

# British Endgame Study News

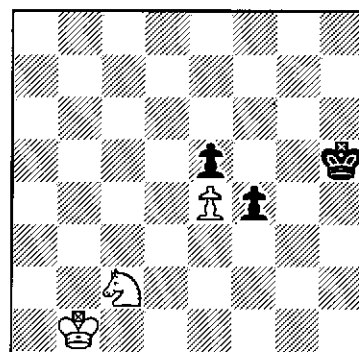
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*Edited and published by John Beasley, 7 St James Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4NX*

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*by David Blundell*  
White to play and win

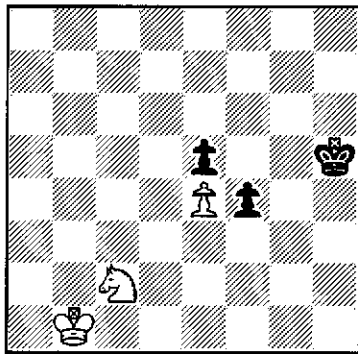
**Editorial.** British endgame study composition is currently experiencing a welcome revival, but many of our studies are published abroad and they are less widely known at home than they should be. I have therefore founded this little magazine so that we can see what we are doing, and perhaps derive both entertainment and inspiration. The intention is that the magazine will appear quarterly and will comprise three main sections: (a) reproduction of some recently published British compositions; (b) an article in which a composer describes some of his work - Adam Sobey starts us off, and I have already received articles from Mike Bent and Andrew Miller for future issues; (c) a look at the wider world scene, which this time has sadly been pre-empted by the need for an obituary tribute to G. M. Kasparian. Our British originals start with David Blundell's splendid discovery above, which I am repeating here even though I recently quoted it in the *British Chess Magazine*. This study was used some years ago as a training exercise for the British international problem-solving team, and only Jonathan Mestel succeeded in the time available. If you haven't seen it before and want to get full value from it, spend half an hour on it before turning the page.

That's the plan, and as regards material I foresee no difficulty. The uncertainty relates to finance. We have funding in place for the first two issues, for which there is no charge, but if we are to continue thereafter we shall need either to find a sponsor or to charge our readers. I am happy to produce the magazine, but I am not willing to do everything myself and I rarely go near a bank during normal working hours. A hundred readers will mean the collection and banking of two subscriptions a week; is somebody willing to undertake the task?

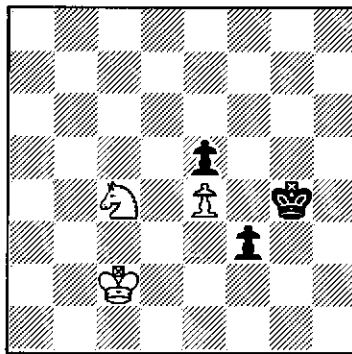
There are two other points. The smallest subscription which is worth the trouble of collection appears to be £10, and this will enable us to supplement the basic magazine with "special numbers" devoted to particular topics and containing longer articles than can be accommodated within our normal format. And, to thank him for his labour, whoever undertakes the tedious but essential task of collecting the money will be given space in each issue to write about one of his favourite studies.

Please, gentlemen, do we have a volunteer?

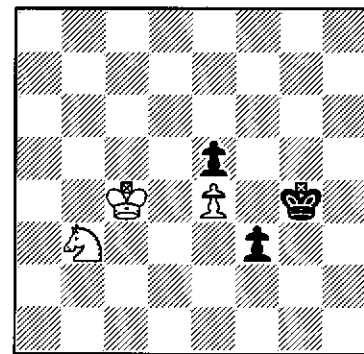
## Recently Published British Originals



1 - win

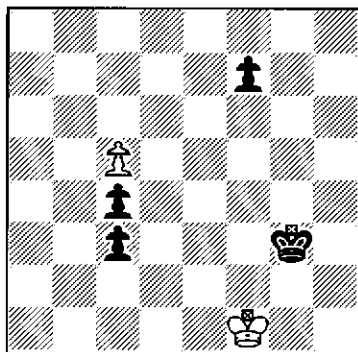


1a - reciprocal zugzwang

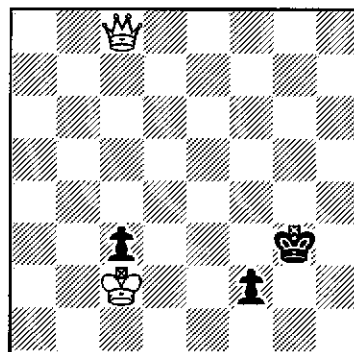


1b - after 5 Kc4

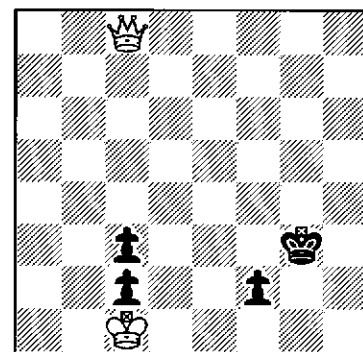
Well, how did you get on with David Blundell's 1? In the composer's own words, "The only satisfactory plan is to manoeuvre wN to d2. The route via a3 and c4 fails: 1 Na3? f3 2 Nc4 Kg5! (but not 2...Kg4? 3 Kc2z Kg3 4 Kc3z Kg4 5 Nxe5+ Kf4 6 Kd4 f2 7 Nd3+ and wins, nor 2...Kh4? 3 Kb2z Kh3 4 Kb3 Kg4 5 Kc2z similarly) 3 Kc2 (if 3 Nd2 then 3...Kf4 4 Kc2 Ke3 draws easily) Kg4z (see 1a) 4 Kc3 (or 4 Nd2 Kf4 5 Kd3 f2z) Kg3/Kg5z with a draw: Nd2 still fails, and on c4 wN prevents the further advance of wK. There is a set of corresponding squares, c3-g3/g5, c2-g4, b2-h4, and 'z' indicates reciprocal zugzwang. Other plans fail, e.g. 1 Kc1? f3 2 Kd2 f2 3 Ke2 Kg4 4 Ne3+ Kf4 5 Kd3 Kg3! 6 Nf1+ Kf3z 7 Nd2+ Kf4z 8 Ke2 f1=Q+! 9 Kxf1 Ke3." Hence 1 Na1!! followed for example by 1...f3 2 Nb3 Kg4 3 Kc2 Kg3 4 Kc3 Kg4 5 Kc4 (see 1b) Kg3 6 Kd5 (now White is well on top) Kf4 7 Nd2 f2 8 Nf1. I set this for solution in *diagrammes* in 1995 (according to custom, its previous use as private training material did not count as publication) and only three solvers succeeded. One described its solution against the clock by Jonathan Mestel as a great achievement.



2 - win



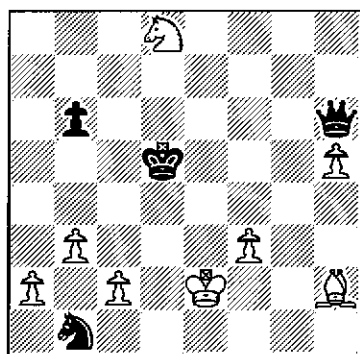
2a - Black draws



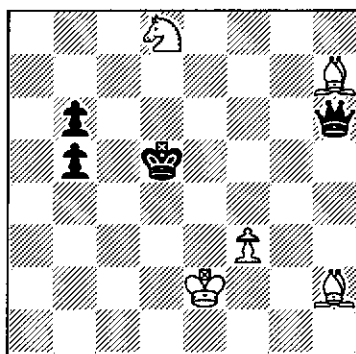
2b - main line, after 6...f2

The talented Andrew Miller has recently made a welcome return to composition. White's first move in 2 (*The Problemist Supplement*, 1995) is 1 Ke1, avoiding check from bPf7 (1 Ke2? f5 2-3 c7 f3+ etc), and the main line starts 1...c2 (1...f5 2 c6 etc will transpose) 2 Kd2 c3+. Now 3 Kxc2? leads to position 2a (after 3...f5 4-6 c8Q f2) and this is a typical Q v Pf2 draw in which Black can play for stalemate on h1 and

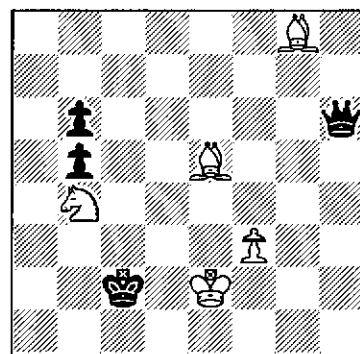
White can never drive bK in front of bP. So White must play **3 Kc1!** and **3...f5** **4-6 c8Q f2** gives position **2b**. Now White has the resource **7 Qf5! Kg2** (the pin on the second rank will be crucial but Black has no alternative) **8 Qxc2 Kg1** **9 Qg6+** (all is now routine) **Kh2** **10 Qh5+ Kg2** **11 Qg4+ Kh2** **12 Qf3 Kg1** **13 Qg3+** and **13...Kh1** will allow **14 Qxf2** with no fear of stalemate while after **13...Kf1** it is mate in three. As always with Andrew's work, the alternatives for both sides are copiously analysed, but for present purposes I am inclined to take them for granted. This is one of the simplest studies that Andrew has published; even so, "A superb riposte with considerable problematic content, necessitating exhaustive analysis" was a solver's comment.



3 - win



4 - win



4a - after 6 Nb4+

**3** was published by Vasily Platov in 1914. White plays to win bQ, and we have **1 c4+ Kd4** (if **1...Kc5** then **2 Bd6+** straight away) **2 Be5+ Kc5** (here and later, a capture of wB will be met by a fork) **3 Bd6+** (now c6 is shielded) **Kd4** (after **3...Qxd6** **4 Nb7+ K--** **5 Nxd6 Kxd6** the win is clinched by wPh5) **4 Nc6+ Kc3** **5 Be5+ Kc2** **6 Nb4+ Kc1** **7 Bf4+** and bQ duly goes. However, it is all rather straightforward, and the use of so many wPs to control bK (and of the idle bN to bar him from b1) is hardly elegant. Paul Byway looks at old studies with a more critical eye than most, and he produced **4** (*diagrammes*, 1995). The second wB and bP do the work of wPa2/b3/c2 and bN, we don't need wPh5 either, and the solution is even one move longer: **1 Bg8+ Kd4** (again if **1...Kc5** then **2 Bd6+** straight away) **2 Be5+ Kc5** **3 Bd6+ Kd4** **4 Nc6+ Kc3** **5 Be5+ Kc2** **6 Nb4+** (see **4a**) **Kb1** (if **6...Kc1** then **7 Bf4+** straight away) **7 Ba2+** (with a second wB in the fray, there is no need to block b1) **Kc1** **8 Bf4+**. This was published as "after Platov" and attracted a lot of praise: "Belle composition amenant l'échec double R/D par le C," "Joli," "Idée connue mais présentée d'une manière économique, bonne étude," "Repeated sacrifices of wB in a marvellously constructed setting - surely the definitive version," and "La belle coordination des FB et du CB charme cette oeuvre." It was an improvement well worth the making.

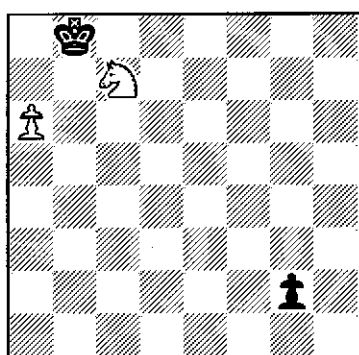
All this leaves no room for the evergreen Mike Bent, but there will be a double ration of his work next time.

*Please will composers bring to my notice compositions that they would like to appear here. I see most magazines that publish original studies, but not all, and even when I see the magazine the merit of a particular composition sometimes escapes my notice.*

# The genesis of a study

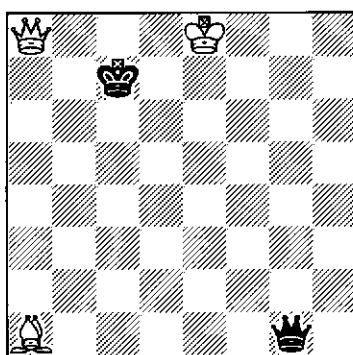
by Adam Sobey

This workshop note describes the way in which a particular study of mine came into being. It shows how an idea was developed, both forwards to the intended denouement and backwards to the initial position of the published study. I do not pretend that my story is necessarily helpful to anyone wanting to try their hand as study composition because any creative activity is strictly personal : no two composers will go about things the same way. In particular, there will be a vastly different attitude regarding the way in which time influences events. As it happens, I believe there is a great benefit in interrupting work and allowing things to be tossed around in the mind. This has a clarifying effect, which is well known to those whose work is analytical, for every time we get stuck and cannot make progress a change in activity generally proves beneficial. We all know that from the crossword world, and Edward de Bono has given it an authoritative ring. In the following I will write the note as though there were no "helpful" suspensions of effort, but from start to finish, the study was evolving over several composing sessions.



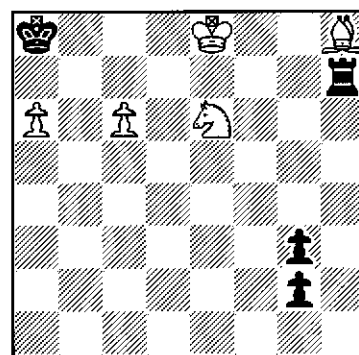
1 - win

to be added: wK, wQB,  
black unit on g-file



2 - after 2...g1Q

to be added: black unit  
on g-file



3 - win

We begin with an idea (Diagram 1). Without some such starting point we have as much chance of creating something worthwhile simply by shifting men around on the board as the monkeys on the island of Laputa. Now it is white to move and win. There are three men to be added: a white king somewhere, a white bishop which in one move can control the diagonal a7-g1 (and in the diagram does not control c7), and a further black piece, probably a pawn, and very likely blocking the g-file. We have two plausible starting moves: (a) wB moves to control a7-g1, and (b) a7+. One line is to succeed, one to fail. Try (a): 1 wB controls a7-g1, Kxc7. Now white has the "wrong" bishop and the a-pawn cannot queen. So (a) fails and (b) must win: 1 a7+ and if 1...Kxa7 then 2 B--+ Kb7 and wN can move away from c7; or 1...Kxc7 2 a8Q g1Q. Now we have a six man ending, Q+B against Q+?, and this is to be a win.

At this point we have to think of the locations of the white king and black's other piece. If, now, we put the white king on e7 or e8, we could continue with 3 Qd8+.

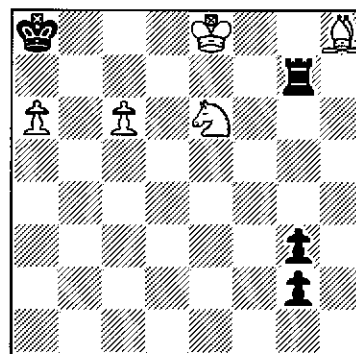
Although Q+B/Q is in the database, we are expecting to win using a line in which the black extra man is relevant. This means that further progress in the study depends on analysis. We shall have to try to find a placement of pieces which gives us play with a point, a try or two, and isn't too "obvious". Suppose the white bishop is on the long diagonal a1-h8 (Diagram 2). Then after 3 Qd8+ black has a choice 3...Kc6 and 3...Kb7. Now running away seems a good idea, but if 3...Kc6 then 4 Qd7+ wins the queen either with a skewer (4...Kc5 5 Qa7+) or a fork (4...Kb6 5 Bd4+). So 3...Kb7 is forced. Nice. So put the white king on e8, not e7 as we don't want it to control d6. Now, after 3 Qd8+ Kb7, 4 Bd4 serves two ends: building a net round the black king for mating, and forcing the black queen to move. As long as any checks are at worst neutral for white all is well. Put a black pawn on the g-file, tentatively on g3. Check the try 1 Be5?, setting up a battery that cannot be fired effectively.

We now have a forward section which is satisfactory. Stop and check everything, making sure that black's freedom to move the queen can be countered in every line. OK. Now we must see what can be done to make the study less obvious, and with a bit more meat on the bone. We notice that the knight on c7 can come with check if we put the black king on a8, for if black goes to a7, Bd4+ will win without the a-pawn. So can we find a way to bring the N from outside the NW quadrant to c7? It could capture a black piece, but adding another black man is only justified if there is more than 1 Nxc7 involved. At this point I see that a pawn on c6 threatening to queen by c7 would force black to capture. So put a black rook on the 7th rank, provisionally on h7. Now put the white bishop on h8 (Diagram 3). If 1 c7 then 1...Rxxh8+ is possible, but if the white knight is on e6 we have 2 Nf8. Good, this gives Rh7 and Ne6 a further purpose. 1 c7 Rxc7 (1...Rxxh8+?) 2 Nxc7+ Kb8 (2...Ka7?) has added two full moves to the study and drawn some attention away from the NW quadrant.

At this point I could have sent it off to an editor, but I like to be sure that there isn't still something left. What about moving the rook to g7? All the intended play works, of course, but now we have to deal with the sucker move 1 Bxg7?. This must not work. More analysis ... yes, that black pawn must be on g3, when we have two nice stalemates refuting the try: 1 Bxg7? gQ 2 c7 Qc1. Now white must reinforce c7 with (a) 3 Kd7 or (b) 3 Kd8. In either case 3...g2 4 Bd4 (to "prevent" g1Q) g1Q! 5 Bxg1 and now either (a) 5...Qc6+ or (b) 5...Qg5+. The kamikaze queen ensures the draw. That's it, rook on g7, and the final construction (Diagram 4) is ready for a thorough testing. There it is, as published in *diagrammes* 1-3/95.

That is how one study came into being. Were I to have described another study, the work plan could have been entirely different : that's composition!

*The study received a good response from the solvers of diagrammes. Some played 4 Bd4, overlooking the "wrong bishop" draw, and "Problème astucieux" and "Voilà une étude amusante et pas trop difficile à résoudre!" came from those who got it right - JDB.*



4 - win (final version)  
 1 c7 Rxc7 2 Nxc7+ Kb8  
 3 a7+ Kxc7 4 a8Q g1Q  
 5 Qd8+ Kb7 6 Bd4 etc.

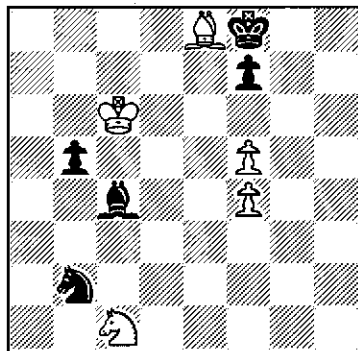
# G. M. Kasparian, 1910-1995

by Timothy Whitworth

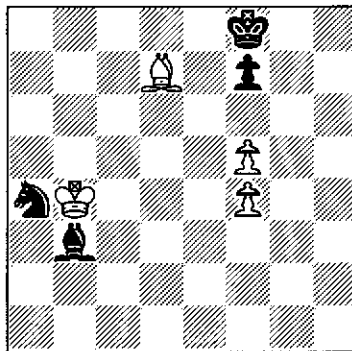
Ghenrikh Kasparian's career as a study composer spanned more than sixty years, from the time when Alexey Troitzky and Leonid Kubbel were in their heyday to our own time. His first study appeared in 1928, and in those early years it was Kubbel in particular who was his mentor. "The works of Kubbel gradually became for me the standard, and from then on I aspired to the same high level that Leonid Ivanovich achieved." As his work developed over the following decades, Kasparian produced many studies of great depth and analytical refinement. He was a strong player (the champion of Armenia ten times and a competitor in four USSR championships) and it shows in his compositions. In introducing his collection of 400 studies, published in 1987, he described his work in the following terms. "I have paid the greatest attention to the themes of positional draw, mate, stalemate, and systematic manoeuvre. This is no accident, but entirely natural: in contemporary study composition these themes are often being elaborated, they are promising, fruitful and, perhaps, inexhaustible." Yes, his themes may be the familiar ones, but the originality and subtlety of the play give his compositions a variety that seems as inexhaustible as the game itself.

Kasparian has left us a colossal legacy, not only as a composer, but also as an anthologist. Between 1963 and 1980, he published five thematically classified anthologies, which constitute an invaluable resource for students of the endgame study. But of all his books, perhaps the one to seek out first is his anthology *Zamechatelnye etyudy* (1982). It is the best, that is to say, the most useful and enjoyable, large-scale general anthology ever to have appeared.

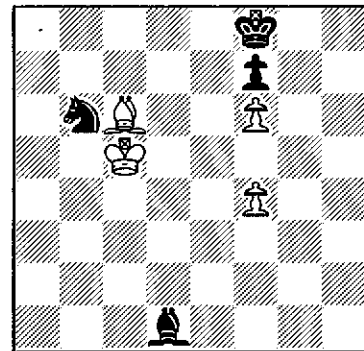
We salute the memory of a great composer by presenting two of his evergreen studies.



1 - draw



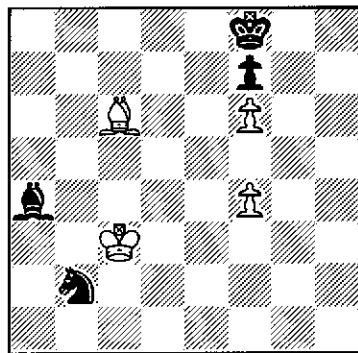
1a - after 4...Bxb3



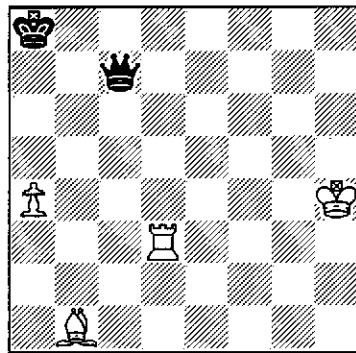
1b - after 7 Kc5

In 1 (1st Prize *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1949), play starts with **1 Bd7 b4** (1...Na4 2 Kd6 is fine for White) **2 Kc5 b3 3 Kb4**. Now White is going to win the pawn on b3, a capture which will apparently clinch the draw. But Black has other ideas. He plays **3...Na4!** and after **4 Nxb3 Bxb3** White faces a problem (see 1a). He is a piece down, the capture **5 Kxb3** loses to **5...Nc5+**, and the moves **5 Bxa4 Bxa4 6 Kxa4 Ke7** also leave White in a lost position. The saving move is **5 Bc6!!** The bishop must occupy

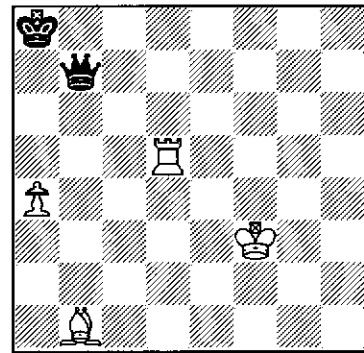
the long diagonal, and we shall see the reason in due course. There follows **5...Bd1 6 f6!** With e7 and g7 denied to the black king, White is now threatening to take the knight. So the knight must run, and White gives chase: **6...Nb6 7 Kc5** (see 1b). Here we see the force of White's fifth move: the bishop guards a8 (and also h1, a point which becomes relevant on the twelfth move). Since **7...Nc8 8 Bd7** settles the issue at once, Black tries another tack: **7...Na4+ 8 Kb4 Nb2 9 Kc3 Ba4!** (see 1c). Now d1 is free for the knight, and play continues with **10 Bf3! Nd1+ 11 Kd2 Nf2 12 Ke3**. If Black now tries **12...Nh3**, the reply is **13 Bg4**, so there is nothing for it but to concede a draw by repetition: **12...Nd1+ 13 Kd2 Nb2 14 Kc3 Bd1! 15 Bc6!** Not surprisingly, this study was honoured with enthusiasm by the tourney judge, Alexander Herbstman: "The composer has worked up a novel and extraordinarily dynamic positional draw. The subtle introductory play, the light construction, the final drawn position, with the keen struggle extending over the whole board - all this makes the study an outstanding work of chess art."



1c - after 9...Ba4



2 - draw



2a - after 3 Rd5

In 2 (1st Prize *Magyar Sakkélet* 1969), White has the material to draw, but his pieces are poorly placed, and we only have to try a few moves to see that his position is indeed precarious. The following lines, for example, all lead to disaster: **1 Rg3 Qf4+ 2 Rg4 Qh6+ 3 Kg3 Qe3+ 4 Kh2** (4 Kg2 Qe2+) **4...Qf2+ 5 Rg2 Qh4+ 6 Kg1 Qe1+**; or **1 Rf3 Qh2+ 2 Rh3 Qf2+ 3 Kh5** (3 Rg3 Qf4+) **3...Qc5+ 4 K-- Qb4(b6,c1)+**; or **1 Kh3 Qc8+ 2 Kh4 Qf8!** To survive, White must take his king towards his other pieces: **1 Kg4! Qc8+ 2 Kf3!!** Eh? This allows an obvious fork, but there is nothing else; after **2 Kh5 Qc5+ 3 K-- Qb4(b6)+**, or **2 Kh4 Qf8**, White really is in trouble. Of course, Black plays **2...Qb7+**, whereupon White unleashes the stunning counter **3 Rd5!!** (see 2a), leaving Black to choose between **3...Qxd5+ 4 Be4** and **3...Qxb1 4 Ra5+ Kb7 5 Rb5+**. The composer's quiet comment: "A little study, which nevertheless is not all that easy to solve." It is, of course, a brilliant and memorable little gem.

*Our thanks to Timothy for his sensitive and knowledgeable tribute. A memorial tourney has been announced (judge G. Amirian) to be held in conjunction with the forthcoming Olympiad. Send two copies of your study (any theme) to G. Kasparian Memorial, 32nd World Chess Olympiad Organizing Committee, 50 Khandjian st., 375025 Yerevan, Armenia, to arrive by June 1.*

## News and notices

**Other magazines.** The international endgame study magazine *EG* (four issues a year) can now be obtained by paying £15 to Walter Veitch, 13 Roffes Lane, Caterham, Surrey CR3 5PU (cheques payable to W. Veitch, please). It is essential reading for serious study enthusiasts, and I make no apology for plugging it both here and in the *BCM*. The most recent issue contains a translation into English of one of the prefaces to Troitzky's 1934 book, fascinating material indeed, together with nearly sixty studies from recent tourneys and magazines, a complete list of the 640 reciprocal zugzwangs in the endgame  $Q + P \text{ v } Q$ , and other computer-related material.

The British Chess Problem Society is primarily concerned with problems, but its remit includes endgame studies and a typical issue of its magazine *The Problemist* (six issues a year) includes five original studies for solution and a short selection with comments of studies recently published elsewhere. The 1996 subscription is £18 (R. T. Lewis, 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 4QA). The society's new and second-hand bookshop currently has over ninety study books in stock, and its library offers a Thompson database look-up service to members.

**Outlets for original composition.** My primary purpose in the *British Chess Magazine* is to introduce the classics to readers to whom the delights of studies are totally unknown, and I publish originals only occasionally (there is a fine one by David Blundell in the current issue). However, Adam Sobey (15 Kingswood Firs, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6EU) accepts them for *The Problemist*, and I myself accept them for the French composition magazine *diagrammes*. There are other regular outlets abroad, and I will send details to composers on request.

**Meetings.** The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on Friday April 12 at 6.00 pm. Non-subscribers will be welcome, but they will be asked to pay £5 towards the cost of the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring the latest *EG* with you!

**Books.** Jonathan Levitt and David Friedgood's *Secrets of spectacular chess* (Batsford, 1995) has just received a reprint. It contains some fine studies to go with its games and problems, and is highly recommended. Another excellent 1995 book from Batsford is John Nunn's *Secrets of minor piece endings*. This is the third of John's trilogy based on the Thompson five-man databases, and covers  $N/B + P \text{ v } N/B$  and  $2B \text{ v } N$ . It contains a host of material - analysis, practical advice, new studies, and, above all, examination of positions of reciprocal zugzwang: science applied to chess in a way that has only recently become possible. And the *BCF/Batsford official chess yearbook 1996* contains a section on studies, a trend which I hope will continue.

*Anybody wishing to give notice here of any event, product, or service should contact the Editor. There is no charge and no account is taken of whether the activity is being pursued for commercial profit, but notices are printed only if they seem likely to be of particular interest to study enthusiasts. Readers are asked to note that the Editor relies wholly on the representations of the notice giver (except where he makes a personal endorsement) and that no personal liability is accepted either by him or by any other person involved in the production and distribution of this magazine.*