

British Endgame Study News

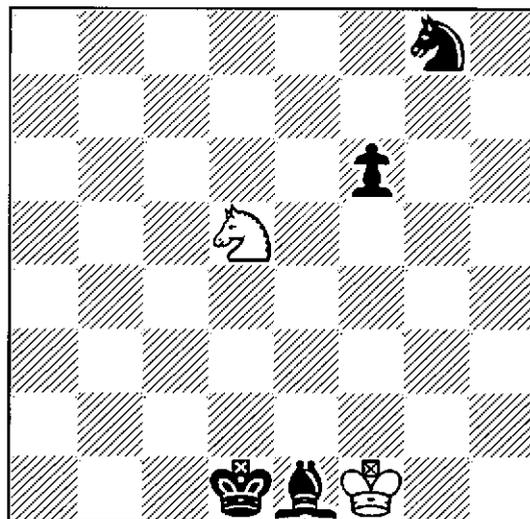
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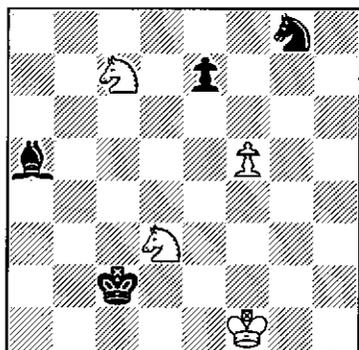
Some British Studies from 1992-93



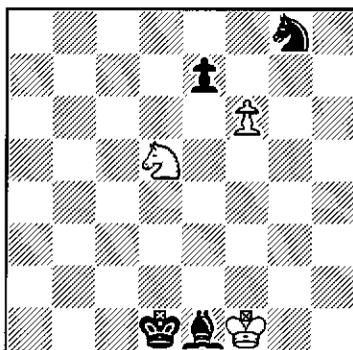
White draws by 4 Ne3+ Kd2 5 Nf5!

Some British studies from 1992-93

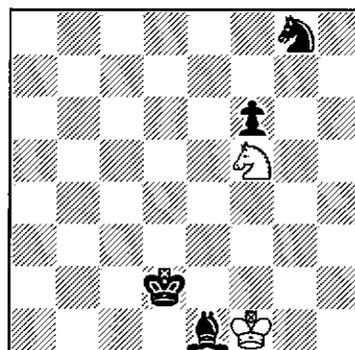
1993 saw the publication of two books featuring British composers: *The Best of Bent*, edited by Timothy Whitworth, and *The Published Work and Notebooks of Hugh Blandford*, edited by John Roycroft. Each contained some fine original studies.



1 - draw

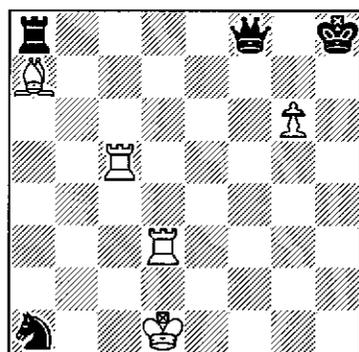


1a - after 3 f6

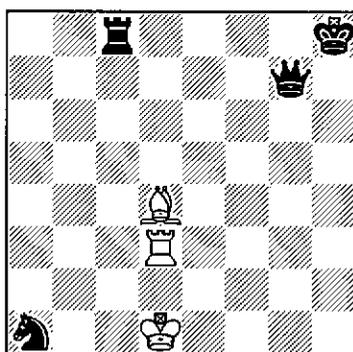


1b - after 5 Nf5

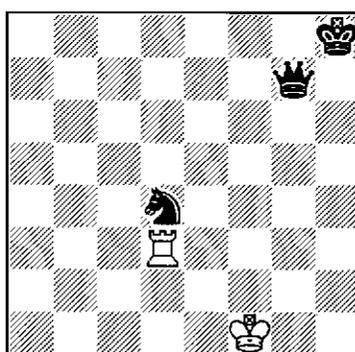
1 is from *The Best of Bent*. White must try and save his knights (Black still having a pawn, the advantage of a piece will win) but **1 Ne1+** gives only a temporary respite; **1...Kd1** restores the attack, and a piece must fall. Hence **2 Nd5 Bxe1**, and now comes the good move: **3 f6!** (see 1a). The reply **3...exf6** is obviously forced, but what has White gained? The answer is that **4 Ne3+ Kd2 5 Nf5** gives a position in which wK and wN paralyse the entire Black army (see 1b). Black's only safe move is **5...Kd1**, after which **6 Ne3+ Kd2 7 Nf5** repeats the position. 1b is actually a position of reciprocal zugzwang, though no use is made of this in the study.



2 - draw

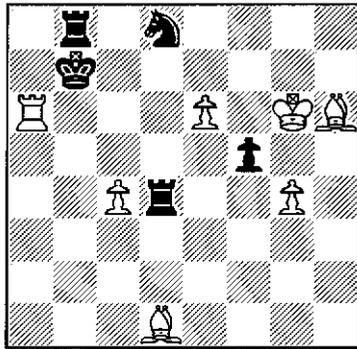


2a - after 3 Bd4

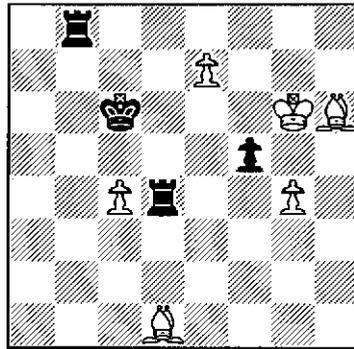


2b - after 6...Nxd4

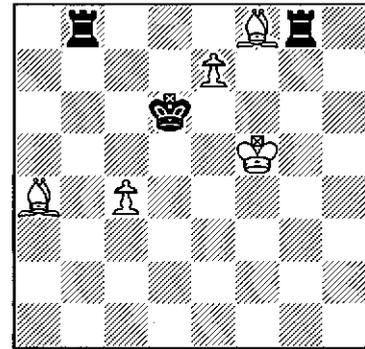
2, by Mike and Timothy jointly, is also from *The Best of Bent*. The wPg6 is helping to shield bK, so **1 g7+** is almost automatic, and **1...Kxg7** will allow perpetual check on g3 and h3 (or loss of bQ). Black plays **1...Qxg7**, therefore, and now **2 Rc8+** looks good for White; **2...Kh7** will lose bQ, hence **2...Rxc8**, and now White plays **3 Bd4** (see 2a) and **3...Qxd4** will leave him with K+R against K+R+N. But Black can wriggle by **3...Rxc1+**, since **4 Kxc1 Nb3+ 5 Rxb5 Qxd4** will win, and after **4 Ke2 Re1+** the capture **5 Kxe1** is compulsory since otherwise Black will play **5...Re5** and



5 - win



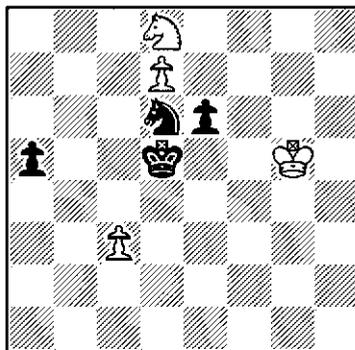
5a - after 2...Kxc6



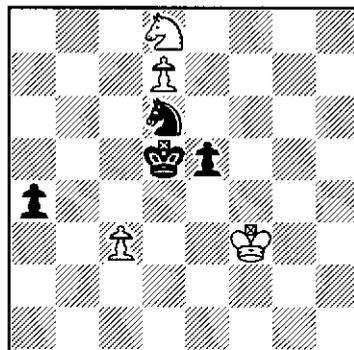
5b - after 5...Rg8

5, by David Blundell and John Roycroft, took second honourable mention in the 1993 "Boris" tourney in honour of the tenth birthday of Jan van Reek's cat. This tourney demanded studies ending in "mirror" mates (each of the eight squares around bK being empty). According to the published report, Boris participated in the judging. In the light of some of the judgements that have appeared in print, this practice might be adopted more widely.

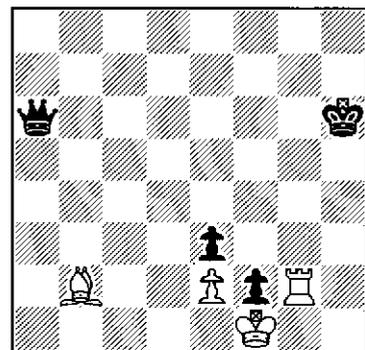
An introductory exchange 1 e7 Nc6 2 Rxc6 Kxc6 produces 5a, and now 3 e8Q+ Rxe8 4 Ba4+ leads only to a draw. 3 Ba4+, therefore, and Black must play 3...Kd6 to attack wPe7 (else 4 gxf5 wins easily). Now comes 4 Bf8 Rg4+ 5 Kxf5 Rg8, and we have reached the heart of the study (see 5b): 6 e8Q+ only draws, but 6 e8N is mate.



6 - win



6a - 1 Kf4, after 2...a4

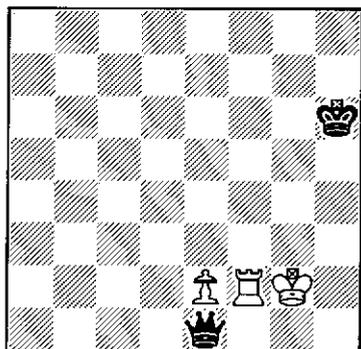


7 - draw

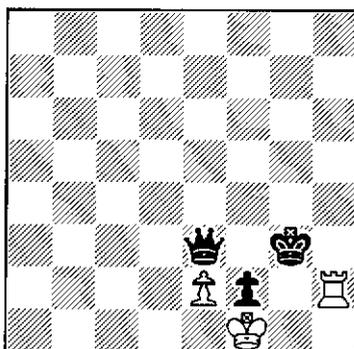
Timothy Whitworth's column in the *BCM* always offered space to British composers, and two pleasant "first compositions" appeared in it during this period.

Everything in George Berguno's 6 (July 1992) hinges on the first move. If we try 1 c4+ Kxc4 2 Nc6 hoping for 2...Nb7 3 Nxa5+, Black has time for 2...Kc5 drawing, since 3 d8Q can be met by 3...Nf7+. So wK must move. 1 Kf6 is met by 1...Ne4+ 2 Ke7 Nc5, and both wPs will fall. 1 Kh4 and 1 Kh6 allow 1...Nf5+ followed by 2-3...Kxd7; White can capture bPe6 and bNf5 (for example, 2 Kg5 Kd6 3 Nxe6 Kxd7 4 Kxf5), but 4...Kd6 draws. 1 Kf4 allows 1...e5+, leading to 2 Kf3 (Kg4 is no better, and other moves allow check from bN) a4 (see 6a) 3 Ke2 (3 c4+ Kxc4 4 Nc6 Nf7 5 Nxe5+ fails to 5...Nxe5+, so wK must get out of range of e5) a3 4 c4+ Kxc4 5 Nc6 Nf7 6 Nxe5+ Kb4 7 Nxf7 a2 with a draw. 1 Kh5 and 1 Kg4 allow 1...Ne4 threatening 2 Nf6+ and 3 Kxd7, and Black will draw at least. There remains 1 Kg6! after which

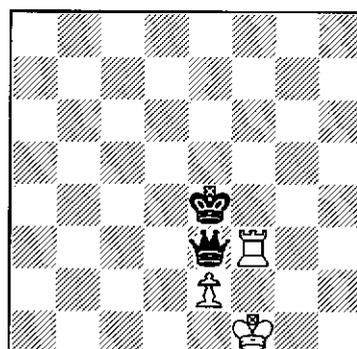
the only fork of wK and wPd7 is on e5 (after 1...Nc4) and 2 Nf7 will hold Black at bay. The rest is routine (any bK or bN move is to Black's detriment, and the main line goes 1...a4 2 c4+ Kxc4 3 Nc6 Nd7 4 Na5+), but the opening analysis has been good work. Many a fine composer has made a more modest start.



7a - Black wins

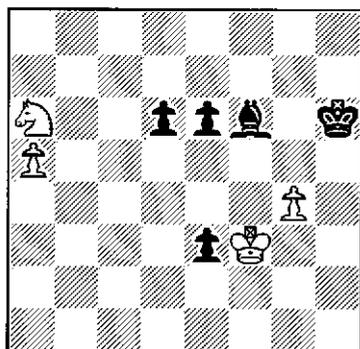


7b - after 5...Kg3

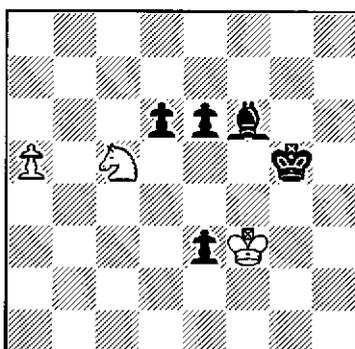


7c - White draws

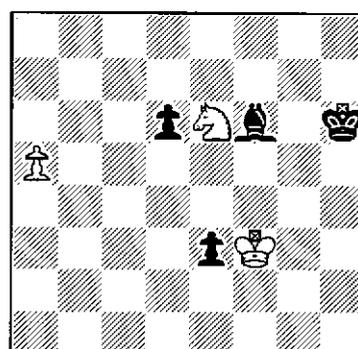
Paul Michelet's 7 (September 1993) requires some book knowledge of Q v R+P. Play starts 1 Bd4 (bK is open to check from e3, so there is no point in disturbing him by a check from h2) Qa3 2 Bxe3+ Qxe3+, and now 3 Rxf2 Qc1+ 4 Kg2 Qe1 leads to a known loss (see 7a). So White starts checking, 3 Rh2+, and Black must either come down the board or go to the f-file. Let's try coming down the board: 3...Kg5 4 Rg2+ Kh4 5 Rh2+ Kg3 (see 7b). Now 6 Rxh3+ Qxh3 looks like a draw by stalemate, but Black can play 6...Kf4! and both 7 Rxe3 Kxe3 and 7 Rf3+ Ke4 8 Rxf2 Qc1+ lead to wins for Black. Instead, White must continue checking by 6 Rg2+ Kh3 7 Rh2+ Kg3 (7...Kxh2 stalemate) 8 Rg2+, and now Black must try the f-file: 8...Kf4. However, this allows White to capture on f2 *with check*, 9 Rxf2+, and after any bK move we have 10 Rf3 with a standard fortress draw (see 7c).



8 - win



8a - 1...Kxg5, 2 Nc5

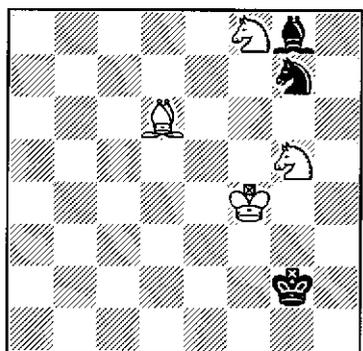


8b - 1...Bxg5, 3 Nxe6

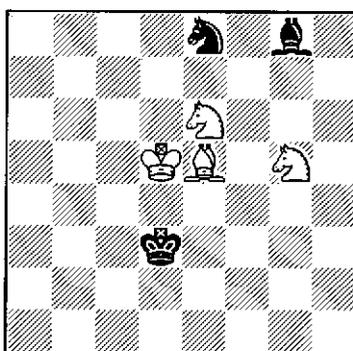
8, from the March 1995 BCM, was overlooked in our 1994-95 special number. This was a correction by Paul Byway of a Platov study. Immediate wN moves allow bB to stop wP (1 Nb4 Bd8 2 a6 Bb6, 1 Nc7 Bc3 2 a6 Bd4, 1 Nc5 dxc5? 2 a6 but 1...Bd8!) and a necessary preliminary is 1 g5+. Now 1...Kxg5 allows the sacrificial 2 Nc5 (see 8a) since 2...Bd8 can be met by 3 Nxe6+, while 1...Bxg5 allows 2 Nc7 Bf6 3 Nxe6 (see 8b) and 4 a6. In each case, wN neatly holds bB at bay.

Timothy also published a fine N+P v 2P study by David Blundell based on reciprocal zugzwang (May 1992, wKa1, wNb8, wPd3, bKh6, bPd5/e5, win), but it had a lot in common with the even better study which I quoted in March 1996 (and which has now received first prize in the *diagrammes* 1994-5 award) and a detailed exposition would repeat much of what appeared then. For the record, the solution goes 1 Nc6 (wN must get to c2) e4 2 d4 e3 3 Nb4 Kg5 4 Ka2! (the positions with wKb2-bKf4 and wKb3-bKf3/f5 are reciprocal zugzwang, so wK stays off the b-file) Kg4 (for the same reason, bK stays off the f-file) 5 Ka3 Kf4 (but now Black has no choice, since 5...Kg3 can be met by 6 Nc2 Kf3/4 7 Kb4 Ke4 8 Kc5 with a win) 6 Kb2 Kf3 7 Kb3 and the rest is not too hard. But there are also tries defeated by zugzwang, and those who want a full analysis will find it on page 251 of the May 1992 *BCM*.

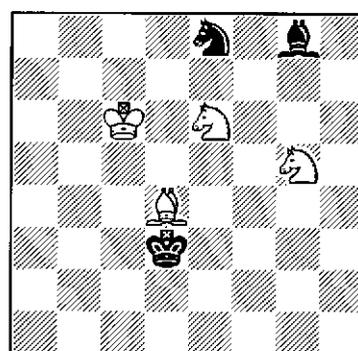
Adam Sobey's column in *The Problemist* has been another good friend to British study composition. It took my own first efforts in the early 1970s, and continues to welcome expert and beginner alike. Adam likes to present a "home" issue from time to time, and the studies that follow come from such an issue in September 1992.



9 - win



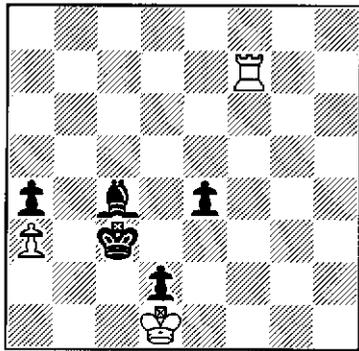
9a - reciprocal zugzwang



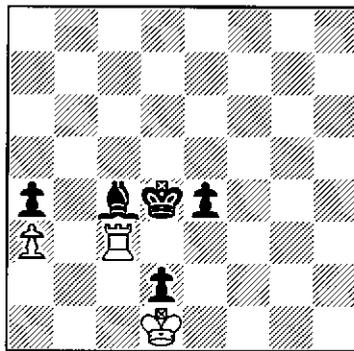
9b - after 8 Kc6

White needs to win a piece in David Blundell's 9, and play starts 1 Be5 Ne8 (1...Nh5 2 Kg4 and wins material) 2 Nfe6 Kf2 (2...Bxe6 3 Nxe6 leads to a quick win for White, who can home on in bN while keeping bK at bay: for example, 3...Kh3 4 Kg5 Kg2 5 Kg6 Kf3 6 Nc5, or 3...Kf2 4 Kf5 Ke3 5 Bb8 Kf3 6 Kg6 Ke4 7 Nf4) 3 Ke4 Ke2. Now 4 Kd5 leads only to a draw: 4...Kd3 (see 9a) 5 Kc6 Bxe6 6 Nxe6 Ke4 7 B-- Kf5 and bN will escape via f6. However, 9a turns out to be a position of reciprocal zugzwang, and if White can reach it with Black to play he will win. Hence 4 Kd4 Kd2 (if 4...Bxe6 then 5 Nxe6 and again White can keep bK at bay) 5 Kc5! Kd3 (conceding the zugzwang, but if 5...Ke3 then 6 Bd4+ Kd3 7 Kc6 reaches 9b a move sooner) 6 Kd5 (mission accomplished) Ke3 7 Bd4+ Kd3 8 Kc6 (see 9b) Bxe6 (8...Kc4 9 Kd7 Kd5 10 Bb2 will give the same finish) 9 Nxe6 Ke4 10 Kd7 Kd5 (10...Kf5 11 Ke7) 11 Bb2 Nd6 12 Nc7+ Kc5 13 Ba3+ and bN falls. This was described as "after V. Bron, *Shakhmatny listok* 1929", but if the reference is to number 207 in Kasparian's *Domination in 2545 endgame studies*, which shows the same final manoeuvre to capture bN, David's is the more subtle composition.

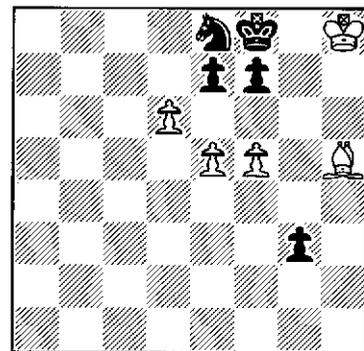
George Berguno's 10 is simpler. The wK is already stalemated, so the sacrificial 1 Rf3+ comes as little surprise, and if Black tries 1...Kb2 we have the first neat touch: 2 Rc3! and if 2...B-- then 3 Kxd2. The main line move is 1...Kd4, and if White tries



10 - draw



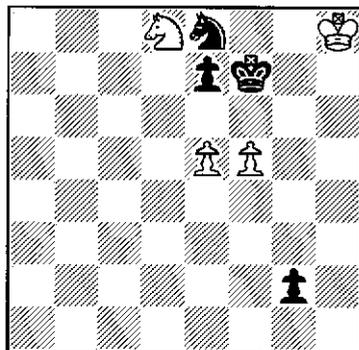
10a - after 2 Rc3



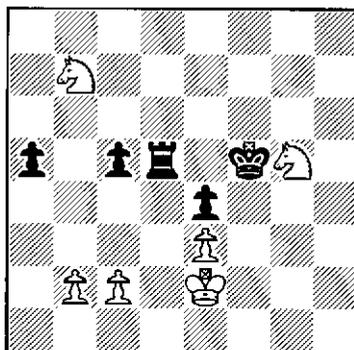
11 - win

2 Rf4 there is a win by 2...Kd3 (3 Rf3+ e3 4 Rxe3+ Kxe3 and the stalemate has vanished). But **2 Rc3!** is again playable (see 10a), since 2...Bd3 (hoping for 3 Kxd2 e3+) can be met by 3 Rc8 with a comfortable draw (3...Ke3 4 Rc3 Kd4 5 Rc8, 3...e3 4 Rd8+ K-- 5 Rxd3). And if 2...e3 defending the d-pawn, White will play **3 Rd3+** and capture both advanced pawns (3...K-- 4 Rxd2+ exd2 5 Kxd2), and will draw since wK can reach a1. "Piquant play," wrote Adam: eminently fair comment.

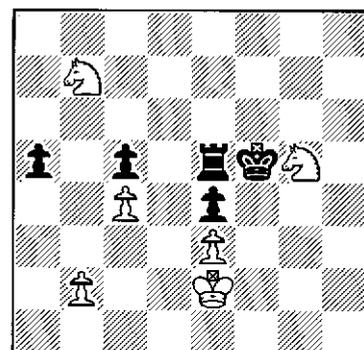
Play in Roberto Waldteufel's 11 starts **1 d7 g2**, and now 2 d8Q will actually lose. Necessary is **2 Bxf7** followed by **2...Kxf7 3 d8N+** (see 11a), and we have an enjoyable horse-ride: **3...Kf8 4 Ne6+ Kf7 5 Ng5+ Kf8 6 Nh7+ Kf7 7 e6 mate**.



11a - after 3 d8N+



12 - win



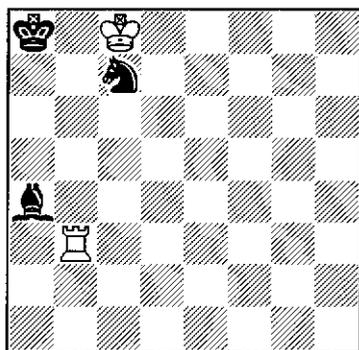
12a - after 1...Re5

12 came from Brian Edwards, better known as a problemist (and better still as a bridge player, I am told). Play **1 c4**, and where will bR go? If **1...Rd3/Rd7** then **2 Nxc5** and **3 Ngxe4**, and White has more than enough material to win. If **1...Re5** (see 12a) then neither **2 Nd6+ Kxg5 3 Nf7+ Kf5 4 Nxe5 Kxe5** nor **2 Nf7 Re7 3 Nbd6+ Kf6** (or **3 Nfd6+ Ke5**) gives more than a draw, but White has **2 Nxe4!** This threatens **3 Nxc5** with a comfortable win, but **2...Kxe4** allows instant mate and **2...Rxe4 3 Nd6+ K-- 4 Nxe4** leads to a comfortably won pawn ending.

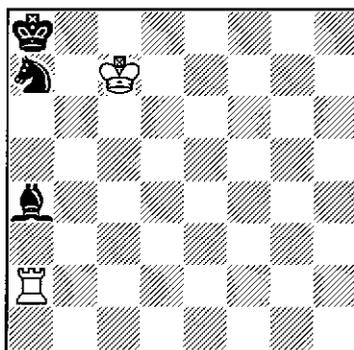
"Congratulations to our home-grown composers on providing such good entertainment," wrote Paul Valois, the general editor of *The Problemist*. I concur; even the simplest of these pieces will have been fun to solve.

An unfortunate omission from the special number covering 1994-95 was a mention of John Nunn's books *Secrets of pawnless endings* (1994) and *Secrets of minor-piece endings* (1995). Although these are books of analysis rather than composition, they

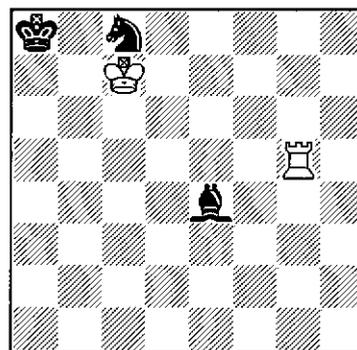
contain many original studies, and the omission was an oversight and not a matter of policy. That said, they, and the book *Secrets of rook endings* which appeared in 1992, are at least as conveniently available as *BESN*, and the primary purpose of these special numbers is to provide a record of material whose publication has been scattered. I therefore content myself with a single example to represent the series.



13 - win



13a - reciprocal zugzwang (!)



13b - after 9 Rg5

13 was a computer discovery; it is the longest win with K+R against K+B+N. To understand the play, it is necessary to know that the ending K+R against K+B can be won if bK can be confined to the “wrong” corner (here a8) or an adjacent square (b8 or a7), but is drawn if bK can escape to c8 or a6. *Secrets of pawnless endings* contains a complete analysis; we give only a sketch. **1 Rb6** (preventing the escape of bK to a6 and so threatening 2 Kxc7) **Nb5 2 Ra6+ Na7+ 3 Kc7 Be8** (bB must stay on the diagonal a4-e8 so that Rb6 can be met by ...Nb5+ or ...Nc6, and 3...Bb5/Bc6/Bd7 all lose quickly) **4 Ra3!!** (4 Ra1 is met by 4...Bg6 guarding b1, with 5 Kb6 Kb8 6 Rxa7 Kc8 as a possible sequel, while 4 Ra2 Ba4 gives **13a** with White to play) **Ba4** (if 4...Bh5 then 5 Rb3 Nc8 6 Rg3 and the win can be shown) **5 Ra2** (now we have **13a** with Black to move) **Bd1** (other moves are analysed in *Secrets of pawnless endings*) **6 Rb2 Nc8 7 Rg2** (threat 8 Kxc8 and 9 Rg6) **Bf3 8 Rg3** (8 Rg1 also wins, the first time White has had a choice) **Be4 9 Rg5** (see **13b**) **Bb1** (bB is tied to the defence of g6 and has no good square; for example, 9...Bc2 allows 10 Ra5+ Na7 11 Kb6 Kb8 12 Rxa7 because 12...Kc8 can be met by 13 Rc7+) **10 Ra5+ Na7 11 Rh5 Bc2 12 Rh8+ Nc8 13 Kxc8 Ka7 14 Rh6**. But why is **13a** a position of reciprocal zugzwang? If Black plays 5...Nb5+ 6 Kb6 Nc3, threatening 7...Nd5+, White can play 7 Rd2 and win quickly; but if we reach **13a** after 4 Ra2? Ba4 and White tries 5 Ra1 to maintain the position, the same line draws for Black since 7...Rd1 is suicidal.

I am conscious that I have only skimmed the surface of an ending which I find fascinating, but those who want the missing details will find them on pages 319-320 of *Secrets of pawnless endings*. Does it matter that this was a “computer” and not a “human” discovery? In my opinion, not in the slightest. It is a thing of beauty, and I am glad it has been uncovered; by whom, or by what, strikes me as irrelevant.

As usual, please will readers bring to my attention studies which they think I ought to have included. Our next special number of this type is scheduled for March 1998, and will cover studies published in 1991 and 1990.