

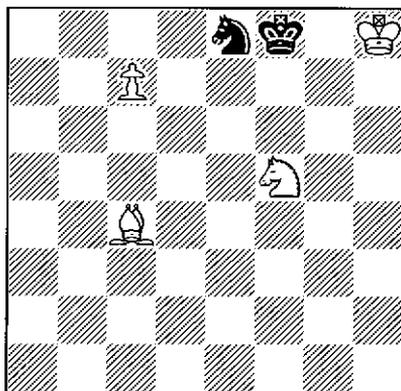
British Endgame Study News

Special number 28

December 2001

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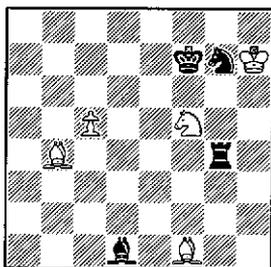
Some British studies from 1968-74



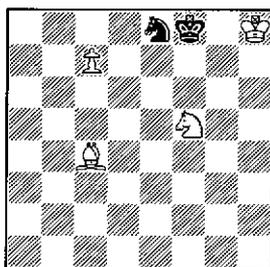
c8Q gives stalemate and c8N also fails, but c8B wins!

Some British studies from 1968-74

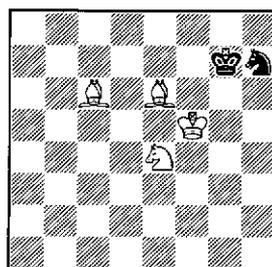
The major study event of 1968-74 was the appearance of John Roycroft's splendid book *Test tube chess*, but this included original compositions only to illustrate points of technical detail, and its examples, though admirably fulfilling the requirement for which they were created, do not seem particularly interesting when taken out of context. Quite different was a demonstration by Walter Veitch that an ending with K+2B+N v K+N could be won even if the bishops ran on squares of the same colour. This arose out of **1**, which appeared under the names of Mike Bent and Walter jointly and won first prize in the Hungarian Chess Federation tourney of 1970.



1 - win



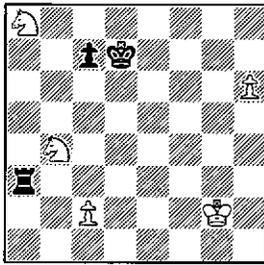
1a - after 6...Nc8



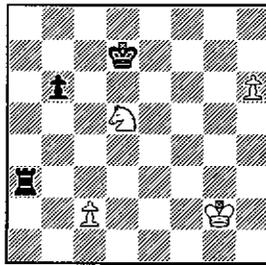
1b - after 18 Ne4

Play starts **1 Nh6+**, and **1...Kf6 2 Nxg4 Bxg4 3 Bc3+** is easy. **1...Kf8**, therefore, and **2 Nxg4** now fails (**2...Bxg4 3 c6+ Kf7 4 Bc4+ Ne6 5 c7 Kf6 6 Bc3+ Ke7** and **7 c8Q** will be met by **7...Ng5+**). White must play **2 c6+** at once, with sequel **2...Rxb4 (2...Kc8 3 Nxg4 etc) 3 c7 Rc4 4 Bxc4 Bc2+ 5 Kh8 Bf5 6 Nxf5 Ne8** and we have **1a**.

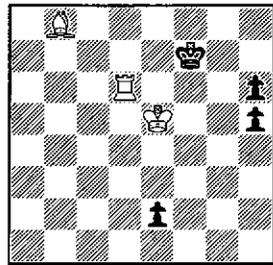
Now **7 c8Q/R** give stalemate, and **7 c8N** is met by **7...Nd6 (8 NxN stalemate, 8 Be6 Nf7+ 9 Kh7 Ng5+)**. This leaves **7 c8B**, giving an ending that appeared to break new ground. I quote from John Roycroft in *EG* 26, editing slightly. "Examination soon showed the win to be probable, but the question of proving it remained. WV solved it for this position by making White first concentrate on improving the position by the five moves **Bb7, Bc6, Bcb5, Kh7** and **Kh6**, meanwhile in essence ignoring all moves by the Black knight, which therefore by **12 Kh6** can wander to any of the 32 white squares on the board. The win was then demonstrated from each square in turn, a task which required 89 columns." The main line goes **7...Nf6 8 Bb7 Ke8 9 Bc6+ Kf8 10 B6b5 Nd5 11 Kh7 Nf6+ 12 Kh6 Ng4+ 13 Kg5 Nf6 14 Ng3 Ke7 15 Kf5 Kf8 16 Be6 Kg7 17 Bc6 Nh7 18 Ne4 (see 1b) Nf8 19 Be8 Nh7 20 B6f7 Nf8 21 Bg6 Kh6 22 Nf2 Kg7 23 Ng4 Kh8 24 Kf6 Kg8 25 Ne5 Kh8 26 Ba4 (waiting) Kg8 27 Bb3+ Kh8 28 Be6** and wins, and those wanting analytic detail will find some of the sidelines in *EG* 26 and in *The best of Bent*. Basically, White goes for the knight, and Black can neither defend it nor counterattack because he cannot afford to exchange knight for bishop. The computer has now confirmed that endings of this kind are generally won, but I always find it interesting to examine a systematic and logical human analysis even when the computer's brute force has also found the answer.



2 - win



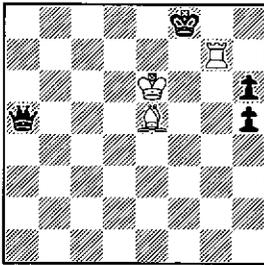
2a - after 2 Nd5



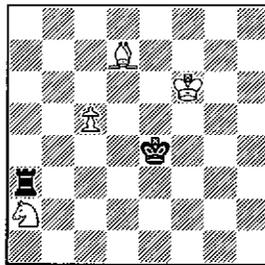
3 - win

The formal tourneys of the *New Statesman* were a feature of the time, and generated more than one classic composition. Participation was international and the prizes normally went abroad, but Andrew Miller's 2 gained 1st Honourable Mention in 1971. 1 h7 is met by 1...Rxa8 and 1 Nxc7 only draws, but 1 Nb6 is surprisingly effective: 1...cxb6 2 Nd5 (see 2a), cramping the rook (2...Ra8/Ra4 3 Nxb6+) and threatening 3 h7. Black can try to meet this by attacking the knight, but 2...Kc6 does nothing (3 h7 Ra8 4 Ne7+ K-- 5 Ng7) and nor does 2...Ke6 (3 h7 Ra8 4 Nc7+). This leaves only 2...Kd6, which proves little better: 3 Nxb6 Ra2/Rc3 (3...Ra5/Ra7 are met by forks) 4 h7 (at last!) Rxc2+ 5 Kg3 Rc3+ 6 Kg4 and Black has nothing left.

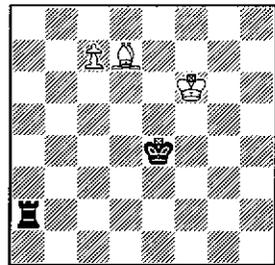
Hugh Blandford's 3 was commended in the same tourney. Play starts 1 Rf6+ Kg7 (1...Kg8 2 Rg6+ and 3 Rg1, 1...Ke7/Ke8 2 Re6+ and 3 Kd5) and Black will promote, but after 2 Ke6 e1Q+ 3 Be5 the new queen is threatened by a discovered check. In fact it is lost: 3...Qa5 (3...Kh7 4 Rf7+ Kg8 5 Rg7+ Kf8 6 Rc7/Rb7 transposes) 4 Rf7+ Kg8 5 Rg7+ Kf8 (see 3a) 6 Rg2 (stopping ...Qa2+ and threatening Bd6+ etc) Qe1 7 Rb2 (or Rc2) Kg8 8 Rb8+ Kh7 9 Rh8+ Kg6 10 Rg8+ Kh7 11 Rg7+ Kh8 12 Rg1+. Hugh Blandford was the *BCM* study editor from 1951 until 1972.



3a - after 5...Kf8



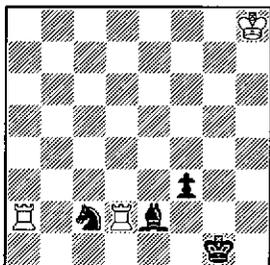
4 - win



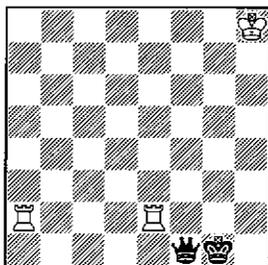
4a - after 2 c7

Adam Sobcy's 4 (2nd HM, Lommer Jubilee Ty 1969) was another tourney success. Play starts 1 c6, and 1...Ra6 will allow White to consolidate. Hence 1...Rxa2, and 2 c7 gives 4a. We now have 2...Rc2 3 Bf5+, 2...Ra8 3 Bc6+, and 2...Ra6+ 3 Ke7, hence 2...Rf2+, and there follows 3 Kg6 (to keep Bf5+ available and also to meet ...Rf8 by Kg7) Rg2+ 4 Bg4! (a familiar decoy move, but always attractive) Rxc4+ 5 Kf7 Rf4+ 6 Ke7 and Black's king stops his rook from getting to the c-file.

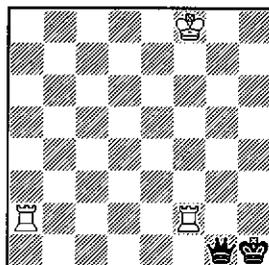
But even more valuable than Adam's composing has been his editing of the study column in *The Problemist*. He started this column in 1968, and for over thirty years it has been the principal outlet for original studies in Britain. Adam has presented some of its more spectacular offerings in our special numbers 26 and 29, but at least as important has been his day-to-day nurturing of home talent.



5 - win

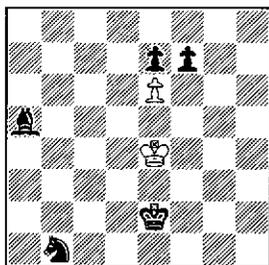


5a - after 2...f1Q

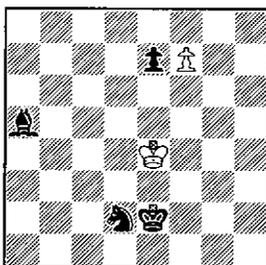


5b - after 5...Qg1

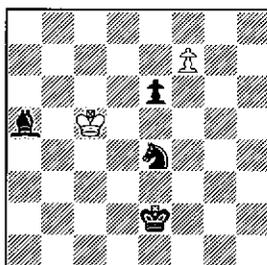
Wallace Ellison was one to whom he gave a platform. I omitted 5 (1969) from our special number on Wallace's studies because of its clumsy double-capture introduction **1 Rdx2 f2** (the alternative is slow death) **2 Rxe2 f1Q**, but once this is over we have the interesting position **5a**. White must now tread precisely: **3 Kg7** (only move to win) **Kh1** (a queen move forward allows a bottom-rank check, while a move left allows Rg2+ etc) **4 Rf2** (only move) **Qg2+!** (had White played **3 Kg8**, Black could now draw by **4...Qc4+**) **5 Kf8** (only move) **Qg1** (see **5b**) and now given is **6 Kf7** though a waiting move by **wRa2** would also serve. The queen is finally forced to the left, **6...Qb1** say, and **7 Rh2+ Kg1 8 Rag2+ Kf1 9 Rh1+** settles matters.



6 - draw

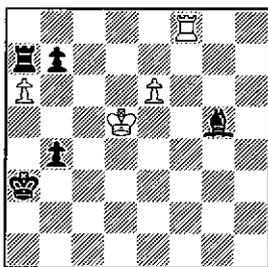


6a - after 1...Nd2+

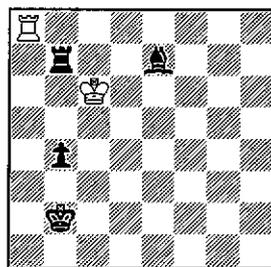


6b - after 3...Ne4+

Adam's own **6**, from 1970, also demands accurate play. Again there is a capturing start, **1 exf7**, but this is soon passed and after **1...Nd2+** where is **wK** to go (see **6a**)? A move to the f-file allows a pawn check and **...Bb4**, **2 Ke5 Nf3+ 3 Ke6 Ng5+ 4 Kxe7 Bb4+** is no better, and **2 Kd4** is met either by **2...e5+** or by **2...Bb4 (3 f8Q e5+)**. But after **2 Kd5 e6+** (**2...Bb4 3 Ke6**) **3 Kc5 Ne4+** White has a way out (see **6b**): not by **4 Kb5/Kc4**, when **4...Nd6+** wins, but by the counter-attack **4 Ke4 (4...Bb4 5 Kxe4 Bd6 6 f8Q Bxf8 7 Ke5, or 4...Ng5 5 f8Q and bPe6 prevents ...Ne6+)**.

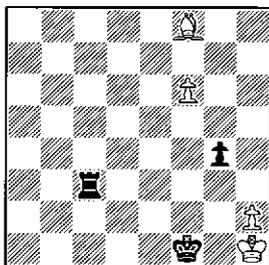


7 - win

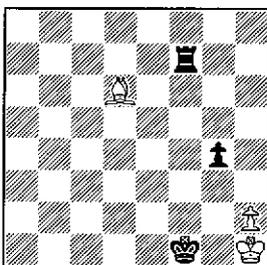


7a - after 3...Kb2 4 Kc6

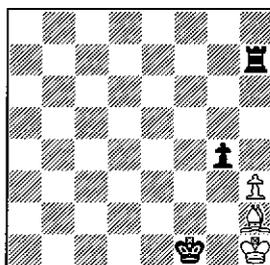
Richard Harman never regarded himself as a composer and his main contribution to the endgame study lay in his thematically indexed collection of over 10,000 studies (now held by Brian Stephenson), but the observation of a gap in the collection caused him to compose 7 to fill it. Play proceeds **1 e7 Bxe7 2 axb7 Rxb7 3 Ra8+**, and now **3...K-- 4 Kc6** leaves the rook neatly dominated (see 7a). Adam published this for him in 1972.



8 - draw



8a - after 2...Rxf7

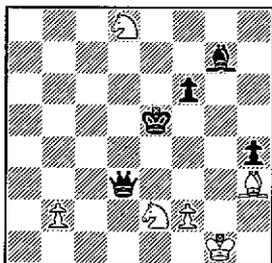


8b - after 4 Bh2

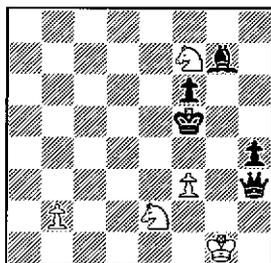
Andrew Miller was a much more regular contributor, and often appeared in the prize lists. We saw his third prizewinner from 1974-75 in "Some British studies from 1975-79", and 8, from 1974, received 1st Honourable Mention in the same award.

White is not merely material down, he is in danger of mate. **1 Bd6** is met by **1...Kf2**, with mate on move 6 at the latest; **1 Bh6** guards c1 and makes things harder, but Black wins by **1...Rf3 2 Bg5** (conceding the f-pawn doesn't help) **Rf2 3 Bh4 Rg2 4 h3 g3 5 Bxg3 Rxg3**. And does not **1 f7** lose to **1...Rf3**? No, because **2 Bd6** allows White to hold the draw even after the pawn has gone. **2...Rxf7** gives 8a and the threat **3...g3** may seem devastating (**4 Bxg3 Rg7**), but **3 h3!** holds everything. **3...g3 4 Bxg3 Rg7** no longer wins because White has **5 Kh2**, **3...hxg3** gives a book draw, **3...Rf3** is met by **4 hxg4** (this is why **3 h4** doesn't work), and even **3...Rh7** doesn't help: **4 Bh2** (see 8b) **g3** (**4...Rxh3** stalemate, **4...R-- 5 hxg4** draw) **5 Bxg3 Rxh3+ 6 Bh2**.

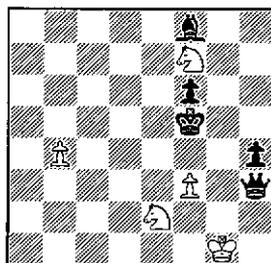
Figures compiled a few years ago showed that Adam had consistently published a higher proportion of British work than any other column in *The Problemist*, and I am sure Alain Pallier will be willing to do the same if composers send him the material.



9 - draw

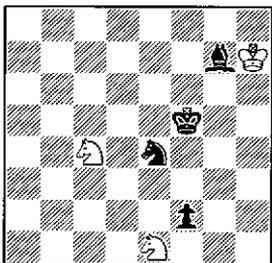


9a - after 4 f3

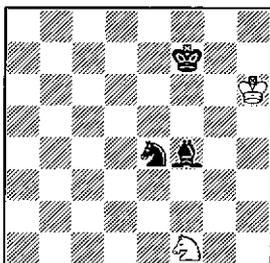


9b - after 5 b4

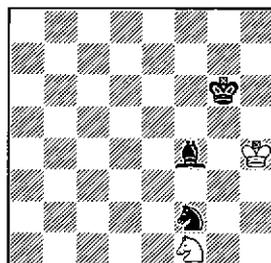
And Mike Bent? Mike was in his high summer, and **9** gained 1st Honourable Mention in the 1969 *New Statesman* tourney. **1 Nf7+** forces **1...Ke4** to avoid a fork, and **2 Bg2+ Kf5 3 Bh3** forces **3...Qxh3** to avoid a draw by repetition. Now **4 f3** shuts in the queen (see **9a**), and Black cannot hope to win by **4...Qxf3 5 Nd4+ K-- 6 Nxf3 Kxf3** even though it leaves him a pawn up; he has the wrong bishop for his h-pawn, and in the last resort White can use his b-pawn to distract Black and then sacrifice his knight for the f-pawn. Nor does **4...Bf8** help. White plays **5 b4** to prevent **...Bc5+**, and Black is in zugzwang (see **9b**): **5...Bxb4** (5 Bg7 6 Nd6+ etc) **6 Nh6+ Ke5/Kg5** (else a fork) **7 Nf7+ Kf5 8 Nh6+** and a draw by repetition.



10 - draw

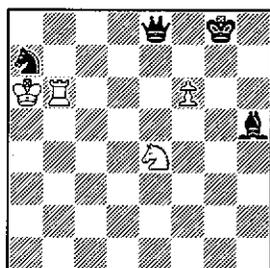


10a - after 5...Bf4+

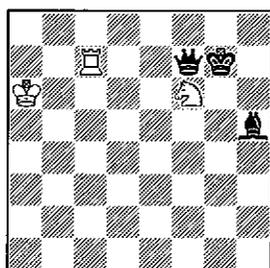


10b - after 7...Kg6

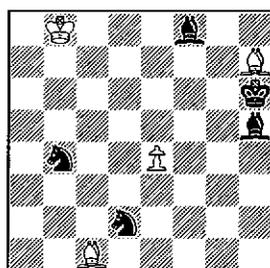
Mike gave some talks on composing to *EG* readers in 1968 and 1969, and **10** (*Tidskrift för Schack* 1968, version) featured in one of them. **1 Nd3** (1 Nf3 Kf6 2 Nh2 Kf7 and White must sacrifice the knight on c4 to avoid mate, 1 Ng2 Kf6 2 Nge3 Kf7 and the same again) **f1Q 2 Ne3+ Kf6 3 Nxf1** and White has 2N against B+N, but **3...Kf7** and he must play **4 Ne5+** to avoid mate. There follows **4...Bxe5 5 Kh6** (else **5...Bg7** followed by mate) **Bf4+** and the knight is imprisoned (see **10a**); can he escape? Every piece apart from the Black knight has already moved, and each of them will move again. **6 Kh5 Nf2** (to prevent 7 Kg4) **7 Kh4** (threat 8 Ng3) **Kg6** and the knight is lost (see **10b**) because 8 Ng3 will be met by **8...Bg5** mate. But White has the last word: **8 Nh2! Bxh2** and stalemate. I have moved the knight to c4 from c2 to avoid a bust by **1...Kf6 2 Nxf2 Nxf2**. In 1968, the position with Kh7 and Nc2 against Kf6, Bg7, and Nf2 was an obvious draw, nobody would have said otherwise; thanks to the computer, we now know that Black can force mate in 49 moves.



11 - draw



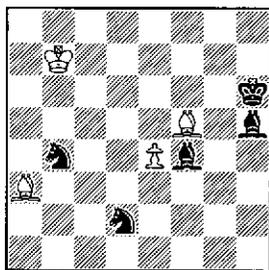
11a - after 5 Rc7



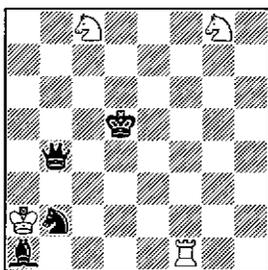
12 - draw

11, from *Československý šach* 1971, also ends in stalemate. Play starts **1 f7+ Qxf7 2 Nf6+ Kf8/Kh8 3 Rb8+**, and **3...Kg7** will be met by the pin **4 Rb7**. But Black can interpolate **3...Nc8**, and after **4 Rxc8+ Kg7** the pin **5 Rc7** loses the rook (see 11a). But so what? **5...Qxc7** guards four of the five squares in the White king's field, and **6 Ne8+ Bxe8** removes White's last outfield man and puts a guard on the fifth.

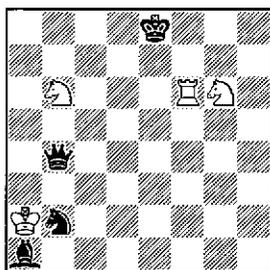
12 appeared in *Schakend Nederland* in 1973. **1 Bf5** saves White's bishop, but **1...Bd6+ 2 Kb7** (to prevent a later ...Nc6) **Bf4** guards Black's knight. So White transfers the attack to the other knight by **3 Ba3** (see 12a), and Black has a choice. If he defends it, **3...Bd6**, White goes back to the first knight, **4 Bc1**, and **4...Bf4 5 Ba3** repeats the position. If alternatively Black moves his knight to safety, say by **3...Nc2**, White has a perpetual check by **4 Bf8+ Kg5 5 Be7+ Kh6 6 Bf8+**, and we note that the crucial blocking man on f4 has moved into position during the play.



12a - after 3 Ba3

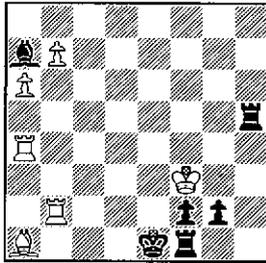


13 - draw

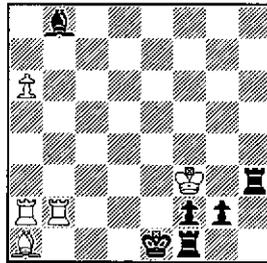


13a - after 4 Ng6

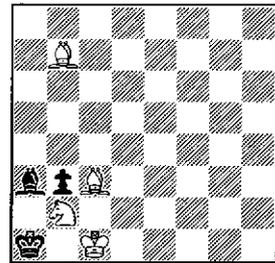
13, which gained 5th Honourable Mention in the 1973 *New Statesman* Tourney, also depends on two different repetitions, though this time they are more closely entangled. Play starts **1 Nge7+ Ke6** (1...Ke4 2 Rf4+ and a fork) **2 Rf6+ Kd7 3 Nb6+ Ke8 4 Ng6** and we have 13a. White now threatens **5 Rf8+** forcing **5...Qxf8**, and **4...Kd8** doesn't help (5 Rf8+ Kc7 6 Nd5+). So **4...Qa5+** forcing **5 Kb1** (5 Kb3 loses, most simply to **5...Qb5+** and **6...Kd8**), and now can Black try **5...Kd8**? With the queen away from b4, the reply **Rf8+** and **Nd5+** no longer works. But **6 Rc6** threatens mate and **6...Qf5+** won't help (7 Kxa1 is simplest), and **6...Ke8** will be met by **7 Rf6**. All right, what about **7...Qe1+ 8 Ka2** and now **8...Kd8**? Still no good: **9 Rc6 Ke8 10 Rf6**. Black can alter his place on the treadmill, but he cannot escape entirely.



14 - win



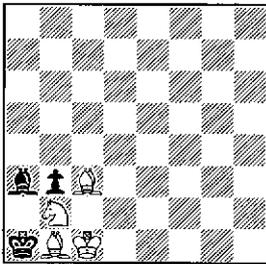
14a - after 2...Rh3+



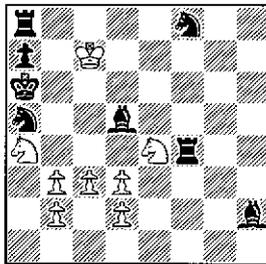
15 - win

I like to finish these selections with some lighter material, and I think Cedric Sell's **14** qualifies even though it took third place in the 1972-75 World Chess Composition Tournament. **1 b8Q Bxb8 2 Raa2 Rh3+** gives **14a**, and the White king must run: **3 Ke4 Rh4+ 4 Kd5 Rh5+ 5 Kc6 Rh6+ 6 Kb7 Rh7+ 7 Ka8** and Black can no longer postpone being mated (**7...Rd7 8 Rb1+ Rd1 9 Bc3**). Cedric, now Cedric Lytton, is a well known problemist.

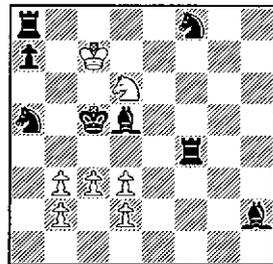
My own **15** (*EG* 1973) was similar in spirit if quite different in realization. **1 Be4 Ka2 2 Bb1+ Ka1** gives **15a**, and now only **3 Bh8** wins (**3 Bd4 Bc5 4 Bxc5** stalemate, **3 Bc5 Bd6 4 Nc4+/Nd3+ Bxe5 5 Nxe5 b2+ 6 Kc2** and again stalemate). I later produced an extended version of this (those interested will find it in my little 1989 vanity-book *Some flights of chess fancy*), but I have come to prefer the simplicity of the original; a light idea is not always enhanced by a lengthy introduction.



15a - after 2...Ka1



16 - draw



16a - after 2...Kxc5

And of course a Mike Bent to round off the feast. **16** (*Tidskrift för Schack* 1968) featured in his 1968 talk. **1 Nac5+ Kb5 2 Nd6+ Kxc5** gives **16a**, and now the Black rook "needs to be in two places at once to suppress the champagne corks which keep popping up beneath him": **3 b4+ Rxb4 4 d4+ Rxd4 5 b4+ Rxb4 6 d4+ Rxd4 7 cxd4+** and stalemate. Mike has a way with words as well as with chessmen.

Our next special number of this kind is scheduled for September 2002, and will cover studies from 1960-67. As usual, please will composers and their friends and admirers draw my attention to studies that they would like to see included, and also to any from 1968-95 which should have appeared in the series but have been overlooked. - JDB