ...

100 - Bernd Gräfrath
Die Schwalbe, 2009
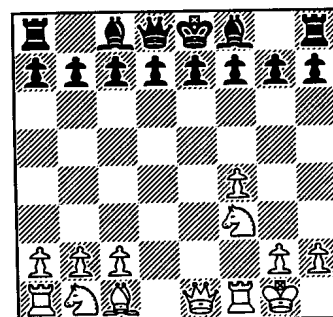
After White's 10th, Bichrome Chess

Answers on page 171.

*Peter offered me joint authorship of **93** if I could add a White tempo move so that the game could finish 8...Ne8 with every surviving man back on its initial square, but I could not oblige. Can any reader do better? - JDB*

On Mixed Quaternary Symmetry In Knight's Tours

by George Jelliss

Types of Symmetry

A diagram shows '*n*-ary' symmetry if it has *n* congruent parts that by reflection or rotation can take the place of any other. In the case of a square diagram *n* can be 2, 4 or 8, and the symmetry is accordingly termed 'binary', 'quaternary', or 'octonary'. In 'direct' symmetry the pattern can be reflected without change of appearance, while in 'oblique' symmetry reflection produces a non-superposable mirror image. Octonary symmetry is direct, but quaternary and binary symmetry can be direct or oblique. The direct symmetries can also be subclassified as 'lateral' or 'diagonal' depending on the directions of the axes of reflection. Here are simple patterns of knight moves on the 4×4 board showing the various types of symmetry that are possible.
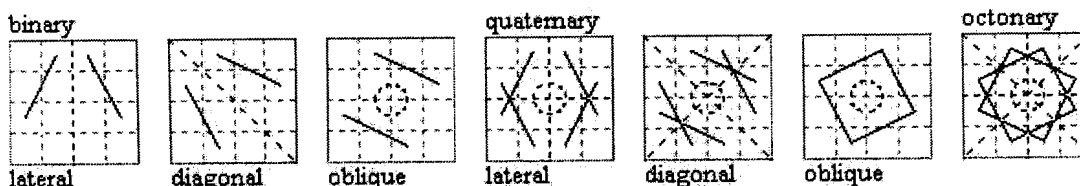
A pattern with octonary, quaternary, or binary-oblique symmetry can be rotated to superimpose with itself. The rotation is through 180 degrees in the binary-oblique and quaternary-direct cases, or through 90 (and hence also 180) degrees in the quaternary-oblique and octonary cases.

Tours and Pseudotours

By a knight's 'tour-pattern' I mean a pattern of knight moves on a board, having two moves incident at every cell. A tour-pattern is either a 'tour', that is a single circuit of knight moves that passes through every cell of the board, or a 'pseudotour', consisting of two or more superimposed circuits. (Note that we are only considering here closed tours and circuits, not open paths with end points.)

This is a convenient point to introduce the centre-outwards coding that I use, giving cells in similar positions the same number. It can be extended to apply to boards of any size.
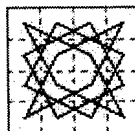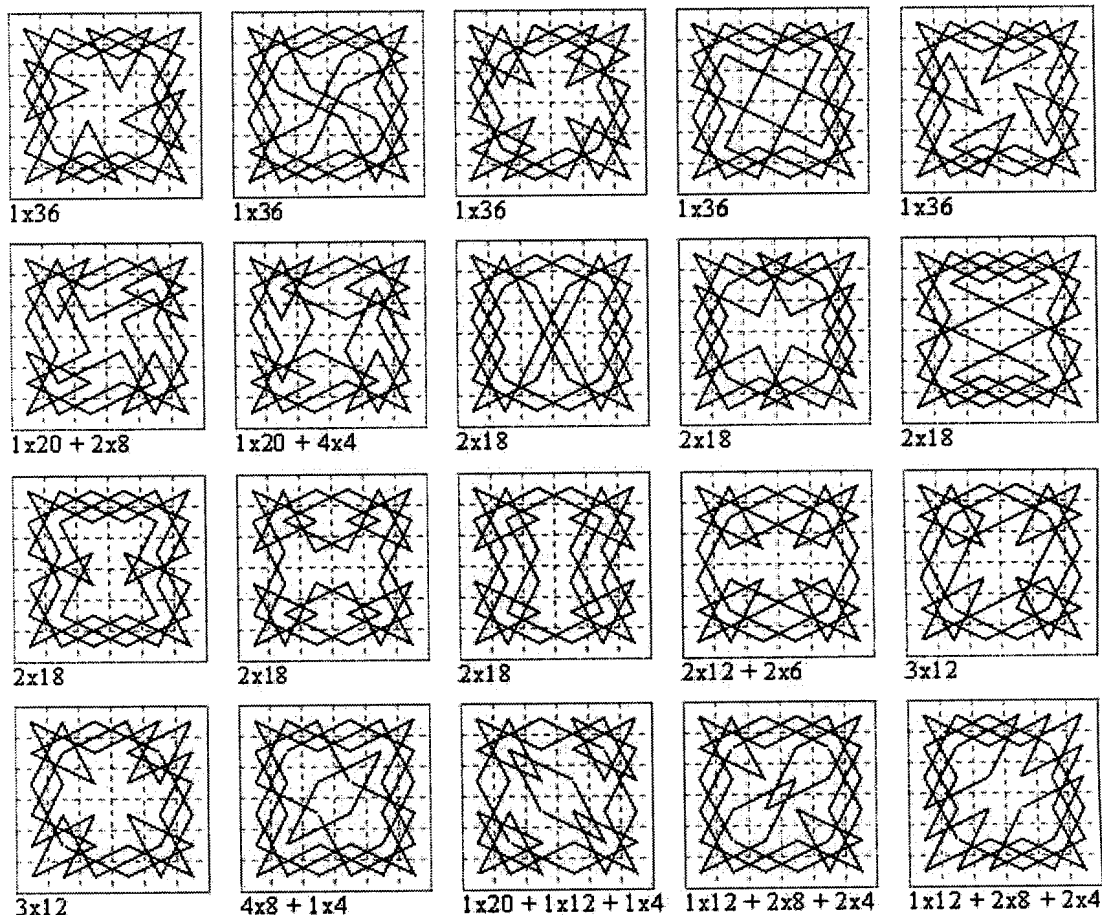

The only possible knight's tour-pattern on the 4×4 board is the pattern of four circuits of four moves known as 'squares and diamonds' which has octonary symmetry. This is easily proved: the only moves available through the corner cells form the diamonds, and once these are in place the only moves remaining through the other cells form the squares. The squares are formed of moves (11) and the diamonds of moves (02) using the above coding.

The next square case, the 6×6 board, is more productive. No octonary tour-pattern is possible (since 36 is not divisible by 8), but there are twenty geometrically distinct quaternary patterns as shown overleaf (i.e. not counting rotations and reflections as different). There are seven oblique, including the five well known quaternary symmetric tours, which have been rediscovered many times, and are shown here in the first row. The other quaternary patterns are all pseudotours. The thirteen direct patterns comprise seven with lateral axes and six with diagonal axes. The legends below the diagrams indicate the numbers of circuits and their lengths. Six of the lateral patterns consist of two circuits of 18 moves, while two of the diagonal type consist of three circuits of 12 moves. (Binary and asymmetric tour-patterns also occur, but we deal here only with the quaternary case.)

On the 8×8 board tour-patterns with octonary symmetry become possible once more, and there are 33 geometrically distinct cases, all pseudotours, as I showed in *Chessics* (#22 p.72, 1985 and #25 p.106, 1986). The numerous quaternary patterns formed of two or four equal paths were enumerated by the Abbé Jolivald (under the pen-name of Paul de Hijo) as

1x36   1x36   1x36   1x36   1x36

1x20 + 2x8   1x20 + 4x4   2x18   2x18   2x18

2x18   2x18   2x18   2x12 + 2x6   3x12

3x12   4x8 + 1x4   1x20 + 1x12 + 1x4   1x12 + 2x8 + 2x4   1x12 + 2x8 + 2x4

long ago as 1882, and his results were confirmed by Tom Marlow as reported in *Chessics* (#24 p.92 1985). These however do not exhaust the cases.

Mixed Quaternary Symmetry

The only symmetry possible in knight's tours on boards of side $4n$ is the binary oblique type. The idea of constructing tours that show a combination of oblique and direct quaternary symmetries was introduced by Ernest Bergholt in some puzzles published in the *British Chess Magazine* in 1918, and elaborated in three memoirs that he sent to H. J. R. Murray that year, which are now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The memoirs were reproduced in issues 13, 14 and 18 of *The Games and Puzzles Journal* (1996 - 2001). There is probably further work on this subject among Murray's extensive papers for anyone who has the time to do the research.

The treatment given here expands and clarifies the methods of Bergholt and Murray by taking proper account of the octonary symmetry component, which they tended to regard as part of either the direct or the oblique component, depending on the focus of attention.

A knight's tour is said to show 'mixed quaternary symmetry' (MQS) if its moves can be regarded as forming three classes, one in purely lateral quaternary symmetry, one in purely oblique quaternary symmetry, and the remainder, such as the eight moves through the corner cells, in octonary symmetry. It follows that the tour as a whole is in oblique binary symmetry, since both types of quaternary symmetry include this lesser form of symmetry. It also follows that the cells used by the three sets all form arrays with octonary symmetry. Mixed quaternary symmetry is possible on any square boards of even side greater than 4, but is mainly of interest on boards of side a multiple of 4 on which a tour with quaternary symmetry is impossible, in particular the 8×8 and 12×12.

On a board of side $2m$ a tour has $4m^2$ moves, so in a tour with MQS if the lateral quaternary class has $4h$ moves, the octonary class $4j$ and the oblique quaternary class $4k$, then $h + j + k = m^2$, with j even. I put the octonary number, j, in the middle since it is counted with h when assessing the direct symmetry, and with k when assessing the oblique symmetry. The tour can then be described as of type h-j-k.

> ***Theorem****. The number of purely oblique components, k, must be odd.*

In terms of coordinates a knight's move is a {1,2} leap, and can be classified as 'horizontal' or 'vertical' according to the direction of the two-step part of the move. Four moves in lateral symmetry are either all horizontal or all vertical, since

reflection in a median does not alter this property. On the other hand, four moves in oblique symmetry consist of two vertical and two horizontal, since 90 degree rotation of a vertical move makes it horizontal, and vice versa. Moves in octonary symmetry can be split up into two lateral or two oblique sets. A tour with oblique symmetry on a board of side $2m$ consists of two congruent paths each of $2m^2$ moves, from corner to opposite corner. A lateral quartet contributes two vertical or two horizontal moves to this half-tour. An oblique quartet however contributes one of each type. The lateral and octonary moves thus always contribute a displacement of the knight by an even number of ranks or files from the initial corner. But the displacement from corner to corner is a displacement of $(2m - 1)$ ranks and files, an odd number. Thus k must be odd. QED.

Mixed Quaternary Symmetry on the 6×6 Board

Among the 17 tours with binary symmetry on the 6×6 board there are two that show mixed quaternary symmetry. The h, j, k values of these tours are 2-6-1 and 4-4-1, the purely oblique component being in each case the four (02) moves, shown in the middle diagram. The lateral and octonary components are also shown.

lateral   octonary   oblique   octonary   lateral

2-6-1   4-4-1
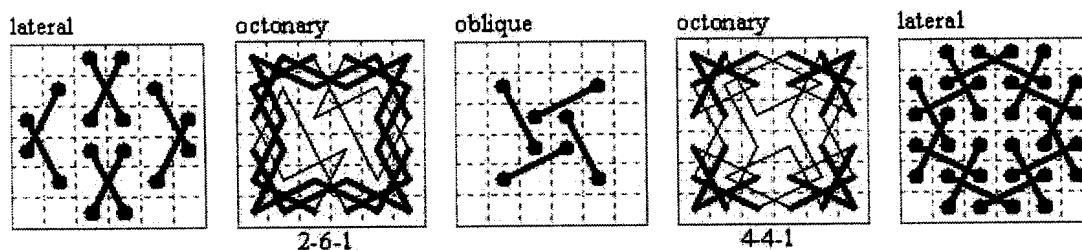
Minimal Oblique Moves in MQS

The minimum of purely oblique moves is 4 ($k = 1$) on boards of side $4n + 2$ (i.e. 6×6, 10×10 etc) but is 12 ($k = 3$) on boards of side $4n$ (i.e. 8×8, 12×12, etc). I give a proof of this since it is not obvious:

> *Theorem*. The minimum purely oblique moves cannot be $k = 1$ on boards of side $4n$.

Consider the possible linkages. The four moves in oblique quaternary symmetry can only be of the type (02), connecting cells on the diagonals in an octonary pattern, as shown or its reflection. Ignoring paths that cross at the centre, there are three geometrically distinct ways in which these cells can be joined to form a tour by paths that are in lateral quaternary symmetry.

odd linkage   short even linkage   long even linkage
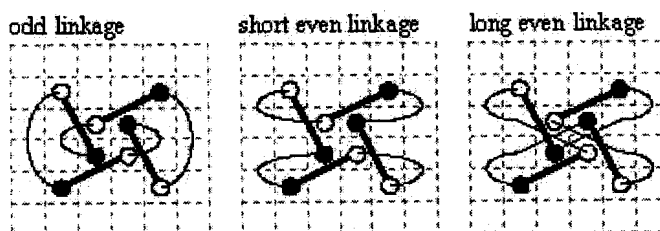
The first linkage, which can also be rotated 90 degrees, connects dark to light cells, so must use four paths of two odd lengths; but an odd length path cannot have the required symmetry, since the middle move would have to cross the median at right angles, which is impossible for a knight move. The second and third linkages connect dark to dark and light to light cells, so must use four paths of even lengths adding to $16n^2 - 4$ (i.e. 60 on the 8×8 board). But lateral symmetry requires that all these be of the same length, and $(16n^2 - 4)/4 = 4n^2 - 1$, is an odd number (15 on the 8×8 board). Thus $k = 1$ is impossible. QED

MQS on the 8×8 Board: the 13:3 case

As proved by the above theorems the minimum purely oblique quaternary moves in a mixed quaternary tour on the 8×8 board is 12 ($k = 3$), the other 52 moves being in direct quaternary symmetry ($h + j = 13$). Tours of this 13:3 type were those mainly studied by Bergholt. They can also be described as tours with maximum direct quaternary symmetry.
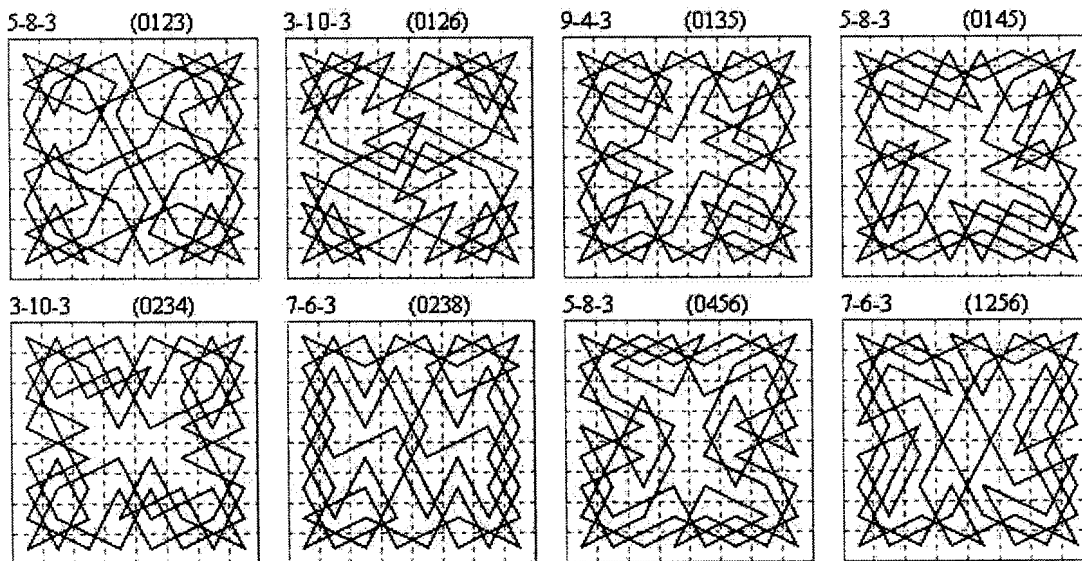
    The cells used by the twelve oblique moves must form an octonary pattern. If the twelve moves are all separate single moves they will use 24 cells, but this will reduce to 20 if a double move is used, or to 16 if they join to form a triple

move. In an octonary pattern an off-diagonal cell will contribute 8 and a diagonal cell 4, so the patterns can be classified by the numbers of these cells used. Using all four diagonal cells (0, 2, 5, 9) is impossible since the corner cells necessarily form part of the octonary set of moves. So we must use one, two or three of the diagonal cells. The only triple moves possible using two off-diagonal cells are (6116), (4114), (3113), but four (11)-moves in oblique symmetry cannot be used since they form a circuit. We thus have five cases: 24 = 3×8 = 2×8 + 2×4, and 20 = 2×8 + 1×4 = 1×8 + 3×4, and 16 = 1×8 + 2×4.

In the 3×8 class I find three choices of off-diagonal cells that will connect in the required manner, namely (134), (146), (347). Of these (134) produces no tours on the 8×8, though it can be used for tours on larger boards, (146) gives 19 tours and (347) a single tour. The *h-j-k* numbers take the values 3-10-3, 5-8-3, 7-6-3. The single (347) example is of maximum octonary type 3-10-3. This and one of the (146) tours are shown, together with the patterns of oblique moves on which they are based.

(146)   7-6-3   (347)   3-10-3
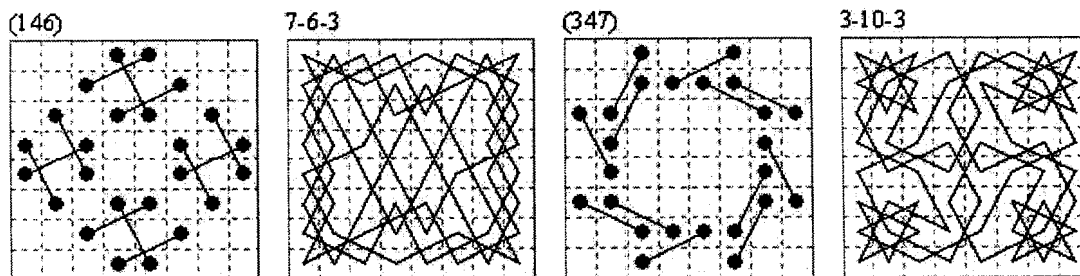
In the 2×8 + 2×4 class, I find nine possible combinations: (0123) 2 tours, (0126) 33 tours, (0135) 12 tours, (0145) 3 tours, (0156) 28 tours, (0234) 2 tours, (0238) 31 tours, (0456) 20 tours, (1256) 22 tours, total 153 tours. Diagrams of all of these will be shown on my knight's tour notes webpages in due course. There is space here only for one from each case. For a (0156) example see further below.

5-8-3 (0123)   3-10-3 (0126)   9-4-3 (0135)   5-8-3 (0145)
3-10-3 (0234)   7-6-3 (0238)   5-8-3 (0456)   7-6-3 (1256)

In the double move 2×8 + 1×4 class there are five possible types: (013) 9 tours, (014) 3 tours, (034) 5 tours, (156) 49 tours, (238) 6 tours, total 72. All of these were identified by Bergholt, except for type (014). (For diagrams see *The Games and Puzzles Journal* #18.)

In the double move 1×8 + 3×4 class I have found only the one type (0256), with 8 tours. The 3-10-3 case was cited by Murray; there are also three 5-8-3 and four 7-6-3.

In the triple move 1×8 + 2×4 class there are six tours of type (023). Bergholt classified these tours as two different types. They use the same key cells but differently connected. (For diagrams see *The Games and Puzzles Journal* #18.)

MQS on the 8×8 Board: the 11:5 case

Following on from the above examples, it is natural to consider tours with 5 sets of moves in pure oblique quaternary symmetry. If all 20 moves are separate they will use 40 cells forming an octonary pattern. If all these cells are off-diagonal we have the 40 = 5×8 case. I find that there are two types in this class. The only pattern usuing the next to corner cell, 8, is Type (13478), but this does not generate any tours on the 8×8 board, though it can be used on the 12×12 board. The only other case is Type (13467), it gives four tours:

1-10-5 · 5-6-5 · 5-6-5 · 5-6-5
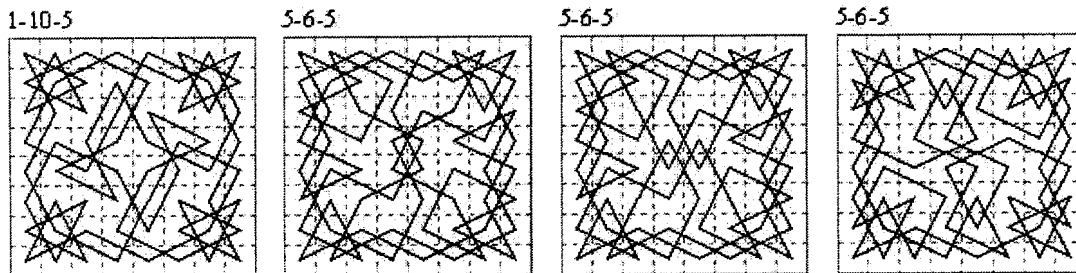
Minimal Lateral Moves in MQS

The minimum of purely lateral moves is 0 ($h = 0$) on boards of side $4n + 2$, since these are the boards on which tours with oblique quaternary symmetry are possible. On boards of side $4n$ the minimum is 4 ($h = 1$). In 2001 I enumerated all tours of this type on the 8×8 board and found 48 in all (as mentioned in *The Games and Puzzles Journal* #18, p.332). They consist of 12 of 1-10-5 type, 20 of 1-8-7 type, and 16 of 1-6-9 type. The four lateral moves are (11)-moves. Another 1-10-5 example is shown above.

1-10-5 · 1-8-7 · 1-6-9 · 1-6-9
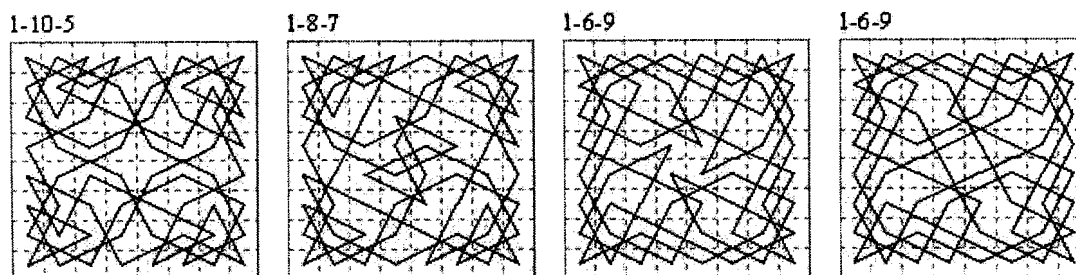
A 1-4-11 tour is impossible. The maximum moves in oblique quaternary symmetry in MQS on the 8×8 board is thus 60 moves (4×15), as in these examples, but the maximum of purely oblique moves is 36 ($k = 9$). The two 1-6-9 examples shown here both use the same cell-sequence (1656494378203871), and differ only in taking the (20) move in a different direction.

Minimum Octonary Moves in MQS

The minimum number of octonary moves in a tour of mixed quaternary symmetry on a board of any size is 16 (i.e. $j = 4$), having four moves in each quadrant, consisting of the 2 moves through the corner cell and 2 moves incident with the next-to-corner cells. There are three minimal formations, any other routes through the next-to-corner cells will result in six octonary moves. However it turns out that case C is impossible, at least on the 8×8 board, as other octonary moves are forced.

A · B · C
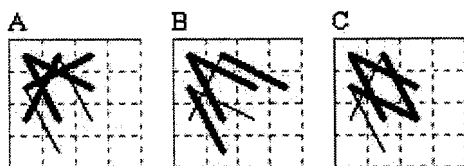
I have found 20 of type A among the 13:3 cases considered above. Type B tends to require more oblique moves. Here are four examples from the 19 I have found so far, 3 (9-4-3), 11 (7-4-5), 5 (5-4-7).

9-4-3 (0156) · 7-4-5 · 5-4-7 · 5-4-7
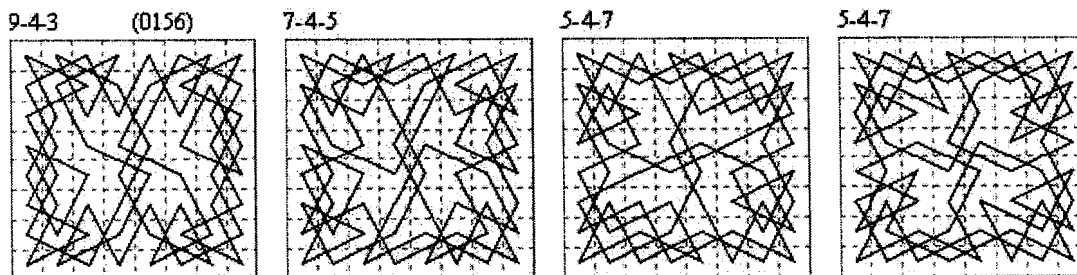
The maximum octonary moves in a mixed symmetry tour depends of course on the size of the board, for the 6×6 board it is 24 ($j = 6$) and for the 8×8 board it is 40 ($j = 10$). (In a binary tour without the mixed quaternary condition 48 can be achieved.)

THE END IS NIGH !

by Paul Byway

Solutions to competition 38

#247　9 Ng1 a4 a5 a6 axb7 b8Q Ra6 Rd6 Qd8 mate.

#248　7 Ke2 Bxg5 Nd2 Ne4 Nd6 Rf1 Rxf7 mate.

#249　9 g3 gxh4 Nh3 Nf4 Nxd5 Rg1 Rg3 Rxc3 Rc7 mate. IR does it differently: 9 g4 g5 g6 gxf7 g8Q Qc5 Nf3 0-0 Rb1mate. JDB points out that only 8 moves are required: 9 (?) Nh3 Nf4 Nxd5 f4 Rf1 Rf3 Rxc3 Rc7 mate.

#250　7 Bf5 Nxe2 Nf4 Nxe6 Nc3 Nxd5 Nec7 mate.

#251　8 Ke8 d4 d3 dxc2 h5 Rh6 Rd6 Rd1 mate.

#252　8 g6 f5 f4 Kb6 Bh6 Rc8 Rc1 f3 mate. The majority prefer to use the other diagonal: 8 Nc6 Nxd4 e6 Be7 Rxa8 Rxa1 Re1 Bb4 mate.

#253　1 R10g9+ Kf10 2 Rf8+ Gxf8 3 Rg10+ Kf9 4 Cf7+ Ge9 5 Cef3 mate. IR finds a variation to this one, with mate in 7 rather than 5 moves: 3 Cf7+ Ge9 4 Cef3+ Ke10 5 Rg10+ Gf10 6 Rxf10+ Ke9 7 Ce3 mate.

#254　1 Hxc10+ Exc10 2 Hd7+ Kd9 3 Hb8+ Ke9 4 Hxc10+ Kd9 5 Rd6 mate.

The current scores: FG 189, IR 164, JB 96, RC 77, PW 35, CL 24, RT 19.

Here's a delightful contribution from Noam Elkies. The solution will be found opposite. For the grasshopper, see *VC* 60 page 100. Promotion is allowed to GRBN, but not to Q.
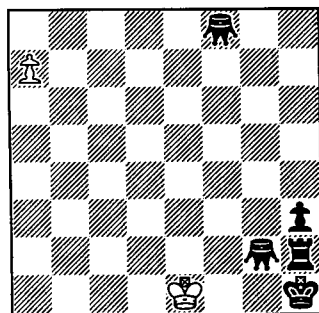
Grasshopper Chess
White to play and win

Competition 39 is alongside.

#255 Dipilato - Leoncini (1981)
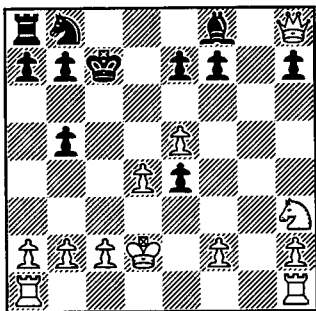
Black wins (series 8)

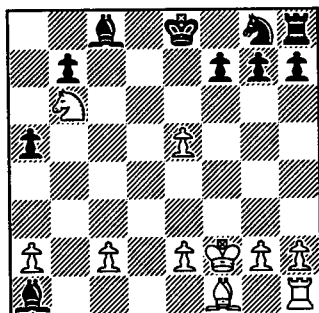**#256** Ervetti - Davide (1987)
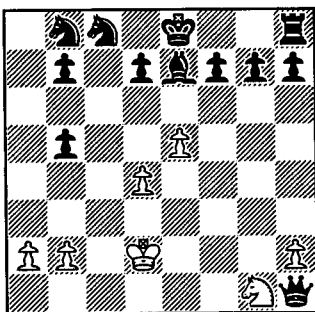
White wins (series 9)

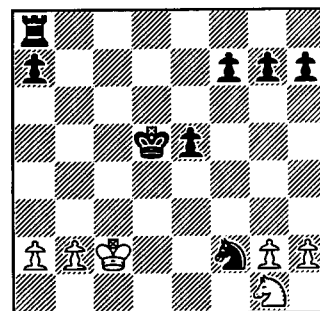**#257** Picasso - Arno (1987)
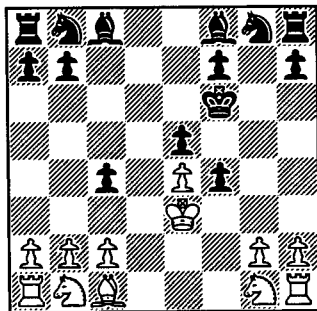
White wins (series 7)

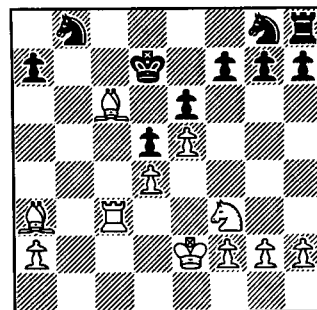**#258** Wagner - Lokvenc (1988)

Black wins (series 8)

#259 Galimberti - Crasto (1982)

White wins (series 9)

#260 Litigio - Lantillo (1989)

Black wins (series 8)

#261 'Five Dances' #26

```
10  . . . : k g . . .
 9  . . . : g : . . .
 8  . . . : : : R . .
 7  . . . . . . . . .
 6  . . . . . . . . .
 5  . . . . . . C . .
 4  . . p . . . . . .
 3  . . . : : : . . .
 2  . . p : : r . . .
 1  . . . : K : . . .
```

Red to play and win

#262 'Five Dances' #101

```
10  . . . k : : . . .
 9  . . . : : : . . .
 8  . P . : : : . . .
 7  . . . . R . . . .
 6  . . . . . . . . .
 5  . . . . . . . . .
 4  . . . . . . . . .
 3  . . . p p : . . .
 2  . . . : : p . . .
 1  . . . K : : . . .
```

Red to play and draw

SOLUTIONS

Polgar Superstar Chess (page 149). Try 1 Rxc3 e5 2 Rxc5 Kg5 3 R~ : no, 3...e3Q+ 4 Kxe3 Kxg3 5 Kd4 f4 5 Kc3 f2Q+ 6 K~ Qa7, and Black has his win. White must waste a move by 2 Rc1, and now he reaches c5 at the right time: 2...Kg5 3 Rxc5 e3Q+ 4 Kxe3 Kxg3 5 Kd4 f4 6 Kd6 f2Q 7 Kc7 and draws. If Black tries 2...Kh6 hoping to lose a move in his turn, then 3 Rc3! Kg7 4 Rc1! etc.

I do like it when a variant turns out to yield attractive endgame studies.

English Progressive (page 149). White played 11 Nxd4 Ra3 N2b3 fxe4 Qc3 Ke2 Rf7 Bg3 h3, after which his four unmoved pawns were all blocked and he still had two moves left :
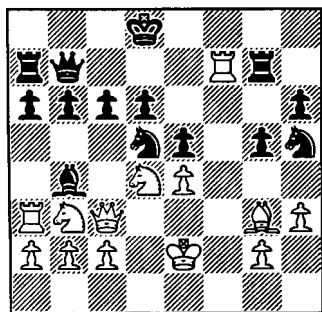
He accordingly finished his turn with Qxc6 and Ne6, and that was that.

My immediate reaction to this was to be thrilled by its ingenuity; my second reaction, having looked again at the rules as given in *ECV 2* (and in the original *Encyclopedia*), was that it was surely illegal, on the grounds that White's Qxc6 had freed the pawn on c2, which then had to make its first move before the knight on d4 could make its second. However, the index sheet for the game in David Pritchard's files gave *Nost-algia* 282 as the earliest reference for the game, and on reading this I found the exegesis mentioned in the text, together with a note that the rules in a new chess variants welcoming sheet implied otherwise. It appears to have been a copy of these latter rules, received by David some years later and still preserved in his files, which he summarized for the *Encyclopedia*. The rules as given in *Nost-algia*

seem to make it clear that White's ninth move terminates the initial sequence in which each man can move only once, after which everything starts again. In any case, it appears that the loser did not object.

A point for the writer of *ECV 3* to note.

Proof games (page 164).

92 (Brobecker) (a) 1 d4 Nd6 2 Bf4+ Nb5 3 a4 mate. (b) 1 Nd3 Nd6 2 Nb4 e6 3 d3 Ne8 mate and 1 Nf3 Nf6 2 Nh4 e6 3 f3 Ne8 mate. (c) 1 e3 Nf6 2 Qh5 Nxh5 3 Ba6 f6 4 Be2 mate.

93 (PF) 1 g4 Nf6 2 Kg2 Nxg4 3 Kh3 Nxf2 4 Rg1 Nxd1 5 Rg4 Nf2 6 Kg2 Nxg4 7 Kg1 Nf6.

94 (Gräfrath) 1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Nd5 3 Ne2 Na6 4 c4 dNb4 5 a3 Nd3 6 Nc3 Nxc1 7 Rxc1 Nc5 8 Rb1 Nd3. Orthodox mating position after both Black's 5th and 8th moves.

95 (Gräfrath) 1 g4 Nf6 2 g5 Nd5 3 Bg2 f5 4 Bxd5 Kf7 5 Bxf7 Na6 6 Kf1 Nc5 7 b4 Na4 8 Bb3 h5 9 Bxa4 d5 10 Be8.

96 (Gräfrath) 1 Nc3 Nc6 2 Na4 Ne5 3 b4 Ng6 4 d3 b5 5 Bd2 bxa4 6 Qb1 a3 7 Qb2 axb2 8 a3 bxa1K 9 Bc3 a5 10 Bxa1. Schnoebelen promotion (promotion to a man, here the Ka1, which is captured unmoved but whose precise nature can be deduced).

97 (Gräfrath) 1 b4 e6 2 b5 Bd6 3 h3 Ne7 4 h4 Ng6 5 h5 Nf8 6 d3 Ke7 7 Rh4 Ke8 and (a) 8 b6 Qxh4 9 bxa7 Qxh5 10 axb8R or (b) 8 Ra4 Qg5 9 Rxa7 Qxb5 10 Rxa8 Qxh5 11 Rxb8. The Rb8 is original in one part, promoted in the other.

98 (Richter) 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Bg4 3 Qxg4 Qc8 4 Qxc8 mate.

99 (Belukhov) 1 d4 c5 2 dxc5 Qa5+ 3 b4 Qxb4+ 4 c3 Qxc3+ 5 Qd2 Qxc1+ 6 Qd1 Qc3+ 7 Qd2 Qc1+ 8 Qd1 Qc3+ 9 Qd2 Qc3+, and the game is drawn by the triple repetition rule.

100 (Gräfrath) 1 f3 Nf6 2 f4 Ne4 3 Nf3 Nxd2 4 Rg1 Nxf1 5 Rxf1 Nc6 6 Rf2 Nd4 7 Kf1 Nxe2 8 Qe1 Ng3+ 9 Kg1 Nf1 10 Rxf1.
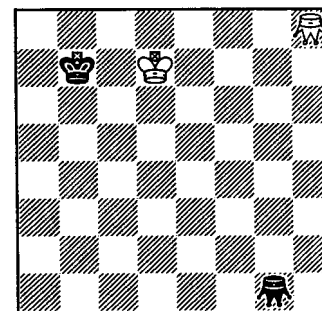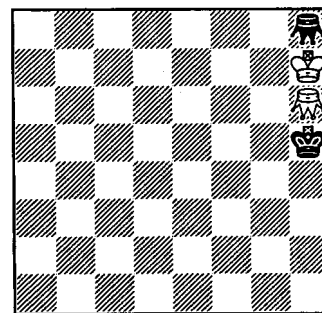
Grasshopper Chess ending (Elkies, opposite). 1 a8G+ Kg1 2 Gg8+ Kh1 and Black's king is hemmed in, but White's king must take over the guard

of g1 in order to free his G to give the eventual mate, and if he plays 3 Kf1 at once Black's 3...Gh8 will force him to retreat again. White must lose a move, and he can do so only via a2 since if he sets foot on the second rank earlier he will allow Black's Gg2 to move and free his rook. Hence 3 Kd1! Gh8 4 Kc1 Gf8 5 Kb1 Gh8 6 Ka1/2 Gf8 7 Ka2/1 Gh8 8 Kb1 Gf8 9 Kc1 Gh8 10 Kd1 Gf8 11 Ke1 Gh8 and now 12 Kf1 is effective: 12...Gf8 13 Ge8 Gd8 14 Gc8 Gb8 15 Ga8 mate.

This was developed from a joke study of my own which appeared in *VC 26* and was reprinted in *51 flights*. The "promotion to Black" element of the original is lost, but the unexpected need for White to retreat to a1 in order to triangulate more than makes up for it.

In *VC 60*, I remarked that the lowly fers could give rise to positions of remarkable subtlety. This was in the context of win by stalemate, but the same is true in shatranj, with its "bare king" rule that a player can win by taking the enemy king's last man provided that his opponent cannot return the compliment next move.

Question: in shatranj, what do the K + F v K + F positions

have in common?
Answer next time.

CONTENTS

Losing Chess. Klaas Steenhuis reported in early December that the 'stayalive' account offering Stan Goldovski's *Giveaway Wizard* (see *VC* 62 page 140) had taken the number 1 position on the Free Internet Chess Server's list of best active suicide players (human players and computers combined), "currently with a rating of 2554 points".

That a computer program should take top place is hardly surprising, but that a program written and frozen more than ten years ago should do so is a different matter (and this despite its having been written to a different stalemate rule, which can occasionally cost it a half or even a full point). There has been one change, *Wizard's* very limited openings book having been replaced by something a little better (though still with a total of only "a few hundred" moves), but this hardly detracts from the achievement.

Well done, Stan.

BCVS NOTICES

AGM 2010. Nominations for office, and resolutions for the AGM, are invited, and should reach me as secretary by **March 1**. I shall be 70 when the AGM is held, and **I shall not be seeking re-election either as editor or as secretary**. Additionally, Peter Fayers has told me informally that he will be unable to continue as treasurer for more than another year or two.

We therefore need a new team if we are to continue: a new editor and secretary immediately, and a treasurer in the very near future. I hope volunteers will come forward, and will be happy to advise on the commitment involved (in particular, the treasurer should have practical accountancy or bookkeeping experience). In the absence of suitable volunteers, we shall have no alternative to dissolve ourselves and close down.

Whatever happens, it is our opinion that our present financial surplus should be used for the benefit of those subscriptions have created it. *VC* 63 therefore has 32 pages, and *VC* **64 will be as large as the remaining funds permit**. Given that it may be the last issue in its present form, copy date for contributions has been put back to **March 31**, and publication is scheduled for May.

In case *VC* 64 should indeed prove to be our last issue in this form, we are considering accompanying it with a "Best of *VC*" special issue containing reprints of items which readers have found of particular interest, and we would welcome suggestions for inclusion.

NOTICES CONTINUED

Peter Fayers has a new **e-mail** address (see below).

Peter and I are holding a modest stock of **back issues**, and Peter is offering these for sale at cost. Any issues that are not in stock we can provide professional copies of, also at (slightly higher) cost. Postage will be charged at cost, and there are significant savings - particularly to UK members - from posting in bulk. Please e-mail him with a list of the issues you want, and he will give you a quote.

David Woo's *Xiangqi Review*. Alex Trotter (maldoror@netzero.com) is interested in back numbers, and is willing to pay for photocopying and postage. He is in New York, and already has most of the issues from 1999 to 2001.

Hostage Chess. John Leslie asks me to say that the computer program HostageMaster is now available from <www.hostagechess.com> free of charge. It is somewhat improved from the version which Paul Yearout defeated so comprehensively in the game quoted in *VC* 62 (John estimates by the equivalent of 100-150 rating points), and in particular now offers a range of thinking times from one second to five minutes.

For me to play against it myself would say more about my capacity for blunder than about the program, but if one of our more experienced Hostage players would care to download and review it for *VC* 64 I shall be very pleased to receive his report.