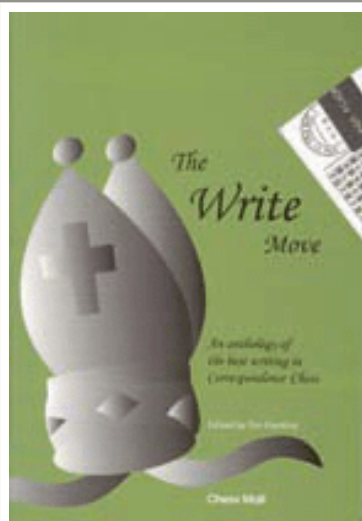




COLUMNISTS

The Kibitzer

Tim Harding



The Write Move
by Tim Harding

Open Games Revisited: The Two Knights

It has been a while since this column looked at openings. Following demand from several readers, including some new queries and examples, and the fairly recent publication of some new books, I have decided to revisit the subject of some of the Kibitzers of earlier years. In particular, I shall be looking at some variations in the Open games beginning 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4.

This month's article will look at some of the sharper lines in the Two Knights Defence, 3...Nf6, mostly met by 4 Ng5. Next month I will deal with 3...Nf6 4 d4 and then early next year (after a break in January when I always do a historical article) I will revisit 3...Bc5, but I shall start with a brief recapitulation for beginners and for those who may want a refresher course.

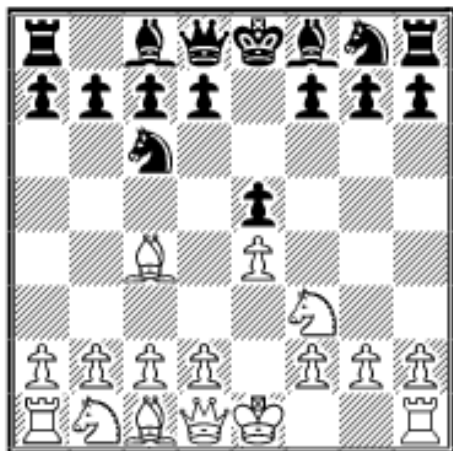
You can refer back to my older articles on these openings, which dealt with some variations in more detail, by looking in the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#). The Two Knight's Defence was surveyed in Kibitzer articles 58-60 (March-April-May 2001). If Black replies 3...Bc5 there are two divisions. The lines where White does not play 4 b4, i.e. the variations known as the Italian Game or the Giuoco Piano, were discussed in Kibitzer articles 64-65 (Sept-Oct 2001) with a follow-up in Kibitzers 69-70 (Feb-Mar 2002). Finally, numbers 89-90 (Oct-Nov 2003) dealt with some aspects of the Evans Gambit, specifically M. I. Chigorin's experiences with it.

More experienced players can now skip the rest of the introduction and jump to the *third* diagram.

1 e4 e5

The class of openings beginning in this way are known as "open games" because of the direct tactical play with an unlocked centre that usually arises, compared with asymmetric positions arising from the Sicilian Defence (1 e4 c5) and blocked centre positions that can arise from the French Defence (1 e4 e6) and many non-1 e4 openings.

2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4



White gets a second piece into play and is already in a position to castle next move. Specifically, he targets the f7-square, traditionally Black's softest spot in open games. 3 Bc4 was very popular in the nineteenth century, but in more recent times it has been considered chiefly a way for players to "learn their trade" before tackling positionally more sophisticated openings.

Traditionally, White's strongest move is considered to be 3 Bb5, the Spanish Opening or Ruy Lopez, which in most variations prepares a slow-burning attack. Also the Scotch, 3 d4, directly challenging the centre, has enjoyed a revival in recent decades. It is noteworthy that those are the two moves in the position that have been preferred at the highest level by Kasparov. He has not played 3 Bc4 very often except in simuls, apart from the two famous games he won with the Evans Gambit. His great rival Karpov played 3 Bc4 more often in master events, not frequently but certainly on several occasions.

In reply to 3 Bc4, from the first diagram, Black has two main moves and various lesser options that I won't be discussing. The main moves are 3...Nf6 (this month's article) and 3...Bc5 (in the December column); the lesser ones, which give Black a more passive game, include 3...Be7 (the Hungarian Defence), 3...d6 and 3...g6 while even more irregular moves like 3...Nd4 and 3...h6 definitely cannot be recommended. If you don't know why, look them up in books, try them against a computer or ask a strong player that you know, because I don't want to be distracted from the main point of the article. I shall just mention that 3...Nge7 would also develop the knight, but would not attack any squares in White's half of the board, and it would impede Black's own king's bishop and queen.

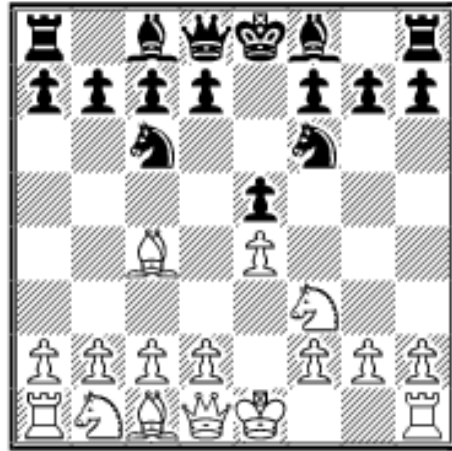
Black normally chooses either 3...Nf6 or 3...Bc5 for the following reasons:

- Both are direct developing moves that contest some squares in the centre and kingside.
- Both bring Black a step closer to castling, which is normally high on both players' list of desiderata in open games. This is because the e-file can speedily become open, and commanded by an enemy rook, whereupon it becomes a very dangerous place for a king to be hanging about.

Which of the two main moves is better is a very open question and I won't

attempt to answer it until the end of next month's column. Sometimes I have played one and sometimes the other. If White proceeds slowly, e.g. 4 d3, then Black may well play at move 4 whichever of the developing moves he did not make at move 3, and so a transposition will occur. On the other hand, if White plays in direct, aggressive style, then the paths diverge immediately.

As I said above, this month I am dealing with the Two Knights Defence, which arises from: **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6**



There is one very important distinction between 3...Bc5 and 3...Nf6, and three secondary differences, which determine the different course of play that normally arises.

i) The main point is that 3...Nf6 may be answered by 4 Ng5, which is not possible against 3...Bc5 except by throwing away a piece for nothing. The point is that in the position after 3 Bc4, White was not threatening Ng5 yet because the black queen covered that square, but 3...Nf6 blocks the black queen's view of g5 so enabling the attacking thrust.

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The secondary differences are that:

ii) 3...Nf6 attacks the white e-pawn;

iii) If White continues slowly against 3...Nf6 with 4 d3 (or 4 0-0), Black is not compelled to develop the bishop at c5; it can also go to e7.

iv) 3...Bc5 does not attack the e-pawn, but it does compete for the important d4-square instead, which means that White can only play 4 d4 as a gambit.

So, from the second diagram and above discussion, it is clear that there are two main moves against the Two Knights Defence, 4 Ng5 and 4 d4, which against 3...Bc5 are either impossible (in the first case) or else (in the case of 4 d4) risky although not completely ridiculous.

The third most important move against the Two Knights is 4 d3, which until the 1970s was rarely played or mentioned in books; then it became quite popular for a while. This was partly because the positions arising could also come about via 1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 (avoiding the Petroff Defence) 2...Nf6 3 d3 Nc6 4 Nf3; when better methods against the Petroff were developed, this variation went out of fashion again. This article won't discuss those slow variations, or other ones (often seen in beginners' games) where the players

avoid direct contact and just develop their pieces in sterile and often symmetrical fashion.

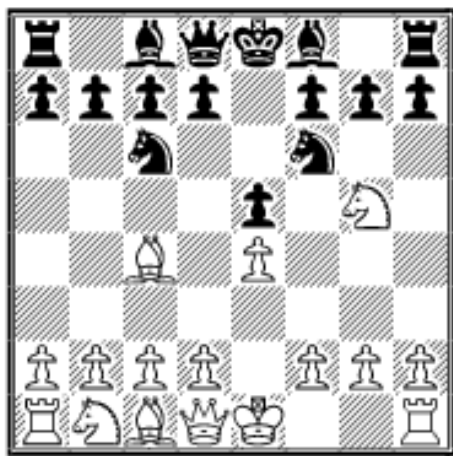
Two other moves for White must be mentioned briefly, 4 0-0 and 4 Nc3. In either case, if Black leaves the white e-pawn untouched, then sterile positions of the type just mentioned will arise. But White also has to reckon with the capture of the e-pawn:

a) 4 0-0 is not a move you will see played by experienced players; it is simply not direct enough. Black can play the safe but sterile 4...Bc5 or simply accept the gambit; after 4...Nxe4 5 Nc3 the next note soon arises by transposition.

b) 4 Nc3 can also be met by 4...Nxe4; this is possible because if 5 Nxe4 d5 forks knight and bishop and so regains the sacrificed material. However, if White is not a beginner then he has probably played 4 Nc3 with the intention of offering the tricky Boden-Kieseritsky Gambit, 4...Nxe4 5 0-0 Nxc3 6 dxc3, when natural moves don't work for Black (6...Be7 7 Qd5) and the main line goes 6...f6 7 Nh4!?. I may do a column on this gambit next year, as it can also arise via the Petroff Defence (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Bc4 Nxe4 4 Nc3) and Bishop's Opening (1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nxe4 4 Nf3). The gambit should be unsound, but the second player must be very careful in the early stages. If Black wants to steer clear of this then 4...Bc5, though dull, is perfectly playable.

Now it is time to look at White's two main replies to the Two Knights, which is a signal for our more experienced readers to rejoin us.

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Ng5



As I was just saying, this is a direct attempt to exploit Black's "failure" to keep g5 guarded. Black must now give up some material, which means that *the Two Knights Defence is a gambit* (or "counter-gambit" if you prefer), whereas 3...Bc5 (Italian Game proper) is not a gambit for Black. If you don't like playing gambits, that is your decision.

In my earlier articles on the Two Knights, I concentrated on 4 Ng5 so this time I shall just deal with two interesting tactical sub-variations that readers have recently referred to me. White's other main move, 4 d4, was not discussed in the 2001 series, but will be discussed in next month's article.

For those who still like to consult theory books, the two most recent of which I am aware are the ones by József Páلكövi, published in German in 2000 by Caissa in Kecskemet, Hungary (is it now available in English?), and by Jan Pinski (Everyman Chess, 2004). The former follows the old analytical plan, whereas the Pinski book is based on the system of illustrative games.

The venerable Dr. Tarrasch dismissed 4 Ng5 as a “bungler’s move” (Stumperzug), but several experts nowadays think differently. Pinski, for example, says that “if you are a hard-working chess player you can seriously hope to get your work returned by good results here for White. Almost all who play this position as Black are not so well acquainted with the actual theory. Many variations give White the chance to win the game from home through dedicated preparation.”

I agree with this viewpoint in general, although I am not sure if the translation is precise here; “actuelle” in German should usually be translated “current” and what word has been rendered as “dedicated”?

4...d5

This is the only way to interfere with White’s double attack on f7, giving up the d-pawn to do so. There are two other moves, which aim at counter-attack while permitting White the choice of taking f7 with either knight or bishop.

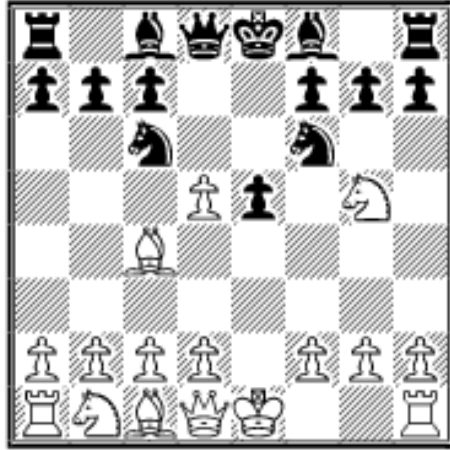
Black used to be able to get his opponent out of the books with 4...Nxe4?!, which was examined as early as [Kibitzer #5](#) in October 1996. The move is little-known, but it can hardly be recommended. Both Páلكövi and Pinski condemn it. They recommend for White 5 Bxf7+ (not 5 Nxf7 Qh4 with counter-chances) 5...Ke7 6 d4, after which Páلكövi analyses only 6...d5. Pinski correctly mentions 6...h6, which was how Yugoslav analyst Rudolf Maric tried to revive the line many years ago, but after 7 Nxe4 Kxf7 8 d5 he stops, saying “White is much better.” I am not convinced this is the whole story; my old article mentioned 8 dxe5 as maybe an improvement. Obviously 4...Nxe4 should not really be good, but it might work in blitz games.

The apparently irrational Traxler (Wilkes-Barre) variation, 4...Bc5, is so complicated that I will save it for an article in the future, maybe next year. It leads to fascinating positions and, correctly played, perhaps gives Black just as good (or bad) chances as any of the main lines after 4...d5. If any readers has played interesting games in this line, or has queries, maybe you would like to send them in before the end of the year?

White should not play 4 Ng5 unless he has something prepared against the Traxler. The gist is that if White takes on f7 with the knight, he forks rook and queen but Black replies 5...Bxf2+ with a counter-attack perhaps good enough for a draw. Either player can lose quickly in this variation after one

plausible misstep. On the other hand, after 4...Bc5 5 Bxf7+ Ke7 White wins a pawn with check, but must lose time with the bishop; Black hopes to get counterplay on the kingside and that the exposure of his king will be less serious than at first appears likely.

5 exd5



This is a major crossroads in the Two Knights. If Black now recaptures by 5...Nxd5 he exposes himself to the possibilities of the Fegatello Attack (6 Nxf7) or the more insidious 6 d4, aiming to take on f7 later. These were examined in my earlier articles. It is not a clear forced win for White, but I wouldn't like to play Black in the 6 d4 line.

Black's main move here is 5...Na5, but I have nothing to add to what I wrote in the articles four years ago. Going down the main line 6 Bb5+ c6 7 dxc6 bxc6 8 Be2 h6 9 Nf3 e4 10 Ne5 has in practice yielded me a lot of points and I cannot remember losing with White in a serious game. I don't have any new games of my own since I have been playing mostly closed openings in recent years.

One of White's guiding principles is that he should be willing to return the extra pawn, if in doing so he can eliminate the enemy dark-squared bishop in exchange for a knight. Long-term chances for White can come either with a kingside attack or in exploiting Black's weakened queenside. Of course, as in all open games, if White is too greedy or too passive, he can get into trouble.

In recent years, a lot of attention has been directed to the Fritz variation (5...Nd4), especially in its improved form where Black plays 5...b5 first. We have also seen the introduction of a new move, 5...Nb4, which apparently stems from computer analysis. That is the main move I propose to examine in this article, but first I want to reply to a reader's query about the Fritz variation.

The Radchenko Variation

Martin Sims from **New Zealand** sent me a game he had played on a correspondence web-server site. He asks of his 13th move: "Does this refute the "Radchenko Gambit" in the Two Knights Fritz?"

Hello Tim, Since you have done a lot of analysis and published several books on classical 1 e4 e5 openings such as the Two Knights Defence, I thought this game might be of interest to you. It is an

informal correspondence game played on the Chessworld.net server, and features Radchenko's dangerous piece sac 9...Bb7?! in the Two Knights Fritz/Ulvestad Variation. After consulting several books, including yours, Estrin's, Pálkövi's and NIC Yearbook 56, I went for the move which NCO and no other source that I looked at recommends, 13 Bf3. To my knowledge, it has not yet been tested in an actual game, but it makes sense to me to give back some material and play for a counterattack.

Kereru - Sterling

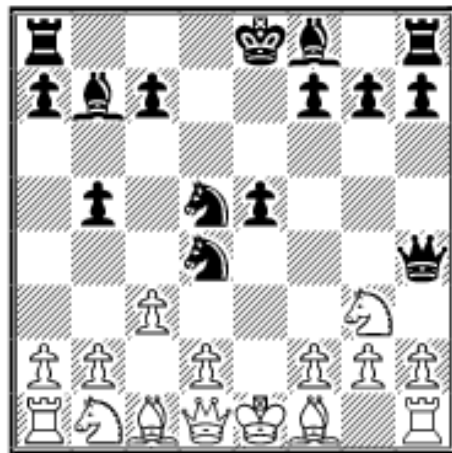
ChessWorld.net server game corr, 2005

Two Knights Defence [C57]

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Ng5 d5 5 exd5 Nd4 6 c3 b5 7 Bf1 Nxd5 8 Ne4 Qh4

The move 8...Ne6 is supposedly Black's best chance; at least he only gives up a pawn instead of several pieces. Pinski gives 8...Ne6 an exclamation mark and says it is sufficient for equality.

9 Ng3 Bb7!?



Only good for blitz games says Pinski; this is the alternative to Hans Berliner's 9...Bg4 which was analysed in detail in my earlier Two Knights coverage. Sims told me he had not seen Pinski's book, but he need not have worried as it doesn't say anything new.

The main line in Pinski goes 9...Qh4 10 f3 e4 11 cxd4 Bd6 12 Bxb5+ Kd8 13 Qb3!, following the same line recommended in Pálkövi's book and in

my article [Kibitzer 60](#). After that article a game Pilgaard-N. Pedersen was played in the Danish Championship of 2002 and you can see it in Pinski's book. Black diverged at move 17 from the line given in my article, but still lost.

I think at present all authorities, except for Dr. Berliner himself, believe that 13 Qb3! busts his line and that therefore 8...Ne6 is obligatory. Therefore new analysis in the Fritz variation should concentrate on trying to find a bust (or a clear justification) of 8...Ne6.

10 cxd4 0-0-0 11 Be2

11 d3!? has been suggested here by Slovenian master Janko Bohak.

11...Nf4 12 0–0 Bxg2

This is maybe not the best move, although I think Black is probably lost anyway. Alternatives are:

a) 12...Rxd4 13 Bf3 e4 14 Bg4+ Kb8 15 Nf5 Qg5 16 Nxd4 h5 which is unclear according to Bohak. The game Ernst-Huisman, Sweden 1978 continued 17 d3 hxg4 18 Bxf4 Qxf4 19 g3 Qh6 20 h4 g5 21 dxe4 gxh4 22 Nf5 and White won according to Pinski, who gives the players' names as Wernst-Huizmann, while Pálkövi has "Ernst-Huizmann." Does anyone know the names for sure? (Thomas Ernst is a strong master player so it's quite important to know if it was him or not.)

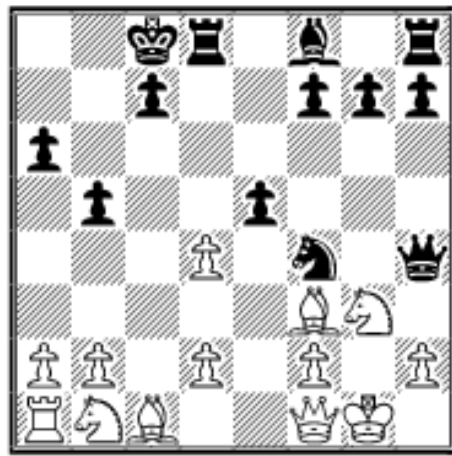
b) I found in my database 12...Nxb7 13 Bf3 Nf4 14 Bxb7+ Kxb7 15 Qf3+ c6 16 Kh1 (16 Re1) 16...g5 17 d3 (17 dxe5) 17...exd4 0–1 M. Von Saleski-U.Weidemann, DESC email 2002, but the result cannot have had anything to do with the position on the board. Now 18 a4 and 18 Nd2 seems the main tries. Maybe White should prefer 13 Bg4+ Kb8 14 dxe5 or here 14 Bf3.

13 Bf3

ICCF senior international master Kurt Widmann of Canada has recommended 13 d3 here, but Sims's move looks quite good.

The game P. A. Rasmussen-M. Westlund, Nordic Cup II corr 1992, went 13 Bg4+ Kb8 14 Re1 h5 15 Bf3 Qh3 16 d3? (16 Rxe5 would win, claimed Rasmussen.) 16...h4 17 Bxf4 Bxf3 18 Qxf3 exf4 19 Qxf4?? (19 Qc6=Rasmussen) 19...Bd6 20 Qd2 (20 Qf5=Rasmussen) 20...hxg3 21 fxg3 and Black finished off by 21...Bxg3! 22 Re2 Rd6 23 Nc3 Bxh2+! 24 Kh1 Bf4+ 25 Rh2 Rg6 26 Qxf4 Qg2# 0–1.

13...Bxf1 14 Qxf1 a6



15 Kh1!

Sims writes: "I had to play quite accurately to bring home my advantage. 15 Kh1! is directed against 15...Rd6, which is still playable, but White is starting to consolidate after 16 Nf5 Qf6 17 Nxd6+ Bxd6 18 Nc3!"

15...Rxd4 16 a4!

Here Sims says: "The move which probably surprised him the most was 16 a4!, passing up the exchange offer and going directly for the king. (16 Nf5 Qd8 17 Nxd4 Qxd4 18 Nc3 Nd3 would have left Black with excellent compensation for the piece). Overall, this game looks like an outright refutation of 9...Bb7, but perhaps you have some suggestions for Black to possibly salvage a draw in this line."

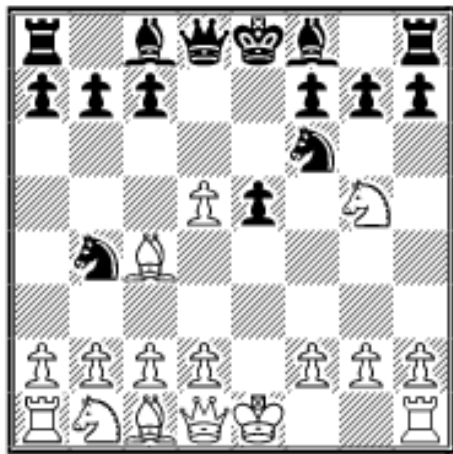
The answer is, "No." I think White must be winning with correct play in Radchenko's line.

16...Qh3 17 Qxh3+ Nxh3 18 axb5 axb5 19 Ne2 Nxf2+ 20 Kg2 Nd3 21 Nxd4 exd4 22 Bc6 Kd8 23 Na3 b4 24 Nb5 g6 25 Nxd4 Bg7 26 Bb5 Bxd4 27 Bxd3 Re8 28 Ra8+ Ke7 29 Ra4 c5 30 Bb5 Rg8 31 Ra7+ Kf6 32 Bc4 Rf8 33 h4 h6 34 d3 g5 35 Ra6+ Kg7 36 hxg5 hxg5 37 Bxg5 f6 38 Bc1 Kg6 39 b3 Re8 40 Be6 Rh8 41 Bf4 Re8 42 Kf3 Rh8 43 Kg4 Rh1 44 Bf5+ Kg7 45 Ra7+ Kh8 46 Be6 Re1 47 Bd5 1-0.

The very strange line 5...Nb4!?

A few months ago, when I was far too busy to do so, a reader asked me to examine a lot of computer analysis dealing with a strange possibility in the Two Knights that he believed to be good. Or rather which his computer program believed to be good.

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Ng5 d5 5 exd5 Nb4?!?



The move 5...Nb4 was unknown until relatively recently, I think. It's not mentioned in the 8th edition of the *Handbuch des Schachspiels* (which does mention the equally dubious 5...Bg4?!).

The earliest game with the move I could find was a postal game from 1974 and most examples (and there are quite a few in my database) are from fairly recent times. So this seems to stem from the syndrome that a computer, asked to

analyse a position for itself rather than play its pre-programmed book move, comes up with a tactically ingenious but ultimately wrong move, which has previously been rejected or not even thought of. I can think of similar examples in some other openings.

Most books, including my own and the one by Pinski, don't mention 5...Nb4, but I found it in Pálkövi's book on page 125 where he describes it as a "gekünstelter" move against which White easily obtains an advantage. I think it's up to the people who advocate 5...Nb4 to show their answer to the obvious objections before they expect people to waste their time checking reams of computer analysis. Unlike the moves normally played by Black, 5...Nb4 attempts only to regain the gambit pawn and does not really put any pressure on White.

From the diagram, White has two ways of proceeding: try to hold the extra pawn by 6 Nc3, or advance it to reactivate the threat to f7. The latter is clearly promising and even 6 Nc3 is not obviously bad.

6 d6

Here are some examples of 6 Nc3 h6:

a) 7 Nf3 Bg4 8 d3 Nbxd5 9 Bd2 c6 10 h3 Bxf3 11 Qxf3 b5 12 Bb3 b4 13 Ne4 Be7 14 0-0 Rc8 15 Qg3 g5 16 Qxe5 0-0 17 Qf5 Nxe4 18 Qxe4 Nf6 19 Qg6+ Kh8 20 Qxh6+ Nh7 21 Rfe1 Bf6 22 Rab1 Bg7 23 Qh5 Rb8 24 Re2 Rb7 25 Rbe1 f6 26 Re8 1-0 E.Sledge-D. Vega, Flint (Michigan) 1993.

b) 7 Nge4 and now:

b1) 7...Nbxd5 8 Nxd5 Nxd5 9 Qh5 c6 10 Qxe5+ Be6 11 0-0 Qc7 12 Qxc7 Nxc7 13 Re1 Be7 14 d4 0-0-0 15 Bxe6+ Nxe6 16 c3 Rhe8 17 Be3 b6 18 b4?! (18 g4!? Grabner) 18...f5! 19 Ng3 f4 20 Bd2 fxg3?! (20...Bxb4!= Grabner) 21 Rxe6 gxf2+ 22 Kf1 Rd6 23 Rxd6 Bxd6 24 g3 Rf8 25 Be3 Rf3 26 Ke2 f1Q+ 27 Rxf1 Rxf1 28 Kxf1 Kd7 29 Ke2 Ke6 30 a4 Kd5 31 Kd3 b5

32 axb5 cxb5 33 Bf4 Be7± with advantage to White but a draw was agreed in E. Ilkka-H.Grabner, ICCF 2nd class corr 1974.

b2) 7...Nxe4 8 Nxe4 Bf5 9 d3 Qh4 10 Ng3 Bd7 11 a3 b5 12 Bb3 Na6 13 Be3 f5 14 Bd2 f4 15 Ne4 Bg4 16 Qb1 Nc5 17 Bb4 Nxe4 18 dxe4 Bxb4+ 19 axb4 Bh5 20 c3 0-0 21 Qd3 Qg4 22 Rg1 f3 23 g3 Bg6 24 Bc2 a6 25 h4 Rf4 26 0-0-0 Rf6 27 Rge1 Qd7 28 d6 Qxd6 29 Bb3+ Bf7 30 Bxf7+ Kxf7 31 Qd5+ Qxd5 32 Rxd5 Re8 33 Re3 g5 34 hxg5 hxg5 35 Red3 g4 36 Rd7+ Re7 37 Rd8 Rh6 38 Ra8 Rh1+ 39 Kc2 Ra1 40 Rh8 Kf6 41 Rh6+ Kg5 42 Rc6 Re1 43 Rd2 Rxe4 44 Kd1 Rh7 45 Kc2 Rh1 46 Rxc7 Re2 47 Rc5 Kf5 48 b3 Rf1 49 c4 Rfxf2 50 Rcd5 bxc4 51 bxc4 Rxd2+ 52 Rxd2 Rxd2+ 53 Kxd2 Ke4 U. Perschke-R. Schischke, Bad Oeynhausen 1984.

I also found 6 d4 Bf5 (6...Bg4!?) 7 0-0 Nxc2 8 dxe5 Nxa1 9 exf6 Qxf6 10 Re1+ Be7 11 d6 cxd6 12 Nc3 d5 13 Nxd5 0-0-0 14 Qf3 Rxd5 15 Bxd5 Bd6 16 Nxf7 Rf8 17 Nxd6+ Qxd6 18 Bxb7+ 1-0 A. Noble-E. Schmidt Endres, Bavaria 1995.



After 6 d6, Black has a choice of knights with which to block the attack on f7.

6...Nfd5

This is as in the example cited by Pálkövi. Is this the correct knight?

6...Nbd5 has been tried recently in a high-level correspondence game. 7 dxc7 Qxc7 8 d3 (8 Bb5+!?) 8...Bc5 9 Ne4 Bg4 10 Nxf6+ (Instead of 10 f3 which has been played in some low-level games) 10...Nxf6 11 Qd2 Qc6 12 0-0 b5 13 Bb3 0-0 14 Qg5 e4 15 Nc3 h6 16 Qh4 exd3 17 cxd3 Rad8 18 Ne4 Nxe4 19 Qxg4 Nxf2 20 Rxf2 a5 21 Qf3 Qxf3 22 gxf3 Rxd3 23 Kg2 Bxf2 24 Kxf2 Rc8 25 Ke2 Rd4 26 Be3 Rh4 27 Rh1 g5 28 Kf2 a4 29 Bd1 f5 30 a3 Kf7 31 Bd2 Rhc4 32 Re1 f4 33 Bb4 Rd8 34 Bc3 Rc5 35 Bc2 Rdc8 36 Rc1 R8c7 37 Be4 Rc8 38 Rb1 Rxc3 39 bxc3 Rxc3 40 Rxb5 Rxa3 41 Rb6 h5 42 Bg6+ Kg7 43 Bxh5 Ra2+ 44 Kg1 1-0 H. Krueger-K. Miettinen, Diaconescu Memorial A corr 2003.

Capturing on d6 and allowing the fork does not look like a good idea, but 6...Bxd6? 7 Nxf7 has occurred in some games between weak players. Then 7...Qc7 is the best chance, being not so clear after 8 Na3 or 8 d3, though White should probably be preferred, while if 8 Bb3 Nxc2+! 9 Qxc2 Qxc2 10 Nxd6+ Bxd6 11 Bxc2 Black's lead in development gives him some play for the pawn.

As in the Traxler, it may be better for White to take on f7 with the bishop:
 6...cxd6 7 Bxf7+ Ke7 8 Bb3 d5 9 Qe2 Qc7 10 Nc3 d4 11 Nb5 Qc5 12 Na3
 d3 13 Qe3 Qxe3+ 14 dxe3 1-0 H.R. Rost-W. Langheld, corr 1980.

7 Nxf7

This is what White is playing for, but another possibility is 7 dxc7 Qxc7 8
 Bxd5 Nxd5 9 d3 (not 9 Qf3? Nb4; nor 9 Nf3 e4; but maybe 9 0-0!?) 9...Be7
 10 Ne4 0-0 11 0-0 b6 12 Nbc3 Nxc3 13 Nxc3 Bb7 14 Qe2 Rad8 15 Re1 Bd6
 16 Qg4 Kh8 17 Bd2 Rfe8 18 Rac1 e4 19 Nxe4 Bxe4 20 Rxe4 Rxe4 21 Qxe4
 Bxh2+ 22 Kh1 Bd6 23 Re1 g6 24 Bc3+ Kg8 25 Qd4 f6 26 Qxf6 Bf8 27
 Qh8+ Kf7 28 Qxh7+ 1-0 Zarul Shafiq-Chan Cho Ki, Kuala Lumpur 2002.

7...Kxf7

7...Qh4!? 8 Nxh8 Qe4+ also comes into consideration:

a) 9 Kf1 leads to wild complications after 9...Qxc4+ 10 d3 Qxc2 11 Qh5+ g6
 12 Qxe5+ Kd7.

b) 9 Qe2 is safer; then 9...Nxc2+ 10 Kd1 Qxe2+ 11 Kxe2 Nf4+ 12 Kd1 Nxa1
 13 dxc7 gives an amusing situation with each side having a knight in the
 opposing corner, but it looks more likely that White's can escape than
 Black's.

8 a3 Nxc2+ 9 Qxc2 c6



Surely White must stand better here? Has
 Black an earlier improvement?

10 0-0

I set Fritz8 to analyse this variation
 overnight, and it preferred 10 Qb3 Bxd6
 11 Nc3 which looks very strong, meeting
 11...b5 by 12 Nxb5 Bc5 13 Qf3+ Kg8 14
 Nc7!.

10...Bxd6 11 Nc3 Be6 12 Ne4

12 Qe4 was Fritz's preference here, e.g. 12...Nf4 (12...Bc5 13 Qxe5 Bd6 14
 Qh5+ g6) 13 d3 threatening Bxf4.

12...Be7?!

Instead 12...Rf8 13 Re1 Kg8 minimizes Black's disadvantage; after 14 d3 he can consider 14...Bc7 or 14...Be7 or 14...Qd7.

13 d3

13 Qb3 is preferred by Fritz once more.

13...h6

Fritz sees no need for this and again prefers ...Rf8.

14 f4 exf4

14...Qb6+ might be somewhat better.

15 Bxf4 Nf6 16 Bxe6+ Kxe6 17 Rae1

Pálkövi stops here, saying (correctly) that White stands better and cited J. Silva-P. Antunes, Evora 1995. Actually he said Silva-Antunes, 1995 Portugal, which may be misleading as they are probably not the strongest players in that country with those surnames; there must be a lot of players called Silva and the Portuguese Olympiad player in 1984, I recall, was A. Antunes.

17...Kd7 18 Nc5+

18 Ng3 may be good too.

18...Bxc5+ 19 Qxc5 Qb6?

Black's case is hopeless after this. 19...Kc8 had to be tried.

20 Re7+ Kc8 21 Rc7+ Kd8 22 Qxb6 axb6 23 Rxc7 Kc8 24 Be5 Nd7 25 Bd6 Nc5 26 Rff7 Nxd3 27 Rc7+ Kd8 28 Rgd7+ Ke8 29 Re7+ Kf8 30 Rh7+ Kg8 31 Rcg7# 1-0.

Unless somebody can find clear improvements for Black in all these lines, I am not going to waste any more time on 5...Nb4, but it would be worth trying in blitz and maybe somebody will discover a new twist.

Postscript on Ken Whyld

To conclude this month's article with a digression, I asked [last time](#) if anyone knew of a Ken Whyld correspondence game. Tony Gillam has sent me one, but unfortunately the wrong player lost it. Anyway here is the game, in the form of a letter from the winner to Ken Whyld, with (on the back) notes to

the game which he was about to submit to B. H. Wood's *Chess* magazine. Whether it was ever printed, I do not know. As the letter was dated 25 January 1950, the game was apparently played mostly in 1949.

Kenneth S. Procter – Ken Whyld

Postal Chess Club Premier A, England 1949-50

Nimzo-Indian Defence [E37]

Notes by Procter

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2 d5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 Qxc3 Ne4 7 Qc2 0-0 8 e3 b6! 9 Bd3 Ba6 10 Ne2 Nd7 11 f3

As recommended in *Pocket Guide to the Openings*.

11...Nd6

This seems an improvement on the Pocket Guide continuation 11...Nef6.

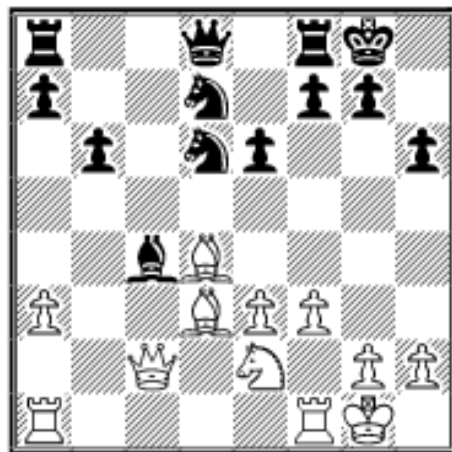
12 b3

If 12 Bxh7+ Kh8 13 c5 Qh4+.

12...dxc4 13 bxc4 h6 14 Bb2 c5 15 0-0

If 15 d5 exd5 16 cxd5 Bxd3, or 15 dxc5 Nxc5.

15...cxd4 16 Bxd4 Bxc4!



17 f4

Preparing Rf3-g3 and preventing ...e5. If 17 Bh7+ Kh8 18 Nf4?! Bxf1 19 Bxg7+?! Kxg7 20 Nh5+ Kh8 21 Qc3+ f6; or 17 Bxc4 Rc8.

17...Bxd3 18 Qxd3 Nf5 19 Rfd1

Changing his plan (in last note) but reserving his QR for the c-file.

19...Qe7

Better 19...Nxd4; Better is 19...Nc5 20 Bxc5.

20 Bxg7! Kxg7

20...Nc5? 21 Bxf8.

21 Qxd7 Qxd7

Better 21...Qc5. The text-move allows the white R to get a powerful position.

22 Rxd7 Nxe3

Greedy! It allows the white K to join in the fray.

23 Kf2 Nd5 24 Kf3 Rfd8 25 Rb7 Rdb8 26 Rd7 Kf8

Better 26...Rc8 first.

27 Rc1 Ke8 28 Rd6 a5 29 Nd4 b5

Preventing Nb5 and trying to make use of his queenside majority.

30 f5! Ke7 31 Rdc6 e5 32 Ke4! f6?

Better 32...exd4 33 Kxd5 Rd8+. The text-move leads either to the loss of the N or to the loss of the exchange.

33 Re6+ Kf7 34 Nc6 Nf4

34...Nc7 35 Re7+; 34...Rc8 35 Kxd5.

35 Nxb8 Nxe6

35...Rxb8 36 Rc7+ Kg8 37 Rxf6.

36 fxe6+ Kxe6

Black is not too badly off: the loss of his N is compensated, almost, by an extra two pawns.

37 Rc6+ Ke7 38 Rb6 b4 39 a4!

39 axb4 a4!.

39...Kd8 40 Na6

Forced, for Black threatens ...Kc7.

40...Rc8 41 Rxf6 Rc2 42 Rxh6 Rxg2

Better 42...b3.

43 Nc5 Re2+ 44 Kd5 Ke7 45 h4 Kf7 46 h5 e4

The sacrifice of the e-pawn enables the b-pawn to advance. Unfortunately for Black, the N comes on to a fine square as the result of the capture.

47 Nxe4 b3 48 Rb6 b2 49 h6 Rh2 50 Ng5+ Ke7

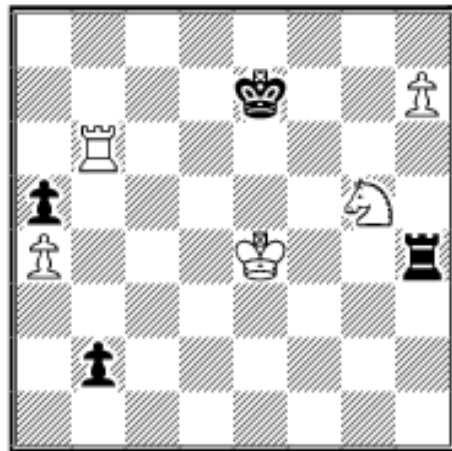
If 50...Kf8 (50...Kg8?? 51 Rb8#) then 51 Rb8+ Ke7 52 h7 Kf6 53 Rxb2! Rh5 54 Kd6! Kg7 (54...Kxg5 55 Rb5+) 55 Rb8 Rh1 56 Rg8+ etc.

51 h7 Rh5

If 51...Kf8 52 Rxb2! Rh5 53 Rb8+.

52 Ke4 Rh4+

Black's final effort.



53 Ke5! 1-0

Resigns. If 53...Rb4 54 Re6+ Kd7 55 h8Q b1Q 56 Qe8+ and mates in 3, or 53...Rh5 54 Kf5 Rh4 (still optimistic!) 55 Rxb2.

But if 53 Kf5 (which looks so obvious) 53...Rb4 54 Re6+ Kd7 55 h8Q b1Q+ and Black might even win! (Wrote Procter; actually 56 Re4 saves the draw, says Fritz8.)

So I am still looking for a postal game won by Ken Whyld.

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