

# Variant Chess

Journal of the Chess Variants Society

## Chess Variants Society

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## Variant Chess

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## Formation of a Society for the Study and Promotion of Chess Variants

As *Variant Chess* enters its third volume, and is now produced by a team of regular contributors, the time seems ripe to take the next step of forming ourselves into a Society for the promotion of all aspects of our common interest in the chess family of games.

Peter Wood, who has ably produced the last twelve issues of *Variant Chess*, wishes to stand down as editor/publisher, though he has in fact provided and typeset most of the material that appears in this issue. George Jelliss, who started the magazine in 1990, has agreed to resume the general editorship for this volume.

Stefanos Pantazis, who has edited the problem pages for eleven issues (including this one), also steps down, due to his other editorial commitments on the *U.S. Problem Bulletin*, and due to his move to Italy. His place is taken, from the next issue, by Ronald Turnbull, whose name will be familiar as a chess problem composer.

The title "The Chess Variants Society" is only provisional. Several alternative names have been proposed. For example, Peter Wood favours something like "The British Non-Orthodox Chess Association". The final form of the title will be decided at the inaugural meeting of the Society. All paid-up individual subscribers to *Variant Chess* automatically become Members of the new Society with the right to attend and vote at meetings.

The Inaugural Meeting, or first Annual General Meeting, is planned to be held in Hastings at the time of the annual chess congress, and is provisionally set for 2.30 p.m. Saturday 4 January 1997 at Peter Wood's home (39 Linton Road, Hastings). Please let the Secretary know of your intention to attend. If the number attending is more than expected we may need to find a larger venue.

At this meeting the appointment of officers (President, Secretary and Treasurer) will be decided. The current assignment of these offices reflects the *de facto* position. The adoption of a constitution will also be decided. A provisional draft of the constitution is available from the Secretary on request.

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# REPLACEMENT CHESS

Bringing unorthodox pieces into play  
by *Stephen Lewis*

Much of the appeal of unorthodox chess pieces comes from their uses in the setting and solving of chess problems. However, not all of those attracted to unorthodox chess are keen problem solvers. Many are, instead, attracted by the intricate ways in which whole games may be recast by sometimes quite simple embellishments of the standard game.

A difficulty arises in trying to construct whole games using unorthodox pieces. If using the standard 8x8 board, the starting array needs to be changed to include an unorthodox piece at the expense of an orthodox one. This may not always be desirable and limits the number of usable unorthodox pieces.

Alternatively, boards larger than the standard size may be used, allowing an extra piece for each extra column. However, since larger boards are not easy to come by and, perhaps more importantly, are felt by some to be unwieldy this too is a problem.

REPLACEMENT CHESS is an alternative which allows the entry of unorthodox pieces into a game which begins in an otherwise orthodox way. In Replacement Chess, each player has an agreed number of unorthodox pieces available for use later in the game but which do not figure in the starting array. The game begins in the orthodox manner but when a player loses a major piece (R, N, B or Q), a replacement may be brought into play in its stead. Such replacements are made instead of making a move and are only available immediately after a piece has been lost. Once a replacement piece is placed on the board, its powers take immediate effect — even being able to give check or mate.

The choice of what pieces should constitute replacements and whether there should be a strict order in which they are allowed to enter the game may be left open for agreement between players. (In devising this form of play, it was originally envisaged that unorthodox pieces should constitute the replacements but an extra set of orthodox pieces may be used instead.)

Although the point of entry may also be left open to agreement, it is recommended that entry be via either of the squares occupied by the King and Queen in the starting array — squares which might be described as the 'Royal House' or 'Royal Camp'. In this way, one may envisage replacement pieces entering through the heart of one's home ground rather than being allowed to fall on almost any square as occurs in Chessgi.

Unlike Chessgi, in Replacement Chess a piece once captured cannot be returned to the game.

In Replacement Chess, the state of play will greatly influence a player's decision to opt for a replacement piece or make a move instead. On occasions, it will be more expedient to move than to gain material. Furthermore, a piece sacrifice takes on a new and quite different connotation. Sacrifice now allows the entry of a new piece which may have quite different and opportune powers at a crucial moment in a game. That being the case, decisions regarding capture also need to be made with extra care.

One might argue that a better name for this form of chess is 'Reinforcement Chess'. However, this term has been used previously for certain forms like Chessgi. Replacement Chess although stated in an orthodox fashion, can quickly develop into totally uncharted territory. The use of pieces, some of which may have previously been confined solely to problem solving, tests a player's ability to balance the use of the familiar and the less familiar.

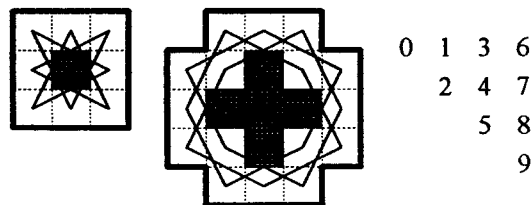
*[The rule that the replacement must be made immediately after a piece has been lost and that the right lapses if not taken up at that time is similar to the rule for en passant capture and suggests that it may lend itself to new results in retroanalysis. GPJ]*

## Puzzle Corner

by *George Jelliss*

The familiar star-shaped path of eight knight's moves round the edge-cells of the 3x3 board, omitting the centre cell, has 'perfect square symmetry', more systematically termed 'octonary symmetry' (since the vertical, horizontal and diagonal axes of symmetry divide it into eight equal parts which bear the same pattern, apart from being rotated or reflected).

A similar octonary tour is possible on the 5x5 board, omitting the corner cells and a cross-shaped hole in the centre.



This type of symmetry in a tour is possible only on oddxodd boards, the path being made up of eight equal paths, each joining a cell on a median to a cell on a diagonal. By numbering the cells from the centre of the board (0) outwards, as indicated above, these two tours can be represented as 1-2 and 3-4-2.

The circuit 1-5 on the 5x5 board does not count as a 'tour' since the cells it uses are not 'connected', by a series of wazir moves, so do not form a 'board'.

Our puzzle is: How many tours of this type are possible on the 7x7 board? (See p.22 for an example.)

**GAMES! GAMES! GAMES!***By David Pritchard***Badgers Wood, Hascombe Rd., Munstead,  
Godalming, Surrey GU8 4AA.**

Some splendid games this issue including one or two older games that only came to my attention recently. Again, more material than there is room for. Apologies to contributors and others whose games may have had to be held over. (As things stand, I am likely to be grovelling like this every issue.)

**CAPITALIST CHESS.** This is one of the games due to appear in Reiner Knizia's new book (see *VC20, Isolated Pawns* No. 29) as slightly modified by me. I have played it several times and have found it most enjoyable. Required is the pack of chess cards accompanying the book (described in *VC20*); until Reiner's book appears however you can use ordinary playing cards. I suggest Kings = kings; Queens = queens; Jacks = rooks; 10s = bishops; 9s = knights; 2s & 3s = pawns; Aces = jokers. A joker may be used to represent any piece. Discard the rest of the pack; shuffle well and place face down beside the board. Also required are 10 counters for each player.

Standard set and usual rules except that there is no check: capture the king to win. White begins and turns over the top card. If other than a knight, pawn or joker, turn again etc. When a pawn, knight, or joker is turned a man of the designated type must be moved by one of the players. White must now either check (tap the table: equivalent to a no bid) or bid one or more counters. If both players check, White moves and no counters change hands. If either player bids, there is an auction. The highest bid wins and the appropriate number of counters must be handed over by the winning bidder to the losing bidder. The winner then moves. The next card is then turned over and the auction is repeated. In theory, and often in practice, one player can have two or more consecutive moves. The skill (apart from in the play) lies in the bidding and the knowledge of which cards have already appeared. At its very simplest, the player with the most counters will be in a position to control the next move. A player lacking the piece displayed may still bid (and pass his turn if he wins the bid). It is obviously desirable to retain at least one of each type of piece as long as possible. When the pack is exhausted it is of course reshuffled and used again.

**FLYING CHESS.** This game was invented in 1984 by David Eltis. It has been played at the universities of Oxford and Munich, at the Oratory School and at Eton College where the inventor now teaches history. The board is theoretically 8x8x2 but it is normally played on a large 8x8 board with markers to indicate flying pieces (i.e., those on the upper plane), thus two pieces can occupy the same square, hence the large board. The game starts with the usual array on the lower board where all men behave normally and the object remains checkmate. Only Rs, Bs and Ns can fly and their behaviour on the upper board parallels that on the lower board, thus Rs and Bs can have their paths blocked by other flying pieces. Rs, Bs and Ns

can move directly up or down a level. This counts as a move. The other main rules are:

**Rooks** A Rook can make a normal move on the lower board and ascend to the upper level. In doing so it moves one square diagonally upwards along its path of movement. A rook can only descend to the square directly below it and this counts as a move.

**Bishops & Knights** These take off and land in the opposite way to the rooks. Bishops and Knights can move on the upper board and descend directly to the lower board, capturing a hostile man if it occupies the square. The descent path is diagonally downward, thus a flying piece above the landing square does not inhibit the descent. Bishops and Knights can only ascend in their own squares and this counts as a move.

**Capturing** All men capture normally in the plane they occupy. Rs, Bs and Ns may all take a man directly above or below them by ascending or descending. This counts as a move. Any man on the lower level may capture a hostile piece on the same square on the upper level. The capturer does not move. This is termed 'head-butting'. For example, consider a rook at a1, a hostile pawn at a5 and a hostile piece flying above a5. The rook can move to a4 and ascend to a5 capturing the hostile piece on the second level; however, the pawn can now head-butt the flying rook.

David Eltis has written some helpful notes on the game which I will summarise. He gives relative values as P=1, N=4, R=6, B=8, Q=8 and points out that a pair of flying bishops can be lethal although a single flying bishop is no great threat. Rooks are weaker than bishops because they cannot move and descend in the same turn. They are generally more effective at the lower level. Knights should be developed before ascending but bishops can ascend at once with advantage. If White opens Bf1(2) there is an immediate Fool's Mate threat of Bb5(2). Black can defend in a number of ways, for example by elevating either bishop. Moving a pawn (1 ...b5 is one possibility) is probably the worst option.

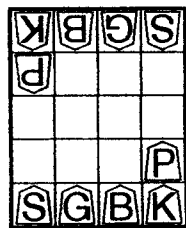
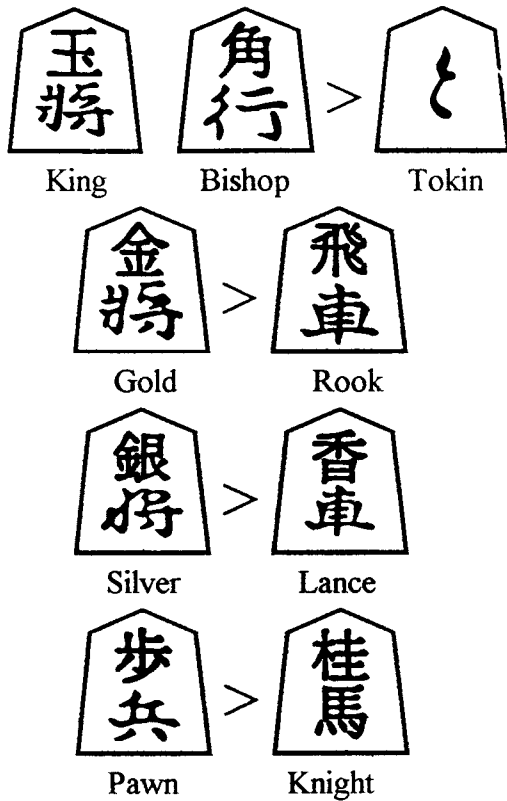
**MICROSHOGI.** I am indebted to Kerry Handscomb of Canada for sending me details of a novel commercial variant. It was apparently used in a sales promotion by a Tokyo-based company some years back but is unknown in the west (and probably in most of Japan). Named in Japanese 'Five-minute poppy shogi', this is the smallest of all shogis. However, it is by no means trivial and, as Kerry points out, it is a challenge just to find the best first move. The board is just 4x5. Each player has five pieces; a king, and four pieces with promotion values differing from the normal shogi pieces. The pieces are:

- 1) King
- 2) Bishop (promotes to Tokin)
- 3) Gold (promotes to Rook)
- 4) Silver (promotes to Lance)
- 5) Pawn (promotes to Knight)

(Note: the Tokin of course moves in exactly the same way as the Gold but is distinguished to avoid confusion with the Gold/Rook piece.)

The play is as in shogi except that whenever a piece, other than a King, makes a capture it is reversed (promoted if you like). A captured piece may be dropped as in standard shogi except that the player may enter it either side up.

The Japanese pieces (you can easily make a set: photocopy and stick on cardboard) are illustrated together with the starting position.



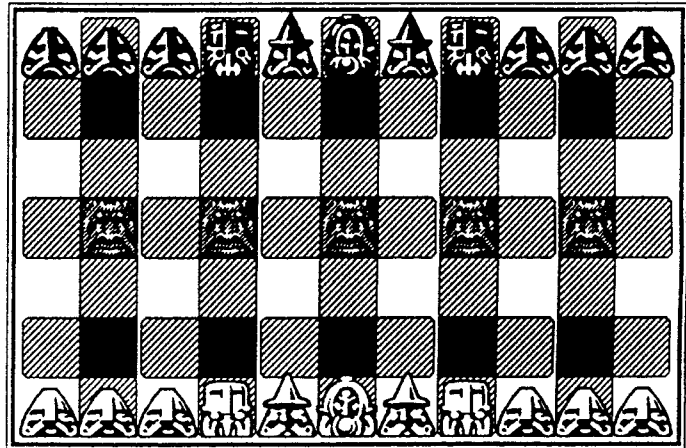
Kerry has made some assumptions which appear eminently reasonable:

- 1) It is possible to put a piece in a position where it cannot move again - quite likely resulting from a capture - in which case it is just too bad.
- 2) A pawn drop to give mate is permitted and two pawns on the same side may occupy the same file on the grounds that these are not strictly shogi pawns.
- 3) The initiator of a repetition of moves must vary.
- 4) If neither player is able to force mate, as in jishogi (*impasse*), the game is drawn.

**NECROMANCER** This game is in the prototype stage pending production. It has several noticeable features but whether these add up to a noticeable game I am not yet able to say. Full marks are earned for originality however. Necromancer, also called Demon Chess, was invented by Kevin Cullen over a period of years. It uses an 11x7 board (illustrated) placed lengthwise between the players. The squares are of three types: white, grey and black. [Gingham is something I associate with table cloths and homespun dresses; its use in necromancy seems incongruous! GPJ]

The grey and black squares together form the 'Demon Grid' which is divided into five zones: centre, inner two and outer two. [The terms inner and outer are used here in a way similar to their use in backgammon. GPJ] Observe that the centre zone has 13 squares compared with 10 squares for each of the other zones. Notice also that the diagonals are made up either of grey squares (the grey diagonals) or of alternating black and white squares (the pied diagonals).

There are 11 pieces on each side: 1 x Necromancer; 2 x Wizard; 2 x Crusader; 6 x Thrall. In addition, there are five neutral Demons that can be invoked by either side. The starting position is shown. The pieces, left to right, are TTTCWNWCTTT.



**Movement.** The moves of the pieces are described. The N and W are magic pieces, the C and T are military pieces. Capture is by displacement.

**Necromancer** moves to any adjacent grey square not attacked by a hostile piece.

**Wizard** moves as a bishop.

**Crusader** moves as a rook.

**Thrall** moves as a knight but in a forward direction only. On reaching the end rank a Thrall transmutes (promotes) to a Wizard if on a grey square and a Crusader if on a white square.

**Demon** cannot be captured but can capture a hostile piece when invoked by a magic piece. There are two conditions: firstly, the magic piece (the invoker) must move onto or within the zone of the Demon; and secondly, certain conditions must be met according to the zone involved. Outer zone: must contain only one magic piece (hostile pieces disregarded) i.e., the invoker. Inner zone: must contain two magic pieces (not more). Centre zone: must contain all three magic pieces. The invoked Demon is moved within its zone to any vacant square or to capture any hostile piece. This forms part of the invoker's move. A player however may elect to pass (i.e., not invoke the Demon).

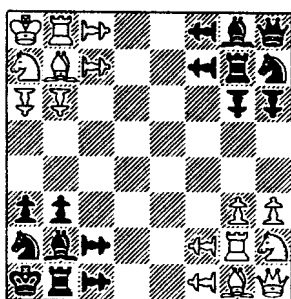
**Object.** The object of the game is to checkmate the Necromancer. Orthochess endings (stalemate, repetition of position, 50-move rule) are possible.

**Play.** White moves first when the turn alternates. Here is a Fool's mate: 1.Wg1-h2 Tc7-d5 2.Tc1-e2 Td5-e3 — a smothered mage? The inventor has some observations on the game. These, and a game score or two next time.

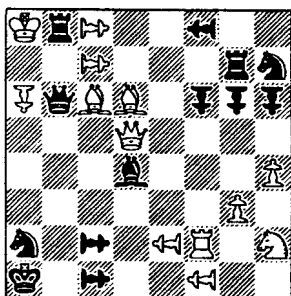
**ASYMMETRIC CHESS.** This game was invented by Michael Howe in about 1993. Orthochess array, Queens move as Kings but capture as Qs or Ns, Rs, Bs and Ns move in usual way but capture like either of the other two pieces. Kings, Pawns and rules of play orthodox. Gianluca Vecchi has organised a postal tournament which is at present underway. Here is the score of a friendly postal game: it is marred by an opening gaffe but it gives a feel for the sort of manoeuvres one meets in Asymmetric Chess.

**White G. Vecchi Black G. Baggio** 1.Nf3 e5 2.e4 Nf6 3.Bc4 Bc5?? 4.Bxc5 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Be3 a6 7.d4 N:f3 8.B:f3 Bg4 9.d:e5 d:e5 10.Q:d8 N:d8 11.Bd2 N:d2+ 12.N:d2 B:e4 13.Be2 b5 14.B:e4 R:e4 15.b3 f6 16.f3 Rh4+ 17.g3 Rh3 18.Nfl R:fl 19.K:fl and White soon won.

**DOUBLE SKAK.** This four-player game was invented by Soren and Christian Kirk some 15-20 years ago. It is played with the standard set on the 8x8 board. The initial set-up is shown with partners sitting opposite each other. The sets are contra-distinguished and the eight inside pawns (those not on perimeter squares) have noses to indicate direction of movement. Initially, each pair of inside pawns face each other nose-to-nose but after first moving a pawn's nose is rotated accordingly. There is no pawn-2, e.p. or castling, and promotion is only to a captured piece. Object is checkmate. Play is in rotation counter-clockwise with White (bottom right) having the first move.



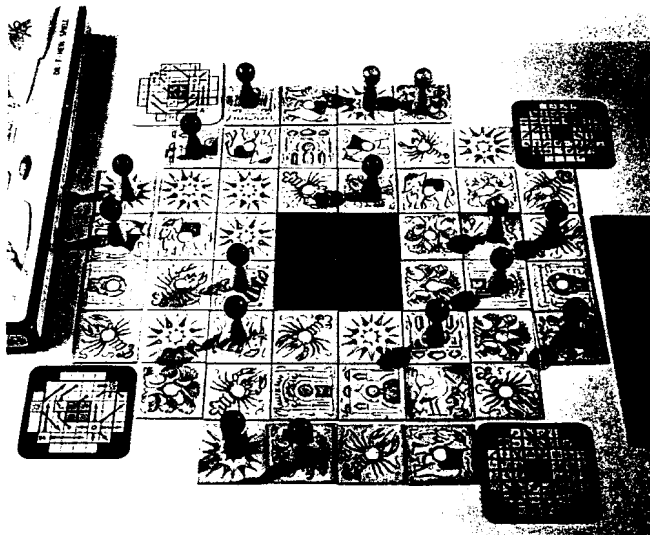
Here are a couple of games. In the first, Jens Nielsen and Soren are Black and Christian, as far as I can make out, plays the White pieces, with colours reversed in the next game. 1.e2 ff6 Bf3 a4 2.h4 Bc4 Nc6 a5 3.Bc5 Qg8 b5 b4 4.Bd6 Qe6 b:c4 b5 5.Qgl Q:c4 N:a5 Bd4 6.Rf2 Qa4 R:b5 R:b5 7.Qg2 Q:a5 Bc6 Rb8+ 8.Qd5 Qb6 mate.



1.e2 e7 a5 Be5 2.Ng4 Bc4 b5 B: c7 3.Bd4+ Be6 Be4 bc3 4.B:g7 Q:g7 Rb7 B:a5 5.Ne3 Qe5 Nc6 Bb4 6.N: c2+ Q:e4 N:b4 Kb2 7.d2 B:c8 N:a2 K: c2 8.Rh2 B:b7+ Ka7 c3:d2 9.Qgl Ba8 Kb6 Kb2 10.Qc5 Qb7+ Ka5 K:a2 11.e1 Qe4 Kb6 a4 12.e:d2 Qb7+ Ka5 R:b5+ 13.d: c1+ Qa7 mate.

Jens Nielsen, to whom I am indebted for the above, believes that Double Skak would also make a good two-player game. I can't see why not.

**MUTABOR** This entertaining proprietary game for 2-4 players was marketed in Germany last year. Mutabor is a chess variant with shades of ludo and halma. A fantasy story line (the by-line is 'in the Calif's maze') and attractive board, made up of 52 individual tiles, give the game popular appeal. The tiles are shuffled and the first four are placed in a square face down while the remaining 48 are placed face up in a predetermined sequence to form an 8x8 board with the three squares forming the corners (e.g., a7,a8,b8 etc.) cut away. There are thus tens of millions of possible boards.



Each player has four pieces. In the two-player game, these start on the four perimeter squares nearest the players, who face each other. The object is to be the first player to move all one's pieces into the opponent's home base. The moves of the pieces are determined by the squares they stand on which in turn relate to the usual chess pieces. There are 10 tiles each of Tree (K), Morning Star (Q), Big Gate (R), Elephant (B), Lobster (N) and two Stork squares (also K, but pieces occupying these squares cannot be taken). Usual displacement capture with a captured piece returned to its home base. Pieces cannot move within bases but are secure from capture. The four central squares (face-down tiles) are out-of-bounds. Mutabor costs DM 48 plus postage from **Dr. F. Hein Spiele, Gunterstrasse 13, 86152 Augsburg, Germany.**

**Comment:** I wonder if there is a flaw in the rules? If your opponent has three men home with a fourth in attendance, and you have only two men home, why not keep a piece in your home base (where it can't be captured) and just move your fourth piece randomly round the board?

**FOREST CHESS** appears on the Net at Web-site: <http://icecube.acf-lab.alaska.edu/~fxmgs/Chess/Forest.html> according to Lex Kraaijeveld who has kindly sent me details of the game.

The inventor appears to be one Michael Schmahl and the game was last modified in April 1995. Usual set-up except that the positions of the rooks and bishops are reversed and the rooks are upside-down, an unnecessary

refinement unless they have green baize on the base as they are meant to represent trees. The king and queen, renamed the Grand Druid and the Bear respectively, behave as their chess counterparts and the capture of the GD is the object of the game. The knights are nightriders, here renamed Rangers, whilst the bishops, called Druids, move as bishop or king (i.e., like a promoted bishop in shogi). The Trees move concurrently as queens. They must move in the same direction but not necessarily over the same distance. The pawns (no initial two-step advance) are Elves, but these mysteriously change into Shrubs later in the game description. Shrubs make more sense because presumably they promote to Trees. There is no castling, but a king adjacent to either Tree may move to any vacant square adjacent to the other, this is known as 'Pass-tree'.

A scale of values is offered: Elf 0.9; Druid 4; Ranger 4; One tree 0; Two trees 7 in the opening, 12 in the middlegame, 17 in the endgame; Bear 9. It would appear from this that a single tree has no powers and cannot move?

**Comment:** Presumably capture is by displacement. It is not clear whether the GD must be checkmated or captured. Promotion to Tree appears highly desirable if one Tree is lost but also if both survive since it would allow a choice of the Tree-pair when moving and it would also provide an extra refuge for the king who would then begin to look if not invulnerable then nearly so.

## ISOLATED PAWNS

By David Pritchard

**33. IS ANYONE OUT THERE?** This is the title of an occasional newsletter put out by John McCallion who contributes the 'Around the Board' pages in *Nost-algia*. The first two issues are confined to CVs (perhaps they all will be?). The annotated games feature just two players: the author/editor/publisher and Ernest Park. Variants explored so far include Ultima, Unorthodox Ultima and an experimental Ultima variant called Prima. Amongst Prima's band of recruits is the Carthorse, a delightful piece, which, being unable to leap, 'falls' on an opposing man and pushes it one square along. If the man happens to be on the board edge this could prove fatal. Anyone interested should write to John at 42-65 Kissena Boulevard (Apt. 324), Flushing, NY 11355, U.S.A.

**34. SKOCK** This is the name of a Swedish CV spotted by Dan Glimne. He tells me the word means a mass of animals or humans etc. The game seems well named as it is played on the 8x8 board with two full sets of chessmen. The players set up their pieces on the first two ranks and their pawns on the next two so that there are no vacant squares at the start of a game. The piece set-up is as in orthochess on the first rank, repeated on the second rank (so that here the kings stand on the squares of their own colour). Two cubic dice are used. Both players roll. The first player to roll a '1' starts (if both roll a 1, roll again). The winning roll is also the player's starting roll.

The spots 1-6 correspond to P-N-B-R-Q-K respectively and also the number of consecutive moves to be played; with the player choosing which die corresponds to which. Thus a roll of 2:5 for example means you can make two

moves with one or more queens or five moves with one or more knights. You capture the first king like an ordinary piece but must mate the second to win. Kings may not pass over threatened squares.

An initial roll of 1:6 is deadly — the pawns create mayhem. Moves that cannot be played are lost. What happens about promotion (on move one White can get a pawn to the back rank)? Is this only to a captured piece? And can a player elect not to complete a series of moves if able to do so? I don't know. We played a few games and found it fun but chance obviously dominates.

**35. RESEARCH CORNER** The International Council for Indian Studies has a symposium on 'Approaching the Roots of Chess' at Pondicherry University 26th-29th November. Papers are invited on chaturanga, origin of the chessboard etc. If enough readers are interested we could charter a Jumbo. Which reminds me that Steve Nichols, a considerable player on the games scene (he marketed Enochian Chess), has written a tome on chaturanga, still unpublished. He told me he had researched much new material (he is a Sanskrit reader amongst other accomplishments).

**36. CV TALK** Recently I gave a 45-minute talk on variants to the 2nd U.K. Meeting on the History of Recreational Mathematics at the South Bank University. I would be happy to repeat it for any club with access to an overhead projector and sufficient funds to pay my travel expenses.

**37. FISCHERANDOM** Bobby Fischer's move to Brazil to launch his game of randomized chess has been reported on BBC TV's Newsnight and in the Today radio programme as well as in the national press. My information is that in Fischerandom (the game has already had a clutch of other names) the king must be placed between the two rooks, a rule of which the media seems to be unaware. *The Independent* ignores this in its published diagram but even more surprisingly gets the orthochess array wrong too! Its headline isn't much better: 'Fischer makes an unprecedented move'. I can't think of any chess variant that has been more preceded in the last 150 years. However, Bobby Fischer has sprung surprises before; perhaps it is as well to wait and see what he is actually saying this time.

**38. TEMPETE SUR L'ECHIQUIER** An anglicized version of this 1986 chess-card game is to be published in America. A German version (Tschach) is already available. A few years back I was shown the sales figures for Tempete. I don't recall them now but I do remember remarking at the time that they would certainly make any chess author envious.

**39. DOUBLE-MOVE CHESS** Rules reminder: White opens with one move, thereafter two moves a turn. Object is to capture (not checkmate) opposing king. Here is a correspondence quickie from the early days with the game's inventor (Fred Galvin) wrong-footed. The winner is Godehard Murkisch who finished second in the *Die Schwalbe* international Double-move Chess correspondence tournament of 1964/6 which attracted 44 entries from nine nations. 1.Nc3; e6,Nc6 2. e4,Nf3?? (e3,Nf3 is correct); Nd4,Qg5 and the white king falls next move. Fred Galvin's comment: 'Two-move Chess, bah!'

## ITALIAN PROGRESSIVE CHESS

by Peter Wood

The result of the *Variant Chess* postal Italian Progressive Chess tournament, which commenced in September 1995, is as follows:

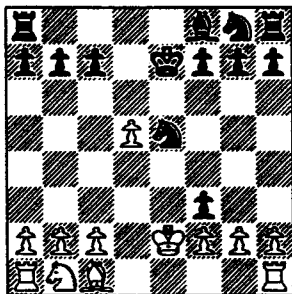
1. Paul Byway 5 (out of 6)
2. Peter Coast 4
3. Ian Richardson 3
4. George Jelliss 0

Many congratulations to the winner who well deserved his victory. The quality of the games was higher than in the 1994 event.

The author is indebted to Patrick Donovan for correcting mistakes in analysis, and for putting forward several suggestions of his own which have been incorporated in the article.

Paul Byway - George Jelliss

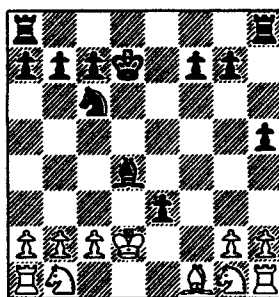
- 1.e4
- 2.d5 d:e4
- 3.Qg4 Q:c8 Q:d8+
- 4.K:d8 e3 e2 e:f1(Q)+ (A line out of favour; because of White's series 5.)
- 5.K:f1 Nf3 Ke2 d4 d5 (Mario Leoncini has notched many victories with this continuation. It is a strong line.)
- 6.e5 e4 Nd7 Ne5 Ke7 e:f3+ (6.h5 h4 h3 h:g2 g:h1(Q) Q:f3+, played by Davide in 1987, is the line that once seemed to dispose of White's 5th., but the reply 7.K:f3 h4 h5 h6 h7 (after h:g7 g:h8(Q) Q:g8 White gets mated by 8.Nc6 Kd7 Bh6 R:g8 f5 .... Nd4#) h:g8(Q) Q:h8 is good. In the game Black fails to find an improvement.)



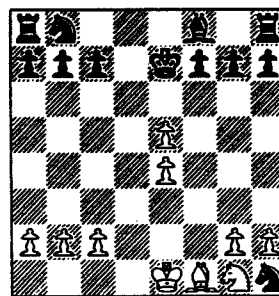
- 7.Ke3 Kd4 Kc5 Nd2 N:f3 Re1 R:e5 mate. (1-0) (N-d2:f3 was a way to make up the number of moves in the sequence. A nice Italian mate. It is dangerous to put your King in front of the diagonal of Bishop or Queen.)

Peter Coast - Paul Byway

- 1.e4
- 2.Nc6 d5 (A justly popular defence.)
- 3.Qg4 Q:c8 Q:d8+
- 4.K:d8 d:e4 h5 Nf6 (Leoncini's well-known series. There have been dozens of White replies to this, but no refutation has yet been found. Black gets a good tally of wins - but White gets results too, from promising new lines.)
- 5.d4 Bg5 Kd2 B:f6 B:e7+ (A new sequence.)
- 6.(?) B:e7 Bh4 B:f2 B:d4 Kd7 e3+ (Following this game I tried out Peter Coast's idea in a Ukranian tournament. My opponent played here 6.B:e7 Kd7 h4 h3 h:g2 g:h1(Q). The game is still in progress at present.)



- 7.Kd1 g4 g5 g6 g:f7 f8(Q) Bh3 mate. (1-0) (A surprising and pretty mate. This combination of Q+B needs watching. A similar idea occurred in a game Fierek v. Novak in 1989. In the following position White mated in 7: Bb5 h4 h5 h6 h:g7 g:h8(Q) Qf6#.)

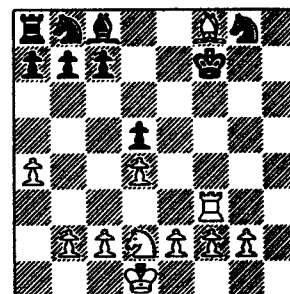


Peter Coast - George Jelliss

- 1.e4
- 2.f5 f4 (George has played this a couple of times previously in tournaments. The points tally in this unusual defence is White 10, Black 3.)
- 3.d4 B:f4 Qh5+ (PC: 'White's development is good, his King has plenty of space - it must be good for him!')
- 4.(?) g6 g:h5 Bh6 B:f4
- 5.Nf3 Ng5 N:h7 Be2 B:h5 mate. (1-0) (Neat.)

Peter Coast - Ian Richardson

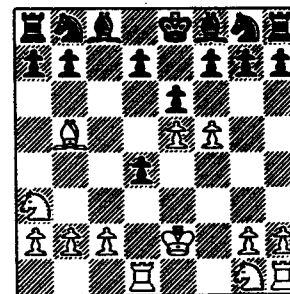
- 1.d4
- 2.g5 g4 (There was a certain vogue for this about 5 or 6 years ago. In 1994 Volosin, playing this as Black, won a 'marathon' 20-series game against Gadzinskij (both of Ukraine).)
- 3.h3 h:g4 Bf4 (White cannot take the Queen without being mated. Bf4 is a new move. Black thought the series good.)
- 4.d5 e5 f6 Kf7 (Good series. IR: 'It took ages to find this.')
- 5.B:e5 B:f6 B:d8 Kd2 Nf3
- 6.h5 h:g4 g:f3 R:h1 R:f1 R:d1+ (Making White lose a move by checking, which is an important motif in PC. Black is well ahead on material, has a safe King position, and the white pawns have a long distance to promote. Black should win; and does.)
- 7.K:d1 Be7 B:f8 a4 Ra3 Nd2 R:f3+



- 8.Nf6 Bg4 B:f3 Nc6 Nb4 Nd3 Ng4 Ng:f2 mate. (0-1) (The danger of leaving a King hemmed in on the back rank. IR: 'At first I seem not to have enough moves for N or R mate, but Nf6 combats the check and moves the Knight one step to its goal.')

Paul Byway - Ian Richardson

- 1.d4
- 2.e5 c:d4 (A popular reply to 1.d4, especially of late.)
- 3.e4 e5 Na3 (A very common line.)
- 4.e6 Qg5 Q:c1 Q:d1+
- 5.R:d1 Bb5 Ke2 f4 f5



(The current analysis battle-ground in this variation. Another popular line is 5.K:d1 Ba6 B:b7 B:a8 Ke2. Patrick Donovan prefers R:d1 instead of K:d1 in this series.)

6.(?) e:f5 B:a3 Be7 a6 a:b5 d3+ (Rets (W) beat Gadzinskij after 6.a6 a:b5 e:f5 B:a3 Be7 f4 7.R:d4 Rd6 Re6 h4 Rh3 Rc3 R:c8#; but Salvadori's line looks useful: 6.e:f5 f6 f:e5 K:f7 B:a3 Bb4. An alternative plan is 6.a6 a:b5 R:a3 ... Re3+, but finding two other suitable moves is a problem: Black has many mates to avoid, and must expend time taking the newly created Queen if he allows White's f6 f:g7 g:h8(Q) Q:g8.)

7.R:d3 Rd6 Re6 h4 Rh3 Rc3 R:c8 mate. (1-0) (The same back-row mate of Rets mentioned in the previous annotation. Again there is the difficulty of a King left on the back rank. A Bishop or Knight placed in front of the King can interpose on either side - but further security is sometimes needed!)

**Paul Byway - Peter Coast**

1.d4

2.d5 e5 (Not so popular as against e4, but quite often played nonetheless.)

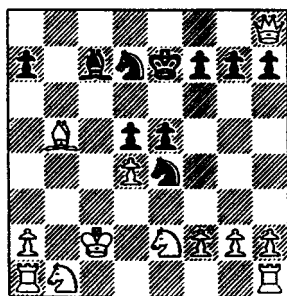
3.Bg5 B:d8 B:c7 (Nf3 often replaces B:c7 in this series. Other popular lines are 3.e4 Nf3 Bb5+ and 3.d:e5 Q:d5 Q:d8+.)

4.Bf5 B:c2 B:d1 Ba4 (Kd7, Bb4+ and f5 have been played as alternatives to Ba4 - admittedly with rather poor results. 4.Bg4 B:e2 B:d1 B:c2 should definitely be avoided, because of 5.B:b8 Bc7 Nc3 N:d5 Bb5#. A good choice is perhaps 4.Nc6 Bg4 Kd7 Bb4+.)

5.b3 b:a4 e4 Kd2 Bb5+

6.Nd7 Bd6 B:c7 Ke7 N8f6 N:e4+ (Black's problems with regard to King safety and development mean that White gets a good lead in material.)

7.Kc2 a5 a6 a:b7 b:a8(Q) Q:h8 Ne2



8.Nf8 Ng6 N:h8 Nc3 N:b5 Nc3 N:e2 N:d4+ (Leaving White two Rooks is not a good idea at this stage of the game. But what else is there? Eg: 8.h5 h4 h3 h:g2 g:h1(Q) Q:h2 Q:h8 Ke6, 9.d:e5 f4 Ng3 Na3 Rh1 R:h5 ... Re8#; (or e:d4 instead of Ke6): 9.f3 f:e4 e5 B:d7 Bb5 Na3 Rh1 R:h8 Re8#.)

9.Kd3 f4 Nd2 Rab1 Rhc1 f5 Ne4 Rb8 R:c7# (1-0)

**George Jelliss - Paul Byway**

1.e3 (The Jelliss or English opening.)

2.e5 d5 (A reply that has yielded good results.)

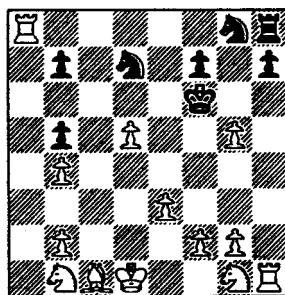
3.c4 c:d5 Bb5+ (A new series. It makes a change from taking the Queen either by Qg4 Q:c8 Q:d8+; or Qf3 Q:d5 Q:d8+.)

4.c6 c:b5 Bg4 B:d1

5.d4 d:e5 e6 e7 e:d8(Q)+ (This looks a ponderous way of taking Black's Queen, but it is not easy to take this piece satisfactorily, eg. 5.(?) d4 e4 Bg5 B:d8 K:d1 6.Nc6 N:d4 g6 Bh6 Rc8 Rcl#.)

6.K:d8 Ke7 Kf6 g5 Nd7 Bb4+ (A good series. It leaves White's 'a' pawn the only one that can promote. He fails to find an adequate defence.)

7.K:d1 a3 a:b4 R:a7 R:a8 h4 h:g5+



8.Ke5 K:d5 Kc4 Kd3 h6 h:g5 R:h1 R:g1 mate. (0-1) (In back row mates the King is often useful in guarding the defending King's forward escape squares.)

**George Jelliss - Ian Richardson**

1.e3

2.Nc6 d5

3.Ba6 B:b7 B:c6+ (This does not seem to improve on 3.Qg4 Q:c8 Q:d8+.)

4.Qd7 Q:c6 Q:c2 Q:d1+ (IR: 'Forced' but not disadvantageous.)

5.K:d1 Ke2 Nc3 N:d5 N:c7+ (IR: 'White has only moved two of his existing pieces.'))

6.Kd8 e5 Bd6 B:c7 Ne7 Ba6+

7.d3 Bd2 Rc1 Rc6 R:a6 f3 Nh3 (IR: 'Inviting a double-rook attack.'))

8.Ba5 Kd7 Rhc8 Rc1 Rac8 R8c2 (h5) R:d2 mate. (0-1) (It was not hard to construct this mate.)

**George Jelliss - Peter Coast**

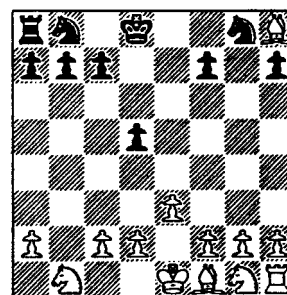
1.e3

2.e5 d5

3.Qg4 Q:c8 Q:d8+

4.K:d8 Ba3 B:b2 B:a1

5.(?) Bb2 B:a1 B:e5 B:g7 B:h8 (In a 1984 game Bellucci played against Gallozzi 5.d4 d:e5 e6 e:f7 f8(Q)+ and drew.)



6.(?) b5 b4 b3 b:c2 Nc6 c:b1(Q)+ (The winner, Black, remarked that White's 5th move was a mistake as he can now get White's pieces tangled up; but he missed immediate mate by 6.d4 d3 Nc6 Nd4 d:c2 c1(Q)#, as well as a 2N - mate by 6.Nc6 Nd4 Nf6 Ne4 Nc3 N:c2# !)

7.(?) Ke2 Kf3 Bb5 B:c6 B:a8 Nh3 R:b1 (White in turn overlooks mate: 7.Ke2 g4 g5 g6 g:f7 Bh3 f8(Q)#.)

8.h5 h4 f5 f4 f:e3 e2 e1(Q) Qe4 mate. (0-1)

**Ian Richardson - George Jelliss**

1.Nf3

2.e5 e4 (The most popular reply to 1.Nf3; but White is not impressed by it!)

3.e3 g3 Bb5 (A new reply.)

4.e:f3 Qh4 Q:h2 Q:h1+

5.Bf1 Q:f3 Q:h1 Q:b7 Q:c8+ (If White plays Q:a8 instead of Q:c8+, he gets mated. IR: 'My moves are almost forced by my opponent's series 2.')

6.Ke7 Nc6 R:c8 Kf6 Nb4 N:c2+ (IR: 'The King here on the 3rd rank is vulnerable to a pawn attack.' But Black has a bad game anyway.)

7.Kd1 Bd3 Bf5 g4 f4 Nc3 Nd5 mate. (1-0)

**Ian Richardson - Paul Byway**

1.Nf3

2.e5 Bb4 (According to 'PR Base', with this line Black has registered 13 wins to White's 1.)

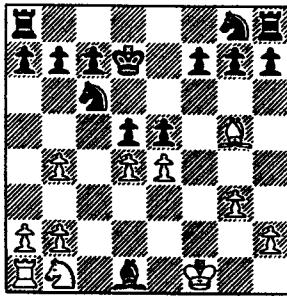
3.c3 c:b4 g3



4.Qf6 Q:f3 Q:h1 Q:f1+ (Giancarlo Buccoliero and Vito Rallo both played 4.e4 e:f3 f:e2 e:d1(Q)+ on the other occasions when White's 3rd was ventured.)

5.K:f1 d4 e4 f3 Bg5 (Giving his King some air.)

6.d5 Bg4 B:f3 B:d1 Nc6 Kd7 (White seems to have a reasonable enough game, which would vindicate his choice of series 3. However, in this difficult position he goes astray and allows a mate. Has he anything better?)



7.Nc3 N:d5 N:c7 N:a8 R:d1 d5 d:c6+

8.K:c6 f5 f4 f3 Nf6 N:e4 Rd8 R:d1 mate. (0-1)

Ian Richardson - Peter Coast

1.Nf3

2.e5 Bb4

3.N:e5 Nd3 f3 (An original approach to Black's series 2.)

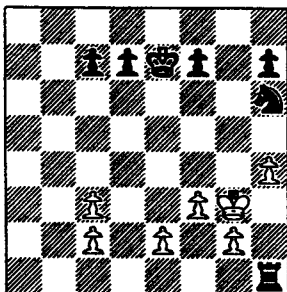
4.Qf6 Q:b2 Q:c1 Q:d1+

5.Kf2 N:b4 Nc3 R:d1 h4 (A good series, making it very difficult for Black.)

6.(?) a5 a:b4 b:c3 g5 g4 g3+

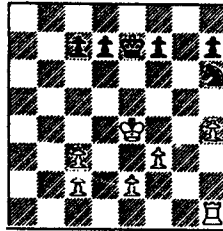
7.(?) K:g3 d:c3 Rb1 R:b7 R:b8 R:a8 R:c8+ (White had 7.K:g3 d4 d5 d6 Rd4 Rg4 R:g8#, an attractive Italian mate pointed out by Patrick Donovan. But White must be winning anyway.)

8.Ke7 Nh6 R:c8 Ra8 R:a2 Ra1 R:f1 R:h1



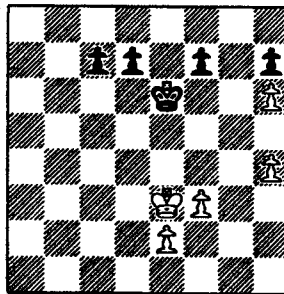
9.(?) Kf2 g4 g5 g:h6 Kg2 K:h1 Kg1 Kf2 Ke3 (White takes both Rook and

Knight. But this line leads, by correct play, to a lost position. Winning is 9.Kf4 Ke4 g4 g5 g6 g7 g8(R) Rg1 R:h1 - the Rook is taboo to capture by the Knight.



Why not promote to a Queen? Because Black can win by 10.Nf5 N:h4 N:f3 Kd6 Kc6 ... Ng5# !)

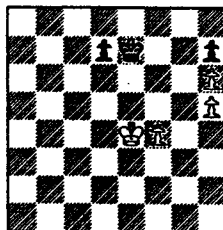
10. Kd6 Kc5 Kc4 K:c3 K:c2 Kc3 Kc4 Kc5 Kd5 Ke6 (A good line for Black is 10.Kf6 Kg6 K:h6 Kh5 K:h4 Kg5 Kf5 Ke5 c5 d6, although he looks to be winning anyway.)



11.Kd3 Kc3 Kb3 Ka3 Kb3 Kc3 Kd3 e3 e4 f4 h5 (White cannot go for the 'c' pawn, for Black will be able to infiltrate on the kingside.)

12. Ke7 Ke6 Ke7 Ke6 Ke7 Ke6 Ke7 Ke6 Ke7 f6 f5 f:e4+ (12..... f5 d5 c5 f:e4+ is perhaps simpler.)

13. Kc4 Kb5 Ka6 Kb7 K:c7 Kb6 Kc5 Kd4 K:e4 Kd5 Ke5 f5 f6+ (White is lost. I did think that a saving line here was 13.Kc4 Kb5 Ka6 Kb7 K:c7 Kb6 Kc5 Kd4 K:e4 Kd5 Kd4 Kd3 Ke4,



believing that Black would be forced to play: 14.Kd6 Kc5 Kc4 Kc3 Kd2 Ke2 Kf2 Kg3 Kg4 K:h5 K:h6 Kg6 Kf6 Ke6 and draws. But Patrick Donovan (and the winner himself I later realised) pointed out that after series

13 White cannot improve his position, so that on series 14 and 16 Black needs only to play moves that keep the position exactly the same. On his series 18 he will have enough time to come round the back of White's position, grab the 'h' pawns, stop White from doing anything by posting the King at g6 or f6, and queen his own pawn at h1.)

14.Kf7 d5 d4 d3 d2 d1(Q) Qd2 Qd1 Qd2 Qd1 Qc1 Qd2 Q:h6 Q:f6+ White resigns. (0-1) (A most interesting endgame. But after his good early play White should not have lost this game.)

**DAVID PRITCHARD**

Congratulations to *il presidente* for reaching the finals of the 1995 AISE International Progressive postal Chess tournament. No mean feat considering the large number of fine players of this variant around.

**ULSTER CYCLE**

In the *Guardian* newspaper of 29th June 1995 it is quoted that a retired academic, Dr. Tom MacGregor, has resurrected a 'pre-Roman pastime' that is 'much more satisfying than chess'. The announcement was made in the King's Arms, Perth in Scotland. The game (pastime) is called here 'Dun' or 'Fortress', but is almost certainly the Viking game of Hnefatafl, details of which can be seen in *Games & Puzzles* issue number 20, and elsewhere. Dr. MacGregor states that 'Dun' is the modern version of a game first mentioned in the 2,500 year-old 'Ulster Cycle'. 'Actually the banished heroine Deirdre is traditionally quoted as playing chess', he says, but he adds that this is a mistranslation.

Peter Wood wrote to Dr. MacGregor asking him to elaborate on the *Guardian* report and quote the passage from the *Ulster Cycle*, but has received no reply. Has any reader an *Ulster Cycle* to hand to quote us the passage relating to a 'chess' game?

George Jelliss heard a radio news report early in September of a dig at a Romano-British burial at Colchester that has unearthed a games board with the pieces in position but hasn't seen this reported in the press. The game (Hnefatafl? Petteia? Latrunculum?) was not named.

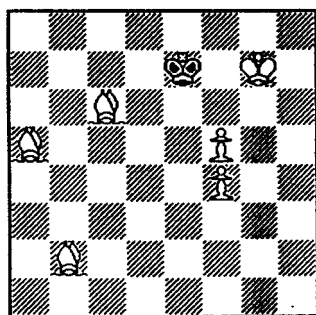
**PROBLEM PAGES**

By *Stefanos Pantazis*

Those of you who read the announcement on p. 220 in the last issue, already know that I am bidding you farewell with this column. My other responsibilities, and in particular the editing and publishing of the *U.S. Problem Bulletin*, have made it very difficult to dedicate the amount of time and care that I wished to these pages.

These lines are being written under more than the usual time pressure, as I am moving to Italy in just a couple of days. Please write down my new address: **Via Spartaco 10, I-40138 Bologna, ITALY**. This however does not affect the wealth of offerings in this issue, which include a number of fine originals and the tying up of two loose ends: the conclusion to Mark Ridley's article, and a late award. In Italy, I will concentrate on editing the *USPB*, which publishes fairies as well as retros and problems of all other types (subscription is \$12 air, \$10 surface). Finally, I would like to take this occasion to thank all the solvers and composers who have supported the column with their creative and analytic work. I hope you will keep in touch!

129. Ronald TURNBULL



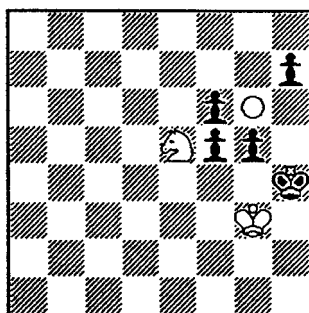
Mate in 2; Angevin Sentinels.

I am very fortunate to leave the column in the skilled hands of Ronald Turnbull. British readers are no doubt familiar with his fairy problems and articles in *The Problemist*, and with his contributions to a revival of problem activities in Scotland (such as the recent meeting in Thornhill). For the others Ronald thoughtfully provides the original 129 as his calling card.

In *Sentinel Chess* any move by a

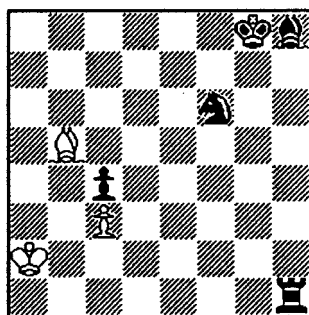
piece leaves behind a pawn of the same colour (with the exception of the 1st/8th rank). In *Angevin Sentinels* a move is legal only if the resulting position could be reached in a game under orthodox rules.

130. Ulf HAMMARSTRÖM



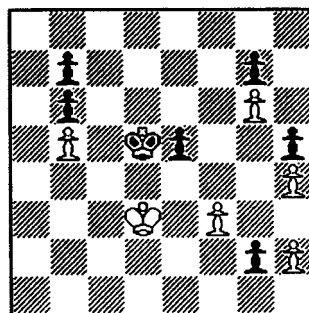
Helpmate in 3.5; Imitator g6.

131. Alexander CHISTYAKOV



Series helpmate in 10; Two variations.

132. Nikolay R. VASYUCHKO



Series helpmate in 31.

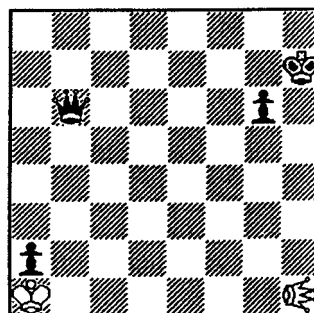
White plays first in 130. With every move the *Imitator* makes a simultaneous parallel move. Moves that cannot be imitated are illegal.

The two solutions of 131 start the same way before separating in two echo variations. The fine 132 is not a record of any kind, but it achieves an intensive result with the simplest of means. The next pair uses the *Lion* (moves and captures on Q-lines by leaping over a hurdle to any distance

beyond). Black plays his longest legal move in both. My 134 was actually inspired by an error in Pavlos' diagram!

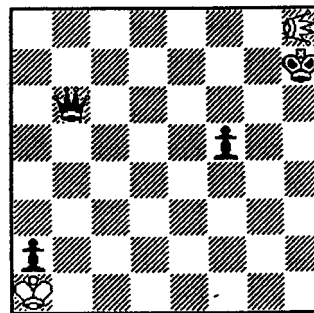
Michal Dragoun shows good strategy in a light setting, while Nebotov's 136 demonstrates a task that he has worked on before (see F1068v *Problemist* vii/1990 & 1512 *Phénix* iv/1993). In *Madrasi* a unit becomes paralysed when observed by an enemy unit of the same type. White forces Black to give stalemate in Edgar's single-row 137. The *Amazon* is a Q+S combination piece.

133. Pavlos MOUTECIDIS



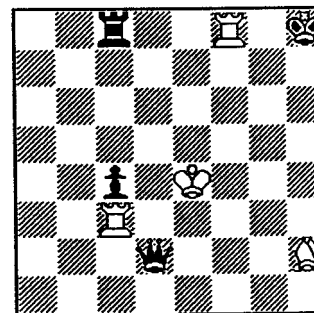
Selfmate in 6; Set Play Maximummer, Lion h1.

134. Stefanos PANTAZIS  
Dedicated to Pavlos Moutecidis



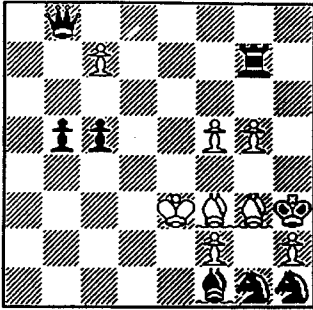
Selfmate in 11; Maximummer, Lion h8.

135. Michal DRAGOUN



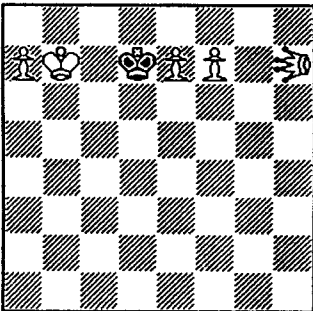
Helpmate in 2; Two solutions, Circe Madrasi.

136. Valery A. NEBOTOV



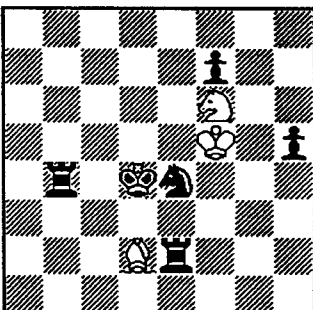
Helpmate in 2; Four solutions, Circe Madrasi.

137. Edgar D. HOLLADAY



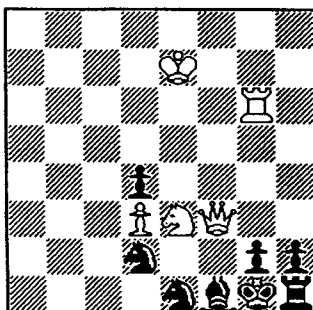
Selfstalemate in 5; Amazon h7.

138. Alexander SHVICHENKO



Helpmate in 3; Two solutions, Andernach Chess.

139. Alexander PANKRATIEV & Dieter MÜLLER

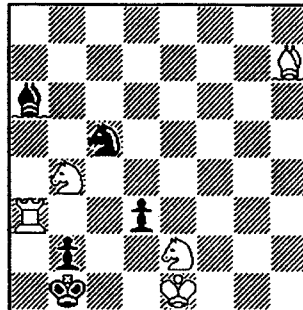


Mate in 2; Set Play, Try, Circe.

Alexander gives us some more model mates with *Andernach Chess* in

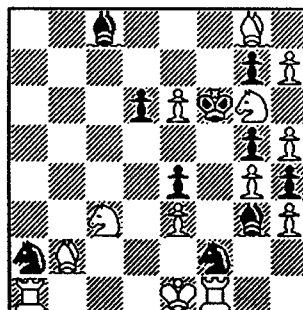
138: any unit—other than a King—changes colour after making a capture. (Pawns first promote and then change colour.) Then come two light Circe settings with bright play.

140. Yves CHEYLAN



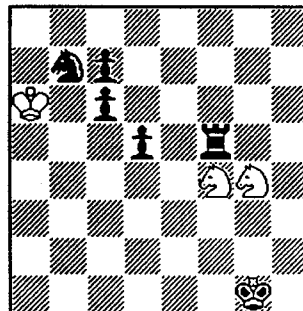
Mate in 2; Circe.

141. Yves CHEYLAN



Mate in 2; Patrol Chess.

142. Luigi VITALE



Helpstalemate in 5.

Our judge takes a second bow with a heavier setting (in fact an illegal position, but that matters less in a fairy). In *Patrol Chess* a man can only check or capture if observed by a friendly unit. Finally relax with a puzzler from Italy!

**Solutions to originals in VC 20**

114 Theodor Steudel.

Set: 1.— a7=

1.bxa6 ... 6.a1=B 7.Be5 8.Bxb2 9.Bb8 ... 11.h1=B 12.Bb7 13.Bc8 dxc8=Q=

"It is not easy to compose a series with set mate. A good composition!" (E. Bartel)

115 Nikolay R. Vasyuchko.

(1) 1.Rxe4 Gf4 2.Bd6 (f)Gd4≠

(2) 1.Bxd6 Gb4 2.Re4 (b)Gd4≠

"Surprising Umnov effects and not easy to solve." (M. Ridley) "Opfer-, Block und Mattwechsel in bestechender Form. Wonderful." (EB) "Nicely matched solutions." (A. Ingleton)

116 H. B. F. Boumeester.

1.e4 (waiting)

1.— Ra5 2.Gxh6 Kb6≠

1.— S~ 2.Gxb4 Rh8≠

1.— Kb6+ 2.Ga5 Rxa5≠

1.— Bxg6 2.f6 Bxe4≠

1.— g3 2.e5 Bf3≠

One-way G-leaps put to good use.

117 Erich Bartel.

(KA = Kangaroo)

1.Kf3 2.KAxa8 3.KAa2 4.Kg4

5.KAxb8 6.KAg3 7.Kf4 8.KAxb8≠

NOTE: Only bRh8, Sg8, Pa7,h7 are not needed for soundness. "Merry-go-round by white King." (composer) "Quite a teaser. 1.Ke4? was very tempting, but then it takes 9 moves." (MR)

118 Nikolay R. Vasyuchko.

1.Kf4 ... 12.Kb3 13.KAa3 ... 21.Ke7

22.KAf8 23.KAc5 ... 32.Kc2

33.KAc1 34.KAc4 ... 47.Ke4

48.KAf4 f3≠

"It's a long way to Tipperary (f4) for the Kangaroo and also the bK for coming home (e4) again." (EB) "Economically controlled royal walk-about leading to ideal mate." (AI)

119 Jorge M. Kapros.

E = Edgehog

(1) 1.1Ee6 gEg5 2.Kd5 Eg1≠

(2) 1.8Ee5 hEf7 2.Kd5 Ea7≠

Paul falls for try 1.1Eb4 gEg5 2.Kc5+ Eg1?? (showing use of wK). "Interesting demonstration of mutual Anti-Bristol of black Edgehogs and self-interference properties of white Edgehogs. I hope this encourages more Edgehog problems." (MR) "Pleasing discovered mates." (AI)

120 Plaksin & Zolotarev.

Retract 1.Rg3-g4+ d7xSc6 2.b2-b3

b3xRc2 3.Sb8-c6 b4-b3 4.b7-b8=S

b5-b4 5.a6xRb7 Rb6-b7 6.Rc1-c2

Rc6-b6 7.Ra1-c1 Rc5-c6 8.Rh5-g5

Rg5-c5+ 9.Rh8-h5 b6-b5 10.h7-h8=R  
Rh8-g8 11.Kg7-f6 etc. "Logjam in  
SE corner can now be cleared without  
further movement of Rh8." (AI)  
So the shortest possible path is h8-g8.  
(Bh4→g1→bl. gP, wPg2xBf3,  
wPh7→h2, bl. R→g1→Ph6xBg5)

#### 121 Geoffrey R. Foster.

There are 14 visible wP captures. So,  
apart from the bK, at most one black  
unit remains. This can only be the a-  
pawn. The bK can only be on e5, e6,  
h3, e2 or a6. In the last case the bP  
must be on a7. If the bK is on h3 or  
e2, its only moves are captures that  
will be announced: 1.— Kxg4/Kxh2/  
Kxd1 2.Bg2/Rh1/Qe1≠.

White tries to force the bK to move by  
capturing the bP. Attempt 1.Ra4 (not  
1.Ra3? Ke5!); if accepted (and no  
umpire announcement is made) the bK  
moved between e5 & e6: 2.Qd6≠. If  
refused the bP is present, so attempt  
1.Rxa5 (this must be a capture if  
legal); if accepted and there is no  
announcement 2.Sc7≠; then 1.Rxa6  
for 2.Bc7≠ under the same conditions.  
Finally if refused, play 1.Rxa7: if  
Kxb6 2.Rd6≠, else 2.Re7 or Qe7≠

#### 122 George P. Sphicas.

1.gxh8=nS (Sb8) 2.nSf7 3.nBxg6  
(g7) 4.nBxh5 (h7) 5.h8=nB  
6.gxh8=nR (Bf8) 7.nRxxh6 (h7)  
8.h8=nQ 9.nQb2 10.nBe7 11.nSxh6  
(Rh8)++ Kxe7 (Bc1)≠

The four promotions on the same square,  
shown for the first time with neutrals.  
Only problem to defeat all solvers.

## FAIRY KINGS

### PART IV by Mark A. Ridley

#### Section 6: Miscellaneous Kings (Contd.)

##### (p) Potentate Kings

The *Potentate King* is only deemed to be in check when  
attacked twice. It ignores single attacks. (It is identical to the  
*Armoured King* independently proposed by N. Guttman in  
the early '80s.)

Problem S was the first published using a PK. The  
bRf1 is *not* pinned (if it moves, the bPK is only under fire  
once). The key allows battery openings and shut offs.

Since a double attack on the PK counts as only a single  
check, much extra force is needed. Nevertheless, PKs could  
have potential, for example if fairy pieces such as Lions, or  
fairy conditions like Patrol chess are in use. (Orthodox  
double checks can then occur without the use of batteries.)

##### (q) Neutral King

Neutral pieces are now well known. They were  
introduced by T. R. Dawson in the Reading Observer

#### 123 Artur T. Gartsler.

(a) 1.Qe4 Bd3 2.Qh4 Be2≠  
(b) 1.Kh4 Kb4 2.Qh5 Bf6≠  
"Not as easy as I first thought; neat  
selfblocking." (MR) "A good grid-  
specific echo. I like it." (EB)

#### 124 Artur T. Gartsler.

1.Rb8 Kd3 2.Rb3+ axb3 (Ra8)  
3.Rc8! (Ra4?) Ke4 4.Rc4+ bxc4  
(Ra8) 5.Rd8! (Ra5?) Kf5 6.Rd5+  
cxd5 (Ra8) 7.Re8! (Ra6?) Kg6  
8.Re6+ dxe6 (Ra8) 9.Rf8 exf7≠  
Systematic movement with simple but  
satisfying dual avoidance (to let wK  
through). Extended round-trip by bR. "R  
keeps coming back for more." (AI)

#### 125 Erich Bartel.

1.hxg1=B (Bf8) gxf8=Q (Qd1)  
2.gxh1=S (Sg8) hxg8=S (Sb1)≠  
"Promotion only" (Composer) "Wot, no  
AUW?" (P. Fayers) Try 1.gxh1=S(Sg8)  
hxg8=Q (Qd1) 2.b1=S Bd4 fails to Kxd4  
(Ke8)!

#### 126 Stefanos Pantazis.

(a) 1.hxg1=S (Sb8) axb8=B (Bc1)  
2.exf1=R (Ra8)+ bxa8=Q (Qd1)≠  
(b) 1.e1=R axb8=B (Bc1) 2.Rxf1  
(Ra8)+ bxa8=Q (Qd1)≠  
1.exf1=R (Ra8) bxa8=Q (Qd1)+  
2.Ke3 axb8=B (Bc1)≠

[Part (b) could be presented as bK→e3:  
1.exf1=R (Ra8)+ bxa8=Q (Qd1) 2.hxg1  
=S (Sb8) axb8=B (Bc1)≠] Ascending  
order promotion only AUW, Phœnix.  
"AUW LDst in (a) and reciprocal white  
UW LDt-DLt in (b); interesting." (EB)

#### \* 127 Peter Fayers.

(Wh.) 1.Re7=R+B Se4 2.R+Bf6

(1912). However, the Neutral King was first suggested by  
K. J. Goodare 40 years later (*Fairy Chess Review* x/1952).

Problem T with its reciprocal e.p. captures is an  
excellent example. It was described by judge Yves Cheylan  
as "one of the greatest Neutral masterworks since the  
invention of the genre in 1912."

Note that in a wholly neutral problem, check or mate to  
a neutral K can only be given by a Neutral Pawn, since any  
check by a Neutral piece would be self-check.

##### (r) Brunner Chess

The posthumous U uses another very old idea (1919).  
In *Brunner Chess* a capture of the King is illegal if it leaves  
the other K in check (i.e. a check can be answered by  
attacking the other K, or by pinning the checking man).

##### (s) Anti-Kings

The *Anti-King* is in check when not attacked by an  
enemy unit. Problem V features such a King together with a  
Rookhopper (moves like a Grasshopper, but on R-lines  
only) and Kamikaze Chess (capturing pieces disappear with  
their victims).

Sxf6 (Rh8, Bf8)≠

Cook: (by M. Ridley) 1.Sxc7 (Qd1)  
Qd4=Q+P 2.Kf3 Q+Ph8=Q+S≠!  
(Bl.) 1.Qc3=Q+S Sb4 2.Q+Sa2  
Sxa2 (Qd1, Sb1)≠

Regarding 128, Paul Răican writes that  
he disagrees with a single pawn  
promoting to a combined piece, but  
points out that two (or more) combined  
pawns *can* promote to combined pieces.  
Rebirths *can* take place on squares  
occupied by friendly units.

#### LADDER SCORES:

Maximum	215	(= 193+22),
P. Răican	161	(= 146+15),
A. Ettinger	129	(= 129+),
E. Bartel	128	(= 116+12),
I. G. Richardson	126	(= 111+15),
M. A. Ridley	86	(= 74+12),
V. Crişan	77	(= 77+),
V. Krivenko	68	(= 68+),
M. Olausson	63	(= 63+),
A. W. Ingleton	22★	(= 155+17),
R. Cassano	17	(= 17+),
P. Fayers	17	(= 9+8),
G. Vecchi	9	(= 9+).

As the column had to be prepared early  
any further solutions received before the  
publication of VC21 will be reported in  
the next issue. A ladder ascent (and a  
year's subscription to the *US Problem  
Bulletin*) goes to Paul, our second solver  
to notch more than 150 points.

Send solutions & originals to:  
**Ronald Turnbull, Highland  
Cottage, Gatelawbridge,  
Thornhill, Dumfriesshire DG3  
SEA, SCOTLAND.**

Although three disparate fairy elements are in use, we nevertheless have a splendid demonstration of 'Organ Pipes'.

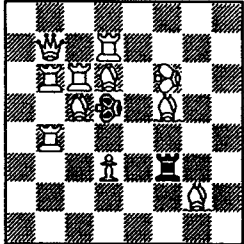
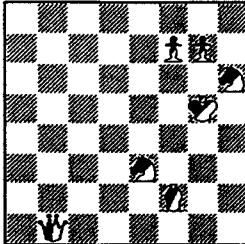
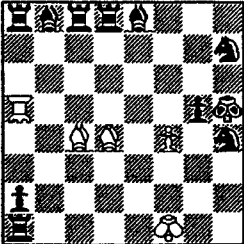
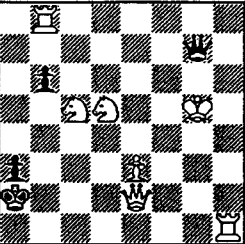
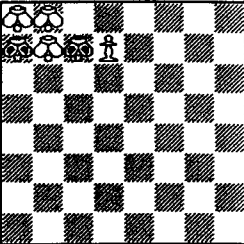
**Section 7: Combinations**

All the problems quoted up to now have featured only one type of fairy K. However, there is no reason why two or more types of fairy Kings could not be combined.

This could be done in a twin (e.g. (a) Circe K, (b)

Antipodean K), or like in Problem W where the Anti-King and Rex Multiplex properties are in use simultaneously. Problem W is an interesting example of piece shuffling.

**Conclusion:** I feel that many more fairy King ideas remain to be explored. Comments from the readers are welcomed. (Write to 59 Otterburn Avenue, South Wellfield, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE25 9QR.)

<p><b>S: A. Davaine</b> Problème iii/1970</p>  <p>≠2 Potentate Ks</p>	<p><b>T: M. Rittirsch</b> v. First Prize, The Problemist 1988</p>  <p>h≠3.5 Neutrals b) nSe3→f8</p>	<p><b>U: Powell &amp; Sells</b> 3rd Commendation, The Problemist 1974</p>  <p>≠2 Kamikaze Chess, Rookhopper a5, Anti-Kings f1, h5</p>	<p><b>V. J. E. H. Creed</b> The Problemist xi/1989</p>  <p>≠2 Brunner Chess (Tries)</p>	<p><b>W. R. Powell</b> The Problemist iii/1983</p>  <p>h=4 Anti-Rex Multiplex</p>
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**Solutions:**

**S Davaine.** 1.6Rb5 (zz) 1.— Rxf5 2.Bf4≠,  
1.— Rh3 2.Bg3≠, 1.— Rf1 2.Bf2≠, 1.— Rxd3 2.Be3≠  
1.— PKxc6 2.Bxf3≠  
**T Rittirsch.** (All men neutral.)  
(a) 1.— eSb4 2.f5 Kg6+ 3.Kh7 Bd4 4.g5 fxg6 e.p. (g7)≠  
(b) 1.— Qb8 2.Kf6+ Ke7 3.g5 Bh4 4.f5 gx f6 e.p. (f7)≠  
**U Powell & Sells.** 1.Ke1 (zz)  
1.— Bc7, Bc6 2.Bc5≠; 1.— Bd7, Bd6 2.Bd5≠

1.— Rd7, Rc6 2.Bb5≠; 1.— Rc7, Rd6 2.Be5≠ etc.  
By-play: 1.— Sf3, Sg2 2.RHxa1≠; 1.— Sg6 2.f5≠; 1.— 7S-  
2.fxg5≠; etc.  
**V Creed.** Tries: 1.Kf6? Qh6 2.Rxh6 Kb1; 1.Kg6? Qb2  
2.Sc3 Qc2; 1.Kh6!  
**W Powell.** 1.Kc8 8Kc7 2.aKb8 aKa7 3.Ka8 d8=K 4.cKb8+  
dKc8 =

(THE END)

## Informal Tourney Award: THE GAMES AND PUZZLES JOURNAL & VARIANT CHESS 1989-90

*Editorial Preamble: Although five year delays in the appearance of awards are unfortunately not as rare as they should be, some words of explanation and apology to the composers are still necessary. The main culprit for the delay was the originally appointed judge, Denis Blondel. Those who have seen Denis' work in the FIDE Album and Phénix will appreciate the reasons he has been so busy. When I took over this column, I was able to find an expert replacement judge in Y. Cheylan, but our work has not been simple as I was not the editor of the column at the time these problems were published. I can only hope that nothing of value was omitted from consideration.*

*Three problems originally intended for honours were found to be unsound and had to be removed from the award. Sadly, these included GPJ 125 by Aubrey Ingleton which would have otherwise received a prize. [Cook: 1.c6 Ka3+ 2.Kxa4(Bf1) Bc4 3.Bc3 Sa7 4.Sxc6(c2) Sa5 5.Sb3 cxb3 (Sg8)≠] The others were VC 13 by K. Widlert [1.Kh2 Ra1 2.Qa4 Rh1+ 3.Kxh1(Ra8) 0-0-0 4.Qc6≠], and VC 16v (with wBa6 and bBb5) by S. Woszczyński [1.Sxd2 Se8 2.b4+ c5 3.Sb3≠]. Please notify new problem editor R. Turnbull if a correction of any of these entries was published in GPJ or VC.*

During 1989-1990, the Games and Puzzles Journal and Variant Chess published 7 retros and 102 fairyies. Some 26 were unsound, VC 20 was self-anticipated, and VC 55 partially anticipated, leaving 81 problems.

The general level was not very high. There were too many trifles without real thematic content. A fairy problem should not be a mere sum of oddities... Perhaps the helpmate encourages such a tendency. I feel it should be reserved for ideas impossible to show in a direct mate. In addition, the fairy composer must try to resist the temptation to use extra conditions or bizarre men just to overcome technical difficulties.

GPJ 105 is not a genuine twin. In GPJ 133 the trick "Black must check" makes things too easy. The dedication of VC 59 does not seem warranted by the content... No real masterpieces here in my opinion, but some good problems, as well as some modest works that were commended because of an interesting idea.

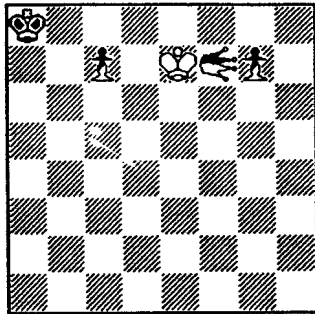
**Prize:** GPJ 111 Erich Bartel. Maybe easy to solve, but with perfect economy. A good find and a nice composition. With its set play, it deserves a prize.

**First Hon. Mention:** GPJ 113 Erich Bartel. The Circe Malefique effects are not too rich, but the AUW is reached.

**Second Hon. Mention:** VC 3 Ian Shanahan. Economical setting with pretty exchange of pin-unpin effects.

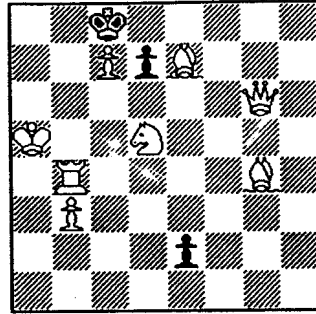
**Third Hon. Mention:** GPJ 138 Theodor Stuedel. Clever entertainment, but too many fairy elements are packed together. Besides a stalemate is rather prosaic when it is reached by consecutive elimination of the men able to move...

**111 Erich Bartel**  
Prize,  
GPJ & VC 1989-90



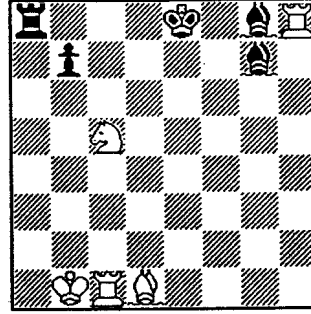
h≠2 Set Play, Lion, Neutrals

**113 Erich Bartel**  
First Hon. Mention,  
GPJ & VC 1989-90



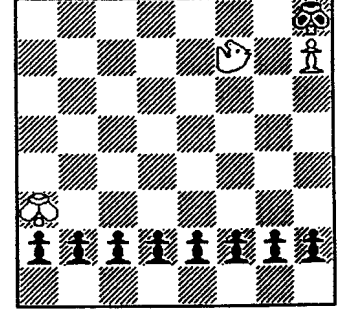
Sh=3 Four solutions,  
Circe Malefique

**3 Ian Shanahan**  
Second Hon. Mention,  
GPJ & VC 1989-90



h≠2 (b) bRa8→d8

**138 Theodor Steudel**  
Third Hon. Mention,  
GPJ & VC 1989-90



h=9 Circe, Camel f7,  
Royal Wazirs

**Solutions:**

**111 Bartel.** Set: 1.— c8=nL 2.nLh7+ g8=nL≠  
1.nLd7 g8=nL 2.nLh7 c8=nL≠

**113 Bartel.**  
1.e1=Q 2.Qxe7 (Bf8) 3.Qd8 Qe8=  
1.e1=R 2.Rc1 3.Rxc7 Qc6=  
1.e1=B 2.Bc3 3.Bh8 Qg7=  
1.e1=S 2.Sc2 3.Sa1 Qc2=

**3 Shanahan.**  
(a) 1.0-0-0 Sa6+ 2.Bc4 Bg4≠  
(b) 1.Bf8 Bh5+ 2.Bf7 Re1≠

**138 Steudel.** (C = Camel, W = Royal Wazir)  
1.a1=C Wa2 2.b1=C Wxa1 3.c1=C Wxb1 4.d1=C Wxc1

5.e1=C Wxd1 6.f1=C Wxe1 7.g1=C Wxf1 8.h1=C Wxg1  
9.Cg4 Cxg4=

**Commendations (in order of publication):**

VC 8 Peter Wong.

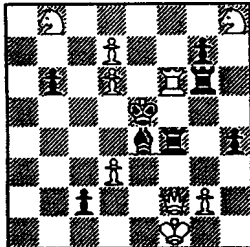
VC 12 Michel Olausson. (Whole board available for each part. The right part has two variations separating on Black's last move.)

VC 32 Alexander George.

VC 37 Erich Bartel.

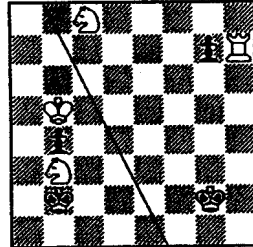
VC 40v Charles Frankiss. (Adding a wP on a7 or a2 makes it sound, but the solution becomes slightly inferior.)

**Peter Wong**  
Commendation



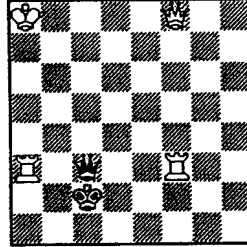
Retract a move by bBe4  
to leave no h≠1

**Michel Olausson**  
Commendation



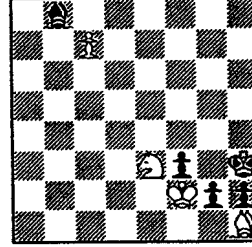
Sh≠12 Chameleon  
Circe. See text!

**Alexander George**  
Commendation



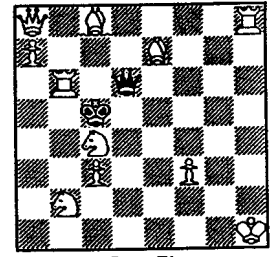
h≠2 Circe Rex Inclusiv  
(b) bKc2→g2

**Erich Bartel**  
Commendation



h=2 Duplex

**Charles Frankiss**  
Commendation



s≠5 Circe

**Solutions:**

**8 Wong.**

Retract Bf5xSe4!

Set: 1.Bd5 Qxf4≠; Tries: Bf5-e4? 1.Rd4 Qxf5≠, Bf3xQ or Bf5xR? 1.Kxf6 d8=Q/B≠, Ba8xR? 1.Kxf6 Qxf4≠, Bf3xR? 1.Kd5 Qd4≠, Ba8xB/P? 1.fRg4 Sf7≠, Bd5xB/P? 1.Rxe4 Sxg6≠, Bf3xB/P? 1.c1=S Qb2≠, Bf5xB/P? 1.Bxd7 Sxd7≠, Ba8xS? 1.Bd5 Sxg6≠, Bf3xS? 1.b5 Qc5≠

**12 Olausson.**

(L) 1.Kxb3 (Bf1) 2.Ka3 5.b1=S 7.Sxf1 (Rh1) 9.Sxh1 (Qd1)  
12.Sb2 Qa4≠ [13.Sxa4 (Sb1)??]  
(R) 6.Ka8 11.g1=Q 12.Qa7/Qb6 Rxa7/Sxb6 (Sb8)≠

**32 George.**

(a) 1.Qxa3 (Ra1) Qe8 2.Qxa8 (Ke1) 0-0-0≠  
(b) 1.Qxf3 (Rh1) Qe8 2.Qxa8 (Ke1) 0-0≠

**37 Bartel.**

(W) 1.g1=R cxb8=B 2.Rg3 Bxg3=  
(B) 1.c8=S gxh1=Q 2.Sa7 Bxa7=

**40v Frankiss.** (with wPa2 or a7)

1.Bh3 (zz) Qxe7 (Bc1) 2.Sa4+ Kxc4 (Sb1) 3.Bf1+ Qe2  
4.Sa3+ Kd3 5.Rh2 Qxf1≠

Orange, April 1996

Yves Cheylan

**Definitions:**

*Camel:* (3,1) leaper.

*Chameleon Circe:* A captured piece transforms in the sequence S—B—R—Q—S..., and is reborn according to its new status.

*Circe Malefique:* Captured pieces are reborn as if they belonged to the opposing side (without changing colour).

*Circe Rex Inclusiv:* The Kings are also reborn according to Circe rules. A King is mated when his capture without a rebirth cannot be avoided.

*Lion:* Moves and captures on Q-lines by leaping over a hurdle to any distance beyond.

*Neutral men:* Can be treated as white or black at the option of the side with the move.

*Wazir:* (0,1) leaper.

Computer tested are: GPJ 111, 113, VC 3, 32, 37, 40v. Please test the remaining problems! Send all claims of cooks or anticipations to the new problem editor by December 1st.

**THE END IS NIGH**  
by Paul Byway

188 Lampits, Hoddesdon  
Hertfordshire EN11 8DU

I have just been reading some interesting articles, from *Eteroscacco*, which were sent to me by Peter Wood, concerning the endgame K, B, N versus K in **Progressive Chess**.

It would be useful, I think, to outline the status of this ending here: much of what follows is due to Vito Rallo, Agostino Braca, Deumo Polacco and Roberto Cassano.

First it will be shown that Black, having the pieces, always wins.

(1) No edge square is safe for the White king, e.g.

W) Kd1 B) Kd3, Bd2, Ne3 or  
W) Ke1 B) Kd3, Bh4, Ne3.

(2) The White king can always be driven from the centre. Consider  
W) Kd4 B) Ke8, Bf8, Ng8  
with Black to move:-

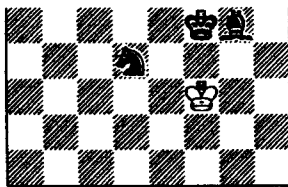
(n) Nf6, Ke6, Be5 drives White from the centre.

(n+1) Kd3.

(n+2) Ke5, Bd4, Nb2 and now Black occupies the centre.

(n+3) Kf3.

(n+4) Kf5, Bg5, Nd4 finally dislodges the White king from the extended centre: this cage was reported by A. Braca.



(3) It remains to be shown that Black wins when the White K occupies one of the six squares b2 to g2.

wKb2: Kc4, Bc3, Ne3.

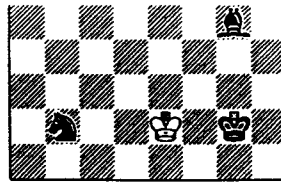
wKc2: Kc4, Bc3, Ne3.

wKd2: Ke4, Bb4, Nd4.

The White king moves to b2 and then loses as in the first example.

wKe2: Kg2, Bg5, Nb2.

White loses by zugzwang as he must make an odd number of moves: this position is due to Cassano.



wKf2: Kf4, Bg3, Nd4.

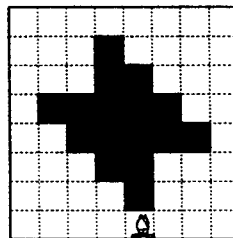
The White king moves to g2 and then loses as in the next example: the Black bishop must come from h2.

wKg2: Kg4, Bg3, Nf4.

If now we consider the endgame with colours reversed it is seen that only in the case of Cassano's position (bKe2) does the result change: because Black plays an even number of moves he cannot be forced to the edge and the result is a draw.

If a cage could be formed with check, white could win. we can conclude then that a centralised Black king will draw, because when White forces the occupation of the centre there is a safe haven at one of the equivalent squares e2, g4, d7, b5.

It would of course be a mistake for Black to retreat slowly to f3, or c6, because Braca's method denies access to the safe squares. The diagram below shows the drawing zone for the Black king (reflect left to right when the White bishop is on light squares): White wins in three cases out of four.



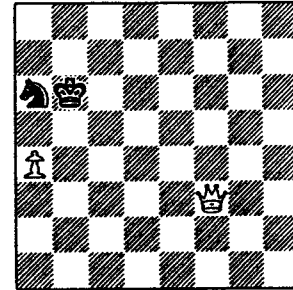
We might next consider whether White can win when Black has a pawn and his king is in the safe zone. I give some examples of White wins in the following table:-

wK	wB	wN	bK	bP
c7	d5	f5	e7	f6
g6	g4	d5	e7	d6
c6	e6	c2	b4	c3
c6	e6	a2	b4	a3
b2	c4	f1	d2	f2
f2	f5	b1	d2	b2
f7	e6	h3	g5	h4
f7	e6	f3	g5	f4

I'd like to hear of any more examples, particularly with the Black king closer to the centre. [Stop Press: in a note to PCW Paul notes two further White wins: d7; d6, g3, f5, g4 and d7; e3, g3, f5, e4.]

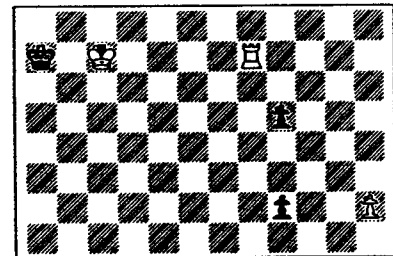
Now for a neat **Losing Chess** study: taken from *John Niemann - Eine Gedenkschrift* by Günter Büsing and Hans Gruber.

17. J.Niemann  
*Schachmatt* 1947



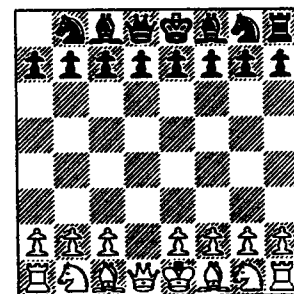
Losing Chess  
White to play and win

Lastly a **Modern Courier Chess** study:  
18. P. Byway



Modern Courier Chess  
White to play and win

— ◆◆◆◆ —  
Our new problems editor sends a  
Beginning instead of an Ending:  
R. Turnbull & S.Emmerson



Andernach Chess (see p.11)  
Position after W's 4th move  
Game so far? (b) + ♖a8, - ♜g8

Solutions on page 16.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**FIRST STEP TO SHOGI**

pp. 308, supervision Oyama Memorial Museum (M. Kitamura), published by Space Sano, Japan 1995.

This new introductory textbook to Shogi is a handsome paperback going in quite a bit more depth than its predecessors, such as Leggett's *Shogi, Japan's game of strategy*. A question that faces books of this type is how far to westernise their presentation (notation, diagrams, and so on; see VC16 pp.120-1, for a discussion by P. Wood). The answer chosen here is an emphatic 'not at all'; in fact there is an explicit effort to use "authentic Japanese terminology and characters".

Diagrams used are basically of Japanese type, and even simple terms like Black or White, Bishop or King, are always replaced by their Japanese equivalents. Now there are cases when something important may be lost in a literal translation (e.g. 'obligation' instead of *giri*), but nothing is gained by saying *Gyok* instead of King. On top of this, it would be a real stretch to call the language used 'English'. Although one can in most cases guess what is meant, any subtleties of emphasis are lost, and sometimes Cho Yo-like peaks of buffoonery are scaled.

This makes comments in the publisher's press release regarding respect for other cultures sound like so much self-satisfied hypocrisy. It is amazing that not a single speaker of English could be scared up for a book ostensibly aimed at *gaijin* and published by a 'translation office'.

The book is divided in three parts; the first starts with the usual basic material (moves of the pieces, rules). An interesting chapter that covers basic mating combinations with many examples will also serve as a brief introduction to the conventions of Shogi problems (or *Tsume-Shogi*). Finally, a game between beginners is examined in detail (40 diagrams!).

Whole games and opening theory are otherwise absent - endgames are of course precluded by the nature of the beast. A brief second part examines 'castling' (defensive) positions and some general strategy, but Shogi is above all a game of tactics, and the last part, dedicated to this topic, is by far the longest, taking up more than half of the book. It starts with a detailed study of the more common types of combinations and culminates with attacks on the opponent's castled King.

In sum, a book with promising contents that could benefit from a better translation and editorial choices more suited to a beginner. In its present form it cannot be recommended to the beginner or casual

reader, but it may be helpful to a serious student who is preparing to tackle Japanese sources.

Available for 2200 Yen (just under £14) from the publisher at 206, 2-5-10 Achi, Kurashiki, Okayama 710, JAPAN. Readers with internet access should look up <http://www.harenet.or.jp:80/mugen/Shogi/index-e.html>.

S. Pantazis

**THE OPENING ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHESS VARIANTS - PART 1**

by Fabio Forzoni

This is the third A4 book in the *I Manuali di Eteroscalco* series; the first two were *Chess Variants* by Alessandro Castelli and (Italian) *Progressive Queenside Games* by Giuseppe Dipilato.

This 115 page book gives all available games from AISE tournaments over the years in the following 14 variants: Billiards Progressive (PR), Berolina PR, Cylindrical PR, Kamikaze PR, Bughouse (Replacement) PR, Mutation PR, Avalanche PR, Marseillais Take-All, Losing Marseillais, Double Move, Bughouse (Replacement), Compromise, Extinction, and Racing Kings — a treasure-house of close on 2000 games, I estimate, from the AISE archives.

The games are sorted into the openings employed. The rules of each variant are given (in Italian) followed by a short account of the variant's history. Most usefully, important articles in *Eteroscalco* are referenced.

This is an important book. It is not only a valuable record, but will assist players who may wish to enter tournaments organised in these variants. Books like this show how far ahead of the rest of the world Italy is, in the field of chess variants. Recommended.

Write to: A.Castelli, C. da Potenza 11, 62010 Villa Potenza (MC), Italy. Price: 25,000 Lire (\$20).

P. Wood

Solutions to p.15:

17. J. Niemann, *Losing Chess*. 1. a5/i Kxa5 2.Qh1/i Ka4/iii 3.Qg2 Ka5/iv 4.Qf3 wins. /i 1.Qh3? Kc5 1.Qd1? Ka7 2.Qa1 Nc7. /ii 2.Qg2? Ka4 3.Qh1 Kb3 wins. /iii 2...Kb4 3.Qg1! and wins because Black attacks c5 twice. 3...any 4.Qc5. /iv 3...Kb4 4.Qg1(f2) wins as before.
18. P.Byway, MCC. 1.Kc6+/i Ka8/ii 2.Kb6 i1=Q 3.Rh8† Kxb8 5.14 i4/iii 6.15 i3 7.16 i2 8.17 i1=Q† wins. /i 1.Kc8† Ka6 2.Rh6† Ka7 3.Rh7†= /ii 1...Ka6 2.Rh2; 1...Kb8 2.Rb7† K~ 3.Rb1. /iii 5...Kc8 6.15 i4 7.16 i3 8.17 i2 9.18=Q† Kd7 10.Qi5. An improved version of MCC#46.
- R.Turnbull & S.Emmerson, *Andernach Chess*.  
 (a) 1.d3 Sc6 2.d4 Sxd4(wS) 3.Sc6 Rb8 4.Sxb8(bS)  
 (b) 1.d4 e6 2.d5 exd(wP) 3.d6 Se7 4.dxe(bP).





# Where to, Xiangqi?



by David H. Li

Readers of *Variant Chess* have been given a rare treat in Mr. Malcolm Horne's piece on "Where Now for Chinese Chess?" (VC20). I should have been similarly entertained by Mr. Horne's wit, were it not for his using my recent work, *First Syllabus on Xiangqi — Chinese Chess I*, as the starting point for his discourse. (I hesitate to call Mr. Horne's piece a "review," since he apparently has not gone beyond page 10 of my book.)

Mr. Horne's interest appears to be (1) piece names in English, (2) figurine or Chinese character representation for the playing board, and (3) move notations — issues important to the future of Xiangqi around the world. It is in the spirit of advancing Xiangqi's future that I offer my two-bits' (or, perhaps, tuppence's) worth of comment. [More like two pound's worth! But I felt Mr Li's views should be aired in full. GPJ]

From the very beginning, perceptive readers will notice our differences. Where Mr. Horne calls the game Chinese Chess (as in the title of his piece), I refer to it as Xiangqi (as in this one). It is true that the three books on the game cited by Mr. Horne all use *Chinese Chess* as their titles, but it must be noted that they were produced before the World Xiangqi Federation (WXF) came into being — the books in 1985, 1989, and 1991; the WXF, in 1993.

The resistance of Mr. Horne and a few others to WXF's efforts at standardisation is beyond me. Mr. Horne seems entirely willing to accept *Shogi*, and does not insist on calling it *Japanese Chess*. This is puzzling. Could the following offer a clue? The governing body for *Shogi* in UK is the *British Shogi Federation*, while that for Xiangqi is the *British Chinese Chess Association*. Could inertia be the reason? [One reason is uncertainty among English language speakers about pronunciation of the strangely spelt word Xiangqi (Zee-ang-key?). Formerly it was transliterated as Hsiang-ch'i, equally problematic. There is no similar problem with *Shogi*. GPJ]

## Piece Names in English

Of course, the name of the game is just the beginning. In my book, WXF-approved English renditions of Xiangqi's seven pieces are followed (King, Chariot, Horse, Cannon, Adviser, Elephant, Pawn) much to Mr. Horne's disliking. He prefers his brand "of unofficial standardisation [that] has developed in the West". Why? Because these names "mirror Western Chess", and are thus "sensible", citing the three pre-WXF books as authority. Then he seems to waver a bit and keeps the door ajar slightly by saying that "of course attitudes and preferences may change in the future".



That future, if I may address Mr. Horne directly, is now. Please come out from hiding behind decade-old pre-WXF books and (1) acknowledge the existence of the WXF and (2) embrace its work. Saying that "this body does not as yet have very much influence outside Asia" is patently false, and, in any event, hurts the future of Xiangqi — but only in the UK, as other Xiangqi federations in the west are much more amenable.



## Board Representation

Piece names are, in actuality, a minor issue compared to the important matter of board representation. Here, let me be blunt and say that, if Mr. Horne insists on using "western diagrams" and "western chess" figurines, he is doing, and will continue to do, the UK Xiangqi lovers a great disservice. I regret that he does not see fit to read beyond page 10 of my book, since, on page 13, in a long footnote, to support my decision to use Chinese characters in diagrams, I gave two reasons: "One, it facilitates playing at the national or international level" and "Two, it prepares one to read classical Chinese writings on Xiangqi, which are, of course, in Chinese."

On this front, I am unclear why Mr. Horne limits "western readers" to English-language readers. To my knowledge, books and magazines in Italian, German, and French (and, soon, Finnish) all use Chinese-character diagrams. Why so? Because they are more pragmatic; their Xiangqi federations want to prepare their teams for international play.

Let me also defend myself on this front. I mulled over this issue of board representation for a long time. And I took my own advice: I did my library research (reading more than a hundred books in several languages at the Library of Congress), and I did field research. Only after seeing the Fourth World Xiangqi Championship in Singapore in September 1995 and talking to many players there did I finalise my position.

## Move Notations

Mr. Horne's next concern is move notation: "Should the move notations be western algebraic (1 Che3 Ng8) or Chinese descriptive (1 C2=5 N8+7)?" He dismisses the latter by saying that "some people are put off by hard-to-learn Chinese calligraphy, or by the traditional notation".

Here we part company completely. Mr. Horne wants to "westernise the game to make it palatable and attractive" to "western readers". Why? Why should a game, with over 100 million happy players, sacrifice itself just for the sake of enticing fewer than 100 players (in UK, Mr. Horne's own estimation)? Why are these 100 players so important? Is each the equivalent of a José Raúl Capablanca? Even if they were, it would not make any sense, at least to a simple-minded person like myself.

This brings up the rationale for my doing the book the way I did it. My approach is simple: (1) this is the world's most popular board game, and this is the way it is played; (2) if you are interested in experiencing the fun, do join us; (3) if you are really keen, after you finish this book, read some advanced ones, perhaps even the classics in their native tongue; (4) if

you find the going rough, if you are put off, we regret our inability to make concessions and we regret not having the pleasure of your company; (5) if you want to tinker with the game, by all means do so, but at your own peril; don't look to us for support, don't expect others to follow you, but do expect to be rudely awakened when you are ready to play at the international level.

To me, guarding the integrity of Xiangqi is paramount. If a reader prefers a watered down version of the real thing, there is not much I can do. [In *Variant Chess*, because of our wide coverage, we will continue to use the algebraic notation for all games because of its universal applicability. Journals and books specialising in Xiangqi may prefer the traditional notation, but I question whether the notation is an 'integral part' of the game. Was the old 'descriptive notation' for chess essential to that game or a burden to it? GPJ]

### Xiangqi Rules

Xiangqi [repetition] rules are difficult. For an introductory book, Mr. Horne wants "a brief overview". But when an author, according to Mr. Horne, indeed did so (I did not get the same impression while reading that same work, however), he laments that it "only scrapes the surface" but applauds it nevertheless, flawed examples or no flawed examples.

To a large extent, I think Mr. Horne expects too much from an introductory volume on Xiangqi. By definition, an introductory volume cannot be encyclopedic. The question then becomes: What should be included? What may be deferred? Should rules be included or may they be deferred?

Before answering them, let me digress for a moment. Having been in Academia for over two decades and having written several textbooks, my pedagogical approach is: do it once, do it right, and do it at the right time. Mr. Horne favours the 'two tier' approach: do it once (do it with figurines), undo it (forget about figurines), and do it again (do it in Chinese characters).

In the context of Xiangqi rules, I made a conscious decision: the introductory volume is not the place. Xiangqi rules are far too complicated;

only a separate volume will do it justice. But, realising that Xiangqi rules are (1) situation-dependent and (2) stated in terms of specific moves, to prepare my readers for rules to be presented in a subsequent book, I made sure that they have a good grasp of the meaning of these various moves. This, of course, is not acceptable to Mr. Horne, who states that "David Li gets bogged down in explaining too much terminology, and his book lacks clarity...." So be it.

Incidentally, in this context, Mr. Horne refers readers to an earlier piece of his, on Xiangqi rules. There, in VC16 p.133, Mr. Horne boldly states that the UKCCA "tried in 1989 to simplify the situation by allowing all repetitions (except perpetual check) to lead to a draw exactly as in Western Chess" and laments that "Other European countries have, perhaps surprisingly, not copied the UK example, and have usually preferred to struggle with the Asian rules. It is a difficult dilemma".

While I appreciate Mr. Horne's inventiveness, I must ask: Why mimic western chess? Are these 'simplifications' made with Xiangqi's best interests in mind? This point reminds me of another episode in which I am deeply involved. Permit me to digress to discuss it.



Early on, I wrote another book, *The Happy Game of Mah-Jong*. In the preface, I cited "curiosities" and "misinformation" I had noticed in Mah-Jong books "written by people in the United States, in Britain, in Japan, whose knowledge of Chinese is nil and whose understanding of Mah-Jong is marginal", and continued by saying that "The main purpose of writing this book is to set the record straight". The British author's contribution in that context is the following: "Declaring the Chinese game as 'simple', he proceeded to introduce 'complicated' hands for his readers...".



### Publishing of Xiangqi Books

While Mr. Horne is undoubtedly an authority on chess, both Western and Chinese, the same cannot be said

of his comments on publishing. The statement that "a poor quality book by a major chess publisher (Batsford or Cadogan?) would almost certainly create a greater stir" is, permit me to be blunt, naive. First, a major publisher will *not* produce a poor quality book to damage its reputation. But, more importantly, a major publisher will not undertake to publish a book that will not sell.

Mr. Horne's reference to not seeing books on Xiangqi in bookstalls or bookshops well stocked with chess titles is, again, completely off the mark. For the same reason that publishers do not publish books that will not sell, booksellers do not carry books that do not sell. Booksellers are realists; their stocking policy is demand-driven. In this context, one need not drag Xiangqi in. Ask simply this question: Do you see David Pritchard's *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* represented in their displays? My own personal experience is similar. Kriegspiel is as close to western chess as can be. Still, my two books on Kriegspiel are not displayed, nor has my attractive advert in *BCM* brought in a single order. But I would not blame the game nor its publisher. It is simply the nature of the beast; book publishing and selling are strictly demand-driven, and demand can only be created through promotion, as Mr. Horne rightly perceives.

### Self-Publishers of Xiangqi Books

It is unfortunate that, without knowing the economics of publishing, Mr. Horne belittles the role of self-publishers and "relatively minor publishers". As I noted above, commercial publishing houses will not publish books that will not sell. This being the case, there are but two options: (1) this void is filled by self-publishers or relatively minor publishers, or (2) these titles will never see the light of the day. Instead of being scornful, Mr. Horne should embrace these self-publishers and small publishers and support them. They are rendering a valuable service; in many, if not most, cases, their motivation is not making a profit, but making a contribution to the literature and pushing the envelope of knowledge further. [Much the same motivation lies behind the production of magazines like *Variant Chess*. GPJ]

Indeed, without Mr. C. K. Lai's self-publishing effort, no non-participant will ever know of the Xiangqi Week in Exmouth, so well organised by none other than Mr. Horne himself and so fondly recounted in his article. Further, even a big-timer began as a small publisher, with but one title or two to start.

How do I know? Well, dear reader, you will never believe it — I have actually completed a book on this very subject. The book, *All-by-Yourself Self-Publishing*, just off the press as this is being written, will be used in colleges offering courses on self-publishing. Self-publishing, incidentally, is all the rage in the United States; some self-published titles have sold over one million copies. So, a book's success or its lack is completely independent of whether it is published by a self-publisher or by a large commercial publishing house.

### Promoting Xiangqi

Mr. Horne longs for "an impresario ... with enthusiasm, ability and contacts, who can organise tournaments and sponsorship, enthuse others, and not take no for an answer". This is indeed the way to go. While I am also looking for such an impresario to show up, I have attempted to do a little bit to fill the gap, here in Washington.

After returning from Singapore, and realising that only New York and Los Angeles had sent delegations to the Fourth World Xiangqi Championship, I organised a Xiangqi club and persuaded a community centre to be the co-sponsor. This Xiangqi club meets every Saturday evening, from 7 to 11, in a high school in a convenient suburban location. On opening day, a reporter of our local newspaper interviewed me, and a photographer took pictures of players in action; both appeared in the paper and, in turn, attracted more attention. The club now has 25 members.

A club tournament is planned for early 1997; an application to join the WXF is the target, so that we may send a delegation to the Fifth World Xiangqi Championship meeting in Hong Kong in September of 1997.

Beginning in September 1996, in co-operation with a local Chinese school (it, along with others in the genre, generally meets on Saturdays to teach pupils of Chinese ancestry the

language and culture) in a pilot program, I will offer hour-long lessons on Xiangqi, over an entire semester, to pupils aged seven years and above. At the end of the semester, we plan to have a class tournament. If the pilot program proves successful, we plan to go to every school that wants us (there are over two dozen Chinese schools in the Washington area, each with 300-500 students) and propose an inter-scholastic tournament in due course.

So, we have the potential of some 10,000 new players of Xiangqi; and we don't have to worry about board representation and such. In keeping with the aim of these Chinese schools, the lessons will use the traditional board and the Chinese-character pieces.



Here, let me digress again. There are but ten different Chinese characters in Xiangqi, and learning them takes no more than an hour. The resistance by Mr. Horne and others against this one-hour time investment is really puzzling. If one is indeed interested in Xiangqi, one would be willing, in my view, to invest this extra hour. Conversely, if one is 'put off' by them, perhaps that person is really not ready for the game.

Let me cite an example. Three weeks ago, on the strength of the newspaper coverage cited above, a non-Chinese speaking western-chess player in his fifties came to the club. I gave him an hour's tutorial; he learned the ten Chinese characters on the spot. Afterward, on his own volition, he went out to buy a Chinese-English dictionary and began to learn how to write Chinese characters all by himself. That, in my humble opinion, is the right spirit.



### Xiangqi in the West

I find Mr. Horne paints an unnecessarily gloomy picture for the future of Xiangqi in the west. If continental Europe is considered a part of the West, there have been quite a few tournaments since the Fourth World Xiangqi Championship last September.

There was the European Individual Xiangqi Championship in

Milan in December 1995, and the European Team Xiangqi Championship in Linden, Germany, in March, 1996. In August, there were three tournaments, no less; the Berlin Open, the Finland Open, and the one ably managed by the UK's own C. K. Lai, in Hastings.

If we further include the Internet, there were open tournaments in January and April, and a Toronto-New York intercity match in May.

### Where to, UK Xiangqi?

In my humble opinion, the lack of progress in Xiangqi is limited to the UK, and this status is self-inflicted. Thus, the remedy is equally straight forward:

1) Forget about *Chinese Chess* and embrace *Xiangqi* — here, Mr. Horne, perhaps representing UKCCA, stands alone. None of the publications in continental Europe and in the US uses *Chinese Chess*. Not even UK's own *Variant Chess* nor C. K. Lai (for example, the latter's 1995 publication is entitled *Xiangqi in Exmouth*).

2) Forget about 'westernising' the pieces and embrace diagrams using Chinese characters — here, Mr. Horne is joined only by *Variant Chess*, and, in so doing, unduly puts the UK players at a disadvantage and gives them an unnecessary handicap when participating in international events. (Luckily, the three UK representatives at the Fourth World Xiangqi Championship can all read Chinese; no UK players participated in European championships in Milan and in Linden.) Three years ago, UK's own Paul Byway said, in *VC13* p78: "Xiang-Qi and its representation should be appreciated as it is and not turned into a pale imitation of Chess". Instead of dwelling on minor issues that are unlikely to mean anything, even if they yield positive results, why not channel efforts that will improve the game, as I suggest in (5) below.

3) Forget about the 'western algebraic' and embrace the 'descriptive Chinese' — here, Mr. Horne has more company, with publications in Italy, Germany, France, and *Variant Chess* (but not C. K. Lai) on his side. The former's advantage completely escapes me, but its disadvantage is quite obvious — the vast treasures of Chinese classics are completely shut out. With over six hundred years of literature at one's disposal — and the

notational system has not been changed one iota in the interim (How can you improve upon perfection?) — one's refusal to embrace it is beyond me, unless one insists on torturing oneself and is content on being second-rate indefinitely. Again, Mr. Byway is worth quoting: "It is pretty clear that, for demographic reasons if no other, Chinese descriptive will not be displaced as the international standard".

4) Forget about tinkering with rules and follow those promulgated by international Xiangqi federations — here, in Mr. Horne's own words, he again stands alone.

5) Work constructively to improve the theory and practice of the game here — I think Mr. Byway sets a good example. By "looking at the position [of a classic Xiangqi end-game] more deeply", he came up with a "general rule" that improves upon one's understanding (VC17 p.145). Similarly, in my book, I have offered some observations (e.g., probability-based valuation of pieces at various stages of a game) that are in need of critical analysis, validation, or refutation. The game will never advance if a book is judged merely on whether its terminology conforms to a reviewer's pet likes.

#### Concluding Remark

With the founding of the World Xiangqi Federation in 1993, the game of Xiangqi has moved into a new era — of broader awareness, of wider appreciation, and of much more rapid growth around the world. Clinging to pre-WXF English-language literature would not retard the WXF's growth nor its influence; resisting WXF's work only isolates oneself and adds self-inflicted embarrassment at the international arena; denouncing WXF's work, as some take delight in doing, particularly those who publish magazines whose very existence is dependent on the WXF, is simply ungentlemanly.

The game of Xiangqi, with over 100 million players, has a secure future, whether the 'West' embraces it or not. Having more players adds diversity, enriches the game, and advances the theory and practice of the game faster. Conversely, changing the game merely to suit those who are unaccustomed to the board, to the piece designations, or to the notation,

is, in my opinion, a losing cause that is unlikely to make a contribution to the advancement of the game.

Clearly, by submitting this piece to the editors of *Variant Chess*, I am throwing myself at the wolves. If this piece sees the light of the day, I wish to thank them for their open-mindedness. But, believe it or not, this is the least hostile among three possible venues for me to air the above. For the other two, I would not even bother to write. This being the case, I look forward to a lively debate with readers of *Variant Chess*.

For those who wish to communicate with me directly, I may be reached at P. O. Box 341267, Bethesda, Maryland 20827, U.S.A. by fax at 301-469-6544 or by e-mail at davidli@erols.com (no punctuation mark after com).

#### Brief Comment

**Peter Wood:** *While editor of Variant Chess my policy has been to westernise the diagrams and use algebraic notation. The intention is to introduce the game to (western) readers, many of whom may know nothing about the game. Readers are directed to other books and periodicals if they wish to learn more. Chinese diagrams and notation could be used in VC of course - readers are free to question my decision. In fact the use of Chinese diagrams is now a possibility, following the advent of the clear 'Alpine' fonts. However, to say that the Chinese notation (where for example the files are numbered 1 to 9 right to left for both players) is 'perfection' is far from the truth - I find it especially difficult to use when playing through the scores of games; a mistake in a score once made is difficult to repair too. I see no difficulty in there being two notations - clearly one must use Chinese notation to study most other XQ literature.*

*With regard to the English names of the pieces, it is surely not wrong to follow the 'unofficial' standardisation adopted by C. K. Lai, David Woo, Sam Sloan, Robert Lin and others - people who have in the last few years, to a greater or lesser extent, provided for westerners much needed theory and up to the minute games, from Chinese sources. The pity is that Professor Li has not used these names too, for clearly his type of enthusiasm*

*is what is needed to kick-start the popularisation of XQ in the West. His use of different English piece names makes it less easy for the new adherents to the game who adopt them, to access the existing XQ literature in English.*

*Malcolm Horne may well wish to reply to Professor Li himself. I would like to point out however that Malcolm had hoped to write a positive review of the book, but after reading it felt unable to do so and was then reluctant to make critical and discouraging comments about it. I gave the go-ahead for the main critical points to be published.*



*[The following is an extract from the longer letter that appears in the section on Computers. It covers some of the same points as in David Li's essay but was sent independently and not as a comment on Li. GPJJ]*

**Stephen Leary:** On the subject of Xiangqi, and 3D pieces being some sort of improvement, I'd merely point out that the trend in chess is actually towards 'flat' pieces. More and more people are playing chess on their computer monitor, which displays 'flat' pieces. More people play on the Internet, or with a computer program, or with a database. Let's not forget the flat pieces found in books and magazines. And these pieces are all pretty much the same height. It's not the physical characteristics of the pieces, but what they symbolise that counts. I wish the problem of Xiangqi promotion in the West could be solved just by changing the pieces but, alas, the difficulty is much more complicated and involves other things that won't change anytime soon. The only easy solution I can think of is to offer huge monetary prizes for westerners taking part in Xiangqi tournaments. Now that would really draw a crowd! On the 'difficult' Chinese calligraphy, I can't help but wonder how tough it would be if those same characters weren't Chinese but ancient Nordic or Celtic symbols. No doubt westerners would enthusiastically proclaim them 'easy' once you understand what they mean!

RUNICCHE ♪♪



# A Xiangqi Miscellany



● As part of the annual Chinese sports festival at **Willesden** in May, over 30 players took part in the Xiangqi tournament. **Guo Shulong** won with 4½ points out of a possible 5, with Wang Shunqi second with the same number of points (tie break after adding the sum of opponents' scores), and Chen Fazuo 3rd with 4 points (he lost the all-important game against the winner in round 4).

In the B section black-leathered 18 year old **Timothy Young** of Colindale won with 5 out of 5, with 17 year old Kwok W. Chung of Harrow in second place. It is to be hoped that these, and the other young players competing in the B section, will maintain their interest in Xiangqi, and be able soon to challenge the 'seniors' of section A.

● The 2nd Shanghai Cup tournament took place at **Hastings** in August - on a hot day, with the loud noise of traffic outside the door and of energetic children inside the door. Surprising and worthy winner (perhaps he is hard of hearing) was **Chung Wen Sung** of Northampton with 4 points - he won the first 4 games including wins against Guo Shulong, Wang Shunqi, and David Young. His only loss was in the last round against second placed Chen Fazuo of Hastings who finished with 3½ points (his loss was against Guo Shulong). Wang Shunqi could also have finished with 4 points, but lost in the last round to Guo Shulong who thus clinched 3rd spot, also with 3½ points. David Young was 4th with 3½ points, while Wang Shunqi and Paul Byway were next with 3 points. 12 players took part.

After the prize-giving C. K. Lai announced that British Master titles have been awarded to Chung Wen Sung, Stephen Chan of Hampton, Shi Jun Zhi (deputy manager of the Bank of China in London), and Paul Byway. Congratulations to them all.

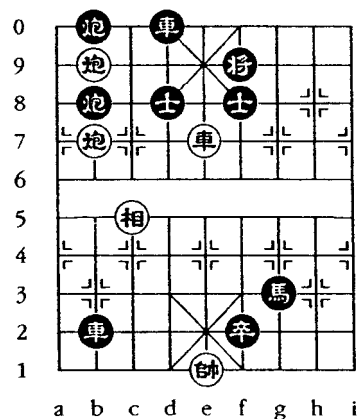
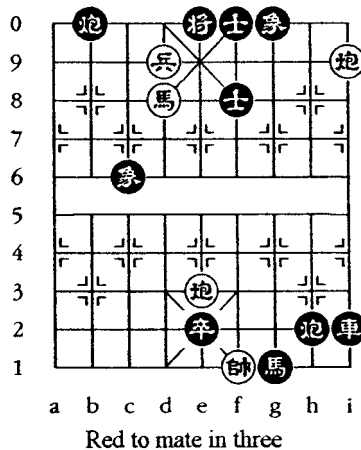
● The 3rd Shanghai Cup will take place next March, the British Championship in London in November. Details of the September European Championship are on the News Page.

● **Guo Shulong** gave birth to a baby girl on 21st August.

She will be staying in China for about a year; no doubt she will get hard and useful practice while she is there, and will be an even more formidable force on her return.

● **C.K.Lai** is planning a book of games which he played with his father while living in Mauritius.

Two books to improve one's Xiangqi tactics are **C.K.Lai's** *Checkmate in Two*, and *The Dim and Fuzzy Collection* (checkmate in three problems). From the latter book there follow two problems which involve Cannons. I present these in Chinese characters - mainly to show off Steve Smith's Alpine fonts! Chinese or English characters for VC? What do readers think?



Solutions in the next issue.

*The Dim and Fuzzy Collection* has many fine and instructive problems. Unfortunately it is marred by errors which occur, strangely, from positions 68-82 — only 7 of these 15 are mates in three. Whether this is due to unsound problems, or errors in the diagrams, it is impossible to say, as no solutions to the problems are given. This is a pity, as this type of book is most valuable in building up XQ skills. Despite the blemish I would still recommend this book, for the (sound) problems are marvellous, and are a pleasure to solve.

● Players of Xiangqi who wish to improve are strongly recommended to subscribe to David Woo's: **XIANGQI REVIEW** This well-produced magazine comes out 6 times a year, and provides annotated games of recent events, mainly from China. There are sections for beginners, advice on openings and endings, a few problems in 'Fun Corner', a 'Game to Study', current news etc. To subscribe costs \$10 (US and Canada); \$15 elsewhere (airmail included). Write to: **David Woo, Chinese Chess Institute, P.O.Box 5305, Hercules, CA 94547-5305, USA.**

David Woo also offers game scores of recent events in China and is bringing out a general instruction book on Xiangqi in the near future (*The First Book on Chinese Chess*) which should prove popular when it finally appears. Price: \$12.95 plus tax and postage (unspecified).

Key to the Chinese symbols. ('Beijing Alternate' font, 14pt size).

- 相 象 bishop
- 炮 炮 cannon
- 士 士 guard
- 帥 將 king
- 相 象 minister
- 馬 馬 knight
- 兵 卒 pawn
- 車 車 rook

This and other game fonts are obtainable from Steve Smith, Alpine Electronics, 526 West 7th St, Powell, WY 82435 U.S.A.

# COMPUTERS

Correspondence from Jeff Mallett and Stephen Leary

**From Jeff Mallett**  
(California, USA)

I do computer chess programming for a living. I know an awful lot of chess programmers through computer chess tournaments I've participated in over the years and so forth, so I'm probably well qualified to respond to your editorial in the Summer 1996 issue.

As far as GMs go, as in every field there will be no loss of prestige once the prowess of computers is fully recognised. GMs will certainly not turn from chess because computers are better than them any more than accountants gave up on account of calculators or spreadsheets. Rather, they will rely on them more and more as tools. Also, neither will GMs lose money. In fact, in order to promote goodwill, the common practice is for computer programs to pay entry fees to compete but not to collect prizes when they win. I don't know anyone who got into chess in order to be better than computers, so I don't think their supremacy now will hurt the game. In any case, all the programs I've worked on can play down to humans, throwing randomness into the evaluation process if need be.

Secondly, I doubt we'll see a huge market pressure forcing CV programs to be created. The current reality is exactly the opposite; I know chess programmers who are interested in CVs, but there's just no money in it. It has been tried before, but not with financial success. In fact my latest commercial offering, 'Internet Chess For The Mac', available at <http://gate.cruzio.com/~tao/iccclient/>, offers great Bughouse and Kriegspiel support, but server stats show that normal chess still completely dominates.

Personally, I'd love it if CVs took off with the mass-market and will do my best to help this along. There is currently a push from the Japanese to focus on Shogi as the next test-bed for 'AI' [Artificial Intelligence] after chess, but most of the chess programmers (and players) I know are turning to Go instead, since it is seen as offering the ultimate challenge.

Two things make Shogi hard to program: (a) The high branching factor

(as you mentioned in VC) means that traditional brute force approaches don't work very well, although the usual approach is brute force for non-drops and high selectivity for drops. (b) The weaker pieces and larger board means that long-range planning plays a big part.

I would think that computers would do well in Minishogi since that eliminates most of (a) and (b), but maybe I'm wrong because a few pieces in hand would still create a huge number of possible moves.

XiangQi has a higher branching factor than chess, but is still in the same ball-park at least. Tactics play a big part in XiangQi and computers are good at that. I'm sure that if as much attention had been paid to programming XiangQi as has been to chess, we would have a world class XiangQi program already, like we do in chess with Deep Blue.

In your survey of variant programs you might want to mention a little about what's going on in Academia. The ICCA (International Computer Chess Association) Journal (<http://www.cs.rulimburg.nl/icca/icca.info.htm>), although mainly focusing on computer chess research, occasionally publishes papers about Shogi and XiangQi. The latest issue, Vol.19 No.2, included two such papers, one of which argued that Shogi, as opposed to XiangQi or Go, would be the logical next testbed for 'AI' techniques after chess!

A Japanese counterpart to the ICCA is the JCCA (Japan Computer Chess Association) and this group considers Shogi in its scope. Just as is common in computer chess, there are computer Shogi championships where researchers can test new ideas and techniques over the board, in this case organised by the Computer Shogi Association (CSA) in Japan. The International Computer Olympiad provides a similar forum for XiangQi.

Although computer chess virtually began with a chess variant (Los Alamos Chess, played on a 6x6 array, see ECV), rarely are non-regional variants discussed in Academia. Therefore I was pleasantly surprised to stumble across this

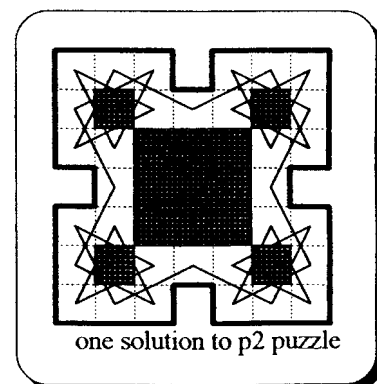
abstract from a recent paper in the computer chess world:

## A Rational Approach to Kriegspiel

by P. Ciancarini (Dept of Computer Science, U of Bologna), F. Daila Libera (Dept of Economics, U of Venezia) and F. Maran (School of Economics, U of Venezia):

*Kriegspiel is a heterodox Chess variation in which the players have incomplete information because they are not informed on their opponent's position and moves. In fact, each player knows the position of his own pieces, but can only guess the position of the opponent's pieces. Each player tries to guess the position of the opponent's pieces as the game progresses by trying moves that can be either legal or illegal with respect to the real position: a referee accepts legal moves and rejects illegal ones; the latter are useful to gain insight into the position. This means that players have to play in a context of uncertainty and partial information.*

*We know of no past attempts to build Kriegspiel-playing programs. This paper describes the design of a program, playing a class of Kriegspiel positions using a knowledge base which implements a 'rational approach'. The program we have developed integrates two different notions of rationality introduced by Simon: the substantive and the procedural rationality (Simon, 1976; Simon, 1978). The interesting part of such an experience is how the procedural rational approach can incorporate results obtained with substantive rationality, whereas the two approaches are usually considered alternative.*



From Stephen Leary  
(Ohio, USA)

I liked your thought-provoking article on computers. I think they represent a threat that cannot be ignored. The threat is the domination of, and ultimately the solutions to, the world's great games of strategy. Once a computer becomes world chess champion or plays the Perfect Game, nothing can remain the same, and changes will have to be made.

I think we have to realise what chess means to humanity: the ultimate goal of playing chess is not to engage in a crude ego-battle, or a forget-my-troubles entertainment, as it may be on its more shallow levels. There is a much nobler goal at work here, and it is self-discovery, and games of strategy are tools to this end, just as the martial arts are not about beating an opponent but about self-knowledge.

[This sounds impressive, but I for one would welcome some expansion of this theme. Am I wrong in my shallowness of attitude in regarding chess as entertainment? GPJ]

I would suggest that domination by computers not only interferes with this goal but makes it absurd. Once computers work out all the variations, chess as we know it becomes a dead game. Chess theory has been building rapidly for many years now, and it's inevitable that some changes will have to be made in the game to short-circuit the computers, ensure the hegemony of humans, and to put the emphasis back on skill instead of opening memorisation, which is the current situation at the highest levels of play.

Bobby Fischer's new 'Fischerandom' variant, or something like it, is probably the wave of the future. I disagree with Raymond Keene's statement in his *Spectator* column that Fischer's variant is an 'extreme' solution. Since it merely changes the starting line-up of the pieces, it's really not a radical change. I would call 'extreme' any change in the powers of the pieces or the size of the board. Chess, in its present incarnation, has enjoyed a good run for several hundred years, but the time may have come to once again change the rules. I think computers will soon force the issue.

I think any variant will be a problem for computers as long as it does not have a large body of theory attached to it. Computers rely heavily on large opening databases. Armed

with nothing more than brute force calculating ability, computers have a much more difficult time of it.

This is seen on the Internet chess servers, where computers sometimes play 'wild' games (usually meaning a random starting line-up of the pieces). For the few computers that play wild chess, their ratings for it are always far below their ratings for standard chess. Maybe that's why few programmers allow their programs to play wild chess. Wild exposes a computer's threadbare positional grasp of the game. The same would be true of other variants. I also agree with Kasparov: to make it fair, chessplayers should have the same access to databases as computers have. A large part of their edge over humans would instantly evaporate.



[A paragraph here on Xiangqi has been extracted to p.20. GPJ]

On the Xiangqi programs, I've heard there is a new version of the *Novag CC Computer* out now. I've been told that the playing strength is much improved over the old version. A couple of players recommended it highly. I don't have many details. The address I have is: Yorter Electronics Ltd., Unit 5, 20/F, Cheung Fung Ind. Bldg., 23-29 Pak Tin Par St., Tseun Wan, New Territories, Hong Kong. Tel: (852) 416-6636; FAX: (852) 412-2220.

A software program is *World Chess Series One: Chinese Chess (DOS)* (Pachyderm Software). Features: multiple time and depth settings; position set-up; suggest moves; handicap play; modify piece values; mouse support. The only address I have for this program is: China Books & Periodicals, Inc., 2929 - 24th St., San Francisco, CA 94110, USA. Phone: (415) 282-2994 FAX: (415) 282-0994. Price: \$39.95 + \$4 shipping.

There is an entertaining program for Windows called *CCChess*. It is currently available on the Internet at <ftp.ifcss.org> in the path: `/pub/software/ms-win/game/ccchess.zip`. It includes a 'lucky games' feature

wherein you face unusual positions at the start. The pieces are Chinese.

There is also Peter Sung's database program for reviewing or inputting Xiangqi games, called *CCHVIEW*. Available on the Internet via anonymous ftp at <ftp.io.org> in the path: `/pub/users/sung/xq/software/cchviw12.zip`. The pieces can be either Chinese or those old AXF 'westernised' pieces that were being touted a decade ago.



As for Shogi, I can mention the following: There is 'Shogivar' written by Philip R. Holland. It can play 5x5, 6x6, Shogi, Tori-Shogi, and Wa-Shogi. His Internet address is: [phil.holland@bcs.org.uk](mailto:phil.holland@bcs.org.uk) and his mailing address is: Holland Numerics Ltd., 94 Green Drift, Royston, Herts SG8 5BT, England. It's available on the Internet. Just a simple board display with letters designating the pieces. There is a second 'Shogivar' program, written by Steve Evans. This one includes 10 Shogi variants, from Tori to Tai; however, it is only for human-human games — there is no program to play against, but the author hopes to add this option in the future. Nice graphic display of the variants. It's available on the Internet. Address: Steve Evans, 257 Bathurst St., West Hobart Tas 7000, Australia

There is also *GnuShogi*. It is available on the Internet at: <ftp.unipassau.de/pub/local/shogi/gnushogi-1.2-for-MSDOS>. This one might be comparable in strength to 'Shogi Master', but I really haven't played it enough to tell. The minimal display is just a simple ASCII board with letters for the pieces.

Finally, there is a small program, 'Shogi', available on the Internet at <ftp.cdrom.com/2/games/mirrors/uw/p/misc/shogi.zip>. This one froze my computer — apparently I don't have the right kind of mouse??

Shogi activity is picking up on the Internet after a slow start. More Japanese are getting involved and are working on improving a few Shogi servers.

*More on computer software from various sources on the next page.*

# NEWS

## OTHER SOFTWARE NEWS

Ken Whyld tells of a 1990 program for Xiangqi by Malcolm P. Banks - for the QL computer. KW does not rate the strength very high.

Steve Nichols, one-time editor of *Games Monthly* (1988/89), is planning to bring out **Chaturanga** and **Enochian Chess** software. (See also *Isolated Pawns* 35, this issue.)

*Eteroscacco* mentions a program for **Gess** (the game), featured in *Games! Games! Games!* - VC19. Contact **Roberto Trotta, Via Balzago 6, CH-6616 Losone (TI), Switzerland**. The instructions are in English.

*Isolated Pawns* 27 (VC20) gave news of a strong **Losing Chess** program developed by Laurent Batholdi. This has been (modestly) 'christened' **IZNOGOU**. To test its mettle it has been entered in the 15th AISE Vinciperdi Championship. Fabrice Liardet of Switzerland (whom DBP in *IP27* reported was also involved in Iznogoud's development) is also entered - so I presume he will be dealing with the program's games.

Again from *Eteroscacco* there is news of **Laser Chess**. This has been invented and copyrighted by Peter Venable. Registration costs \$14. Write to PV at **SUB Box 2162, Seattle, WA 98119-1997, USA**. This would appear to be a completely different game from the Laser Chess program for the Atari (1988 by Mike Dupong) given in *ECV*.

The article on computers in VC20 did not mention the interesting software available from *Eteroscacco*. Contact **Alessandro Castelli, 62010 Villa Potenza (Macerata), Italy**.

(1) **PR Base 3.2** is a recent supplement to 3.0 and 3.1, and brings the total number of Italian Progressive games in PR Base up to 11,071.

(2) **Esau** is a mate-finding program for Italian Progressive Chess, which has been available for some time. I have not tested the efficacy of it however.

(3) **AISE Yearbook 1995** is a program which gives details of variants, contacts, results of postal tournaments, books, magazines, etc.

## SHOGI EVENTS

7th December 1996 - Hythe.  
**Steve Campbell, 9 Ian's Walk, Seabrook, Hythe, Kent CT21 5TT.**

The British Championship, in April, was won by **Mike Sandeman** with a clear 6/6 score. Mike is not a regular Shogi player now (he was the winner of the inaugural Br.Ch. in 1985) and in fact only entered to make up the numbers! Following this win Mike Sandeman is now placed 3rd on the July European Elo List; Stephen Lamb is 6th, Tony Hosking is 9th.

The **London Shogi Club** meets on the first Sunday of each month between 2.00 and 7.00 pm. at the Daiwa Foundation, 13/14 Cornwall Terrace, London NW1. All players are welcome to come along.

Membership of the **British Shogi Federation** now costs £5 per annum. Quarterly issues of the fine new-look *Shoten* magazine are included.

As part of her European tour, **Miss Takahashi Yamato** of Japan (Ladies 1-dan) scored 6 out of 7 in a simultaneous display against British players at the London Shogi Club in July. **Steve Lamb** was the one winner against her - in a non-handicap game. *Shoten* reports that unfortunately he has been unable to reconstruct the game - or to persuade the Japanese delegation to part with a copy of it!

**Shogi Proverb** - 'A Lance behind a Rook is twice as sharp'.

## ERRORS

David Woo points out that in the piece on '5 Tigers' (VC20 p.217), the best first move for Red is g4-g5 and c4-c5. DW also suggests that in the Wood - Byway game an improvement for Red is 26.Nf7. (P.Byway: 26...Cde6+ 27.Kd1 and if N:d5, 28.N:e5. The black Knight is pinned and at the least Red has C:a6.)

In the index the Malcolm Horne interview should read 68-70, not as shown. Foster's *Chancellor Chess* was published in 1889, not 1899. On p.221 Shatrang should read Shatranj; on p.223 Scwalfenberg is Schwalfenberg.

## HETERODOX OLYMPICS

With just a few results to be sorted out the likely team placings for the 2nd Olympiad are 1) Italy 1, 2) Ukraine, 3) England. All English team members won medals: Golds for Patrick Donovan (2) and Peter Wood, Bronzes for George Jelliss, Paul Novak, and David Pritchard.

## GUILDFORD CHESS CLUB

### VARIANTS DAY

This will now take place on Sunday 27th October. Ten variants will be played in this one-day tournament - rules will be sent out beforehand. David Pritchard is organising. Contact: **Steve Coope, 13 Rosebank Cottages, Westfield, Woking (Tel: 01483 723031)**. Come along to join the fun (or the torture).

### VC - BOUND VOLUMES

Volume 1 (issues 1/8) costs £10 (UK), £11 (\$17) (Europe, and Surface worldwide), £13 (\$20) (Airmail worldwide).

Volume 2 (issues 9/20) costs £17 (UK), £18 (\$27) (Europe, and Surface worldwide), £21 (\$33) (Airmail world-wide). Postage is included.

Bound volumes of VC's precursors *The Games and Puzzles Journal* 1987-9 (1 vol £17.50) and *Chessics* 1976-86 (2 vols £15) are also now available from George Jelliss, who has also launched the first issue of a new volume of the *G&P Journal*.

Addresses on page 1.

### CHINESE CHESS EVENT

21/22 September 1996 - Paris. 13th European Xiangqi Championship. Entry fee is 40FF, 7 rounds, each player is allowed 1 hour on the clock. Contact: **F. Corrigan, 7 rue des Batignolles, 75017 Paris, France** for further details of tournament, and accommodation.

### COMPOSITION TOURNAMENT

Information from *ES*: The magazine *Scacchi e Scienza Applicate* has organised a tournament for 2 and 3 move problems in **Xiangqi**; and for 2 move problems in **Avalanche Chess**. There are three prizes for each tournament: 1st. 80,000 Lire, 2nd. 60,000 Lire, 3rd. 35,000 Lire. The closing date for entries is 31st December 1996. Send 2 copies of diagrams and solutions to: **Romano Bellucci, Castello 5449, 30122 Venezia, Italy**.

### PROBLEM PAGES

The editors wish to thank **Stefanos Pantazis** for the really fine column he has produced while he has been Problems Editor. He has provided top-quality problems and comment. Not least he has got the outstanding awards out of the way!