

# ENGLISH CHESS FEDERATION



# OFFICIAL CHESS YEARBOOK 2021

# English Chess Federation



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## **REPORT OF THE BOARD TO COUNCIL - OCTOBER 2020**

Approved by the Board in September 2020. The Report of the Board to Council and the Strategy and Business Plan document are included for the historical record and do not necessarily represent the latest state of affairs in all cases



### **INTRODUCTION**

This report has, as last year, been prepared in accordance with the recommendation of the Independent Constitutional and Governance Review Commission that “instead of individual Directors reporting to Council, there should be a single report of the Board, approved by it beforehand”. The report focuses on what has been achieved during 2019/2020. The Board has reviewed the Strategy and Business Plan document, also included in the papers to Council, and has made a few changes, mainly to reflect the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic and the increased focus on online chess. The Board is happy that that document sets out the Board’s proposed direction of travel over the coming years and the objectives that the Board has set itself for 2020/2021 and beyond.

### **REVIEW OF THE YEAR**

There can be no doubt that this year has been extremely difficult for the ECF. The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the ECF, both operationally and financially. As a result of the latest measures announced by HM Government the return of over the board chess in any significant way looks more remote than ever. We are keeping developments under close review and publish regular updates – together with our best interpretation as to what HM Government’s pronouncements are intended to say. Our sincere thanks go to all our members who have shown such faith in the ECF by renewing their memberships even though over the board chess has ‘hit the buffers’; the Board is most grateful to them. Despite those members’ best efforts, however, we still face serious financial difficulties if the current crisis extends too far into 2021, and we exhort Council members to encourage their constituents who have not yet renewed their memberships to do so, if at all possible, recognising of course that many people are facing financial difficulties in these unprecedented times. We believe it is vital that the ECF’s core infrastructure is protected so that when the Covid-19 pandemic abates the ECF will emerge all the stronger.

Despite our present troubles much has been achieved. Until the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic it was very much ‘business as usual’ for the ECF, and it was also good to see non-ECF over the board events such as the Hastings Congress, the UK Chess Challenge, the London Chess Classic the 4NCL continue to flourish – as they will again. If there has been a silver lining to the Covid-19 cloud, it has been the opportunity that the cessation of over the board chess has given many of our hard-working volunteers to turn their attention to developmental initiatives that will serve us well in the future in particular in the online chess and grading/rating arenas.

- We have carried out a full review of our operations, with some difficult decisions having to be made. We have reduced office staffing to two members of staff, reduced administration costs, given notice on our lease so that we can move to a smaller office, home working or a combination of both, brought

much of our bookkeeping in-house, insourced the company secretarial function, successfully negotiated moving the contract for the 2020 British Championships at Torquay to next year and saved costs by moving Board and Council meetings onto Zoom. Despite our best efforts, the restoration of the ECF's finances to a reserves level of £100k or so will have to be put on hold for the foreseeable future, and it may be that despite our best efforts we will need to call on external sources of funds such as the Permanent Invested Fund to see us through the current crisis. Furlough funding and grants from HM Government and the local council respectively have been invaluable in helping us cover, at least in part, the shortfall in membership income.

- We have made good progress in relocating the library to De Montfort University Leicester – the collection has been valued, contracts have been signed, and we anticipate that the collection will be moved later this year. Should by some remote mischance the collection not be moved before our present lease expires the collection will be put into store until such time as the move can be made.

- The new monthly rating system has been successfully launched. Further developments are planned, but the lion's share of the work on the main system has been completed. The Board's sincere thanks go to the team of volunteers, ably steered by Dave Thomas, Nigel Towers and Brian Valentine, who have given so freely of their time and effort to bring the project home. If the main thing that people have found to complain about so far is the rating database's colour scheme, that is probably a good indication of a successful piece of work! The next significant piece of work is to integrate monthly online rating into the main system, and this work is scheduled for later this year and the early part of 2021.

- Much good work has gone into developing the ECF's online chess presence. The ECF Online Clubs facility is now well established on chess.com and lichess.org and continues to grow steadily with around 5,000 members across various platforms and regular club events on a daily basis, while the regular Junior and Women's Online Clubs competitions and events are supported by more than 500 members. The ECF Online area of the ECF website is now well established with information as to how to join clubs, details of events, online news, and details of how to get events rated. The online rating system now well established with six months' worth of live ratings produced on a monthly basis, at standard, rapid and blitz time controls. A series of highly successful national competitions has been organised, including the English Online Blitz Championship, the English Online Chess Marathon to support the Red Cross, the National Clubs Championship, the Online Counties 2020 Season (with more than 1,000 players taking part), and the North v South rematch of the 1893 and 1894 competitions. Fair play and anti-cheating guidelines and rules have been developed and published in collaboration with the 4NCL. Players in ECF Online Clubs, including a number of titled players, have taken part in the chess.com Nations League and the lichess.org Nations Cup, Nations League and World Series events with some very creditable results. The ECF has worked closely with Team England Live to support and promote participation in the World and European daily leagues, where England is on track to become world champions, and organised the first ECF daily chess championships on Chess.com. Finally, the ECF is developing a programme that includes guidance to leagues and clubs on how to organise and rate online events; affiliated leagues include the 4NCL, West Midlands, Five Counties, Cornwall, Hull, Cumbria, and various others.

- We participated in the Online Chess Olympiad organised by FIDE at short notice to replace the cancelled over the board Olympiad scheduled for August in Moscow. Private donations meant that we were able to field a full-strength squad at no cost to the ECF: GM Michael Adams GM Luke

McShane GM Gawain Jones GM David Howell, IM/WGM Jovanka Houska, IM/WGM Harriet Hunt, IM/WGM Dagne Ciuksyte, WGM Katarzyna Toma, FM Akshaya Kalaiyalahan, IM Matthew Wadsworth, FM Jonah Willow and Nadia Jaufarally. Although the draw was unkind to us, we still had chances to qualify on the third and final day – but two winning games turned to losses in the space of 30 seconds, and we were eliminated. Nonetheless, in International Director Malcolm Pein's words, 'Overall, I was pleased not only that the English chess community came together to support the team, but also that a large amount of coaching for female and junior players was part of their tournament experience.' Our thanks go to all the individuals who donated, as well as the Chess Trust and the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust for providing funds so that the juniors in the team could receive grandmaster coaching. FIDE should be congratulated for devising and successfully running such an event which must have been an enormous logistical challenge, taking place across numerous time zones and in countries with poor internet access, and it was great to see Alex Holowczak appointed as Chief Arbiter for the Olympiad – a signal honour for him and for the ECF.

- Earlier in the year, in October/November 2019 our international Open team medalled again, taking bronze at the European Team Championships in Batumi. England finished behind Russia – with whom we drew 2-2 after Michael Adams Defeated Dmitry Andreikin - and Ukraine, who inflicted England's only defeat. Since our fifth place at the Chess Olympiad in 2018 our team has experienced success the like of which we have not seen in twenty years.

- Mention should be made of the annual ECF awards, which recognise the achievements of many of our volunteers during the year. This year awards were made to Oxford University Chess club (Club of the Year), Bude Chess Club (Small Club of the Year), Scorch Chess and 4NCL Online (Online Contribution of the Year), Hull 4NCL International Congress (Congress of the Year), and Graham Bromley, Ian George, Alex Holowczak, Peter Hornsby, Harry Lamb and Nigel Towers (President's Award for Services to Chess). Our thanks go to them, and to all our other volunteers who work so hard in the cause of our great game.

- Finally, we welcome the following volunteers to the ECF -

Samantha Ali (*Safeguarding Officer*)

Andrew Caswell (*Manager of Daily Chess*)

Julian Clissold (*Sports and Recreation Alliance Representative, Safeguarding Lead*)

David Eustace (*Platinum Members Representative*)

Mark Hogarth (*Member, Awards Committee*)

Jo Hutchinson (*Manager of Women's Online Chess*)

Aga Milewska (*Alternate Director of Women's Chess, Bronze Members Representative*)

Chris Skulte (*Bronze Members Representative*)

Nigel Towers (*Manager of Online Chess*)

Tim Wall (*Silver Members Representative*)

Danny Rosenbaum (*Secretary to the Board, Minutes Secretary*)

... and we say goodbye, with our sincere thanks for their dedicated service to the ECF, to the following -

Phill Beckett (*Safeguarding Officer*)

Francis Bowers (*Platinum Members Representative*)

Christine Carcas (*Membership Secretary*)

Julie Denning (*Non-Executive Director*)

Adrian Elwin (*Director of Home Chess*)  
David Eustace (*Finance Director*)  
Julian Farrand RIP (*Member, Book of the Year Committee*)  
Angus French (*Bronze Members Representative*)  
Mike Gunn (*Sports and Recreation Alliance*)  
Charles Higgin (*Bronze Members Representative*)  
Alex Holowczak (*Safeguarding Lead*)  
Keith Jones (*Silver Members Representative*)  
Andrew Leadbetter (*Member, Governance Committee*)  
William Metcalfe (*Member, Awards Committee*)  
Ian Reynolds (*Member, Finance Committee*)  
John Swain (*U19 National Schools Organiser*)  
Dave Thomas (*Director of Membership*)

## **STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PLAN**

### **STRATEGY**

#### **Furthering the Cause of English Chess**

The ECF will lead the development and organisation of chess for all players in England and our international teams. This will encompass:

- Extending the number of active competitive and social chess players.
- Increasing the number of juniors playing competitive chess and transitioning to becoming adult competitive players.
- Encouraging the development of women's and social chess as part of a wider commitment to increasing the diversity of participation in chess.
- Embedding and continuing the development of online chess.
- Increasing the awareness of chess and its wider social benefits outside the existing ECF membership.
- Building the financial strength of chess and chess organisations.
- Developing the number of elite players and individual players of exceptional talent.

#### **Priority areas**

Our ambition is to increase participation in chess among women of all standards to 15% of ECF membership (including ECF Supporters) within three years, and to facilitate the transition from junior, to adult, to senior.

We have already begun, and we will continue to develop and refine, programmes to encourage participation among junior players and to help them achieve their potential.

We will continue, and improve, our support to English players taking part in international competitions, with the aspiration of re-establishing England as a force in the chess world.

We welcome the ongoing growth in online chess and the increasing level of participation amongst English players. We will continue to develop the ECF's support for this area including organising online events, providing a rating service, and supporting leagues and congresses that move online.

At the same time, we understand the central importance of over the board chess and the need to support a safe return to over the board congresses, leagues, and events when the time is right, and we will continue to provide support and advice to organisers as the Covid-19 situation develops.

Our biggest asset is our membership. We will continue to improve the attractiveness of membership through good communication and enhanced membership services and offerings for all forms of chess. We recognise that the ECF needs to grow its membership and improve the attractiveness of the game in order to sustain a viable future. The Board will continue to focus on these targets.

We will work with member organisations to grow chess activity at all levels across England, focussing in particular on junior, women's, and social chess.

We will keep the operation of the membership system under review, ensuring the system is well maintained, remains fit for purpose, and provides additional benefits to members.

We will continue to provide support to chess organisers, and we will keep under continuous review all competitions organised for which we are responsible, including the British Championships, the UK Open Blitz Championships, the County Championships, the Women's English Championships and our various ECF online club events and National Championships.

Commercial sponsorship generates additional income that can help us to make extra investment in areas such as junior, women's and international chess. We will continue to seek out new sponsorship opportunities and build on our relationship with existing sponsors and support them to build their brands.

We will actively engage with other chess organisations in England and elsewhere to improve coordination, efficiency, and knowledge-sharing across English chess.

We will continue to develop a set of key performance indicators in order to monitor our progress against our objectives.

## **Business Planning**

The Board will produce an annual business plan. That will set out how we propose to deliver the priorities set out in this statement. As part of the business planning process, we will refine our strategic intentions and financial planning in consultation with Council and in accordance with prevailing circumstances.

## **The Board**

Directors will work collegiately both within the Board and with other chess organisations. We will encourage a culture where we actively invite comment and feedback. We will ensure our governance processes and constitutional structure are effective and fit for purpose.

## **Funding**

Our core activities will continue to be funded through membership fees. We will use sponsorship and donations/bequests to support strategic and developmental projects and initiatives, ensuring that sponsors' own objectives are addressed. We will avoid the use of external funding as a substitute for core activity funding. We will work closely with the Chess Trust and the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust, in particular regarding funding for strategic and developmental projects and initiatives.

## **Office**

We are committed to maintaining the central functions of an ECF Office, whether physically or remotely. The Office endeavours to provide a high quality and efficient service to ECF members and other chess organisations and gives support to ECF directors and officials as required. Staff will be offered opportunities for professional development on an individual basis.

## **Communications**

Initiatives such as introducing a monthly e-newsletter and press releases, developing our social media presence, overhauling the website and direct emailing of members and Council have helped to improve communication to members. We want stronger partnerships with chess players and chess organisations and will continue to develop communications across a range of platforms and seek greater engagement with members to help shape our policies and plans.

## **BUSINESS PLAN**

### **Finance**

Objective: Support the overall objectives of the English Chess Federation and the agreed plans of the Executive Directors.

- Ensure that the ECF's finances are sufficient to enable the ECF's infrastructure to be maintained while the Covid-19 pandemic lasts and rebuild the necessary financial strength thereafter.
- Grow income in such a way as to enable the Board's plans to be achieved, taking into account funds received from donations, sponsorship, and other sources.
- Use membership income to fund ongoing operational expenditure, using sponsorship, bequests and donations for new initiatives and developments.
- Develop and maintain a reserve of £100,000 over the five-year planning cycle.

- Seek to achieve an annual break-even financial position over the five-year planning cycle.
- Ensure that all finance activities are performed transparently, efficiently, and effectively.
- Ensure accounting records and accounts are maintained in an accurate and timely manner.
- Simplify the overall financial structure consolidating funds into the ECF and the Chess Trust. This will remove the requirements for the active use of the BCF, Chess Centre Ltd and the Permanent Invested Fund.
- Promote our direct debit facility for the membership scheme.
- Continue to improve the presentation of financial information to directors and to members.

## **Governance**

Objective: Ensure that the ECF's governance processes and constitutional structure are effective and fit for purpose.

- Continue to review compliance with most appropriate governance practice.
- Develop a code of conduct for Board members to underpin effective Board operation.

## **Junior**

Objective: Improve participation levels in and the profile of junior chess in England and reduce the current rate of attrition in the transition to adulthood.

- Continue to develop the ECF Chess Academy in partnership with our chosen partners as the development route of choice for our top juniors.
- Support the Chess Trust as it continues to develop its Accelerator Programme for our elite junior players and the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust in its support for the British Championships and a range of other junior initiatives.
- Encourage junior chess organisations' activities in England and promote the development of collaborative working.
- Understand why so many girls stop playing chess in school and put actions in place accordingly, liaising closely with the Director of Women's Chess and junior organisers.
- Identify and use sponsorship money to improve the quality of support to junior players.
- Develop competitive chess in schools with a particular emphasis on those pupils aged over 11.
- Develop chess playing opportunities that encourage girls to continue playing chess in adulthood.

- Encourage adult chess clubs and leagues to integrate, support and develop junior players.
- Review and improve junior financial management processes.
- Identify and work with top junior players to increase participation in non-ECF events, in particular FIDE-rated tournaments.
- Extend take-up of the new Supporter category.

## **Women**

Objective: Work towards delivering our ambition to increase participation in chess among women of all standards to 15% of ECF membership (including ECF Supporters) within three years.

- Increase participation in the English Women's Championships.
- Work with independent organisers to increase female participation in non-ECF events and in particular FIDE rated events.
- Increase the profile of women's chess so that girls/teenagers/women have something to aspire to.
- Reach out to non-chess women's organisations to encourage female take-up of and participation in chess.
- Extend take-up of the new Supporter category among girls and women.
- Implement the proposals in the paper "Development of Women's Chess: Progress Plan" to be presented at the October 2020 Council meeting.

## **Home**

Objective: Support the Board in its goal of increasing the perceived added value that the ECF provides to its members.

- Keep the format of competitions organised by the ECF, in particular the British Chess Championships, the County Championships, the English Women's Championships and the UK Open Blitz Championships, under review.
- Continue the development of official ECF online chess events, widening participation among junior, female, and social players in particular.
- Support initiatives that encourage the return to OTB chess during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Provide more effective support and advice to independent event organisers.

- Provide effective support, advice, and training for new and existing arbiters.
- Maintain official anti-cheating procedures for ECF-organised events. Extend take-up of the new Supporter category across the casual/social/online chess playing population.
- Increase use of social media.

## **Membership**

Objective: Oversee the operation and effectiveness of the membership system and ensure that it is maintained and improved, as necessary.

- Put in place special offers for ECF members with third party companies as a membership retention/acquisition initiative.
- Improve communication to and facilities for consultation with corporate and individual members.
- Improve the documentation of the requirements for the administration of membership and of the operation of the new system.
- Identify selling points which might make membership attractive to individuals who are not themselves competitive players in order to increase the ECF's potential membership base.
- Continue to develop the main monthly rating system's functionality.
- Integrate the online rating system into the main monthly rating system.
- Review junior membership arrangements, including the effectiveness of our free first year membership offer, with a view to improving junior membership retention.
- Complete the move to a full membership organisation and review whether game fee and pay-to-play fees can be replaced with a flat fee per event approach.
- Promote our new casual/social chess player Supporter category.
- Review the arrangements for bulk membership renewals by corporate members following the abolition of the Membership Organisation scheme.
- Promote the use of the ECF League Management System by affiliated leagues, and consider enhancements to the system, including those necessitated by its increasing use for online chess.

## **International**

Objective: Improve the performance of our international teams.

- Work with the Directors of Junior and Women's Chess to identify and nurture top talent.

- Identify and use sponsorship money to improve conditions, training etc for international players.
- Develop England's presence in online international events.
- Review how the ECF can better capture the views and insights of top players in England.
- Seek to foster an environment to support top chess players to maximise their potential while also developing a career outside chess.

## **Online**

- Continue to develop and grow our ECF online members clubs with regular events on the major online platforms.
- Support and develop English online community clubs including junior and women's clubs and events.
- Continue to run online National Championships and competitions including the English Online Blitz, Rapid and Bullet Championships, the Online Counties Championships and related competitions, and the English Chess Marathons.
- Develop a programme of ECF online affiliated leagues and clubs to support non-ECF online events and allow these to be rated.
- Continue to develop the online rating system including integration of the rating process with the new monthly rating system and production of a combined listing showing OTB and online ratings along the lines of the USCF model.
- Organise and publicise participation of English teams in online international events.
- Promote daily chess at international level including participation in World and European online daily leagues.

## **Office**

Objective: Continue to provide a high-quality service to stakeholders.

- Complete the transfer of the library from the Office to the De Montfort University Special Collections facility.
- Continue the development of the yearbook as an annual news digest.
- Complete the project to diarise all key office internal and external deadlines.

## New Initiatives – GoMembership



The English Chess Federation (ECF) has partnered with GoMembership to provide thousands of discounts on offer from over 270 of your favourite online and high street retailers. You can save hundreds or even thousands of pounds on your purchases.

The cost of the rewards scheme is tiered, based on your membership and in addition to the membership fee, as follows —

- Platinum is free
- Gold costs £5 for a year
- Silver (including Free Junior Silver) costs £10 for a year
- Bronze costs £15 for a year
- Supporter (including the new Queen's Gambit Scheme) costs £20 for a year

To take advantage of this wonderful scheme simply log into the ECF membership site at <https://ecf.azolve.com/> using your membership username and password. The menu is in the top left-hand side of the screen. From this menu select the **Rewards** tab, then simply add the reward scheme to your cart and pay. Once you have paid you will receive a confirmation email straight away. Overnight you will receive a welcome email with details of how to access your gift cards and Vectis card. If this doesn't arrive in your inbox, please check your junk email (we've had instances of this happening when we tested the system).

There are two main types of discounts available —

### 1. Gift cards

These are self-explanatory once you are on the site. They can be used online or in the store via your phone or printed off if required. Each gift card offers a different discount depending on the retailer (see examples below), so by buying a gift card with John Lewis, for example, for £100, you only pay £94 at the till.

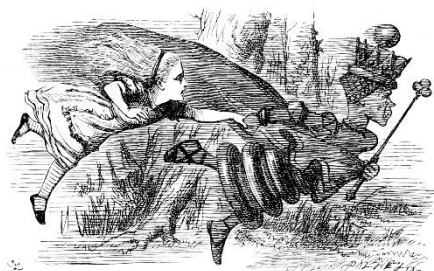
### 2. Vectis Card

This is a phone app, and a number of retailers on the site use this card. With the app you can search retailers offering discounts within one mile of your location or search by retailer name. Once your retailer pops up, simply click on it and follow the very simple instructions. Apple store is on Vectis. If I'd had a Vectis card last Xmas, I would have saved £60 on my children's headphones bought as Xmas presents.

Some examples of discounts — 10% off Apple products; 6% off John Lewis; 5% off M&S; numerous discounts from cinema chains such as Odeon and Vue; 25% off Prezzo; 10% off Pizza Express; 10% off Costa; 4% off Deliveroo; up to 40% off AA breakdown cover; up to 15% off NCP parking pass; 5% off Lastminute.com; 4% off Virgin gift cards; up to 42% off airport parking; various discount packages on BT Broadband

— Rob Willmoth, Director of Membership, English Chess Federation

## **New Initiatives – the Queen’s Gambit Scheme (QGS)**



Picture by John Tenniel from *Through the Looking Glass*

With many people working from home during lockdown and children stuck indoors out of school, the ECF, along with hundreds of clubs, has seen a spike in interest among former enthusiasts as well new players who want to learn and play chess online. The Queen’s Gambit Netflix mini-series has also contributed to the increasing popularity of the game by breaking down the stereotype that the chess is only played by men, and it has led to increasing interest from women and girls.

The ECF’s new Queen’s Gambit Scheme, which offers FREE Supporter membership for women over 18 who have not previously been members of the ECF, together with a package of events aimed at new player joiners, will run alongside the current Free Junior Silver membership scheme with the idea of encouraging women and generally wider participation in organised chess.

### **Key points**

The Queen’s Gambit Scheme (and Free Junior Silver) packages last until the end of the current membership year and will include –

- All Supporter benefits (and all Silver member benefits for Free Junior Silver membership)
- ECF Online club membership and ability to play in regular club events and online internationals
- The ability to enter special new player events at the British Online Chess Championships and in ECF Online Clubs over the coming months

New player events will include -

- Special tournaments alongside the British Online Chess Championships
- Beginners’ coaching on Zoom during the British Online Chess Championships
- A rating limited tournament added to the regular club events
- A monthly chess variant event added to the regular club events
- Other events including a chess marathon in the New Year

In Director of Women’s Chess Chris Fegan’s words, ‘The Queens Gambit series which has recently been shown on Netflix has been a tremendous success and has been seen by millions of people throughout the world, many of whom have been encouraged to take up the game for the first time. The ECF wishes to keep the momentum from the TV series going into 2021, and therefore we are offering free Supporter membership to women over 18 alongside our Free Junior Silver membership scheme for girls under 18 to enable them to experience the benefits of ECF involvement for themselves.’

To take advantage of the Queen’s Gambit Scheme and become an ECF Supporter at no cost, or to become a Junior Silver member at no cost, join here — <https://ecf.azolve.com/>. To find out about

the benefits of being an ECF Supporter or a Junior Silver member click here — <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-membership-partners-and-benefits/>

## **Chess in Prisons**

A report for the ECF Yearbook 2021 by Carl Portman, Manager of Prisons Chess

The Coronavirus pandemic has inevitably meant that physical visits to prisons were not possible this year. However, this is no reason to stand still and wait. I can report that I continue to write my chess column for *Inside Time*, the prison newspaper which potentially reaches some 60-80,000 people in the UK and abroad. As a result of the column, I receive a wide range of correspondence from prisoners. I can report that chess is still thriving although the lockdown in prisons has curbed actual meetings of chess clubs for the time being. Prisoners play in their cells, which is another good reason to play chess, since it is inexpensive and logistically unchallenging to have a set, a board and a good chess book. Some inmates still shout their moves through prison doors!

I am encouraged by the support that prisoners give to chess and the stories that they tell. I cannot wait to get back into prisons to meet prisoners again, talk about and play chess.

I was delighted to be contacted by none other than GM Judit Polgar as she had heard about my, and the ECF's, work in prisons, and she asked me to deliver a lecture on chess in prisons for her 6th Global Chess festival. Although I did this in my capacity as author of 'Chess Behind Bars' I did of course mention the ECF. Apparently Hungarian TV were impressed with the whole idea of chess in prisons and I had a lot of positive feedback. The video of my piece can be seen on You tube here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb1dZHJYIU0> *[more on this below]*

I should say that if I look a bit pale, I was very ill at the time and required a blood transfusion the next day, but I was determined to get the message out there. Nothing must stop the chess roadshow! Thanks to Judit and her team on behalf of myself and the ECF.

I finish this brief report with a line from a prisoner's letter ---

*'On our wing there are groups of Vietnamese, Albanians and Romanians who do not speak English but can engage by playing chess and we have regular games despite language barriers'.*

Truly then chess is a global language, and it brings people together whatever the circumstances. This is why chess in prisons is so important. This is why the work must and will continue when the encumbrance of the Pandemic is over.



— Carl Portman, ECF Manager of Chess in Prisons

*I want to give particular thanks to the ECF Office team for handling all the mail and ensuring that it gets to me despite difficult Covid constraints. They always do their best and this deserves to be acknowledged here.*



As Carl mentions in his report, he was one of the guest speakers at Judit Polgar's Global Chess Festival 2020. He spoke about his book 'Chess Behind Bars' and chess in prisons in general – especially the benefits of the game and its profound influence on prisoners. He did of course mention the ECF and received positive feedback about the presentation, including from the FIDE Office and President Arkady Dvorkovich himself. From an ECF perspective Carl wants to use this opportunity to say that whilst it has been impossible to get into prisons this year because of the Covid Pandemic he still writes a chess column in his own capacity

for the prison newspaper 'Inside Time' and continues to exchange chess correspondence with prisoners across the UK and occasionally further afield. As soon as conditions allow, he will be happy to be back behind bars again!

## **The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust**

Founded in 2006 - charity registration number 1116981



The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust was founded in 2006 and is an independent grant-making charity (registration number 1116981). The Trust was created following the death of Mr. John Robinson on 1st February 2006.

Applications for financial support are invited and should be emailed to the Chairman (*see the email address below*). The aim of the Trust is to support junior chess and grants are made to individuals, chess organizations and events. The Trust supports ENG players under the age of 21.

If you wish to enquire about the work of the Trust, please contact the Chairman Dr. John Higgs by email at [john.higgs@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:john.higgs@englishchess.org.uk)

## **The Chess Trust - Report for 2020**



Despite 2020 being a difficult year for chess activities the Trust has continued its work as far as possible. The Trust's main activity has been the development and delivery of the Accelerator Programme, which is designed to develop young players to become the titled and international players of the future. After two years since inception the Trustees decided to manage the Programme differently with the appointment of UK Chess Challenge to undertake the day-to-day operation of the Programme. Two experienced mentors, John Emms, and Adam Hunt, have also been engaged to provide the necessary level of training expertise on a regular basis. Activities include mentoring, coaching and support for attendance at selected events. Approximately ten candidates are invited to join the Programme by a Selection Committee, and progress is reviewed regularly with the Trustees. Trustees regard this as a long-term initiative; performance should be assessed in that light.

The Trustees wish to thank Grandmaster Peter Wells for his efforts and dedication in establishing the Programme. The start of any new initiative is always the most challenging part and Peter provided a wealth of experience and learning to enable the Programme to be further enhanced.

Additionally, the Trust made donations to the Glorney Cup event and the awards under the British Chess Education Trust, both of whose funds had been transferred to the Chess Trust for management. Awards made to schools were - Woodbridge School; Hallfield School, Edgbaston; Laxton Junior School, Oundle; Newton Longville Church of England Primary School; Kings College Wimbledon Junior School; Long Marton Community School; Hampton Hill Junior School.

To support the English teams in the Online Olympiad the Trust received generous donations towards the costs which were contributed to the event.

Unfortunately, as the British Championships were not held during 2020 because of the pandemic restrictions, donations were not made from the John Robinson bequest nor the Neil Carr Award. Hopefully, in 2021 these awards will be made.

For next year, the Trust is exploring how it might further invest in the development and support for aspiring Junior players complementing its Accelerator Programme. The initiative is at an early stage but should reach fruition in 2021.

### Donations

The Trust does not have infinite resources. It is dependent on sources from donations to continue its work into the long-term future. Donations will be gratefully received by the Trustees. For any large donations or bequests, the trustees will take into consideration specific requests from donors as to how their gift should be applied, subject to it being consistent with the objectives of the trust. Donations and bequests attract reliefs from taxation. Any bequests made to a charity may reduce the inheritance taxes that may be due on an estate.

Donations made by an individual who is a UK taxpayer will enable the Trust to reclaim basic rate tax on the value of a donation through the government's Gift Aid scheme. Thus, a donation of £100 will enable the Trust to reclaim £25, making the total donation worth £125 to the Trust. A donation made by an individual who pays UK tax at the higher rate of 40% or 45% will be able to reclaim the difference between the basic and higher rates through their tax return.

The Trust will be establishing a regular donations scheme so that donors will be able to make small regular payments to the Trust, which will have the benefits of the Gift Aid Scheme.

Donations should be sent to The Chess Trust at the English Chess Federation Office, The Watch Oak, Chain Lane, Battle, East Sussex TN33 0YD. If you would like to donate directly to the Chess Trust by BACS, the sort code is 601015 and the account number is 87899590. If you choose this method, please let the ECF office know by email at [office@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:office@englishchess.org.uk) so that the Trustees can be informed.

The Chess Trust - Registered Charity Number 1160881

--- *David Eustace, Trustee*

## **The ECF Academy**

Some highlights from 2020 ... Alex Longson writes

101 students attended sessions during the year. There were training weekends in February, May, September, and October as well as regular exercises and assignments throughout the year.

The first training weekend took place at the De Vere in Staverton which was a superb venue with extra large training rooms and great facilities. Mike Truran and Alex Holowczak both attended and hosted parent talks about the Academy and wider ECF plans. This of course was all before Covid-19 and lockdown forced our hand to running online sessions.

The final 3 training weekends were all hosted online on Zoom, with May being split into two weekends. The format for these sessions was changed with a mix of smaller group coaching sessions, larger plenary sessions with more general / practical subject matter, quizzes, and training tournaments.

One of the advantages of the online format is that is much easier and more practical to invite a wider range of coaches and speakers. GM David Howell attended two of the weekends and GM Luke McShane made his first Academy appearance to discuss some of his best games as a junior. For the November weekend we were delighted to be joined by Dr Barry Hymer and GM Peter Wells, who gave a talk to parents and students about Growth Mindset and their new book *Chess Improvement: It's all in the mindset*

Many students showed a superb attitude in difficult circumstances; in particular in completing two coursework assignments, one about analysing their own games and another about evaluating the position. Students received a certificate to acknowledge their efforts throughout the year.

Membership in 2021 is on an annual rolling basis and each month there are regular sessions and a thematic topic. The core programme is now permanently online, but as soon as it is safe to do so we look forward to running more physical training events again.

## **Result of the Elections for Direct Members' Representatives**

The successful candidates were –

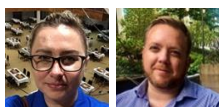
**Gold — Lorin d'Costa and Rob Willmoth**



**Silver — John Reyes and Tim Wall**



**Bronze — Aga Milewska and Chris Skulte**



## **John Poole at 100**



John Poole will celebrate his 100th birthday on Wednesday 16th September 2020. He is a previous President of the British Chess Federation and is an Honorary Life Vice President of the ECF. Other posts he held in the BCF included London League representative on the Board. Indeed, he was a principal architect of slimming the general committee of the BCF down from 48 to a Management Board of 19. He knew that was still too many, but further reduction had to wait until 2004. Later, in the 1980s to 90s, he was Publicity Director, Home Chess Director. etc.

I first met him when I was 16, playing for the Middlesex adult team on board 64 in the Southern Counties Championship in 1955, when there used to be 80 board matches among the four home counties. He and I worked together on many projects, including a *100 Year History of the BCF*, published in 2004 and found here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/100-year-history-of-the-british-chess-federation/>

--- Stewart Reuben

## **Membership Secretary – retirement**

After twelve years of loyal service to the English Chess Federation and the membership at large, Christine Adams [née Carcas] has now retired. During her time with the ECF Christine saw the membership grow from 3500 to more than 12000, and she wrestled with three different membership systems, the original being an Access database in the office, the most recent an online system created by GoMembership/Azolve.



She was always cheerful, whatever the nature of the telephone or email enquiry, and she leaves the office a more subdued place. We wish her well in her retirement and many years of peace and pleasure in her Bexhill hideaway ...



## **ECF Awards 2020**

### **The President's Award for Services to Chess**

**Graham Bromley, Ian George, Peter Hornsby, Harry Lamb, Nigel Towers, Alex Holowczak**

**Graham Bromley** is a lifelong Chester Chess Club member with a passion for our game. For many years he was a typical Club member supporting the Club by playing and helping the Club in administrative positions, but prioritising family and work needs. Then, in 2002, Graham became president of the club and, with time available following retirement, made it his priority to re-open a junior section which had successfully provided encouragement and support for children wishing to play chess over an earlier period of some 12 years. By 2003 the junior club had been shut for 3 years but having made contact with potential players, and having put arrangements in place for a suitable venue, Graham re-opened the club [full citation at [www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards](http://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards)]

**Ian George** has been a stalwart of Cornish chess for many years. Our county secretary for over thirty years, during the whole of this time he has doubled up as county grader and principal organizer of our annual Congress. Over the last ten years he has served as CCA's treasurer and league secretary. His administrative flair has frequently seen him responding to the needs of the chess community at the expense of his playing. Although outright Cornish champion in 1985 and 1990 and West of England champion in 1995, he stopped competing in 1999 to take over the less glamorous role of Controller. Although Ian is a fine and imaginative player and one of the top boards for the county team, this citation concentrates on his work in establishing then maintaining Cornwall's online presence. The Chess Cornwall website was developed latterly into a highly successful instrument to support our local chess community through the Covid-19 pandemic. Ian performed a number of associated administrative tasks with grace and distinction [full citation at [www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards](http://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards)]

In March 2020, as a result of the challenges we all now face, **Peter Hornsby** set up one of the world's most successful and inclusive online Chess tournaments, the 2020 Chess Championship League (2020 League). The league takes place wholly online, a successor to a highly popular English clubs and universities over-the-board tournament and can be found at [www.2020chess.com](http://www.2020chess.com). The tournament is open to everyone and free. Matches take place on Monday and Friday evenings spanning three-week periods. It is currently on its fourth instalment [full citation at [www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards](http://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards)]

**Harry Lamb** is a lifelong player with a peak FIDE rating of 2285. He has been the Chairman of Bolton Chess Club for 56 years. Harry has been a team captain in both the Bolton League and Manchester League; a Greater Manchester team county player; was the Founder of the Bolton District Chess League; wrote chess articles in the local Bolton Evening News newspaper for a number of years; was one of the founder members of the Manchester Chess Federation; President of the Manchester Chess Federation for 2 years 1973-1975; became an International Chess Arbiter in 1984; coached many Bolton juniors at Bolton Chess Club in his 56 years at the club; is the current Chief Arbiter at the Bolton Easter and Bolton Rapidplay Chess Congress and has been for many years. He is also the current Congress director of the Manchester Chess Federation Congress [full citation at [www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards](http://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards)]

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a complete cessation in over the board since March, with no sign yet of any resumption in the short to medium term. This, although in many ways something of a disaster for English chess, has presented an unprecedented opportunity to develop online chess into a credible alternative to over the board chess. Exploiting the opportunity has, however, required a huge amount of time and effort to incredibly tight timescales on the part of a handful of individuals, with **Nigel Towers** and **Alex Holowczak** at the forefront of initiatives to develop both the ECF's and the 4NCL's online presence. Nigel and Alex have worked closely both with each other and with other hard-working volunteers to put the ECF's and the 4NCL's online infrastructure and capability in place; in International Director Malcolm Pein's words, 'Nigel is one of the ECF's best people, without whom I think it's no exaggeration to say that the ECF would have lapsed into temporary irrelevance'. I would make exactly the same observation about Alex and his work for the 4NCL [full citation at [www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards](http://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards)]

### **Club of the Year**

**Oxford University Chess Club** [full citation at [www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards](http://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards)]

### **Small Club of the Year**

#### **Bude Chess Club**

BudeChess Club was formed in September 2012 and has varying numbers of members in the adult club, with 10 members at any one time being the maximum. However, this has not stopped it from entering teams in Division 1 and 2 of the Cornwall League, the Cornwall Rapidplay competition and a knockout competition. Bude won the Roger Grime U135 Knockout cup in 2018 and 2019, and were to play in the final in 2020 when coronavirus ended over the board chess. They are looking forward to defending their title when this situation changes. When the 2020 over the board season was curtailed Bude were lying 4th out of 8 teams in the County Shield (Division 1) with 2 games in hand; 6th out of 9 teams in the Roberts Cup (Division 2 grading limited) with 3 games in hand; and 1st in the Eastern Division of the 500 League (rapidplay with grading limit). These results are based on a small core of players who wish to play competitive chess and are willing to travel up to 2 hours for a match.

Bude Chess Club welcomes members of all ages and abilities. To this end there have been a number of players who 'pop along' irregularly for a friendly game. They have also encouraged those who want to improve and have one member who plays for and has captained teams, having joined as a beginner a couple of years ago. Although a small club, their regular teams consist of 2 female players, one of whom captains the 500 League team [full citation at [www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards](http://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards)]

### **Congress of the Year**

#### **Hull 4NCL International Congress**

There has been a weekend congress at Hull for 55 years, but in recent years it has been in decline. In 2018 there were only 89 participants. Following on from a successful British Championships in Hull, Hull and District Chess Association approached 4NCL to enter a joint partnership and an integrated event incorporating the 56th Hull congress. The result was the Hull 4NCL International congress, a new venture for both organisations. It was clear that we needed something a bit different to a 'normal' Hull or 4NCL event — so we devised a rather different programme - a ten

player, five-day Grandmaster norm event and a weekend, five round, three-day congress. Alongside this there were three days (pre congress) of free junior coaching, led by FM Charlie Storey, free junior and female places, extra junior and local prizes, a social programme and a bookstall provided by Chess Direct. The whole event took place in several chandelier lit rooms at the plush Royal Hotel, Hull, situated right in the heart of Hull at Hull Central railway station [full citation at [www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards](http://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards)]

### **Online Chess Contribution of the Year**

**Aloysius Lip (Scorch Chess) & 4NCL Online** [full citations at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/awards2020-compressed.pdf>]

### **ScorchChess – Impetus**

When I first joined my club at uni, we tried to resurrect the annual amateur inter-college rapidplay tournament. Picture it – around 100 anxious undergraduates, keen to return to their revision notes, stuck inside on a hot summer's day. All because they were keen chess players attending their one outlet to play over the course of the term. The competition was nearly derailed by slow pairing times. We'd scoured the web and couldn't find a single program that could handle individual players, teams, and a Swiss system that was accessible to use.

There is so much technology available to us and it is all so powerful. Those kind enough to organise amazing playing opportunities should never have to be bogged down in logistics that distract from the incredible game of chess.

ScorchChess was built during the UK lockdown from January to April 2020. It is a software that takes care of all the arduous management. Originally envisioned for in-person tournaments, it grew rapidly to cater for the community transitioning online and developed ground-breaking integrations with Lichess.org, Chess.com, and ECF online services. It modernises organisation and makes the process easy and enjoyable. The platform is intuitive, filled with features, and innovative. Chess players shouldn't have to settle for anything less.

### **Scorch Chess - Core Values**

#### **1. EFFICIENCY**

The primary aim of ScorchChess is to eliminate all tiresome logistical work from the role of chess tournament directors. It permits organisation with minimal delay. It frees directors to focus on helping players enjoy themselves. ScorchChess anticipates ideas tournament directors might have and performs the work necessary for them, offering them limitless creativity.

#### **2. INTUITIVITY**

ScorchChess offers all the features imaginable and lets tournament directors immediately know how to use them. Directors and players alike know exactly where to click and how to create. We hope this allows a new focus on enjoying the game. In doing so, they create the perfect tournaments they envision, with no compromises necessary.

### 3. INCLUSIVITY

Inclusivity comes 3rd because it is a consequence of the other two, but by far the proudest achievement. ScorchChess seeks to grow the chess community wherever possible and make running tournaments accessible to non-professionals. It is further committed to upholding social justice wherever possible throughout its activities.

#### **4NCL Online and Junior 4NCL Online**

The 4NCL would like to nominate its 4NCL Online and 4NCL Junior Online national leagues for the Online Chess Contribution of the Year Award.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused huge problems for over the board chess, with all events effectively cancelled from the moment of HM Government's announcement of a strict lockdown on 23rd March. One silver lining to this particular cloud, however, has been the boost it has given to online chess, and the 4NCL wasted no time in setting up the two online competitions above; round 1 of 4NCL Online took place on 7th April, little more than two weeks after HM Government's announcement, a remarkable achievement given the complexity of what was involved.

The sheer number of team entries (184 teams in 4NCL Online, 142 teams in Junior 4NCL Online) shows how much this initiative has been welcomed as a means of playing friendly but competitive chess at a time whenever over the board chess competition and club activity has been suspended. No fewer than 1,820 players in total have participated in both leagues, with 23GMs/WGMs and 34 IMs/WIMs also joining in the fun. Three aspects have been particularly encouraging:

- The number of girls (111, 15.4% of all players) who have played in 4NCL Junior Online.
- The participation of so many teams from far-flung communities in the British Isles who have hitherto found the distances and costs involved in playing in the over the board 4NCL national league to be insuperable obstacles.
- The huge support given to Junior 4NCL Online by junior team captains and organisers across the British Isles.

Not everything has been plain sailing. It has become clear over the course of the season that our fair play guidelines could have been improved. In retrospect this was unsurprising given that as 'early adopters' we were to a large extent always going to be in uncharted territory, but we have worked hard to address this for our second season, which will begin in the second half of 2020. What has been very pleasing is how well representatives from the 4NCL, the ECF and Chess Scotland have worked together to learn from the 4NCL's experiences in order to develop what we believe are robust and workable fair play guidelines that can be adopted by all organisations in the British Isles that wish to run online chess competitions.

Now that the heavy lifting of putting the infrastructure for the two leagues has been put in place we are very much looking forward to our second season, and are confident that we already have sufficient critical mass to ensure that our new venture will continue to prosper even when over the board chess returns.

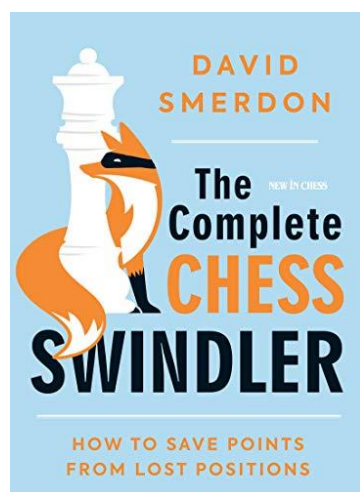
## **Book of the Year 2020**

This year's shortlist contained four books of considerable merit. One, however, stood out for its original subject matter, which was treated in a serious manner, but with good writing and a considerable sense of humour.

### ***The Complete CHESS SWINDLER***

GM David Smerdon

New in Chess paperback pp359 £21.95



The subtitle explains the aim of the book – ‘How to save points from lost positions’. It is the fate of all chess players to sometimes wind up in lost positions, but Smerdon argues that does not mean a player should give up trying to save the game. There are many ways to resist, and this book is a manual of weapons – strategic, tactical and psychological – that the reader could use. Saving a lost game can sometimes be as rewarding as winning one!

Smerdon starts by looking at the psychology surrounding swindles. A swindler has to know both his own mind (Tal being the perfect example of optimistic resourcefulness) and that of his opponent (are they anxious, want to get the game over quickly for whatever reason, or prefer a simple technical win to complicated but quicker victory?). He

then goes on to consider the various approaches a swindler may use such as a ‘Trojan Horse’ and the ‘Decoy Trap’, and many others. But the above does not work unless a player knows various ways that enable a potential swindler to escape his fate, such as stalemate or perpetual check. The book contains many examples of the various positions and techniques that can be used. Smerdon concludes with 110 exercises to develop the reader's swindling skills of various degrees of difficulty.

What lifts the book above the ordinary is Smerdon's quality of writing and his enthusiasm for chess, its players, and the chess world. As an academic in behavioural economics, he has a sharp eye for human nature and enlivens the text with many quotes and pointed footnotes. Of course, the book's subject provides much amusement – who does not enjoy (unless you are the victim) a good swindle?

An outstanding Book of the Year 2020, which combines insightful discussion of a previously unexplored subject with good writing and great entertainment throughout. Ideal for these difficult times.

— Ray Edwards & Sean Marsh, 29th September 2020

## **British Chess Educational Trust Awards 2020**

With funds provided by the generosity of the late Sir George Thomas (now administered by the British Chess Educational Trust) the English Chess Federation annually awards shields to schools which have shown outstanding achievements or enthusiasm in chess. Commencing 1982 inscribed chess boards have been substituted for shields. Recommendations for awards should be forwarded (via the appropriate Union if in England, or via the national organisations for Scotland or Wales) to: John

Wickham, 55 Shakespeare Way, Taverham, Norwich, NR8 6SL Email: j.r.wickham@btinternet.com by 31st March. Latest recipients are –

**Newton Longville C of E Primary School; Hallfield School, Edgbaston; Hampton Hill Junior School 2020; Kings College Wimbledon Junior School; Laxton Junior School; Long Marton Community School; Woodbridge School, Suffolk**

### **New FIDE Arbiters**

Following the decisions on title applications approved by the 90th FIDE Congress, which was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE on 27th-29th February, England has two more FIDE Arbiters. Congratulations to Ravi Sandhu *[below left]* and John Wickham *[below right]* on their achievement!



### **79th Internet Based FIDE Arbiters' Seminar**

The 79th Internet-based FIDE Arbiters' Seminar was held on the consecutive weekends of 20th/21st June and 27th/28th June 2020. It was organized by the ECF, under the auspices of FIDE. The lecturer was IA Lara Barnes, assisted by IA Alan Atkinson. Eleven (11) arbiters from five Federations (ENG, NOR, WLS, USA and PHI) participated in the seminar, and we extend congratulations to the following ECF members, who succeeded in the test —

**Phill J Beckett; Emma-Jane Billington-Phillips; Chun Chiu; Hok Chiu; Michael Green; Chun Rong Lu; Dylan Mize**

They will be awarded a norm for the title of FIDE Arbiter, following approval by the next FIDE Council, and we wish them well for their future progress as arbiters.

### **ADDENDUM**

Following the decisions on Arbiter title applications approved by the 4th quarter FIDE Online Council Meeting in December 2020, England has another FIDE Arbiter. I am sure that everyone will want to join me in sending Emma-Jane Billington-Phillips congratulations on her achievement!

*--- Alan Atkinson, ECF Manager of Arbiters*

## **Adrian Elwin IA**

The 2nd FIDE Council meeting for 2020 recently approved the granting of the International Arbiter title to Adrian Elwin, the ECF's Director for Home Chess. Warm congratulations are extended to him.

--- Alan Atkinson, ECF Manager of Arbiters



Adrian Elwin – picture Bob Jones / Brendan O’Gorman

## **And the FIDE Online Olympiad’s Chief Arbiter is ...**



... IA Alex Holowczak! Many congratulations to Alex Holowczak on this prestigious appointment. Alex heads a distinguished squad of 14 arbiters. Congratulations also go out to Shohreh Bayat, who is on Alex's team.

## **Bloxwich JCA celebrates 10 years!**

Bloxwich Junior Chess Academy celebrates having reached a milestone 10 years – a decade! Founded by Eunice and Ray Dolan, it started with 6 children – today they have 30! Over the years Bloxwich has produced five England players and one International winner (Cork Congress Joint 1st) aged just 14. They have also taught older children to become coaches so they can follow in their footsteps.



## **Congratulations Kevin Staveley, BEM**

*--- article and photographs courtesy of British Chess News / Dr John Upham*

BCN offers Kevin Staveley the warmest congratulations on being awarded the British Empire Medal in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List. The citation reads, 'For services to Chess in Wales'

Kevin Charles Staveley was born on December 30th, 1955 in Pontypridd, Mid-Glamorgan, Wales and has resided in Treorchy, Glamorgan, Wales. Currently he lives in Cwmparc, Rhondda.

He is a member of Newport Chess Club.

Kevin is Home Director for the Welsh Chess Union and many times Tournament Director of the British Chess Championships. Kevin is also Director of the South Wales International Chess Festival, Bridgend and the South Wales Megafinal to name but a few.

He became a FIDE International Arbiter in 1991 and a FIDE International Organiser in 2013.

Kevin is editor of the Welsh Chess Union Yearbook.

Kevin is keen to encourage young players to become arbiters.



## **January 2020**

**BELFAST** – There was a three-way tie for first at the Ulster Masters in Belfast (23-24 November).

**Masters:** 1-3 Gareth Annesley (Belfast South), Calum Leitch (Strand), Danny Roberts (Civil Service) 3½/5.

**Intermediate:** 1-3 Mathew Dougherty (Queen's University), James O'Fee (Bangor), Aaron Wafflart (Strand) 4.

**BOLTON** – Paul Macklin won the Bolton Rapidplay for a fourth consecutive occasion on December 1st, although this time he had to settle for a share of first.

**Open:** 1-3 Paul Macklin (Chorlton), Mike Surtees (Great Lever), Yichen Han (Forest Hall) 4½/6.

**Major:** 1 John Hall (Alwoodley) 5½, 2 Sam Parry (Cheddleton) 5, 3-6 Reg Clucas (Altrincham), Gerald Fletcher (Hillsborough), Peter Garrett (Waterloo), Michael Barooah (Formby) 4.

**Knights:** 1 David Aston (Pensby) 6, 2-5 Michal Osxczyk, Chagdarsuran Batbileg (both Eccles), Robert Owens (Formby), John Kelly (Stockport) 5.

**BURY ST EDMUNDS** – Two IMs tied for first at the ever-popular Bury St Edmunds Congress (26-27 October).

**Open:** 1-2 Richard Pert (Brentwood), Antanas Zapolskis (London) 4½/5, 3 Martin Walker (Norwich) 4.

**Major:** 1-2 Paul Kenning (Braintree), Vladimirs Bovtramovics (Woking) 4, 3-8 Dominic Bartram (Milton Keynes), John Daugman (Cambridge), Chris Levy (Hackney), Chris Willoughby (Brentwood), Sarah Weersing (Linton), Gavith Dharmasena (Linton) 3½.

**Intermediate:** 1 R.K. Ranjith (Brentwood) 4½, 2-5 Marc Bryant (Hastings), Giovanni Esuperanzi (Cambridge), Colin Payne (Norwich), Kenneth Hobson (Cowley) 4.

**Minor:** 1-5 David May (Norwich), John Duff-Cole (Colchester), Paul Buswell (Hastings), Rowan Kent (Bury St Edmunds), Kameron Grose (Barnet) 4.

**EXMOUTH** – This year's 20th Royal Beacon Seniors Congress (4-8 November) was Bob Jones's last at the helm and we very much hope that the event will continue in Exmouth.

**Seniors:** 1-2 Alan Crombleholme (Walsall), William Adaway (Dorchester) 4½/5, 3 Ken Norman 4/5.

**'Juniors':** 1 Robin Moss (Carlisle) 4½, 2-3 Graham Bolt (Exeter), Mike Waddington (Dorchester) 3½.

**GLASGOW** – The Malawi Rapidplay raised £1410 for the Malawi Charity on November 30th.

**Open:** 1-3 Andrew Greet (Bearsden), Jonathan McKay (Musselburgh), Tommy Barrett (Castlehill) 4/5.

**Major:** 1-4 Brian Teaz (Irvine), Stuart Lampard (Troon), Eric MacKinnon (Carrick), Calum McGillivray (Edinburgh) 3½.

**Minor:** 1 Jainill Vadalía 4½, 2-5 Ruairidh MacKay, Ibrahim Khan (all Glasgow), James Keegan (Galston), Carolina Espinosa Cancino (Girvan) 4.

**HEREFORD** – The Hereford Congress saw chess return to the Green Dragon Hotel (30 November - 1 December).

**Major:** 1 Joseph Turner (Malpas) 4/5, 2-3 Richard George (Cirencester), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale) 3½.

**Intermediate:** 1 Kyle Pelling (Tameside) 4½, 2-3 Rob McClatchey (Salisbury), David Teague (Harrogate) 3½.

**Minor:** 1 Patrick Sartain 4½, 2-3 Jennifer Goldsmith (both Harrow), Paul Broderick (Newport) 3½.

**LETCHWORTH** – The indefatigable Adam Raoof's latest venture is the Letchworth Rapidplay, which takes place in the Grand Ballroom of the Broadway Hotel, just opposite the town's station. Ian Thompson triumphed on October 27th.

**Open:** 1 Ian Thompson (Crowthorne) 4½/6, 2-4 Peter Hunt (Leighton Buzzard), Connor Clarke (Barnet), Kennan Kesterson (Richmond) 4.

**Major:** 1-3 Raghu Kamath (Richmond), Haran Rasalingham (Dulwich), Matthew Ball (St Albans) 4½.

**Minor:** 1 Cecil Sloan (Watford) 5, 2 Dhruv Radhakrishnan (Hertfordshire) 4½, 3-4 Jean- Claude Sartenauer (Hendon), Adam Tarling (Guildford) 4.

It was then young Rajat Makkar's turn to triumph on November 17th.

**Open:** 1 Rajat Makkar (Reading) 6/6, 2 Ashley Stewart (Royston) 4.

**Major:** 1 Peter Tart (Camberley) 5½, 2-3 Peter Brocklehurst (Civil Service), Julian Llewellyn (Kings Head) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Hossain Mo (Bangladesh) 5½, 2-4 Cecil Sloan (Watford), Paul Walton (Royston), Alison Bexfield (Letchworth) 4.

**LONDON** – Ali Hill won the Open at the Central London Congress, which was once again hosted by Imperial College (1-3 November).

**Open:** 1 Alistair Hill (Battersea) 4½/5, 2-3 Sylvian Eche (Hammersmith), Christopher Russell (Muswell Hill) 4.

**Major:** 1 Julian Llewellyn (Kings Head) 4½, 2- 3 Kevin Millward (Athenaeum), Will Johnston (Hammersmith) 4.

**Minor:** 1 R.K. Ranjith (Brentwood) 4½, 2-3 Eduardo Caceres (Spain), Timothy Woods (Sussex) 4.

Regular visitor Nicholas Tavoularis (Middlesbrough) racked up a perfect score at the latest Hampstead Under-2200 Congress (23-24 November), finishing a point ahead of Marcus Osborne (Wimbledon). Robert Cassen (Middlesex) and Lorenzo Fava (Cambridge) shared first place in the Under- 1900 with 4/5, the same score as made by Nuutti Karjalainen (Finland), Frank Gillespie (Beckenham) and Robert Lankester (London) in the Under-1700. Bogdan Lalic (Wood Green) proved far too strong at the Muswell Hill Rapidplay of November 19th, his 5½/6 two points more than Ben Keohane and Tom Quilter (both London) could muster. Elsewhere, Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) and Raghu Kamath (Richmond) tied for first in the Major and David Lewis (Hendon) won the Minor.

The latest Golders Green Rapidplay of November 9th saw a three-way tie for first in the Open.

**Open:** 1-3 Alexander Cherniaev (Hackney), John Pigott (Kings Head), Jovica Radovanovic (Sandhurst) 5/6.

**Major:** 1 Dave Cork (Coulsdon) 5½, 2-4 Jonathan Rubeck (Hendon), John Bussman (Surbiton), Kenneth Hobson (Cowley) 4½.

**Minor:** 1-3 Tim Shallice, George Hassabis (both London), Claudio Oliveri (Hendon) 4½.

**Amateur:** 1 Daniel Aserkoff (Barnet) 5, 2-4 Eduardo Caceres (Spain), Keith Wicks (Sheffield), Abeer Gogia (Maidenhead) 4½.

**Improvers:** 1 Jai Kothari (Coulsdon) 6, 2 Reya Li (Oxford) 5.

On October 12th Jovica Radovanovic again came first, this time outright.

**Open:** 1 Jovica Radovanovic (Sandhurst) 5½/6, 2-3 Roy Sagall (Barnet), Lorenzo Lucchi (Italy) 4½.

**Major:** 1 Timur Kuzhelev 6, 2-5 Dominic Gibbs (both Coulsdon), Christopher Levy (Hackney), Ray Tarling (Guildford), Raghu Kamath (Richmond) 4½.

**Minor:** 1 Claudio Oliveri (Hendon) 6, 2 Guy Levy (Harrow) 4½.

**Amateur:** 1-2 Eduardo Caceres (Spain), Charles Sturt (Hammersmith) 5.

**Improvers:** 1-2 Gul Kapur (Enfield), Krrish Patel (Harrow) 5½.

And back on September 14th it had been the turn of IM Alan Merry to triumph at Golders Green.

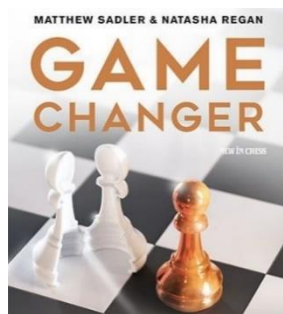
**Open:** 1 Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds) 5½/6, 2 John Merriman (Petts Wood) 5.

**Major:** 1 Conor Gay (Battersea) 5, 2 Paul Chantrell (Kings Head) 4½.

**Minor:** 1 Elliot Kalfon (Metropolitan) 5½, 2 Sivastyan Balasundaram (Barnet) 4½.

**Amateur:** 1 David Dunne (Nottingham) 6, 2 Guy Levy (Harrow) 5.

**Improvers:** 1 Xavier Ensum (east London) 5½, 2-3 David Clarkson (Hendon), Krrish Patel (Harrow) 5.



This year's **ECF Book of the Year Award** was presented at the Classic to Matthew Sadler and Natasha Regan. Judges Ray Edwards, Julian Farrand and Sean Marsh commented that, "Chess players will find a splendid collection of games with many comparing AlphaZero with players and games of the past. Very readable, there is nothing in the book that cannot be understood or enjoyed. The book is beautifully presented by New in Chess and is excellent value. The ultimate accolade came from Carlsen who said that AZ had influenced his approach to chess. *Game Changer* may also influence yours."

**NEWPORT** – Experienced FM Peter Varley triumphed with a perfect score at the South Wales Autumn Congress (15-17 November).

**Open:** 1 Peter Varley (Newport) 5, 2 Daniel Kosusek (Czech Republic) 4, 3-4 Joseph Turner (Malpas), Joe Fathallah (Cardiff) 3.

**Premier:** 1 David Pinch (Steynton) 4, 2-5 Martin Jones, Peter Quinn (both Cardiff), Harrison Postans (Chepstow), Stephen Horrell (Abergavenny) 3½.

**Minor:** 1-2 Oliver Sapsford (Chepstow), Mark Summers (Newport) 4/5, 3 Harri Gilbert (Swansea) 3½.

**OBAN** – There was a three-way tie for first at the popular Oban Congress (15-17 November).

**Open:** 1-3 Neil Berry (Edinburgh), Richard Birkett, Andrew Newton (both Inverness) 4/5.

**Challengers:** 1 Ralph Stirrat (Cumbernauld) 4½, 2-4 John Cawston (Selby), Lucasz Nowak (Oban), Jonathan McKay (Musselburgh) 4.

**Major:** 1-3 Martin Brejter (Edinburgh), Ross Blackford (Dunbar), Tom Tait (Dalmeir) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Alex Keenan 4½, 2-5 Thor Saemundsson (both Hamilton), Christopher Sharp (Oban), Andrew McCulloch (Giffnock), David Watson (Edinburgh) 4.

**OMAGH** – Calum Leitch (Strand) triumphed with 5½/6 at the Omagh Rapidplay on November 30th, finishing a point and a half clear of both Robert Lavery (Ballynafeigh) and Samuel Moore (Bangor), while James White (Omagh) won the Junior with 5/6.

**PLYMOUTH** – Jos Haynes (Tiverton) and Jonathan Underwood (Seaton) tied for first on 5/6 at the Plymouth Rapidplay on December 1st, finishing half a point ahead of Steven Levy (South Hams) and Michael Stinton-Brownbridge (Plymouth).

**PRESTON** – IM Brandon Clarke won £300 for triumphing at the Preston Congress (15-17 November).

**Open:** 1 Brandon Clarke (Oxford) 4½, 2-5 Paul Littlewood (St Albans), Dietmar Kolbus (Douglas), Yichen Han (Forest Hall), James Moreby (Gosforth) 3½.

**Major:** 1 John Wareing (Halifax) 5, 2-4 Graham Ashcroft (Preston), Neil Coward (Blackpool), Michael Connor (Great Lever) 3½.

**Minor:** 1 Phil Ramsey (Southport) 4½, 2-3 Pavel Nefyodov (Stafford), Charalampos Patsos (Preston) 4.

**Standard:** 1-3 Alan Ruffle (Swadlincote), Keith Wicks (Sheffield), Edward Pattern (Formby) 4.

**SCARBOROUGH** – Despite there only being 50 players in the Open at the Scarborough Congress (25-27 October), there was a three-way tie for first.

**Open:** 1-3 Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Laurence Webb (Münster), James Moreby (Gosforth) 4½.

**Major:** 1-6 Tim Turner (Driffield), Michael Round (Rose Forgrove), Martin Cutmore (Folkestone), David Williams (Derby), Paul Jackson (Coulsdon), Martin Gawne (Ulverston) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1-2 Gary White (Telford), Parin Suchak (Syston) 4½, 3-5 Stephen Williams (Cwmbran), Richard Dowling (Edinburgh), Roger Greatorex (Llangollen) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Stephen Carter (Richmond) 5, 2 Gary Corcoran (Bradford) 4½, 3-4 Paul Kent (Aigburth), Nikas Zaleskis (Battersea) 4.

**Foundation:** 1 Bob Amos (Prescot) 4½, 2-5 John Sugden (Withernsea), Michael Siddle (Bishop Auckland), Josephine Woollard (Sheffield), Daniel Hilditch-Love (Newport) 4.

**TORQUAY** – Many of the players at Exmouth went straight on to the Torbay Congress (8- 10 November), which was held at the Livermead House Hotel and where Keith Arkell was punished for grabbing a very hot b-pawn by Gerald Moore.

**Open:** 1 Gerald Moore (Broadland) 4/5, 2-7 Keith Arkell (Paignton), William Claridge-Hansen, Tim Paulden (both Exeter), Jonathan Underwood (Seaton), John Edge (Halesowen), Richard Webster (Worksop) 3½.

**Major:** 1 David Archer (South Hams) 4½, 2- 4 Max Walker (Clevedon), Giles Body (Exeter), Meyrick Shaw (Exmouth) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1 Danilo Gouveia Wasques (Newton Abbot) 4½, 2 Phil Foley (Upminster) 4, 3-6 Amanda Jones (Salisbury), Lynne Fursman (Tewkesbury), Jacquie Barber-Lafon (Newton Abbot), Ian Abraham (Barry) 3½.

**Foundation:** 1-2 Michael Pope (Salisbury), Ian Farrow (Dons) 4½, 3 Joy Fursman (Clevedon) 4.

**WITNEY** – Mihov Filip triumphed at the Witney Congress (2-3 November).

**Open:** 1 Mihov Filip 4½/5, 2-3 David Zakarian (both Oxford), Paul Girdlestone (Witney) 3½.

**Major:** 1 Pawel Murawski (Oxford) 4½, 2-3 Michael Lucey (Bourne End), Carlos Ferrera Gonzalez (Didcot) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1-3 Adam Sieczkowski (Witney), Darrell Watson (Bourne End), Duncan MacArthur (Keynsham) 4.

**Minor:** 1-2 Patrick Sartain (Harrow), William Stock (Hastings) 4½, 3-4 Alexander Hertog (Oxford), Freddie Beneat (Abingdon) 4.

## **February 2020**

**BRIDGEND** – The South Wales New Year Congress took place over the weekend of 3-5 January, resulting in a three-way tie in the top section.

**Open:** 1-3 Simon Gay (Market Harborough), Daniel Kozusek (Pontypridd), Grzegorz Toczec (Cardiff) 4/5.

**Major:** 1 David Teague (Harrogate) 4½, 2 Gwyn Havard (Malpas) 4, 3-5 Andrew Borkowski (Bristol), Russell Doddington (Merthyr Tydfil), Chris Peters (Bridgend) 3½.

**Minor:** 1-2 Rhys Davies (Cardiff), Rob Tipping (Penarth) 4, 3 James Williams (Bridgend) 3½.

**CLEVEDON** – The Somerset New Year Congress (11-12 January) was hosted by the Walton Park Hotel in Clevedon.

**Major:** 1-4 Brian Gosling (East Budleigh), George Miller (Keynsham), Paul Spiller, Max Walker (both Clevedon) 3½/5.

**Intermediate:** 1 Stephen Horrell (Abergavenny) 4½, 2-8 Arthur Hibbitt (Banbury), Rob McClatchey (Salisbury), Jorgen Nielsen (Wimborne), Rob Parsons (Hatch End), Gary Walker (Wiltshire), Peter Dimond (Bath), Ken Alexander (East Budleigh) 3½.

**Minor:** 1 John Webb (Cosham) 4½, 2-3 Elmira Walker (Downend), Matthew Wood (Bristol) 4.

**COVENTRY - Open:** 1 John Pitcher (South Birmingham) 5/6, 2-3 Nathanael Paul (Newport), Bruce Baer (King's Heath) 4.

**Major:** 1-2 Anton Genchev (Leicester Uni.), Gary Fairclough (Chorley) 5, 3-5 James Harrison (Warwick Uni.), Daniel Hardman (Ashfield), Tony Preece (Maddocks) 4½.

**Minor:** 1-2 Viacheslav Shkirkiiy, Samuele Ferracin (both Warwick) 5, 3 Warrick Scaife (Coventry) 4½.

**DAVENTRY** – Divisions One and Two of the 4NCL began their season over the weekend of January 11th and 12th (the planned opening weekend in November had to be postponed due to a clash with the European Club Cup). Defending champions Guildford laid down a clear statement of intent, fielding the 2640-rated Romain Edouard on board 5 (behind Matthew Sadler, Gawain Jones, Michael Adams and Luke McShane), as they whitewashed Cambridge and then overcame Barbican 7-1. Elsewhere in Pool A, White Rose are now partnered by Chessable, which meant a return to the board for the strong American IM Dmitri Shneider, but they lost the top three boards and were defeated 5-3 by Wood Green. Chess.com Manx Liberty began with two commanding victories in Pool B, but regular title challengers Cheddleton were defeated 5½-2½ by Guildford II and then held to a draw by newly-promoted Gonzaga.

**HASTINGS** – Once again there was much more to the popular Hastings International Congress than just the Masters (28 December - 5 January).

**Christmas 'A':** 1-4 Helge Hjort (Hendon), Jeffrey Boardman (Haywards Heath), Lars Andersen (Norway), Wilton Maximillian (Sussex) 4/5.

**Christmas 'B':** 1 Almas Zhorayev (Kazakhstan) 4½, 2-3 Joe Hirst (Newcastle-under-Lyme), Jason Lv (Leicester) 3½.

**Christmas 'C':** 1 Ian Goodger (Eastbourne) 4½, 2 Douglas Forbes (Gerrards Cross) 4, 3 Patrice Tournier (Hastings) 3½.

**New Year Morning 'A':** 1 Jonathan Rubeck (Hendon) 3½, 2 David Heath (Maidstone) 3.

**New Year Morning 'B':** 1-4 Phil Foley (Upminster), Chris Bernard (Crystal Palace), Satyam Kumar (Maidenhead), Henry Shaw (Crowborough) 3.

**New Year Morning 'C':** 1 Alan Collins (Cowley) 3½, 2-3 Oliver Stockham (Sussex), William Stock (Hastings) 3.

**New Year Afternoon 'A':** 1 Jonathan Rubeck (Hendon) 4, 2-3 Jerry Anstead (Tunbridge Wells), David Cutmore (Albany) 3.

**New Year Afternoon 'B':** 1-3 Chris Bernard (Crystal Palace), Peter Wood, David Cousens (both Hastings) 3.

**New Year Afternoon 'C':** 1-2 Paul Buswell (Hastings), Joseph Whelan (Coulsdon) 3.

**HULL** – The city's station hotel once again provided a fine setting for the Hull Rapidplay on January 5th.

**Open:** 1 Dan Staples (York) 4½/5, 2-3 Peter Ackley (Chesterfield) 4, 3-5 Nugith Jayawarna (Heyworth), Simon Smith (Oxford), Shaun Culkin (Hull) 3½.

**Major:** 1 Paul May (Wetherby) 4½, 2-3 Bruce Oliver (Beverley), Kevin Winter (Bradford) 4.

**Minor:** 1-2 Milosz Kasprzyk (Hull), Alan Smith (Doncaster) 4½, 3-5 David Buckley (York), Patrick Costello, Ian Scott (both Hull) 4.

**LEYLAND** – A FIDE-rated Congress took place at the Leyland Civic Centre (14-15 December).

**Major:** 1-2 Peter Kobryan (Great Lever), Martin Burnes (Stockport) 4/5.

**Minor:** 1 Ishan Kumar (Glasgow) 5, 2 Thisumi Jayawarna (Tameside) 4.



**LONDON** – The London Chess Classic (30 November - 8 December) was, of course, headlined by the finals of the Grand Chess Tour. Another very important event was the British Knockout Championship, which saw 16 of England's leading female and under-25 players take part in a nine-round blitz qualifier. Speed star Marcus Harvey proved far too strong, as he amassed a huge 8½/9 to advance to the quarter-final stage, along with Brandon Clarke and Andrew Horton who were back on '+3'.

The quarter-finals saw Gawain Jones, Luke McShane and David Howell fairly comfortably get the better of Nick Pert, Andrew Horton and Brandon Clarke, all three progressing 1½-½, but there was nearly a major upset in the other quarter-final where Michael Adams was fortunate to progress against Marcus Harvey. Both classical games were drawn, which meant, in what was a rather gruelling one-day format, two blitz playoff games, in both of which Harvey defended extremely well to force an Armageddon encounter. There he had Black and despite missing an early tactical opportunity, reached a knight endgame a pawn ahead. All Adams had going for him was a passed h-pawn, which would, however, prove decisive once Harvey tragically picked the wrong moment to offer an exchange of knights.

David Howell survived a horrible position to defeat Gawain Jones in the first classical game of their semi-final, eventually advancing 15-13, the same score by which Michael Adams overcame Luke McShane.

Unfortunately, with the Knockout not allowed to be played on the Auditorium's stage alongside the GCT, the final consisted only of rapid and blitz games, as Adams defeated Howell 18-10 to take the £10,000 first prize.

The Richmond Blitz Blast took place just before Christmas, on December 22nd, attracting a strong field, including IM James Sherwin who finished on '+4'. Bulgarian IM Martin Petrov racked up 10/11 to finish a point ahead of Graeme Buckley (Wimbledon), with brother Vladimir Petrov back on 9 points.

Russian GM Alexander Cherniaev was held to draws by Vincent Sagues and John Richardson at the Golders Green Rapidplay on January 4th.

**Open:** 1-2 Alexander Cherniaev (Hackney), Federico Rocco 5/6, 3 John Richardson (both Hendon) 4½.

**Major:** 1 Chris Levy (Hackney) 5, 2-3 Raghu Kamath (Richmond), Julian Macdonald (Chatham) 4½.

**Minor:** 1-2 Han-Sen Choong (Hampstead), Connor Clarke (Barnet) 5, 3-4 David Smith (Redditch), Oren Levene (Hendon) 4½.

**Amateur:** 1 Peter Watts (Middlesex) 5½, 2-3 Martin Leanse (Athenaeum), Sam Peterson (Hampstead) 5.

**My First Tournament:** 1 Dominic Maynard (Thurrock) 5/5, 2-3 James Coward (Bushbury), Alex Usharovskiy (Surrey) 4.

**PUDSEY** – Now at a new venue, the British Rapidplay Championships aren't as strong as they once were, but still saw GM Stephen Gordon and IM David Eggleston tie for first over the weekend of 23-24 November, while we were amused to see one of those classic pairings, Burke against Hare.

**Open:** 1-2 Stephen Gordon (London), David Eggleston (Durham) 8½/11, 3-5 Lawrence Webb (Münster), Aron Cohen (Cambridge), Robert Starley (Leeds) 7.

**Major:** 1-4 Kevin Yeomans (Olton), Mark Bastow (Colwyn Bay), Simon McGuinness (South Shields), Fazal Rabbi (Bingley) 7.

**Intermediate:** 1 Kyle Pelling (Tameside) 8½, 2 Sean McDonald (Ashby) 8, 3-4 Ben Crosby (Horsham), Lawrence Coe (Yorkshire) 7½.

**Minor:** 1 Tobias Potel (Middlesex) 8½, 2-3 Robert Dennington, Ian Strickland (both Leeds) 8.

## **March 2020**

**BELFAST** – Gareth Annesley (Belfast South) triumphed with a perfect score to win the Williamson Shield at the Maynard Sinclair Pavilion over the weekend of January 18th and 19th. Gabor Horvath (Strand) finished a point behind, while Aaron Wafflart (Strand) edged out James O'Fee (Bangor) on tie-break in the Intermediate after they had both finished on 4/5.

**BIRMINGHAM** – New venture First Weekend Chess congresses will be held on the first weekend of every quarter (May, August, etc) with the next one scheduled for 2-3 May.

**DAVENTRY** – Guildford and Manx Liberty are the only sides on 100% after four rounds of the top flight of the 4NCL. We'll have a full report on the second weekend of the season next time, but for now do enjoy two fine games from the opening weekend, a crushing win by Britain's long-time no.1 and a King's Indian Attack which actually was a brutal attack.

**M. Adams - A. McClement** - Guildford vs Cambridge, Sicilian Scheveningen

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e6 6 ♙e3 a6 7 ♙e2 ♙e7 8 ♚d2!?

This aggressive sideline of the Classical Scheveningen is quite tricky for Black, who probably shouldn't combine the three routine moves which now follow.

8... ♘c6 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 f4 ♚c7 11 g4! ♘xd4 12 ♚xd4 e5 13 ♚d3



**13... ♖xg4?**

Likewise, 13...exf4 14 ♖xf4 ♖xg4? 15 ♖xg4 ♜xg4 16 ♜d5 ♞d8 17 ♜hg1 ♜e5 18 ♖xe5 dxe5 19 ♞g3 gave White a huge advantage in Ivanchuk-Van Wely, European Club Cup, Novi Sad 2016. Black's position is suspect in any case, but he should at least try 14... ♖e6.

**14 ♖xg4 ♜xg4 15 ♜d5 ♞d8 16 ♖b6! ♞d7?**

Already the only chance was to ditch the exchange with 16... ♞e8 17 ♜hg1 ♜f6, not that White then has to go in for 18 ♜c7.

**17 ♜hg1 ♖d8?**

Another slip, but Black would also have been getting crushed after 17... ♜f6 18 fxe5 ♜xd5 19 ♞xd5.

**18 ♖xd8 ♜axd8 19 f5! 1-0**

The black knight is lost in view of 19...h5 20 h3 ♜h6? 21 ♜f6+.

### **S. Ansell - L. Cyborowski** - Blackthorne Russia vs Manx Liberty, King's Indian Attack

**1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 e6 3 g3 ♜c6 4 ♖g2 ♜f6 5 ♞e2 d5 6 exd5 ♜xd5 7 0-0 ♖e7 8 ♜a3!?**

This in conjunction with White's Chigorinesque fifth move is an interesting twist on the standard KIA approach of d3 and ♜bd2.

**8...0-0 9 ♜c4 ♞c7**

9...f6 seems more consistent with Black's fifth move, and if 10 ♜e3 ♜c7 11 d3 e5.

**10 d3 b6 11 a4 ♖b7 12 ♖d2 ♜ad8 13 a5!?** Ambitious, but by preparing to sacrifice a pawn White aims to take control of the situation in the centre of the board.

**13... ♖f6 14 ♜fe1 b5 15 ♜ce5 ♜db4**

15... ♜xe5! 16 ♜xe5 ♜b4 seizes control. **16 a6 ♖a8** The Polish Grandmaster is drifting.

16... ♜xa6!? was risky, but playable, and if 17 ♜xc6 ♞xc6 18 ♜h4 ♞d7.

**17 ♜g4 ♖e7 18 ♖f4 ♞b6?**



Now White drums up a strong attack. 18... ♖c8! was better, and if 19 h4 ♔h8 or even 19... ♜fe8 20 h5 h6 21 ♜d2 ♜d4.

**19 h4! ♜xa6 20 h5 ♜ab4?**

Allowing White to lodge a fish bone in the black king's throat. 20...h6! 21 ♜xh6+ gxh6 22 ♜xh6 ♜c7 looks risky, but has the computer's seal of approval.

**21 h6! g6 22 ♜g5 ♜c7 23 ♜f6 ♜d5 24 ♜g7 b4 25 c4!**

Preparing to swing the queen across to the key long diagonal.

**25... ♜b6 26 b3 ♜d7 27 ♜b2 ♜fe8 28 ♜h8 ♜f8**



**29 ♜f6**

Hardly bad, but there was a lovely win available with 29 ♜g7+!! ♜xg7 30 hxg7 (threat: 31 ♜h6#) 30...h5 31 ♜h6+ ♔h7 32 ♜xf7 (threat: 33 ♜3g5+) 32... ♜xh8 (32...g5? 33 ♜3xg5+ ♔g6 allows White a choice of pretty finishes, including 34 ♜e4+ ♔f6 35 g8 ♜#) 33 gxh8 ♜+ ♜xh8 34 ♜3g5+ ♔g8. It's not that hard to calculate this far, but to sacrifice the queen White would have to have realised that now 35 ♜xe6 is but extremely strong, and if 35... ♜f8 36 ♜e8 or 35... ♜d4 36 ♜xg6+ ♔f8 37 ♜xh8 ♜xg2 38 ♜h7+ ♔e7 39 ♜e1+ ♜e5 40 ♜xg2 and wins.

**29... ♜e7?**

29...e5 30 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 limps on.

**30 ♜fe5 1-0**

30... ♜xg2 31 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 32 ♜e5! and ♜f6+ is a killer.

**EDINBURGH** – The Lothians Allegro took place at the Bainfield Bowling & Social Club on January 12th.

**Open:** 1 Francisco Sanchez Saez (Spain) 5/5, 2 Alan Tate (Wandering Dragons) 4, 3 Craig Pritchett (Dunbar) 3½.

**Challengers:** 1 Jim O'Neil 4½, 2-4 Richard Kynoch, Ewan Taylor (all Wandering Dragons, Edinburgh), James Montgomery (Hamilton) 4.

**Major:** 1 Simon Bate (Civil Service) 4½, 2-4 Sam Coates (Oban), Chihon Ley, Peter Knak (both Edinburgh University) 4.

**Minor:** 1 David Craig (Hamilton) 5, 2-6 Derek Coope (Oban), Julien Papillon (Govanhill), Tilak Ittigi (Prestwick), Kartike Sharan, Jainill Vadalia (both Glasgow) 4.

**FRODSHAM** – The Frodsham Congress took place, as per usual, at the start of February (31 January - 2 February).

**Open:** 1 Aditya Munshi (West Nottingham), Chris Doran (Chester) 4/5, 3-4 Oliver Jackson (Cheshire), Bob Newton (Rochdale) 3½.

**Major:** 1-4 Barry Groves, Steven Potter (both St Helens), Richard Clissold (Winwick), Niamh Bridgeman (Morecombe) 4.

**Minor:** 1-2 Thisumi Jayawarna (Heywood), Jonas Schult (Germany) 4½, 3-4 Jon Reese (Runcorn), Khalid Khokhar (Northenden) 4.



**HARROGATE** – Jonah Willow *[left]* drew with Danny Gormally en route to claiming the £500 first prize at the Harrogate 4NCL Congress (17-19 January), although the rising star was slightly fortunate that Peter Wells didn't quite have enough time to convert a queen against Max Turner's two pieces in the final round.

**Open:** 1 Jonah Willow (Nottingham) 4½/5, 2-4 Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Peter Wells (Swindon), Max Turner (Berwick-upon-Tweed) 4.

**Major:** 1-2 Jude Samarasinge (Crystal Palace), Marc Obi (Bedford) 4½, 3 Oliver Graham (Worksop) 4.

**Minor:** 1-2 Bruce Oliver (Beverley), Noel Boustred (Gosforth) 4½, 3-4 Daniel Dufton (Keighley), Vivien Webster (Halifax) 4.

### J. Willow - J. Burnett - Harrogate 2020



22 ♖d8+! ♔xd8 23 ♜xf7+ ♚g8 24 ♜xd8  
1-0

**HASTINGS** – Lithuanian IM Antanas Zapolskis triumphed when the Caplin Hastings International closed, as per tradition, with a weekender (3-5 January).

**Open:** 1 Antanas Zapolskis (London) 4½/5, 2 Tanmay Chopra (Harrow) 4, 3-5 Sylvian Eche (Hammersmith), Francis Rayner (Hastings), Savin Dias (Barnet) 3½.

**Intermediate:** 1 Alexander van Hoof (Leicester) 5, 2 Matthew Masani (Guildford) 4, 3-7 Brendan O’Gorman (Coulsdon), Andrew Mata (Tonbridge), Anthony Roberts (Wallasey), Aron Saunders (Downend), Bhramav Rajesh (Chelmsford) 3½.

**Under-130:** 1-2 Ken Alexander (East Budleigh), Manmay Chopra (Harrow) 4½, 3-5 Jeff Fleischer (Croydon), Paul O’Brien (Worthing), Terence Greenaway (Torquay) 4.

**LONDON** – Lorenzo Lucchi (Lewisham) emerged victorious at the latest Hampstead Under-2200 Congress (18-19 January), his 4½/5 a half point more than Julius Schwartz (Inverness), Stephen Prior (Grantham) and Peter Finn (Wycombe) could score. 9-year-old Max Pert (Billerica) won the Under-1900, also with 4½/5, with Dylan Mize (UCL) and Jeremy Brookes (Hampstead) back on 4, while the Under-1700 saw a five-way tie for first on 4/5 between Tiu Loog (Hanham), Tom Schrade (USA), Alex Brett (Wimbledon), Lukasz Zarzycki (Queen Mary) and Avyukt Dasgupta (Watford). Meanwhile Bogdan Lalic (Hastings) proved too strong at the Muswell Hill Rapidplay on January 21st, with the Major being won by Colin Gentile (Muswell Hill) and the Minor by Frank Usher (Dulwich).

James Holland triumphed at the 5th Kingston Rapidplay on January 25th.

**Open:** 1 James Holland (Surrey) 5/6, 2-3 Michael Healey, Nishchal Thatte (both Coulsdon) 4½.

**Major:** 1 Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) 5½, 2-3 Oz Ozan (Turkey), Wole Maraiyesa (London) 5.

**Minor:** 1 Jack Moss (London) 6, 2 Wiktor Piechocinski (Poland) 5.

The **London Chess Classic** (30 November - 8 December) once again concluded with an extremely strong Super Blitz, in which Gawain Jones won an Armageddon encounter in the final against Tigran Gharamian to pocket the £2,000 top prize.

**FIDE Open:** 1-2 Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa (IND), Anton Smirnov (AUS) 7½/9, 3-6 Aravindh Chitambaram (IND), Jules Moussard, Sebastian Maze (both FRA), Martin Percivaldi (DEN) 7, 7-13 Sahaj Grover (IND), Martin Petrov (BUL), Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Mark Hebden (Leicester), Ezra Kirk (London), Alexander Cherniaev (Hackney), Vaishali Rameshbabu (IND) 6½.

**Weekend Open:** 1 Steven Jones (Basingstoke) 4½/5, 2 Colin Menzies (Athenaeum) 4, 3-12 Vladimir Petrov (BUL), Jovica Radovanovic (Sandhurst), Terry Chapman (Cavendish), John Merriman (Orpington), Israel Shrentzel (ISR), Thomas Bonn (Hammersmith), Agoston Mihalik (South Birmingham), Juan Manuel Garcia Almaguer (MEX), Lorenzo Lucchi (Lewisham), David Roberts (Bracknell) 3½.

**Weekend Under-2050:** 1 Harry Li (LSE) 5, 2 Tim Rogers (Hackney) 4½, 3-4 Eldar Alizada (Cumnor), Tony Stewart (Surrey) 4.

**Weekend Under-1825:** 1-2 Georgi Aleksiev (BUL), Kane Toh (Cambridge) 4½, 3-6 Cem Ozturan (TUR), Sehyuk Cheon (London), Tashika Arora (Oxford), Kristina Solovieva (Barnet) 4.

**Weekend Under-1600:** 1 Adrian Santos Ruiz (MEX) 5, 2 Gursharanjit Gill (Southall) 4½, 3-11 Samuel Ward-Riggs, Jorge Apaza (both Battersea), Tony Bynnersley (West London), Lakshan Siddharth (Basildon), Teymour Harandi (Barnet), Manmay Chopra (Harrow), Frank Gillespie (Beckenham), Luiz Ricardo Bissoto, Alexander Iskauskas (both London) 4.

**Weekday Under-2050:** 1 Benedict Keohane (London) 4½, 2-4 Raymond Boger (NOR), Tim Rogers (Hackney), Peter Wood (Lewisham) 4.

**Weekday Under-1750:** 1-3 Anurag Singh Chauhan (GER), Julian Llewellyn (Kings Head), Marcel Neo Han Sheng (SGP) 4½.

**English Open Women & Girls Rapid Championship:** 1 Madara Orlovska (Crystal Palace) 6/7, 2-5 Sheila Jackson (Liverpool), Petra Nunn (Chertsey), Rasa Norinkeviciute (Hastings), Anum Sheikh (Ilford) 5½.

The famous **London Junior Championships** also took place in December, at the University of Westminster's Harrow Campus (14-15 and 28-30 December)

**Under-8:** 1 Billy Fellowes (Coventry) 7/7, 2-3 Emils Steinners (Coulsdon), George Zhao (Barnet) 6; Leading Girl: Seha Konara (Crowborough) 5½.

**Under-10:** 1 Max Pert (Billericay) 6½, 2 Alexey Lapidus (Richmond) 6, 3-10 Billy Fellowes (Coventry; Leading Under-9), Theo Khoury, Aayush Dewangan, Soham Kumar (all Maidenhead), Yifan Luo (Petts Wood), Ethan B Li (London), Jintian Guo (Wey Valley), Alfred Soulier (Wimbledon) 5½; Leading Girl: Dhriti Anand (Edgware) 4½.

**Under-12:** 1 Andrey Pichugov (Barnet; also Leading Under-11) 8/9, 2-3 Luca Buanne (Battersea), Kenneth Hobson (Cowley) 7; Leading Girl: Eugenia Karas (Edgware) 6½.

**Under-14:** 1-4 Anum Sheikh (Ilford; also Leading Girl), Aayan Ismail Mohammed (Newham), Jacob Yoon (Ealing), Jason Lv (Wigston; Leading Under-13) 5/6.

**Under-16:** 1 Jacob Yoon (Ealing) 6, 2 Jason Covey (Hendon) 4½, 3-5 Alex Barlov (Richmond), Shahjahon Saidmurodov (Newham), Julia Volovich (Cambridge; Leading Girl) 4.

**FIDE-rated Open:** 1 Tanmay Chopra (Harrow; Leading Under-21 and Under-18) 5/6, 2 Junhao Xian (Glasgow) 4½, 3-9 Nicholas Tavoularis (Middlesbrough), Nazir Rizvi (Coulsdon), Vishnu Kirupakaran (Harrow), Chirag Hosdurga (Bristol), Thomas Bonn (Hammersmith), Federico Rocco (Hendon), Haran Rasalingam (Dulwich) 4.

**NEWRY** – Supported by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the Ulster Rapidplay Championships took place on February 1st at the Sticky Fingers Arts Centre in Newry. Danny Roberts (Civil Service) claimed the title, his 5/6 half a point more than Stephen Scannell (Ballynafeigh) could muster, while Pat McKillen (Muldoons) won the Intermediate with 5½/6, Aaron Wafflart (Strand) and Vincent O'Brien (Ballynafeigh) sharing second half a point in arrears.

**PERTH** – FM Murad Abdulla dominated the Perth Congress, held at the city's Salutation Hotel.

**Open:** 1 Murad Abdulla (Aberdeen) 5/5, 2-5 Andrew Green (Edinburgh), Daniel Abrahams (Canada), Duncan Campbell (Oban), Theodoros Vasiliadis (Bon Accord) 4.

**Major:** 1 Stephen Robinson (Ardrossan) 4½, 2-3 Andrew Sutherland (Perth), Callum Robertson (Dunbar) 4.

**Minor:** 1-2 David Cubitt (Edinburgh), Lawrence Freel (Hamilton) 4½, 3-4 Kartike Sharan (Glasgow), Ananth Subramaniam (Aberdeen) 3½.

**STOCKPORT** – There were plenty of draws in a hard-fought top section of the popular Stockport Rapidplay on January 26th, which was held at the town's Masonic Guildhall.

**Open:** 1-2 Paul Macklin (Chorlton), Joshua Pink 4½/6, 3-4 Adam Ashton (3Cs), Robert Shaw (Cheddleton) 4.

**Major:** 1 Sam Davies (Southport) 5½, 2 Daniel Sheppard (Stockport) 4½, 3-5 John Hall (Alwoodley), Damian McCarthy (Culcheth), Chris Vassiliou (Chorlton) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1 Sam Parry (Cheddleton) 6, 2-3 Raven Morrello (Chorlton), Philip Cattermole (Macclesfield) 5.

**Minor:** 1 Dawn Supatan (Ashton) 5½, 2-5 Dale Bax (Chester), Neil Jackson, Alannah Ashton (both 3Cs), Talakalukoppa Amarnath (Chesterfield) 5.



**TELFORD** – IM Joseph McPhillips *[left]* played the Swiss Gambit to perfection, drawing with Thomas Sygnowski in round 2 ahead of defeating Ameet Ghasi in the final round to bag the £1,000 first prize at the Shropshire Congress (3-5 January).

**Open:** 1 Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) 4½/5, 2 Marcus Harvey (Witney) 4, 3-7 Jeremy Fallowfield (Shirley), Stephen Gordon (London), Ameet Ghasi, Henrik Stepanyan, Thomas Sygnowski (all Sutton Coldfield) 3½.

**Major:** 1-4 Graham Ashcroft (Preston), Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Tim Lane (South Birmingham), David Stephenson (Hull) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1-2 Chris Fraser (West Bridgford), Alan Woollaston (South Birmingham) 4½, 3-4 Peter Mellor (Liverpool), George Viszokai (Maddocks) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Oliver Davies (Manchester) 5/5, 2-3 Dillan Duke (Herefordshire), Dylan Whitney (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 4.

**TORQUAY** – The Livermead House Hotel played host to the Simon Bartlett Memorial Congress (24-26 January).

**Open:** 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 4/5, 2-4 Alan Punnett (Guildford), Jonathan Underwood (Seaton), Graham Bolt (Exeter) 3½.

**Major:** 1-3 Yasser Tello (Wimbledon), Brian Gosling (East Budleigh), George Lekoudis (Hastings) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1 Robert Wilby (Plymouth) 4½, 2 Paul O'Brien (Worthing) 4, 3-7 Dinah Norman (Wokingham), Amanda Jones (Salisbury), Eddie Fierek (Gloucester), Gregor Fotheringham (Tiverton), Piotr Ruszelak (Torquay) 3.

**Minor:** 1-2 Alan Stonebridge (Wellington), Lana Boztas (Coulsdon), 3-4 John MacDonald (Kings Head), Steven Cawser (Brixham) 3½.

## **April 2020**

**BATTLE** – At the recent FIDE Congress in Abu Dhabi we were delighted to see the confirmation of the International Arbiter title to two ECF arbiters, Ravi Sandhu and John Wickham. Meanwhile, in a break with tradition, the ECF have published their 2020 Yearbook online - visit [www.englishchess.org.uk](http://www.englishchess.org.uk) for a PDF version.

**BELFAST** – It was great to be reminded by our friends in Ulster that simultaneous exhibitions still take place and can prove very popular. On the evening on 20th February Matthew Turner gave a simul at the Stormont Pavilion, scoring 27/28. Matthew was held to draws by Danny Roberts (Belfast) and Robert Lavery (Ballynafeigh) and impressed his hosts as he “Took time to chat to players and have some good craic.”

**BRISTOL** – The Bristol Winter Congress (14-16 March) saw a five-way tie for first in the Open after Keith Arkell was defeated by Jonah Willow who then drew with Alan Merry.

**Open:** 1-5 Keith Arkell (Paignton), Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds), Jonah Willow (West Nottingham), Tom Brown (Cardiff), Alexandre Belsey (Bristol University) 4/5.

**Major:** 1-2 Gareth Cullen (South Bristol), Gwyn Havard (St Albans) 4½, 3 Andrew Heard (Beckenham) 4.

**Minor:** 1-4 Geoff Ainsley (Halifax), Lana Boztas (Coulsdon), Anthony Carver (Bristol), John Webb (Cosham) 4.

**COVENTRY** – The in-form Mark Hebden won his first four games ahead of a draw with Jonah Willow to pocket the £250 first prize at the Warwickshire Open Championships in Coventry (21-23 February). Bruce Baer became Warwickshire Champion, with the women's title being shared by Imogen Dicen and Anna Szasz.

**Open:** 1 Mark Hebden (Leicester) 4½/5, 2-5 Jonah Willow (West Nottingham), Aaravamudhan Balaji (Coulsdon), Bruce Baer (Mutual Circle, Birmingham), Stratsimir Kostov (Northampton) 4.

**Major:** 1 Lionel Riou-Durand (Coventry) 4/5, 2-5 Yasmin Giles (Lancaster University), Ian Deswarte (Guildford), Michael Dunkley (Peterborough), Shahab Quraishi (West Bromwich) 3½.

**Intermediate:** 1 Phil Foley (Upminster) 4½/5, 2-4 Neil Homer (Northampton), Daniel Hilditch-Love (Newport), Alan Woollaston (South Birmingham) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Phil Love (Newport) 4½/5, 2 Paul Silverman (Solihull) 4, 3 Granville Hill (Latimer) 3½.

**EXETER** – Bob Jones reports from the East Devon Congress (6-8 March): In spite of the Coronavirus threat and three late withdrawals, the congress enjoyed its highest entry for a decade, proving that at least chessplayers weren't then intending to miss out on their weekend fun. A little further spice was added by the visit on family business of Devonian and former Australian Champion Gary Lane, who was glad to be able to combine business and pleasure.



Added to the mix was the return of Shreyas Royal [left], who last year was perhaps somewhat burdened by the press's label of 'The World's Strongest 10-Year-Old'. Since then, he greatly reduced his chess commitments in order to concentrate on school studies and forthcoming 11+ exams, but now that's all behind him, he's able to gear himself up for this year's British Championship which is scheduled to return Torquay in July. Shreyas is the third-youngest ever qualifier and aims to turn his Candidate Master's title to at least FIDE Master and hopefully IM. That will surely come before too long,

although he was a little off the pace at Exeter and finished on a modest 50%.

Round 5 saw the top two seeds paired on board one, Gary Lane and Will Claridge-Hansen. The latter, having taken a bye in the first round, trailed by a half point, so Lane could settle for a risk-free draw and wait to see if anyone could catch him, which no-one could.

**Open:** 1 Gary Lane (Rooty Hill) 4½/5, 2-5 Will Claridge-Hansen (Exeter University), Peter Large (Epsom), Carsten Stanetzek (Niederkassel), Graham Moore (Coltishall) 4.

**Major:** 1 Nathan Mills (Brixham) 5, 2-3 Frank Pittman (Weymouth), Rob Fursman (Newmarket) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Chris Webb (Dorchester) 4½, 2-5 Joseph Farrell (Metropolitan), David Gilbert (Sidcup), Barry Childs (Huelgoat), Jeff Leung (Exeter University) 4.

**W. Claridge-Hansen - S. Royal** - Exeter 2020 [Notes by Will Claridge-Hansen]



White stands better here after a successful opening and now opens the d-file.

**18 c5! dxc5 19 ♘h3 e6?**

19... ♗e6 20 ♘xe6 fxe6 21 ♖xc5 looks ugly for Black but was the only option.

**20 e5!**

Rather than recapturing the pawn, White fixes the dark squares and prepares ♗c3-e4-f6.

**20... ♖e7**

20... ♗f5 was necessary, if rather grim for Black after 21 ♘xf5 gxf5 22 ♖d6.

**21 ♗e4 ♗e8**

White also wins after 21... ♗c6 22 ♗f6+ ♔h8 23 ♖h6.

**22 ♗f6+! ♗xf6 23 exf6 ♖d8 24 ♖xd7! ♖xf6**

Of course, 24... ♖xd7 25 ♖h6 would force mate.

**25 ♖xc5 1-0**

**FAREHAM** – Tony Corfe's Castle Chess organised the Fareham Congress (28 February - 1 March).

**Open:** 1 Charlie Nettleton (Uxbridge) 5/6, 2-3 Rishi Patel (Harrow), Tim Spanton (Battersea) 4.

**Major:** 1 Peter Dove (Newbury) 5, 2 Gillian Moore (Southampton) 4½, 3-7 Matthew Deacon (Fareham), George Georgiou (Swindon), Ben Harte (Wanstead), Jacques Parry (Coulsdon), Peter Wood (Hastings) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Jason Madden (Leamington) 5, 2 Daniel Rugman (Hammersmith) 4½, 3-7 Charles Charalambous (Isle of Wight), Paul Collis (Godalming), Nicholas Deacon (Fareham), Anthony Elbourn (Gosport), Robin Morris-Weston (Coulsdon) 4.

**FISHGUARD** – The Dyfed Congress once again took place at the Fishguard Bay Hotel (14-16 February). Alan Young (White Knights, Llanelli) impressed as he racked up 4½/5 in a small, if fairly strong, Open, with Howard Williams (Cardigan) coming second. In the Major, Mark Paffard (Steynton) defeated tournament leader Robert Hurn (Caerphilly) in the final round to force a three-way tie, the pair being joined on on 4/5 by Stephen Chadaway (Church Stretton).

**KIDLINGTON** – The 43rd Kidlington Congress once again proved popular and took place at its traditional home of Exeter Hall. Carl Portman features one of his games from Kidlington elsewhere in these pages, while in the Open top seed Marcus Harvey reached 4/4 by defeating Andrew Greet before being held to a draw by Oxford University's Yuting Fu.

**Open:** 1 Marcus Harvey (Witney) 4½/5, 2 Daniel Abbas 4, 3-4 Yuting Fu (both Oxford University) Andrew Greet (Bearsden) 3½.

**Major:** 1 David Ireland (Coventry) 4½, 2-4 Roger de Coverly (Bourne End), Anita Somton (West Nottingham), Adam Sieczkowski (Witney) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1-2 Peter Dove (Newbury), Gareth Stevens (Cumnor) 4½, 3-5 Peter Smith (Northampton), Darrell Watson (Bourne End), Chris Copeland (Bicester) 3½.

**Minor:** 1 Zulfi Heydon (Oxford) 5, 2 Colin Thompson (Chippenham) 4½, 3-4 Duncan Clarke (Aylesbury), Richard Collis (Bristol) 4.

**LEYLAND** – The Leyland Rapidplay took place at the Banqueting Suite in the South Ribble Borough Council Civic Centre on February 16th.

**Under-195:** 1 Peter Jowett (Preston) 5/6, 2-3 Mark Whitehead (Rochdale), Lee Kay (Atherton) 3½.

**Intermediate:** 1 Michael Fisher (Oldham) 5, 2 Steve Hill (Meir) 4½, 3-5 Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Kevin Winter (Bradford), Jim McKie (East Cheshire) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Andrey Shamshin (Preston) 6, 2 Jack Yang (Chester) 5, 3 Neil Maher (Liverpool) 4½.

**LONDON** – The Hampstead Under-2200 Congress of March 14th and 15th was one of the first events to be cancelled due to a certain virus. Back in February (15-16), Junhao Xian (Queen Mary College) had triumphed with a perfect score, finishing a point clear of Shahjahon Saidmurodov (Newham). Edmond Andal (Philippines) also made 5/5 in the Under-1900 section, with David Cork (Coulsdon) and Jeremy Brockes (Hampstead) back in second, while Andrea Passariello (Rochester) made it a clear sweep for perfect winning scores in the Under-1700, Anusha Subramanian (Maidenhead) and Nigel White (Wanstead) sharing second a point adrift.

Adam Raoof's many events will be missed during these Coronavirus-affected times, including the weekday Muswell Hill Rapidplay, where on February 18th Bogdan Lalic (Hastings) and Peter Sowray (Hammersmith) shared first with 4½/5. Haran Rasalingam (Dulwich) triumphed with 6/6 in the Major, finishing a point ahead of Ozan Oz (Turkey), with Leonard Wylie (Cambridgeshire) and Simon Ogah (Harrow) sharing first in the Minor on 5/6. Russell Granat had earlier claimed first place ahead of two FMs at the Golders Green Rapidplay of February 8th.

**Open:** 1 Russell Granat (Wimbledon) 5/6, 2-3 Dimitrijs Tokranovs (London), Maciej Czopor (Poland) 4½.

**Major:** 1 Kazi Azizur Rahman (Battersea) 6, 2-3 Kevin Smyth (Folkestone), Ethan Li (Barnet) 4½.

**Minor:** 1 Jean-Claude Sartenaer (Hendon) 6, 2 Myroslav Seman (Cowley) 5, 3-4 Andy Mitchell (Lewes), Alfred Soulier (Wimbledon) 4½.

**Amateur:** 1-2 Anusha Subramanian, Shrihan Koppuravuri (both Maidenhead) 5, 3-5 Christopher Eliadis (Woking), David Bluestone (London), George Meligonis (Muswell Hill) 4½.

**Improvers:** 1 Liad Levy 6, 2 Bharath Jayakumar (both Barnet) 5, 3-4 Gavin Wang (Southampton), Darren Sutton (Oxford) 4½.

**Under-80:** 1 Aradhya Kothari (Essex) 6, 2-3 Madhav Kaushik (Golders Green), Ayush Pipalia (Barnet) 5.

Legendary IM Mike Basman turned 74 on March 16th and finished second at the Kingston Rapidplay on February 29th.

**Open:** 1 Dimitrijs Tokranovs (London) 5/6, 2 Mike Basman (Surbiton) 4½, 3-4 Ciprian Matei (Romania), Raghu Kamath (Richmond) 4.

**Major:** 1-2 Vladimir Bovtramovics (Woking), Shivam Agarwal (India) 5, 3 Kenneth Hobson (Cowley) 4½.

**Minor:** 1 Anusha Subramanian (Maidenhead) 6, 2 Ravindran Visagan (Richmond) 5, 3-4 Oliver Stockham (Sussex), Ankit Gaekwad (Petts Wood) 4.

As we'll see next month, Oxford University triumphed at this year's BUCA Championship and went into the annual Varsity match on the back of three successive wins in the historic fixture. However, they were outrated by over 125 points per board on average and didn't even manage to win a game, Cambridge's 5½-2½ victory extending their overall lead to 60-56, with 22 matches drawn. Shohreh Bayat was a special guest of honour at the RAC Club, with Cambridge first on the board through Ryan Rhys Griffiths who rather demolished Daniel Abbas's Nimzo-Indian before Harry Grieve and Gustavo Leon Cazares got the better of Akshaya Kalaiyalahan and Andrew Rogozinski respectively.

**NOTTINGHAM** – Despite the sad loss in early January of Nottingham chess supremo Robert Richmond (1956 - 2020), the Nottingham Rapidplay took place on February 16th.

**Open:** 1 Mark Hebden (Leicester) 5½/6, 2-3 John Naylor, Shabir Okhai (both Syston) 4½.

**Major:** 1-2 Paul Colburn (Rugby), Robert Taylor (Ashfield) 5, 3-6 Andrew Toothill (Shepshed), Michael Connor (Great Lever), Joe Hirst (Newcastle-under-Lyme), John Thomson (Market Harborough) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1-2 Andrew Allen (Worksop), Graham Gibson (Gambit, Nottingham) 5, 3-5 Barry Redburn (Radcliffe), Chris Fraser (West Bridgford), Kevin Gallagher (Lichfield) 4½.

**Minor:** 1-2 Ray Bettam (Coleshill), Granville Hill (Latimer) 5, 3-8 Joshua Sawyer (Lichfield), Robert Arthurton (Skegness), Paul Fischer (Lincoln), Andrew Watson (Skegness), Gavin Dow (Radcliffe), Li Jiping (Sheffield) 4.

**Improvers:** 1-2 Isaac Keenan (West Nottingham), Adam Hartshorne (Radcliffe) 5½, 3-5 Vassily Sagyaman (Coventry), Rene Butler (Market Harborough), Richard Bohm (Bury) 4.

## May 2020

**BIRMINGHAM** – The 28th Birmingham Rapidplay on March 15th was once again well run at the Quinborne Community Centre by that highly able team of Alex Holowczak, Dave Thomas and Ravi Sandhu.

**Open:** 1 Henrik Stepanyan 6/7, 2-3 Tomasz Sygnowski (both Sutton Coldfield), Precious Emojevu (Manchester) 5.

**Major:** 1 Francis Sagyaman (Nuneaton) 6, 2-3 Sam Davies (Southport), Devan Patel (Rushall) 5.

**Intermediate:** 1-2 Michael Fisher (Oldham), Billy Fellowes (Halesowen) 5½, 3 Peter Loach (Oscott) 5.

**Minor:** 1-2 Luke Sullivan (Rugeley), Dylan Whitney (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 6, 3-5 Joshua Tang (Leicester), Ray Bettam (Coleshill), Vassily Sagyaman (Coventry) 4½.

Earlier, and out at Birmingham Airport, over the weekend of 22-23 February, Oxford University won the British Universities' Chess Association (BUCA) Championship, their first victory since 2011. Seeded second, Oxford got off to the best possible start, defeating defending champions Imperial College before overcoming top seeds Cambridge – who would gain revenge a fortnight later in the Varsity match, as we saw last month – as well as Warwick, LSE and Bristol. Joris Gerlagh of the Netherlands did for Oxford what most teams would like their top board to do, drawing all five games, including with Cambridge's rising star IM Matthew Wadsworth, while Romanian FM Victor Vasiesiu amassed 4½/5 and Macedonian Filip Mihov chipped in with '+3'. Cambridge claimed the

silver medals, winning their other four matches, with bronze going to Warwick, who also finished second in two of the supporting sections, the Plate and Bowl, and won the Shield, all while fielding an impressive nine teams in total.

### **R. Haria - M. Wadsworth** - UCL vs Cambridge Reti Opening

**1 ♖f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♙g2 c6 4 c4 ♙f5 5 0-0 e6 6 cxd5 exd5 7 d3 ♙e7**

Classical development, but 7... ♙c5!? 8 ♚b3 ♙b6 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 ♘a4 ♚e8 11 ♘xb6 axb6 12 ♚c2 h6 13 b3?! c5 14 ♙b2 ♘c6 already favoured Black in Oparin-Carlsen, World Rapid, St. Petersburg 2018.

**8 ♚b3 ♙b6 9 ♚c2!**

Keeping queens on and now the e2-e4 break will leave White with a handy central preponderance.

**9...0-0 10 ♘c3 ♘bd7**

10...h6 11 e4 ♙h7 saves the bishop, but also looks quite pleasant for White after 12 ♙e3.

**11 e4 ♙g6 12 ♘h4! dxe4 13 dxe4 ♘e5 14 ♙e3 ♚a6 15 ♘xg6 hxg6 16 ♙d4**



16 ♚ad1 to avoid any counterplay on the d3-square was likely even stronger. In any case, in this battle between two talented, young IMs, it's safe to say that Black has been outplayed, with White enjoying a mobile central majority and the bishop-pair.

**16... ♚d3 17 ♚d1?! ♚xd1?!**

White's last two moves haven't been too accurate and here 17... ♘fg4! was a decent way to stir up trouble, and if 18 ♚xd3 (or 18 h3 ♚fd8) 18... ♘xd3 19 ♚ad1 ♘xb2 20 ♚b1 ♚ad8!.

**18 ♚axd1 ♘c4 19 e5! ♘g4?**

19... ♘d7 20 f4 ♘c5 21 b3 ♘b6 resembles a bad Slav for Black but had to be tried.

**20 b3 ♘b2!?**

There's to be no return path for this knight, but Black's problem is that 20... ♘b6 21 h3 ♘h6 22 g4! would but rather leave his other knight sidelined.

**21 ♚d2 ♚fd8 22 h3**

Hardly bad, but the immediate 22 ♘d5! would have been even stronger, and if 22... ♙a3 (or 22...cxd5 23 ♙xb2) 23 h3 ♘h6 24 ♙xb2 ♙xb2 25 ♚xb2 cxd5 26 ♚d2 followed by collecting the d-pawn.

**22... ♘xe5 23 ♘d5! ♙d6 24 ♙xb2 cxd5 25 ♚xd5 ♘c6 26 ♚fd1 ♙e7**



Wadsworth has done well to stay on the board, but now must not only face two raking bishops, but the invasion of his second rank.

**27 ♖d7 ♘f8 28 ♙f3 ♜ab8 29 ♙c3**

There's no need to rush, but White could have begun to increase the pressure to unpleasant levels with 29 h4! followed by the line-opening h4-h5.

**29...f6 30 ♙e4 g5 31 ♖f1 ♙e8 32 ♙g6+ ♖f8 33 ♖e2 a6 34 ♙e4 ♜xd7**

White has drifted a little and after 34... ♜bc8 might have been down to only a very pleasant edge.

**35 ♜xd7 ♘d8 36 ♙d2 b6 37 b4 a5?! 38 a3?**

There was no reason to decline the pawn, in view of 38 bxa5 bxa5 39 ♙xa5, and if 39... ♜b2+ 40 ♜d2.

**38... ♘e6?!**

Time-trouble. After 38... ♘f7! (preparing to activate with ... ♘e5) 39 ♜b7 ♜xb7 40 ♙xb7 ♘e5 41 ♙d5 axb4 42 axb4 ♙d6 Black would have had definite chances to hold.

**39 ♙d5! ♘d4+ 40 ♖d3 ♘b5? 41 a4 ♘d6 42 bxa5 bxa5 43 ♙xa5**



There goes a pawn and Haria was now quick to finish Black off with a powerful sequence of moves.

**43... ♜b1 44 ♖c2 ♜a1 45 ♙b4! ♖e8 46 ♙c6 1-0**

**BLACKPOOL** – The famous Blackpool Congress was likely to be the last weekend for many a month. Entries were unsurprisingly down this year (13-15 March), with only 31 players and no GMs in the Open, but there were still almost 300 players in total at the Imperial Hotel, including a whopping 93 in the bottom section.

**Open:** 1 Martin Mitchell (Bispham) 4½/5, 2- 3 Antanas Zapolskis (London), Alan Tate (Edinburgh) 4.

**Major:** 1 David Ireland (Coventry) 4½, 2-5 Luke Boumphrey (Liverpool), Edison Figueroa (East Ham), Phillip Zabrocki (Shrewsbury), Neil Jones (Maryport) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1 Robert Clegg (Huddersfield) 5, 2-7 Keith Aitchison (Edinburgh), William Clinton (Livingston), Neil Coward (Blackpool), Max Parkhouse (Tockwith), Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster), Brendan O’Gorman (Coulsdon) 4.

**Minor:** 1-2 Edouardos Ter Gevorkian (Sheffield), Luke Maher (Liverpool) 4½, 3 Will Vout (Kynoch) 4.

**Standard:** 1 James McKay (Gosforth) 5, 2-3 Edward Patten (Formby), Katie Ord (Sydney) 4. The eventual local winner of the Open, Martin Mitchell, reached 4/4 after defeating veteran IM Antanas Zapolskis and John Naylor before drawing with FM Alan Tate. As so often, the overall victor had to ride their luck in the Friday night round.

### **M. Mitchell - B. Hymer** - Blackpool 2020 Old Indian Defence

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 d6 3 ♘c3 ♘bd7 4 e4 e5 5 ♘f3 ♘e7 6 ♘e2 0-0 7 0-0 c6 8 ♚c2 a6 9 a4**

Positionally a little suspect. White more usually maintains the tension with 9 ♖d1.

**9...a5 10 h3 ♜e8 11 ♜d1 ♚c7 12 ♘g5 h6 13 ♘h4?!**

The bishop will achieve little on the kingside. 13 ♘e3 exd4 14 ♘xd4 ♘c5 15 f4 ♘f8 16 ♘f3 was the critical line.

**13... ♘f8 14 ♘g3 ♘h5 15 ♘h2 ♘f4 16 ♘f1 g5!?**



This gives up the f5-square, but crucially takes the fight to the higher-rated player (classic Chess for Tigers advice) and gives Black definite attacking chances.

**17 ♘e2 ♘f6?!**

17... ♘g7 or 17... ♘xe2+!? 18 ♘xe2 exd4 19 ♘xd4 ♘c5 would have avoided the possibility in the next note.

**18 ♘g3?!**

Eyeing the hole on f5, but 18 c5! would have been a powerful undermining, and if 18...dxc5 19 dxe5.

**18...g4 19 ♘h4?!**

White is fixated on f5 and begins an overly ambitious plan. After 19 hxg4 ♘xg4 20 ♘f5 ♘xf5 21 exf5 he certainly can't be worse and shouldn't get mated.

**19...gxh3 20 ♘hf5?! hxg2 21 ♘xg2 ♚h7**

Control of f5 doesn't supply too much compensation, in part because the centre is fluid and as Black can attack down the g-file and by making use of his additional h-pawn.

**22 ♘f3 ♘e7 23 c5**

A little hasty again. Regrouping with 23 ♚h1 ♜g8 24 ♘e3! would have kept White on the board.

**23... ♜g8 24 ♚h1 ♘g4! 25 cxd6**

Now Black untangles, but he also would have done so after 25 ♖xg4 ♜xg4 26 ♜g1 dxc5 27 dxc5 ♙e6.

**25... ♙xd6 26 ♙xg4 ♜xg4 27 ♘xd6?**

Giving up on the hard-won outpost. 27 ♜g1 would have left Black less actively placed and White still with definite defensive chances.

**27... ♜xd6 28 dxe5 ♜xe5 29 ♜d8?**



**29... ♜h4**

Hardly bad, but Black missed that after 29... ♜xg3! 30 fxg3 (30 ♙xg3? ♜h5+ 31 ♖g1 ♘e2+ 32 ♖f1 ♙g4 leads to a quick mate), there's 30... ♙g4!, and if 31 gxf4 ♙f3+ 32 ♖g1 ♜g7+ 33 ♖f1 ♜xd8. Also, rather neat, as well as deadly, is 29... ♙f5!?, and if 30 ♜xa8 ♜xg3!

**30 ♜ad1 ♜g5?**

After 30... ♙g4! 31 ♜b3 ♜f6 32 ♜xa8 ♘h3 Black's mighty attack would have massively outweighed White's extra rook.

**31 ♜c3 f6 32 ♜a3 c5 33 ♜b3 ♜g7 34 ♜c3? ♜g5?**

Strange things can happen in timetrouble. 34... ♙g4 was still on and even stronger would have been 34... ♜g4!, in view of 35 ♜h8+ ♖g7!.

**35 ♜b3 ♜g7 36 ♜b6? ♙g4**

At last Black seizes his chance, or at least appears to have done...

**37 ♜xa8 ♙xd1 38 ♜xc5 ♙f3+ 39 ♖g1 ♘e2+ 40 ♖f1**



**40... ♜h2??**

Black would have been winning easily after 40... ♖d7, and if 41 ♖d5 ♗xd5 42 exd5 ♜d4, “But in time pressure this was beyond me,” writes the loser of this great if cruel scrap. “So I went for the line that wins in all variations bar the crucial one!”

**41 ♖f5+ ♗g6 42 ♜h8+!**

Ouch. Playing longplay games without a time control (Blackpool was 110 minutes for all the moves, with a 10-second increment), as we so often do these days, can easily lead to some unfortunate oversights.

**42... ♗xh8 43 ♗xg6 ♜xg3+ 44 fxg3 1-0**

Barry nobly adds, “All credit to Martin: he went all in to win even when his position didn’t warrant it. My nerve failed me at critical junctures and we both went on to get the tournament results we deserved.”

**COVENTRY** – The highly successful Coventry Chess Academy followed junior events run by the Warwickshire Chess Association on Saturday 7th March with a rapid the next day.

**Masters:** 1 Finlay Bowcott-Terry (Halesowen) 6/6, 2 Chris Baker 5, 3-7 Bernard Charnley, Joshua Pink, David O’Neill (all Coventry), Dustin Bowcott (Halesowen), Jude Shearsby (Kenilworth) 3½.

**DONCASTER** – The in-form and already 219-graded Oskar Hackner won all five games at the Doncaster Congress (21-23 February).

**Open:** 1 Oskar Hackner (Sheffield Nomads) 5/5, 2-5 Deji Jeje (Hillsborough), Simon Smith (Oxford), Yichen Han (Newcastle), Peter Shaw (Wakefield) 3½.

**Major:** 1-3 Anita Somton (West Nottingham), Robert Taylor (Malpas), Sam Davies (Southport) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1-3 Rob Fursman (Newmarket), Steven Watson (Hull), Alexander Iskauskas (London) 4. **Minor:** 1 Barry Williams (Aughton) 4½, 2-6 Noel Boustred (Gosforth), Alan Smith (Doncaster), David Buckell (Clitheroe), Chris Fraser (West Bridgford), Phil Sneesby (Norwich) 4.

**LONDON** – Adam Raoof’s Chess England organisation has moved online for the time being and are regularly holding events on Lichess. Adam’s latest OTB event before restrictions on social movement came in was the Golders Green Rapidplay of March 7th, where only Bao Nghia Dong was able to take a draw off GM Bogdan Lalic.

**Open:** 1 Bogdan Lalic (Hastings) 5½/6, 2 Roy Sagall (Mushrooms) 4½, 3-5 Bao Nghia Dong (Battersea), Peter Sowray (Hammersmith), Ciprian Matei (Romania) 4.

**Major:** 1 Sebastiano Rebonato Scott (Richmond) 5½, 2-5 Conrad Allison (Petts Wood), Oliver Finnegan (Loughton), Niall Clarke (Elstree), Theo Khoury (Maidenhead) 4½.

**Minor:** 1 Frankie Badacsonyi (Muswell Hill) 4½, 2-5 Salvatore Pepe, Morris Jones (both Hendon), Avyukt Dasgupta (Watford), Tomasz Janeczko (Cavendish) 4.

**Amateur:** 1 Mark Johnson (Colchester) 5½, 2 Faye Ainscow (Kings Head) 4, 3-4 Geoffrey Sims (Surbiton), Kai Gardner (Banbury) 3½. **Improvers:** 1-2 Dmitriy Borodkin (Scotland), Gul Kapur (Enfield) 5, 3-4 Giulio Buanne (Battersea), Riccardo Rebonato (Richmond) 4½.

**Under-80:** 1 Leo Jowell (Camden) 6, 2 Kai Rundall (London) 5, 3-4 Zac Gardner (Barnet), Maya Fitzhardinge (London) 4½.

At the other end of the news spectrum from the many young players and those new to the game who compete each month at Golders Green, we were sad to hear of the recent passing of Tony Suttill. He was one of the founders of the legendary Kings Head Chess Club, along with Andrew Whiteley and Roger Lancaster, in the late 1970s, and held administrative roles with the ECF and Middlesex County Chess Association.

**RINGWOOD** – The 25th Dorset Rapidplay was organised, as each one has been, by local chess supremo Martin Simons and was played, amidst a number of elbow bumps, on March 15th. Matthew Turner (Glastonbury) took top honours and the £200 first prize with 5½/6, Ian Clark (Wimborne) and Ian Thompson (Crowthorne) collecting £100 each and sharing the Dorset Rapidplay title after finishing just half a point adrift.

**WHITTLESFORD** – Philip Bonafont and Chris Davison tied for first in the EACU Closed Championship which took place to the south of Cambridge (7-8 March).

**Open:** 1-2 Philip Bonafont (Norwich), Chris Davison (Cambridge) 4/5, 3 John Anderson (Lowestoft) 3½.

**Under-170:** 1-3 James Pack (Bury St Edmunds), Steve Moore (Norwich), Antony Hall (Streatham) 3½.

**Under-130:** 1 Gert de Block (Cambridge) 4, 2-5 John Weston (Fakenham), Steven Ashworth (Ely), Biran Shah (Norwich), Edward Knox (Peterborough) 3½.

## **June 2020**

**4NCL** – A speedy and welcome response to the pandemic came from 4NCL supremo Mike Truran who decided to move the league online. Impressively organised and run by Alex Holowczak and his team of helpers, play began in the inaugural 4NCL Online League as early as April 7th. As many as 180 teams of four per match are doing battle across no fewer than five divisions.

There is also a successful 130-team Junior 4NCL Online running on Thursday night in parallel with it. All games are played with a 45-minute time control with a 15-second increment per move on the Lichess portal. As such, the 4NCL Online is subject to Lichess' anti-cheating measures and we'll have more next month on such issues as chess moves online. We'll also bring you the best of the action next month.

For now, with six of the 10 preliminary rounds played, Chessable White Rose led Division One with a perfect score, aided in no small part by 6/6 from IM James Adair. Battersea Horses, Guildford Young Guns, Surbiton, Watford and Wood Green were all on 10/12.

**BATTLE** – By the time you read these pages Chess.com will have hosted a 24-hour chess marathon for the ECF which will raise funds for the work of the British Red Cross as they help those affected by Covid-19. We're sure plenty of subscribers will have supported this fine initiative and will let you know how it went next month, as well as bring you the results of the English Blitz Championships, the final of which took place just as we went to press.

The two qualifying tournaments on May 9th attracted 248 and 216 players respectively, and were won by Gawain Jones and Justin Tan. There are six ECF-rated events run online each week by Nigel Towers and his colleagues, making use of both the Lichess and Chess.com portals, and the County Championships are also moving on to the internet for this year.

As mentioned in last month's Editorial, we were sad to hear of the death of 80-year-old Kings Head member Tim Crouch. Fellow weekend tournament stalwart Richard Desmedt remembered Tim as 'Always a gentleman and [he] was very pleased to have a chat with anyone.' Another victim of Covid-19 was 83-year-old Tom Evans of Olton Chess Club, who unfortunately contracted the virus whilst in hospital. Just as the Leamington and District League will miss 'Old Tom', so will the Blackpool and Flyde chess community mourn popular 76-year-old Geoff Robinson of Lytham St Annes Chess Club who also passed away after catching this horrible virus.

## July 2020

**BATTLE** – IM Andrew Horton stunned Gawain Jones in the semi-finals of the English Online Blitz Championship on May 16th, advancing 2½-½. Meanwhile Marcus Harvey needed an Armageddon encounter to get past fellow speed expert Ameet Ghasi before the final was a fairly one-sided affair, Harvey winning the first three games. In the women's competition, Svetlana Sucikova ran out a convincing winner, defeating fellow WFM Shohreh Bayat 2½-½. England continues to lead the way as a country providing chess online, be that through the ECF's events, including the County Championships Online which got underway in early June, or with the England Women who now have over 200 members on Lichess and, led by Jovanka Houska, took part in the Online International Women's Competition, where in the opening round on May 28th they finished second, behind Austria.

**EDINBURGH** – We were sorry to hear of the passing of Hugh Flockhart (ii.xii.1937 - viii.v.2020), who had been suffering for some years from Parkinson's disease. Flockhart was a former director of Chess Scotland and the main driving force behind the 2003 British Championships in Edinburgh. In more recent years, this legend of Edinburgh chess had worked hard to get Scotland's senior teams up and running, initially playing for them.

**LINDORES** – While Hikaru Nakamura amassed an unbeaten '+4', Magnus Carlsen was far from his best in the preliminary stage of the Lindores Abbey Rapid Challenge (19 May - 3 June; crosstable on page 17). That said, the champ did outplay Alireza Firouzja when required to make the quarter-finals, where one of the most eye-catching encounters was the following.

**Yu Yangyi - Ding Liren** - Quarter-final: 2nd set; Game 4 Two Knights Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘ f3 ♘ c6 3 ♙ c4 ♙ f6 4 ♘ g5 d5 5 exd5 ♘ a5 6 ♙ b5+ c6 7 dxc6 bxc6 8 ♚ f3

Now Black usually plays 8... ♚ b8 or develops a bishop, but Ding has presumably concluded that White's bluff can be called.

8...cxb5!? 9 ♚ xa8 ♙ e7 10 0-0 h6!?

A new idea. 10...0-0 11 d4 exd4 12 ♚ f3 h6 13 ♘ e4 ♙ b7 14 ♘ xf6+ ♙ xf6 has seen a bit of correspondence testing and also looks quite viable for Black.

11 ♘ e4 ♚ d7 12 ♘ xf6+ gxf6 13 ♚ e4



Retreating the queen before she was trapped by ... ♘ c6.

**13... ♖ g8 14 f3?**

Overlooking a fiendish blow. 14 ♖ e2! ♗ c6 15 f3 was necessary, not that Black has any problems after 15... ♗ h3 16 ♜ f2 ♗ c5 17 g3 when play might conclude in an early if far-from-forced repetition with 17... ♗ xf2+ 18 ♔ xf2 ♗ c5+ 19 ♗ e3 ♗ c4 20 ♗ e2 ♗ c5+.

**14... ♗ c5+** Presumably only now did Yu spot 15 ♔ h1 ♜ xg2!, and if 16 ♔ xg2? (even 16 ♗ h4 ♜ g4! 17 ♗ e1 appears to be hopeless for White, as shown by 17... ♜ g6 18 ♗ h4 ♗ h3) 16... ♗ h3+ 17 ♔ h1 ♗ xf1#.

**15 d4 ♗ xd4+ 16 ♗ e3** 16 ♔ h1 would again have been poleaxed by 16... ♜ xg2! and Black is also winning after 16 ♜ f2 ♗ h3.

**16... ♗ h3 17 ♜ f2 ♗ b7**

Black's bishops continue to rule the roost.

**18 ♗ h7 ♜ xg2+! 19 ♜ xg2 ♗ xe3+ 20 ♔ h1 ♗ xf3 21 ♗ g8+ ♔ e7 22 ♘ c3 ♗ g5 23 ♜ ag1 ♗ f2 23... ♘ c4 24 ♗ b8 ♗ c6** would have been a simpler win.

**24 ♗ b8**



**24... ♗ xg2+?**

Electing to force a draw and so win the set, but Black might still have won had he found 24... ♗ b6!, keeping White fatally bottled up.

**25 ♜ xg2 ♗ f1+ 26 ♜ g1 ♗ f3+ 27 ♜ g2 ♗ f1+ 28 ♜ g1 ♗ f3+ 29 ♜ g2 ♗ f1+ ½-½**

**LONDON** – John Harold Woolley (i.x.1945 - xxi.v.2020) played for Acton, Wimbledon, Hammersmith, West London, Hayes (now Uxbridge), Greenford, and Middlesex.

Peter Lord pays tribute – “John was a popular and surprisingly strong club chess player, who was universally well-known and equally popular, especially within the West London league ‘circuit’. It may well be no exaggeration to say that he epitomised the ‘soul’ of chess, and that we and the game are all the poorer for his passing. He had a strong artistic bent, often ‘preparing’ for a tough league game with a visit to the cinema to see a film, or even two occasionally. For him it would all be part of that day’s artistic appreciation.

This artistry was also evidenced in his games, where he strove for beauty and truth more than the result. John’s passions were art, films, animal welfare and, of course, chess and chess history, of which he had an extensive knowledge. I always enjoyed John’s company; he was entertaining and wise. He seemed ageless and when I found out how old he really was, I struggled to believe it. He always seemed youthful, timeless, and open to ideas and friendly chat. We would usually be the first to the bar at Greenford versus Uxbridge matches, and chess hardly ever figured in our

conversations. Yes, now and then he would get upset at some chess match happening that rankled, and he could be known to rant and sulk, but left alone he would soon return to 'normal'.

An especial thank you to Michael Price, John's good friend, who had been doing John's shopping during the lockdown. Michael remembered that John was the only chess player he's ever heard of who valued draws over wins. That said, our record was P5 W2 D1 L2. I like to think we both enjoyed the cut and thrust of our games. He was a true artist, and will be much missed. He had a few foibles, but a good heart."

Paul Kennelly added, "Previously a captain at Acton Chess Club, John was for decades a committee member of the Thames Valley League and in his time also dabbled with West London Chess Club, before finding a home at Hammersmith. In recent years he played mostly for Uxbridge and Greenford. He was known as an eccentric, but this belied a deep knowledge of many subjects, including art – it's believed John attended most major exhibitions in London over the past 40 odd years – and it's something he loved to talk about. He was also a long-standing supporter of Arsenal football club, having a season ticket for many years, and of course was a very able chess player, still punching above 140 ECF as recently as 2016."

**4NCL** – Not only has the main 4NCL been a big success, but also the Junior 4NCL Online, involving 142 teams of four players per match. That takes place on Thursday evenings; elsewhere on the first and third Monday of each month, Alex Holowczak is doing further fine work in running the County Junior Team Battles, which regularly involve some 450 children. Just before we went to press, the initial group stage of the 4NCL Online League concluded, where in Divisions One to Four, teams were divided into four pools, taking part in both an all-play-all therein and facing those teams from the other pools who shared the same seeding. Chessable White Rose finished some six points clear in Pool C, racking up a huge 19/20, while Battersea Horses also impressed as they made 17/20 in Pool D, where Wood Green's first team surprisingly didn't make it through.



The event then moved on to a knockout stage in which the quarter-final pairings for Division One were: Anglian Avengers vs Watford, Battersea Horses vs Wood Green Monarchs, Chessable White Rose vs Celtic Tigers, and Guildford Young Guns vs Warwick University. While Gawain Jones plays for Guildford in the 4NCL proper, he turned out in the final two rounds to help White Rose qualify, impressing with his technique. Another Yorkshireman who did very well was James Adair [left, picture by John Saunders], who excelled at the 45+15 time control, scoring a huge 9½/10.

### **J. Rogers - J. Adair** - Barbican vs Chessable White Rose English Opening

**1 c4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 e5 3 ♘f3 ♘c6 4 e3 ♙b4 5 ♘d5**

A natural leap, but there may be a good reason why the main line has long been the complex 5 ♙c2 0-0 6 ♘d5 ♚e8 7 ♙f5.

**5...e4 6 ♘xb4 ♘xb4 7 ♘d4?!**

By far White's main move here, but 7 a3 may well be preferred in future, and if 7... ♘c6 (7... ♘d3+? 8 ♙xd3 exd3 9 ♙b3 safely collects the pawn) 8 ♘d4 ♘xd4 9 exd4 0-0 10 d3 d5 11 dxe4 ♘xe4 12 ♙e3 with rough equality.

**7...c5!**



## 8 ♖b5

This doesn't really help, but White was worse too after 8 ♖b3 b6 9 d4 exd3 10 ♙xd3 d5 11 cxd5 ♙xd3+ 12 ♚xd3 ♚xd5 13 ♚xd5 ♙xd5 in Baghdasaryan-Bakunts, Yerevan 2016, and even 8 ♖c2!? ♙d3+! 9 ♙xd3 exd3 10 ♖a3 0-0 11 ♚b3 d5 leaves Black with excellent light-square compensation after 12 ♚xd3 dxc4 13 ♚xd8 ♚xd8 14 ♖xc4 ♖d5.

## 8...d5 9 a3 10 d3+ 11 cxd5

11 b4!? a6 12 ♖c3 dxc4 13 bxc5 ♙d7 14 0-0 ♙c6 doesn't impress for White, but at least this way his bishop would have a square.

## 11... ♙xd5 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♚f3?!

By this stage White likely had to dig in, grim though something like 13 ♖c3 ♙xc3 14 bxc3 ♚d5 15 ♙b2 ♙d7 16 f3 would be.

## 13...f5!

Even stronger than 13... ♙e6, as once played by Arkadij Naiditsch.

## 14 ♖c3

Black's light-square bind is also a most impressive one after 14 b3 a6 15 ♖c3 ♙xc3 16 dxc3 when even 16...c4!? is possible, and if 17 bxc4 d2 18 ♙b2 ♙e6 19 ♚e2 ♚d7.

## 14... ♙e6 15 ♚b1 a5

Continuing to clamp down on any counterplay.

## 16 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 17 ♚f4



White hopes to ditch the exchange for a degree of freedom with 17... ♙xg2 18 ♙xg2 ♚d5+ 19 ♙g1 ♚a2, but Adair is having none of it.

## 17... ♙a2! 18 ♚a1 ♙b3 19 a4 ♚d7 20 ♚a3 c4 21 ♚e1 ♚ac8 0-1

A striking and truly horrible position for White. We're not sure when we last saw such a bad bishop.

## **August 2020**

**4NCL** – After 13 highly successful Tuesday evenings of action involving some 184 teams, if also sadly a few bans for likely computer assistance, the first season of the 4NCL Online came to a finish, with Chessable White Rose defeating Guildford Young Guns 3-1 to claim the First Division title.

The other divisional winners were ChessPlus Alpha, Brentwood, Celtic Tigers Cubs and Hertford.

White Rose's triumph completed a remarkable few weeks for Chessable and we'll have the inside story of their success next month.

**ECF** – The ECF's National Online Club Championships also took place on Lichess (26-28 June), involving 30 teams split up into three sections. Harrow CC racked up 5/5 to triumph in the Major, with top honours in the Intermediate and Minor going to Wimbledon and Hull Chess Clubs, respectively.

## **September 2020**

**BATTLE** – We were delighted to see the ECF unfurloughing their generally excellent office staff, which certainly led to an increasing number of announcements and amount of news on [www.englishchess.org.uk](http://www.englishchess.org.uk). There you should head if you would like to take part at 6.30pm on Saturday 5th September in the North of England vs South of England match on Chess.com. Will the South triumph just as they did back in Birmingham in 1893 and London in 1894?

The ECF's shortlist for the Book of the Year Award features a still fairly new publisher, Elk & Ruby, appearing for the third year in a row, this time represented by Alexander Nikitin's Coaching Kasparov, volumes one and two. That is joined by Forster, Negele and Tischbierek's second volume of their Emanuel Lasker biography, as well as by two books from New in Chess: The Best I Saw in Chess by Stuart Rachels and David Smerdon's The Complete Chess Swindler. A high-quality shortlist, indeed, if one unusually not featuring a single UK-based chess publisher.

In less optimal news, we were sorry to hear via the ECF of the loss of 74-year-old David Woodruff, a stalwart of Keynsham Chess Club for decades. He held just about every role at one time or other at the Somerset Club and is estimated to have played over 1,000 matches for them. The chairman of Bourne End Chess Club, Ken Hawkins (xxviii.x.1951 - xxii.vii.2020), will also be much missed, both for his organisational acumen and his love of attacking play, not least in his favourite King's Gambit. Finally, we must sadly report that Bury Chess Club's popular president Bernard Sharples (xii.iii.1938 - xiii.vii.2020) lost his battle with cancer, having still been graded in the 150s and a most determined player until very recently.

**BRADFORD** – More sad news was the announcement of the death of Winston Williams, the originator of the Bradford Chesstival, which popularised the game in the West Riding city as chess took over Centenary Square for a day each summer, featuring simul, coaching and plenty of open-air games amongst the public.

Williams (xx.ii.1958-xxix.vii.2020) was born in London, but grew up in Singapore, where he once drew with Paul Keres in a simul. He rose to Inspector in the Singaporean Police Force before moving to Yorkshire in 2003, where he quickly became known as a larger-than-life character and as a regular in several leagues, while also serving in various official capacities and as a tutor for Chess in Schools and Communities.

**HARROGATE** – The ECF’s Checkmate Covid-19 may have been the main fundraiser for the British Red Cross, but there have also been smaller, no less worthy fundraising events involving chess online. One saw £350 raised for the Harrogate Community Trust Fund after a match between Harrogate Archbishops and Kenilworth Chess Club on LiChess, which came about thanks to the efforts of England Over-65 team-mates Mick Stokes and Mark Page. 15-year-old Mate Ther defeated Paul Lam 1½-½ on top board as Harrogate ran out winners by the narrowest of margins, 10½-9½.

**LICHESS** – More and more British events have popped up on Lichess, which is, of course, a lovely playing interface, albeit not the easiest to spectate on. Nevertheless, if tournaments identify players’ handles, it can be done easily enough, as was the case for the Glorney and Gilbert Cups in July. England drew with the Netherlands in the former, but after both teams had defeated Ireland, Belgium, Wales and Scotland, England triumphed thanks to their greater board points. The Dutch, however, had a measure of revenge as they claimed the Gilbert Cup (once known as the Faber), while in the younger age group events, England claimed top honours in both the Robinson and Stokes Cups.

By the time you receive these pages, a second season of the 4NCL and Junior 4NCL will be underway on Lichess (see [www.4ncl.co.uk](http://www.4ncl.co.uk)). Then in early September the 1st Welsh Chess Union Online League will begin, run by Mark Adams and Kevin Staveley – those interested in following some of the matches should keep an eye on [www.welshchessunion.uk](http://www.welshchessunion.uk).

In terms of completed national events, we mentioned the winners of the ECF National Online Club Championships last month, which took place under the watchful gaze of Stephen Greep and Douglas Vleeshouwer. More recently (13-19 July), the 1st Online Scottish Championships were run by Andy and Karen Howie. FM Alan Tate didn’t have things all his own way, but ran out a clear winner with 5½/7, Nihad Abdullazada and Craig Stout finishing half a point behind. Tilak Ittigi triumphed with 4½/5 in the Under- 1500 section, with Andrew Todd and Frederick Gordon making that same score as they shared top honours in the Weekender.

A stand-alone weekender was the one staged by Alex Holowczak and his ever sterling team on behalf of the 4NCL (10-12 July). This too took place on Lichess and attracted 172 players.

**Open:** 1 Brian Dinter (Stroud) 4½/5, 2-3 Dmitrijs Tokranovs (London), Thomas Villiers (Muswell Hill) 4.

**Major:** 1-3 Tim Valentine (Battersea), David Hall (Perth), Leon Cox (Winwick) 4.

**Minor:** 1-3 Daniel Shek (Crowthorne), Jason Liu (Dublin), Urbi Modhura (Southend) 4½. And what, you might wonder, about the indefatigable Adam Raoof? Well, his regular Golders Green Rapidplay, Hampstead Under-2200 Congress and blitz events have all moved online, if not to Lichess. If you’d like to play in some, do just check out: [tornelo.com/chess/orgs/chess-england](http://tornelo.com/chess/orgs/chess-england).



**RICHMOND** – We were saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Julian Farrand (xiii.viii.1935 - xvii.vii.2020) [left, picture courtesy of John Upham]. Born in Doncaster, Farrand was educated at Haberdashers’ Askes before enjoying a distinguished career in the field of law, as Professor of Law at the University of Manchester, Law Commissioner, and Insurance and Pensions Ombudsman, while his second wife was Baroness Hale of Richmond. He was also a strong amateur player, as is his son Tom, and regularly did pretty well in the leading British events in the sixties and seventies. More recently Farrand had served as one of the judges of the ECF Book of the Year, represented England in World

and European Senior Team Championships, and turned out for Barbican in the 4NCL, as well as playing for the Cavendish, Insurance and Pimlico chess clubs. He was undoubtedly a keen player, as well as one who liked to attack, a quality which helped him claim the scalps of such players as former British Champions George Botterill and Harry Golombek.

### **J. Farrand - M. Franklin** - Blackpool 1976 Schmid Benoni

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 c5 3 d5 d6 4 e4 g6 5 ♙e2 ♙g7 6 ♘f3 0-0 7 0-0 ♘a6 8 ♘d2 ♘c7 9 a4!**

Ever a key advance in this structure, as well as the natural follow-up to White's last ahead of him bringing his knight to its ideal square.

**9...b6 10 ♘c4 ♖b8?!**

Slow, although even after 10... ♙a6 11 ♖e1 (11 ♙f4 ♘h5!? isn't so clear) 11... ♙xc4 12 ♙xc4 a6 13 ♙g5 ♘d7 14 ♖e2 White enjoys a pleasant edge.

**11 ♙f4 ♘d7 12 ♖d2 ♘a6?**

And this is far too slow, although Black was already in some trouble as we can see from 12...a6 13 ♙h6 b5? 14 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♘a5!.

**13 ♙h6**

Thematically exchanging off Black's best piece.

**13... ♘b4 14 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 15 f4**



It's high time for the ideal pawn break. Black is already in huge trouble and perhaps he now had to try the rather desperate looking 15...f5!? 16 e5 a6.

**15... ♘f6 16 ♙f3 e6 17 dxe6 ♙xe6 18 ♘e3 ♖d7?**

The final error and Farrand was never going to miss the tactic this permits.

**19 f5! gxf5 20 exf5 ♙xf5 21 ♙c6! ♘xc6 22 ♘xf5+ 1-0**

22... ♖h8 23 ♖h6 is devastating as if 23... ♘e8 24 ♖xf8#.

## **October 2020**

**4NCL** – The second 4NCL Online Congress (August 21-23) was smoothly run by Tim Dickinson and Andy Howie and attracted 147 players.

**Open:** 1 Brian Dinter (Stroud) 4½/5, 2-3 Haroon Majeed (Nottingham), Terry Chapman (Cavendish) 4.

**Major:** 1 Jason Liu (Dublin) 5, 2-4 Sanjoy Banerjee (Liverpool), Mark Szymanski (Ely), David Cox (Letchworth) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Andy Lin (London) 5, 2 Olga Latypova (Chelmsford) 4½, 3-8 Barry Croucher (Calstock), Aryan Munshi (Glasgow), Tim Bowler (Maryport), Andrew Duffell (Norfolk), Dylan Cooper (Newcastle-under-Lyme), Sean Gannon (Dublin) 4.



A second season of the popular 4NCL Online League has begun, with matches taking place every other Tuesday. Celtic Tigers have expanded to become Celtic Tigers & Sharks but were only able to draw with West is Best ahead of going down 2½-1½ in a big clash with Blackthorne Russia. The top three boards were drawn, Richard Bates needing to rely on the presence of opposite-coloured bishops to hold against Mark Kvetny, with Tom Rendle blundering when under heavy pressure from Laurence Webb to give Blackthorne the spoils. A fortnight earlier Blackthorne had

gone down by the same score to Chessable White Rose, despite an impressive victory for Danny Gormally [*above, with Jonah Willow*] on top board.

### **G. Jones - D. Gormally** - White Rose vs Blackthorne Russia Sicilian Tiviakov-Jones

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘ c3 ♘ c6 3 ♙ b5 ♘ d4 4 ♘ f3!?**

An old Jones favourite, aiming to swap the bishop-pair for quick development with 4... ♘xb5 5 ♘xb5 a6 6 ♘c3 d6 7 d4 cxd4 8 ♙xd4.

**4...a6 5 ♙d3 d6 6 ♘xd4 cxd4 7 ♘e2 e5 8 0-0**

8 c3!? dxc3 9 dxc3 looks like a better try and is Gawain's recommended improvement in his forthcoming 1 e4 repertoire work for Quality Chess.

**8... ♘f6 9 f4 ♙e7 10 ♘g3**

White's problem piece is the bishop on c1 and now 10 c3 might even be met by 10...0-0!? 11 cxd4 ♙g4, continuing to leave it somewhat entombed.

**10...g6 11 ♙c4 b5**

Expanding with tempo. The classical reaction 11...exf4 12 ♙xf4 d5 13 exd5 0-0 14 d3 ♘xd5 would also have given Black a pretty pleasant position.

**12 ♙b3 d3!?**



Ever a tempting and critical path in such positions.

**13 ♙f3?**

Gawain is rather unrecognisable after this. For better or worse White simply had to accept: 13 cxd3! 0-0 (or 13... ♙b6+ 14 ♙h1 ♙g4 15 ♘e2 0-0 16 d4! exd4 17 d3, untangling) 14 d4!, leaving

White slightly for choice, but everything to play for after 14...a5! (14...♖b6 15 d3 ♖xd4+ 16 ♔h1 achieves little with ♜e2 next up) 15 a3! (stabilising the queenside) 15...♙g4 16 ♜e2 exd4 17 d3 d5 18 e5.

**13...♖b6+ 14 ♔h1 h5!**

Danny was largely playing at tempo and as ever is especially dangerous when he has the initiative.

**15 cxd3**

15 ♖xd3 h4 16 ♜e2 h3 17 g3 was perhaps the lesser evil, even if White is forced into the rather sub-optimal 17...b4 18 c3 ♙b7 19 ♙d5.

**15...h4 16 ♜e2 h3**

16...♙g4! 17 ♖f2 ♖xf2 18 ♖xf2 ♜h5! would have been even stronger, threatening a certain check on g3, as well as f4.

**17 g3 ♙g4 18 ♖f2 ♖xf2 19 ♖xf2 ♙xe2**

Simple chess. Will the bishop on c1 ever see the light of day?

**20 ♖xe2 exf4 21 gxf4**

21 d4!? was an attempt to partially free White's position and would at least have forced Black to find 21...♜h5 22 gxf4 ♜xf4 23 ♖f2 ♙g5 24 ♖f1! ♜e2! to maintain the upper hand, not that this seems too terrible for White after 25 ♙d5 (but not 25 ♖xf7? ♖c8 26 ♖f1 ♖f8 or 25 ♙xf7+? ♔e7 26 ♙xg6 ♖ag8 27 ♙f5 ♙f4) 25...♖c8 26 b3.

**21...♖h4**



**22 ♖e3?**

Clearly rattled, Gawain unusually fails to find the only defence, which was to grovel with 22 d4!

♖xf4 23 ♔g1.

**22...♖c8 23 ♖f3 ♜h5 24 d4 ♖xf4 25 ♖xf4 ♜xf4 26 d3**

White has finally managed to free his queenside pieces but is simply going to be too many pawns in arrears.

**26...♜xd3 27 ♙e3 ♜xb2 28 ♖f1 ♜c4 29 ♙g1 ♙g5!**

Teeing up Black's simplifying next.

**30 ♖f3 ♜d2 31 ♖xh3**



**31... ♖xb3!**

31... ♖xe4 32 ♜h8+ ♔d7 33 ♜xc8 ♔xc8 34 ♜xf7 would still have left Black with work to do, whereas after the text it's easy and Danny made no mistake from here on:

**32 ♜xb3 ♜c1 33 a3 ♜a1 34 ♔g2 ♜c1 35 ♜c3 ♜xa3 36 ♜c8+ ♔d7 37 ♜a8 ♜b2 38 d5 ♜e5 39 ♜b8 ♜e1 40 ♜b7+ ♔e8 41 ♜b8+ ♔e7 42 ♜b6 ♜xe4 43 h4 b4 44 ♔f3 ♜f4+ 45 ♔e3 ♜g4 46 ♔d3 b3 47 ♜d8+ ♔d7 48 ♜g5 b2 49 ♔c2 ♜g2+ 50 ♔b1 ♔c7 51 ♜b3 a5 52 ♜e3 a4 53 ♜b6+ ♔d7 54 ♜b4 ♜e2 55 ♜d4 a3 0-1**

James Adair was surprisingly unable to exploit an extra piece against Richard Bates, but the Chessable-supported side progressed 2½-1½ thanks to wins from John Emms and Christof Sielecki, the former doing things in style.

### **J. Emms - L. Webb** - White Rose vs Blackthorne Russia Caro-Kann Defence

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖d2 dxe4 4 ♖xe4 ♖f6 5 ♖xf6+ exf6 6 c3 ♜d6 7 ♜d3 0-0 8 ♖e2 ♜e8 9 0-0**

Simple chess. Instead, 9 ♜c2 h5!? 10 ♜e3 ♖d7 11 0-0-0 ♖f8 continues to hold up well enough for Black.

**9... ♖d7 10 ♜f4 ♖f8 11 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 12 ♖g3 ♖g6 13 ♜c2 ♜d7**

13... ♜f4!? would have prevented White's next and after 14 ♖e2 ♜h6 Black can complete development with ... ♜g4.

**14 f4! ♜e7**

This also feels a little too routine. 14... ♖xf4 15 ♜xh7+ ♔h8 16 ♜f5 surely would have favoured White too, so perhaps Black should have gone 14...b6!?, preparing ... ♜ad8 and ...c5 (Pein).

**15 ♖e4**

15 ♜f2!? ♜ae8 16 f5 ♖f8 17 ♜f4 would have led to a favourable endgame for White.

**15... ♜c7 16 ♜f2 ♜ae8?**

16...f5 was essential, and if 17 ♖g3 when Black can defend the pawn with 17... ♜c8 or sacrifice it for a fair amount of activity after 17... ♜ae8!? 18 ♖xf5 ♜xf5 19 ♜xf5 ♜e2.

**17 f5! ♖f8 18 ♜h4**



So bad is Black's position that the machine now proposes the desperate 18...c5.

**18...h6? 19 ♘xf6! gxf6 20 ♙xh6 ♖e3**

Preventing ♜f3 and preparing to meet 21 ♜f4? with 21...♙xf4 22 ♙xf4 ♜xd3.

**21 ♜ad1!**

There's simply no defence to ♜f4.

**21... ♘h7 22 ♜f4 ♙d6 23 ♜g4+ ♘g5 24 ♜xg5+! fxg5 25 ♙xd6 1-0**

Chessable White Rose defeated Wessex Some Stars 3-1 in the second round and must have been delighted too as their second team overcame a significant rating gap to draw with Alba, on the top boards Maaik Keetman and Peter Gayson defeating Iain Gourlay and Clement Sreeves, respectively. Elsewhere Guildford Young Guns edged past Irish side St. Benildus 2½-1½, despite Matthew Wadsworth being outplayed by 12- year-old Kavin Venkatesan, while Tiruchitapalli Venkataramanan scored a crushing victory on top board for Watford.

### **T. Venkataramanan - D. Grant** - Watford vs Sussex Social Isolators c3 Sicilian

**1 e4 c5 2 c3 ♘f6 3 e5 ♘d5 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 ♙c4 ♘b6 7 ♙b3 d5 8 exd6 ♙xd6 9 0-0 ♙e6 10 ♘a3!? dxc3 11 ♙e2 ♙xb3 12 ♘b5 ♙b8 13 axb3 e6 14 ♙e4?**

As shown by a c3 Sicilian guru, the Croatian GM Hrvoje Stevic, 14 g3! appears necessary here and after 14...♙c8 15 ♘g5 c2 16 ♙h5 g6 17 ♙f3 White had sufficient play for his pawns in Stevic-Spasov, Palic 2014.

**14... ♙c8 15 ♜d1 a6?**

15...c2! 16 ♙xc2 a6 17 ♘c3 ♙e7 would have left Black clearly for choice.

**16 ♘xc3 ♙e7 17 ♙g4**



An instructive position. How would you defend against the attack on g7?

**17...0-0?**

This forces Black to give up the exchange for insufficient compensation. 17...g6?! 18 ♘h6 f6 19 ♖f4 e5 20 ♗e3 ♗c7 21 ♜e4 would also not have been entirely optimal, but after 17...♙f8! there would have remained everything to play for.

**18 ♘h6 ♘f6?**

18...g6 19 ♘xf8 ♘xf8 20 ♖f4 leaves White pressing after, say, 20...♘g7 21 ♜g5, but simply had to be tried.

**19 ♜e4**

Already White is winning, in view of his next move, which we hope you've spotted, if you haven't already (as a rather tough training exercise) tried to calculate things out to a forced win.

**19... ♘xb2**

Unfortunately for Black, 19...♙h8? 20 ♜xf6 gxh6 21 ♖e4 ♙g7 is poleaxed by 22 ♖f4 and ♜h5+.

**20 ♜d4!!**



Lovely geometry from Venkataramanan.

**20...g6**

20...♘xd4 21 ♖xd4 g6 fails to 22 ♜f6+ ♙h8 23 ♘e3! ♜d5 (or 23...♜xd4 24 ♘xd4 ♖d8 25 ♖h4) 24 ♖h4 h5 25 ♜xh5!.

**21 ♜f6+ ♙h8 22 ♖h4!**

An only move, if also a fairly obvious one, to force the win.

**22... ♜xd4 23 ♖xd4 ♘xa1**

Taking the other rook would have fared no better in view of 23...♘xd4 24 ♘e3 h5 25 ♘xd4 ♖d8 26 ♜xh5+ ♙g8 27 ♜f6+.

**24 ♘g5 h5 25 ♜xh5! ♖c1+**

This won't help, but clearly if 25...gxh5 26 ♘f6+ ♙g8 27 ♖g5+ and mate on g7.

**26 ♘xc1 ♘xd4 27 ♜f6+ ♙g7 28 ♘h6+ 1-0**

**BELFAST** – The Titanic Quarter Elite Blitz on Saturday, 5th September featured eight of Northern Ireland's strongest players and took place on picnic tables outside the Pump House. Players had to wear gloves and a mask, which didn't prevent favourite Danny Roberts (Civil Service) from racking up 6/6 to finish a point ahead of Robbie Wright (Strand). The event was possible thanks to the efforts of Ulster's leading organiser, Brendan Jamison, who the following Saturday morning staged a second blitz tournament outside at Bangor Marina.

**ECF** – In both 1893 and 1894 the South and North of England did battle over 108 boards, the South winning first in Birmingham by just 53½-52½ (adjudicator Joseph Blackburne must have endured a stressful late afternoon), and then by a much wider 64½- 43½ in London. The North belatedly gained a measure of revenge when the contest was revived online by Nigel Towers and the ECF on September 5th. As in that latter match, Oxfordshire counted as part of the North, the line of counties upwards from those stretching between the Wash and the Bristol Channel. Indefatigable captains Mick Riding and Tony Fulton were the first to finish, agreeing a friendly draw on top board, before the North, headed up by IMs Andrew Horton and James Adair, proved too strong, running out 61-47 winners. Horton defeated GM Bogdan Lalic, while Adair enjoyed a dream opening.

### **M. Harris - J. Adair** - North vs South Grünfeld Defence

**1 d4 ♘ f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘ c3 d5 4 ♚ b3!?**

A somewhat rarer choice than 4 ♘ f3 ♙ g7 5 ♚ b3, if a sideline with a fair pedigree.

**4...dxc4 5 ♚xc4 ♙ e6 6 ♚b5+ ♙ d7!**

The right way to sacrifice a pawn, 6... ♘ c6 7 ♘ f3 ♚ b8 8 ♘ e5 (8 e4 a6 9 ♚d3 is even stronger) 8... ♙ d7 9 ♘ xd7 ♚xd7 10 d5 having favoured White in Euwe-Alekhine, 2nd matchgame, Holland 1935.

**7 ♚xb7?!**

Rather greedy and there's a good reason why the main theoretical continuation is 7 ♚b3 c5 8 d5 b5!, as in, for instance, Svidler- Gelfand, Jerusalem (rapid) 2014, and Nakamura-Caruana, Saint Louis 2015.

**7... ♘ c6 8 e3 ♚ b8 9 ♚a6 ♘ b4 10 ♚e2**

Essential, but clearly White's development is not a pretty sight.

**10...c5! 11 a3**

11 dxc5 ♚a5 12 a3 ♘ e4! also leaves White struggling.

**11... ♚a5 12 ♘ f3?**



White had to find 12 ♚b1 ♘ bd5 13 ♚c2 or 12 ♚d1 to stay in the game.

**12... ♙ f5 13 e4 ♘ xe4!**

With such a lead in development, it's hardly surprising that such a blow exists and is already a decisive one.

**14 ♘ xe4 ♘ d3+ 15 ♚d1 ♙ xe4 16 ♚e3**

Naturally Black's play was underpinned by the point 16 ♚xe4? ♘ xf2+.

**16... ♚ b3**

Adair is relentless.

17 ♖d2 ♔a4 18 ♕e2 f5 19 ♗c3 ♜xb2 20 ♔d2 ♗h6!



It's not often that you see the darksquared bishop developed straight to h6 in a Grünfeld and already White might well have given up.

21 ♗xh6 ♜xc3! 22 ♗g7

Or if 22 ♕xc3 ♗c2#.

22... ♜f8 23 ♗e2 ♔a5 24 ♗b5+ ♗xb5! 25 ♕xc3 ♗d3+ 26 ♕xb2 ♗c2# 0-1

A fortnight earlier, also at 6.30pm on a Saturday, Northumberland had rather outclassed a far from shabby Lincolnshire side 8½-3½ to triumph in the ECF Online County Championship, with James Moreby defeating Matthew Turner on top board and Yichen Han overcoming Chris Dorrington on board 2. It must be hoped that both those counties will be tempted to again field such strong teams when the County Championship resumes over the board next year. The whole competition was most ably run by County Championship Controller Mark Murrell in conjunction with Chief Arbiter Lara Barnes. Our thanks too to all the other arbiters who made the Online County Championships work: Alan Atkinson, Shohreh Bayat, David Clayton, Adrian Elwin, Fiona Green, Chunrong Lu, Alex McFarlane, David Sedgwick and Bob Tinton.

Elsewhere on Finals Night, Devon rather outclassed Yorkshire 8½-3½ in the Major Open, Middlesex B defeated Oxfordshire 17- 7 to claim victory in the Open Challengers, Worcestershire edged out Somerset 6½-5½ in the Minor Open Championship and Essex defeated Lincolnshire 7½-3½ in the Under- 1825 Championship, with Greater Manchester defeating Norfolk 9-4 in the Under-1825 Challengers.

**PONTYPOOL** – The Welsh town lost one of their club icons in late August when Stan Owen (1924-2020) passed away after suffering from a heart condition. Born in Brighouse, Yorkshire, Owen arrived in Pontypool in 1963 – and never left. Known for the rapid tempo of his play, Owen persuaded the club to provide training for junior players, which he undertook himself, alongside fulfilling just about every club office at one time or other. He continued playing until 2017 and, away from the board, served first in the RAF and then as General Manager for the Co-Op organisation in the Pontypool area.

Elsewhere, we were saddened to learn from Nottingham of the death of John Calvert (1945-2020), who will be familiar to many British and Hastings regulars, where he was always immaculately attired in jacket and tie. Another player who will be much missed is the ever-amiable John Naylor (1972-2020), a strong player whose rating peaked at 2295, originally from Rugby Chess Club and also well known for his exploits in the 4NCL and for Hayes Chess Club. Simon Williams paid tribute

to John by staging a blitz event on Lichess in his honour – and no mean blitz event at that. Michael Adams, Gawain Jones, Luke McShane and plenty of John’s friends took part, with top honours going to Alireza Firouzja no less who edged out Anish Giri to claim the £500 first prize.

### **M. Webb - J. Naylor** - White Rose vs Jutes of Kent, 4NCL 2011 Centre Game

**1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 ♖xd4 ♘c6 4 ♜e3 g6 5 ♘c3 ♙g7 6 ♙d2 ♘ge7 7 0-0-0 0-0?!**

A risky choice, despite the upcoming central counter.

**8 h4! d5 9 ♜g3**

9 h5! would have been pretty strong, since 9...d4 10 ♜g3 dxc3? 11 ♙xc3 ♜e8 12 hxg6 results in a deadly attack, and if 12...fxg6 13 ♙c4+ ♚h8 14 ♜h4 h5 15 ♜g5.

**9...d4?!**

White doesn’t seem to have anything too amazing after the cold-blooded 9...dxe4 10 ♙g5 ♜e8.

**10 ♙f4 dxc3!**

Not completely sound, but an excellent practical choice. The opening has clearly not gone well for Black, so Naylor sacrifices his queen to enable him to battle for the initiative.

**11 ♜xd8 cxb2+ 12 ♚b1 ♜xd8 13 ♙d3 ♙e6 14 a3?**



This creates a hook which Black is quick to cotton on to. 14 ♘f3 ♘b4 15 ♙e5! was the calm way to defuse the pressure.

**14... ♜d4! 15 ♘e2?**

Even here matters would have been but rather unclear after 15 ♘f3 ♜a4 16 e5.

**15... ♜a4 16 ♙b5**

At least this holds on to a3. 16 e5 ♜xa3 17 ♚xb2 ♘f5 18 ♜f3 ♜a2+ 19 ♚b1 ♘xe5 would also have left Black with a most powerful initiative.

**16... ♜xe4 17 f3 ♘b4?!**

Tempting, but 17...a6! was the way to sacrifice when White wouldn’t be able to survive after 18 ♙xc6 (or 18 fxe4 axb5 followed by ...b4) 18... ♜xe2 19 ♙e4 ♘f5 20 ♜h2 ♘d4.

**18 c3?**

Again, both players underestimate the importance of the e5-square: 18 axb4! ♜xb4 19 ♙d3 ♜a4 20 ♙e5! ♜a1+ 21 ♚xb2 ♙xe5+ 22 ♜xe5 ♜xh1 23 ♘f4 could only have favoured White.

**18... ♜xe2! 19 ♙xe2 ♘bd5 20 ♙e5**

Finally, but it’s too late to save Webb’s position.

**20... ♘xc3+ 21 ♙xc3 ♙xc3**



Black has bishop, knight and three pawns for the queen, but the pawn on b2 is simply too strong, not to mention the horrendously exposed white king.

**22 ♖d3 ♜d5**

22... ♜d8! would have brought the final piece into play with tempo, and after 23 ♖e4 ♜d5 24 h5 ♜g7 25 hxg6 hxg6 26 ♖h4 ♜c3+ 27 ♖c2 ♜d7 White would have had to resign.

**23 h5 ♜g7 24 hxg6 hxg6 25 ♖h4 b5?**

John was probably already running low on time. 25... ♜e8! would have preserved Black's large advantage.

**26 ♖h7+ ♜f8 27 ♖h8+ ♜xh8 28 ♜xh8+ ♜g7 29 ♜xa8**

Suddenly White is right back in the game.

**29...c5 30 ♜xa7 c4? 31 ♜e4 c3 32 ♜xd5 0-1**

A fair result considering Black's inspired play, as White failed to spot in time that 32 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 33 ♜c7! would actually have left him with a winning endgame in view of 33... ♜c4? 34 ♜xc4! bxc4 35 a4.

## **November 2020**

**4NCL** – Possibly due to the chief arbiter being Oxfordshire's finest, Tim Dickinson, the 3rd 4NCL Online Congress (2-4 October) saw Oxford-based players do especially well.

**Open:** 1-3 James Cole, Simon Smith, Michael Handley (all Oxford) 4/5.

**Major:** 1 Kenneth Hobson 4½, 2-3 Tashika Arora (both Oxford), Gai Guanqun (Didcot) 4.

**Minor:** 1-2 Andrey Ivanov (Malahide), Selvakumar Nalli Kandasamy (Greenwich) 4½, 3-5 Barry Croucher (Calstock), Aaron Rich (York), Reya Li (Oxford) 4.

As this magazine arrives with readers, the Hull 4NCL Online Congress will be taking place (30 October - 2 November).

**ALSAGER** – Covid continues to battle the British chess world, as we'll see further below, and one who unfortunately passed away after suffering from it was 85-year-old Brian Birchall, a pillar of Alsager Chess Club and chess in Staffordshire up until 2016. Elsewhere we were sorry to learn of the death from cancer of Mike Duck, a stalwart of Didcot Chess Club and the Oxfordshire Chess Association, as well as to hear of the death of Rik Thomas, a key player for Kings Head Chess Club for the best part of three decades, as well as one of the excellent tutors at the famous Richmond Junior Chess Club.

**BANGOR** – The final of seven open-air blitz tournaments run by Brendan Jamison took place by Bangor's McKee Clock on October 10th. Local player Andrew Todd was inspired by the clock tower setting to triumph ahead of Aaron Wafflart (Strand, Belfast) and Danny Roberts (Civil Service, Belfast), but it was Roberts who would claim overall victory in the NI Open Air Grand Prix 2020, albeit only by a point from Calum Glendinning (Holywood) and Adam Rushe (Strand).

**BATTLE** – The ECF has taken advantage of the government's flexible furlough scheme to reduce the hours worked by the staff at the ECF Office in Battle, and no wonder with the number of ECF members electing to renew for 2020/21 still just under 50% as we went to press. Under the care of Brian Valentine the ECF have at least undergone a major change in the field of grading – or should that be rating? All three-figure ECF grades have been converted into four-digit Elo ratings with, for instance, your editors going from 235 to 2463 and 125 to 1638 respectively. The ratings will appear monthly – see [ecfrating.org.uk](http://ecfrating.org.uk) for your new rating and full details.

In other ECF news we were delighted to see the appointment of Aga Milewska as Alternate Director of Women's Chess alongside Chris Fegan, while the ECF Book of the Year award went to *The Complete Chess Swindler*. Commenting on David Smerdon's highly original work, judges Ray Edward and Sean Marsh noted that it 'combines insightful discussion of a previously unexplored subject with good writing and great entertainment throughout' before adding, most aptly, that it is 'Ideal for these difficult times.'

**CWMPARC** – We were delighted to see Welsh chess supremo and leading arbiter Kevin Staveley appearing in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, in which he was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to chess in Wales. The 65-year-old resident of the Rhondda Valley is currently the Home Director of the Welsh Chess Union, as well the Manager of the British Chess Championships, and will be well known to many readers.

**HOLMFIRTH** – As previously reported in these pages, Steve Westmoreland did tremendous work in ensuring that OTB chess could safely restart as soon as possible at Holmfirth Chess Club. Unfortunately, the move of Kirklees and Calderdale into a 'High' Covid rating brought an end to chess activity at the Stumble Inn in Holmbridge and the Westmoreland-run POD League. The final round of matches there saw Belgrave (Halifax) beat David Browns (Honley), and Holmfirth defeat Huddersfield in this threeboard friendly league with a time control of an hour each (to comply with the rule of six and the 10pm curfew). While staging even a three-board league was looking impossible for areas moving into tier two on the government's latest stage of restrictions which came into force just before we went to press, we were delighted to see a smattering of over-the-board activity throughout the land, all carried out safely and in compliance with social distancing and other requirements. Perhaps it was no surprise that the Douglas Chess Club Championship was going ahead on the Isle of Man, but in the capital the Great London, Hammersmith and Wanstead clubs ran small events, as further afield did the chess clubs of Barrow, Bingley, Bognor Regis, Burntwood and Hull.

## **December 2020**

**4NCL** – We went to press just before the final round of the group stage of the second season of the 4NCL Online. In the top flight defending champions Chessable White Rose had qualified from Pool B with a round to spare; so had Wood Green who were also on 12/12 in Pool D. Their second team, Wood Green Monarchs, were on 100% too in Pool A and set to be involved in a winner-takes-all

clash with Guildford Young Guns. Meanwhile ChessPlus Kingston topped Pool B on tiebreak from Barbican 4NCL, with Gonzaga just a point back in third. Richard Bates turned in another fine attacking display for midtable Blackthorne Russia.

### **R. Bates - L. Cooper** - Blackthorne Russia vs Wood Green Youth Modern Defence

**1 d4 g6 2 ♘f3 ♙g7 3 g3 c5 4 ♙g2 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♘c6 6 ♘b3 d6 7 0-0 ♙e6**

Wood Green supremo, IM Lawrence Cooper, wants to attack with ... ♖d7 and ... ♗h3. He might also have considered an immediate 7...h5!?

**8 ♘c3 ♖d7 9 ♘d5**

Preventing ... ♗h3 and fighting for the initiative rather than transpose towards Dragon waters with 9 e4.

**9... ♗f6 10 c4 ♘e5!?**

Continuing to strive for the maximum, but Black would have enjoyed a comfortable setup after 10...0-0.

**11 ♘d4!**



Bates is happy to keep upping the ante.

**11... ♘xc4?**

Rather too greedy. 11... ♗h3! would have been more consistent when White should not touch the bishop (12 ♗xh3? ♖xh3 13 ♘c7+? ♖d7 14 ♘xa8 ♗fg4 leads to mate), but would likely develop with 12 ♗g5.

**12 ♘xe6 fxe6 13 ♘f4**

White is a pawn down, but just look at that bishop on g2, not to mention the target on e6.

**13...g5 14 ♘d3 h6 15 b3 ♘a5 16 ♗b2 ♘c6**

16...e5!? 17 ♖c1 (17 f4 gxf4 18 gxf4 e4 19 ♘f2 d5 should be OK for Black) 17...0-0 would have been a safer spot for the black king than the game continuation, although even here White retains promising compensation after 18 b4 ♘c6 19 b5.

**17 f4!**

Making fine use of both unfurled bishops to seize the initiative, as 17...gxf4 18 ♘xf4 would leave Black rather vulnerable on g6 and e6.

**17...0-0-0 18 ♖c1 ♖b8 19 b4!**

There's not to be any respite for the black king.

**19... ♖c8 20 b5 ♘d8**



## 21 ♖a4?

Allowing Black a chance, which 21 ♖xc8+! ♜xc8 (or 21... ♜xc8 22 ♖a4 ♜b8 23 ♙d4) 22 ♖a4 would have avoided. The threat is 23 ♙d4 and if 22... ♜e8 23 ♙xg7 ♜xg7 White can crash through with 24 b6! axb6 25 ♖c1 ♜c6 26 ♜b4.

## 21... ♖xc1 22 ♖xc1 a6?

Now Bates is delighted to sacrifice the b pawn and exploit the weaknesses Black has just created. Instead, 22... ♜e8 (or 22... ♜h5) 23 ♙xg7 ♜xg7 24 ♖d4 e5 25 fxe5 ♜ge6 26 ♖b2 would have left White somewhat for choice, but Black fighting on after 26... ♖f8.

## 23 ♖a5! axb5

23... ♖xb5 fails to 24 ♖c7+ ♜a8 25 ♖c8+ ♜a7 26 ♙d4+ b6 27 ♖a8#.

## 24 ♜e5! 1-0

By no means the only way to win, but the prettiest and most clinical. Black resigned in view of 24... dxe5 25 ♙xe5+ or 24... ♖e8 25 ♖c7+ ♜a8 26 ♖c8+ ♜a7 27 ♙d4+ ♜a6 28 ♖a8#.

Peter Gayson is having a fine season for Chessable White Rose II, although he required some fortune to gradually turn around a bad Dutch against Matthew Wadsworth.

## M. Wadsworth - P. Gayson - Guildford Young Guns vs White Rose II



White has already gone astray and should now have been happy to settle for a draw by repetition.

## 30 ♜c1

Naturally not 30 ♜b1? ♜c6 or 30 ♜d2? ♜c6+.

## 30... ♜b3+ 31 ♜c2 ♜d4+ 32 ♜c3?

Far too ambitious. 32 ♜c1 was essential.

32... ♖c6 33 ♜e3

The only way to avoid losing a piece.

33... ♜d3+! 34 ♔c4 ♜d4+ 35 ♔c5

Even here a loose piece won't quite fall off, but White is going to lose his kingside and with it the game.

35... ♜xb4 36 ♔xc6 ♜xb2 37 ♜f1 ♜xf2 38 ♜c4+ ♔g7 39 ♜f1 ♔f6 40 ♔d5 h5 41 ♔d4 g5

The pawns are just far too strong.

42 ♔e3 ♜c2 43 ♜a6 ♔e5 44 ♜e2 f4+ 45 gxf4+ gxf4+ 46 ♔f2 f3 47 ♜g3 h4 0-1

**BATTLE** – There may be no Hastings Congress to support this year, but we were delighted to see its sponsor Caplin Systems transferring their support to the British Online Championships, which will take place between December 18th and January 3rd. The Championship, Women, Senior and Junior events will feature a qualifying stage ahead of the finals and be played with various different time controls. There will also be standard play events for Under-2000, Under-1700 and Under-1400 level players.

**HULL** – The 4NCL Online Hull Congress (30 October - 2 November) attracted some 178 players, including Mr Dodgy. There was commentary from Danny Gormally and a score of 4½/5 was only sufficient for second in the Open.

**Open:** 1 Adam Collins (Kilkenny) 5/5, 2 Neil Thomson (Giffnock) 4½, 3-4 James Cole (Oxford), Christopher Tombolis (Ealing) 4.

**Under-2000:** 1-4 Leon Cox (Winwick), Robert Dean (Pudsey), Steve Hodge (York), Richard Johnson (Bristol) 4.

**Under-1700:** 1-2 Emils Steiners (Battersea), Luoke Wang (Essex) 4½, 3-6 Tamal Matilal (Cowley), Alec Grice (Beverley), Anuj Venkatesh (Coulsdon), Dillan Duke (Hereford) 4.

**Under-1400:** 1-2 Tran Minh Hieu (Vietnam), Amar Adatia (Streatham) 4½, 3-5 Kevin Wilkinson (Scotland), Steven March (Enfield), Vasylyna Vitvitska (St Albans) 4.

**LONDON** – We were very saddened to hear of the untimely passing of Nick Mitchem (1973-2020), an active and keen junior, and later captain of the Richmond 4NCL team. Mitchem had been ill for over a year, with his prognosis significantly worsening over the summer. His good friend Richard Bates paid tribute, noting that “His bravery was astonishingly demonstrated by his personal reaction to the recent death of John Naylor, at a time when he was already aware of his likely fate, and (from a personal perspective) his determination to retain a presence as part of our weekly online quiz team for as long as possible, including from his hospital bed.”



## Events around England

### 4NCL Online 2020 – 1<sup>st</sup> Season 4NCL Online Results – Mike Truran



#### Division 1 Final

		<b>Chessable White Rose 1</b>		2579		<b>Guildford Young Guns</b>		2485
111	w	Harikrishna, Pentala	g	2719	1 - 0	Lagarde, Maxime	g	2655
112	b	Jones, Gawain C B	g	2670	½ - ½	Clarke, Brandon G I	i	2424
113	w	Adair, James R	i	2450	1 - 0	Wadsworth, Matthew J	i	2416
114	b	Emms, John M	g	2478	½ - ½	Suarez Real, Alberto	i	2448

**3 - 1**

#### Division 2 Final

		<b>Wood Green Youth</b>		2290		<b>ChessPlus Beta</b>		2025
211	w	Fitzsimons, David	i	2334	0 - 1	Ni, Viktorija	wi	2215
212	b	De Verdier, Michael	f	2302	0 - 1	Agafonov, Yuri Dr		2106
213	w	Toma, Katarzyna	wg	2289	1 - 0	Foley, John P		1954
214	b	Stepanyan, Henrik		2237 e	1 - 0	Imanovs, Elhans		1827

**2 - 2 (ChessPlus Beta win on tie-break)**

#### Division 3 Final

		<b>Brentwood</b>		2112		<b>Warwick University B</b>		2021
311	w	Pert, Richard G	i	2416	1 - 0	Mulay, Partha		2147 e
312	b	Haydon, David L	f	2294	½ - ½	Jina, Taran		2132 e
313	w	Coote, Trevor D		2044	½ - ½	Karia, Rishul		1870 e
314	b	Pert, Max		1697 e	½ - ½	Bott, Simeon		1937 e

**2½ - 1½**

#### Division 4 Final

		<b>Celtic Tigers Cubs</b>		2044		<b>Chessmates</b>		1744
411	w	Maciol, Ryszard		2215 e	1 - 0	Tomlinson, Zak		1802 e
412	b	Pedersen, Carsten		2155 e	1 - 0	Catt, Peter		1734
413	w	Tivillier, Jacques		1945 e	0 - 1	Fisher, Neal		1720 e
414	b	Kitchen, Peter J		1862 e	1 - 0	Webster, Vivien		1720 e

**3 - 1**

#### Division 5 Winners: Hertford

For the full results tables for this 4NCL event -  
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/4NCL-Online-01.html>

### 4NCL Online 2020 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Season 4NCL Online Results

#### Division 1 Final

		<b>Wood Green</b>		2442		<b>ChessPlus Kingston</b>		2293
111	w	Fernandez, Daniel H	g	2466	½ - ½	Cramling, Pia	g	2464

112	b	Haria, Ravi	i	2440	0 - 1	Reizniece-Ozola, Dana	wg	2279
113	w	Harvey, Marcus R	f	2440	1 - 0	Pavlik, Goran		2197
114	b	McPhillips, Joseph	i	2425	0 - 1	Vakulenko, Oleksandr	f	2232

**1½ - 2½**

#### Division 2 Final

		<b>CSC 1</b>		2113		<b>Catford Cosmonauts 1</b>		2111
211	w	Finn, Peter		2125 e	0 - 1	Sedykh, Mikhail		2192 e
212	b	Frostick, Clive A		2108	1 - 0	Orlovskaya, Madara		2125 e
213	w	Saidmurodov, Shahjahon		2147 e	1 - 0	Robertson, Mark M		2087 c
214	b	Hasson, Peter		2072 c	0 - 1	Roberts, Mike		2042 c

**2 - 2 (CSC 1 win on tie-break)**

#### Division 3 Final

		<b>Trelawny's Army</b>		2009		<b>Catford Cosmonauts 2</b>		1986
311	w	Menadue, Jeremy F S		2050 e	0 - 1	Vidruska, Renate wf		1998
312	b	Retallick, Lloyd		2065 e	½ - ½	Gruau, Martin G		2035 c
313	w	Kneebone, Robin F G		1982 c	1 - 0	Allen, John P		1922 c
314	b	Hassall, Mark I		1942	0 - 1	Wood, Peter R		1990 e

**1½ - 2½**

#### Division 4 Final

		<b>Hertford 1</b>		2023		<b>Bolton and Worsley</b>		1858
411	w	Borman, Philip		2190	1 - 0	Hann, R Mark		2035 c
412	b	Cheal, Barry A		2193	1 - 0	Tyton, Adam		1915 e
413	w	Capes, Ian		1922 c	½ - ½	McElvenny, Damien		1885 e
414	b	Buswell, A Mark		1787 c	0 - 1	Kumar, Jamie		1600 c

**2½ - 1½**

#### Division 5 Final

		<b>Hackney Thirsty</b>		2121		<b>Barnet Knights A</b>		2019
511	w	Eames, Robert S	f	2267 e	½ - ½	Stoica, Savas Marin		2042 e
512	b	Mackle, Dominic		2192 e	0 - 1	Rasalingam, Haran		2065 e
513	w	Tennyson, John		2020 c	1 - 0	Covey, Jason		1990 e
514	b	Baumann, Tobias		2005 e	1 - d	Kesterson, Kennan		1982 e

**2½ - 1½**

#### Division 6 Winners: Dundee City B

For the full results tables for this 4NCL event -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/4NCL-Online-02.html>

## 4NCL Online 2020 – 1<sup>st</sup> Season Junior 4NCL Online Results

### Division 1 Final

		<b>To Be Decided</b>	1861		<b>KJCA Young Kestrels A</b>	2036
11	w	Rathbone-Jones, Ifan	1982 c	0 - 1	Ismail, Mohammed Aayan	2042 c
12	b	Gurner, Jem	1975 c	1 - 0	Ratnesan, Rajeiv	2057 c
13	w	Vanjare, Aditya	1705 c	1 - 0	Watson, Mikey J	2042 c
14	b	Chadha, Sambhav	1706 u	0 - 1	Watson, Jacob	1975 c
15	b	Rathbone-Jones, Ifan	1982 c	½ - ½	Ismail, Mohammed Aayan	2042 c
16	w	Gurner, Jem	1975 c	0 - 1	Ratnesan, Rajeiv	2057 c
17	b	Vanjare, Aditya	1705 c	1 - 0	Watson, Mikey J	2042 c
18	w	Chadha, Sambhav	1706 u	1 - 0	Watson, Jacob	1975 c

4½ - 3½

### Division 2 Final

		<b>Gonzaga College SJ B</b>	1616		<b>Warwickshire Bears A</b>	1757
211	w	Moran, Hugh	1673 o	1 - 0	Dicen, Imogen	1847 c
212	b	McGlade, Emmet	1625 o	0 - 1	Chen, Daniel Xingyu	1750 c
213	w	O'laoide, Liam	1585 o	0 - 1	Wong, Tristan	1705 c
214	b	Tempany, Max	1551 o	0 - 1	Dicen, Elis Denele	1697 c
215	b	Moran, Hugh	1673 o	½ - ½	Dicen, Imogen	1847 c
216	w	McGlade, Emmet	1625 o	1 - 0	Chen, Daniel Xingyu	1750 c
217	b	O'laoide, Liam	1585 o	0 - 1	Wong, Tristan	1705 c
218	w	Tempany, Max	1551 o	0 - 1	Dicen, Elis Denele	1697 c

2½ - 5½

### Division 3 Final

		<b>KJCA Young Kestrels C</b>	1647		<b>4 Gems</b>	1428
311	w	Brightley-Davies, Ciaran	1637 c	0 - 1	Whelan, Joseph	1547 c
312	b	Oprea, Danny	1630 c	½ - ½	Gogia, Abeer	1427 c
313	w	Chaban, Roxolana	1690 c	1 - 0	Rizvi, Aysha	1345 c
314	b	Mehta, Shaurya	1615 c	1 - 0	Rizvi, Zara	1360 c
315	b	Brightley-Davies, Ciaran	1637 c	0 - 1	Whelan, Joseph	1547 c
316	w	Oprea, Danny	1630 c	1 - 0	Gogia, Abeer	1427 c
317	b	Chaban, Roxolana	1690 c	1 - 0	Rizvi, Aysha	1345 c
318	w	Mehta, Shaurya	1615 c	1 - 0	Rizvi, Zara	1360 c

5½ - 2½

### Division 4 Final

		<b>KJCA Young Kestrels D</b>	1579		<b>St Benildus 2</b>	1335
411	w	Ajili, Nour	1547 c	1 - 0	Brady, Fearghal	1450 u
412	b	Wang, Yong Gui	1600 c	1 - 0	Lievens, Karel	1416 u
413	w	Sagar, Aneesh	1607 c	0 - 1	Cooney, Thomas	1457 c
414	b	Shkuratovskyi, Artemiy	1547 c	1 - 0	Gubala, Max	700 o
415	b	Ajili, Nour	1547 c	0 - 1	Brady, Fearghal	1450 u
416	w	Wang, Yong Gui	1600 c	1 - 0	Lievens, Karel	1416 u
417	b	Sagar, Aneesh	1607 c	0 - 1	Cooney, Thomas	1457 c
418	w	Shkuratovskyi, Artemiy	1547 c	0 - 1	Gubala, Max	700 o

4 – 4 (KJCA Young Kestrels D win on tie-break)

## Division 5 Winners: East Kilbride Knights

For the full results tables for this 4NCL event -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/4NCL-Junior-01.html>

## 4NCL Online 2020 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Season Junior 4NCL Online Results

### Division 1 Final

		<b>A6 and Chill</b>	1690		<b>KJCA Young Kestrels A</b>	2071
11	w	Collins, Adam	1760 u	0 - 1	Ismail, Mohammed Aayan	2117 c
12	b	O'Cuilleanain, Oisín	1669 u	½ - ½	Ratnesan, Rajeiv	2065 c
13	w	Kavanagh, James	1719 u	0 - 1	Watson, Mikey J	2080 c
14	b	Avetisyan, Gagik	1539 u	½ - ½	Merriman, James	1975 c
15	b	Collins, Adam	1760 u	0 - 1	Ismail, Mohammed Aayan	2117 c
16	w	O'Cuilleanain, Oisín	1669 u	1 - 0	Ratnesan, Rajeiv	2065 c
17	b	Kavanagh, James	1719 u	0 - 1	Watson, Mikey J	2080 c
18	w	Avetisyan, Gagik	1539 u	0 - 1	Merriman, James	1975 c

**2 - 6**

### Division 2 Final

		<b>May The Fork Be With You 1</b>	1807		<b>Hull and Friends 2</b>	1534
211	w	Gilmore, Samuel	1840 c	0 - 1	Rich, Aaron	1615 c
212	b	Li, Ethan	1840 c	0 - 1	Wood, Gabriel	1600 c
213	w	Le, Anh Dung	1900 u	1 - 0	Wood, Philip A	1532 c
214	b	Anand, Dhriti	1495 u	1 - 0	Meredith, Daniel	1247 u
215	b	Gilmore, Samuel	1840 c	0 - 1	Rich, Aaron	1615 c
216	w	Li, Ethan	1840 c	1 - 0	Wood, Gabriel	1600 c
217	b	Le, Anh Dung	1900 u	1 - 0	Wood, Philip A	1532 c
218	w	Anand, Dhriti	1495 u	1 - 0	Meredith, Daniel	1247 u

**5 - 3**

### Division 3 Final

		<b>Surbiton Juniors B</b>	1326		<b>KJCA Young Kestrels F</b>	1419
311	w	Bailey, Matthew	1412 u	0 - 1	Adatia, Amar	1457 c
312	b	Tran, Joseph	1337 u	0 - 1	Barton, Ben	1442 u
313	w	Sheftel, Sam	1300 u	0 - 1	Shkuratovskyi, Makariy	1375 u
314	b	Baguley, Rory	1187 u	0 - 1	Allen, George	1390 u
315	b	Bailey, Matthew	1412 u	0 - 1	Adatia, Amar	1457 c
316	w	Tran, Joseph	1337 u	0 - 1	Barton, Ben	1442 u
317	b	Sheftel, Sam	1300 u	0 - 1	Shkuratovskyi, Makariy	1375 u
318	w	Baguley, Rory	1187 u	0 - 1	Allen, George	1390 u

**0 - 8**

## Division 4 Winners: Barnet Knights A

For the full results tables for this 4NCL event -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/4NCL-Junior-02.html>

## Caplin Hastings International Chess Congress 2019/20 – Pam Thomas



Above – winner GM Magesh Panchanathan with sponsor John Ashworth (Caplin) and the Mayor of Hastings Nigel Sinden

Final Ranking crosstable after nine rounds (top twenty)														
	Title	Name	Rtg	FED	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	Pts
1	GM	Panchanathan Magesh Chandran	2479	IND	121w1	21b1	2w½	7w1	12b1	23w1	5b½	13b1	6w½	7,5
2	GM	Edouard Romain	2653	FRA	35b1	8w1	1b½	5w½	20b1	3w½	41b1	12w½	23b1	7,0
3	GM	Kantor Gergely	2541	HUN	29w0	33b1	76w1	24b½	21w1	2b½	17w1	15b1	5w½	6,5
4	GM	Williams Simon K	2461	ENG	56b1	49w1	23b½	18w½	7b0	50w1	35b1	25w½	20b1	6,5
5	IM	Bagi Mate	2469	HUN	31w1	29b1	13w½	2b½	6w½	83b1	1w½	9b1	3b½	6,5
6	GM	Stany G.A.	2526	IND	51b1	41w½	25b½	30w1	5b½	47w½	24b1	8w1	1b½	6,5
7	GM	Howell David W L	2676	ENG	42w1	16b1	14w½	1b0	4w1	9b0	37w1	19b½	47w1	6,0
8	GM	Fishbein Alexander	2435	USA	37w1	2b0	31w1	44b½	29w½	34b1	26w1	6b0	36w1	6,0
9	GM	Hebden Mark L	2433	ENG	48b½	55w1	47b0	57w1	22b1	7w1	12b½	5w0	30b1	6,0
10	WGM	Vaishali R	2376	IND	81b1	23w0	48b½	66w1	74b1	12w0	36b½	65w1	33b1	6,0
11	GM	Gormally Daniel W	2497	ENG	58w0	45b1	121w1	42b½	24w0	66b1	52w1	47b½	39w1	6,0
12	IM	Petrov Martin	2497	BUL	32b1	47w½	43b1	25w1	1w0	10b1	9w½	2b½	16w½	6,0
13	GM	Sengupta Deep	2564	IND	30b1	20w1	5b½	47w½	41b½	19w½	43b1	1w0	35b1	6,0
14	GM	Swayams Mishra	2479	IND	38b1	24w1	7b½	23w½	47b½	41w0	56b1	22w1	18b½	6,0
15	GM	Flear Glenn C	2440	ENG	65b½	48w½	38b1	51w1	18b½	24w½	32b1	3w0	25b1	6,0
16	GM	Cherniaev Alexander	2419	RUS	36b1	7w0	56b½	55w1	58b1	18w½	65b½	50w1	12b½	6,0
17	FM	Murphy Conor E	2407	IRL	55b½	66w½	65b½	76w1	83b½	67w1	3b0	72w1	31b1	6,0
18	GM	Korneev Oleg	2524	ESP	22w1	26b½	27w1	4b½	15w½	16b½	47w½	42b1	14w½	6,0
19	GM	Lalic Bogdan	2414	CRO	84w½	72b½	52w1	73b½	44w1	13b½	23b½	7w½	32b1	6,0
20	IM	Merry Alan B	2420	ENG	52w1	13b0	37w1	54b1	2w0	44b1	42w½	38b1	4w0	5,5

Full crosstable here --- <http://chess-results.com/tnr468458.aspx?lan=1&art=4>

### New Year Morning Section A

1 J. Ruback (Hendon) 3.5

2 D. Heath (Maidstone) 3

3= H. Hjort (Hendon); A. Waldock (East Grinstead); T. Stock (Hastings & St. Leonards); H. Cove (Hastings & St. Leonard); M. Cutmore 2.5

### **New Year Morning Section B**

1= P. Foley (Upminster); C. Bernard (Crystal Palace); S. Kumar (Maidenhead Juniors); H. Shaw (Sussex Juniors) 3/5

5= A. Roberts (Wallasey); J. Parry (London EcWc) 2.5

### **New Year Morning Section C**

1 Alan Collins (Cowley) 3.5

2= Oliver Stockham (Sussex Juniors); William Stock (Hastings & St. Leonards) 3

4= J. Whelan (Weybridge); Paul Buswell (Hastings & St. Leonards); Anna Pontinutti (Hastings & St. Leonards) 2.5

### **New Year Afternoon Section A**

1 J. Ruback (Hendon) 4/5

2= J. Anstead (Tunbridge Wells); D. Cutmore (Albany) 3

4= C. Howell (Coulsdon CF); F. Thomas (Sussex Juniors); J. Geoffrey (Brighton & Hove); H. Hjort (Hendon); J. Lv (Leicester Juniors); P. Kelly (Hastings & St. Leonards); A. Mata; C. Hann (Hastings & St. Leonards) 2

### **New Year Afternoon Section B**

1= C. Bernard (Crystal Palace); Peter Wood (Hastings & St. Leonards); D. Cousens (Hastings & St. Leonards) 3

4= J. McKenna (Crystal Palace); Hambel Willow (Newcastle under Lyme); J. Parry (London EcWc); P. O'Brien (Worthing) 2

### **New Year Afternoon Section C**

1= P. Buswell (Hastings & St. Leonards); J. Whelan 3

3= D. Howes (Coulsdon); M. Fletcher (Hastings & St. Leonards); C. Chapman (Combined Services CA); J. Brouwer (NED); S. Rowles (4NCL Icen); J. Calvert (Mechanics) 2



[clockwise - Arbiter Matthew Carr; Hebden vs Howell; Marc Bryant; James Merriman; Patrick Damodaran; Miruna-Daria Lehaci; Aaravamudhan Balaji]

## **Wiltshire & West of England Junior Congress prizewinners – Bev Schofield**

<b>Major</b> 1st= Aliriza Gorgun (Wilts); Eryl Malanta (Surrey) 3rd= Chirag Hosdurga (Bristol); Saahil Bansal (Kent) West of England U18 Champion – Aliriza Gorgun West of England U16 Champion – Chirag Hosdurga Best Game – Aliriza Gorgun; Chirag Hosdurga	<b>U14 Championship</b> 1st – Adam Hussain (Cornwall) 2nd= Arjun Kolani (Sussex); Thomas Martin (Sussex) West of England U14 Champion – Adam Hussein West of England U14 Girls Champion – Georgia Headlong (Wilts) Wiltshire U14 Champion – Georgia Headlong Grading Prize – Charlie Hill (Devon) Controller's Prize – Lakshan Siddarth (Essex)	<b>Minor</b> 1st – Bilal Ahmed (Bristol) 2nd – Oliver White (Wilts) Wiltshire Minor Champion – Oliver White
<b>U12 Championship</b> 1st – Avyukt Dasgupta (Herts) 2nd= Tom Usharovsky (Surrey); Matthew Timbrell (Bath); Jan Murawski (Oxon) West of England U12 Champion – Matthew Timbrell West of England U12 Girls Champion – Zoha Ashraf (Wilts) Wiltshire U12 Champion – Zoha Ashraf Wiltshire U12 Girls Champion – Zoha Ashraf Wiltshire U11 Champion= Mayant Palav; Larissa Cuthbert Best Girl= Olga Latypova (Essex); Zoha Ashraf Best U11 – Avyukt Dasgupta	<b>U12 Challengers</b> 1st – Quinton Daniels (Glos) 2nd – Eve Malanta (Surrey) Best Girl – Eve Malanta Controller's Prize – Arnav Nayyan	<b>U10 Championship</b> 1st – Sai Dheeraj Vadlamundi (Wilts) 2nd – Wassim Hidouci (Wilts) 3rd – Elliott Bleeg (Bristol) West of England U10 Champion – Sai Dheeraj Vadlamundi West of England U10 Girls Champion – Dyansa Gunatilake (Bath) Wiltshire U10 Champion – Sai Dheeraj Vadlamundi Best Girl – Risha Jithendra (Sussex) Controller's Prize – Dyansa Gunatilake
<b>U9 Championship</b> 1st – Alexander Linton (Cambs) 2nd= William Yu (London); Kasi Veshagan Nallaperumal (Berks); Nicholas Deacon (Hants) Bronze Medal – Jai Kothari (Surrey) West of England U9 Champion – Nicholas Deacon Wiltshire U9 Champion – Angad Sarpotdar Best Girl – Eshitha Ramesh (Berks) Controller's Medal – Rowan Eccleston (Greater Manchester) Controller's Medal – Yile Wang (Oxon)	<b>U8 Championship</b> 1st – Harry Bryant (London) 2nd – Charan Chatti (Essex) 3rd – Avishka Gunatilake (Bath) West of England U8 Champion – Avishka Gunatilake West of England U8 Girls Champion – Anne Doan (Bristol) Wiltshire U8 Champion – Shazil Bukhari Wiltshire U7 Champion= Karthikeyan Boobalan; Kaira Davies Best U7= George Zhao (London); Amelie Bryant (London); Maelys Manouvel (Bristol) Best Girl= Amelie Bryant; Maelys Manouvel Controller's Medal – Judith Tomy (Herts); Charan Chatti	<b>Beginners</b> 1st – Pavel Sahotra (Wilts) 2nd – Eli Pillie (Glos) 3rd – Joshua Kirwan (Wilts) Best Girl – Neha Krishnakumar (Wilts) Controller's Medals – Monika Sakthivel (Wilts); Pavel Sahotra (Wilts); Eli Pillie

<b>Saturday Intermediate</b> 1st= Jacob Hoyes (Soms); Kei Macabentra (Oxon) 3rd= Delara Badii (Wilts); George Zhao (London); Harri Gilbert Cwmbran) Best Girl – Delara Badii Controller's Prize – Eleanor Fairfax (Wilts)	<b>Sunday Intermediate</b> 1st – Adarsh Ganeshbabu (Berks) 2nd – Sasha Kamotskiy (Wilts) 3rd= Catherine Pham (Mddx); 3rd= Alexander Conlon (Oxon) Best Girl – Catherine Pham Controller's Prize – Csilla Rajeev-Lazar (Berks)	
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### **Winton British Chess Solving Championships final – Nigel Dennis**

The Final of the 2019-20 British Chess Solving Championship, sponsored by Winton, took place at the Copthorne Hotel, Slough on 22nd February. The event consists of six rounds each featuring problems of a different type (mates in 2, mates in 3, mates in >3, helpmates, selfmates and endgame studies) which must be solved within the stipulated time.

Three-time former World Solving Champion John Nunn was on top form, solving 12 of the 13 problems set, and duly recorded his tenth win in the event. Former World Champion Jonathan Mestel recovered from a poor start to take second place, with defending champion David Hodge third.

The event forms one leg of the World Solving Cup, and attracted 13 strong solvers from 6 countries, who could gain WSC points. Belgium's Eddy van Beers top-scored among the visitors, who compete in the Open section (for those who have not qualified for the British Final – Finalists and Open solvers solve the same problems). A Minor event for lower-graded solvers, featuring easier problems, was won by Giles Body.

<b>British Championship</b> 1st John Nunn - 60/65 2nd Jonathan Mestel - 47 3rd David Hodge - 43.5 4th Colin McNab - 37 5th Michael McDowell - 35.5	<b>Open Section</b> 1st Eddy van Beers (Belgium) - 59.5/65 2nd Martynas Limontas (Lithuania) - 53.5 3rd Abdelaziz Onkoud (Morocco) - 51 4th Dolf Wissmann (Netherlands) - 50	<b>Minor Section</b> 1st Giles Body - 56/65 2nd Freddie Hand - 54 3rd Stephen Peters - 48 4th Oliver Penrose - 32.5
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### **Northern Junior Chess Championship winners – Julian Clissold**

Played at Abbey Gate School, Chester on the 22nd/23rd February 2020, this was the fifth year in which the Northern Junior Championship has been held. Previous Congress events have included Manchester, Yorkshire (Leeds), Merseyside (Crosby), Newcastle and now Chester. The congress attracted almost ninety children, mainly in the age range 9-12 and a future ambition is to establish the event with secondary school children.

Prizes were awarded for the first three boys and the first three girls in each age group. The event was hosted by Abbey Grange School, Chester who provided good playing conditions.

A big thank you to the control team and in particular Einas Benhamid (Ashton), Manoj Arora (Newcastle) and Everson Correa (Three Cs). A further thank you goes to Howard Wood for his excellent book shop.

<b>Under 7s</b> 1st – Savannah Ashton, Three Cs =2nd – Sammy Goldsmith; Nishad Vikram, Polehampton Infants School	<b>Under 8s</b> 1st Girls – Anbalaan Amarishka, Witton 1st Boys – Alexandr Korsniskij, Liverpool 2nd Girls – Jasmine Chapman, Chester Chess Club 2nd Boys – Anirudh Nedungadi, Manchester 3rd Girls – Diah Patel, Hallfield =3rd Boys – VishalPrasad, Buckingham =3rd Boys – Kia Zhang, Forest Park School	<b>Under 9s</b> 1st Girls – Alannah Ashton, Three Cs 1st Boys – Arad Enshaeia, Liverpool 2nd Boys – Ethan Jia, Forest Park School =3rd Boys – James Hayward, Forest School =3rd Boys – George Turner, Hoole
<b>Under 10s</b> 1st Boys – Peter Fedotov, Liverpool =1st Girls – Seren Fletcher, Chester Chess Club =2nd Boys – Edward Correa, Three Cs; Aaron Freddy, Merchant Taylors =2nd Girls – Freya Chapman, Chester =2nd Girls – Kathy Su	<b>Under 11s</b> 1st Girls – Amanthika Amarishka, Witton 1st Boys – Rohit Surapaneni, C&NW =2nd Boys – Ethan Challoner, Chester =2nd Boys – Matthew Pearson, Bolton	<b>Under 12s</b> 1st Girls – Dawn Supatan, Ashton 1st Boys – Ethan Gardiner, Three Cs 2nd Girls – Prachi Arora, RGS Newcastle 2nd Boys – Dylan Cooper, Staffordshire 3rd Girls – Rebecca Correa, Three Cs 3rd Boys – Dylan Whitney, Newcastle-U-Lyme
<b>Under 14s</b> =1st Boys – Marek Korsnikij, Liverpool =1st Boys – Mohammed Benhamid, Three Cs 2nd Boys – Denzel Supatan, Ashton	<b>Under 16s</b> 1st Boys – Bashir Rozevi, Liverpool 2nd Boys – Ben Whitehead 3rd Boys – Ranjula Ransinghe	<b>Under 18s</b> 1st Girls – Aisha Benhamid, Three Cs 1st Boys – Sai Mong



### **Women's chess continues to develop ...**

... across the country, with two noteworthy events in the Midlands over the last two weeks ...

### **Worcestershire v Nottinghamshire 15th February – Stephen Woodhouse**

WGM Katarzyna Toma played on board 1 for the Worcestershire county team in their regional stage match against Nottinghamshire on 15th February. Worcestershire won the match 10-6 and Katarzyna won her game against Peter Mercks. She joins an impressive list of women players who have appeared on top board for their county including (with apologies for any unintended omissions) —

Vera Menchik, who played board 1 for Kent vs Essex 12th September 1942

Susan Lalic, who appeared on board 1 for Surrey (and also played for Worcestershire)

Harriet Hunt, who played board 1 for Oxon (in the 1990s)

Jovanka Houska, who played on board 1 for Berkshire (also in the 1990s)  
 Dagne Ciuksyte, who played on Board 1 for Suffolk (in the 2010s)  
 Zehra Topel, who played on Board 1 against Essex in the SCCU Championship (in the 2010s)



Katarzyna Toma at Worcs vs Notts - photograph courtesy of CSC Teesside

### **Warwickshire Championships – Nigel Towers / Ed Goodwin**

This weekend (**21st – 23rd February**) saw the 2020 Warwickshire Championship in Coventry, which is now awarding the title of Warwickshire Women's Champion for the top female player, together with prizes for the top females in each section.

The female prize fund was supported by the ECF, and the event saw a big turnout of female players, with almost 20% women or girls. The highest placed female player was Anna Szasz, who played in the Open section, and becomes the Joint Warwickshire Women's Champion for 2020 along with Imogen Dicen.

GM Mark Hebden came first overall in the open with 4.5/5, followed by IM Jonah Willow. Bruce Baer won the Tucker Trophy as the highest-placed Warwickshire player.

### **World Senior Teams 2020 – Stewart Reuben**

We were badly damaged by fears about the Coronavirus. This caused John Nunn, Nigel Povah, Ian Snape and Geoff James to withdraw from the 65+ 1st team. I consulted a private doctor and withdrew from the 65+ 2nd team on his advice. Jon Speelman withdrew from the 50+ 1st team. This is no reflection on the six withdrawals. Jon was replaced, at very, very short notice, by James Plaskett, who gallantly stepped into the breach. Brian Ewart withdrew Wednesday but changed his mind and travelled Thursday! All five women stood firm. Rounds 8 and 9 were cancelled by the Czech Government. The results up to and including round 7 will count for prizes.

### **Results of England 50+ players**

<b>England 1</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Rp</b>	<b>Rating gain</b>	<b>+– K factor</b>
Arkell	3/6	2339	–7.4	10
Hebden	3.5/5	2429	+1.0	10
Flear	5.5/7	2509	+5.7	10
McDonald	4/6	2268	–8.5	10
Plaskett	2/4	2274	–6.1	10

**England 2**

C. Frostick	3/6	2262	25.6	20
Fraser-Mitchell	2/5	2047	-1.2	20
White	2/5	2003	-4.0	40
Thurstan	3.5/6	2118	20.0	20
Lawrence	3/6	2035	+38.0	40

**England Women**

Jackson	3/7	2166	+10.8	20
J Bellin	2/6	1970	-10.2	20
Lauterbach	3/6	1939	-19.0	20
P Nunn	2/5	1843	-16.8	20
H Frostick	2.5/4	1762	-3.2	20

It is noticeably tougher on board 1 than board 2, especially lower down. Thus, Clive Frostick only scored 3/6, but had an admirable rating result. Similarly, Sheila Jackson only scored 3/7, but had the best rating result in her team. Glenn Flear, with 5.5/7 had the best rating gain of anybody on board 3.

Paul Lawrence gains 38 rating points with 3/6. But note, since his k factor is 40, due to lack of experience, for comparison purposes it counts as +19 by comparison with Clive.

**Results of England 65+ players**

England 1	Score	Rp	Rating gain	+ - K factor
Stebbins	3.5/6	2204	-16	20 for all 10 players
Page	2.5/6	1978	-26	
Bowmer	3.5/6	1937	-16.4	
Stokes	2/5	1883	-29.3	
Habershon	3/5	1897	-10.8	

**England 2**

Farrand	2/6	1951	+1
Valentine	1.5/5	1826	-15.6
Ingham	3/6	1971	+13.2
Ewart	1/5	1677	-23.4
Goldrick	4/6	1939	+29.2

Sadly, none of the England 1 65+ team gained rating points; but three of the second team did. Julian Farrand only gained one rating point, but it becomes more and more difficult as one gets older – and Julian is the oldest of our 25 players.

The 5 match captains did a fine job: Glenn Flear England 1; Petra Nunn England Women; Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell England 2 in the 50+; and Mick Stokes England 1; Brian Valentine England 2 65+. Since there were 5 players in each team, there had to be one rested each round. Apart from the 50+ 1st team, they all come



to play. Jeremy not only took on that job, but also took my place as overall group leader. Both Glenn and Jeremy wrote blogs for this report.

The premature end to the event was very sad. Now people will be scrabbling to get home – bon voyage!

(5426) **Stokes, Michael** (2100) – **Nickl, Klaus** (1946) [A00]

FIDE World Senior Team Championship 2020, Olympik Hotel, Sokolovska 138 (6.12), 11.03.2020

1.e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 de4 4. Ne4 Nd7 5. Nf3 Ngf6 6. Nf6 Nf6 7. Bd3 c5 8. Be3 Bd7 9. Qe2 cd4 10. Bd4 Bc6 11. O-O Qd5 12. Be5 Be7 13. Rfe1 O-O 14. Rad1 Qa5 15. Ng5 g6 16. Bc4 Nd5 17. Ne4 f5 18. Nc3 Rfe8 19. Nd5 ed5 20. Bc3 Bb4 21. Qe8 Re8 22. Re8 Kf7 23. Re5 Bc3 24. bc3 Kf6 25. Rde1 Qc3 26. Re6 Kg5 27. Bd3 d4 28. h3 Bd5 29. Re7 Kf6 30. R1e2 h5 31. f3 h4 32. Kf2 a5 33. Rh7 Ba2 34. Rh4 Bg8 35. Rf4 Be6 36. h4 a4 37. g4 a3 38. gf5 gf5 39. h5 a2 40. h6 a1Q 41. Rh4 Qa8 42. h7 Qh8 43. Rh6 Kg7 44. Rhe6 Kh7 45. f4 Qf8 46. R6e5 Qcc8 47. Re1 Qf6 48. Rh1 Kg6 49. Rg1 Kf7 50. Rg5 Qg5 51. fg5 Kg6 52. Bf5 Qf5 53. Rf5 Kf5 54. Kf3 Kg5 55. Ke4 Kf6 56. Kd4 Ke6 57. Kc5 Kd7 58. Kb6 Kc8 59. c4 Kb8 60. Kc5 Kc7 61. Kd5 b6 62. Kd4

### **Girls Chess Day 7th March in York – Peter Cloudsdale**

White Rose Junior Chess Academy organised a very successful chess day at Wakefield Junior School in Mulberry Hall. 34 girls attended from all over Yorkshire, and teaching was led by Lateefah Messam-Sparks, who came from Madrid where she now lives. Helpers were Olivia Westmoreland and Steve Westmoreland from Upperthong; and Noel Stewart, Peter Cloudsdale, Bradley and Mike Triffitt from York. Unfortunately, the local MP did not appear, although invited ...

Lateefah opened proceedings by demonstrating a famous game on the display board played by Judith Polgar against Berkes using the French Defence. The girls were split into 2 sections and a 5 round Swiss competition held, also with tuition. All received a certificate and medal, and winners were as follows —

#### **Section A**

1st – Julia Smith Wakefield; 2nd – Alana Glennan, Wakefield; 3rd – Isabella Bardsley, Wakefield  
Merit Awards – Lini Lara, York; Arushai Burau, Wakefield; Eva Young

#### **Section B**

1st – Elsie Luna; 2nd – Samishka Yerabati, Leeds; 3rd – Natasha Pointon, Thirsk  
Merit Awards – Nina Hitzeroth, Olivia Roebuck, Claudia Jozefowski, Camilla De-Luca, Pippa Colver, Felicity Tinker, Rebecca Trout

Thanks to Richard Ribeiro and the school for their excellent facilities and good refreshments from the PTA. We hope to hold another one in due course.

## **Checkmate Covid-19 – Danny Rosenbaum**

The ECF's fundraiser for the British Red Cross in May 2020 went right to the wire.

*'More than ever before, I felt a real sense of unity and purpose at the ECF charity Blitz event for the British Red Cross. I am not alone in that view. Chess proves again that it is a force for good.'*

Carl Portman

*'A fantastic effort that really brought the chess community together for an excellent cause.'*

Ben Graff

After 24 hours and 9872 games, with 459 players competing, the Checkmate Covid-19 marathon blitz tournament in aid of the British Red Cross all came down to the very last second and just 1 point.

With just 30 seconds to go, FM Harry Grieve won to level the standings with GM Danny Gormally at the top of the table. The seconds ticked by and he was paired with Ben Purton (who also had a fantastic tournament). If the game remained unfinished in the half-minute left for the event, it would abort with no additional score for either player.

Harry Grieve wanted a draw and amazingly, with one second left, he managed it. He had spent just 8 seconds on his 21 moves! The tournament result was declared - Harry Grieve 517 points, Danny Gormally 516 points. Third place was FM David Haydon on 444. It was now 5pm on Sunday 24 May 2020. The event had been running 24 hours.

It was an Arena tournament on Chess.com which meant that players could leave and re-join whenever they wanted. They simply had to play 5 minutes-a-side games as often or as little as they liked.

Among the players were eight grandmasters - Michael Adams, Gawain Jones, Matthew Sadler, Simon Williams, Danny Gormally, Keith Arkell, Luke McShane, and John Emms. Checkmate Covid-19 raised over £11,000 for the British Red Cross and their activities during the pandemic working with the NHS, providing for the vulnerable, and supporting those in emotional need.

Chess.com not only provided a huge amount of support but also donated \$500 of prizes and \$500 directly to the funds raised. As well as organising the event, the English Chess Federation donated £300.

A list of 'thank-yous' and prizes appears on <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/checkmate-covid-19-playing-chess-for-the-british-red-cross/>. Even that already-long list of thanks ought to be longer, with numerous people within the ECF, such as Nigel Towers and Malcolm Pein, being very helpful in making the event such a success. It was wonderful to see the number of people who donated. One anonymous donor gave £500. Just as striking was the quantity of donors - literally hundreds of people contributed. The full tournament standings and all the games can be accessed at <https://www.chess.com/tournament/live/arena/checkmate-covid-19-194078>

## **English Youth Online Championship prize lists – Alex Holowczak**

### **Under 12 Blitz Championship**

Overall 1st Dimitros Zakarian 8½; 2nd Hou Ning Zhou 7½; 3rd Elis Dicen 7½  
Under 12 Boy 1st Dimitros Zakarian 8½; 2nd Hou Ning Zhou 7½; 3rd Denis Dupuis 7  
Under 12 Girl 1st Lindsay Pyun 6; 2nd Roxolana Chaban 6; 3rd Anusha Subramanian 5½  
Under 10 Boy 1st Billy Fellowes 7; 2nd Max Pert 7; 3rd Jan Murawski 7  
Under 10 Girl 1st Elis Dicen 7½; 2nd Amraya Johal 5½; 3rd Shriya Sastry 5  
Under 8 Boy 1st Patrick Damodaran 6; 2nd Kai Hanache 6; 3rd Adrian Callan 5½  
Under 8 Girl 1st Ruqayyah Rida 5; 2nd Elizabeth Amore 4; 3rd Amelie Bryant 4

### **Under 18 Blitz Championship**

Overall 1st Koby Kalavannan 11; 2nd Omeet Atara 9; 3rd Shreyas Royal 9  
Under 18 Boy 1st Koby Kalavannan 11; 2nd Omeet Atara 9; 3rd Oliver Stubbs 8  
Under 16 Boy 1st Connor Clarke 8; 2nd Toby Cox 7½; 3rd Pawel Murawski 7½  
Under 16 Girl 1st Shira Parnes 6; 2nd Imogen Dicen 5½; 3rd Amrissa Johal 3½  
Under 14 Boy 1st Shreyas Royal 9; 2nd Dimitros Zakarian 8; 3rd Edison Xu 7  
Under 14 Girl 1st Anusha Subramanian 7; 2nd Abigail Weersing 7; 3rd Elis Dicen 6

### **Under 18 Bullet Championship**

Overall 1st Max Turner 15; 2nd Koby Kalavannan 13½; 3rd Omeet Atara 11  
Under 18 Boy 1st Max Turner 15; 2nd Koby Kalavannan 13½; 3rd Omeet Atara 11  
Under 16 Boy 1st Toby Cox 10; 2nd Finn Goodhew 9; 3rd Pawel Murawski 9  
Under 16 Girl 1st Amrissa Johal 7; 2nd Shira Parnes 7  
Under 14 Boy 1st Edison Xu 10½; 2nd Ethan Chung 9½; 3rd Iwan Cave 9½  
Under 14 Girl 1st Elis Dicen 8½; 2nd Lindsay Pyun 8½; 3rd Emily Maton 8

## **National Online Club Championships report – Stephen Greep**

Congratulations to Harrow, Hull and Wimbledon chess clubs!

The National Online Club Championships were held over the weekend of 26th-28th June. 34 teams entered from 30 clubs, with 310 registered players and 510 individual games played. Games were played on the Lichess platform and managed through the ECF's League Management System (LMS).

Teams were divided into three sections, based on the average grade of their top six players (teams were entitled to select from a pool of up to twelve). The top six teams played in the Major section on an all-play-all basis, the next 12 teams in an intermediate section and 16 in the minor. All three sections were keenly fought, with the eventual winners not known until the final round. Trophies will be awarded to all the section winners as well as team grading prizes in the Intermediate and Minor sections.

Congratulations to Harrow, Wimbledon and Hull Chess Clubs, who won the three sections. While every section was decided on the results of the last round, the minor was most closely fought, where Hull won their last round as rivals Watford and 3Cs, playing each other, drew. A win for either would have secured the title. The winners and 'near winners' were —

## Major

Champions – Harrow Chess Club (5/5); Runners-up – Muswell Hill (3.5/5)

## Intermediate

Champions – Wimbledon Chess Club (4/5)

Uxbridge Chess Club (Uxbridge Knights) also scored 4/5 but Wimbledon won the title on tie break.

Uxbridge Knights won the team grading prize.

## Minor

Champions – Hull Chess Club (4/5)

Three teams scored 3.5/5 – Noisy Neighbours (North Bristol, runners-up on tie break), Watford and 3Cs. The team Grading Prize was won by Stroud Chess Club (3/5)

During the Championship, all the games could be viewed through links on the LMS. The results of all the matches as well as individual games and performances and the full tables can be found on the Championship section of the LMS – <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/60234/home>

There were only four games defaulted (0.8%), and most late arrivals at the board were sorted through rapid communications facilitated by WhatsApp groups. ECF Fair Play arrangements have been implemented and the rules and guidance for the Championships have been reviewed with some changes for next time (if there is one!).

Hull and District Chess Association was pleased to support the ECF in managing the event. The Tournament Controller was Stephen Greep, Chief Arbiter was Douglas Vleeshouwer, supported by Tom Hackett. Peter Perkins provided further support throughout the event. The tournament team would also like to thank Malcolm Peacock and Steve Emmerton for their work regarding LMS, to Mark Rivlin and Danny Rosenbaum for newsletter and social media advertising, and to Nigel Towers, Mike Truran and Andrew Walker for help throughout, but particularly leading up to the event.

## Glorney Gilbert International Online 2020 – Alex Holowczak

### Glorney Cup

		1	2	3	4	5	6	GP	MP
1	England		2½-2½	4-1	4-1	4½-½	5-0	20	9
2	Netherlands	2½-2½		3½-1½	3-2	4-1	5-0	18	9
3	Ireland 1-4	1½-3½		3-2	3½-1½	3-2	12	6	
4	Belgium	1-4	2-3	2-3		3-2	3-2	11	4
5	Wales	½-4½	1-4	1½-3½	2-3		4-1	9	2
6	Scotland	0-5	0-5	2-3	2-3	1-4		5	0

### Gilbert Cup

		1	2	3	4	5	6	GP	MP
1	Netherlands		2-1	2½-½	2-1	1-2	2-1	9½	8
2	England	1-2		½-2½	2-1	3-0	2-1	8½	6
3	Ireland	½-2½	2½-½		2-1	1-2	2-1	8	6
4	Belgium	1-2	1-2	1-2		2½-½	2-1	7½	4
5	Wales	2-1	0-3	2-1	½-2½		2½-½	7	6

6	Scotland	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	½-2½	4½	0
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### Robinson Cup

		1	2	3	4	5	6	GP	MP
1	England		5-1	3-3	4-2	5-1	5½-½	22½	9
2	Netherlands	1-5		4-2	3½-2½	4-2	6-0	18½	8
3	Belgium	3-3	2-4		4-2	2-4	4½-1½	15½	5
4	Ireland 2-4	2½-3½	2-4		4-2	3½-2½	14	4	
5	Wales	1-5	2-4	4-2	2-4		4½-1½	13½	4
6	Scotland	½-5½	0-6	1½-4½	2½-3½	1½-4½		6	0

### Stokes Cup

		1	2	3	4	5	6	GP	MP
1	England		4-2	3½-2½	5½-½	5½-½	6-0	24½	10
2	Netherlands	2-4		4½-1½	4-2	5-1	4-2	19½	8
3	Ireland	2½-3½	1½-4½		3½-2½	4½-1½	5-1	17	6
4	Belgium	½-5½	2-4	2½-3½		5-1	4-2	14	4
5	Scotland	½-5½	1-5	1½-4½	1-5		3½-2½	7½	2
6	Wales	0-6	2-4	1-5	2-4	2½-3½		7½	0

## Online Counties Chess Championships 2020 – Mark Murrell

### Semi-Finals Headlines

- Open – Lincolnshire's strength in depth too much for determined Norfolk resistance
- Open – seeded to meet in the Final and almost evenly matched on all but 2 boards where Middlesex A had the paper edge, Northumberland dominate the top boards to reach the final
- Major – Devon and Yorkshire sweep Essex and Greater Manchester aside
- Challengers – Middlesex B, a traditional 'minor counties' team with no head or tail continue their march against one county team opposition as Shropshire fall, whilst Oxfordshire only just made their lower board advantage count against Cumbria
- Minor – Gloucestershire match Somerset at the top against the odds but not enough to cause an upset, whilst disaster for Berkshire with a double default gifting the tie to Worcestershire despite a top 4 clean sweep
- U1825 – Essex and Lincolnshire hold their nerve to survive two knife edge matches against Northumberland and Middlesex, to make it an all East Coast affair for both the Open and U1825 Championships, where Lincolnshire are looking to pull off a remarkable double
- U1825 Challengers – Greater Manchester too strong for embattled Surrey in stark contrast to Norfolk's reliance on the tie break to prevail over Oxfordshire

**Northumberland** are the first **Online County Champions** after an emphatic Finals Night display on Saturday, streamed live by Matthew Sadler and Natasha Regan. **Essex** win the **U1825** crown. Both had encounters with double championship finalists Lincolnshire, who proved to be the county to beat in all competitions over the summer. Northumberland batted deep and well, whilst Essex, the

surprise package, had the run of the green in the championships stage, gaining momentum in the final by turning the tables in a couple of games.

In the divisional championships **Devon** were just as emphatic in the Major Open, which also had live commentary, **Middlesex B** continued to dominate the minor counties encounters in the Challengers 24 boards final whilst **Worcestershire's** staying power prevailed in the Minor. The greater depth of **Greater Manchester** secured the U1825 Challenger's title. Middlesex (top seed in the Open) was the only county to have a presence in Divisions 1, 2 and U1825 and had a substantial presence in The South regional team too.

### **North v South Match – Mark Murrell**

The 2020 North v South online challenge took place on 5th September after a break of 126 years, following the challenges of 1893 and 1894. This was the third in the series of three North v South matches in 1893, 1894 and now 2020 in an online format.

North v South 1893 – The 1893 match took place in the luncheon room of the rather ornate (and quite recently built) Great Western Hotel in Birmingham. The match was meant to be played over 100 boards in tables of 10 boards. However, there were 6 reserve boards who also played. The Southern players were asked to wear blue rosettes, while Northern players wore red-and-white rosettes. The match started promptly at 1.15 pm and went through to 5.45 pm. It was close all the way through the afternoon as the early games finished with the stewards reporting the score. The great Joseph Henry Blackburne was in attendance and was asked to adjudicate all games still running at 5.45 pm which he did game by game. After the adjudications, the top 100 boards were drawn 50-50 and the South only won based on the 6 reserve boards being counted with a narrow 53.5 to 52.5 margin overall following the adjudications. The result was disputed by the Northern players who claimed that Mr Blackburne had declared a draw in what looked like a won position for a Northern player. However, no-one dared to question the great man at the time and the result still stands.

North v South 1894 – The 1894 re-match took place at the Portman Rooms, Baker Street, London and was a more comfortable win for the South by 64.5 – 43.5 over 108 boards.

North v South Online 2020 – Honour was restored to the North of England after a 126-year wait in the oldest counties challenge of them all, with an emphatic victory over the South of England in the North v South Challenge, particularly across the top 20 boards where the North held a significant and decisive grading advantage. GM Matthew Sadler & WIM Natasha Regan provided the live commentary via their GameChanger Youtube channel. In 1894 style, Adrian Elwin, David Sedgwick, Phill Beckett and controller Mark Murrell were the match stewards.

All bar two of the 39 affiliated English counties were represented extending the reach of county competition with the event fulfilling its 'all abilities' team billing, from Grandmaster to beginner. The match was played on Chess.com over 108 boards matching the last encounter in 1894. With thanks to South skipper, Anthony Fulton, you can read about the 1894 London & 1893 Birmingham encounters here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/online-north-v-south-challenge-2020/>.

In 2020, the North crossed the finishing line reaching 54½ game points at 8:49pm after 2h 19m play in the 2½h session. Skipper Mick Riding, rounding off his triumphant online summer, reported that it was, ironically, Nick London for the North who scored the winning point. By close of play a further

6 points had been added to give a comfortable margin of victory 60½ to 46½, in this finale to the summer's online counties championship season and the first ECF members' event of 2020/21. Full results are published here.

Col	BD		North of England		v	South of England		
B	1	168	Riding	Cpt. Mick D	½ - ½	Fulton	Cpt. Anthony R	177
W	2	236	Horton	Andrew P	1 - 0	Lalic	Bogdan	230
B	3	228	Adair	James R	1 - 0	Harris	Michael	211
W	4	228	Moreby	James E	1 - 0	Lewis	Andrew P	208
B	5	223	Han	Yichen	½ - ½	Conlon	Joseph P	203
W	6	213	Walker	David J	1 - 0	Davison	Chris	203
B	7	208	Wall	Tim P	½ - ½	Wilson	Jaimie	198
W	8	206	Smith	Murray D	½ - ½	Frostick	Clive A	193
B	9	200	Mooney	David P	½ - ½	Hodgson	John H	187
W	10	199	Neat	Ken	1 - 0	Brixel	Christof	185
					<b>7½ - 2½</b>			
B	11	188	Dargan	Paul A G	1 - 0	Fleming	Nigel D	183
W	12	187	Prasath	Malola TS	0 - 1	Fegan	Chris	187
B	13	185	Hurney	Kevin	1 - 0	Hampton	Paul DJ	182
W	14	184	Boyd	John	½ - ½	Jenkins	John	179
B	15	182	Murphy	Gary	½ - ½	Nunn	Petra	179
W	16	182	Phillips	David A	1 - 0	Chaplin	Peter E	176
B	17	181	Ellames	Roy	1 - 0 (def)	Tennyson	John	176
W	18	180	Dodds	Edward P	½ - ½	Calvert	D Ian	175
B	19	179	Smith	Simon	½ - ½	Mackenzie	Colin	175
W	20	178	Billings	Alex J	1 - 0	Shepley	Julien M	174
					<b>7 - 3</b>			
B	21	178	McAtear	Jacob B	1 - 0	Corfield	Julian	171
W	22	176	Altinsoy	Mehmet N	0 - 1 (def)	Freeman	Ashley	170
B	23	174	Cornwall	Gary L	0 - 1	Hunnable	Ian D	169
W	24	174	Olbison	Philip J	0 - 1	Lees	Fraser A	168
B	25	173	Green	Anthony J	0 - 1	Hampton	Christopher	163
W	26	173	Varney	Zoe	½ - ½	Williamson	Kevin J	166
B	27	66	Cordon	Ray	½ - ½	Cox	David R	76
W	28	169	Symonds	Richard	½ - ½	Kenning	Paul H	163
B	29	168	Garnett	John S	0 - 1	Miller	George I	162
W	30	140	Shaw	Tony	½ - ½	Figuerroa	Edison	161
					<b>3 - 7</b>			
B	31	167	Clarke	Neil	0 - 1	Saunders	Aron	161
W	32	167	Lowick Higgle	Charles	1 - 0	Marshall	Michael O	159
B	33	164	Hirst	Joe	1 - 0	Moore	Steve N	158
W	34	159	Skelsey	Stuart	1 - 0 (def)	George	Olufemi	157
B	35	159	Trevelyan	Andy J	½ - ½	Phillips	William	156
W	36	159	Woodhouse	Stephen V	0 - 1	Small	Edward P	155

B	37	158	Cole	Graham L	½ - ½	Janota	Paul S	154
W	38	157	Turner	James	1 - 0	Sheard	Jack	154
B	39	156	Evans	Harry G	½ - ½	Waters	Andrew C	153
W	40	155	Flynn	David	1 - 0	Evans	Chris John	153
					<b>6½ - 3½</b>			
B	41	154	Jones	DR Tim	½ - ½	Redmond	Michael F	150
W	42	154	Towers	Nigel S	0 - 1	Green	George DA	150
B	43	153	Goodwin	Ed H	0 - 1	Pradhan	Abhishek	148
W	44	150	Staples	Neil	½ - ½	Madden	Steve	147
B	45	148	Weston	Richard	0 - 1	Graff	Coby	146
W	46	147	Eastlake	Phil	1 - 0	Nickals	Peter A	146
B	47	145	Catt	Peter	1 - 0 (def)	Gaffney	Samuel	144
W	48	144	Doherty	Paul D	1 - 0	Payne	David J	144
B	49	144	Sharkey	Gary	1 - 0	Rapacci	Pascoe	143
W	50	143	Mohindra	Raj K	1 - 0	Bayliss	Andrew	140
					<b>6 - 4</b>			
B	51	140	McKay	Mark	1 - 0	McCready	Mark	140
W	52	139	London	Nick J	1 - 0	Richardson	John	140
B	53	138	Podlesak	Mark	1 - 0	McCarron	Peter DJ	138
W	54	138	Shaw	John S	½ - ½	Broad	Michael J	137
B	55	137	Fisher	Peter S	1 - 0 (def)	McNish	David	137
W	56	137	Perella	Andrew	0 - 1	Gurjar	Roshan	136
B	57	136	Reynolds	Gary	0 - 1	Jones	H Trevor	136
W	58	135	Hayles	Robin	0 - 1	Smith	Peter K	136
B	59	134	Mackay	Ian W	1 - 0	Sookphanich	Golf	134
W	60	130	Wilson	Andrew B	1 - 0	Acibar	Arnold	133
					<b>6½ - 3½</b>			
B	61	129	Holmes	Matthew A	1 - 0	Seyfried	Donald	131
W	62	128	Chester	Ian B	½ - ½	Gregg	Alan M	130
B	63	128	Czestochowski	Eddie	½ - ½	Wickham	Michael	130
W	64	127	Wright	David	0 - 1	Slonczuk	Pawel	129
B	65	125	Redmond	Nigel	½ - ½	Beachley	Evan	128
W	66	125	Wootton	Stephen G	½ - ½	Cload	Adrian	125
B	67	124	McKay	James	1 - 0	Harris	Dai	124
W	68	123	Riley	Adrian K	0 - 1 (def)	Gunn	Michael J	123
B	69	122	Smith	Edwin	½ - ½	Rosenbaum	Danny	123
W	70	121	Brindley	Malcolm	0 - 1	Willis	Alan S	122
					<b>4½ - 5½</b>			
B	71	120	Larkin	Steve J	1 - 0	Cox	Lucian	120
W	72	120	Rumsby	Stephen	1 - 0 (def)	Sainiuc	Stefan	120
B	73	120	Scales	Walter	1 - 0	Gurjar	Siena	117
W	74	119	Bowler	Tim	1 - 0	Lambert	David	116
B	75	117	Cassidy	Sean	½ - ½	Koreywo	Witold	114

W	76	106	Vdovycia	Titas	0 - 1	Tang	Brian	114
B	77	115	McAtear	Andrew G	½ - ½	Skippen	Terry C	111
W	78	114	White	Dennis A	0 - 1	Buckingham	Michael J	110
B	79	113	Bainbridge	Bryan J	1 - 0	Gorman	Alphonsus	109
W	80	113	Csecs	Gilbert	0 - 1	Ware	Philip J	109
					<b>6 - 4</b>			
B	81	112	Holmes	Nick D	0 - 1	Lee	Robin	106
W	82	112	Oxnard	Richard	0 - 1	Oh	Julie	105
B	83	110	Siddle	Michael	0 - 1	Clayton	Gerry	100
W	84	109	White	Richard	1 - 0	Celebi	Serhan	99
B	85	103	Simpson	Stuart	1 - 0	Jirgensone	Inga	95
W	86	101	Clynes	Chris	0 - 1	Singh	Hari	94
B	87	97	Li	Ray	0 - 0	Parikh	Naavya	92
W	88	96	Appleby	J Robert	0 - 1	Smyth	Sandy A	92
B	89	95	Miller	Jonathan	1 - 0	Jones	Graham L	91
W	90	93	Green	Eliot W	1 - 0	Brown	Hugh	86
					4 - 5			
W	91	92	Arora	Prachi	1 - 0	Flewellen	David	84
W	92	92	Walsh	Shaun	1 - 0	Tekniepe	T Klaus	79
B	93	91	Bizzell	Paul	0 - 1	Goldman	David	78
W	94	90	Blair	James	0 - 1	Stubbs	John	75
B	95	89	Meredith	Daniel	1 - 0	Russell	Lloyd	66
W	96	85	Frings	Mick J	½ - ½	Baig	Huzaifa	65
B	97	83	Newton	Martin	0 - 1	Skinner	Samuel	63
W	98	80	Kearney	Jonny	0 - 1	Wright	George A	62
B	99	79	Glenn	Thomas	0 - 1	Osseiran	Nadim	58
W	100	76	Jones	Reg	0 - 1 (def)	Nokes	Oliver	54
					<b>3½ - 6½</b>			
B	101	75	Morgan	John	1 - 0 (def)	Kilambi	Venkata A A	48
W	102	74	Babu	Rohan	1 - 0	Lawrence	Anthony P	47
B	103	74	Topping	Rachel	1 - 0 (def)	Osborne	Trevor J	47
W	104	71	Riddle	Alan	1 - 0	Mouratidis	Markos	44
B	105	60	Butler	Rene	0 - 1	Acibar	Joshua Anthony	38
W	106	59	Mohindra	Arun	0 - 1	Stevens	Tobias	28
B	107	17	Chadwick	Donna	1 - 0 (def)	Wang	Luoke	28
W	108	60	Glass	Andrew	1 - 0	Jestico	John V	100
					6 - 2			
					<b>60% - 46%</b>			

## European Online Youth Championships report – Tim Wall

England's Open and Girls teams took part creditably in the ground-breaking European Online Youth Chess Championships (EOYCC), held over the weekend of 18th-20th September, with a majority of players taking part from a central venue, Holiday Inn Kenilworth. It was the first major international individual and team tournament organised as a hybrid event, where play takes place online with a combination of in-person and video conference arbiter supervision.

The combined England performance (99 points out of a possible 180) was broadly in line with, or even slightly better than, performances in recent years in over-the-board (OTB) European youth championships. England's 12 Open Team players scored 57/108, while our eight Girls Team players scored 42/72.



### Rapidplay tournament over 3 days

The sections were organised by the European Chess Union (ECU) as 9-round Swiss rapidplay tournaments, with a time control of 25 minutes plus 5 seconds per move, and included players from 40 countries. The eight sections included Open Under 18, Under 16, Under 14 and Under 12, and Girls Under 18, Under 16, Under 14 and Under 12. Russia triumphed in six out of the eight sections, winning the Open Under 18, 16 and 14, and Girls Under 18, 16 and 12. Azerbaijan won the individual title in the Open Under 12, and Belarus won the individual Girls Under 14.

The England scores (out of 9) in the various age categories were —

Open 18 – Jonah Willow 5.5, Koby Kalavannan 5.5, Viktor Stoyanov 5

Open 16 – Aaravamudhan Balaji 5.5, Ranesh Ratnesan 4.5, Aditya Verma 4

Girls 16 – Nadia Jaufarally 5, Imogen Dican 4

Open 14 – Jacob Yoon 5, Shahjahon Saidmurudov 5, James Merriman 4.5

Girls 14 – Julia Volovich 5.5, Abigail Weersing 5.5, Anum Sheikh 5

Open 12 – Nishchal Thatte 5, Sohumi Lohia 4, Luca Buanne 3.5

Girls 12 – Eugenia Karas 6, Nina Pert 6, Tashika Arora 5

### A socially distanced playing venue

The event was played on the Tornelo.com playing platform, with online arbiter supervision via video conference and a local in-person arbiter at a central playing hub – in England's case, at the Holiday Inn Kenilworth, near Coventry. A large majority of the 20 England players took part from the Kenilworth venue, socially distanced and staying within designated groups (or 'bubbles') of 6 throughout the three days of competition, following the new government regulations.

Each player played on their own laptop computer on a separate table, and sharing their screen by Zoom video conference link with the online arbiter. The playing hall was laid out in classroom style, with 16 players and one arbiter generously spaced out in a room measuring a total of 226 square metres. The local arbiter at Kenilworth, IA Matthew Carr, could observe the players in person and ensure that Fair Play regulations were strictly observed in the playing hall, and there were two digital cameras set up to observe the whole playing area from different angles. Participants wore face coverings at all times in the playing hall, and also throughout the public areas of the hotel, in compliance with government regulations.

A small minority of players, whose families were either shielding due to Covid-19 regulations or in a “local lockdown” area, were permitted by the ECU organisers to play from home – in one case, with IA David Sedgwick as local Fair Play arbiter at the player’s home, and for the other three players, there was increased Fair Play scrutiny from the ECU’s online arbiters.

#### Using Ken Regan’s anti-cheating software

In addition to the in-person and online arbiter supervision, all the games in the eight sections were checked in real time by Professor Kenneth Regan’s anti-cheating software.

Tornelo is slightly different from other major online chess servers (such as Chess.com, Lichess.org, Chessclub.com, and Chess24.com) in that it is specifically designed for organised tournaments run and controlled by qualified arbiters, rather than for fun or unofficial online events, and that it uses FIDE-approved pairings systems – not the ones designed by the servers themselves. The idea is to replicate as closely as possible an over-the-board (OTB) tournament, and it allows direct communication between players and arbiters. It is true that Tornelo is a new and relatively untested playing platform, and that there were a few technical glitches during play, including some rounds starting later than advertised. But the England players adapted magnificently to these delays, staying focused at their computers, and once play started there were no issues. On the most important issues of avoiding internet disconnections and ensuring Fair Play, however, I believe the event was very successful.

#### An enjoyable experience

As well as the sterling efforts of IA Matthew Carr and IA David Sedgwick, particular thanks are also due to ECF Chief Executive Mike Truran and Director of Junior Chess and Education Alex Holowczak for their support in getting the event off the ground in such challenging circumstances, and to Guaranteed Events Ltd and the manager and staff of the Holiday Inn Kenilworth for providing us with an excellent venue. The players and their families all expressed satisfaction that the event had been a worthwhile experiment as a hybrid chess event, and were happy to be able to socialise in a limited way with other players and families whom they had not seen since over-the-board chess events were halted in the spring.

One informal highlight of the event for the juniors was the opportunity to play a fun online “Banter Blitz” tournament on Lichess.org on the Saturday evening. The players played, masked up, via their computers from their desks in the playing hall, and enjoyed a fair amount of light-hearted trash talking and chatter while the games were in progress.

On a personal note, I can say it was a real pleasure to be involved in organising this event and to interact with their players and their families, who all put in a lot of effort into the tournament and carefully followed social distancing. To the wider chess community, I can highly recommend the hybrid format as a way to play safely according to Covid-19 regulations, under arbiter and video conference supervision, while enabling players to meet in a socially distanced way and enjoy the experience of something close to an OTB tournament.

### **Cheney Under 11 tournament 24/10 – Joseph Conlon**

Once upon a time – only one year ago but a world away – I ran an Oxfordshire qualifying event for the London Junior championships. There had been 100 children; they and their parents had fitted in the venue comfortably. As the same time of year approached, the question nagged – why not run another over-the-board event this year?

I knew the venue – a large self-contained secondary school building with a total of eleven classrooms – was well suited to social distancing. I knew ‘supervised activities provided for children’ were permitted. I enquired; the school were receptive to outside bookings – and so, risk assessment done and tournament protocols planned, I went ahead and advertised.

A few weeks later, on the 24th of October, after enquiries, entries, withdrawals and organisational nerves about what the government might at any time announce, 13 enthusiastic players turned up at Cheney School in Oxford, ranging from experienced young campaigners fresh from the online Terafinals (Reya Li, Cian Ward and Vassily Sagyaman from the U10s, and Harry Bryant and Diah Patel from the U8s) to those playing their first over-the-board tournament. The chess was in two upstairs classrooms, three boards to each room, while parents waited downstairs in allocated classrooms.

Given the paucity of available OTB chess, the plan was to get plenty of rounds in, and eight were played in total on a 15+8 time control. As expected, the first two rounds went with seed and then in round 3 the top of the draw started clashing.

**White: Cian Ward (103); Black: Harry Bryant (83); Petroff, Stafford Gambit**

**1.e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 Nc6** (Classic junior chess – dodgy but aggressive gambits!) **4. Nxc6 dxc6 5. d3 Bc5 6. h3 Qd4 7. Qe2 Be6 8. c3 Qd7 9. Be3 Bb6 10. Nd2 O-O-O 11. Bxb6 cxb6 12. O-O-O Ne8** (White has steered to a clear advantage but Black now starts an enterprising knight manoeuvre) **13. Nb3 f6 14. Qc2 Nc7 15. Nd4 Nb5 16. Nxb5 cxb5 17. Be2 Qf7 18. Bg4 Bxg4 19. hxg4 Qxa2 20. b3 Qa3+ 21. Qb2 Qc5 22. b4 Qg5+ 23. Kb1 Qxg4 24. f3 Qf4 25. Qa2 a6 26. Qe6+ Kc7 27. d4 Qe3 28. Qb3 Qe2 29. Qc2 Qc4 30. Kb2 a5 31. Qd3 axb4 32. Qxc4 bxc4 33. cxb4 h6 34. Kc3 b5 35. Ra1 Ra8 36. Ra5 b6 37. Rxb5 Ra2 38. Rb1 Rxg2 39. Rb2 Rxb2 40. Kxb2 h5** (Black is won as the pawn is unstoppable, but White finds the one practical chance)



**41. e5 h4 42. e6 h3 43. e7 h2??** (43. ... Kd7 or g5 kills the game cold) **48. e8=Q Rxe8 45. Rh5 Re2 46. Kc3 Re3+ 47. Kxc4 Rxf3 58. Rxh2 f5 49. Rh5 Kc6 50. d5+ Kd6 51. Kb5 Kxd5 52. Kxb6 g6 53. Rg5 Rb3 54. Kb5 Ke4** and with both players in heavy time trouble the game was played out to bare Kings.

The fourth round saw the meeting of the two highest rated players, Reya Li and Cian Ward. Defending a tricky endgame, Cian did not notice his time run out and lost on time, leaving Reya as the sole leader on 4/4 chased by Harry Bryant on 3.5/4. The two met in the next game, when Harry caught Reya in a passive position and forced through checkmate, leaving Harry sole leader on 4.5/5 and having played the two top seeds.

Eight rounds gives many room for pitfalls though, and in round 7 Maidenhead junior Kanishka Suriarachi defeated Harry. Reya did not let this chance slip, winning all remaining games to take first place with 7/8.

The youngest player in the tournament was Ayan Pradhan, recently turned 5 and playing his first OTB tournament. Nonetheless, honed by online chess, he impressed with an unusually mature style for his age, holding his own against far older and more experienced players.

**White: Alexander Conlon (81); Black: Ayan Pradhan (ungraded)**  
**English Opening, Symmetrical**

**1. c4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. g3 d6 4. Bg2 Nf6 5. e3 Bd7 6. Ne2 g6 7. O-O Bg7 8.d4 O-O 9. d5 Ne5 10. b3 Qb6 11. Bb2 Rad8 (11. ... Nxc4!) 12. Qd2 Rfe8 13. Nf4 g5 14. Nd3 Nxd3 15. Qxd3 e6 16. Rfe1 exd5 17. Nxd5 Nxd5 18. Bxg7 Kxg7 19. Bxd5 Bc6 20. Bg2 Bxg2 21. Kxg2 Qc6+ 22. Qd5 Qxd5 23. cxd5 Re5 24. e4 f5 25. f3 ...**



Black gets the right idea, but in the wrong move order – 25. ... Rde8 leaves Black clearly better. **25. ... fxe4 26. fxe4 Rde8 27. Kf3 Rf8+ 28. Ke3 Rfe8 29. Kd3 Kf6 30. Rac1 R5e7 31. Rc4 b5 32. Rc2 Rc8 33. Rf2+ Kg6 34. Rc2 c4+ (and Black drops a pawn) 35. bxc4 bxc4+ 36. Rxc4 Rxc4 37. Kxc4 h5 38. Kd4 h4 39. e5 dxe5 40. Rxe5 Rxe5 41. Kxe5** (and White soon won)

1st Reya Li, 7/8; 2nd = Harry Bryant, Cian Ward 6.5/8; full results on UTU Swiss.

A big thanks to Cheney School and Dylan Davies, for their supportive attitude and their willingness to continue outside lettings at this time, to Rod Nixon and St Giles Junior Chess Club for the loan of

equipment, and to the players and parents for their support of OTB chess at the current time.

### **Online County Under 18 Championship – Alex Holowczak**

**First place – Warwickshire; Second place – Kent; Third place – Oxfordshire**

Final Ranking crosstable after 7 Rounds												
	County	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4
1	Warwickshire	7w4	2b4	8w5	5b5	6b4½	4w4	9b5	14	200,5	31,5	45
2	Kent	6b5	1w2	3b3½	4b4	5w4½	7b4	8w5	12	194,5	28,0	53
3	Oxfordshire	12w5	4b1	2w2½	7w5	9b6	6w3½	10b5	10	127,5	28,0	40
4	Yorkshire	9b3½	3w5	5b3	2w2	10w4	1b2	7w4½	9	163,0	24,0	53
5	Berkshire	10w4	11b6	4w3	1w1	2b1½	8b4	12w3½	9	115,0	23,0	47
6	Northumberland	2w1	9w3½	7b4½	8b3½	1w1½	3b2½	11w3	7	104,0	19,5	48
7	Leicestershire	1b2	12w4½	6w1½	3b1	11b5	2w2	4b1½	4	106,0	17,5	56
8	Staffordshire	11b3	10w3½	1b1	6w2½	12b3	5w2	2b1	4	87,5	16,0	50
9	Hampshire	4w2½	6b2½	12b3	11w5	3w0	10b3	1w1	4	86,0	17,0	48
10	Worcestershire	5b2	8b2½	11w3	12w3½	4b2	9w3	3w1	4	80,0	17,0	40
11	Merseyside	8w3	5w0	10b3	9b1	7w1	12b3	6b3	4	53,0	14,0	32
12	Gtr. Manchester	3b1	7b1½	9w3	10b2½	8w3	11w3	5b2½	3	78,5	16,5	35

### **Caplin British Online Chess Championships 2020 – Nigel Towers**

The Caplin British Online Chess Championships took place over two weeks from 18th December 2020 to 3rd January 2021 on the Chess.com platform. This was the first time in its history the British Chess Championships was staged online in the 116 years since the tournament started in 1904, and means the British was able to continue, albeit in a different format, without a gap. The event was organized by the British Isles Chess Championships team, including Kevin Staveley as Tournament Director and a team of around 15 arbiters in the control team.

We had direct entries from numerous titled players in the open championships, including GMs Mickey Adams, Matthew Turner, Daniel Fernandez, Keith Arkell, Mark Hebden, Bogdan Lalic, IM Ameet Ghasi, and WGM Katarzyna Toma. The blitz championships included GMs Gawain Jones, John Nunn, John Speelman and Nick Pert. The women's championship also saw a very strong group of entrants, including WGMs Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant, Dagne Ciuksyte and Harriet Hunt.

The event was a great success, with almost 800 entrants and approximately 2,400 entries across the various championships and competitions. There were 10 different championships (Open, Women's, Seniors (50+ and 65+) and Juniors with 6 different age groups) and 4 different time controls from Standardplay to Bullet in each championship.

Commentary was provided by GM Matthew Sadler and WIM Natasha Regan via their Game Changer YouTube channel, where you can watch recordings for the different events and rounds. Congratulations go to GM Michael Adams as the first British Online Champion [following a playoff with IM Ameet Ghasi]. Congratulations also to WGM Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant as the first British Online Women's Champion, and to all the new champions across the different categories and time controls, including some very strong female players, the seniors and of course the many junior players who took part during the school holidays.

A closing and awards ceremony was held on Zoom with a virtual prize giving to recognize the winners. Full results and PGNs can be found at this links for the qualifiers and the finals ---  
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/BOCC-2020.pdf>

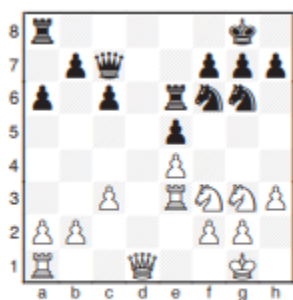
Championships Winners & Placings				
Event	Time control	1st place	2nd place	3rd place
Championship	Standard	Michael Adams	Ameet Ghasi	Matthew Wadsworth
	Rapidplay	Harry Grieve	Matthew Turner	Yichen Han
	Blitz	Gawain Jones	Jon Speelman	Ameet Ghasi
	Bullet	Ameet Ghasi	Yichen Han	Aaravamudhan Balaji
Women's	Standard	Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant	Nina Pert	Dagne Ciuksyte
	Rapidplay	Harriet Hunt	Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant	Trisha Kanyamarala
	Blitz	Trisha Kanyamarala	Liza Kisteneva	Maria Emelianova
Seniors 65+	Standard	George Green	Dave Bray	Alan Gregg
	Rapidplay	Paul Kemp	Stewart Fishburne	Pat Twomey
Seniors 50+	Standard	Clive Frostick	Robert Willmoth	Timothy J Kett
	Rapidplay	Keith Arkell	Graham Waddingham	John Pitcher
Under 18	Standard	Shreyas Royal	Toby Cox	Ethan Sanitt
	Rapidplay	Oliver Stubbs	Yichen Han	Shreyas Royal
	Blitz	Omeet Atara	Oliver Stubbs	Shreyas Royal
Under 16	Standard	Maximilian Wilton	Adam Collins	Oisin O'Cuilleainain
	Rapidplay	Aaravamudhan Balaji	Adam Sieckowski	Barnaby Wreford
	Blitz	Adam Sieckowski	Adam Collins	Aron Saunders
Under 14	Standard	Mohammed Aayan Ismail	Manmay Chopra	Matthew Fleri
	Rapidplay	Mohammed Aayan Ismail	Shivam Agrawal	Arnav Srivastava
	Blitz	Arjun Kolani	Mohammed Aayan Ismail	Ethan Chung
Under 12	Standard	Nishchal Thatte	Harry Zheng	Denis K Dupuis
	Rapidplay	Jude Shearsby	Nischal Thatte	Kenneth Hobson
	Blitz	Stanley Badacsonyi	Denis K Dupuis	Kenneth Hobson
Under 10	Standard	Frederick Gordon	Theo Khoury	Cian Ward
	Rapidplay	Frederick Gordon	Alexander Linton	Jai Kothari
	Blitz	Frederick Gordon	Soham Kumar	Kameron Grose

<b>Under 8</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Patrick Damodaran</b>	Luca Fischbein	Luoke Wang
	<b>Rapidplay</b>	<b>Patrick Damodaran</b>	Harry Bryant	George Chen
	<b>Blitz</b>	<b>Patrick Damodaran</b>	Harry Bryant	Oleg Verbytski
<b>Junior Bullet</b>	<b>Bullet</b>	<b>Finlay Bowcott-Terry</b>	Shreyas Royal	Benjamin Murray
<b>Festival Winners &amp; Placings</b>				
<b>Event</b>	<b>Time control</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>2nd place</b>	<b>3rd place</b>
<b>Major Open</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>James Thomas</b>	Arjun Kolani	Kennan Kesterson
	<b>Rapidplay</b>	<b>Douglas Vleeshouwer</b>	Andrew McGettigan	Timothy J Kett
<b>Under 2000</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Lewis A Turner</b>	Oscar J Idle	Jason Lv
	<b>Rapidplay</b>	<b>Joshua Pink</b>	Lakshan Siddharth	Steve Madden
<b>Under 1700</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Andrew Todd</b>	Andrew Broughen	Theo Torres
	<b>Rapidplay</b>	<b>Andrew Todd</b>	Robert M Ashworth	Niki Mullins
<b>Under 1400</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Oliver Craven</b>	George Burke	Colin Vernon, Yile Wang
	<b>Rapidplay</b>	<b>Alex Istari</b>	Joshua Seet	Yiwen Ding

## Games from the Online British

Michael Adams featured the British Online in his column at the beginning of January which is reproduced below by kind permission of Trinity Media.

THE British Championship Online, which began before Christmas and stretched over the festive season into the New Year with a few breaks, was fiercely contested despite the unusual format. I made a good start but was less energised in the concluding rounds. Ameet Ghasi caught me up on 7/9, but I managed to survive a rather random play-off and won the event.

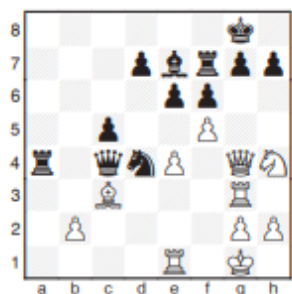


**C. Finn – M. Adams**  
Caplin British Online 2020

18.Rd3 (It looks like mass exchanges on the d-file will lead to an uneventful draw, but I found a way to spice up the position) 18...Nf4 19.Rd2 c5! 20.c4 (After 20.Qc2 c4 a later Nd3 will plug the open file, keeping an edge, but this opens another route for my knight to reach a strong post on the d-file) 20...Ree8! 21.Qc2 (I wasn't sure what the best reply was against 21.Nf5. In fact, 21...Nxe4! 22.Rd7 Qc6 23.Ne7+ Rxe7 24.Rxe7 Qg6! is crushing) 21...Ne6 22.Rad1 Nd4 23.Qb1 g6 (Maintaining my knight on the great central outpost is more important than damaging the kingside pawns with 23...Nxf3+ 24.gxf3. The cost of rejuvenating White's pieces is too high) 24.Ne1 (White

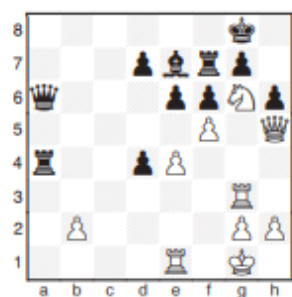
sends his knight towards d5 in response, but it won't get there quickly) 24...Qc6 (Targeting the pawn on e4 to force a weakening pawn move) 25.f3 b5 26.Nf1 (26.Nc2 heading towards e3 was better) 26...Nh5! (My other knight heads towards a threatening post) 27.cxb5?! (A mistake

activating my rook on a8. 27.Ne3 Rad8 was tougher) 27...axb5 28.b4? (Compounding the error; now I have a strong passed pawn, and things unravel quickly) 28...Nf4! 29.Kh2 (29.bxc5 Nfe2+ 30.Kh2 Nc3 wins the exchange) 29...c4 30.Nc2 c3! 31.Rf2 (Forced, as 31.Nxd4 exd4 32.Rxd4 c2 wins) 31...Qb6! (Eyeing up the rook on f2, which is seriously short of squares, hungrily) 32.Nxd4 (I was hoping for 32.Nce3 Rec8 33.g3 c2 leading to a pretty finish: 34.Nxc2 Rxc2 35.Rxc2 Nxf3+ 36.Kh1 Qg1 mate. 32.Nfe3 loses a piece due to 32...Nxc2) 32...exd4 33.g3 d3 White resigned. The hanging rook on f2 and the threat of c2 decide



T. Cox – T. O'Gorman  
Caplin British Online 2020

22.Qh5 Qa6? (Black should have redeployed the bishop with 22...Bd6 23.Rh3 Bf4 24.Ng6 Bh6 when it does a very important blocking job to safeguard the kingside. After the natural move in the game, White is already winning. The attack will arrive before Black has time to cause trouble with Ra1) 23.Bxd4 (23.Ng6! immediately was also good) 23...cxd4 (23...Rxd4 24.Ng6! is similar) 24.Ng6! h6 (The knight can't be captured: 24...hxxg6 25.fxxg6 Bb4 26.gxxf7+ Kf8 27.Qh8+ Kxf7 28.Rxxg7 mate. However, 24...Ra1 allows White to execute his threat: 25.Qxxh7+! Kxxh7 26.Rh3+ Kg8 27.Rh8 mate)



25.Nh8! A beautiful knight leap to the corner decides. Black resigned, as 25...Rf8 26.Qxxh6, or 25...Kxxh8 26.Qxxf7 are hopeless.

GM Keith Arkell comments on his game against Mark Josse in round 2 of the BOCC Rapidplay 50 Plus finals, which Keith went on to win. Keith shows some expert technique in the rook ending where he steadily increases the mobility of his rooks to reach a winning position.

### **(2525) KeithArkell (2520) – Mark Josse (2003) [D02] – BOCC Rapidplay 50 plus finals**

Live Chess Chess.com, 03.01.2021

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nc3 c6



We reach a familiar queens gambit exchange variation position with Carlsbad pawn structure. Keith is an expert in such positions.

6.Qc2 Be7 7.Bg5 Nbd7 8.e3 h6 9.Bh4 Nh5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.Be2 Nhf6 12.0–0 0–0 13.Rab1 a5 14.Rfe1 Re8 15.a3 - A theoretical novelty which allows blacks next move.  
15 b5



**16.a4?** An inaccuracy allowing b4 and black is gaining space on the Q side

[Better was 16.Bd3 (making way for the knight which can reroute to the K side) Ne4 17.Ne2 Ba6 18.Nf4 g5]

**16...b4 17.Na2** - Black is slightly better because of the extra space

**17...c5** [Critical move.]

**18.dxc5 Nxc5 19.Nc1** – Keeping control of b3

**19. ..Bd7**

**20.b3 Nfe4** - The position is roughly equal again

**21.Nd3 Rac8** [ Hoping for Nxa4]

**22.Nxc5 Rxc5 23.Qb2 Rec8 24.Nd4 Qg5 25.Bf3 Nc3 26.Ra1 h5 27.Qd2** [±]

**27...h4 28.Kh1 Bg4**

**29.h3** Inviting B to open the g file

**29..Bxf3?** This is a mistake - Better was 29...Be6

**30.gxf3** [A critical move opening the file for White's rooks while Black pieces are busy on the Q side].

**30...Qf6 31.Rg1**



**Kf8 32.Rg4 g6 33.Rag1 Qe7 34.Qd3 Ke8 35.Rg5**

[Rg4 looks stronger with Rf4 and Rgg4 to follow.]

**35...Kd7 36.Qa6**

**36...Qd6 37.Qxd6+** [=]

**37...Kxd6 38.R5g4**

**38...Rh8 39.Rf4**



**Rc7??** This was the critical mistake after which W wins.

[(0.00) The best move was 39...Ke7 after which the position is equal eg 40.Rg5 Na2 41.Nb5]

**40.Rf6+ Ke7 41.Ra6 Rc5**

**42.Rg5**



Ra7+ is now a strong threat.

**42...Nd1?** [This was a mistake with...Rhc8 43.Kg2 Nb1 was better getting the R on h8 back in to the game]

**43.Kg2** [Defending the pawn. W is winning now although better may have been 43.Re5+ Kf8 44.Ra7 Kg7 45.Ree7]

**43...Nb2** [ Better was 43...Rhc8 44.Rg4 Rc2 45.Nxc2 Rxc2]

**44.Re5+ Kf8 45.Ra7 Nd3 46.Ree7 Ne1+?** [MISTAKE (+8.94)]

[(+5.78) The best move was 46...Rh7 47.Ne6+ fxe6 48.Rxh7 Kg8 49.Rhg7+ Kh8 50.Rxg6 e5 51.Rh6+ Kg8 52.Rd6 Rc8 53.Rxa5 Ne1+ 54.Kf1 Nxf3 55.Raxd5]

**47.Kf1 Rc1?** [This allows Mate in 4 although black is lost at this point]

**48.Ke2 Rh7 49.Ne6+ Kg8**

**50.Re8#** [Keith Arkell won by checkmate]

**1-0**

## **GM Gawain Jones is the European Online Blitz Chess Champion – Danny Rosenbaum**



Many congratulations to GM Gawain Jones on becoming the European Online Blitz Chess Champion! After getting through a gruelling 11-round qualification stage, he reached the last 16 of a strong field of over 350

players. He had notable victories over the very strong GM David Navara in the semi-final and against chess legend GM Alexei Shirov in the final.

### **Gibraltar Chess Festival 2020 – John Saunders**



David Paravyan, a 21-year-old from Russia, is the 2020 Gibraltar Masters champion. The 2020 Gibraltar Masters began on 21st January 2020 with seven players rated 2700 and above topping a stellar field of 248 players vying for the increased first prize of £30,000. The list of competitors also included many of the world's leading female players, who will be playing for the top women's prize of £20,000.

### **Caplin Hastings All-Play-All 2021 – Carlos Alberto Colodro**

David Howell wins the Caplin Hastings online tournament *[from Chessbase.com]*



Full report by Carlos Alberto Colodro here – <https://en.chessbase.com/post/david-howell-wins-hastings-online-tournament-2021>. Results and prizes are here – <http://www.hastingschess.com/caplin-all-play-all-results-and-prizes/>

Already closing on a hundred editions, the Hastings International Chess Congress was organized this year despite the pandemic. Sponsored by Caplin Systems for a second time, the tournament was played online on Saturday and Sunday.

This time around, ten top English players were joined by the winner and runner-up of the Caplin British Online Chess Championships – IM Matthew Wadsworth and IM Matthew Turner. Michael Adams, Luke McShane, Gawain Jones, David Howell and Nicholas Pert, all top-10 players in England, participated.

The tournament was a 12-player single round robin with a time control of 15 minutes for the game and 10-second increments from the first move. Six rounds were played on Saturday and the remaining five took place on Sunday. The games were played on the Tornelo platform, with special regulations put in place to secure fair play in the online event.

Danny Gormally also had a good performance, especially against the four strongest players in the field — who, incidentally, finished in the first four positions of the standings table.

**1st GM David Howell 9/11 points; 2nd GM Luke McShane 7.5; 3rd GM Michael Adams 7**

4th GM Gawain Jones 6.5; 5th GM Daniel Gormally 6; 6th GM Matthew Turner 5.5; 7th IM Matthew Wadsworth 5; 8th GM Keith Arkell 5; 9th GM Nicholas Pert 4.5; 10th GM Mark Hebden 3.5; 11th IM Ameet Ghasi 3.5; 12th GM Glenn Flear 3

Prizes – 1st £1,200; 2nd £800; 3rd £650; 4th £550; 5th £450; 6th £350; 7th £300; 8th £250; 9th £200; 10th £200; 11th £100; 12th £100

### **ECF Daily Chess – Andrew Caswell**

#### **ECF Daily Championship 2021**

The 2021 ECF Daily Championship 2021 on the Chess.com platform opened for registration on 17th December and commences on 1st January 2021. There will be three separate tournaments based on Chess.com daily ratings at the point registration opens - 1750 and above; 1400 -1749; Under 1400. Entrants will be randomly split into groups of four and will play two concurrent games against the other three players in their group, with a three days per move time control. The winners of each group will progress to the next round of the competition. All members of the ECF Members club on Chess.com will automatically receive an invitation to take part as long as the settings on their profile permit this.

#### **Team England**

By the end of the year the ECF endorsed Team England club on Chess.com had beaten Russia in a mammoth 665 board match, although there were 11 games still to finish. Final confirmation will be some time off, but it is expected that Team England will therefore win both the World League and European League in 2020.



## **Online Chess Report by Nigel Towers, Director of Home Chess**

ECF members endured a difficult year without over-the-board chess and the peripheral social activities that go with it. Leaving home, meeting up with teammates or fellow competitors at a tournament, post-match analysis and a drink or two in a nearby tavern were replaced by Zoom chess servers and a cup of tea ... but these clouds, along with the Netflix sensation *The Queen's Gambit*, brought silver linings that resulted in a universal resurgence of online chess. You only have to look at the proliferation of online leagues, tournaments and approaches to clubs all over the country to see how much chess is loved.

The ECF played a full part in this resurgence, organising a number of online championships and events during the year in addition to its regular online club tournaments.

These included the **English Online Blitz Championships** in May with the Open and Women's titles won by FM Marcus Harvey and WFM Svetlana Sucikova respectively, and the **Checkmate COVID-19 Online Marathon**, also in May.

The Online Marathon was organised by our social media manager Danny Rosenbaum. Amazingly the tournament went right down to the wire, with FM Harry Grieve just edging out GM Danny Gormally for top spot by 517 points to 516. The event raised over £10,000 for the British Red Cross. Stephen Greep organised the **National Online Club Championships [Page 83]** in June with Harrow, Wimbledon and Hull Chess Clubs taking the section honours.

The ECF also organised a very successful **Online County Championships [Page 85]** tournament run by Mark Murrell. The first County Championships were held in 1908 and the 2020 Online event had a different feel to the over the board competitions from the 100 years that had gone before. The Online County Championships started in June following some preliminary matches and ran until the finals in August and September.

On a historical note we organised a **North v South [Page 86]** online match which took place in September after a pause of 126 years since the first over the board North v South matches of 1893 and 1894. Over 200 players turned out for an online version of the match played over 108 boards with the North, led by Captain Mick Riding, winning 62-45.

And despite the cancellation of the over the board British Championships in Torquay we put together the **Caplin Online British Chess Championships [Page 94]**, starting in December 2020 and running until 3rd January 2021. This was a virtual version of the physical tournament, with separate Open, Women's, Seniors and Junior Championships together with an online Major Open and rating limited events. GM Michael Adams and GM Ameet Ghazi finished on 7/9 in the Open, with Adams winning an exciting tie-break. Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant won the Women's section with an outstanding performance. In what was a top-class event that lifted spirits in difficult times we greatly appreciate the sponsorship of Caplin Systems.

You can read further details of all the flagship events in the 'Events around England' section of the Yearbook.

## **ECF Online Club Tournaments, Leagues and Congresses**

### **ECF Members Club Tournaments**

The ECF Online clubs went live on 8th January 2020 with ECF members clubs on Chess.com and Lichess.org at the links here - <https://www.chess.com/club/english-chess-federation-members> & <https://lichess.org/team/english-chess-players>

We also went live with our ECF Social Chess club open to all players at <https://www.chess.com/club/english-chess-federation>

Club membership grew steadily throughout the year, with numbers as follows by December 2020

Chess.com ECF Members - 1,182  
Lichess.org English Players - 943  
Chess.com ECF Open Club - 3,874

For Members Club tournaments, we started with two ECF online rated tournaments per week and then moved to three per week for each club. The tournaments have been a mix of Swiss and Arena format at a range of blitz and rapidplay time controls. 10|0 is the most popular time control on Chess.com and Lichess.org and the 10|0 and 10|2 events have proved very popular in addition to the faster 3|2 and 5|2 blitz events.

For Rapid and Blitz events, the standard schedule settled down into the following weekly pattern of Rapid and Blitz events from April 2020, running throughout the year –

Event	Date	Format	Time Control
Friday Evening Diamond Rapid (ECF online rated)	8.00pm Friday on Chess.com	90 minute Arena at 10 2	Rapid
Saturday Evening Rapid (ECF online rated)	8.00pm Saturday on lichess.org	90 minute Arena at 10 2	Rapid
Sunday Evening Rapid (ECF online rated)	8.00pm Sunday on Chess.com	7 round Swiss at 10 2	Rapid
Monday Afternoon Blitz (ECF online rated)	2.00pm Monday on Lichess.org	7 round Swiss at 5 2	Blitz
Wednesday Evening Blitz (ECF online rated)	8.00pm Wednesday on Lichess.org	9 Round Swiss at 3 2	Blitz
Thursday Afternoon Blitz (ECF online rated)	2.00pm Thursday on Chess.com	7 round Swiss at 5 2	Blitz

All ECF events have been ECF online rated, with a growing number of players in the tournaments, and between 30 to 40 players taking part on a regular basis by year end. Here are a couple of example tournaments from the November events on Chess.com and Lichess.org.

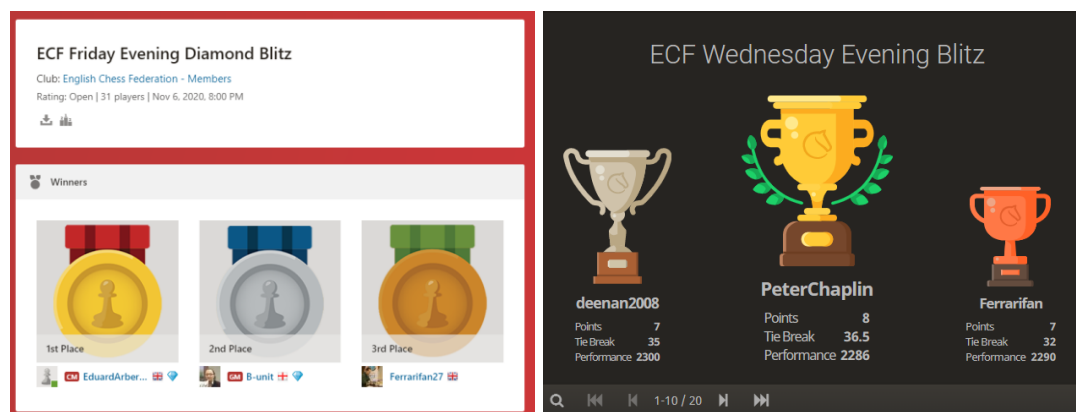
### **Chess.com Friday Evening Diamond Blitz**

The Friday evening tournaments are slow blitz Arenas, running for 90 minutes at 10|0 time control,

with a one-month Chess.com membership upgrade going to the winner.

### Lichess.org Wednesday Evening Blitz

The Wednesday events are 9 round Swiss tournaments at 3|2 time control.



Here is a game from one of the May 2020 Wednesday Evening Blitz tournaments, with commentary from club member Peter Finn.

### **(1) Peter Finn (Checkmatealot (2275)) – IM Thomas Rendle (TRendle (2609)) [C03]**

ECF Wednesday Evening Blitz Arena lichess.org, 06.05.2020

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 a6**

[A slightly unusual move but not necessarily a bad one, especially for a blitz game.]

**4.Ngf3 Nf6 5.e5 Nfd7 6.Bd3 c5 7.c3 Nc6 8.0-0 g5 [**



Very similar to another line of the French but here black has included a6 instead of Be7. The difference isn't clear at first but not including Be7 allows a tactical shot.]

**9.dxc5** [9.Nb3! Seems like a blunder at first. 9...c4 (9...h6 10.Nxc5 Nxc5 11.dxc5 Bxc5 12.Re1 White's lead in development and black's exposed kingside give white a clear edge here also. 9...g4 10.Ng5 c4 11.Bxh7 cxb3 12.Qxg4 White's attack is easily enough compensation for the piece and with a quick f4, f5 the white rook will join the attack.) 10.Nxg5 cxd3 11.Nxe6! White's idea when playing Nb3. 11...Qb6 (11...fxe6 12.Qh5+ Ke7 13.Bg5+) 12.Nf4 White will pick up d5 and with black's king in the centre and 3 pawns for the piece, white is clearly better.]

**9...g4**



[Continuing as if I were playing against the Be7 line.]

**10.Nd4 Ncxe5 11.N2b3** [11.Bc2 Keeping the knight on d2 was better in order to play f4 next to force black to either give up g4 or open the f file.]

**11...Nxc5 12.Nxc5 Bxc5** [Now f4 is no longer possible as gxf3 ep will destroy white's kingside.]

**13.Bf4 Qf6 14.Bxe5 Qxe5 15.Qxg4 h5 16.Qg3? Qxg3 17.hxg3** [



Black is clearly better, he has the 2 bishops a strong central pawn chain and white struggles for ideas.]

**17...Bd7 18.Rfe1 Ke7 19.b4** [A desperate attempt to create some play but in reality just creating weaknesses.]

**19...Bb6 20.a4 Rac8 21.Ra3 Kf6 22.Re3 Kg7 23.a5** [



**23...Rxc3?** [A tempting tactic but it doesn't work.]

[23...Bxd4 24.cxd4 Rc1+ 25.Kh2 Rbc8 White has got no play and is getting dominated.]

**24.Nxe6+ fxe6 25.Rxc3 Bxe3 26.Rc7 Bd4 27.Rxd7+ Kf6 28.Rxb7 Rc8 29.Bxa6 Rc2 30.Bd3 Rxf2 31.Kh2 Rd2 32.Bf1 Be5 33.a6 h4** [Black has put up great resistance up until this point but can't find a tricky resource to hold a draw.]

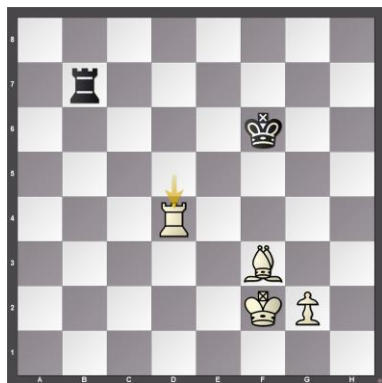
[33...Rd4! Threatening Rh4+ and Bd4#. 34.Kg1 Rd1 35.Kf2 Bd4+ 36.Ke2 Ra1 Successfully blockading white's passed pawns.]

**34.a7 hxg3+ 35.Kh3**



[Only move otherwise Rd1 and Bd4+ follow.]

**35...Ra2 36.b5 Bd4 37.b6 Bxb6 38.Rxb6 Rxa7 39.Kxg3 Ke5 40.Be2 Ra4 41.Bg4 Kd4 42.Bxe6 Ke4 43.Bf7 d4 44.Bg6+ Ke5 45.Rb5+ Kf6 46.Bh7 Ra7 47.Be4 Ra3+ 48.Kf2 Re3 49.Bf3 Re7 50.Rd5 Rb7 51.Rxd4**



[With black's pawns eliminated the game is over. Just a simple conversion needed.]

**51...Rb2+ 52.Kg3 Rb3 53.Rf4+ Kg5 54.Rg4+ Kf5 55.Re4 Ra3 56.Rb4 Rc3 57.Rb5+ Kf6 58.Kf4 Rc8 59.g4 Rf8 60.Be4 Kg7+ 61.Bf5 Rd8 62.Rb6 Re8 63.Kg5 Re7 64.Rd6 Kg8 65.Rd7 Re8 66.Kg6 Kh8 67.Rh7+ Kg8 68.Rh1 Re7 69.Ra1 Re8 70.Kf6 Kh8 71.Bg6 Rf8+ 72.Bf7 Kh7 73.Rh1#**

[An interesting game if not the most well played game. I would just like to take this opportunity to give my thanks to Nigel Towers and the ECF for getting the ECF Online tournaments up and running. It has given myself and many others tournaments to play in each week helping to keep my motivation high to work on my chess and keep on improving throughout the pandemic.]

**1-0**

Bullet chess - our regular tournaments were relatively quick at rapid and blitz time controls but still too slow for some, and in response to requests we held our first Bullet event on 19th January at <https://lichess.org/tournament/84fRUK2l>. Sunday is a popular day for Bullet on Lichess.org, especially after 9.00 pm when the 'speed kings' settle in for the evening.

They say bullet isn't real chess, which could be true but misses the point. We certainly have some gems of bullet history, the highlight being the 2001 Bullet Immortal on ICC between GMs Roland Schmaltz and Ronen Har-Zvi - <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1553589>

After a quiet opening GM Har-Zvi reaches this position when the fun starts.



Can you see Ronen's move and the follow up – and could you see it in a second or two? Ronen saw it, including the follow-up, and proceeded to demolish the unofficial Bullet world champion of the day with multiple piece sacs and a forced White king march to the 8th rank accompanied by Black's remaining minor pieces, where the White King is checkmated on move 24.

There were some (almost) equally dramatic games in our first bullet event with Lichess.org ECF club member 'cynosure' going on an unbeaten run of 27 games. If you go on a streak in Lichess.org Arena matches, you get double points for a win (4 rather than 2). 'cynosure' ended up with 107 points from 29 games in the hour's tournament, comfortably ahead of 'somethingpretentious' who came second with 59 points.

Nakamura's key tips for bullet are to play an opening where you are very familiar with the positional ideas, so you can get ahead on time; use lots of small improving moves, don't assume too much with pre-moves; choose your thinking time well; and of course - never resign!

<https://www.chess.com/article/view/7-bullet-chess-tips-by-hikaru> - Bullet is not for everyone but it's worth giving it a try at least once.

### English Juniors Club

The English Juniors team was set up in 2020 by ECF Junior Director Alex Holowczak, and ran fortnightly events on alternate Thursdays at 6.00pm with occasional matches against other countries. The junior club events were a mix of Rapid, Blitz and Bullet with the occasional Chess960 event. The club link and joining instructions can be found at <https://lichess.org/team/england-juniors>

## England Women's Club



The England Women's Club was established in 2020 by Jovanka Houska, and led by Jo Hutchinson and Lawrence Cooper. The club can be found here (including full details of club events) - <https://lichess.org/team/england-women>

The club was very well subscribed, and ran a regular schedule of weekly events including training events, club tournaments and team battles in various Lichess.org leagues, including the long running Quarantine League on Sunday afternoons.

The team also took part in a regular series of international events, including an inaugural team battle in May and June against a number of European nations. The group stage of the competition was played on 28th May and the finals on 4th June at 18.30 British Summer Time.

We came second in round 1, qualifying for the top group of five nations on 4th June, where the England team played against Germany, France, Austria, and Hungary. The final was won by the German team, with France in second. We came third, just keeping our lead against Austria to overturn the previous week's order, and ahead of Hungary in fifth.

This was an outstanding result for the England Women's team in the inaugural Lichess.org Women's team battle, against nine other European federations across the two rounds. The match links can be found here along with Jovanka's commentary on Twitch -

<https://lichess.org/tournament/5YQD6Zxl>, <https://lichess.org/tournament/BLPTPQgm>

[www.twitch.tv/jovihouska](https://www.twitch.tv/jovihouska) & <https://englishchessonline.org.uk/english-womens-international-team-battle-28th-may/>

## Online Rated Leagues

The majority of English leagues went online during 2020 so that they could continue running during the pandemic, starting with the 4NCL, Cornwall League, and the newly formed West Midlands and Five Counties leagues. An increasing number of these were ECF online-rated with the full list of online-rated leagues at the end of the year at this link - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/online-rated-leagues.pdf>

### **West Midlands Area Online League**

The West Midlands Online league was formed in April 2020 as we went into lockdown. WMA Online was established as an ECF online-rated league with teams from the Birmingham, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Dudley and Coventry leagues and a few others, including the Isle of Wight. There were enough teams from the Midlands leagues to form two divisions for the regional league - <http://www.worcestershirechess.org.uk/wma/index.htm>

There were three seasons of the West Midlands league during 2020 – Spring, Summer and Autumn. Spring - South Birmingham won the Spring League and became the first Division 1 Champions, just ahead of Sutton Coldfield.

WMA Online Rapidplay League Division 1 Spring 2020							
Team	Played	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Points
South Birmingham 1	12	7	5	0	32	16	24
Sutton Coldfield 1	12	7	4	1	29½	16½	22
Solihull 1	12	7	2	3	27½	18½	19
Rugby	12	2	5	5	21½	26½	11
Redditch	12	3	3	6	18½	29½	11

Worcester 1	12	2	3	7	19	29	8
Greenlands	12	2	2	8	16	28	8

Warwick University and South Birmingham 2 dominated Division 2, with the scholars emerging as the winners.

WMA Online Rapidplay League Division 2 Spring 2020							
Team	Played	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Points
Warwick University	18	13	2	3	48	24	36
South Birmingham 2	18	12	1	5	44	26	31
Isle of Wight	18	9	4	5	39½	32½	26
Stourbridge 1	18	7	6	5	35½	34½	22
Coventry Chess	18	7	4	7	37	35	21
Stourbridge 2	18	7	3	8	32½	37½	21
Sutton Coldfield 2	18	5	6	7	34½	35½	19
Mutual Circle	18	6	2	10	32	40	16
Worcester 2	18	4	3	11	30	42	13
Solihull 2	18	2	5	11	23	49	11

Summer - Sutton Coldfield were the Summer League Division 1 Champions, with Coventry winning Division 2.

Autumn - Redditch were Autumn League Division 1 Champions, and Warwick University Alumni were top of Division 2.

### Five Counties Online League

This is an entirely online association of clubs across England. There are currently 16 junior and 13 adult teams from a total of 15 clubs in counties ranging from Cheshire in the North to Kent in the South (it was initially clubs from five counties in and around London, but this has expanded largely due to an influx of junior teams/clubs).

The organisation relies completely upon the ECF League Management System for captains and players to organise, record and grade (monthly) their match results. All players must be ECF members or supporters, which means that there is no thankless task of chasing players for game fees.

On match night, a WhatsApp group allows captains to instantly relay messages to their opposing captains (these are usually about players not starting their games). Players enjoy the ability to do a bit of pre-match prep as their opponent's Lichess.org name is made available on the ECF LMS 60 minutes before the schedule time.

The three divisions start at different times. Division 3 has 12 junior teams and starts at 6.00pm. Some junior teams also play in Division 2 with other adult teams, and this starts at 7.00pm. The relatively stronger adult teams start at 7.30pm in Division 1.

Match night is Tuesday and alternates with the main 4NCL online chess league. Although we miss OTB chess, a great advantage of this online organisation is that there are no travel logistics and the match night is always every Tuesday, rather than the ever-changing club nights for the away matches and fixtures arriving sometimes like proverbial buses.

Another advantage is that some of the teams do not actually have a physical venue but draw from juniors within a local area, perhaps all known to the chess coach, who is also their team captain.

We anticipate that the Five Counties Online League will continue, particularly for the Junior Chess, even after our clubs reopen for OTB matches.

**Cornwall Chess Online** - <http://www.cornwallchess.org.uk/index.htm>

Cornwall Chess Online is one of the new online leagues, and was set up by Ian George in March 2020 on the Lichess.org platform when OTB play was suspended. It has attracted nearly 60 regular players, including several new to organised chess. The second seasons of the league and individual congress are in progress.

Competition winners in the first season were ---

#### League

Bude (9 teams)

Congress [fortnightly, 7 rounds rapidplay]

Premier: Robin Kneebone 10/14 (8 player APA)

Major: Kieran Macphail 9/14 (8 player APA)

Intermediate: Martin Pope and Jason Henderson 8½/14 (8 player APA)

Minor: Maurice Richards 10½/14 (Swiss)

Winter Congress [24 January 2021, rapidplay, 5 round Swiss]

Premier: IM Andrew Greet 4½ (13 entries)

Under 1700: Kieran Macphail (15 entries)

#### Others

On 16 January 2021, Cornwall played an 11-board match against Fiji, winning 8½ - 2½.

Starting in January 2021 Cornwall Online will be hosting an all-play-all Western Counties Online Championship over 16 boards, featuring all 7 counties in the WECU (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Somerset, Wiltshire), with Dorset and Wiltshire entering a combined team. Three rounds have been played at the time of writing.

#### Congresses

A number of congresses also moved online in 2020, as shown below ---

Lichess.org - 4NCL Online Congresses - monthly standard play congresses, Challenge, 45|15, Standard

Lichess.org - Cornwall Online Congress - fortnightly rapidplay congresses, Rapid

Tornelo - Hampstead Online Congress - Challenge, 60|10, Standard - Oct/Nov/Dec 2020

Lichess.org - Witney Online Congress - Challenge, Standard - 7th-8th November 2020

#### ECF Online National Events & Championships

##### **English Online Blitz May 2020**

The English Online Blitz Championships 2020 was the first of the ECF National Online Championships and was held over two weekends in May 2020 on Chess.com. The group stage took place with two qualifiers on 9th May and the finals on 16th May and the winners becoming English Online Blitz Champions for 2020.

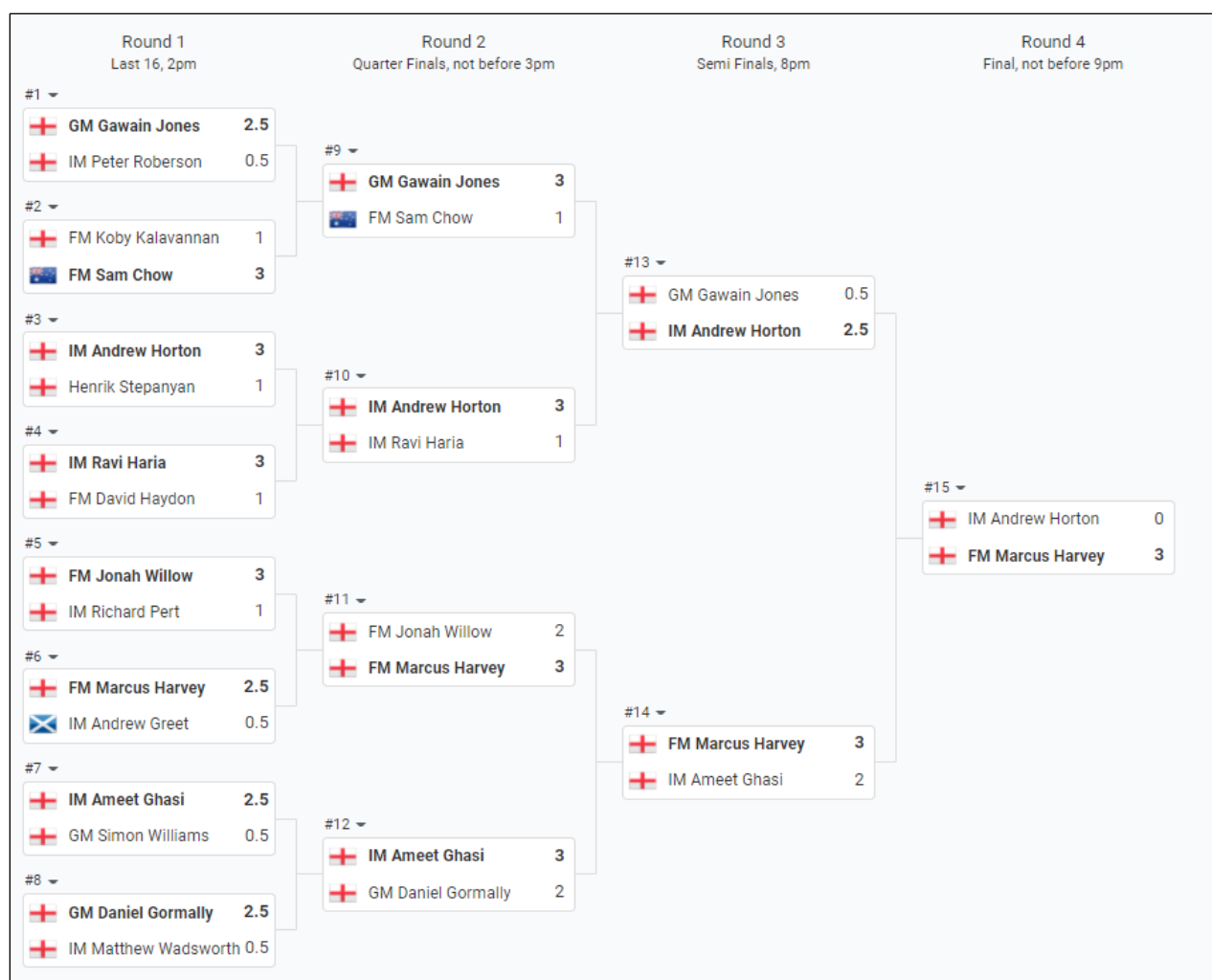
The Championships were open to all ECF members or supporters with entry via the ECF members club on Chess.com and were based on a group stage consisting of two Swiss tournaments, with a final a week later for players qualifying from the group stage events.

The group stage was based on two Swiss tournaments at 3|2 time control starting at 2.00 pm and then 8.00 pm. Players had the option of playing in one or both tournaments. Both qualifiers were highly competitive with large fields liberally sprinkled with titled players. There were 248 entrants for qualifier 1 in the afternoon, and 216 entrants for the evening event. You can find full details, PGNs, and final standings on the chess.com tournament result pages here on the ECF website here - <https://www.chess.com/tournament/live/ecf-english-blitz-championships—group-stage-1-1217776> and <https://www.chess.com/tournament/live/ecf-english-blitz-championships—group-stage-2-1217782>

The Open and Women's finals were played on Saturday 16th May and were based on a 16-player knockout format with 4 blitz games for each pairing to proceed to the next round. Matches with equal score after four games were determined via an Armageddon time odds match with 5 minutes for white and 4 minutes for black with a draw counting as a win for black. Colours were determined by drawing of lots witnessed by the players based on the 'wheeldecide' web site. The qualifying players were as follows for the two sections ---

Open Final	Women's Final
1 GM Gawain Jones	1 Maaïke Keetman
2 FM Jonah Willow	2 WFM Svetlana Sucikova
3 IM Ameet Ghasi	3 Ekaterina Diakonova
4 IM Andrew Horton	4 Anita Somton
5 IM Ravi Haria	5 Zoe Varney
6 GM Daniel Gormally	6 Eugenia Karas
7 FM Marcus Harvey	7 WFM Sarah Longson
8 FM Koby Kalavannan	8 WFM Shohreh Bayat
9 FM Sam Chow	9 Imogen Dicen
10 IM Andrew Greet	10 Elis Dicen
11 IM Matthew Wadsworth	11 Rayelynn Posadas
12 FM David Haydon	12 Nina Pert
13 Henrik Stepanyan	13 Niamh Bridgeman
14 GM Simon Williams	14 Alaa Gamal
15 IM Richard Pert	15 Julie Oh
16 IM Peter Roberson	16 WFM Rasa Norinkeviciute

For information, GM Justin Tan (who won the OTB UK Blitz in 2019) was one of the Open Section qualifiers but decided not to play as he had the final exam for his course early the following week. The full set of pairings and results are shown here [next page]



The Open semi-finals saw IM Andrew Horton beat GM Gawain Jones and FM Marcus Harvey beat IM Ameet Ghasi. They were both very close contests with some excellent chess. In the end, it was FM Marcus Harvey who won the final against IM Andrew Horton. Many congratulations to Marcus who becomes the English Online Blitz Champion for 2020 and to runners up Andrew in second, and Gawain and Ameet in joint third.

In the semi-finals of the Women's Championships WFM Shohreh Bayat beat Anita Somton and WFM Svetlana Sucikova overcame Ekaterina Diakonova. It was Svetlana who won the final against Shohreh. Many congratulations to Svetlana who becomes the English Online Blitz Champion for 2020 and to runners up Shohreh in second and Anita and Ekaterina in joint third. A full set of PGNs can be found here for the two sections of the finals - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-online-blitz-finals/>

Round 1 Last 16, 2pm	Round 2 Quarter Finals, not before 3pm	Round 3 Semi Finals, 8pm	Round 4 Final, not before 9pm
<div>#1</div> <div> <div>Maaïke Keetman 1</div> <div>WFM Rasa Norinkevic... 3</div> </div>	<div>#9</div> <div> <div>WFM Rasa Norinkevic... 1</div> <div>WFM Shohreh Bayat 3</div> </div>	<div>#13</div> <div> <div>WFM Shohreh Bayat 2.5</div> <div>Anita Somton 1.5</div> </div>	
<div>#2</div> <div> <div>WFM Shohreh Bayat 3</div> <div>Imogen Dicen 0</div> </div>	<div>#10</div> <div> <div>Anita Somton 3</div> <div>Zoe Varney 2</div> </div>		
<div>#3</div> <div> <div>Anita Somton 2.5</div> <div>Niamh Bridgeman 1.5</div> </div>			
<div>#4</div> <div> <div>Zoe Varney 3</div> <div>Nina Pert 1</div> </div>			<div>#15</div> <div> <div>WFM Shohreh Bayat 0.5</div> <div>WFM Svetlana Suciko... 2.5</div> </div>
<div>#5</div> <div> <div>WFM Svetlana Suciko... 3</div> <div>Julie Oh 0</div> </div>	<div>#11</div> <div> <div>WFM Svetlana Suciko... 3</div> <div>Elis Dicen 0</div> </div>		
<div>#6</div> <div> <div>WFM Sarah Longson 0</div> <div>Elis Dicen 3</div> </div>		<div>#14</div> <div> <div>WFM Svetlana Suciko... 2.5</div> <div>Ekaterina Diakonova 1.5</div> </div>	
<div>#7</div> <div> <div>Ekaterina Diakonova 3</div> <div>Alaa Gamal 0</div> </div>	<div>#12</div> <div> <div>Ekaterina Diakonova 3</div> <div>Eugenia Karas 1</div> </div>		
<div>#8</div> <div> <div>Eugenia Karas 2.5</div> <div>Rayelynn Posadas 1.5</div> </div>			

The open final was played between Marcus Harvey and Andrew Horton with Marcus proving the winner over three games, shown below.

### Harvey, Marcus vs Horton, Andrew 1-0

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 d6 3. Nf3 Nbd7 4. Bf4 Nh5 5. Bc1 Nhf6 6. Nc3 e5 7. Bg5 Be7 8. de5 de5 9. Qc2 c6 10. e3 Nh5 11. Be7 Qe7 12. Be2 Nhf6 13. O-O O-O 14. Nd2 Re8 15. Rfd1 a5 16. Nde4 Nc5 17. Nc5 Qc5 18. Na4 Qe7 19. Nb6 Rb8 20. Qc3 Qb4 21. Qb4 ab4 22. a3 ba3 23. Ra3 Be6 24. f3 Red8 25. Rd8 Rd8 26. Kf2 Kf8 27. Ke1 Nd7 28. Nd7 Bd7 29. Ra7 Rb8 30. Kd2 c5 31. Kc3 Ke7 32. Bd3 Bc6 33. Be4 Kd6 34. Ra1 h6 35. Rd1 Kc7 36. Bc6 bc6 37. Ra1 Kb6 38. Rd1 Kc7 39. h4 Ra8 40. h5 Ra7 41. f4 ef4 42. ef4 Ra8 43. Re1 Kd6 44. g4 Kd7 45. Re5 Kd6 46. g5 f6 47. gf6 gf6 48. Rf5 Rf8 49. b3 Rf7 50. b4 cb4 51. Kb4 Rb7 52. Kc3 Rf7 53. Kd4 Rf8 54. Ra5 Rg8 55. Ra7 Rg4 56. Ke4 Rh4 57. Ra5 Rh3 58. c5 Ke6 59. Ra6 f5 60. Kd4 Rh5 61. Rc6 Kd7 62. Rd6 Kc7 63. Ke5 Rh1 64. Kf5 Rc1 65. Rh6 Rc5 66. Kg6 Kd7 67. f5 Ke8 68. Rh8 Ke7 69. f6 Ke6 70. Re8 Kd7 71. f7 Rc6 72. Kg7

*Marcus won by resignation*

### Horton, Andrew vs Harvey, Marcus 0-1

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 b6 4. Bg2 Bb7 5. O-O c5 6. b3 Be7 7. Bb2 O-O 8. e3 d5 9. Nc3 dc4 10. bc4 Ne4 11. Ne2 Bf6 12. Bf6 Nf6 13. d3 Qc7 14. Nc3 Rd8 15. Qe2 Nc6 16. Rfd1 Rd7 17. Nb5 Qd8 18. Rab1 h6 19. a3 Qe7 20. Rd2 Rad8 21. Rbd1 e5 22. Nc3 Na5 23. Nh4 Bg2 24. Ng2 Nb3 25. Rb2 Na5 26. Rbd2 e4 27. Nf4 Nb3 28. Rb2 ed3 29. Qf1 Na5 30. Ncd5 Nd5 31. Nd5 Qe4 32. Qd3 Qd3 33. Rd3

Nc4 34. Rc2 Ne5

*Marcus won by resignation*

### **Harvey, Marcus vs Horton, Andrew 1-0**

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. b3 b6 3. Bb2 Bb7 4. g3 Bf3 5. ef3 e6 6. f4 Be7 7. Bg2 d5 8. O-O O-O 9. c4 c6 10. Qc2 g6 11. d3 Nbd7 12. Nd2 Rc8 13. Nf3 a5 14. Rac1 c5 15. Ne5 d4 16. Nc6 Qe8 17. Na7 Rc7 18. Nb5 Rc8 19. Na7 Ra8 20. Ba8 Qa8 21. Nb5 h5 22. a4 Ng4 23. Qe2 Ndf6 24. Rce1 Kg7 25. h3 Nh6 26. Na3 Rh8 27. Nb1 Nf5 28. Nd2 Qb7 29. Qf3 Qc8 30. Ne4 Qd7 31. Nf6 Bf6 32. Bc1 Ne7 33. Kg2 Nf5 34. Rh1 Be7 35. Kf1 Bd6 36. g4 hg4 37. hg4 Nh4 38. Qe4 Be7 39. g5 Bd6 40. Ke2 Nf5 41. Rh8 Kh8 42. Rh1 Kg7 43. Rh3 Qc7 44. Bd2 Kg8 45. Qh1 Kf8 46. Rh8 Ke7 47. Qa8 Bf4 48. Bf4 Qf4 49. Qd8#

*Marcus won by checkmate*

The women's final was played between Svetlana Sucikova and Shohreh Bayatt with Svetlana winning over three games as follows.

### **Sucikova, Svetlana vs Bayat, Shohreh 1-0**

1. e3 e6 2. c4 d5 3. Nc3 c6 4. Nf3 Bd6 5. b3 Nf6 6. Bb2 e5 7. d4 e4 8. Nd2 O-O 9. Qc2 a5 10. cd5 cd5 11. Nb5 Nc6 12. Nd6 Qd6 13. Qc5 Qe6 14. Be2 Bd7 15. O-O Nb4 16. Qc7 Rfc8 17. Qe5 Rc2 18. Bc1 Na2 19. Bd1 Rc1 20. Ra2 b6 21. b4 Qe5 22. de5 Ng4 23. ba5 Ra5 24. Rb2 b5 25. Nb3 Rca1 26. Na1 Ra1 27. Bg4 Rf1 28. Kf1 Bg4 29. Rb5 f6 30. Rd5 Be6 31. Rd6 Kf7 32. ef6 gf6 33. Ke1 Ke7 34. Rb6 f5 35. Rb7 Bd7 36. Kd2 Kd6 37. Kc3 h5 38. Kd4 Ke7 39. Rb6 Be6 40. Ke5 Bd7 41. Rh6 h4 42. Rh4

*Svetlana won by resignation*

### **Bayat, Shohreh vs Sucikova, Svetlana 1/2-1/2**

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. ed5 cd5 4. Bd3 Nc6 5. c3 Qc7 6. Nf3 Bg4 7. Nbd2 Nf6 8. h3 Bh5 9. O-O e6 10. Qb3 Bg6 11. Bg6 hg6 12. Re1 Bd6 13. Nf1 O-O 14. Bg5 Ne4 15. Be3 Na5 16. Qc2 Rac8 17. N1d2 Nd2 18. Nd2 b5 19. a3 Nc4 20. Nc4 Qc4 21. Qe2 Qe2 22. Re2 a5 23. Rf1 Rc4 24. f4 b4 25. ab4 ab4 26. Bd2 bc3 27. bc3 Ra8 28. Be1 Bc7 29. Rf3 Ra1 30. Kf2 Ba5 31. g4 Rc1 32. Ree3 Rc8 33. Ke2 Rb1 34. f5 gf5 35. gf5 Rb6 36. Re5 Rbc6 37. fe6 fe6 38. Rfe3 Bc3 39. Bc3 Rc3 40. Re6 Rc2 41. Kf3 Rh2 42. Kg3 Rd2 43. Rd6 Rd4 44. Re7 Rc3 45. Kf2 Rd2 46. Ke1 Rdd3 47. Rdd7 Re3 48. Kd2 Rcd3 49. Kc2 Re7 50. Rd8 Kf7 51. Kd3 Re5 52. Rd6 g6 53. Kd4 Rf5 54. Rd5 Rd5 55. Kd5 Kf6 56. Ke4 Kg5 57. Kf3 Kh4 58. Kg2 Kg5 59. Kg3 Kf5 60. Kf3 Kg5 61. Kg3

*Game drawn by agreement*

### **Sucikova, Svetlana vs Bayat, Shohreh 1-0**

Nf3 e6 2. c4 d5 3. e3 c6 4. Nc3 f5 5. Be2 Nf6 6. d4 Bd6 7. Ne5 Nbd7 8. Bh5 g6 9. Nd7 Bd7 10. Be2 O-O 11. O-O e5 12. cd5 ed4 13. Qd4 c5 14. Qc4 Qe7 15. Rd1 Qe5 16. g3 a6 17. a4 b5 18. Qd3 ba4 19. Qc2 Ne4 20. Na4 h5 21. Nb6 Rad8 22. Nc4 Qf6 23. Nd6 Qd6 24. Ra6 Qe5 25. Rg6 Kh7 26. Ra6 h4 27. f4 Qg7 28. g4 fg4 29. Qe4 Bf5 30. Qe5 Qg8 31. Ra7 Rd7 32. Rd7 Bd7 33. Qh5 Kg7 34. Qg5 Kh7 35. Bd3 Bf5 36. Bf5 Rf5 37. Qf5 Kh8 38. Qh5 Kg7 39. Qg5 Kf7 40. Qg8 Kg8 41. d6

*Svetlana won by resignation*

GM Matthew Sadler and WIM Natasha Regan provided a stream for Rounds 1 (last 16), 3 (semi-finals) and 4 (the final) on their Gamechanger YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/c/gamechangerchess>, and IM Adam Taylor provided commentary on his Twitch channel for the event. Simon Williams and Danny Gormally also provided streaming commentary on their games on their Twitch channels.

## **ECF Online Internationals**

International Chess became very popular with the online boom, and the ECF's English club teams took part in regular international events on Chess.com and Lichess.

### **February 2020 International Weekend**

There were some big English wins in our first Online International Weekend on Saturday and Sunday 15th/16th February, between the ECF Members and USCF. The match was played over 17 boards with two games of 15/10 rapid play per board and colours reversed between rounds, and NM Sam Copeland, playing for the US, provided a streaming commentary during the match. The link is here - <https://www.chess.com/club/matches/live/english-chess-federation-members/6091/games>

The two teams had similar ratings and it was always going to be very competitive. The English team took an early lead in round one, which we maintained despite a late comeback from the US players, so we won the event with 18.5 points against the US team's 15.5 total. There were some very close and hard fought games across all boards.

Our first Lichess.org International was in the newly formed **Nations Cup**. The English team came first in our Nations Cup Group Stage Team Battle on 15th February, some way ahead of the Russian and Spanish teams in second and third - <https://lichess.org/tournament/t2avr1D9>

We went on to win the final on Sunday 16th February, ahead of the Mongolian Team in second, Russia in third and Turkey in fourth, followed by five other national teams.

There were nine national teams taking part in all (England, Russia, Turkey, Kenya, Nigeria, Brazil, Ecuador, Mongolia, and Japan) and, as with the group stage, this was a one-hour Arena Blitz event, with a 3|0 time control. The Nations Cup continued with monthly team battles for the rest of 2020, but our February result was the only time we won the event during 2020. We are still looking to bring the cup back home.

### **Chess.com Nations League**

The ECF Members club took part in the much-awaited Nations League 2020 on Chess.com. The first season kicked off on June 28th and ran until August 16th on Sunday afternoons or evenings. The top two teams in each division qualified for the playoffs. The matches were 1v1 team matches against other nations, with boards of 10-20 players or more and two segments per match (rapid at 15|2 and blitz at 3|2). We won our first match against Greece on June 28th and our last match against Brazil on August 16th by 21-7 and 16-2, with England finishing sixth in the top division. Many thanks to FM Marcus Harvey, IM Tom Rendle and WIM Natasha Regan for helping us to win our last fixture of the season, and to all of those who have played for the England team in the Season 1 events, including GM's Keith Arkell and Simon Williams. We will be organising some friendly fixtures against other Division A teams during August and September, including USA and Romania, as preparation for the second season [scheduled for later in the year].

### Division A standings after Round 7

Place	Name	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Total
1	Romania	W2	W4	W7	W5	W6	W8	W3	7
2	Kazakhstan	L1	W8	D3	W6	W4	W7	W5	5.5
3	Poland	W8	W6	D2	D4	W7	W5	L1	5
4	Argentina	W5	L1	W8	D3	L2	W6	W7	4.5
5	United States	L4	W7	W6	L1	W8	L3	L2	3
6	England	W7	L3	L5	L2	L1	L4	W8	2
7	Greece	L6	L5	L1	D8	L3	L2	L4	0.5
8	Brazil	L3	L2	L4	D7	L5	L1	L6	0.5

You can find the full set of England matches with individual games on the Chess.com ECF members club matches page here - <https://www.chess.com/clubs/matches/live/english-chess-federation-members>.

For a complete appendix of ECF and Affiliated Online Events in 2020 follow this link - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ecf-online-events-appendix.pdf>



## **Off the Wall**

A selection of articles from 2020 from FM Tim Wall, as featured in the ECF Newsletter

### **Pieces of Staunton** – September 2020

Howard Staunton (born 1810, died 1874, resurrected on Twitter in 2016) has generously agreed to conduct a rencontre for the ECF monthly communiqué. The titled and noble chess writer Mr Timothy Wall journeyed to London's celebrated chess salon, Simpson's-in-the-Strand, to meet the undefeated World Champion (1843-2020), renowned Shakespearean scholar, raconteur and gigglemug. You can follow Mr Staunton's informed views on chess on Twitter (@HowardStaunton).

*TW: Mr Staunton, we are deeply indebted to you for sharing your informed views on the most noble of games with the readers of the English Chess Federation's Gazette. To what do you attribute your vigour that has enabled you to remain astride world chess like a colossus at the sprightly age of 210?*

HS: Strictly observing the two-metre rule since 1874.

*TW: It is beguiling that you have chosen to resume your illustrious career in chess journalism through the medium of Twitter, a mere 141 years since you penned your last column in The Illustrated London News and went to meet the great arbiter in the sky. Pray, what induced you to stage your comeback/resurrection? Was it somehow to challenge another fine warrior of the chessic quill, Mr. Leonard Barden, who has surpassed even your longevity as a chess columnist for The Evening Standard and The Guardian? Do you have confidence in demanding satisfaction from Mr Barden in an arm-wrestling contest?*

HS: Comeback? In reality, we have never left the stage. Chess immortality continues to fill the vacant hours which we might otherwise spend less wisely. It is not commonly known that Leonard began his career in journalism 'ghost-writing' columns for us in the early 1870s, and we take intense pride in our protege. Long may the grim winner of that most chequered of all games – the game of life – withhold his final move from the boy Barden.

*TW: You have accumulated a deep vault of chess knowledge since your more active years on the London tournament circuit. In your humble opinion, who is the greatest chess author – David Ionovich Bronstein, with his beautiful Russian prose in The Chess Struggle in Practice (Zurich 1953 Candidates) or the old Dutch Master, Jan Hein Donner? Or pray tell us, perhaps you think it is yourself?*

HS: Mr Bronstein was heavily indebted to Mr Vainstein for his prose, whereas the Dutch curmudgeon was a scribbler of the first rank. Donner mixed his ink with vitriol but tempered his blade with a humorous playfulness that almost disarmed criticism. Hein sends the following greeting, by the way: 'Hello, unreliable Brits! How's Brexit going?'

*TW: Do you approve of Mr Carlsen, Mr Nakamura and their butter-upon-bacon friends playing these 'online' benjos? Do you favour the subtle positional niceties of the noble Norwegian champion, or do you prefer the brash cat-lap style of the American challenger? How do you rate their pre-move mouse skills and their handling of modern timepieces? In the days when you were at*

*the peak of your health and chess prowess, would you be enthuzimuzzy to test your skills against these two skilamalinks?*

HS: To draw together a large assemblage of Chess players and offer prizes open to public competition is unquestionably best for the advancement of the game. Mr Carlsen and Mr Nakamura are players of undoubted genius, both remarkable for the energy and daring of their attack, as well as for the rapidity of their conceptions, and both somewhat apt in their eager application of the sword to throw away the shield. Whether either could match the might of Staunton is a question too invidious for a public answer. Better address your mouse skills question to a cat.

*TW: Local wood-pushers have described you as Bang Up to the Elephant. With that in mind can we perchance touch upon a rather unsavoury matter. A certain Mr Short, formerly of the County of Lancashire and latterly lodged in the old stomping ground of Lord Byron and the Elgin Marbles, has claimed he is the greatest English player of all time. What say you to this podsnappery?*

HS: Witness our erstwhile Twitter joust with Bolton's Aristotle: Mr Short: 'I don't know who you are.' Mr Staunton: 'I am the finest Chess-player England has produced.'

*TW: Howard, me old China (if we may be a tad chuckaboo), we now move onto Count Vladimir Kramnik of Zurich, who has posited that Caissa's ancient game could be much improved if castling were to be repealed, and the more genteel previous form of the game restored. Would you agree with this charming suggestion from the latter-day champion of Muscovy? Or do you consider this to be merely a devious plot?*

HS: No, 'Mr Staunton', if you please. We are no great admirer of new varieties of Chess, believing the ordinary mode of playing the game to be morally unimprovable. We advise Mr Kramnik to study our The Laws and Practice of Chess before he again ventures to impugn the integrity of our noble game.

*TW: Let us delve into the delights of your seminal classic of modern chess theory, The Chess-Player's Handbook, published in 1847. We are mystified that your Magnum Opus does not give consideration to the Poisoned Pawn Variation of the Sicilian Najdorf, and indeed it humiliates the whole concept of the Caro-Kann as that ridiculous opening invented by some yet-to-be-born oik from Newcastle. Will you now be updating your meisterwerk and publishing CPH II for an appreciative audience in 2020? And will you be using Stockfish or Leela to analyse the positions?*

HS: To quote Mr Fischer, the doyen of that variation of the Sicilian Defence: 'Staunton was the most profound opening analyst of all time. Playing over his games I discover that they are completely modern.' The Chess-Player's Handbook is unimprovable and forms a better Staunton monument than a tablet in Westminster Abbey. All chess calculating machines are the work of the Devil.

*TW: Who, in your opinion, flaunted the most magnificent mane, tresses, locks, beard, moustache, toupee or other impressive follicular structure among the all-time chess greats? Was it yourself (Mr Mutton Chops) with your own lustrous handlebars; Mr Steinitz's nesting beard; Mr Speelman's werewolf chic; Mr Nepomniatchi's mellifluous man bun, or perhaps even Mr Williams' glorious gingeriness?*

HS: Herr Steinitz was the original 'Ginger GM' whose red whiskers far outgrew and outshone the young pretender's. In recent times few have surpassed Mr Yusupov for dogged hirsuteness. Long hours perfecting the 'Rasputin' look at Mr Dvoretzky's salon led to several acclaimed books on the subject, such as *Beard Grooming for the Tournament Player*, *Secrets of Whisker Preparation and Attack and Defence: How creative hairstyling develops in a chessplayer*. His sensational *Boost Your Beard* (Goatee Chess, 2011) was the deserved winner of the coveted English Barber Federation Book of the Year Award. Mr Caruana's burgeoning lockdown Afro has impressed but he needs to devote more time to develop a fully rounded face fungus styling repertoire. Bubbling under; Peter Heine Nielsen.

*TW: Let us address the perilous state of English chess amid the modern-day plague of Coronavirus. Delving into your vast expertise of Victorian parlour games, how can we rescue the game from its present-day vicissitudes? And should we be playing on <http://chess.com> chess24 or lichess?*

HS: Promoting the Evans Gambit in schools is a very important project, for which the English Chess Federation has shown little enthusiasm. Another vital area of concern is the recent decline in standards of tailoring, aggravated by the World Champion's lockdown slovenliness. Cravats, waistcoats, and top hats should be worn in all club matches and tournaments. At no period in history are so many facilities afforded for Chess. Practical experience is obtainable in the public rooms, day and night. Those who celebrate the progress of Chess might hail its source; the railway I created has produced the present number of travellers. To avoid such debacles as beset the final of the recent Chess Olympiad we recommend that future matches are conducted by electric telegraph.

*TW: We would like to thank you, Mr Staunton, you are undoubtedly the most famous person to have graced the streets of Kensal Green (although we concede there is a dearth of competition). Should you choose to play in one of Mr Raoof's Golders Green tourneys or the IV Nations Chess League, is there some way we could recognise you in your 21<sup>st</sup> century incarnation? Will you be sporting a trendy door-knocker beard, a sleek pair of gas-pipes – or perhaps you will be carrying a treasured first edition of Arkell's Endings?*

HS: Our neighbours Messrs Thackery, Trollope, Babbage, Collins, Siemens and Pinter find your ignorance shocking. We regret that our lack of mobility forces us to decline such kind invitations. The incognito of an amateur has the same claim to respect as that of the knights of old, who persisted in keeping fast closed the bars of their helmets. Sadly only Staunton's endings are in our possession.

#### Notes on the vocabulary of Victorian English

*Gigglemug*: "A habitually smiling face."

*Butter upon bacon*: Extravagance, and especially too much extravagance. For example: "Are you going to put lace over the feather, isn't that rather butter upon bacon?"

*Benjo*: Nineteenth-century sailor slang for "A riotous holiday, a noisy day in the streets."

*Cat-lap*: A London society term for tea and coffee "used scornfully by drinkers of beer and strong waters ... in club-life is one of the more ignominious names given to champagne by men who prefer stronger liquors."

*Enthuzimuzzy*: "Satirical reference to enthusiasm."

*Skilamalink*: Secret, shady, doubtful.

*Bang up to the elephant*: This phrase originated in London in 1882, and means "perfect, complete, unapproachable."

*Podsnappery*: This term describes a person with a "wilful determination to ignore the objectionable or inconvenient, at the same time assuming airs of superior virtue and noble resignation." (Forrester)

*Me old China*: Cockney rhyming slang. China (plate) = mate.

*Chuckaboo*: A nickname given to a close friend.

*Door-knocker*: A type of beard "formed by the cheeks and chin being shaved leaving a chain of hair under the chin, and upon each side of mouth forming with moustache something like a door-knocker."

*Gas-pipes*: A term for especially tight pants.

Source: <https://theweek.com/articles/567412/56-delightful-victorian-slang-terms-should-using>

## **Chess Fever** – October 2020

*Darling, I didn't realise it's such a fascinating game! Let's play a Sicilian!* (Chess Fever, 1925)

In these days of pandemic and lockdown, many of us are simultaneously attracted to studying chess and playing the game online, and driven to distraction by not being able to actually play over the board.

It might seem bizarre but imagine a world where everyone – from tiny tots to courting couples, child-minding nannies, policemen, cab drivers, chemists and aged grandparents – is mad about chess. And you are the odd one out – the only person who isn't crazy about the game.

This is the rather charming concept behind the silent film classic 'Chess Fever,' made in Soviet Russia at the time of the 1925 Moscow International tournament – at that time, a very big deal in a country still recovering from a decade of world war, revolution, civil war, famine and epidemics. The international tournament was a kind of Olympic spectacle for a country weary of real-life conflict, an affordable mind sport that everyone could take part in if they just had a simple chess board and pieces.

### **Absent-minded, with cats - a chessy type we can all recognise**

In the film's simple plot, the heroine of the story is waiting for her fiancé to turn up for their wedding at the local registry office, and she's driven to distraction when all he can think about is chess – completely forgetting that's he supposed to be getting married that day. (At least it makes a change from today's Stag Night antics...)

The fiancé is a chessy type we can all recognise – a geeky, lanky and bespectacled young gent who endlessly plays both sides in a chess game in his meagre apartment, decorated only with a chess table and a bookcase containing chess books, and (with no doubt a nod to the future World Champion Alexander Alekhine, then exiled from Russia) he has a seemingly endless supply of cute kittens popping out of his chessboard-patterned attire – from the sleeves of his overcoat to his chequered cap and socks.

The film is perhaps most noted by chess historians and trivia fans for its cameo appearances by participants of the 1925 Moscow super-tournament, which featured leading international players

(including then-World Champion Jose Raul Capablanca and his predecessor, Emmanuel Lasker) and 10 Soviet masters.

Nikolai Krylenko, the organiser of the tournament, was a Bolshevik official who would later use his talents in a more sinister way – prosecuting his former comrades in Stalin’s show trials of the 1930s.

### **Capablanca’s pick-up line**

It’s a silent film, so we don’t hear the players speak, but Capa is given a great supporting role (given the film’s total 19 minutes running time, it’s a bit more than a cameo), and his immortal pick-up line to the heroine is captioned on the screen: “When I’m in the company of a beautiful woman, I also hate chess.”

Within a few moments, our non-chess-playing heroine – clearly exasperated at everyone’s love of a game that leaves her cold – exclaims: “At last, a fellow enemy of chess!” and hops into a waiting car with the smooth Cuban lothario, driving off in the Moscow snow as the jilted hero can only skulk off, desolated, in the direction of the chess tournament. (Oh yes, we’ve all been there: Chess as a consolation and retreat from painful affairs of the heart).

Capa’s dramatic role fits in, of course, with apocryphal stories about him and Alekhine going to the music hall together, with Alekhine never looking up from his pocket chess set through the performance, while Capa (ahem!) ... never took his eyes off the chorus line.

(Who knows what Capa got up to in Moscow away from the board in 1925, but perhaps that’s why he only finished third in the tournament, behind Efim Bogoljubov and Lasker.)

Using a combination of actual footage of the tournament, plus a few clips with the players shot specially for the film, the film features the highest average chess strength of any film’s cast.

(Certainly, higher than the FIDE ratings of the cast of Guy Ritchie’s ‘Snatch’, who reportedly played blitz for cash stakes continually with the director on set.) Among the real players on screen in ‘Chess Fever’ are Richard Reti, Frank Marshall, Ernst Grunfeld, Carlos Torre and England’s Fred Yates.

But the real value of the Soviet comedy is actually not Capablanca’s appearance (he’s like the Hollywood star they bring in to sell films at the box office), but what it says about the value of chess to society.

### **Lenin, Trotsky and Arthur Ransome**

Krylenko and the Soviet authorities saw in chess a way of raising the cultural and educational level of a country that, just a few years before, had been overwhelmingly comprised of 100 million-plus peasants living in villages, with massive illiteracy, just a few million industrial workers and a thin sprinkling of the aristocracy and intelligentsia on top.

Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky definitely gave chess their full support. They were both avid players (the exiled Trotsky was a regular at Vienna’s Café Central chess salon before World War I, while Lenin was known to enjoy a game – including with English journalist and writer Arthur Ransome (of ‘Swallows and Amazons’ fame), who later married Trotsky’s secretary Yevgenia Shelepina and brought her to live with him in his beloved Lake District.

Chess was an affordable way to raise the country’s cultural level, and it didn’t require much in the way of education – it could be played and enjoyed by a cook as easily as by a prime minister.

The 1920s were a time in the Soviet Union before Stalin’s later repressions and murder of millions in the GULAG, when there was greater hope and belief in a new society, and there was a feeling that chess (like other mass activities introduced to the general public at that time) was a game that

anyone could enjoy. Thanks to the massive promotion of chess and chess teaching through Pioneers Palaces (the Soviet equivalent of the Scouts or Guides), the game took off from the 1920s onwards, and no doubt the Moscow tournament and 'Chess Fever' played a big part in popularising the game.

Also in the 1920s, chess featured in the tales of Ilf and Petrov, two Soviet authors whose comedy classic 'The Twelve Chairs' tells the story of Ostap Bender, a charlatan who goes around the country pretending to be a grandmaster, fleecing townspeople in rural Russia for a simultaneous display in which he loses every game, then scarpers with their hard-earned roubles. As Tal (who studied 'The Twelve Chairs' in his literature course at university) impishly points out in his autobiography 'The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal,' 1. e4 is the best opening move in chess, "as recommended by Grandmaster Ostap Bender." (It was where Bender's opening theory ended.) Although today 'Chess Fever' is widely praised as one of the few non-propaganda Soviet films – there is no politics of any sort in the film – it is propaganda of a sort: for chess.

Indeed, there is an innocence and pure joy associated with the game in the film that is definitely infectious: a policeman catches a fare-dodging tram passenger, but they end up playing chess with a pocket set thrown out of the window by the furious heroine; while a toddler's nanny exclaims, "Kolya's played a beautiful Queen's Gambit – I'm breathless!" Elsewhere, a faking blind beggar catches a falling chess book and starts to read it excitedly, and two workers in a pharmacy are so distracted by the mind-boggling tactics in their chess game that they wrap up a queen instead of a vial of poison to give to the suicidal jilted fiancée.

All in all, 'Chess Fever' is about the most fun I've ever had watching a short film about chess (that even includes Alexander Grischuk's 'Thug Life' compilation). It's pretty universal and timeless, too. Even though the captions are in Russian (with English subtitles) I showed it at our local junior chess club, and the kids enjoyed it immensely.

As experienced chess players, it is easy for us at the moment to get rather jaded, naturally frustrated by the lack of OTB chess and annoyed by the cheating, suspicion and artificial nature that come with online chess.

But let's try to put that aside, and focus on the positive.

### **The Zak Crawley Attack**

'Chess Fever' gives us that 'Ratatouille' moment – like when the cynical food critic in the Disney film of that name recalls that joyous, innocent moment from childhood when he tasted his mother's favourite country recipe for the dish. Similarly, let's recall the sheer joy of discovering chess for the first time, as people did in Soviet Russia back in the 1920s, and many people are doing now during lockdown.

Today, in these altered Coronavirus times, many people are taking up the game – getting 'Chess Fever' – in casual games online against their friends, and actually think the game is cool.

(During one rain-affected Test Match cricket highlights programme this summer, for instance, I noticed how Stuart Broad talked excitedly about chess games with Zak Crawley (you can see Zak's games on Chess.com, by the way. He seems to favour a Five Pawns Attack against Joss Butler's Hippopotamus Defence, with 1 e4, 2 d4, 3 f4, 4 c4 and 5 b4. Rather like his swashbuckling batting style!)

We should encourage the many thousands of Zak Crawleys, Jos Buttlers and Stuart Broads (very casual players) to get involved in organised chess, whatever the format (online in local club events, online, or later when lockdowns are lifted, in fun rapidplays, blitz tournaments and even chess variants in relaxed, social settings).

And we need to acknowledge that the type of chess they are interested in is not necessarily the more serious form of the game that we are used to.

Let's face it, many young casual internet players, if they went along to many of our real OTB chess clubs, might easily walk out again if faced with our dour long games and rule of silence.

If we are to kindle the current 'Chess Fever' that many young casual players are experiencing in lockdown, our chess clubs and other events need to welcome these new players in – not purely on our terms, but to meet them at least halfway.

As the chess-obsessed hero and new-to-chess heroine are about to discover at the end of 'Chess Fever,' they will have to find a form of the game that both can enjoy in their future life together. After all, a certain amount of compromise and doing things the other person wants to do are essential in any relationship...

'*Shakhmatnaya Goryachka*' (*Chess Fever*) stars Jose Raul Capablanca, Vladimir Fogel and Anna Nemtsova. It was released in December 1925 and written and directed by Vsevolod Pudovkin and Nikolai Shpikovsky.

You can watch it (with English subtitles and a great, entertaining musical score) here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLuZRIY6k34&t=927s>

## **Mark Rivlin (and Tim Wall) – the interviews**

### **Our Man in Moscow - Mark interviews International Arbiter and Director of Home Chess Alex Holowczak**

*What was your role as one of the arbiters at the FIDE World Rapidplay and Blitz in Moscow?*

Pairing Officer; it was my role to set up the Swiss-Manager files in advance and keep an up-to-date list of entries on Chess-Results, and then at the tournament itself collect and process results and do the pairings for the next round. I then had to calculate the prize lists at the end.

*How many IAs were present and how were the various roles defined?*

There were 30 arbiters; a Chief Arbiter, two Deputies, three Anti-Cheating Arbiters, four Pairing Officers (two per section) and the other 20 had general floor duties, including collecting results.

*There was an incident in Round 19 of the Blitz when Magnus Carlsen played Alireza Firouzja who lost on time despite Carlsen only having a Bishop against Firouzja's Bishop and three Pawns, so no mating material. This caused some confusion among followers so please explain the ruling.*

I wasn't directly involved in this, save for twiddling my thumbs waiting for the appeal to be heard! The first part was that Firouzja's flag fell, and with the material balance on the board, this was enough for Carlsen since he could win by any series of legal moves with his King and Bishop against Firouzja's King, Bishop and three Pawns. At first, it seemed Firouzja didn't realise this, but this was explained to him and clearly, he wasn't happy with that.

His appeal was on the grounds that he was distracted by Carlsen during the game due to his speaking Norwegian at some point, for which there was no supporting evidence from the arbiter, the video cameras focused on the game, or a complaint from Firouzja during the game. The Appeals Committee rejected this appeal.

*How was the organisation and management of the Moscow tournament? With so many Rounds each day (particularly the Blitz section) were the arbiters under extra pressure?*

Personally, I find Rapid and Blitz tournaments more interesting to run, because there is always something for an arbiter to do. So, I actually see it as fun rather than extra pressure. However, the big difference with speed events is that something is much more likely to go wrong in the games themselves that causes a dispute – a piece being accidentally knocked over for example.

*You also had to use your arbitration skills in the FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss on the Isle of Man in October 2019 when you moved one of the boards in this unusual situation - <https://www.chess.com/news/view/2019-fide-chess-com-grand-swiss-round-8>. In resolving this matter, how much was it about the Laws of Chess or player management?*

Player management? You sound like a cricket umpire! The link you provide covers the situation pretty clearly and this incident was almost entirely player management. In particular, I thought it was important to get across to the players that they were being moved for their benefit to prevent any future accusations that may arise, and that by moving them we were not accusing them of anything untoward.

*If ECF members are interested in becoming an arbiter, what particular personal skills are required for the role?*

In my opinion, the following are important.

Skills – Technical; Well-organised; Efficient; Communication

Characteristics – Empathy; Calm; Assertive; Aware

These skills and characteristics will improve with experience, and if I were scoring myself out of 10 on these, I am sure I would fall some way short of 100 percent! Knowledge of the laws is a pre-requisite, and the ECF organises training courses for that, such as the one in Daventry in February.

*You are also Tournament Director of the Delancey Chess Challenge, one of the UK's most successful competitions. What are the challenges in managing so many children and parents?*

My role does not really require too much management of that number of children and parents. My main role is to source a team of arbiters, set up the IT, come up with the floor plan at each event, and then help to ensure the event runs smoothly at the weekend. It is more technical than public facing.

*What is the FIDE Qualification Commission's remit and what does your secretarial role include?*

The remit includes the FIDE rating system, title norms (e.g., Grandmaster), and transfers between Federations. The part that takes up most of my time is manually approving tournaments that have been submitted late for registration and investigating the circumstances that led to it. Last year I organised the QC Councillors' meeting held in Solihull.

*What are your main goals in your role of ECF Director of Junior Chess?*

The main part of the role is to co-ordinate the Selection Policy for international events. A lot of the other things that need be done including increasing numbers of children playing rely on local efforts rather than a national effort. I am actively involved in my area over the past few years to develop that, with some good success so far.

### **Lennart and his lens art – Mark interviews Lennart Ootes, top chess tournament photographer**

*Let's talk about playing chess You are obviously a strong player with a 2131 FIDE rating. What are the highlights of your chess career?*

I was quite an active player till 8 years ago. My best result was a tournament in Groningen in 2010. I was close to an IM norm but lost the final two rounds. More recently I beat Wesley So in a Fischer Random game while most of the top grandmasters were kibitzing - but in Wesley's defense we played with time odds.

*How much over the board competitive chess do you play? Do you play online?*

It is hard to identify myself as a chess player these days as I play so little over the board and haven't really studied chess in the past 5 years. I do play on Chess.com and Lichess – once I reach a decent rating on one platform I switch to the other platform to match that rating.

*How did you break into photography and videography?*

I bought my first camera to take videos at chess tournaments for a Dutch chess website. I made a big jump in the quality of my photos when I started to watch tutorials during the 2014 US Chess Championships. It was great to learn in the evenings and to bring that knowledge in practice the next day. I usually combine photography with operating the DGT boards, and that 'buy-one-get-two' combination earned me quite some invitations to tournaments.

*Your photography work is extremely creative, delving deeper than the ubiquitous player or players over the board. How do you find inspiration at the big tournaments and events you cover?*

That's something I wonder myself before every new tournament. But once the games start and I feel the tension of the games, I absorb that competitiveness and get motivated to get the best out of every situation. But I have to admit that I certainly look at other photographers to spot new ideas and learn new camera angles.

*Is the static nature of a chess contest easier to shoot and portray than fast-moving sports like football and athletics?*

On first sight, chess should be easy to capture. But there are only a few tense and emotional moments in a chess game, while in any other sport you'll see emotions all the time. I strongly believe that it helps to understand chess to take a photo at the right moment.

*You were at the 2019 World Athletics Championships in Doha; have you covered other major sporting events?*

I love sports and attending sports events, but so far my photography is purely focused on chess. A friend has tried to convince me to take photos at fencing events but I haven't found the right moment yet. Maybe I should try capturing chessboxing events first?!

*You are a man of many creative talents –photographer, videographer, broadcaster and producer working at some of the world's top tournaments. How stressful is this kind of lifestyle?*

I work for 15-20 tournaments a year and travel a lot, but that's not very stressful for me. I try to take short holidays in between tournaments and try to take things easy. I guess the responsibility of organizing a local chess tournament at home would be more stressful for me.

*With more sponsorship money coming into chess, is the game finally getting the recognition it deserves.*

It is great for the world's best players that there is more money in chess and I believe that's partially because of the Magnus effect. We still haven't seen any interest from major tech brands, the online viewing numbers seem to stagnate, and I don't see many young professionals who would like to work full time for chess organisations or tournaments.

*In an interview with GM Maurice Ashley you talk about creating stories from tournament shoots. Please explain more about this.*

It happens that I'm the only photographer at a tournament and that people follow the tournament through my lens I love bringing all the stories from the tournament hall to those following chess at home. I really get excited when Carlsen plays a grinding 7-hour game and to capture the excitement of the winner and the bitter disappointment of the loser.

*What are your ambitions for the future?*

I am setting up a photo exhibition at the Max Euwe Center in Amsterdam, which will be my first experience with printing photos. But my biggest ambition is to gather some young ambitious people to work with at chess tournaments. Chess can use some more creativity.

### **Centre counter punch - Mark Rivlin interviews chessboxer Chris Levy**

*How long have you been playing competitive chess?*

I've had two stints, five years as a junior before I gave the game up like many others around the age of 20. I then took the game up again in my late 20s thanks to discovering chessboxing.

*What made you want to throw your hat into the ring as a chessboxer?*

I've always quite liked the idea of trying boxing but was intimidated by the idea of walking into a 'proper' boxing gym as opposed to a boxercise type class. Once I discovered the idea of chessboxing, it seemed like the perfect chance to try my hand at pugilism. Once I'd been to one session, I realised I was completely wrong in my thoughts on boxing gyms – everyone there is extremely welcoming and respectful, even towards chess players.

*For the uninitiated, please describe how chessboxing works.*

There are 10 alternating rounds of both, until someone wins one way or the other. The board is taken out of the ring at the end of a chess 'round' and then brought back in after the boxing and the game continues where it left off. Clocks are set to around 10-15 minutes each, which can be used as you like over the course of the chess rounds. Another important aspect is we have to wear noise-cancelling headphones as there is a chess commentator describing the action to the audience and sometimes strong players shouting out tips.

*How many chessboxing events have you participated in?*

Five as a fighter and others as a commentator as I'm more or less retired. I'm the Gary Neville of chessboxing, if you will.

*Are chessboxers more proficient at one of the two disciplines? To win a match, which do you think has more influence on the overall outcome?*

Chess, without a doubt. For reasons of safety and spectacle, we have to match up opponents who are reasonably close in both disciplines. Assuming there isn't a physical mismatch I'd say the chess decides 8 out of 10 times. In particular, the transition from a boxing round to a chess round is the 'danger zone'—once you've got a round of boxing under your belt it easily takes around 20-30 ECF points off your playing strength. This is less through having been hit and more through having a lot of adrenaline coursing through your veins, which makes it very difficult to think objectively.

*You are now a commentator on the chessboxing scene. Do you use any football manager cliches?*

I confess to resorting more to the lowest common denominator innuendos on the chess – I'll leave the reader to think of examples. We used to have Malcolm Pein as a commentator and I picked this up off of him, I think.

*I remember your gruelling bout in the iconic York Hall with Matt 'Crazy Arms' Read, co-editor of CHESS magazine. Is that your most exciting bout to date?*

Like the recent Fury-Wilder bout, this was a rematch and the first was also pretty exciting. However, getting to fight at such a venue combined with an unlikely comeback chess win (having been thoroughly outplayed by Matt) made this one particularly memorable.

*I've noticed that audiences at Chessboxing tend to be more hipster than a usual boxing only card. How important is the ringside atmosphere?*

We get a really diverse crowd at events which I think makes it a fun evening out. I've seen stag parties, couples on date nights, and some very strong GMs (we had Fabiano Caruana and Maurice Ashley mingling at an event we put on in the middle of the London Chess Classic).

*In the chess part, how difficult is it to concentrate on strategy after a pummeling in the previous boxing round?*

This really is the trickiest bit! In particular you're naturally drawn towards aggressive continuations, even if you know they are bad, due to all that adrenaline.

*What is the women's scene in chessboxing?*

We've had a couple of high-class bouts, but I think because we tend to draw more from the chess than the boxing scenes, there are fewer women. We'd love to see this changing, and there are a few women who are training with us every week who we'd be very happy to match up. The atmosphere is very welcoming, I'd like to think.

*What are the minimum levels of chess and boxing required to make a decent chessboxer?*

In boxing, you don't have to bring any experience to make it and with dedicated training, I think it is possible to become technically proficient enough to fight competitively within a year. On the chess, we have a few fighters around 100 ECF strength who match well against each other. At the very top, there is FM Carl Strugnell who is undefeated.

*Any advice for people who would like to take up the sport?*

Check out our next event by coming along to The Dome in Tufnell Park or watch online - [www.twitch.tv/londonchessboxing](http://www.twitch.tv/londonchessboxing). If you fancy getting the gloves on come along to training at Islington ABC (link below) 10.00am on Saturdays. Above all else, don't be intimidated as I was about the idea of boxing! For further information on chessboxing please go to <https://londonchessboxing.com/classes/>

## **GM Danny Gormally – Mark interviews the popular grandmaster**

*Questions by Tim Wall and Mark Rivlin*

GM Danny Gormally is a rare and welcome maverick in England Chess. His no-nonsense approach to putting the game's and society's wrongs to right (<https://twitter.com/elgransenor1>), along with his quirky writing and commentary style (see his master class on player impersonations here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFSHCJcw7Bs> provide a refreshing alternative to the rather staid image often associated with chess.

The style of his 2016 book, *Insanity, Passion and Addiction: A Year Inside the Chess World*, an irreverent account of life on the European circuit – is reminiscent of American beat writers Charles Bukowski and Jack Kerouac and was well received in the chess community. His chess career highlights include joint first place at the Politiken Cup in 1998 and winning the Hastings Challengers in 2003. In 2006 he was joint winner of the British Rapidplay and joint second in the European Individual Championships. In 2015 he tied for second place with David Howell and Nick Pert behind Jonathan Hawkins in the British Championships in Torquay. Danny also represented England in the 2005 European Team Championships and the 2006 Chess Olympiad. His highest rating to date is 2573, achieved in 2006. He now combines tournament and league chess with writing, coaching, commentary and analysis.

*Please give us a short précis of your career to date, including other interests you pursue outside of chess.*

I have played chess seriously for over twenty years. I will leave it to others to describe me as a professional when it's probably more that I don't do anything else. I also recently finished writing a chess novel which I hope to get published, and so unsurprisingly I am a keen reader and I read anything I can get my hands on.

*What are your tips for the club player to improve their calculation ability?*

I think the main thing is to play a lot really. There is no substitute for real game practice. But I think with all these Banter Blitz videos online on sites like YouTube, it's a unique opportunity to see how top players calculate. We didn't have access thirty or fifty years ago to players like Kasparov and Fischer sharing their thoughts so openly. It was more closed then, so now you have a way to see how top players operate, and how they calculate, and you should take advantage of that.

*How would you compare the options for today's club chess players – books, or watching videos and doing tactical puzzles?*

Watching strong players explain their thoughts on such a large scale is perhaps unique to our era. In the past, we had The Master Game but it's on a different level now. Chess books still have their place. Speaking honestly, I think for many years I fell out of love with chess and the process of improving and studying the game. I took being a strong chess player for granted. But of late I have reawakened my love for the game and particularly for chess books, some of which are far better than others of course, like anything else in life.

I've been doing some reviews for CHESS magazine, and a book I would particularly recommend is Together with Mamedyarov. David Howell's latest video course, Winning Grandmaster Methods: How I Reached 2700, is also excellent.

As for Puzzle Rush and Puzzle Battle – <https://www.chess.com/news/view/new-feature-puzzle-battle> – there's no doubt it can help your chess and in a recent online blitz tournament I managed to beat Ameet Ghasi and Julian Hodgson with tactical combinations that I would never have found if I hadn't become addicted to Puzzle Battle!

*In your candid 2016 interview with ChessBase (<https://en.chessbase.com/post/an-interview-with-daniel-gormally-1-2>) you say, 'My chess is 40 percent playing, 40 percent writing and 20 percent coaching. But if I'm honest, I'd rather just play all the time, or perhaps even change my career entirely. But all I've ever done is chess, so what can I do? Maybe I'm stuck with it forever.' Four years on, have those percentages and views changed?*

For many years I fell out of love with the game. It's only recently that I've realised once again that it's a blessing to be good at anything, particularly a game that stimulates the imagination and creative process in the way that chess does. I've become slightly more excited about things, and the possibility of improving even at a later age, even if my default morose state has not been completely eroded. I think most of my issues relate to money. If I had more money, then I'd probably look at Chess more favourably. But it's easy to blame chess for problems that are mostly

self-inflicted. And it's also true that when I see friends and colleagues doing much better in a financial sense as chess professionals, then that is likely to spark some kind of jealousy. But the onus is on the individual to turn that jealousy into constructive motivation.

*Your 2016 book, Insanity, Passion and Addiction: A Year Inside the Chess World, was admired for its brutal honesty and self-deprecation. Do you have plans for more of this kind of writing or are you focusing on chess improvement books?*

I hope to get the recently completed chess novel published at some point, and I'm also working on self-improvement courses. The way I want to approach such material is to try and present a thinking- outside-the-box-angle. It's very easy to write a very clichéd, boring chess book/course and I've done enough of those in the past. As a writer, it's more challenging and exciting to approach chess from slightly more obscure angles.

*Should players use computer engines for post-game analysis as part of their training routine?*

I was thinking about this the other day when I asked on a forum if people could send me some games for a course I was writing. When I got some positive replies, what took me back was how obsessed they were with computer evaluations. One player apologised to me about the long annotations and said he doubted that I would be interested in his own analysis, only what Houdini/Komodo was saying.

I said that wasn't true at all because I was interested in how a player of his level thought, how they approached a position, and how they came about decisions. I was not interested in the computer evaluations at all. Computers have their place, but people have become too obsessed with them. I can't stress enough the importance of turning them off from time to time and forcing your brain to come to terms with the position. If you keep turning the computer on every time you are stuck, then you'll become lazy in your analysis, as I know from personal experience.

*You're known for being quite vocal about the issue of cheating in OTB chess. How do you think the chess world can adapt to the growth of online chess, while improving its anti-cheating measures?*

I was shocked by the case of [Igor] Rausis, and how he got away with it for so long. It was kind of obvious to me that he was dodgy as his games were too clean. Even when a strong player beats someone with a lower rating, there is normally some kind of struggle, which wasn't the case with him. And if an experienced Grandmaster can cheat, anyone can. I don't trust anyone online. The other day I played a friendly match that was set up by a friend of mine – the idea was that I was going to be taking on some juniors, who would decide on the right move through consultation. And even there they cheated! Two of their accounts were later banned. You have to hope that cheaters are in the minority, but the evidence that I've accumulated online indicates that there is still far too much of this going on. And I'm not sure how you can stamp it out completely.

*Which chess players have most influenced you?*

I think this answer mainly depends on your age. I've always been fairly good at tactics, and I think that is partly because I was a fan of [Vishy] Anand back in the 1990s.

*Your chess commentary and analysis is presented in a way that is user friendly for club players to follow (this video is a typical example – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K36XS9cDaSc>) How difficult is it to ‘downsize’ to lower levels of understanding and would you like to do more of the commentary work?*

It is difficult at the beginning. It’s easy to disregard other players altogether and get caught up in your own bubble, spitting out variations in machine-gun style. And I’m not even sure that’s a bad thing, because as I said earlier Banter Blitz gives you that sort of platform to show other players how GMs really think.

*What advice would you give young players thinking of making chess a potential main source of income?*

Get another job! More seriously though – or perhaps not – then you need to have a great deal of passion for the game and be prepared for the kind of lifestyle that comes with it. It’s not a life that comes with its own self-imposed regime and that’s something I’ve struggled with, to impose that discipline myself. If they can deal with it, then why not? I think chess is growing all the time because it’s ideally set up to succeed on the Internet, and the potential scalability is enormous. But the loneliness of being a chess player is also a factor. If you work in a normal job, then you’re more likely to socialise with people on a more regular basis, and the advantages of that should not be underestimated.

*How do you cope with the stresses of tournament play? Are there any tips you can recommend to club players who experience similar problems?*

Stay away from alcohol! I think a lot of people play tournaments because of the social side, but if you want to win them then you need to be disciplined. You don’t see Luke McShane or Michael Adams going out on the town during the middle of the British [Championships]. I would certainly try and incorporate an exercise regime as well, which should be stuck to during the tournament. You need to relieve some tension. I remember a tournament in Wales a few years ago, and I didn’t do any real exercise during the event, and the amount of physical tension that built up over the course of the event was enormous. Even though I was doing well, when it came to the critical rounds of the tournament I couldn’t really handle the tension and fell apart.

*Who are the most promising young players in England today? Do you see any of the current juniors becoming GMs, or even making it to the SuperGM elite?*

We haven’t really had any super grandmasters come through for some time, and I think there are a few reasons for this. Firstly, the junior coaching in this country isn’t always as well organised as in some other places, and there’s no encouragement for players to go and work together like they do in India, for example. It’s also the case in the west you can get a much easier life if you don’t follow chess as a career. Players like Alireza Firouzja from traditionally poorer countries like Iran are forging ahead because they are hungrier for success. But there’s nothing to stop a junior player who wants it enough putting in the hours to become a seriously good player. If you are young and hungry enough, nothing can stop you. I think this is the best generation of junior players we’ve had in years, with the likes of Shreyas Royal and Yichen Han who represents the Netherlands but is based in England.

## **By Royal Command – Mark Rivlin interviews CM Shreyas Royal**

Eleven-year-old Shreyas Royal is a CM and has a standard play grading of 2121(202 ECF) and is the top-rated player for U13 age group in England and top 10 in the world. Recently he drew with GM Axel Bachmann (despite the result later being cancelled) and plays remotely in all forms of chess, holding his own in tournaments with titled players. His coach, IM Ravi Haria says, “In the past few months, Shreyas has really developed his calculation process. In addition to learning effective ways to cope with complicated positions, Shreyas has also been consolidating the basic fundamentals of middlegame planning and the importance of having ideas behind each move. His enjoyment of the game makes it a particular pleasure to work with him, and I look forward to helping him achieve more progress in the future.”

*Looking at the above introduction, are you surprised by what you have already achieved?*

No, not really since I try to be as confident as possible believing I can do anything as long as I put my mind to it. Yes, sometimes I celebrate as if it was impossible but deep inside, I know I can do it.

*At what point of your chess career did you think that you could go far. Was it a particular game, or was it a gradual process of getting stronger?*

It was in the European Schools 2016 U7 when I came second with no real preparation or knowledge. Then I started to take it more seriously and started to work harder as it really boosted my confidence.

*You were coached by GM Glenn Flear and your current coach is IM Ravi Haria. Describe your relationship with them and how they have helped you?*

I have had good relationships with both of these fantastic coaches. With Glenn we looked at a lot of aspects and I think I have improved in all places quite a lot, so I am really thankful for that. Ravi has made the coaching much more advanced, working with lots of difficult calculation and positional problems. He also has given me tips some tips on how to look at the game in different ways. This has helped me become more e me more effective. We have also looked at opening structures which have also helped me.

*What are your chess ambitions? On your website - [shreyasroyal.co.uk](http://shreyasroyal.co.uk) - you make a claim that you could be a world champion by 2030. Is that banter or do you really mean it?*

I really mean it because I always have set my goals quite high knowing that nothing is impossible since records are there to be beaten.

*Are you concerned that chess may have to take more of a back seat as you enter secondary education?*

Absolutely, my studies have an impact on my chess. If you have some target in life to do something you have to be absorbed in trying to achieve that goal. I felt this at the end of last year during my eleven-plus exam preparation and my chess had to take a back seat. I was offered places in two

secondary schools that were not ready to give flexibility on chess. So, with my parents, we have decided I will be home schooled.

*Please provide a link to your favourite game, and tell us why it is your number one.*

Royal, Shreyas (1941) - Zapolskis, Antanas (2280) 11th CSC London Chess Classic

<https://old.chesstempo.com/gamedb/game/4483400>

My pieces were placed quite nicely throughout the game and I found an unavoidable mate on move 47 in a position that looked like he had perpetual checks.

*Which chess players have most influenced your career?*

In the early days, it was Garry Kasparov and Bobby Fischer had a lot of influence because of their attacking style and brilliant sacrifices but from the age of eight, I have become a devoted fan of Magnus Carlsen. His way of slowly squeezing water out of a stone is remarkable. I bought his movie so as to better understand his mindset. I always enjoy looking at his games.

*Outside of chess and your studies do you have any other interests and hobbies?*

I like sport, especially lawn tennis, cricket and football.

*There will be a lot of junior players reading this interview. What advice can you give youngsters on how to improve their game?*

Look at top players' games and take time as if it was a live game, guess their moves and understand why they played them.

*Did all the publicity and waiting for the decision from the Home Office that you could remain in the UK have an effect on your chess progress?*

Yes, it did. So, I am thankful to everyone for the positive outcome.

*Who is your favourite online chess commentator?*

Daniel King is my favourite commentator because his methods are very instructive and effective. I recommend his Powerplay series.

*Finally, the ECF members need to know – name the patzer who managed to get a game off you in the 2018 Sam Black Memorial Blitz?*

Hmmm I wonder, was it comedian Lee Hurst or Mark Rivlin?

## **Two Chess Rookies – Mark Rivlin**

From naught to sixty in a few weeks - this month's interview is with two chess players whom you will not recognise. Both aged 25, they represent a very large cohort of enthusiasts who play online and who are not members of the ECF. Jake and James are professionals in Law and IT and have taken up chess during lockdown. They approached Hackney Chess Club last month asking about social over-the-board chess opportunities. Lockdown has been extremely challenging for many ECF members. Aside from the risk of catching the virus and its effect on people over the age of 60 (so a lot of active chess players) missing out on the social aspect of the game is an issue. But online chess has enabled the show to go on and with excellent coaching available (often at no cost) people taking up chess can get to a low club standard quickly. Jake and James represent the future and while we have a thriving junior chess scene and an excellent online facility, I think this is the time to make a concerted effort to attract the 18-30 cohort to club chess. Such a campaign does not need money (especially if we use social media as the conduit). So I'd be pleased to hear from anyone out there who would like to be involved in such a campaign. This comment from James is particularly telling - I think chess needs to try and reinvent itself to become more accessible.

*Jake and James, how old are you and what do you do in work or studies?*

Jake: I'm 25 and currently a trainee solicitor.

James: I'm 25 and I work in IT as a Cloud Engineer.

*When did you first get started with chess?*

Jake: I played a bit of chess at school when I was about 10 years old. After that, I don't think I played again until a few years ago when I was on holiday and there happened to be a chess set where I was staying.

James: I learnt the rules and basic game play as a child and played very occasionally growing up. Two months ago, I started playing more regularly (several times a week) after making an account withchess.com. I've now made an effort to learn a few basic openings and I'm starting to play more strategically. Maintaining the edge over Jake is a key motivator to keep me playing regularly.

*Have you ever played any competitive over-the-board games?*

Jake: Never.

James: Only if the annual game of Christmas Monopoly counts.

*There are currently around 20 million people registered on Chess.com with around a million a day playing. How much have you been playing online?*

Jake: I played my first online game on Chess.com about six weeks ago and have been playing most days since. It's been a great lockdown pastime.

*Has your online grading increased the more you have played?*

Jake: Chess.com starts you off at 1200 so I quickly dropped well below that. I wasted a lot of time playing blitz when I didn't know what I was doing. I now only really play Rapid and daily and my ratings are improving.

James: Definitely. The more I've played the less I tend to lose pieces early in the game. I get myself into better positions after learning some simple openings and my rating has increased as a result.

*Do you prefer standard, rapid or blitz games?*

Jake: Rapid is my favourite time control. In my experience, you can't really lose on time because of the extra 10 seconds per move, but the time constraint ultimately prevents the game dragging on.

James: I prefer rapid. I get enough time to think through the position without being too rushed, but the timing keeps things moving.

*As well as playing, have you been watching tournaments with commentary and some online coaching videos*

Jake: I've watched some YouTube videos, but I've found learning from books more helpful (in particular, Vincent Moret's My First Chess Opening Repertoire for White and My First Chess Opening Repertoire for Black).

James: So far, I've found the coaching videos I've come across to be really useful and interesting. Every now and then when I have time I'll try and pick up a new aspect of the game through YouTube or the Chess.com tutorials. I've briefly had a look at some tournament games and they're intriguing to watch despite much of the gameplay going over my head.

*How do you think chess is perceived in the UK? Do you have friends who are interested in the game?*

Jake: I have a few friends who play chess occasionally. My sense is that quite a lot of people enjoy playing the odd game, but are perhaps put off playing more often because of the time and attention required.

*How 'cool' do you think chess is?*

Jake: It scores low, for sure.

James: Not particularly cool.

*Would you consider playing competitive over-the-board chess with a club and playing in individual tournaments?*

Jake: If I were to reach a decent level, maybe. At the moment, I'm quite content playing casually.

James: Yes I would. A weekly beer and blitz evening at a local club caught my eye. It would be fun to play face to face occasionally – all my games so far have been online. I would want to improve more before taking on a tournament.

*Any ideas on encouraging the next generation of players?*

Jake: I've been playing online because of lockdown measures and the convenience of having an endless supply of opponents you can play whenever it suits you. However, I'm looking forward to

playing more over-the-board chess as lockdown measures ease off, as it's actually a great social activity. More chess sets in pubs and cafés might help attract more players.

James: I'm unaware of the demographics of the chess-playing population but to me, it is perceived to be a game for the older generation, similarly to sports like golf and cricket. I think chess needs to try and reinvent itself to become more accessible. The complex strategy of the game makes chess what it is but is also a significant barrier to entry for new players. Introducing alternative formats of the game using the success of T20 cricket as a model could be a way to spark people's interest.

### **Chess Coach – Mark Rivlin talks about chess coaching with IM Lorin D'Costa, FM Bob Eames and CM Rob Willmoth**

IM Lorin D'Costa has been a full-time coach for over ten years, working with beginners, juniors, schools, England Youth and England Women's teams. Recently he has set up a free girls chess training and tournament on the Lichess server since lockdown, with a view to setting up a UK girls charitable chess project called She Plays To Win.

FM Bob Eames started playing chess at four years old and started one-to-one coaching at 18. Four years ago he took voluntary redundancy from a supply chain job he had been working for 18 years. He has been combining one-to-one coaching with sessions in primary schools.

CM Rob Willmoth's coaching career really started informally at university in 1987. After a successful career at Barclays Capital, in 2010 Rob accepted an early redundancy package and took the plunge into self-employment, coaching chess in four schools. Later that year, he had filled all his slots and took over coaching the famous Barnet Knights junior club. Ten years on with a roster of 50 schools, Rob says: "It's a job I love, and I wish I had done it professionally 20 years earlier."

#### *Qualities required to be a good coach*

LD: I try to teach and enthuse the children as I would myself have liked to have been taught. Are they learning, enjoying and having fun at the same time? What will keep them into chess as they move on into Secondary School?

BE: I think you have got to love playing chess and to like people in general. You need a lot of patience, and in particular with teaching chess in school classrooms, a teacher should inspire and instil self-confidence and a sense of self-worth in the children, and it should be engaging and fun! Chess is a great game that can benefit people mentally throughout their lives, irrelevant of how good they become at it, much in the same way that the physical exercise of other sports increases physical health.

RW: An ability to maintain control in a classroom certainly is important. I try to quickly work out the levels of children and coach at the required level. I have seen many examples of strong players coaching at what they think is the correct level and seen the children staring into oblivion.

#### *Making a living from coaching*

LD: I guess the main angle is whether to do private one-to-one lessons or school/group coaching. They require different skills, though of course, it is definitely possible to do both! A prospective coach who wants to do it for the money only is probably advised to do something else. You are giving yourself to the children and parents, it comes with the territory.

BE: I am a full-time freelance coach providing one-to-one lessons in person and online. I work as a tutor in schools with Premier Chess Coaching, Chess in Schools and Communities (CSC), Richmond Juniors and Meri Grigoryan's Organic Chess.

RW: I have a team of staff working in around 50 schools. If you have a big network you can get by on one-to-one coaching alone. I find this harder and work in schools is more profitable. Online coaching is a new income stream that can be utilised once we are back to normal for group or one-to-one coaching.

### *Differences between online and face-to-face coaching*

LD: I'm a bit old school and always preferred face-to-face lessons. However, with the enforced change to being online, I think I, and probably many others, have been quite surprised as to how effective being online can be. Previously, you were limited to a coach who lived in your area. With the online boom, you can have your pick of almost anyone in the world, though finding the right fit might be harder.

BE: We have all been forced into teaching online. There are some advantages like using shared screens which allows viewing of stored database material on Chessbase as well as internet websites. Also, there is no geographical restriction online in that there is no need to travel anywhere, only restricted by which time zone and what time of day it is! There are drawbacks of online teaching as well, as it is more difficult to communicate as clearly, as well as the danger of the technology failing and disconnection.

RW: I actually don't think there is a great deal of difference. A good coach can work on any medium. I have found that I can actually teach more online, but on the flip side there is less interaction with the children, as I would normally get in a demo board in a classroom and subsequently walking around a classroom

### *How important is coaching for improvement*

LD: I am reminded of a parent who once said: 'I would never dream of letting my child learn the violin by themselves, is it the same for chess?' Never having had a private coach, I can't say if having had one growing up would have made a difference for me or not. I learned with books, playing tournaments and slow play club games. However, there aren't many who have the drive to do self-study in the modern era especially when there are plenty of coaches around to suit your budget or level, regardless of age. I have seen some juniors improve immensely with one-to-one sessions with a coach, and others not. Parents need to ask themselves – will this benefit my child?

BE: The key to improvement is to study and practice. Ultimately, improvement comes from within. You could have a player who endlessly plays blitz chess on the Internet and who never improves because they do not ever find out where they could have done better, or alternatively somebody who reads a lot of books or watches videos but does not play any games, and so their information does not get put into practice and remains abstract. There are examples of players becoming very strong without using a coach – world number three Ding Liren works alone. This requires an enormous amount of self-discipline!

RW: I would say 90 per cent playing and self-teaching and 10 per cent coaching for fine-tuning

### *Does a coach have to be a strong player?*

LD: No, although I found it a good way to get into coaching initially. Parents often opt for titled players when it is probably how experienced the coach is and what success they have had with other pupils. Having said that, hiring a young coach who will have more time to give and is also very motivated to get on the coaching ladder could reap benefits too. I know some coaches around 100 ECF who teach beginners and do a great job of teaching the young and up and coming kids to a certain level.

BE: No, but it helps! Teaching ability is more important than playing ability, but one does aid the other. The late Mark Dvoretsky was often punted as the world's best chess coach, and yet remained an IM rather than GM. Sir Alex Ferguson was an average football player and yet one of the most successful managers.

RW: Whatever the level, a structured form of learning is required. Strength is not an important factor – a player graded 60 can happily teach a class of Year 2s.

### *How to cultivate natural talent*

LD: There are of course plenty of obstacles for anyone who wants to become a strong chess player. Somehow a coach needs to guide those who show something to try and do some work on their game to improve and do it independently. Many coaches are concerned the switch to being online has meant kids are playing a lot of chess, but it is meaningless bullet or blitz games. This can be helpful but Malcolm Gladwell's deliberate practice idea holds true here. Sites like Chessable are new ways to try and encourage learning – children simply don't use books anymore!

BE: I strongly believe in nurture, not nature. I do not believe there is any such thing as natural talent, in that it is not natural! Nobody is born with the ability to play chess; it is a skill that is learnt. The Polgar sisters, who were home-schooled, are perhaps the best-known example of this. Some rare people are sometimes described as geniuses because they are able to make something that is extremely difficult to do look ridiculously easy. A big component part of a player's talent or aptitude is their work ethic and their ability to work hard, without which any ability will be wasted. Again, a player's progress will ultimately depend on their own motivation, and so to cultivate this people need to be encouraged to practice and to study and be provided with excellent material to do this with.

RW: The first thing to do is get the parents on board, then construct a playing schedule advising suitable tournaments for that person to gain most from. Then set a specific coaching schedule tailored to the strengths and weaknesses of the child and constantly monitor improvement.

*Editor's note: The views expressed by Lorin, Bob and Rob are their own, and not necessarily those of people who may employ them.*

### **Penny Farthing for your thoughts - Mark Rivlin interviews the ECF Chair of Council Michael Farthing**

*Tell us about yourself, background, work, and interests outside chess.*

I'm now retired after a career mainly in IT, and before that teaching and a period working for the Cambridge Examination Board (looking after IT syllabuses). As well as being an indifferent chess player I have been an indifferent amateur actor, a more-or-less competent hill walker and wild camper, and a lover of languages and history. Currently, I have a busman's hobby – building an operating system from scratch purely for fun. I have no wild idea that anyone else will use it.

*In February of this year, you were elected to be Chair of Council. Why did you stand for this position?*

The Chair of Council is chosen by a vote of the members of Council, not the Board, and the vote was not unanimous – there was another candidate. The Board's role was just to organise the election and confirm the result. The trigger for my standing for the post was that it was suggested to me (in the bar, following the 2019 AGM, so in 'vino stupiditas'). More seriously, I suppose I felt it was a new and exciting challenge, and I did have some clear ideas for new directions – but I wasn't anticipating Covid.

*How long have you been playing chess and which club(s)/county do you play for? Any well-known scalps?*

I've been playing chess now for 62 years, being taught by my father when aged five. I remember he delayed teaching en passant until it arose naturally in a game between us, when I felt most aggrieved that he'd got an advantage by springing a new rule on me! As a boy, I played incessantly – a small group of us every break in a corner of the playground, each with a pocket chess set and this continued to university. After that was a long gap until I returned first to online chess and then OTB about ten years ago. I now play for Morecambe in two leagues and Lancashire (usually as a humble U140 with an occasional excursion to u160). I also usually manage about half a dozen weekend congresses each year.

*Tell us about the role of Chair of Council.*

It's a lot more varied than I had anticipated. I was a bit worried about my ability to keep myself neutral but actually during the Finance meeting [in July] I was so busy with the mechanics of ensuring everyone who wanted to speak could do so and trying to keep things on track, that I had no time to even think about my own views. In fact, I'm laying down my roles as a league and congress representative simply because I don't think I can combine this with being Chair. But a lot also happens outside the meeting – advising on planned motions, responding to general queries and suggestions from Council members and trying to ensure that all member organisations have appointed reps in the first place. And I get landed with jobs nobody else wants to do such as running an election for the direct members' representatives or working out a mechanism for conducting a card vote on Zoom.

*Please explain to members the difference between the ECF Board and ECF Council.*

The best analogy (if perhaps a tad grandiose) is that the Board is the Government and Council is the Parliament. Council has the problem here that it only meets twice a year for just five hours each time and therefore its scrutiny of 'The Government' is somewhat constrained. But the Board cannot set membership fees without the consent of Council and it is Council that elects (and can dismiss) the Board.

*As Chair of Council, what aims do you have for the role?*

I see the role as one that should seek to strengthen the ability of Council members to influence the Board. It is more subtle than just a struggle for power between the two because Council (at its best) can raise issues, ideas and sometimes criticisms that a Board (at its best) will listen to and learn

from, and it is that inter-play that should be fostered. One of my first initiatives was to set up a forum – which did spark some interest but at present does not look to have been a success. However, I also have in mind that with the emergence of internet conferencing, we could have extra informal meetings as well as the formal Finance Meeting and AGM. These might be dedicated to exploring particular issues of current interest.

*You got off to a very good start at the online Finance Council Meeting via Zoom in July. How difficult is it keeping an online meeting in order?*

It was a lot easier than I expected. There were a couple of moments where I felt I had to be quite assertive but I was very pleasantly surprised at the ready cooperation of representatives in observing the procedures and keeping quiet when not called to speak. It was a new approach for us all and I think everyone was making a special effort to make it work. I had a separate host to help me and we had planned to mute everyone when they were not speaking, but actually this was only very lightly enforced; it was a discipline that wasn't really needed.

*Before becoming Chair of Council you had experience in other ECF roles including Silver Rep and as a member of the Governance Committee. Did these roles give you an insight into how the ECF is run?*

Very much so –though my knowledge is still quite limited to the mechanics of governance. I know little of how the County Championship is run, or the Chess Academy or the training or arbiters (and I could extend this list much further). However, I know those who do and that knowledge was part of what was needed to be a Silver Rep – the relatively small amount of 'constituency' work provided a lot of satisfaction. Governance has also proved surprisingly satisfying and I have felt proud to be part of a team whose job is to review the effectiveness of the ECF's procedures. Of course, my rosy view of that does not find universal agreement.

## **Arkell's Musings**

Tim Wall interviews Grandmaster Keith Arkell, author of the critically-acclaimed new book and video course *Arkell's Endings*, about the tournaments he is playing during the pandemic, what he would be doing if he wasn't a professional chess player, and which openings to play against him if you want to avoid an ending.

*TW: Are you currently in lockdown, or are you able to play chess events where you are?*

Keith Arkell: In mid-September, I travelled via Prague to Pardubice with my friend Anuurai Sainbayar for a tournament. Ironically, Prague had been the last place we had flown back from before the first UK lockdown in March. We then went on to Budapest, where we are enjoying two full-length tournaments a month.

*TW: How has Arkell's Endings book and video course been received? Like many readers of the ECF Newsletter, I'm enjoying the videos and prefer the personal touch of learning that way. Which did you like doing better –the book or the videos?*

Keith Arkell: I heard that we had a rather good first month in book sales from Chess & Bridge. And recently Simon Williams informed me that the video has sold sufficiently well that any further sales

will see royalties flowing my way! I guess that the good reviews I've been lucky enough to receive haven't harmed these sales. I find it hard to compare which I preferred to do. Each was a pleasure in its own way, but each seemed daunting at times. In terms of the time scale, the book took four years to write, whereas the video course took about 13 hours, and with no retakes.

*TW: You are renowned for being a very active practical player, usually playing a lot of tournaments in any given year. Assuming we ever come out of this pandemic, will the experience of making Arkell's Endings encourage you to write more books and/or record more videos? Do you have any more projects in the works?*

Keith Arkell: I put a monumental effort into writing my first book, *Arkell's Odyssey*, which was well received but which was – and is – very hard to get hold of. In conjunction with Simon Williams' GingerGM and Chess & Bridge, there is a plan in place to add a few chapters, covering, for example, my Senior performances, and to improve the quality of the photos, and then re-release the book, including electronic versions. I am also in the process of co-writing a book with Joel Sneed (who co-wrote successful books with GM Boris Gulko). This will be in the form of transcripts between teacher and student on 50 of my Caro-Kann games. And after that, I may shock the chess world with the third book of the Trilogy which began with *Odyssey* and *Endings: Arkell's Combinations!*

*TW: Can you see big chess tournaments returning anytime soon, and if they don't, what will professional chess players do instead?*

Keith Arkell: You have to go out there and find tournaments! There is no shortage of them here in Budapest.

*TW: As the winner of many tournaments, how do you motivate yourself for each new event? It might seem like a strange question, but what is your goal when you sit down at the chessboard?*

Keith Arkell: Unless I am playing in an event in which I am motivated to try to score well for career reasons, I simply enjoy playing chess, and hope to play games I'm satisfied with.

*TW: You are well known as someone who likes to socialise at tournaments and makes new friends very easily among players of all levels. What is the right balance between socialising and preparation, and have you found the happy medium?*

Keith Arkell: This is quite easy to answer. I rarely ever prepare for games, whereas I can get tempted to socialise a little too much! For me, the ideal is maximising the amount of energy I play with by neither preparing for games nor drinking too much alcohol during events, or getting too little sleep. I can get easily led astray, though!

*TW: If you were not a professional chess player, what would you like to do instead?*

Keith Arkell: I've changed my answer to this question in recent times. In the past, I might have said 'scientist' or something with numbers like working out rail timetables, but now I would like the idea of being a psychiatrist or psychologist/psychotherapist.

*TW: You have enjoyed some great successes in recent years, including winning the European Seniors Championship and being runner-up in the World Seniors Championship in 2014. Some players aren't*

*able to maintain their chess strength as well as they get older. What advice would you give more mature players who feel that their chess powers are waning?*

Keith Arkell: I would say firstly buy the book *Chess for Life* by Matthew Sadler and Natasha Regan, which deals excellently with this very issue. I think you should aim for positions which rely more on understanding and experience and less on the need to burn up a lot of energy analysing complex positions. Perhaps Viktor Korchnoi would have disagreed with this, though!

*TW: Which is your favourite country to visit for chess?*

Keith Arkell: I always have a great time playing chess in Ireland.

*TW: If you had to be locked down with one other chess player on a desert island, who would you choose?*

Keith Arkell: From my closest friends (who are nearly all chess players) I'd choose the one who was least likely to want to talk about chess all the time, and whose sense of humour most closely matched my own.

*TW: Which opening should we be playing against you to win quickly – and avoid playing an ending?*

Keith Arkell: Maybe with Black the Queen's Gambit Accepted or the Benoni. With White, 1.e4 because there are shaky lines in all of my main defences.

*TW: What would you say to promising young players today who are considering whether to pursue chess as either a profession or a serious hobby?*

Keith Arkell: I'd say, 'Good luck!' And "I hope you enjoy the game sufficiently, because from a cold economic perspective there are many easier ways for a bright person to earn money."

*TW: And finally, what is your top tip for club players to improve their game?*

Keith Arkell: Instead of obsessing over the latest opening theory, try to understand the game. Listen to what strong players have to say about various types of positions.



## **Remembering ...**

A selection of articles from the British Chess News website at <https://britishchessnews.com>, courtesy of Dr John Upham [see also the website advertisement on page xxx]

### **Remembering GM Harry Golombek OBE (01-iii-1911 07-i-1995)**



Harry Golombek O.B.E.  
Harry Golombek, OBE (from the rear cover of  
*A History of Chess*)

Harry Golombek OBE passed away on Saturday, January 7th, 1995. The *Amersham Advertiser* of Wednesday, 18th January 1995, on page 6, reported, 'His funeral was due to be held as 12.30pm (today), at Chilterns Crematorium, Whielden Lane, Amersham'.

Harry Golombek was born on Wednesday, March 1st, 1911 in Lambeth, London and his parents were Barnett (Berl) Golombek (Golabek) (1878-1943) and Emma Golombek (née Sendak) (1883-1967). The Polish word Golabek translates to 'small dove' in English. Barnett was a "dealer of gas fittings" and was 33 when Harry was born, and Emma was 26. Both of his parents were born in Zambov which is in the Lomza Gubernia region of the Kingdom of Poland which existed from 1867 – 1917. Their nationalities are both recorded as Russian in the 1911 UK census.

We don't know (as yet) when Barnett and Emma settled in the UK. Harry had a brother Abraham (born in 1906) and a sister Rosy born in 1908. The family lived in 200b Railton Road, Herne Hill, Lambeth.

He is recorded with a service number of 992915 as being a member of The Royal Regiment of Artillery in 1939 and was discharged as having reached the age limit in 1956 aged 45 and one day. Harry married his long-time nurse, Noel Frances Judkins (1941 – 2011) in January 1988, and they had (born in 1992) one son, Oliver Golombek-Judkins BVSc MRCVS, who is a successful Somerset-based veterinary surgeon. The marriage was recorded in the district of Kensington & Chelsea.

The date of probate was 22 Mar 1995 and the executor of HGs will was David Anderton OBE.

In 1966 Harry became an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), Civil Division awarded in the 1966 Queen's Birthday (rather than New Years) Honours list. The citation read simply, 'Harry Golombek. For services to Chess'. He was the first UK person to be so honoured.

In 1985 Harry was awarded the long overdue (but Honorary) title of Grandmaster by FIDE. Harry was Southern Counties (SCCU) Champion in the 1955-56 and 1963-64 seasons. Harry was in 1974-82 a FIDE Zonal President and from 1978-96 he was the FIDE Permanent Fund Administrator. Sadly, he never received the Presidents Award for Services to Chess from either the BCF or ECF - maybe a posthumous award is long overdue?

Here (from *British Chess Magazine*, Volume CXXXII (132), 2011, Number 3 (March), pp.150-154 is an affectionate collection of memories from Bernard Cafferty -

'In recalling four decades of knowing the GOM of 20th century English chess, one has to stress the 'English' aspect. The 'Harry' part of his name was much more significant than the Polish surname, and, though he was the most cosmopolitan of men, who fitted into any milieu, my abiding memory

of him always throws up the quirks that are the sign of an Englishman. I wonder how many of my readers recall the classic English actors Naunton Wayne and Basil Radford, whose main preoccupation in their films was getting to know the latest cricket score from Lords or The Oval. Indeed, Harry was a long-time member of Surrey Cricket Club, and once, when he came back from being an arbiter at an international tournament in Tenerife, his main comment to me was not about the event or the players, but rather that the volcanic rock of the Atlantic island made for brackish water, so that one could not get a decent cup of tea!

I first met Harry in the early 1950s when I was a teenage student keen on chess and accordingly spent my meagre pocket money on a day out in Manchester to watch the Counties Final match between Lancashire and the all-conquering Middlesex side of those years. Harry and I were about the only spectators. He was there reporting for The Times. I recall that the top board game was between the veterans William Winter and WA Fairhurst. The game duly appeared in the BCM with Harry's notes, for he was the long-serving Games Editor of that august publication.



*Players at the 1946 British Championships in Nottingham. Harry Golombek is in the front row, second from the right.*

Perhaps I may enter a belated correction to "Who's Who" here. Some editions stated that he was editor of BCM after the Second World War. Not so. His stint in the editorial chair was 1938-40, after which he was called up, initially being assigned to the Royal Artillery. Perhaps that is a sign of the speciality of the Services – fitting a square peg in a round hole – but he was swiftly transferred to the Intelligence Corps, perhaps at the behest of Hugh Alexander who knew that Harry had studied German at his London grammar school in Camberwell and then at London University.

### **(1) Geller, Efim P - Golombek, Harry [E41]**

Budapest Maroczy Memorial Budapest (10), 19.03.1952

[Wolfgang Heidenfeld & British Chess News]

[This game is a rare example of a drawn game receiving a brilliancy prize : something that HG was very proud of. Notes by Wolfgang Heidenfeld from Draw!, George Allen & Unwin, 1982, pp. 103 - 4]

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3** [This quiet solidating move of Rubinstein's has steadily grown in esteem since the "Nimzo" became a going concern in the late 'twenties. Its popularity has outstripped all its rivals. 4. Qb3, 4.Qc2, 4.Bg5 and 4.a3]

**4...c5** [With the square d4 overprotected (unlike the position after Qc2 or Qb3), this move does not force White into possibly premature decisions on how to conduct the struggle for the centre.]

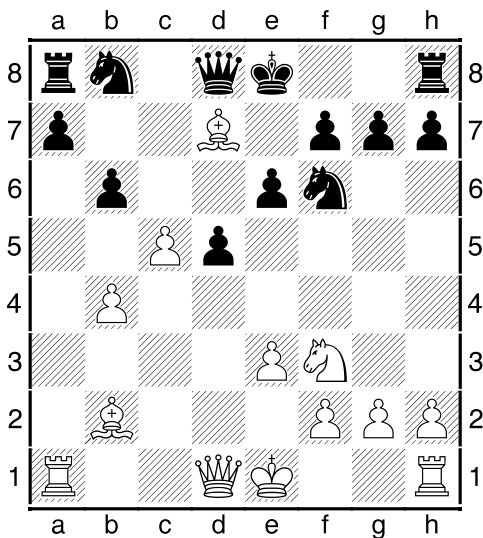
**5.a3 cxd4 6.axb4 dxc3 7.Nf3** [A gambit move typical of Geller. Golombek accepts - mainly in order to see what is going to happen.]

**7...cxb2** [7...0-0 followed by ...d5 would be perfectly satisfactory.]

**8.Bxb2 d5 9.c5 b6?** [Foolhardy play by the usually so careful Golombek, who seems to have been infected by the spirit of his opponent.]

[9...0-0 was necessary, though White would have full value for his pawn - the a-file, a strong pair of bishops, and pressure by the Q-side pawns. Now Black has to struggle for survival.]

**10.Bb5+ Bd7 11.Bxd7+**



**11...Nfxd7!** [An unpleasant necessity, for]

[11...Nbx7? 12.c6 with complete paralysis of the Q-side.; If 11...Qxd7 12.cxb6 Qb5? 13.Rxa7!+—]

**12.Qc2** [Before hacking into the K-side by Bg7 : White first wishes to obtain control of the square c6. This is so important, the resultant strangulation so fatal, that Black has to surrender the whole K-side (not merely the g-pawn) as the lesser evil.]

[12.Bxg7 Rg8 13.Bb2 Rxc2 14.Qa4 bxc5 15.bxc5 Qc7 16.Nd4+—; Some critics have suggested 12.Qa4 as even stronger, because c6 is under direct control of the white Q, but this deployment of the Q also has its drawbacks. First of all she can no longer assist the B by capturing on h7, secondly she is subject to swapping offers. e.g. 12...bxc5 13.bxc5 Qc8! 14.Bxg7 Rg8 15.Bd4 Qc6 16.Qc2 Rg6 with an unclear position.]

**12...Nc6! 13.Bxg7 Nxb4 14.Qb1!** [but after the text the N hangs, the KR hangs and , if it moves, the KRP will go. Is there a saving clause for Black?]

[Of course, not 14.Qb3? Nxc5]

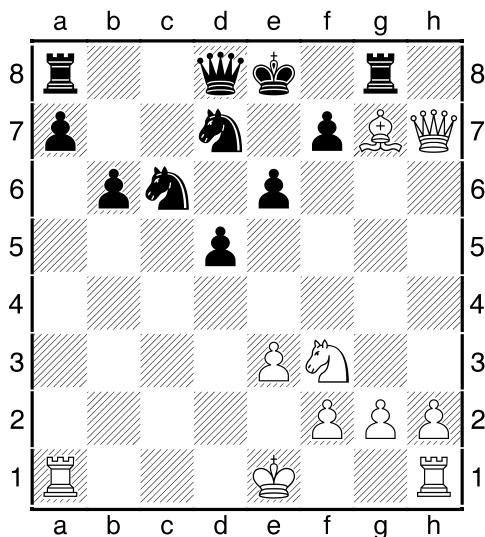
**14...Rg8 15.c6** [So as to eliminate the counter loss of the exchange after 16. Qh7: Rg7: ! 17. Qg7: Nc2+]

[15.Qxh7 Rxc7 16.Qxg7 Nc2+ 17.Ke2 Nxa1 18.c6 Nb3 19.cxd7+ Ke7 20.Ne5 Qg8 21.Qh6 f6 22.Qh4 Rf8±]

[After the deflection of the black N white hopes to enjoy his extra material at leisure and without further complications. However...]

**15...Nxc6** [If Black tries 15...Nc5? 16.Qxh7 Rxc7 17.Qxg7 Nc2+ 18.Kd2 Nxa1 19.Ne5! Qe7 20.Rxa1 0–0–0 21.Nxf7 Rf8 22.Rxa7 and wins.]

**16.Qxh7**



**16...Nf6!** [An amazing combination! Black gives up both rooks so as to land in an unavoidable perpetual check.]

**17.Bxf6 Qxf6 18.Qxg8+ Kd7!** [Not 18...Ke7? 19.Qg5+—]

**19.Ne5+ Nxe5 20.Qxa8 Nf3+!** [The diagonal for the Q is re-opened with gain of time. White choses a less elegant sequel :]

**21.gxf3** [The thematic continuation would now be 21.Ke2 Qb2+ 22.Kxf3 Qf6+ so that Black administers his perpetual without regaining any material.]

**21...Qxa1+ 22.Ke2 Qa2+** [and agreed drawn. - there is no escape from the perpetual check. :]

**23.Kf1 Qb1+ 24.Kg2 Qg6+** [etc.]

½–½

Clearly, under the conditions of 1940, a linguist was just what was needed to make up the team of mathematicians, cryptographers and such like who were tasked with breaking the secrecy of German coded messages.



I once mentioned the misunderstanding over the “Who’s Who” entry to Brian Reilly. He laughed it off, saying that it was almost certainly the abiding fault of HG – not taking Brian’s repeated advice to fit a new typewriter ribbon!

I could relate to that since Harry’s handwritten game scores, written in pencil and descriptive notation, were very hard to decipher, a real scribble that only the man himself could make sense of. When I asked him why he did not use algebraic notation, he commented that he

wrote for so many English-language outlets - The Times, The Times Weekend Supplement, Observer and chess book publishers like Bells and Penguin - who knew their audiences of those years were supporters of the Pawn to King’s Knight Three school. In fact, Harry commented, he had made more

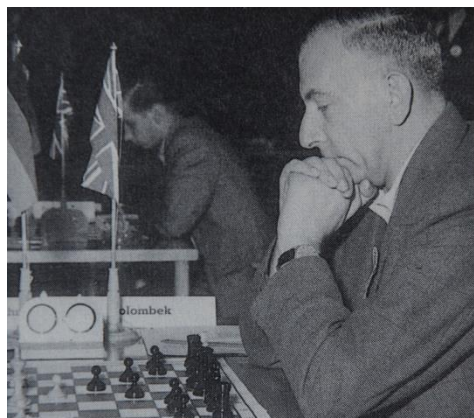
money out of his Penguin book *The Game of Chess* than from all his other extensive book authorship and journalism. Moreover, it took him about three whole days to assemble the documents and papers to enable him to fill in his income tax form.

That reminds me that, when he was in his final years, and in an old person's rest home, he arranged for his extensive library to be transferred in many large tea chests from his house in Chalfont St Giles, Bucks, to the St Leonards address where I had worked for the BCM for the last 12 years and which had recently been vacated as a result of Murray Chandler deciding to transfer BCM operations to London. I had the task, arranged with The Friends of Chess and the BCF, to do a sort-out and preliminary catalogue of his books and magazines which Harry was bequeathing to the BCF to form the nucleus of a National Chess Library. That would be a pleasant enough task, but it was prolonged into many weeks by having to decant the valuable chess material from the tea chests, much of it covered in dust and even spiders' webs, from the many financial and other papers to do with his financial affairs. It was then that I first learned what a 'tip sheet' was, and it was not until stockbroker David Jarrett, BCF Hon. Treasurer, came down for a visit that the dross amongst the many papers was separated from the gold and passed to Harry's executor David Anderton.

Reverting to the cup of tea story, the first time I got to know Harry well was at the British Championship at Leicester in 1960. Many of the participants were lodged in University accommodation near the venue. Every evening, after play had finished, a number of us got together for a chat over a cup of tea in the accommodation unit's kitchen. There Harry would regale us with stories from his many visits abroad, particularly to Moscow for the world title matches involving Botvinnik. Harry had formed many interesting views on Soviet society. Amongst the stories he told was of the all-pervasive dead hand of the bureaucracy. He was used to filing his reports on the match in English at the Central Post Office. One day, a clerk behind the grille, told him he could not accept it, since the regulations stated that all outgoing material had to be in Russian. With his logical mind, and not appreciating the discipline and associated bureaucracy which the rulers tried to impose on Soviet society, Harry commented that, "Yesterday, I submitted in English and it was accepted", at which the clerk drew herself up to her full height and stated firmly, "Yesterday was yesterday, today is today". Harry's considered views included these – that Communism would never be made to work properly in Russia, since the Russians lack the requisite discipline. "They should have tried it on the Germans. They might have made it work". He once commented that when he went to Germany in the decade or so after the war, he was aware that some of those whom he met had been strong supporters of Nazism. "If they had had their way, they would have turned me into a bar of soap!". I got a benefit from Harry being in Moscow. I wanted to get a copy of Chigorin's collected games by Grekov, a very rare item. Harry duly promised to seek one out on his next visit to Moscow and a second-hand copy of this fine book came to me through the post some weeks later. No charge to me, of course.

Harry played a big role in drawing up the Rules of Chess as they applied to post-1945 competitive play. He served on the appropriate FIDE commission for decades and always argued that too precise a codification limited the discretion of the arbiter to apply a common-sense solution to a concrete set of circumstances. Alas, that sensible approach has been moved away from in recent times, especially with the introduction of quick-play finishes and associated fine points about time limits.

A final shrewd comment from Harry, based on his Moscow experience. “In 1917, the new Bolshevik regime claimed that they were abolishing all titles, privilege and so on. The result? Forty years later they have the most class-conscious society I have encountered.” One proof of this might be given – the Soviet internal passport system, one point of which required the holder (and for a long time no peasant was allowed such an identity document – who, then, could claim that the Tsar had abolished serfdom in the middle of the 19th century?) to state his/her ethnic origin - Russian, Ukrainian, Kalmyk, Armenian, Jew and so on. The Western mind boggles ...’



*Harry Golombek during a team event, Jonathan Penrose on the adjacent board.*

We leave the final word in reminiscences of Golombek to his near-neighbour in Chalfont St Giles, Barry Sandercock - ‘Harry was a very interesting man to talk to and liked to talk about the early days when he played against some of the great players. He was also very knowledgeable on many subjects, the arts, music etc. I played him when he gave a simul at Gerrards Cross in 1955 (Jan. 21st) and managed a draw after 3 hours play. I remember the local paper once wrote an article about him, calling him an ex-world champion. I got a letter published where I pointed out that he was an ex-British Champion not ex-world champion. I hope he didn’t see that!’

To finish, a characteristic Golombek game, with his own notes. I (Ed) have selected one of the games from his victorious British Championship playoff match against Broadbent in 1947. It is characteristic of him in many ways. The game features a typically smooth positional build-up, from his beloved English Opening, played with the Nh3 development plan, which was a particular favourite of his. The notes are also very typically Golombek – concentrating in the main on verbal explanations, with relatively few variations, but also characterised by occasionally extreme dogmatism in his assessments, such as the notes to moves 1, 2 and 6, for example. The game and notes were published in the December 1947 issue of The British Chess Magazine.

### **(1) Golombek, Harry - Broadbent, Reginald Joseph [A26]**

British CF-34 Championship playoff London (2), 19.10.1947

*[Harry Golombek]*

**1.c4** [I do not regard this system of defence as at all satisfactory. Black, by abandoning control of the white squares in the centre to the first player, simply plays into his hands..]

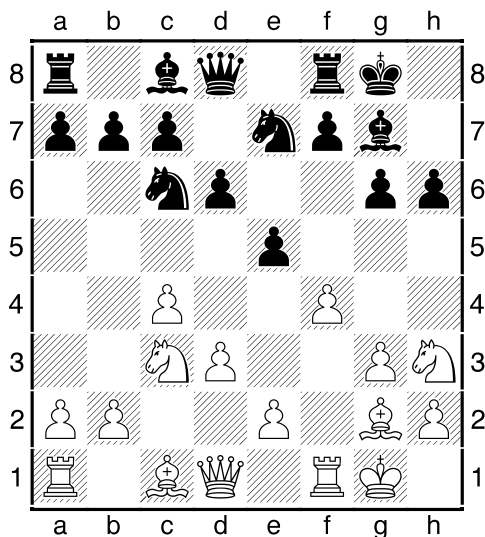
**1...e5** [Both 1...Nf6; and 1...e6 are to be preferred.]

**2.Nc3 Nc6** [and here better is 2...Nf6 , which does at least make some attempt to contest the square d5]

**3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.d3 d6 6.Nh3** [For the pros and cons of this method of attack, the reader is referred to the remarks made in my game v BH Wood in a previous number of The British Chess Magazine. I would only add that it is even more effective against a king's fianchetto by Black, and this gives White further objects of attack on the kingside.]

**6...Nge7** [Here, A R B Thomas played against me, at Nottingham 1946 6...Be6 7.f4 Qd7 8.Ng5 Nge7 9.0–0 0–0 10.Nd5 h6 11.Nxe6 fxe6 12.Nxe7+ Qxe7 13.e3 Kh7 14.Qg4 leaving White with a won game because of his strong kingside attack.]

**7.f4 0–0 8.0–0 h6**



Partly with the idea of limiting the scope of White's knight and partly so as to set up a formation with the king on h7 and pawn on f5, with possibilities of a counterattack on the kingside. But he never gets time for this, and meanwhile, he has created pawn weaknesses in his own position.]

[A colourless move like 8...Bd7 , though not entirely satisfactory, was better than any positively harmful line such as the text.]

**9.Nf2** [The knight is centralised and will prove of great use on this square during the subsequent course of this game.]

**9...f5 10.Bd2 Kh7 11.Rb1** [Preparing further pressure on the white squares by b4–5. The luxurious advantages furnished by White's plan are such that he has the best of both worlds - attacks on both the kingside and the queenside.]

**11...Nd4** [In order to stem White's attack on the white squares by c7–c6.]

**12.e3 Ne6 13.b4 c6 14.b5** [Just in time; Black was threatening d6–d5.]

**14...c5** [14...d5 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Qb3 Nc5 18.Qb5 and White wins material; whilst if 14...Nc5 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.Na4 is very strong]

**15.a4 Rb8 16.Nd5 Qe8** [Pursuing the faulty plan of bringing his queen over to the kingside to f7.16...Nxd5 was imperative.]

**17.Bc3 Bd7 18.Qd2 Qf7 19.fxe5 dxe5 20.Qb2 Rbe8** [Black cannot defend his e-pawn but strives to create tactical complications.]

**21.Ne4** [Over-ambitious. This move wins, it is true, but only after some hair-raising adventures. The simple 21 Ng4 would have won the e-pawn and the game without much bother.]

[If now 21.Bxe5 Nxd5 22.Bxd5 Bxe5 23.Qxe5 Ng5 24.Bxf7 Rxe5 with good counterchances for Black.]

**21...fxe4** [Courageously and ingeniously played;]

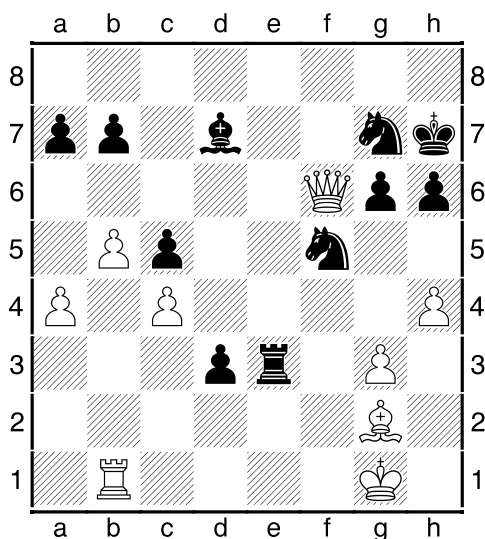
[If 21...Nc8 22.Bxe5 is deadly]

**22.Rxf7 Rxf7 23.h4** [White must play this weakening move to prevent Black's Ng5]

[If 23.Bxe5 Nxd5 24.cxd5 Bxe5 25.Qxe5 (25.dxe6 Bxb2 26.exf7 Rf8 27.Rxb2 exd3±) 25...Ng5 26.Qc3 Ref8 27.dxe4 Nh3+ 28.Bxh3 Bxh3 29.Qa1 Rf2–+ and Black wins]

**23...Nf5 24.Bxe5 exd3** [Black must now give up the exchange, after which he has only two minor pieces for the queen. But he has a dangerous passed pawn on d3 and White's king is exposed to attack. White, therefore, still has to play accurately to win, in spite of the disparity in material.]

**25.Bxg7 Nexg7 26.Nf6+ Rxf6 27.Qxf6 Rxe3** [



**28.Rb2!** [A simple move, which took me a great deal of time to find. It is imperative to stop the advance of the d-pawn,]

[28.Rd1 Will not do because of 28...Rxc3 threatening Rxc2+ followed by Ne3+. With the rook on b2 this threat does not exist. 29.Qd8 Be6 30.Rxd3 is 2020 analysis]

**28...Rxc3 29.Kf2 Rg4** [If 29...Ne3 30.Kxc3 Nh5+ 31.Kf3 Nxf6 32.Kxe3 with an easily won ending]

**30.Bd5** [threatening Qf7 and a mating attack.]

**30...Be8** [Possibly overlooking White's 32nd move, which wins a piece.]

[30...Rf4+ 31.Ke1 Be6 32.Bxe6 Re4+ 33.Kd2 Nxe6 and White's superiority in material will tell]

**31.Qf8 g5 32.h5** [A neat little finishing touch.]

**32...Rf4+** [If now 32...Bxh5 33.Bg8+ Kh8 (33...Kg6 34.Qf7#) 34.Bf7+ Kh7 35.Qg8# And since otherwise, mate on the move is threatened, Black must give up a piece, after which it is all over.]

**33.Ke1 Ne7 34.Qxe7 Bxh5 35.Be4+ Kg8 36.Bxd3 Rd4 37.Be2 Nf5 38.Qxc5**

**1-0**

From *The Anglo-Soviet Radio Chess Match* by Klein and Winter -

'Harry Golombek is a Londoner. He was born in 1911 and learned chess when twelve years of age. He is another of those who went through the mill of the British Boys' Championship, winning it in 1926. He has played in most English international tournaments and has represented Great Britain in team tournaments. In the London International Tournament, 1946, he came fifth.

A graduate of London University, he served in the Foreign Office during the war, but has since retired to the country (Chalfont St. Giles). His literary activities include *50 Great Games of Modern Chess* [Legend, according to James Pratt, has it that HG wrote the book without the aid of a chess

set!]) and *Capablanca's Hundred Best Games*. He reports chess tournaments for *The Times*, and edits *The Times Weekly* chess column. His chess is perhaps not inspired and lacks the spark of enterprise, but he is a solid player on the whole and is apt to hold the best to a draw.'

### (1) Franklin, Michael J - Golombek, Harry [E14]

British CF-42 Championship Aberystwyth (11), 02.09.1955

[Harry Golombek & British Chess News]

[See British Chess Magazine, 1955, October, page 313 and British Chess, page 79.]

1.d4 [1) BCM 1955, p313.]

1...Nf6 2.Nf3 b6 3.c4 Bb7 4.e3 [Intending a solid development with Bd3 and Nc3 with an eventual occupation of the centre with e4.]

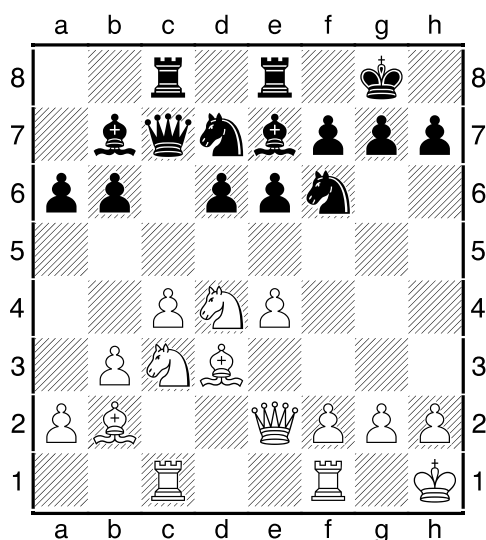
4...e6 5.Bd3 Be7 6.Nc3 c5 7.0-0 cxd4 8.Nxd4 [or 8.exd4 d5 when Black will concentrate his attack on the isolated d-pawn.]

8...0-0 9.e4 d6 10.Qe2 Nbd7! [Much stronger]

[than 10...Nc6 as on d7 the knight will have excellent prospects of advancing to the attack either on c5 or e5.]

11.b3 Rc8 12.Bb2 Qc7 13.Rac1 Rfe8 [An important part of Black's system not only making room for the knight to defend on f8 but also facilitating the important d5 advance.]

14.Kh1 a6



completing the transposition to a kind of Sicilian Defence position.

15.f4?! [Though it is usual to make a thrust with the kingside pawns in such positions, this move is not good. Black's kingside position and all his pieces are so menacingly placed for counterattack that White should really be concerned with strengthening his own pawn structure before embarking on attack. Hence the indicated move is 15.f3.]

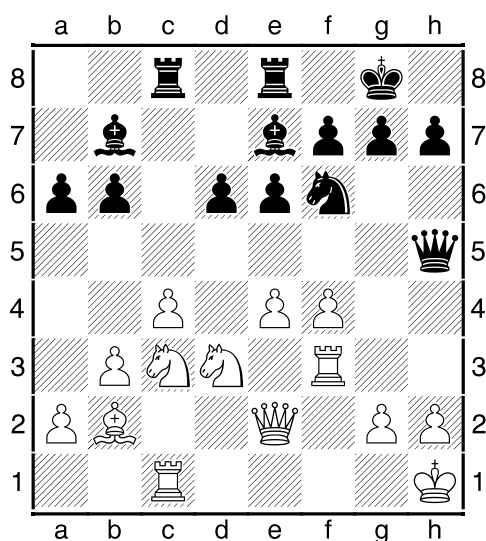
[Many of White's problems after f4 stem from the loose bishop on d3. Hence tucking it away with 15.Bb1 is sensible. 15...Bf8 has four games in Megabase 2020.; 15.f3]

15...Qc5! [Black does not immediately threaten Qxd4 because of Na4 winning the queen; but he does threaten b5 after which the knight would be en prise.]

**16.Nc2** [16.Na4 Qh5 17.Qxh5 Nxh5 18.g4 Nxf4 19.Rxf4 e5 20.Rf3 exd4 21.Bxd4 b5!⚡]

**16...Qh5 17.Rf3** [Again the exchange of queens would be bad for white because of 17.Qxh5 Nxh5 18.g4 Nc5!–+]

**17...Nc5 18.Ne1 Nxd3 19.Nxd3**



**19...d5! 20.Nf2** [20.cxd5 exd5 21.e5 Ne4 threatens Ng3+ whilst after a double pawn exchange the rook on e8 dangerously comes to life.]

**20...dxc4 21.g4?** [This is White's losing move.]

**21...Qa5** [21...Nxg4? Golombek gives 22.Nxg4 Qxg4 23.Rg1 but, in fact, after 23...Qh4 24.Qg2 g6 Black is winning anyway.]

**22.g5 Nd7 23.Rh3 cxb3 24.axb3** [24.Qh5 Nf8]

**24...Nf8 25.Rg1** [intending Ng4 - f6+. Black's reply nips this in the bud and prepares a queenside counterattack especially against the sensitive point at c3.]

**25...Bc5 26.Rg2 Bd4 27.Qe1 Rc7 28.Rd3 Rd7 29.Qd2 Red8 30.h4 Qb4 31.Qe2 Bxf2!** [Forcing White to yield control of the d-file and winning another pawn in complete safety.]

**32.Rxd7 Rxd7 33.Rxf2 Qxb3 34.h5 b5** [Decisive! Owing to the weakness of the e-pawn, a direct consequence of this move, White cannot withstand the attack of Black's b-pawn.]

**35.h6 b4 36.Nd5** [desperation]

**36...exd5 37.hxg7 dxe4!** [Quickest.]

**38.gxf8Q+ Kxf8 39.Kh2 e3 40.Qg4 Qd1** [and White resigned.]

**41.Qxd1 Rxd1 42.Re2 Rd2**

**0–1**

Here is HG's entry from Hooper & Whyld (*The Oxford Companion to Chess*) -

'English player and author. International Master (1950), International Arbiter (1954), honorary Grandmaster (1985). In 1945 Golombek became chess correspondent of The Times, a position he

held until 1989. Also in 1945 he decided to become a professional chess-player. He won the British Championship three times (1947, 1949, 1955) and was equal first in 1959 but lost the play-off (to Jonathan Penrose) and played in nine Olympiads from 1935 to 1962. An experienced arbiter and a good linguist, supervisor of many important tournaments and matches, he served for 30 years on the FIDE Commission that makes, amends, and arbitrates upon the laws and rules of chess. His many books include *Capablanca's Hundred Best Games* (1947), *The World Chess Championship 1948* (1949), *Réti's Best Games of Chess* (1954), and *A History of Chess* (1976).'

From *The Encyclopaedia of Chess* (Robert Hale 1970 & 1976), Anne Sunnucks - 'International Master and International Chess Judge. British Champion in 1947, 1949 and 1955. Captained the British Chess Federation team for many years in Chess Olympiads. In the 1972 Olympiad, captained the BCF women's team. Chess author and chess correspondent of The Times since 1945 and the Observer since 1955. British Chess Federation to FIDE.

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THE BRITISH CHESS MAGAZINE



Post-Banquet photograph — Left to right: H.Golombek, A.Adorjan, D.Wright, B.Eley, M.Stean, D.Silk, R.Silk, A.K.Henderson  
Photo B.C.M.

Born in London on 1st March 1911, Golombek learned to play chess at the age of 12 and in 1929 won the London Boy's Championship. Two years later he became the youngest player to win the Surrey Championships. After graduating in languages at London University, Golombek devoted his full time to chess, apart from the way years, when served in the army and at the Foreign Office, and was awarded the OBE for his services to the game in 1966. He was the editor of the British Chess Magazine from 1938 to 1939 and for many years served as its games editor. He is now its overseas news editor. In his capacity as International Chess Judge, he has acted as judge in World Championship matches since 1954.

He has competed in a number of international tournaments, his best results being 1st at Antwerp 1938, 1st at Leeuwarden 1947, 1st at Baarn 1948 and -4th with Barcza, Foltys and Gliogoric at Venice 1949. In 1951, he represented the British Chess Federation in the Zonal tournament at Bad Pyrmont and came 5th, qualifying for the Interzonal.

His publications include *Capablanca's 100 Best Games of Chess* (1947), *World Chess Championship 1948* (1949), *Pocket Guide to the Chess Openings* (1949), *Hastings Tournament 1948-1949* (1949), *Southsea Tournament 1949* (1949), *Prague 1946* (1950), *Budapest 1952* (1952), *50 Great Games of*

*Modern Chess* (1952), *Reti's Best Games of Chess* (1954), *22nd USSR Championship* (1956), *World Chess Championship 1957* (1957), *Modern Opening Chess Strategy* (1959), and a translation of *The Art of the Middle Game* by P. Keres and A. Kotov. He enjoys classical music and has been known to be successful on the Stock Exchange.'

A reasonable enquiry might be 'What did Harry write about himself?' Well, according to *The Encyclopaedia of Chess* (Batsford, 1977) –

'British international master, three times British champion and the first person to figure in that country's Honours List on account of his services to chess. Golombek was born in London and lived there till the Second World War. Educated at Wilson's Grammar School and the University of London, he became London Boy Champion in 1929 and London University Champion 1930-3. By this time he was part of a trio of the leading players in England, the other two being Alexander and Milner-Barry. (Ed: It is curious that HG does not mention William Winter. Maybe they were not like-minded souls?). His best result in the British championship before the Second World War was =2nd with EG Sergeant, 1/2 a point below Alexander at Brighton 1938. In that year he won first prize in a small international tournament at Antwerp ahead of Koltanowski. In 1938 too he became editor of the British Chess Magazine and occupied this post till he entered the army in 1940.

Before the war he had already played in three International Team Tournaments (or Olympiads as they subsequently became called) at Warsaw 1935, Stockholm 1937 and Buenos Aires 1939.

After the Buenos Aires event he went on to play in an international tournament at Montevideo where he came second to the World Champion, Alexander Alekhine.

In the war he served first in the Royal Artillery, from 1940-1 and then, for the rest of the war, in the Foreign Office at Bletchley Park, employed (like Alexander, Milner-Barry and quite a number of other chess-players) in code breaking.

After the war he made chess and writing about the game his livelihood, becoming Times Chess Correspondent in 1945 and Observer Chess Correspondent in 1955. As a player he had a consistently good record in the British Championship, coming in the prize list on fourteen out of eighteen occasions he competed in the event. He was British Champion at Harrogate 1947, Felixstowe 1949 and Aberystwyth 1955. Here is HG's win against his old friend PS Milner-Barry from Aberystwyth 1955 –

### **(1) Golombek, Harry - Milner Barry, Philip Stuart [E02]**

British CF-42 Championship Aberystwyth (4), 25.08.1955

[Harry Golombek and British Chess News]

[This is BCM game # 11,769. annotated in October 1955, page 310 onwards. This was reproduced in British Chess, page 78.]

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 dxc4 5.Qa4+ Bd7** [An inferior defence]

[to 5...Nbd7 since it eventually results in White getting control of the centre.]

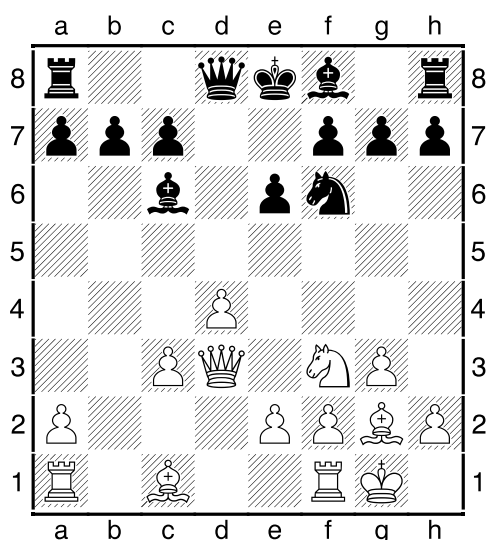
**6.Qxc4 Bc6 7.Nf3 Nbd7 8.Nc3 Nb6** [In a later round Dr. Aitken played against me here 8...Be7 but after 9.0-0 0-0 10.Qd3 Nd5 11.Nxd5 exd5 (11...Bxd5?! 12.e4!) 12.Bf4 White obtained enduring pressure on Black's queen's side.]

**9.Qd3 Nbd5** [preventing White from playing e4.]

[Another way of doing this was 9...Bb4 then, as in another game I had against Dr. Aitken (European Zonal, Munich, 1954) 10.0-0 0-0 11.a3 Bxc3 12.Qxc3 a5 13.b3 gives White much the better game thanks to his two bishops and pressure along the c-file.]

**10.0–0** [Threatening Ne5 inducing the following exchange.]

**10...Nxc3 11.bxc3**



is much stronger All four games that reached this position were won by White.  
[than 11.Qxc3 since White's central pawn majority will now prove most embarrassing for Black.]

**11...Be4** [Not a good manoeuvre.]

[He should play 11...Be7 and hasten to get castled.]

**12.Qb5+ Bc6N** [12...c6? is the move given by Megabase 2020.; 12...Qd7 13.Qb3! threatening Ne5 is very strong.]

**13.Qb3 Be7 14.c4 0–0 15.Bb2 Qd6** [Hoping to relieve his position by exchanging queens after Qb4. White at once extinguishes this hope.]

**16.a3 Rab8** [16...Rad8 is better.]

**17.Rfd1 b5?** [Almost certainly the losing blunder.]

[Better was 17...Rfe8 18.a4±]

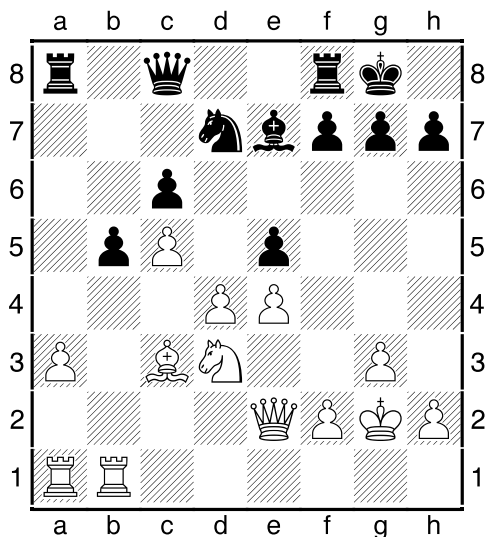
**18.c5 Qd8** [Worse still is 18...Qd5 19.Qxd5 Bxd5 20.Ne5 Bxg2 21.Kxg2 when Nc6 cannot be prevented.]

**19.Ne5 Bxg2 20.Kxg2 Qe8 21.Qf3 Nd5 22.e4 Nf6** [Not 22...f6 23.Nd3 and the black knight is lost.]

**23.Bc3 c6 24.Rdb1** [Threatening to break through on the a-file with fatal effect, therefore Black decides to give up the a-pawn to obtain some freedom. and prevent White's rooks from occupying that file.]

**24...a5 25.Bxa5 Ra8 26.Bc3 Qc8 27.Qe2** [Preparing for an eventual break through in the centre by f3, Qb2, Nd3–b4 and the pawn advance d5.]

**27...Nd7 28.Nd3 e5** [



Apparently Black has at length secured some counterplay but now comes a crippling blow]

**29.d5! cxd5 30.exd5 Nxc5 31.Nxe5+– Qf5 32.Qf3 Qxf3+ 33.Kxf3 Bf6** [Otherwise Nc6]

**34.Rxb5 Nd7 35.Nxd7 Bxc3 36.Ra2 Rfd8 37.Nb6 Ra5** [After 37...Rab8 38.a4 the further advance of the a-pawn is not to be prevented.]

**38.a4 f5 39.Rc2 Rxb5 40.axb5 Bd4** [Seemingly winning one of the passed pawns but]

**41.Nc8** [and Black resigned]

**41...Rxd5** [41...Kf8 42.d6 Ke8 43.b6 etc]

**42.Ne7+**

**1–0**

He represented England in six more Olympiads, Helsinki 1952, Amsterdam 1954, Moscow 1956, Munich 1958, Leipzig 1960 and Varna 1962. His best individual international results were first prizes at small tournaments in Leeuwarden 1947, Baarn 1948 and Paignton 1950 (above Euwe and Donner); =4th with O’Kelly at Beverwijk 1949, =4th with Barcza, Foltys and Gligoric at Venice 1949, and 5th at the European Zonal tournament at Bad Pyrmont 1951, thereby becoming the first British player to have qualified for the Interzonal. He was awarded the OBE in the Queen’s Birthday List in 1966.

A founding member of the FIDE Commission for the Rules of Chess, he became a FIDE International Judge and as such officiated at six World Championship matches. He was also chief arbiter at a FIDE Candidates tournament, at an Interzonal and two European Team Championship finals, etc. When the FIDE President, Dr Euwe, had to return home from Reykjavik before the 1972 Spassky-Fischer match got started. Golombek represented FIDE in Iceland and did much to ensure that the match took place and that it continued to be played.

Harry gave more than the average number of simultaneous displays in this career. For the photograph below Leonard Barden provided the following caption –



*Harry was invited because it was the 50th anniversary of his victory in the London Boys 1929 a success which he often referred to in his Times column. There were seven 30-board simuls that day, the top three being England Juniors v USSR (Spassky, Vasyukov, Kochiev) where Spassky had the worst simultaneous result of his career. No 4 was by Murray Chandler, Harry was No5 and the others by Whiteley and Rumens. The juniors who played the Russians were personally invited.*

A prolific writer and translator of books on the game, he has had some thirty-five books published on various aspects of chess. Among them are : Capablanca's Best Games of Chess, London, New York 1947; Reti's Best Games of Chess, London 1954; New York 1975; The Game of Chess, London 1954; Modern Opening Chess Strategy, London 1959; A History of Chess, London, New York 1976.'

From *British Chess* (Pergamon Press, 1983), Botterill, Levy, Rice and Richardson, we have this rather brief biography -

'Three times British Champion (Harrogate 1947, Felixstowe 1949, Aberystwyth 1955) and the first person to figure on the Honours List for services to Chess. He has represented England in 9 Olympiads. A FIDE International Judge and Arbiter has officiated at 6 World Championship matches. He is chess correspondent of The Times and a prolific writer and translator.'

### **Remembering Vera Menchik (16-ii-1906 27-vi-1944)**

In the early morning of Tuesday June 27th 1944, Vera Menchik, her sister Olga, and their mother were killed in a V-1 flying bomb attack, which destroyed their home at 47 Gauden Road in the Clapham area of South London. All three were cremated at the Streatham Park Crematorium on 4 July 1944. Vera was 38 years old.



*Isaac Kashdan plays Vera Menchik during the Hastings Congress on December 28th, 1931. Kashdan won in 45 moves in a classical French.*

The August 1944 *British Chess Magazine* (Volume LXIV, Number 8, page 173 onwards) contained this editorial from Julius du Mont -

'British Chess has suffered a grievous and irreparable loss in the death by enemy action of Mrs. R.H.S. Stevenson, known through all the world where chess is played as Vera Menchik. We give elsewhere (below - Ed.) an appreciation of this remarkable woman.

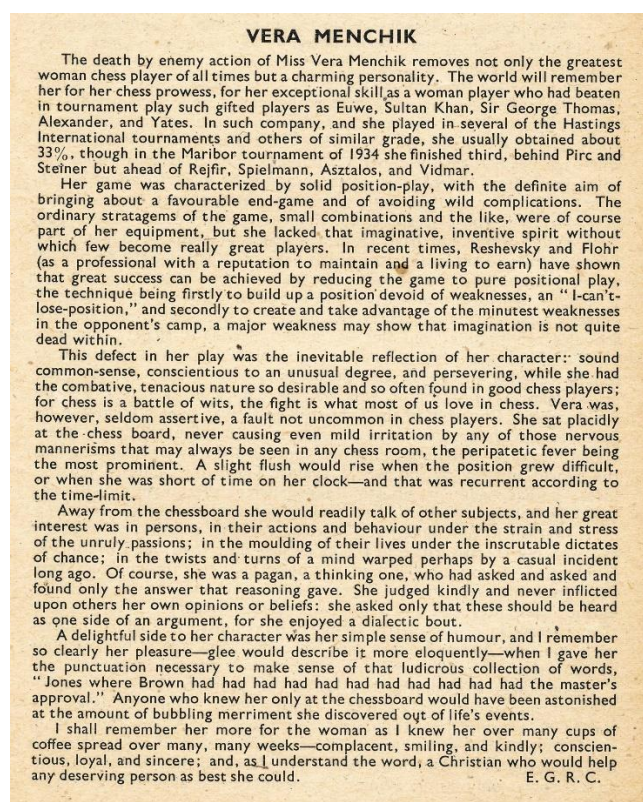
Quite apart from her unique gifts as a chess-player, the world may never see her equal again among

women players. She had many qualities which endeared her to all who knew her, the greatest among them being her great-hearted generosity.

We sympathise with our contemporary 'CHESS' - Vera Menchik was for some years their games editor. Few columns have been conducted with equal skill and efficiency and none, we feel sure, with a greater sense of responsibility.

The news of this remarkable tragedy will be received by the chess world with sorrow and with abhorrence of the wanton and useless robot methods of a robot people. One shudders at the heritage of hatred which will be theirs, but their greatest punishment will come with their own enlightenment.'

From page 178 of the same issue we have an obituary written by EGR Cordingley –



## (1) Euwe, Max - Menchik, Vera [D63]

Christmas Congress 1930/31–11 Premier Hastings Waverley Hotel (2), 30.12.1930

[johnu]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 Be7 6.Nf3 0–0 7.Rc1 a6 8.cxd5 exd5 9.Bd3 c6 10.0–0 Ne4 11.Bf4 Nxc3 12.Rxc3 Re8 13.Qb1 Nf8 14.b4 Ng6 15.Bg3 Bd6 16.a4 Bxg3 17.hxg3 Bd7 18.Rfc1 Qf6 19.b5 axb5 20.axb5 Rec8 21.Qc2 Qd8 22.bxc6 Rxc6 23.Rc5 Rxc5 24.dxc5 Ra5 25.Qb2 Qa8 26.Qb6 Nf8 27.Ne5 Ra1 28.Rb1 Rxb1+ 29.Bxb1 Be6 30.Kh2 Nd7 31.Nxd7 Bxd7 32.Qc7 Qc8 33.Qxc8+ Bxc8 34.Ba2 Be6 35.Kg1 Kf8 36.Kf1 Ke7 37.Ke2 Kf6 38.Kd3 Ke5 39.g4 g5 40.g3 Bxg4 41.f4+ gxf4 42.gxf4+ Kf6 43.Bxd5 Bc8 44.Bf3 Ke7 45.Kc4 Kd8 46.Kd5 b6 47.c6 Kc7 48.Ke5 Be6 49.f5 Bb3 50.Kf6 b5 51.Kg7 b4 52.Kxh7 Bc2 53.Kg7 b3 54.Bd5 b2 55.Ba2 Kxc6 56.f6 Kd6 57.e4 Bxe4 58.Kxf7 Bd5+ 59.Bxd5 b1Q 60.Kg7 Qg1+ 61.Kf8 Kxd5

0–1

From *The Encyclopedia of Chess* (Robert Hale, 1970 & 1976) by Anne Sunnucks -

'Woman World Champion from 1927 to 1944. Vera Menchik was born in Moscow on 16th February 1906 of an English mother and a Czech father. Her father taught her to play chess when she was 9.

In 1921 her family came to England and settled in Hastings (at 13 St. John's Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 6HP).

Two years later, when she was 17, Vera joined Hastings Chess Club, where she became a pupil of Geza Maroczy. The first Women's World Championship was held in 1927. Vera Menchik won with a score of 10.5 out of 11. She defended her title successfully in Hamburg in 1930, in Prague in 1931, in Folkestone in 1933, in Warsaw in 1935, in Stockholm in 1937 and in Buenos Aires in 1939. She played 2 matches against Sonja Graf, her nearest rival, in 1934 when she won +3 -1 and in 1937, in a match for her title when she won +9 -1 =5.



Vera Menchik at Margate 1935, photographer unknown

The first woman ever to play in the British Championship and the first to play in a master tournament, Vera Menchik made her debut in master chess at Scarborough 1928 when she scored 50 per cent. The following year she played in Paris and Carlsbad, and it was at Carlsbad that the famous Menchik Club was formed. The invitation to Vera Menchik to compete among such players as Capablanca, Euwe, Tartakower and Nimzowitch was received with amusement by many of the masters.

The Viennese master, Becker was particularly scornful, and in the presence of a number of the competitors he suggested that anyone who lost to Vera Menchik should be granted membership of the Menchik Club. He himself became the first member. Other famous players who later joined the club were Euwe, Reshevsky, Sultan Khan, Sir George Thomas, C. H. O'D. Alexander, Colle and Yates.

Her greatest success in international tournaments was at Ramsgate in 1929, when she was =2nd with Rubinstein, half a point behind Capablanca and ahead of Maroczy. In 1934 she was 3rd at Maribor, ahead of Spielmann and Vidmar. In 1942 she won a match against Mieses +4 -1 -5. In 1937 Vera Menchik married R. H. Stevenson, who later became Hon. Secretary of the British Chess Federation. He died in 1943. She continued to use her maiden name when playing chess. On her marriage she became a British subject.

From 1941 until her death, she was Games Editor of CHESS. She also gave chess lessons and managed the National Chess Centre, which opened in 1939 at John Lewis's in Oxford Street, London and was destroyed by a bomb in 1940.

In 1944 Vera Menchik was a solid positional player, who avoided complications and aimed at achieving a favourable endgame. Her placid temperament was ideal for tournament play. Her main weakness was possibly lack of imagination. Her results have made her the most successful woman player ever.'

From *The Encyclopedia of Chess*, (BT Batsford, 1977) by Harry Golombek -

'Probably the strongest woman player in the history of the game, Vera Menchik was born in Moscow and, though her father was a Czechoslovak and her mother English, she played for most of her life under English colours.

In 1921 her family came to Hastings in England and there Vera became a pupil of the great Hungarian master, Geza Maroczy. This was to have a dominating influence on her style of play which was solidly classical, logical and technically most well equipped. Such a style enabled her to deal severely not only with her fellow women players but also with contemporary masters and budding masters. Vera did extremely well, for example, against C. H. O'D. Alexander and P. S. Milner-Barry but lost repeatedly to H. Golombek who was able to take advantage of her lack of imagination by the use of more modern methods.

Vera was soon predominant in women's chess. In the first Women's World Championship tournament, at London in 1927, she won the title with a score of 10.5 out of 11 and retained the championship with great ease at all the subsequent Olympiads (or International Team tournaments as they were then known more correctly) at Hamburg 1930, Prague 1931, Folkestone 1933, Warsaw 1935, Stockholm 1937 and Buenos Aires 1939.

With Sonja Graf, the player who came nearest to her in strength among her female contemporaries, she played two matches and demonstrated her undoubted superiority by beating her in 1934 (+3-1) and again in a match for the title in 1937 (+9-1=5).

In 1937 Vera officially became a British citizen by marrying the then Kent and later B.C.F. Secretary, R. H. S. Stevenson (Rufus Henry Streatfeild Stevenson was home news editor of the British Chess Magazine, secretary of the Southern Counties Chess Union and match captain of the Kent County Chess Association). Oddly enough, Sonja Graf, many years later, also became a Mrs Stevenson by marrying an American of that name some years after the Second World War.

Vera Menchik also played and held her own in men's tournaments. She did well in the British championship and her best performance in international chess was =2nd with Rubinstein in the Ramsgate Team Practice tournament ahead of her old teacher, Maroczy. She also had an excellent result at Maribor in 1934 where she came 3rd, ahead of Spielmann and Vidmar.

Her husband died in 1943 and Vera herself, together with her younger sister Olga and her mother, was killed by a V1 bomb that descended on the Stevenson home in London in 1944. This was a sad and premature loss, not only for British but for world chess, since there is no doubt she would have continued to dominate the female scene for many years.

As a person Vera was a delightful companion, jolly and full of fun and understanding. As a player she was not only strong but also absolutely correct and without any prima donna behaviour. Generous in defeat and modest in victory, she set a great example to all her contemporaries. An example of Vera's attacking play at its best against her nearest rival, Sonja Graf, is shown by the following game which was played in her 1937 match at Semmering in Austria'

### **(1) Menchik, Vera - Graf Stevenson, Sonja [D46]**

World Women-ch Menchik-Graf +9-2=5 Semmering (14), 13.07.1937  
[ChessBase]

1.c4 [Bykova:Vera Menchik. p.141]

1...e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4 Nf6 4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.e3 c6 6.Bd3 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 dxe4 9.Nxe4 Nxe4 10.Bxe4 Nf6 11.Bc2 c5 12.dxc5 Qa5 13.Be3 Bxc5 14.Bd2 Qc7 15.Bc3 Be7 16.Qe2 b6 17.Ng5 [17.Rad1 Bb7 18.Ne5±]

**17...g6** [17...Ba6 18.b3 Bb7 19.Ne4 (19.Bxf6 Bxf6 20.Bxh7+ (20.Nxh7 Bxa1?) 20...Kh8) 19...Qc6=]

**18.Qf3 Bb7 19.Qh3 h5 20.Rad1 Ng4??** [20...Qxc4! 21.Rd4 Qb5 22.Qg3 Bd5=; 20...Rad8 21.Bxg6 fxg6 22.Qxe6+ Kh8 23.Rxd8 Bxd8 24.Be5 Qc5 25.b4 Qc6 26.Qxc6 Bxc6 27.Ne6±]

**21.Rd7!** [21.Rd7 Qxd7 22.Qxh5 gxh5 23.Bh7#; 21.Qxh5 Qxh2+ 22.Qxh2 Nxh2 23.Nxf7±] **1-0**

From *The Oxford Companion to Chess*, (Oxford University Press, 1984) by Hooper and Whyld - 'Woman World Champion from 1927 until her death. Daughter of a Czech father and an English mother, Menchik was born in Moscow, learned chess when she was nine, settled in England around 1921, and took lessons from Maroczy a year or so later. In 1927 FIDE organized both the first Olympiad and the first world championship tournament for women. These events were run concurrently, except in 1928, until the Second World War began, and Menchik won the women's tournament every time; London 1927 (+10=1); Hamburg 1930 (+6=1 — 1); Prague 1931 (+8); Folkestone 1933 ( + 14); Warsaw 1935 (+9); Stockholm 1937 (+14); and Buenos Aires 1939 ( + 17=2). She played in her first championship tournament as a Russian, the next five as a Czech, and the last as a Briton. She also won on two matches against her chief rival, the German-born Sonja Graf (c. 1912-65): Rotterdam, 1934 (+3-1), and Semmering, 1937 (+9=5—2).



Left to right: Vera Menchik, Alexander Alekhine, Géza Maróczy and Sultan Khan. From London International Masters

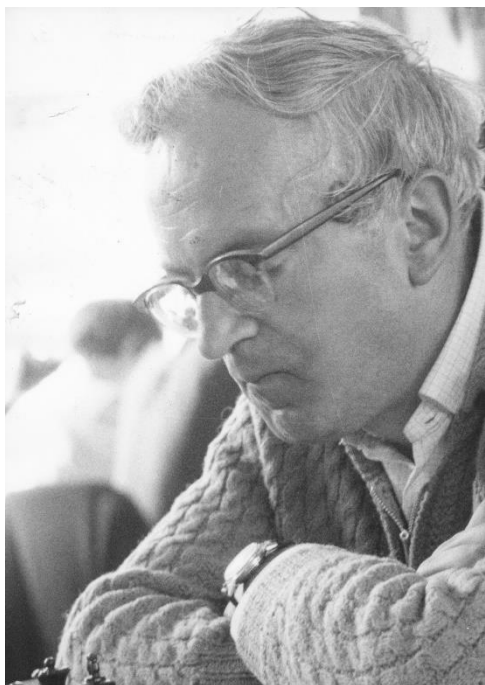
In international tournaments which did not exclude men Menchik made little impression; one of her best results was at Maribor 1934 (about category 4) when she took third place after Pirc and L. Steiner ahead of Spielmann. In 1937 she married the English chess organizer Rufus Henry Streatfeild Stevenson (1878-1943), A chess professional, she gave lessons, lectures, and displays, and was appointed manager of the short-lived National Chess Centre in 1939. In 1942 she defeated Mieses in match play (+4=5-1), She, her younger sister Olga (also a player), and their mother were killed in a bombing raid.

Her style was positional, and she had a sound understanding of the endgame. On occasion she defeated in tournament play some of the greatest masters, notably Euwe, Reshevsky, and Sultan Khan. Men she defeated were said to belong to the Menchik club. When world team championships for women (women's chess Olympiads) were commenced in 1957 the trophy for the winning team was called the Vera Menchik Cup.'

She was inducted to the World Chess Hall of Fame in 2011.

### **Remembering IM Bob Wade OBE (10-iv-1921 29-xi-2008)**

IM Robert Graham Wade OBE passed away on November 29th, 2008. In 1979 Queen's Birthday Honours List, Civil Division Bob Wade was awarded the OBE. The citation read simply, "For services to Chess". He won the BCF Presidents's Award in 1986.



IM Bob Wade

In the Foreword to the 2009 *ECF Yearbook*, President Gerry Walsh wrote, 'As I started this report I had just heard the sad news that IM Bob Wade had died aged 87. I first met Bob at one of the Whitby Congresses and in 1972 he played in the Teeside GM Tournament where I recall he beat the three Hungarian players Portisch, Bilek and Sax (ed: aged 51).' Wade was Southern Counties (SCCU) champion for the 1956-57, 1957-58 and 1964-65 seasons.

Geurt Gijssen wrote on Chesscafe.com -

'I received the sad news that Bob Wade passed away at the age of eighty-seven. He played his last tournament in London in August. When I was young, I read about his exploits as a chess player, and he was the arbiter in many important chess events. I met him in 1993 when I was the organizer of the first part of the match Karpov – Timman, played in The Netherlands in three different cities: Zwolle, Arnhem, and Amsterdam. He was the only member of the Appeals Committee and Bob was always present watching the games

in the playing hall. He gave me invaluable advice about all elements of the match venues. It was very clear that he was an experienced chess player and arbiter, and I learned many things from him. May he rest in peace.'

Wade was Southern Counties (SCCU) champion for the 1956-57, 1957-58 and 1964-65 seasons.

From the Preface of *The World Chess Championship 1951* by Lionel Sharples Penrose we have -

'Mr. Wade is also passionately devoted to the game. Before coming to Europe, he was three times champion of New Zealand. He had played in tournaments in England, but his chief successes have been on the Continent. At Venice in 1950, he obtained a high place in a very severe contest in which some of the strongest Russia, Czech, Dutch, French, Italian, North and South American players took part. Much of his time is occupied in chess organising and teaching. He is an acting vice-president of the F.I.D.É and in this official capacity he attended the match in Moscow, which is the subject of this book.'

Simon Spivack & Paul McKeown have researched the earliest part of Bob's life as follows -

'On May 20th, 1919, Thomas Graham Wade, aged 27, Sergeant in the NZ Expeditionary Force, repatriated with honour from war-time service in Egypt, Gallipoli and France, married Amy Lilian Neave, aged 21, in South Dunedin. A New Zealander of Scots and English descent, his family was Graham from Montrose. The family name, Wade, came from Marshall George Wade, the soldier and engineer who led the Hanoverian forces against the Scots at the time of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion.

Robert Graham Wade, known in the Scots manner to his family as Robin, and later to his many friends as Bob, was their first child, born April 10th, 1921, at Dunedin. Over the next few years he was joined by sisters, Lilian, Agnes, Betty, June, his brother Ted and finally by his youngest sister Amy.

The family lived for a number of years at Portobello. At that time, Portobello was a scattered community of about 150 people with three shops and a pub on the Otago Peninsula. Bob attended

Portobello Primary School, a small country school, finished 'dux' or top of class, and then attended the King Edward Technical High School at Stuart Street in Dunedin.'

Anne Sunnucks wrote in *The Encyclopedia of Chess* (Robert Hale, 1970 & 1976) - 'International Master (1950 Ed: actually 1954), International Judge (1958), New Zealand Champion three times and British Champion in 1952 and 1970.

Bob Wade was born in New Zealand on 10th April 1921 and is a professional chess player. He has lived in England for many years and has played regularly for the British Chess Federation team in Chess Olympiads. He has played a prominent part in coaching schemes for juniors and is largely responsible for recent successes of English juniors in international events.

He is chess correspondent of Associated Newspapers and Independent Television News and editor of a series of books on Contemporary Chess Openings published by Batsford.

Author of a number of books on the game, his publications include books on the World Championship of 1951, 1957 (ed: this book was, in fact, by Golombek) and 1963, the first in collaboration with W. Winter, *The Closed Ruy Lopez* (Batsford, 1970) in collaboration with LS Blackstock and PJ Booth, *World Chess Championship* (Batsford, 1972) in collaboration with S.Gligoric, *Games of RJ Fischer* (Batsford, 1972) in collaboration with KJ O'Connell and *Soviet Chess* (Neville Spearman, 1968).

Wade was a member of the FIDE Laws Commission from 1950 to 1952.'

From *The Encyclopedia of Chess* (Batsford, 1977), Harry Golombek OBE - 'International Master who was born at Dunedin, New Zealand, but came to live In England in 1946 and has represented both countries on different occasions. He has nearly always done well in British Championships and won the title in Chester in 1952 and again at Coventry in 1970. He had played for the British Chess Federation at the Olympiads of 1954, 1956, 1958, 1960 and 1962, winning the shortest game of the Varna Olympiad in that year in nine moves against Anton Kinzel of Austria.

### **(1) Wade, Robert Graham - Kinzel, Anton [A40]**

Olympiad-15 Preliminaries D Varna (4), 19.09.1962  
[*British Chess News*]

**1.d4 b5** [Spassky has played this sort of thing.]

**2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Bg5N** [3.Nxb5 Bb7± gives Black some control of e4 for the time being.]

**3...c6 4.Bxf6 gxf6 5.e3 e5 6.Qh5 e4?** [It is not clear what Anton Kinzel had been doing on the night before this game!]

**7.f3 f5 8.fxe4 fxe4??** [Blacks 7th pawn move out of 8 and not a very good one.]

**9.Qe5+** [Ooops !]

**1-0**

He played for the New Zealand team at the 1970 Olympiad at Siegen but returned to the BCF team at Skopje in 1972. His best individual international results were a fifth place at Venice 1950 and

again fifth at the Masters section of the Capablanca Memorial at Cienfuegos in Cuba in 1975. Possessor of a sharp clear-cut style of play, he once drew a match with the West German grandmaster Lothar Schmid with neither side drawing a game, though this was before Schmid received the grandmaster title.

He has done much valuable work in England teaching the young and was responsible for the text of a highly successful television series in 1975. His main books are *Soviet Chess*, London, 1967, *Botvinnik-Bronstein Match 1951* (in co-operation with W. Winter), London, Toronto 1951, *Match Petrosian-Botvinnik*, London, 1963, *Sousse 1967*, *The Chess Player*, Nottingham, 1968.'

From *British Chess* (Pergamon Press, 1983) we have this article from George Botterill - 'In the Birthday Honours list of 1979 Bob Wade was awarded the OBE for his services to chess. Few rewards can have been more thoroughly earned. For some reason, Bob has always been held in



Theodore Tylor vs Bob Wade at Paignton 1953. Bob held TT to a draw to secure first place

greater esteem abroad than in the country for which he has done so much. But they many players who have turned to him for advice or who have simply enjoyed his hospitality, which is always ungrudgingly available to fellow chess players, know the measure of his dedication to the game.

Wade was born in Dunedin, a third generation New Zealander of Scots and English ancestry. He started a career as a civil servant in the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Having won the New Zealand

Championship in 1944 and 1945 he was sent over to participate in the British Championship of 1946. The result was not exactly a success – a mere 3.5 points out of 11. But Bob was not to be disheartened so easily. Feeling he was capable of better things, he took leave of absence in 1947 and did the circuit, such as it then was, of chess tournament in Europe and North America.

When he returned to New Zealand he found that he had been transferred to another department in a civil service reorganisation. The new job was not so congenial. He stuck it out for 6 months – during which time he won the New Zealand Championship for a third time – and then handed in his resignation to take up the precarious life of a chess professional.

Settling in Britain he soon gained the IM title (ed: 1954). But even in those days when still a young man Wade did not concentrate exclusively on his own playing career. In 1949 he went to the FIDE congress and was one of the five people – the others were BH Wood, Ragozin, Zubarev and Rogarde – who collaborated on the writing of the official rules for the game.

He also served as a member of the commission that determined who the original holders of international titles would be. When you consider that Wade was also on the 1950 commission that decided the composition of the World Championship Interzonals, it becomes apparent that this man played a significant part in the shaping the structure of modern international chess.

Although rarely at the top in international tournaments, Wade was always a very dangerous player, capable on his day of beating anybody in the world. He won the British Championship twice at Chester in 1952 and at Coventry in 1970. In recent years Wade has put his main energies into junior training and organisation and also into his work as the editor of Batsford's highly productive and extremely successful series of chess books.

It is hard to say in what department one should place Wade's greatest contributions to British Chess. Living through what is retrospect look to have been the Dark Ages of British chess – the 1950s and 1960s – he has demonstrated that even in a social and cultural environment that made playing chess economically 'impossible' profession to follow it was still possible to dedicate a life to chess, if one had the determination.

During those years he was really the only British Player who regularly active in international tournaments. Since then he has been constantly active as an author, editor and adviser, always working to transform Britain into a country more congenial to good chess. But we suspect that he might regard this role as trainer and coach as the most important thing of all. He is, quite appropriately the British Chess Federation's Chief National Coach. If one had to choose a single best game from Wade's whole tournament career, it would probably be this one –

### (1) Wade, Robert Graham - Uhlmann, Wolfgang [C05]

Skopje/Ohrid Solidarnost-02 Skopje (18), 1968

[George Botterill & British Chess News]

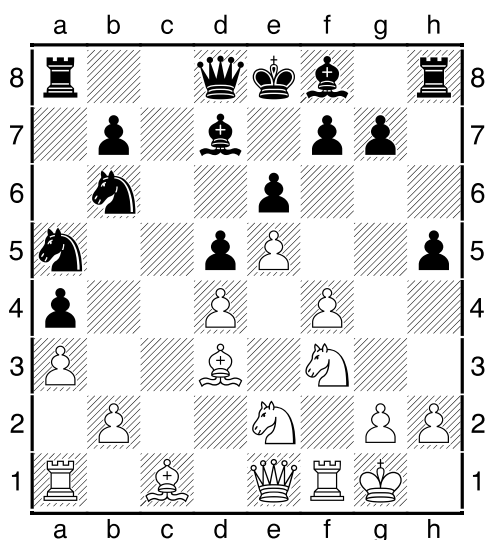
**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4 c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.Ndf3 cxd4** [7...Qb6 In 2020 this is the most popular line 8.g3 cxd4 9.cxd4 Bb4+ 10.Kf2 g5]

**8.cxd4 h5** [again 8...Qb6 9.g3 is more popular]

**9.Bd3 Nb6 10.Ne2 Bd7 11.0–0 a5 12.a3 a4N** [In 1968 this was a novelty.]

[In view of the surprise White has in store at moves 14 and 15, 12...Be7 seems wiser 13.b3 Kf8]

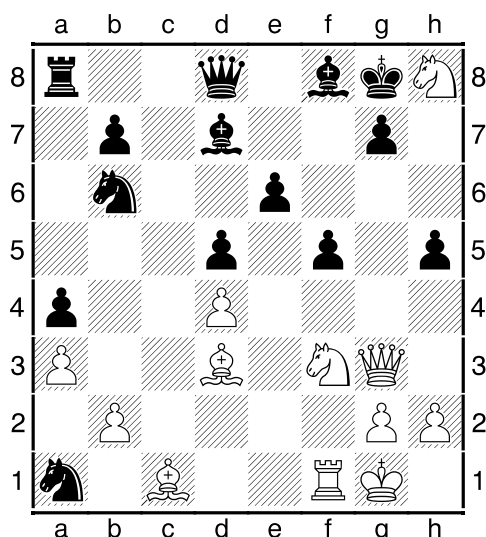
**13.Qe1 Na5?! [**



[Here 13...g6 was necessary, though it was not at all easy to see why!]

**14.f5! exf5 15.e6! fxe6** [No better is 15...Bxe6 16.Nf4 Qd7 17.Bxf5]

**16.Qg3 Kf7 17.Nf4 Kg8 18.Ng6 Nb3 19.Nxh8 Nxc1** [The refutation of 19...Nxa1



is rather droll. after 20.Ng6 Black has no reasonable defence against 21. Qh3 and 22.Qxh5]

**20.Raxc1 Kxh8 21.Ne5 Be8 22.Rc7!** [keeping up the attack.]

**22...h4** [the point is that if 22...Qxc7 23.Ng6+ discovers an attack on the black queen.]

**23.Qf4 g5 24.Ng6+! Kg8** [An unimportant inversion of moves]

[24...Bxg6 25.Qe5+ Kg8 takes us back into the game.]

**25.Qe5 Bxg6 26.Qxe6+ Kh8 27.Rxb7 Qe8 28.Rxb6** [From here on it is not too difficult even against Uhlmann.]

**28...Bg7 29.Qxg6 Qe3+ 30.Kh1 Qxd3 31.Qh5+ Kg8 32.Rd1 Qc2 33.Rb7 Rf8 34.Rxg7+ Kxg7 35.Qxg5+ Kh7 36.Rc1 Re8 37.h3** [and Black resigned] **1-0**

### **Remembering Baruch Harold Wood MSc OBE (13-vii-1909 04-iv-1989)**



Baruch Harold Wood was born on Tuesday, July 13th 1909 in Ecclesall, Sheffield, Yorkshire. The registration district is given as Ecclesall Bierlow. The birth record suggests that he was baptised as Harold Baruch Wood. His mother's name was Herington.

Baruch attended Friars School, Bangor (established in 1557) along with William Ritson Morry. BHW was one year and three months older than WRM so it is entirely possible that they had met.

In October 1936 BHW married Marjory Elizabeth Farrington in Ross, Herefordshire. When Marjory died on 7th September 1977 they were living at 146, Rectory Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands. In the 1984 New Years Honours List, Civil Division, BHW was awarded the OBE. The citation read simply, 'For services to Chess'.

From *The Anglo-Soviet Radio Chess Match* by Klein and Winter -

'BH Wood was born in Sheffield in 1909. A great lover of the game, he founded the magazine Chess in 1935, and has written a book for beginners. He scored a notable success by winning the British Correspondence Championship on one occasion. Wood has competed in the British Championship on several occasions, and in a number of Premier Reserves tournaments. He also played for Great Britain in the international team tournament at Buenos Aires in 1939.

He is a graduate of the University of Wales and Birmingham University. He has been very active in recent years in giving simultaneous exhibitions and in organising correspondence chess.'

Here is an obituary from the BCF Yearbook 1989 – 1990, pages 14 -15

#### B. H. WOOD, O.B.E.

Baruch H. Wood, O.B.E., founder of *CHESS*, and the magazine's editor for 52 years, died at the age of 79 on 4th April.

Born in Sheffield on 13 July 1909, "B.H.", as he was widely known in chess circles, took up the game early playing competitively at school and at University. After graduating from the University College of Wales, Bangor with a 1st class honours degree in Chemistry, he took an MSc at Birmingham University. Soon, however, his love of chess took him away from a career in chemistry, with his launch of *CHESS* in 1935. He was to continue as editor, publisher, for many years printer, and often major contributor, for over half a century.

The magazine quickly won an international reputation for its frankness and outspokenness. It speaks much for the character and determination of its editor that he was able to continue publishing *CHESS* throughout the difficult years of the Second World War, whilst holding a full-time job as director of a chemical research laboratory in Lichfield.

Wood will be best remembered for the magazine, and for his other journalistic activities. He was for many years chess correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* and of *The Illustrated London News*, and his best-known book *Easy Guide to Chess* went through three editions and many impressions. Wood's feat in writing, publishing, printing and selling his own book may be unique. However, Wood was no mean player as his draw against the then world champion Max Euwe, who became a life-long friend, testifies. He represented England in the International Team Championship at Buenos Aires in 1939, scoring 50%. He also took first prize in international tourna-

ments at Baarn 1947, Paignton 1954, Whitby 1963, Thorshavn 1967 and Jersey 1975 and was second in the 1948 British Championship. He was British Correspondence Chess Champion in 1946.

A Life Member of F.I.D.E. Wood was also an International Arbiter, and organised 21 annual chess festivals at seaside venues from the 50's onwards. In addition he was an active behind-the-scenes inspirer of many chess events, and in particular was known as a driving spirit of university chess, being until the time of his death President of the British University Chess Association. He founded the Postal Chess Club and League and was for many years President of the British Postal Chess Federation.

He was awarded the O.B.E. for services to chess in 1984.

His wife, Marjory, predeceased him; he leaves three sons Christopher, Frank and Philip, and a daughter, Peggy.



"B.H." at Bournemouth in May 1971

14

From *The Encyclopedia of Chess* by Harry Golombek -

'A well known British player, editor of Chess (starting 1935) and chess correspondent of The Daily Telegraph and Illustrated London News. A FIDE judge, he has founded and conducted 21 annual chess festivals, notably at Whitby, Eastbourne and Southport.

Winner of a number of small and semi-international tournaments- Baarn 1947, Paignton 1954, Whitby 1963, Thorshavn 1967, and Jersey 1975.

Played for the BCF in the International Team Tournament at Buenos Aires 1939. His best tournament result was probably his equal second in the British Championship at London 1948.



The Cedars Chess Club May 1962 – Baruch is seated, second from the right. Photograph sourced from ECF obituary.

Among his books are *Easy Guide to Chess*, Sutton Coldfield 1942 et seq; *World Championship Candidates Tournament 1953*, Sutton Coldfield 1954.'

From Wikipedia –

Baruch Harold Wood OBE (13 July 1909 – 4 April 1989), generally known as B. H. Wood, was an English chess player, editor and author. He was born in Ecclesall, Sheffield, England.

#### Playing career

Between 1938 and 1957, Wood won the championship of Warwickshire eight times. In 1939 he represented England at the Chess Olympiad in Buenos Aires. He won the tournaments at Baarn (1947), Paignton (1954), Whitby (1963), Tórshavn (1967) and Jersey (1975).[3] He took part in the Gijon International Chess Tournaments of 1947 (5th), 1948 (2th) and 1950 (8th). He tied for 4th–6th, scoring 5 points out of 9 games, at the 1948–49 Hastings Christmas Chess Congress, 1.5 points behind winner Nicolas Rossolimo. In 1948, he tied for second place at the British Chess Championship held in London. He won the British correspondence chess championship in 1944–45.

#### Writings

In 1935, Wood founded the magazine *CHESS*, which became one of the two leading chess magazines in Great Britain. He edited it until 1988, when it was taken over by Pergamon Press. Wood was the chess correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Illustrated London News*. From

1948 to February 1967, he was responsible for the chess column of the Birmingham Daily Post. He also wrote a popular and often reprinted book *Easy Guide to Chess* (Sutton Coldfield 1942), described by Grandmaster Nigel Davies as "one of the best beginners books on the market". His other books include *World Championship Candidates Tournament 1953* (Sutton Coldfield 1954) and *100 Victorian Chess Problems* (1972).

#### Administrative roles

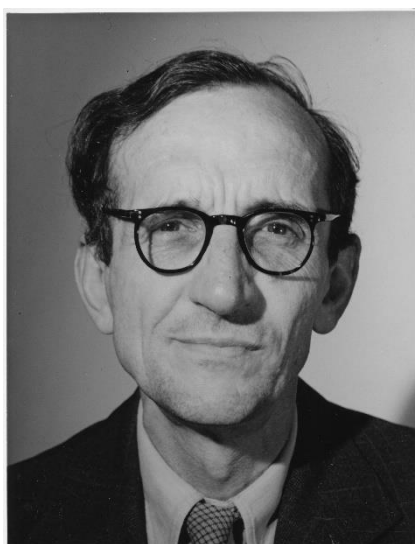
From 1946 to 1951 he was a president of the ICCA, a forerunner organization of the International Correspondence Chess Federation. Wood was a FIDE Judge, an international chess arbiter, and the joint founder of the Sutton Coldfield Chess Club. Wood represented England when it joined FIDE, the world chess federation. He was longtime President of the British Schools Chess Association and also of the British Universities Chess Association.

He won the BCF President's Award in 1983, an OBE in 1984 and he was made a Life Member of FIDE.

### **Remembering Brian Reilly (12-xii-1901 29-xii-1991)**

From *The Encyclopaedia of Chess* (Batsford, 1977), Harry Golombek OBE (written by Wolfgang Heidenfeld) –

'Irish master born at Menton, of Irish descent, who has represented Ireland in nine Olympic team tournaments between 1935 and 1968; three times on top board.



He was also Irish representative at seven FIDE congresses. Reilly played in a number of small international tournaments, winning first prize at Nice 1931 and sharing fourth prize with Klein and EG Sergeant behind Reshevsky, Capablanca and Sir G. Thomas at Margate 1935.

Winner of Irish championship in 1959 and 1960. General Editor of *British Chess Magazine* since 1949.'

His obituary in *British Chess Magazine* was written by Bernard Cafferty and appeared in Volume CXII (112, 1992), Number 2 (February), page 70 -

'With great regret we have to report that Brian Patrick Reilly has, to use the older term, 'joined the great majority'.

B. P. Reilly (Menton, 12 xii 1901-Hastings, 29 xii 1991) was born into an expatriate family on the French Riviera, and so was bilingual. He learned his chess in France where he had many friends and acquaintances. He knew Alekhine in the 1920s and 1930s and was a witness at Alekhine's wedding.

### **(1) Reilly, Brian Patrick - Thomas, George Alan [E95]**

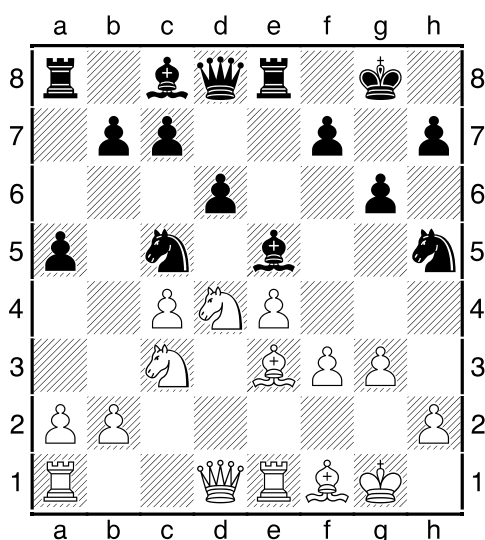
Kent County CA-29 Premier Margate (8), 23.04.1936

[*British Chess News*]

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.Re1 Re8 9.Bf1 exd4 10.Nxd4 Nc5 11.f3 Nh5 [11...a5]

12.Be3 Be5 13.g3 [13.Qd2]

13...a5N

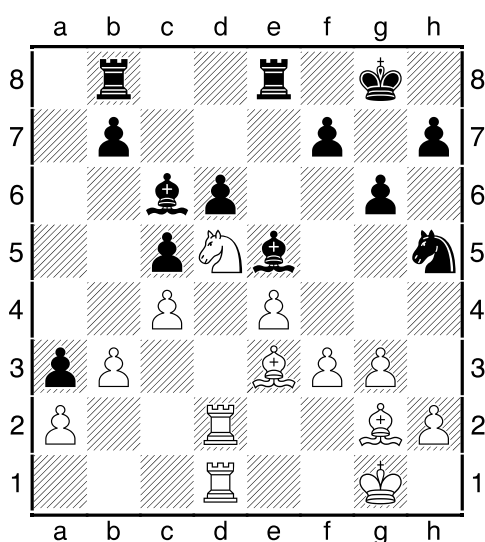


14.Qd2± [Black has yet to equalise and White maintains an edge.]

14...Ne6 15.Nce2 [15.Rad1]

15...Nxd4 16.Nxd4 Bd7 17.Bg2 a4 18.Rac1 c5 19.Ne2 [19.Nb5]

19...a3 20.b3 Bc6 21.Rcd1 Qc7 22.Nc3 Qa5?! 23.Nd5! Qxd2 24.Rxd2 Rab8 25.Red1 [



25...b5? [A natural enough looking move but Sir George has missed something]

26.cxb5 Bxd5 [Black is forced to make this unpalatable exchange.]

[If 26...Bxb5 27.f4 Bb2 28.Nc7+— is the problem for Black 28...Rec8 29.Nxb5 Rxb5 30.Rxd6 and the d-pawn falls.]

27.Rxd5+— [f4 is on the horizon.]

**27...Nf6 28.R5d2 Rxb5 29.Bf1 Rb6 30.Bc4 Rc8 31.Rc2 Kg7 32.Kg2 h6 33.f4± Ng4??** [Sir George blunders]  
[33...Bb2 34.Kf3]

**34.Bg1 Bd4 35.Rxd4!** [and Black resigned since]

**35...cxd4 36.Bxd4+ Kf8 37.Bxb6**

**1–0**

Many years later he was to do extensive research on Alekhine's life, and was the first to establish (though he did not publish the fact) that the Russian did not complete his doctorate studies at the Sorbonne, so that "Dr" Alekhine must be considered a purely honorary title.

Brian won the Nice tournament of 1931, ahead of Notoboom, Mieses, ... Sir George Thomas ... Znosko-Borovsky ... and played for Ireland at the 1935 Olympiad beating Fine. These results, taken with his fourth place at Margate 1935, behind Reshevsky, Capablanca and Sir George Thomas, made it clear that he was of IM strength.

We are grateful to Tony Gillam for providing the following score which has only recently come to light. See Warsaw Olympiad 1935, The Chess Player, Nottingham, 2020.

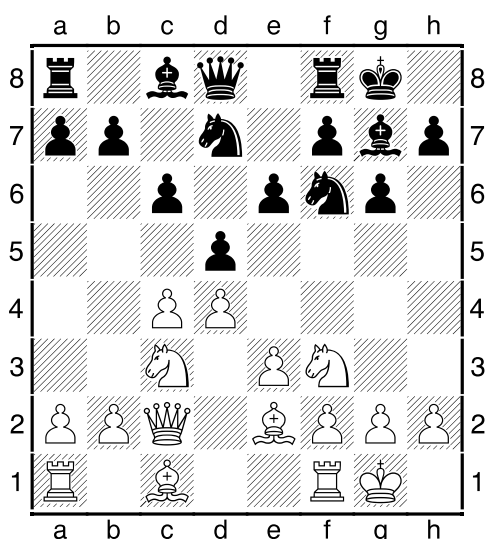
### **(1) Reilly, Brian Patrick - Mikenas, Vladas [D95]**

Warsaw ol (Men) Warsaw (19), 31.08.1935

[*British Chess News*]

**1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 d5 5.e3 0–0 6.Qb3 c6 7.Be2 e6** [7...dxc4 8.Bxc4]

**8.0–0 Nbd7 9.Qc2**



[9.Rd1]

**9...Nb6?!N** [9...b6]

**10.b3 a5 11.Bb2 a4 12.c5 a3 13.Bc1 Nbd7 14.Na4 Qc7 15.Bxa3 Ne4 16.Bb2 f5 17.Nc3 e5 18.Nxe5 Nxe5 19.dxe5 Bxe5 20.f4 Bxc3 21.Bxc3 Nxc3 22.Qxc3 Re8 23.a4 Qe7 24.Rf3 Be6 25.b4 Bd7 26.Ra3+–** [From now on Reilly outplays Mikenas from a better position.]

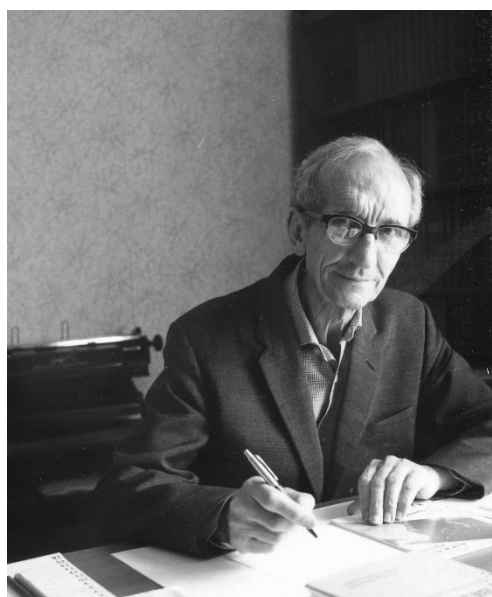
26...Ra7 27.Rf1 Rea8 28.Rfa1 Be8 29.Qd4 h6 30.a5 Bf7 [Blacks bishop is pretty awful !]  
 31.a6 bxa6 32.Rxa6 Rxa6 33.Rxa6 Rxa6 34.Bxa6 Be8 35.Be2 h5 36.Bf3 Bf7 37.g3 Kh7 38.h4 Bg8 39.Kf2  
 Qb7 40.Be2 Bf7 41.Qb2 Be8 42.Qe5 Bf7 43.Qf6 Be8 44.Qd8 Bd7 45.Qa5 Kg7 46.Ba6 Qb8 47.Qb6 Qe8  
 48.Qc7 Kh6 49.Qe5 Qa8 50.Be2 Qc8 51.Qe7 Be8 [Black can do nothing useful apart from resign.]

52.Qf8+ Kh7 53.b5! Qd7 54.b6 [and Black resigned. Source : Reilly's notebook and Tony Gillam.]

1–0

During the war Brian was interned in France as a British citizen, coming close to starvation for a time. He described all this in the very detailed account of his life in the September 1980 BCM, on which we have drawn, along with the many reminiscences Brian passed on to the present writer.

After working for the Sutton Coldfield magazine just after the war (he did not get on well with B. H. Wood, thinking him not very business-like – do we put this too diplomatically?) Brian was a freelance translator in the pharmaceutical industry before taking over BCM in 1949. At the time the magazine was technically bankrupt.



Brian Reilly in the BCM office. Photographed most likely by Freddy Reilly.

In 1964 he moved the office from London to St Leonards, showing his business acumen yet again. He ran the bookstall for many years at the Hastings Congress at the Sun Lounge and the Falaise Hall. After the union troubles of 1970-71 and the Fischer boom he arranged for the magazine to be typeset by his son Freddy at the family home in West Norwood. This led to an expansion in the pagination after some teething troubles.

All this while, Brian was playing for Ireland in Olympiads, and attending to FIDE affairs as a FIDE delegate.

After the death of his son Freddy in 1980, the magazine was sold to the BCF and Brian retired as editor in September 1981, remaining as a consultant for nearly a decade. He won the BCF President's Award in 1983 along with BH Wood.

## (1) Reilly, Brian Patrick - Fine, Reuben [A98]

Olympiad–06 Warsaw (6), 20.08.1935

[johnu]

1.d4 e6 2.Nf3 f5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Be7 5.c4 d6 6.Nc3 0–0 7.0–0 Qe8 8.Qc2 Nbd7 9.e4 Nh5? 10.exf5 exf5  
 11.Re1 Ndf6 [11...Qf7? 12.Ng5]

12.Ng5! c6 13.d5 c5 14.Bd2 Ng4 15.Nb5 Qd8 16.Ne6 Bxe6 17.Rxe6 a6 18.Rae1 Rf7 19.Nc3 Ne5 20.Nd1 f4  
 21.Be4! g6 22.Bc3 Ng7 23.Bxe5! dxe5 24.Nc3 Rf8 25.Rd1 fxg3 26.hxg3 Nxe6 27.dxe6 Qe8 28.Rd7 Bf6  
 29.Bd5! Kh8 30.Ne4 Bg7 [30...Be7 31.Qc3 Bf6 32.Nxf6 Rxf6 33.Qxe5 Qf8 34.Rf7+–]

31.Nd6 Qb8 32.e7! Re8 33.Nf7+ Kg8 34.Nxe5+ Kh8 35.Nf7+ Kg8 36.Nd6+ Kh8 37.Qe4! Bd4 38.Kg2 Bf6  
 39.Qe6 Bxe7 [39...Bg7 40.Qg8+ Rxg8 41.Nf7#]

40.Qe5+

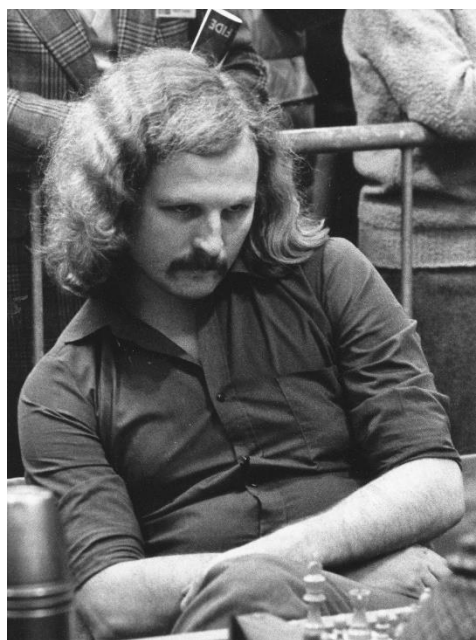
1–0

His last years were spent in Hastings, where it was his wont to carry on with the long sea-front walks that he had practised since a breakdown in health due to overwork. He had strong views on correct diet and exercise which he could expound to anyone willing to listen. The fact that he could walk up to six miles a day in his late eighties and that his faculties, including his memory, only seemed to be weakening in his last two years, is proof enough of the validity of his theories.

On his 90th birthday he attended the office and drank a glass of champagne to celebrate the occasion. We have the testimony of Mrs Arnold, who worked with him so long, that he was still talking of visiting the Hastings Congress. This was on Boxing Day, the day after he had been admitted to St Helen's Hospital with a chest infection. He assured her he would be up and about again, but old friends such as Harry Golombek and Ritson Morry waited for him in vain as Hastings got under way ...

BCM readers, too, must be counted amongst his old friends who will miss him. They should be aware that, but for Brian, and his decades of hard work, there would now be no BCM.'

### **It's Only Me! Remembering Tony Miles (23-iv-1955 12-xi-2001)**



From *British Chess* (Pergamon Press, 1983) by Bernard Cafferty -

'If one had to forecast at the start of the 1970s the British chess would have a player in the next decade who would win the World Junior Championship, make plus score against Soviet players in his first years of play against them, and beat such household names as Geller, Bronstein, Larsen, Gligoric, Smyslov, Spassky and Karpov...one would have been called a romantic dreamer. If one had gone further and said that the same grandmaster X would become only the second British player this century to beat a reigning world champion, and that as Black in an irregular opening (1 e4 a6 2 d4 b5) then incredulity would indeed have been a fitting reaction. Yet all this has come to pass; all the above is fact not fiction, reality not a daydream. Who is grandmaster X? Where did he develop?

Anthony John Miles was born on the 23rd April, 1955, in Birmingham (his birthplace is incorrectly marked (Ed: as London) on the map in Elo's book on ratings.) He learned the moves at the age of five, became seriously interested in the game at the age of nine or ten, and almost straight away won the Birmingham Primary Schools Championship.

In 1965 he joined the Birmingham Chess club, and the following year became a pupil at King Edward School (KES) (the alma mater of other strong British players, such as Hugh Alexander and Malcolm Barker, runner-up to Ivkov in the inaugural World Junior Championship held at Birmingham in 1951). At the Birmingham Club he met strong opposition (another grandmaster-to-be, the postal player Keith Richardson was a member there for a time) since the club's four teams were all in the higher divisions of the local league. Yet Tony's schoolwork meant that he could not

be called a frequent attender at the club – he turned up for league matches and the club championship, but rarely for skittles except in the summer.

Soon he was playing in the Second Division, by 1968 he was in the First Division, and in the 1969-70 season he was on top board for one of the Club's three teams in the top Division. Tony made his debut in the BCF Congress at Oxford, 1967, where he was equal 11th in the under-14 Boys Championship won by another rising star, John Nunn. Strangely enough when Tony won this title the following year at Bristol Nunn was 3rd equal!

The Edgbaston player was also a regular competitor in the annual Easter Congress held in the same suburb of Birmingham where he lived. The breakthrough to national status came when he was a sixth-former at KES. At the BCF Congress, Blackpool, 1971, he won the under-21 Championship (with Nunn and Jon Speelman equal 2nd and the same year made his international debut in a junior tournament at Nice which he won ahead of various prominent players including the Swiss Hug who was to win the World Junior championship some 4 months later! In the 1971-72 Birmingham and District League season he set up a scoring record, mainly on top board, that may never be equalled (9.5 out of 10).



During these school years Tony was a rather taciturn teenager (perhaps to be expected in an only child) but he never fitted in with the conventional image of chessplayer as weedy bookworm. He always had a fine physique, played rugger at school, and later became keen on squash and skiing as a means of keeping fit, though he is the first to admit that he can be rather lethargic (especially in the mornings!). At the time I knew one of his teachers professionally and heard the occasional report that he was not always up to the best academic standards of KES. My reaction must have seemed heresy at the time,

but subsequent events in the post-Fischer era have confirmed that the ability to play chess to international standard may lead to a more worthwhile career than being a run-of-the-mill university graduate.

A sign of Tony's growing understanding of the finer points of the game came when he strolled into the Birmingham Club the day after the first game of the Spassky-Fischer match and pointed out (correctly as was shown later) the reason why Fischer had made his famous Bxh2 sacrifice / oversight.

International recognition came in 1973 when he finished 2nd to Romanishin in the European Junior Championship at Groningen, and Second to Belyavsky in the World Junior at Teeside, as well as sharing 4-6th place in the British Championship at Eastbourne at only the second attempt. His first game to be published round the world was his victory over Bisguier in the Birmingham Easter tournament which he won ahead of Adorjan and Bisguier in the same year. The main event of 1974, a break-through for British chess, was the World Junior Championship played in August in sub-tropical Manila. Here he played one of his finest games, against Kochiev, to take the title with a round to spare, thereby becoming International Master. Tony's physical strength showed up to good effect here, not just lasting out the 4 weeks in the baking humidity but coping with the huge load of luggage (on the outward journey huge cases full of Chess Player, Informator and the like; on the return journey this load reinforced with prizes and souvenirs!).

Gaining the title brought regular invitations to tournaments which could not be fitted in well with the demands of his maths course at Sheffield University. In the summer of 1975, he gave up the course after two years, while the University authorities showed their recognition of his distinction at chess by the award of an honorary MA degree. Once free to concentrate wholeheartedly on his true calling he took the grandmaster title in a rush. The first norm came with first prize, August, 1975, at the London Chess Fortnight ahead of Adorjan, Sax and Timman. Hastings 1975-76 was not too good a result, but only a few weeks later he was on his way to a great triumph despite forced late acceptance of the invitation to the USSR due to lack of finance. He got his visa just in time and went to snowy Dubna, a scientific centre near Moscow, to achieve that most difficult feat – a GM norm in a Soviet tournament ahead of eight GM's and others just as strong.

Thus, Tony Miles became the first official British grandmaster (the title dates officially only from 1949, so excluding the likes of Staunton, Blackburne and Burn) and took the £5000 Slater prize for the first British GM to add to the £1000 prize for victory in the 1975 Cutty Sark series of weekend and other tournaments. The availability of sponsorship, it goes without saying, has done much to encourage Tony on his chosen path as a chess professional, a far from easy vocation that demands will-power and strong nerves to be successful. 1977 confirmed that here was a genuine grandmaster with first prizes at the Amsterdam IBM and Biel tournaments, and second prize behind Karpov at the first of the new series of Super grandmaster tournaments (Tilburg, Holland.)

After his promotion to the ranks of grandmaster Tony, with his usual directness, said that the only thing left to achieve was to have a crack at Karpov. (His fans might react by saying that there were other mountains to climb such as first place at Hastings and in the British Championship, but then Karpov has not achieved the first either, and only became Soviet Champion after he had taken the world title!). The first chance for this 'crack' came with their meeting in the super tournaments at Tilburg and Bugojno, as well as in the 1977 BBC2 TV Master Game. The results went much in favour of the (slightly) older man. Tony had to wait till January 1980 before he could celebrate a victory over Fischer's successor. By this time Tony had failed in his first bid to get to a title match with the Russian when he fell away after a good start in the 1979 Riga Interzonal (the second stage of the three-part qualifying cycle). It is a pity that our leading professional in Britain still has to accept so many invitations merely to make a decent living. As Botvinnik has commented, some properly directed study and training at home may be preferable to too frequent public appearances at the board.

What sort of person and player is Tony Miles? He has become a more outgoing person in recent years and has even overcome his legitimate aversion to media representatives who attempt to interview him without any background in the game. His style has also gone through various changes. At first, he was purely a 1 e4 player with a penchant for tricky Nc6 variations of the Four Knights. This repertoire brought him a string of wins, but once he began meeting masters regularly he had to change his repertoire to include the flank openings and 1 d4 as well as the Sicilian Defence. Some notable contributions to opening theory include Bf4 against the Queen's Indian, the defence 1...b6, perhaps now 1...a6. Yet his real strength is not in the openings, and he rarely scores quick knockouts. His strength lies in the ability to play a wide variety of positions, to have the patience to play on when there is nothing special in the position and then to recognize the crisis (sometimes more psychological than positional). At this point his fitness and energy tell. It is

significant that one of his best wins in the Dubna tournament came in a queen and pawn ending that demanded great patience and technical ability.

As readers of his weekly column will know he loves to analyse ever more deeply and seems happier here than in taking intuitive decisions. In the play of the first British grandmaster, we see a confirmation of the fact that modern competitive chess is more of a sport (Denksport as the Germans have it) than an art, more a bitter struggle of strong personalities than an orthodox game.'

From *The Oxford Companion to Chess*, (OUP, 1984 & 1994), Hooper & Whyld -

'English-born player, International Grandmaster (1976). While an undergraduate he entered and won by a margin of one and a half points the World Junior Championship, Manila 1974. The following year his university, Sheffield, awarded him an honorary MA degree for his chess achievements, and he left without completing his studies, to become a chess professional. The successes came quickly; London 1975, first (+6=3-1); Amsterdam 1976, first equal with Korchnoi; Amsterdam 1977, first (+7=7-1); Biel 1977, first (+8=6-1); Tilburg 1977, second (+5=4-2), after Karpov, ahead of Hort and Hübner; Tilburg 1978, third (+4=4-3) equal with Dzindzichashvili and Hübner, after Portisch and Timman; London 1980, first (+6=5-2) equal with Andersson and Korchnoi; Las Palmas 1980, first (+6=5) equal with Geller and Petrosian; Baden-Baden 1981, first (+6=7) equal with Ribli, ahead of Korchnoi; Porz Koln 1981-2, second (+8=1-2), behind Tal, ahead of Hort; Biel 1983, first (+5=6), shared with Nunn; Tilburg 1984, first (+5=6), ahead of Belyavsky, Ribli, and Hübner; Portoroz-Ljubljana 1985, first (+4=6-1) equal with Portisch and Ribli; and Tilburg 1985, first (+6=5-3) equal with Hübner and Korchnoi.

Around this time Miles began to feel the strain of ten years at the top. He was the first British player of modern times who could be seen as a possible challenger for the world title, and in the late 1970s he was well clear of his British rivals. However, largely inspired by Miles's success, a new generation, led by Short, was in pursuit, and by the mid 1980s Miles was no longer top board in the Olympiad side. Successes became fewer, his marriage ended, and his confidence was weakened. Determined to make a new start, he transferred his allegiance to the USA in 1987, and immediately shared first place with Gulko, who won the play-off, in the US Open Championship.

The move was not a lasting success. Miles had indifferent results and was not selected for the US Olympiad team in 1988. He had maintained a home in Germany and commuted to play in the Bundesliga and by 1990 he was spending an increasing proportion of his time in Europe. His confidence began to return, and with it more victories. He was first in two Swiss system events, Rome 1990, ahead of Barayev, Chernin, Smyslov etc, and Bad Worishofen 1990 (shared), and at Biel 1990 was equal third (+3=9-2) after Karpov and Andersson.'

### **(1) Anthony Miles - Boris Spassky [E12]**

Montilla Moriles Montilla Moriles (2), 1978

**1.d4** [Notes by Raymond Keene, with excerpts from Jan Timman, and Tony Miles. \*\*\* It was Boris Spassky who was partly responsible for the generally awakened interest in chess after 1972. This, of course, was a consequence of his sensational world title fight with Fischer. Six years later, the ex-world champion was to lose a brilliant game to one of the young men who had been inspired by the contest in Reykjavik. This great game was played at Montilla, the so-called 'Wine Tournament' (Torneo del Vino), August 15–24, 1978. In spite of his setback here, Spassky still won first prize with 6 1/2 out of 9, ahead of Miles, Gligoric and Hort on 6. At his best, Miles' style exhibited a broad penchant for attack. A tip-top Miles game always seemed to show him having unlimited reserves ready to throw into the offensive, however many exchanges had taken place beforehand. The following beautiful game against a former world champion is, in my opinion, his best. It demonstrates clearly

not only Miles' quality of imagination but also the relentless formation of Tsunami, or attacking waves, which so magically appeared in his best games.]

**1...Nf6 2.Nf3 b6 3.c4 e6 4.Bf4** ["My latest anti-Nimzo-Indian variation. It has the merit of being completely untried at master level (consequently unanalysed) and having played it all of three times, I am now undoubtedly the world's leading authority on it. Indeed, after one or two more it will probably be named after me!" -- Tony Miles. "Miles had a patent on this system against the Queen's Indian." -- Timman]

**4...Bb7 5.e3 Be7** ["According to Chess Encyclopaedia 5...Ne4 is good for Black. I, of course, disagree as, it seems, do my opponents." -- Miles. "Spasky goes for a passive set-up, allowing White to get a clear opening advantage." -- Timman]

**6.h3** ["6 Nc3 Nh5! gives Black less trouble, otherwise Black might get the bishop pair." -- Timman]

**6...0-0 7.Nc3 d5 8.cxd5 exd5** ["8...Nxd5 9 Nxd5 Bxd5 10 Bd3 is slightly better for White, as in Browne-Miles, Amsterdam 1978. It was probably better to swap a couple of knights, but even then Black would feel the pressure." -- Timman.]

**9.Bd3 c5 10.0-0 Nc6** [The stage is set. White has prospects against Black's kingside, while Spassky has chances on the other side of the board.]

**11.Ne5 c4** [!? "11...cxd4 12 Nxc6 Bxc6 13 exd4+=" -- Miles]

**12.Bc2 a6 13.g4** [The signal for the attack. -- Timman]

**13...b5 14.g5 Ne8** [In the diagram, White has already burned his boats. Black has a dangerous queenside pawn majority and, by advancing his g-pawn, White has weakened his kingside. White has apparently staked all on attacking Black's king, rendered somewhat exposed by the forced retreat of the knight from f6 How should White pursue the attack? 15 Qh5 allows Black to play ...g6 (a move he intends to play anyway) with gain of tempo. The obvious attacking try is 15 Bxh7+ Kxh7 16 Qh5+ Kg8 17 g6 fxg6 (17...Nf6 18 gxf7+) 18 Nxc6 but Black can then defend satisfactorily by 18...Rf6 when 19 Nxd5 loses to 19...Rxc6+; 18...Nf6 19 Qh8+ Kf7 20 Nxf8 Qxf8 is also not bad for Black. So Miles played 15 Qg4, a multi-purpose move, transferring the queen to the kingside, defending the pawn on g5, vacating d1 for a rook and eyeing d7.]

**15.Qg4 g6 16.Rad1** ["White prepares his assault with natural developing moves. The black counter-offensive on the queenside makes little difference." -- Timman]

**16...Ng7 17.h4 Bb4** [? Up to this point, the game had been fairly balanced, with White's kingside attack countered by defence in depth plus a black queenside pawn majority. But now Spassky removes a key defensive piece, clearly miscalculating the tactics that follow. Probably best is 17...b4 18 Ne2 f6.]

**18.Nd7** [! "Already the final blow. But it needed accurate calculation."--Timman]

**18...Bc8** ["Forced. 18...Bxc3 19 Nf6+ Kh8 20 bxc3 followed by h5 is hopeless for Black. 18...f5 19 gxf6±" -- Miles]

**19.Nxd5** ["19 Nf6+? Qxf6 20 Qxc8 Qe6!="+ -- Miles]

**19...Kh8** ["If 19...Bxd7 not 20 Nf6+, which is refuted by 20...Qxf6!, when White's queen would be hanging. Stronger would be 20 Qxd7 Qxd7 21 Nf6+" -- Miles. This game is replete with such delicate tactics.]

**20.N5f6 Ra7** [Best. If 20...Be7 21 Be4 or 20...Ne8 21 Be5. Now White must lose the knight on d7, but his attack becomes decisive.]

**21.d5** [Now the point of move 16 is revealed." -- Timman]

**21...Ne7** [If 21...Na5 22 h5! Rxd7 23 Qh4 gxh5 24 Be5 Re7 [24...Qe7 25 Qe4] 25 Bd4!+ -- Miles]

**22.Be5** [! Now 22 h5 is not so clear, e.g. 22...Bxd7 23 Qh4 gxh5 with ...Ng6 to follow. With the point that 22...Bxd7 fails to 23 Qd4" -- Timman]

**22...Rxd7** [Not 22...Bxd7 23 Qd4!]

**23.h5** [! "23 Qd4? Nc6! or 23 Nxd7? Qxd7 and ...Qg4+. The attack is still rolling along but it still requires accurate calculation." -- Timman. Despite exchanges the attack steadily mounts.]

**23...Rxd5** ["23...Rb7 24 Qf4+" -- Miles]

**24.Qf4** [! The best square for the queen.]

**24...Rxd1 25.Rxd1 Qa5** [Though a piece ahead, Black is lost. The more natural 25...Qb6 allows 26h6 when the attacked knight cannot move because of Nd5+.]

**26.Ne8** [! The death blow.]

**26...f6** [Or if 26...Rxe8 27 Qf6 Rg8 (27...Nef5 28 Bxf5 Rxe5 29 h6 Bf8 30 hxg7+ Bxg7 31 Rd8++) 28 h6 mates quickly: 28...Nef5 29 Bxf5 Bf8 30 Bxc8+.]

**27.gxf6 Kg8** [If 27...Nxe8 28 f7+ or 27...Rxe8 28 f7! Rf8 29 h6 Nef5 30 Qxf5 Bxf5 31 hxg7#]

**28.Nxg7** [If 28...Nc6 29 hxg6 soon forces mate. "And Black resigned, crushed. A magnificent attacking win, all the more considering that Spassky, together with Karpov, had won the first Bugojno tournament earlier that year"--Timman. Many players would find Miles' 18th or 19th moves more impressive than his fifteenth. But these moves were susceptible to precise calculation, whereas 15 Qg4 was not. 15 Qg4 stands out as a star move, because White displayed good judgement in rejecting the tempting 15 Bxh7+ and correctly chose to pursue the attack by slower means. I think this is Miles' best game.]

**1-0**

### **(1) Miles, Anthony John (2630) - Tukmakov, Vladimir B (2580) [E12]**

Biel SKA Biel (8), 30.07.1996

[Miles,A]

**1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 b6 3.Nc3 Bb7 4.d4 e6 5.a3 g6!? 6.g3 Bg7** [6...Bxf3!?]

**7.Bg2 Ne4** [7...0-0 8.0-0 Ne4 9.Nxe4 Bxe4 10.Bg5 Δ Qd2±]

**8.Nxe4 Bxe4 9.Bg5!?** [9.0-0]

**9...Qc8 10.Qd2 h6 11.Be3 Nc6** [Δ Nc6-e7-f5]

**12.Rc1** [12.d5 Na5!]

**12...Ne7 13.g4!? Qb7 14.h3 f5?** [14...0-0-0! Δ g5,f5 /ṛ]

**15.g5! h5** [15...hxg5 16.Bxg5 Nc6 17.d5!↑]

**16.0-0 d6** [Δ 17...e5]

**17.Nh4!** [x g6]

**17...Bxg2 18.Nxg2 e5 19.f4!** [±/±]

**19...exd4 20.Bxd4 Bxd4+ 21.Qxd4 0-0-0 22.Rf3!** [Δ 23.Re3]

**22...c5 23.Qf6 Rhf8 24.Qe6+ Qd7 25.Qxd7+ Rxd7** [25...Kxd7]

**26.Nh4!±** [× g6]

**26...Rg8 27.Re3! d5 28.Re6! dxc4 29.Rxc4 Rd1+ 30.Kf2 Kd7 31.Rf6! Rd6 32.Rf7! Ke6 33.Rh7 Nc6 34.Rc3!**

[Δ 35. Re3]

**34...Rd4 35.Re3+ Kd6 36.Kg3 Rd2 37.Rf7+— Nd4 38.Rf6+ [38.Kf2+—]**

**38...Kd7 39.Nxg6 [39.Rf7+ Δ 40.Kf2]**

**39...Nxe2+ 40.Kh4 Rxg6 41.Rxg6 Nxf4 42.Rg7+ Kd6 43.Rf3 Rd4 44.Rxf4! Rxf4+ 45.Kxh5+— Rf2 46.Rf7?**  
[46.Rxa7+—]

**46...Rxb2 47.Rxf5 c4 48.h4! c3 49.Rf3 c2 50.Rc3 Kd5 51.Kh6?** [51.Kg6!; 51.g6? Kd4 52.Rc8 Rb5+ Δ 53...Rc5]

**51...Kd4 52.Rc8 Kd3 53.g6 Rb1?? [53...Rb3=]**

**54.g7 Rg1 55.h5 b5 56.Kh7 a5 57.g8Q Rxg8 58.Kxg8 b4 59.h6 b3 60.h7 b2 61.h8Q c1Q 62.Qh7+ Kd4**  
**63.Qg7+ Kd3 64.Qg6+ Kd4 65.Qf6+ Kd3 66.Qf5+ Kd4 67.Rd8+**

**1–0**

### **(1) Karpov, Anatoly (2725) - Miles, Anthony John (2545) [B00]**

EU Team-ch07 Final Skara (1.1), 20.01.1980

[Knaak,R]

Karpov completely dominated the chess world around 1980. Miles had the bad luck to almost always get the Black pieces against the world champion, since he was terrifying with White, while sometimes willing to go along with a quick draw as Black. As a result the English player's personal score in his games against Karpov was catastrophic. But just this once everything was different.....

**1.e4 a6!** [ An interesting choice psychologically. Everything other than a victory is a failure in Karpov's eyes. Of course a trick like this only works once.

**2.d4 b5 3.Nf3 Bb7 4.Bd3 Nf6 [Δ4...e6]**

**5.Qe2 [5.e5 Nd5 6.Ng5!? Δ→]**

**5...e6 6.a4 c5 [6...b4 (Miles)]**

**7.dxc5 [7.e5 c4∞ (Miles); 7.c3 c4 8.Bc2 d5 Δb4→« (Miles)]**

**7...Bxc5 8.Nbd2 b4 9.e5 Nd5 10.Ne4 Be7 11.0–0?! A solid move, but he overlooks an opportunity.**

[Δ11.Bg5.] and White gets a clear advantage.

**11...Nc6 12.Bd2 [12.Bg5 f6! ΔQc7,0–0–0 ↑]**

**12...Qc7 13.c4 [13.Ng3 h5!?]**

**13...bxc3 14.Nxc3 Nxc3 15.Bxc3 Nb4!** According to Miles with equality. But perhaps this evaluation isn't correct and White still has the advantage.

**16.Bxb4 Bxb4 17.Rac1 Qb6 18.Be4 [18.Ng5!? Be7 19.Qh5 (19.Nxh7 g6 20.Nf6+ Bxf6 21.exf6 Qd4?) 19...Bxg5**  
**20.Qxg5 0–0∞ (Miles)]**

**18...0–0 19.Ng5** Overlooks the opportunity of a bishop sacrifice on h7. If Karpov wanted to play for a win (which can be assumed) this was definitely the better continuation compared with the move in the game. Proving the sacrifice's accuracy with the help of a computer is admittedly a quite different matter than playing it at the board.

[19.Bxh7+! certainly offers good chances: 19...Kxh7 20.Ng5+ Kg6! 21.Qg4 More complicated is 21...f5! (21...f6? !? (Miles) but 22.Nxe6+ Kf7 23.Nxf8 Kxf8 (23...Bxf8 24.Qxd7+ Kg8 25.e6+—) 24.exf6 gxf6 25.Qxd7 Rd8 26.Qh7 and White should win.) 22.Qg3 Qd4! ♣ (Miles), but that isn't right: (22...Rg8 23.Rc7! (Fritz) 23...Bc6! (23...Rae8 24.Nxe6+ Kf7 25.Ng5+ Ke7 26.e6+—) 24.Nxe6+ Kf7 25.Qb3! Ke8 (25...Rgf8 26.Rd1 Ke7 27.Rxc6 Qxc6

(27...dxc6 28.Nf4+—) 28.Qxb4++—) 26.Rc1 Ba5 27.Qd1 dxe6 (27...Qxc7 28.Nxc7+ Bxc7 29.e6+—) 28.R7xc6±) 23.h3!

**a)** 23.Nxe6+ Qg4 24.Nxf8+ Bxf8 25.Qxg4+ fxg4 26.Rfd1=;

**b)** 23.Rc7 Bc6 24.h3 Qxb2! (24...f4? 25.Qg4 Kh6 26.Qh4+ Kg6 27.Rxc6 dxc6 28.Qh7+ Kxg5 29.h4+ Kg4 30.Qg6+ Kxh4 31.Kh2+—) 25.Nxe6+ Kf7∞;

23...Kh5! (23...f4? 24.Qg4 Kh6 25.Rfd1 Qxe5 26.Qh4+ Kg6 27.Rxd7! Rh8 28.Nf7+—) 24.Nh7! (24.Rc7 Bd5 25.Nh7 Be7 26.Rxd7 (26.Nxf8 Bxf8 27.Rxd7 Qh4!) 26...Bh4 (26...Rh8 27.Rxe7 Rxh7 28.Rxg7 Rxg7 29.Qxg7 Ra7=) 27.Qxg7 Rg8 28.Nf6+ Bxf6 29.Qh7+ Kg5 30.exf6 Kxf6=) 24...Be7 (24...Bd2?! 25.Rfd1 Qf4 26.Qxg7 Bxc1 27.Nxf8 Rxf8 28.Qxf8 Bc6 29.Qf7+ Kh6 30.Rd3±) 25.Rcd1 Qxa4 (25...Qh4 26.Qxg7 Rg8 27.Nf6+ Bxf6 28.Qh7+ Kg5 29.f4+—) 26.Qxg7 Rg8 27.Nf6+ Bxf6 28.Qh7+ Kg5 29.f4+ Qxf4 30.Rxf4 Kxf4 31.exf6 (31.Qxd7 Rxg2+ 32.Kf1 Rg1+ 33.Kxg1 Rg8+ 34.Kf1 Bg2+ 35.Ke1 Bh4+—) 31...Rxg2+ 32.Kf1 Be4 Now Black threatens 33...Rh2 and 33...Rag8. 33.Rd2!? Rxd2 34.Qh6+ Ke5 35.Qxd2 Kxf6 36.Qxd7 White can play for a win without any risks.]

**19...h6 20.Bh7+?! It's** probably just at this point that Karpov, entirely uncharacteristically, loses his sense of danger – maybe because of Black's provocative opening.

[ After 20.Bxb7 Qxb7 21.Qe4 Qxe4 22.Nxe4 a fully equal endgame arises.]

**20...Kh8 21.Bb1?! [21.Be4]**

**21...Be7 22.Ne4 [22.Qd3 g6̄ (Miles)]**

**22...Rac8** Banks a pawn, since compensation through possible threats on the b1-h7 diagonal doesn't arise.

**23.Qd3?** After 23.Rcd1 Black has a small advantage.

**23...Rxc1 24.Rxc1 Qxb2 25.Re1?! [ Better 25.Rd1!? g6 26.Nd6]**

**25...Qxe5—+ 26.Qxd7 Bb4!** Strongest, but 26...Rb8 was also possible because of White's lack of breathing space.

**27.Re3 Qd5 28.Qxd5 Bxd5** The rest is a matter of technique, even Karpov can't do anything against a pair of bishops and an extra pawn.

**29.Nc3 Rc8 30.Ne2 g5 31.h4 Kg7 32.hxg5 hxg5 33.Bd3 a5 34.Rg3 Kf6 35.Rg4 Bd6 36.Kf1 Be5 37.Ke1 Rh8 38.f4 gxf4 39.Nxf4 Bc6 40.Ne2 Rh1+ 41.Kd2 Rh2 42.g3 Bf3 43.Rg8 Rg2 44.Ke1 Bxe2 45.Bxe2 Rxg3 46.Ra8 Bc7**

**0–1**

From Wikipedia ...

Personal life –

Miles was an only child, born 23 April 1955 in Edgbaston, a suburb of Birmingham, and attended King Edward's School, Birmingham. He was married and divorced twice, and had no children. Miles' first wife was Jana Hartston, who had previously been married to William Hartston.

Early achievements in chess -

He learned the game of chess early in life and made good progress nationally, taking the titles of British under-14 Champion and under-21 Champion in 1968 and 1971, respectively. In 1973, Miles won the silver medal at the World Junior Chess Championship at Teesside, his first important event against international competition. Both he and compatriot Michael Stean defeated the tournament winner Alexander Beliavsky, but were unable to match the Soviet player's ruthlessness in dispatching lesser opponents. Miles went on to win this prestigious title the following year in

Manila, while a mathematics undergraduate of the University of Sheffield.

Taking the decision to pursue the game professionally, Miles did not complete his studies, but, in 1975, was awarded an MA by the University in respect of his chess achievements.

Further career highlights -

In 1976, Miles became the first UK-born, over-the-board chess grandmaster, narrowly beating Raymond Keene to the accolade. The naturalised, German-born Jacques Mieses was awarded the GM title in 1950, while Keith Bevan Richardson had been awarded the GM title for correspondence chess earlier in 1975. For his achievement, Miles won a £5,000 prize, put up by wealthy businessman and chess backer Jim Slater. Miles had a string of good results in the late 1970s and 1980s. He matured into a world class player and won games against high calibre opponents, such as former World Chess Champions Vasily Smyslov, Mikhail Tal and Boris Spassky.

In 1980 at the European Team Championship in Skara, he beat reigning World Champion Anatoly Karpov with Black, using the extremely unorthodox opening 1. e4 a6!?, the St. George Defence. It is often said that Miles learned the line from offbeat openings enthusiast Michael Basman, but in his book *Play the St. George*, Basman asserts there is no truth to this. Miles beat Karpov again three years later in Bath in a game that was part of the BBC's Master Game series, but it was shown only by the (co-producing) German television network, due to a BBC technicians' strike at the time of broadcast.

Miles won the British Championship just once, in 1982 when the event was held in Torquay. His prime time as a chess player was the mid-1980s. On 20 May 1984 in Roetgen (Germany), Miles set a European record in blind simultaneous chess with 22 games (+10–2=10); this record was not broken until 2009. On the January 1984 Elo rating list, he ranked No. 18 in the world with a rating of 2599. One of his best results occurred at the Tilburg tournament in 1984, where, from a strong field, he emerged sole winner by a clear margin of one and one-half points. The following year, he tied for first at the same event with Robert Hübner and Viktor Korchnoi, playing several of his games while lying face down on a table, having injured his back. The result was controversial, as many of Miles' opponents felt they were distracted by the unusual circumstances. A string of good performances culminated in a good showing on the January 1986 Elo rating list, where he climbed to a best-ever position of World No. 9 with a rating of 2610.



Tony Miles at Tilburg 1985

opponents felt they were distracted by the unusual circumstances. A string of good performances culminated in a good showing on the January 1986 Elo rating list, where he climbed to a best-ever position of World No. 9 with a rating of 2610.

During this period, there was considerable rivalry with Nunn over who was the United Kingdom's best player, the two protagonists regularly leapfrogging each other in the world rankings. Nigel Short and Speelman soon added to the competition, as the English national squad entered its strongest period.

Never able to qualify out of the Interzonal stages into the Candidates' series, Miles eventually lost the race to become the first British Candidate when Short did so in 1985. However, he retained top board for England at the Thessaloniki and Dubai Olympiads of 1984 and 1986, helping the team to silver medals at each.

Against Garry Kasparov, Miles had little success, not winning a game against him, and losing a 1986 match in Basel by the score of 5½–½. Following this encounter, Miles commented "I thought I was

playing the world champion, not a monster with a thousand eyes who sees everything” (some sources alternatively quote Miles as having the opinion that Kasparov had 22 or 27 eyes). After he was hospitalised because of a mental breakdown in late 1987, Miles moved to the United States. He finished last in the 1988 U.S. Championship, but continued to play there and had some good results. In 1991, he played in the Championship of Australia, but eventually moved back to England and began to represent his native country again. He was equal first at the very strong Cappelle-la-Grande Open in 1994, 1995, and 1997, and caused a shock at the PCA Intel Rapid Chess Grand Prix in London in 1995, when he knocked out Vladimir Kramnik in the first round and Loek van Wely in the second. His bid to win the event was finally halted in the semifinal by English teammate Michael Adams.

There were four notable victories at the Capablanca Memorial in Cuba (1994, 1995, 1996, and 1999). Miles also tied for first in the 1999 Continental Open in Los Angeles with Alexander Beliavsky, Ľubomír Ftáčnik and Suat Atalık. His last tournament victory was the 2001 Canadian Open Chess Championship in Sackville, New Brunswick.

Miles entered and played at the 2001 British Championship in Scarborough, but withdrew before the final round, apparently because of ill health. His final two games before his death were short draws in the Four Nations Chess League. Miles played in an extraordinary number of chess events during his career, including many arduous weekend tournaments. The Miles Variation (1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.Bf4) in the Queen’s Indian Defence is named after him.



Tony receives the 1984 Leigh Grand Prix award from Dr. A Kent, Malcolm Wood (Chief Executive) and David Anderton OBE

## Remembering Fred Dewhirst Yates (16-i-1884 11-xi-1932)



Fred Yates passed (or, at least was recorded as passing) on Friday, November 11th, 1932.

Fred (not Frederick) Dewhirst (not Dewhurst) Yates was born in Birstall, Leeds on Wednesday, January 16th 1884, the same year as Harry S Truman and Eleanor Roosevelt.

An obituary appeared in Volume LII (52, 1932), Number 12 (December), pp.525-528 of the *British Chess Magazine* by PW Sergeant -

'The chess world has had many heavy bereavements during the year which is coming to an end; but to the British section of it there has been no bereavement like the last, which robbed it of F.D.Yates, when still in the prime of his chess career. The circumstances of his end were tragic. On the night of Tuesday, November 8th, he gave a very successful exhibition at Wood Green, only dropping one half-point in 16 games. On the following night he was in the company of a

chess friend until fairly late, and then went back to his room in Coram Street, Bloomsbury. He was never seen alive again. It was not until Friday morning that anxiety was felt at Coram Street as to what he might be doing; for he was in the habit of secluding himself for many hours at a stretch when busy with work.

On Friday, however, when no answer could be got to knocks on the door of his room, which was locked, and a smell of gas was noticed, the door was at last broken open, and he was found dead in bed.

It came out at the inquest before the St. Pancras coroner on November 15 that, though the gas-taps in the room were securely turned off, there had been an escape from what a gas companies official described as an obsolete type of fitting attached to the meter in the room. The meter, it appears, was on the floor, and the fitting must have been accidentally dislodged. A verdict was recorded of Accidental Death; and the coroner directed that the gas-pipes from the room should remain in the custody of the court. The body was conveyed to Leeds for burial on the morning of November 16.

So prematurely passed away one who may with justice be called one of the finest exponents of British chess, and an international master whose strength was recognised all over the world.

Frederick Dewhurst (sic) was born at Birstall, near Leeds, on January 16, 1884. He did not develop his chess power very young, at the B.C.F. congress at the Crystal Palace in 1907 only playing in the Second Class, though he then won first prize in one of the two sections. At Tunbridge Wells next year he tied for fourth place in a section of the First Class. He was admitted to the British Championship at Scarborough in 1909 (in which year he was Yorkshire Champion), and there tied with Blackburne for fourth and fifth prizes, after HE Atkins, JH Blake, and W. Ward.

In the same event at Oxford in 1910 he again tied with Blackburne, but this time for second and third prizes, Atkins being first, though losing in his individual encounter with Yates. In 1911, at Glasgow, Yates still further improved his position, this time tying with Atkins for first place; but in the tie-match Atkins won somewhat easily.

Atkins stood down for the first time at Richmond in 1912; but the success of RC Griffith left Yates second, in company with the late HG Cole. At last in 1913, Yates gained his ambition, and at Cheltenham won the British Championship with the fine score of 9 out of a possible 11, 1.5 points above J. Mahood and 2 above Blackburne. In the ruined Congress at Chester in 1914 he tied for first place with Blackburne; and, as Blackburne was unable to play a deciding match, Yates won his second championship.

Since the War he gained the title again in 1921, 1926, 1928 and 1931, thus making a record of six championships, second only to Atkin's record of nine (ed : in 1969 at the Rhyl Congress Jonathan Penrose OBE was to surpass Atkin's record by one.)

Yate's six victories were gained in sixteen attempts. In addition, must be mentioned his success in the Hastings tournament, in the New Year of 1921, for holders of the British Championship only. His other successes in this country, including his two wins in the in the Anglo-American cable match, in 1910-11, need not detain us; for limitations of space demand that we shall come to Yates as an international master. His first essay was at Hamburg in 1910, on the invitation of the German Chess Federation. Though he did badly, only getting one win in 16 games, the win was a remarkable effort, at the expense of no less a celebrity than Dr. Tarrasch. At Pistyan two years later he did a little better. He had to wait until after the War for a third attempt; but it will be best to give what we believe to be a full record of his performances in international event (to be added).

These lists, however, furnish no just view of the strength of Yates's play, which always was most fully exhibited against the leading competitors in tournaments. Among his triumphs must be noted his particularly his wins against Alekhine at Hastings, 1922, and Carlsbad 1923 (a brilliancy prize game); against Euwe, Scarborough, 1928; against Nimzowitsch, Carlsbad, 1929; against Bogoljuboff, London, 1922, and Baden-Baden, 1925; against Tartakover, Hastings and Kecskemet, 1927; against Knoch and Rubinstein, Budapest, 1926; against Spielmann and Vidmar, San Remo, 1930; and his draws with Alekhine and Capablanca at New York, 1924. The harder the opposition, the better his play. Conversely, against what should have proved easier opponents he was apt. at times, to show less of his skill. In this, of course, he was not peculiar, even among the experts.

Generally speaking, however, he was a remarkably tenacious player, who would not abandon a game while there was the slightest chance of a win or a draw. This was not due to mere obstinacy, as may sometimes have appeared, but to the depth of his vision, which gained for him among the German commentators the title of ein tiefe Denker (ed: a deep thinker) – no small testimony from those from whom it came. With a robust physique there is no knowing to what a position he might have attained in the chess world. The late Amon Burn always had the highest opinion of his powers, and always pointed out, too, the handicap under which a player labours who has to report the events in which he takes part – equivalent, he would say, to giving the other competitors Pawn and move!

Yates was unfortunate in embracing professionalism in an era when the rewards were becoming less and less, and finally reached a stage when they scarcely provided the means of a bare existence. He

was a fine simultaneous player, whose exhibitions always delighted by their combination of speed, precision and flashes of brilliance.

As commentator he was very good indeed, and his contributions, especially to The Manchester Guardian, were noted alike for their accuracy and for a sense of style.

He had a journalistic training, outside chess. He was not, in fact, 'a mere chessplayer', in spite of his intense devotion to the game. It was his extreme reticence which gave such an impression to all but those whom he admitted to intimacy. They at least knew his widespread interest in other things; and W. Winter's recent tribute to him in the Guardian in no way exaggerates his charm as a companion among those who knew him best. To them his loss is one which cannot be replaced."

### **An Appeal**

No doubt all chessplayers in England will have read with sorrow of the death of F.D.Yates at the early age of 46, and more especially will the circumstances of it be a shock to many.

An inquest was held, as has already been reported, and was attended by his two sisters, who have practically no means, as was the case of Yates himself. Certain chessplayers who attended the funeral agreed to make themselves responsible for the funeral expenses, but as the body was removed to Birstall in Yorkshire for burial in the family grave, the expenses were considerably heavier than was anticipated and, with the money owing to the landlady, comes to a total of £51 2s and 0d.

We feel quite sure that when our readers know, they will like to show their last recognition of the value which F.D.Yates was to English chess by giving a donation towards the sum.

The London Chess League, whose finances are not in a very satisfactory state, as in the case of most chess concerns, has agreed to donate £3 towards this. Their president has given £1 1s 0d., and one or two other members have promised donations. We shall be happy to receive any contributions towards this fund, and will give acknowledgment in future issues.'

From *The Oxford Companion to Chess* (OUP, 1984) by Hooper and Whyld -

'English player. British Champion 1913,1914,1921,1926,1928, and 1931, Around 1909 he gave up his profession in accountancy to become a chess professional. Of the many international tournaments in which he competed from Hamburg 1910 to Hastings 1931—2 he made his best results in the B Final, Kecskemet 1927, first (+4=2-1) equal with Tartakower, and at San Remo 1930, the strongest tournament of the year, when he came fifth after Alekhine,, Nimzowitsch, Rubinstein, and Bogoljubow ahead of Spielmann, Vidmar, and Tartakower.

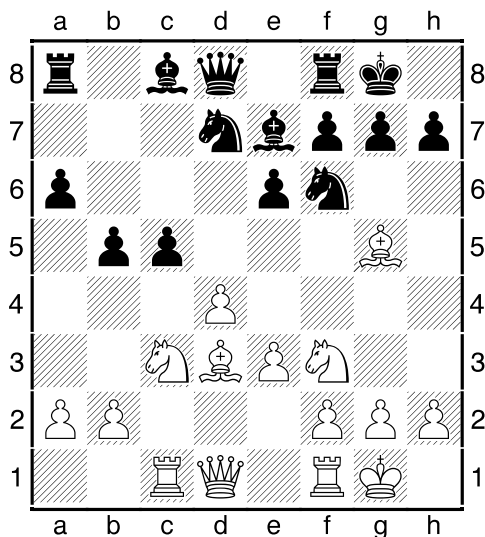
### **(1) Vidmar, Milan Sr - Yates, Frederick Dewhurst [D66]**

San Remo San Remo (14), 03.02.1930

[*British Chess News*]

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 Be7 6.Nc3 0-0 7.Rc1 c6 8.Bd3 a6!? [8...dxc4 9.Bxc4 Nd5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.Ne4 (11.0-0 Nxc3 12.Rxc3 e5 13.dxe5 Nxe5 14.Nxe5 Qxe5 15.f4 Qe4 16.Qe2 Bf5 17.Bd3 Qd5 18.e4 Qd4+ 19.Qf2 Qxf2+ 20.Kxf2 Bd7 21.Rd1 Rfd8 22.Bc4±) ]**

**9.0-0 dxc4 10.Bxc4 b5 11.Bd3 c5**



**12.a4** [12.dxc5 Nxc5 13.Bb1 Bb7 14.Qc2]

**12...c4 13.Bb1 Nd5 14.Bxe7 Qxe7 15.axb5** [15.b3]

**15...Nxc3 16.bxc3 axb5 17.e4 Rd8 18.e5 Bb7 19.Nd2 Ra3 20.f4 g6 21.Be4 Nb6! 22.Bxb7 Qxb7 23.Qe1 Nd5 24.Ne4 Ra2** [24...Qe7]

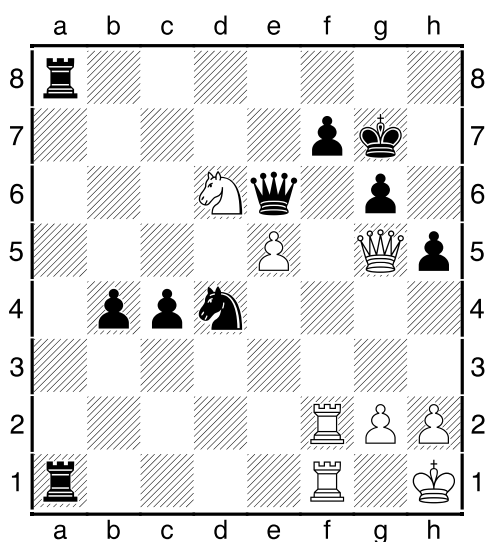
**25.Qh4 Rda8 26.Rf2 Kg7?! [26...Ra1 27.Rxa1 Rxa1+ 28.Rf1 Qa8]**

**27.Rcf1 Qe7** [27...Rxf2]

**28.Qg3 Kh8** [28...Rxf2 29.Qxf2 b4—+]

**29.Ng5 Kg7** [29...Rxf2 30.Rxf2 Ra1+ 31.Rf1 Rxf1+ 32.Kxf1 b4—+]

**30.Ne4 Ra1 31.f5 exf5 32.Rxf5 b4 33.R5f2 R8a3 34.Nd6 Nxc3 35.Qg4 h5 36.Qc8 Ne2+ 37.Kh1 Qe6 38.Qd8 Ra8 39.Qg5 Nxd4**



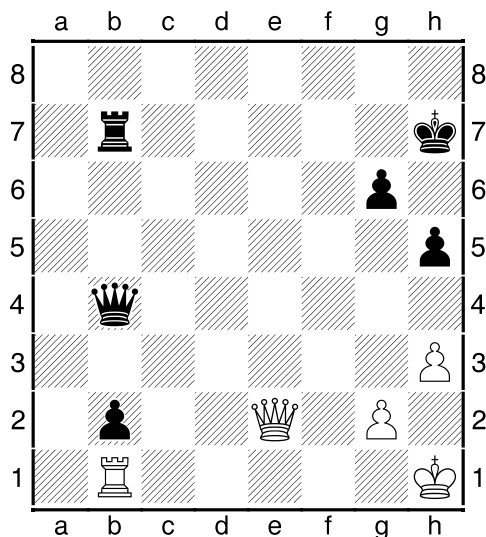
**40.Nxf7? Nf5! 41.Nd6 Nxd6** [41...Rxf1+ 42.Rxf1 Rf8]

**42.exd6 b3** [42...Rxf1+ 43.Rxf1 Rf8—+]

43.h3 b2 44.Qb5 c3 45.Qb7+ Kg8 [45...Kh6!]

46.d7 Rd8 47.Qb4 Rxd7 [47...Qxd7]

48.Qxc3 Rxf1+ 49.Rxf1 Rb7 50.Rb1 Rb3 51.Qc2 Rb8 52.Qc3 Qb6 53.Qc4+ Kg7 54.Qc3+ Kh7 55.Qe5 Rb7 56.Qe2 Qb4



57.Qf2? Qc3! 58.Qf1 Kg7 59.Kh2 Qe5+ 60.Kh1 Rc7 61.Qd1 Qf4 [61...Ra7]

0-1

A tenacious player, he could be a dangerous opponent. In tournament play he defeated most of the greatest masters of his time on one occasion or another, and among these victories were two defeats of Alekhine (Hastings 1922, Carlsbad 1923), and three defeats of Bogoljubow (London 1922, Baden-Baden 1925, Scarborough 1927) and Rubinstein (London 1925, Moscow 1925, Budapest 1926). A careful and conscientious writer, he conducted a chess column in the Yorkshire Post, was chess correspondent of the Manchester Guardian, and wrote three books (see foot of article) in collaboration with William Winter (1898-1955).

A leak from a faulty gas pipe connection killed Yates while he was asleep. His book *One-hundred-and-one of My Best Games of Chess* was published in 1934.'

From *The Encyclopedia of Chess* (Robert Hale, 1970 & 1976) by Anne Sunnucks -

International Master and British Champion in 1913, 1914, 1921, 1926, 1928 and 1931. Born in Birstall, near Leeds in Yorkshire, on 16th January 1884, Yates was 25 before he played in the British Championship for the first time. In 1909, having won the Yorkshire Championship, his entry was accepted for the British Championship at Scarborough, and he tied with Blackburne for 4th prize. The following year he again tied with Blackburne, this time for 2nd prize, and in 1911 he tied with Atkins for 1st prize but lost the play-off for the title. In 1913, he succeed in winning the British Championship for the first time. During his career he competed in the British Championship 16 times and won the title on six occasions.

In International tournaments his record did not do him justice as far as his final placings were concerned. However, in studying his performance in detail, his wins were often against the strongest players and his losses against those at the bottom of the tables. This was particularly apparent in the results of the 1926 Budapest tournament.

During the course of his career, Yates beat practically every contemporary Grandmaster, with the exception of Lasker and Capablanca. His victory over Alekhine at Carlsbad 1923 came at the end of a combination 18 moves deep and won the brilliancy prize, while his victory over Vidmar at San Remo in 1930 was described by Alekhine as the finest game played since the war.

His losses against weaker players may well have been due to ill-health and lack of necessary stamina to play consistently throughout a long tournament. He was continually troubled by a hacking cough and could not afford to carry out the medical advice that he should go to the Riviera for a cure.

For some years Yates ran the chess column for The Manchester Guardian. He was co-author with Winter of *Modern Master Play* and of books on the Capablanca vs Alekhine and Alekhine v. Bogoljubov World Championship matches.

He died in tragic circumstances, On 11th November 1932, he was found dead in his bedroom from gas poisoning. At the inquest it was established that there was a faulty connection in the gas meter in his room and a verdict of accidental death was returned.'

From *The Encyclopedia of Chess* (Batsford, 1977) by Harry Golombek –

'A British master. Yates trained as an accountant but in 1909 abandoned this career in favour of chess and journalism. In 1911 he tied for first prize with Atkins in the British Championship losing the play-off match. Two years later he won the event – the first of six such victories (1913, 1914, 1921, 1926, 1928 and 1931).

In international tournaments Yates's results were generally mediocre, but he was capable on occasion of defeating the strongest opposition and his victims included Alekhine, Reti, Bogoljubow, Tartakower, Rubinstein, Euwe, Nimzowitsch and Vidmar. He was a regular competitor at the Hastings Christmas Congresses, winning in 1920/1 and finishing in 3rd place on four occasions: 1923/4, 1924/5, 1926/7 and 1929/30.

Yates was for many years the chess correspondent of The Manchester Guardian and, in addition, wrote *Modern Master Play*, London, Philadelphia 1929 (with W. Winter as co-author) and books of the 1927 Capablanca-Alekhine, London 1928, and the 1929 Alekhine-Bogoljubow World Championship matches, London, 1930.

He died from being accidentally asphyxiated in his rooms by a faulty gas connection.'

### **(1) Wahtuch, L. - Yates, Frederick Dewhurst [D55]**

Northern Counties Chess Union-ch Manchester, 1921

[Yates,F]

1.d4 [1)De Felice: Chess Results 1921–1930. McFarland p. 16.2)BCM 1921, p.200 [Yates]. 1.-2. Wahluch and Yates 6/7 3.Lund 4,5/7 4. Duncan 3,5/7 5,-6. Briggs and Kelly 3/7 7.-8. Jackson and Parry 1/7.]

1...d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Bd3 0–0 7.Nc3 b6 8.cxd5 exd5 9.0–0 Bb7 10.Rc1 c5 11.Qe2 Ne4 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.Rfd1 Nxc3 14.Rxc3 c4 15.Bb1 b5 16.Nd2 f5 17.Qf3 g6 18.b3 Nf6 [18...b4 19.Rxc4 dxc4 20.Qxb7 c3±]

19.bxc4 b4 20.Rcc1 dxc4± 21.Qe2 c3 22.Nb3 a5 23.Nc5 Bd5 24.f3 Rae8 25.Re1 Qa7 26.Qa6 Qc7 27.e4? fxe4 28.fxe4 Ng4!–+ 29.e5 Nxe5 30.Be4 Bc4 31.Qb7 Qd6

0–1

From Wikipedia -

'Yates almost won the British Championship in 1911, when he tied for first place with Henry Atkins, but lost the play-off. He went on to secure the title in 1913, 1914, 1921, 1926, 1928 and 1931.

Despite considerable domestic success, his record in international tournaments did not do him justice. Often the winner against his strongest opponents, he would then lose to those at the bottom of the table. This was particularly apparent at the Budapest tourney of 1926.

His lack of consistency was attributed to poor health and loss of stamina. A constant hacking cough went unchecked, as his funds did not stretch to a holiday in warmer climes; the advice given by his doctor. He was also subjected to journalistic pressures, frequently reporting on the tournaments in

which he was playing. Yet, dedicating himself to the playing side of chess would have earned him insufficient sums to make a living. A number of his contemporaries believed that his talent could have placed him among the world championship contenders, had his circumstances been different. Nevertheless, in his time, he defeated most of his illustrious adversaries, the most notable exceptions being Emanuel Lasker and José Raúl Capablanca. His victory against Alexander Alekhine at Karlsbad in 1923 won the brilliancy prize, while his win against Milan Vidmar at San Remo in 1930 was described by Alekhine as the finest game played since the war.'

### **(1) Alekhine, Alexander - Yates, Frederick Dewhurst [E62]**

Karlsbad–03 International Masters Karlsbad (7), 06.05.1923

[Yates,F]

1.d4 [1)Turnierbuch Karlsbad 1923. S.12 2)Kagans Neueste Schachnachrichten 1923, S.227 3)Yates: 101 of My Best Games. p.50 4)Skinner:Alekhine.p.192.5)BCM 1923. p.259 [Blake,JH] 6)Tarrasch's Schachzeitung 1932,H.5, S.70.]

1...Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0–0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.d5 Nb8 [7...Na5 The modern line]

8.0–0 Nbd7 [8...c6]

9.e4 a5 10.Be3 [In Round 9 Bernstein played 10.h3 Nc5 11.Nd4 e5 12.Nde2 Nh5 13.g4 Nf6 14.Be3 Ne8 15.Ng3 1–0 (89) Bernstein, J-Yates,F Karlsbad 1923]

10...Ng4 11.Bd4 Nge5 12.Nxe5 Nxe5 13.c5 [13.f4 Bg4! (13...Nxc4? 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.Qd4+) 14.Qb3 (14.Qd2 Nxc4) 14...Nf3+ 15.Bxf3 Bxd4+ Yates]

13...dxc5 14.Bxc5 b6 15.Bd4 Ba6 16.Re1 Qd6! [Yates:Very clever]

[16...c5 17.dxc6 Nxc6 18.Bxg7 Kxg7 19.e5 Rc8 20.e6±; 16...Re8; 16...e6]

17.Bf1 [17.f4 Nd3 18.Bxg7? (18.e5 Qb4) 18...Qc5+–; 17.Rb1]

17...Bxf1 18.Rxf1 [18.Kxf1]

18...c5 19.Bxe5 [19.dxc6? Qxd4–+]

19...Qxe5 20.Qb3 [⊔20.Qe2]

20...Rab8 21.Qb5 f5! [Yates: Black has now a definite superiority.]

22.Rae1 [ares: Perhaps White would have done better to capture this pawn 22.exf5 but even then 22...Qxf5 23.Rae1 followed by 23...Bd4 would exert powerful pressure on the f-file.]

22...f4! 23.Qd7 Rbd8 24.gxf4 Qxf4 25.Qe6+ [25.Qxe7 Qg4+ (25...Rfe8!–+ 26.Qb7 Be5) 26.Kh1 Qf3+ 27.Kg1 Rde8 28.Qd7 (⊔28.Qg5±) 28...Re5 (28...Bd4) 29.Ne2 Rxe4 30.Ng3 Rxe1–+ Yates]

25...Kh8 26.f3 Qg5+ 27.Kh1 [27.Qg4 Qd2 28.Re2 Qd3± wins a pawn 29.Qg2 Bd4+ 30.Kh1 Bxc3 31.bxc3 Qxc3]

27...Rd6 [27...Bxc3 28.bxc3 Rd6 29.Qh3 Qd2±]

28.Qh3 [⊔28.Qg4 Qd2 29.e5=]

28...Be5± [28...Bxc3 29.bxc3 Qd2±]

29.Re2 [29.Nd1 Rdf6 30.Ne3 Bd4 31.Nc4 b5 32.Nxa5 Qd2 33.Nb3 Qxb2 34.Nxd4 cxd4±]

29...Rdf6 30.Nd1 [30.Rg1 Qf4 31.Rf1 g5 32.Rg2 Qe3 33.Qh5 Rg6±]

**30...Rf4** [30...Bd4!]

**31.Ne3?** [31.Rg2 Qf6 32.Ne3 Bd4 33.Re2 a4=]

**31...Rh4—+ 32.Qe6 Qh5 33.Ng4 Rxg4!** [Yates: !! A magnificent combination which forces the win]

**34.fxg4 Rxf1+ 35.Kg2 Qxh2+ 36.Kxf1 Qh1+ 37.Kf2 Bd4+ 38.Kg3 Qg1+ 39.Kh3** [39.Rg2 Qe3+ 40.Kh2 Qf4+ 41.Kh1 Qh6+ 42.Rh2 Qc1+ 43.Kg2 Qd2+ 44.Kf1 Qd1+ 45.Kg2 Qe2+ 46.Kg3 Qe3+ 47.Kg2 Qf2+ 48.Kh3 Qf3+ 49.Kh4 Bf6+ 50.g5 Qf4+ 51.Kh3 Be5—+]

**39...Qf1+ 40.Rg2 Qh1+ 41.Kg3** [41.Rh2 Qf3+ 42.Kh4 Bf6+ 43.g5 Qf4+ 44.Kh3 Be5—+]

**41...Qe1+ 42.Kh3 g5!** [Yates: !!]

**43.Rc2 Qf1+ 44.Kh2 Qg1+ 45.Kh3 Qh1+ 46.Kg3 Qd1!** [Yates: !! The final stroke.]

**47.Rc3 Qg1+ 48.Kh3 Qf1+ 49.Kg3 Bf2+ 50.Kf3 Bg1+ 51.Kg3 Qf2+ 52.Kh3 Qh2#**

**0–1**

As a journalist he was the chess columnist of The Manchester Guardian and with William Winter, the co-author of *Modern Master Play* (1929). He wrote accounts of two world championship encounters; those between Capablanca and Alekhine, and Alekhine and Bogoljubow.

In team competition, he played at the first, third and fourth Olympiads, representing the 'British Empire' team. On each occasion, he made a plus score and at London 1927, earned a team bronze medal/

His life ended prematurely, when a leaking gas pipe caused him to asphyxiate during his sleep.

According to the inscription on Yates' gravestone, his birth name was actually Fred Dewhirst Yates. However, throughout his chess career he was known by the name at the head of this article or simply as F.D. Yates, both of which featured in his posthumously published, part-biographical, 'My Best Games' Collection.'

### **Remembering IM Conel Hugh O'Donel Alexander CMG CBE (19-iv-1909 15-ii-1974)**

From *The Anglo-Soviet Radio Chess Match* by E.Klein and W.Winter –

'CHO'D Alexander was born in Cork in 1909 and learned chess at the age of ten. He was educated at King Edward School, Birmingham, where he exhibited early prowess by winning the Birmingham Post Cup. In 1927 he won the British Boy's Championship. During his student days, from 1928 to 1932, he was a convincing champion of Cambridge University. Subsequently he competed in five British Championships, winning the title in 1938. He also played in several international tournaments, his outstanding performance amongst these being Hastings in 1938, where he shared second and third prizes with Keres, following Reshevsky who won the tournament, and ahead of Fine and Flohr. In 1939, in the England-Holland match, he had the satisfaction of defeating the ex-World Champion, Dr. Euwe, in a sensational games, drawing the return game.

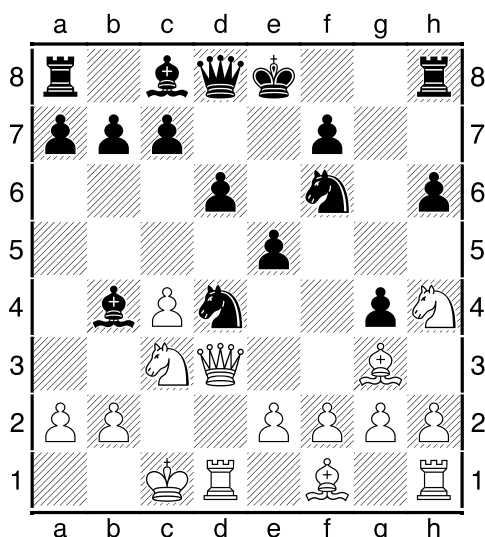
#### **(1) Euwe, Max - Alexander, Conel Hugh O'Donel [E33]**

Match/Nation NED-ENG 10–10 The Hague (1.1), 28.05.1939

[*British Chess News*]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 Nc6 5.Nf3 d6 6.Bg5 h6 7.Bh4?! [7.Bd2 0–0 8.a3 Bxc3 9.Bxc3 Qe7 10.e4 e5]

7...g5 8.Bg3 g4 9.Nh4 Nxd4 10.Qd3 e5 11.0–0–0N



11...Ne6 12.Nb1 Ba5 13.Qa3 Bb6 14.Bxe5 Ne4! 15.Bxh8 Qxh4 16.c5 Qg5+ 17.Nd2 N6xc5 18.h4 gxh3 19.gxh3 Nxf2 20.Rh2 Nxd1+ 21.Rg2 Qe3 22.Rg8+ Ke7 23.Kxd1 Qxa3 24.bxa3 Ne6 25.h4 Bf2 26.h5 d5 27.Bh3 b6 28.Bxe6 Kxe6 29.Re8+ Kd7 30.Re5 Bb7 31.Bg7 Bd4

0–1



A brilliant mathematician, he took a first at Cambridge and chose a scholastic career, joining a well-known public school (Winchester College). From there, via a short spell in a business appointment (John Lewis), he entered the service of the Foreign Office, where, during the war years, his valuable work earned him the OBE.

He plays imaginative and courageous chess and is never afraid of the wildest complications.'

From Chessgames.com -

'Conel Hugh O'Donel Alexander was born in Cork, Ireland. Awarded the IM title in 1950 at its inception and the IMC title in 1970, he was British Champion in 1938 and 1956. During the Second World War, he worked at Bletchley Park with Harry Golombek and Sir Philip Stuart Milner-Barry, deciphering German Enigma codes and later for the Foreign Office. Alexander finished 2nd= at Hastings (1937/38) tied with Paul Keres after Samuel Reshevsky and ahead of Salomon Flohr and Reuben Fine. He held Mikhail Botvinnik to an equal score (+1, -1) in the 1946 Anglo-Soviet Radio Match, and won Hastings (1946/47) while finishing equal first at Hastings (1953/54). He represented England on six Olympiad teams. Alexander was also an author of note. He passed away in Cheltenham in 1974.'

Prior to the second world war Alexander was employed by John Spedan Lewis in his Department store in Oxford Street. When he returned from Buenos Aires ("good air") from the 1939 Olympiad he travelled aboard the RMS Alcantara. Hugh sailed from Buenos Aires, Argentina in September 1939 to

arrive at Southampton September 19th 1939. The ship was the Alcantara operated by Royal Mail Lines Ltd hence the RMS Alcantara.

According to Wikipedia –

‘RMS Alcantara was a Royal Mail Lines ocean liner that was built in Belfast in 1926. She served in the Second World War first as an armed merchant cruiser and then a troop ship, was returned to civilian service in 1948 and scrapped in 1958.’

Ports of the voyage were Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Santos, and Rio de Janeiro, and Hugh’s official number was 148151 and he travelled 2nd class. His proposed destination residential address was 316, Rodney House, Dolphin Square, London, SW1

According to Wikipedia –

‘The proximity of Dolphin Square to the Palace of Westminster and the headquarters of the intelligence agencies MI5 (Thames House) and MI6 (Vauxhall Cross) has attracted many politicians, peers, civil servants and intelligence agency personnel as residents.’

From *The Oxford Companion to Chess* by Hooper & Whyld -

‘International Master (1950), International Correspondence Chess Master (1970). Born in Cork, he settled in England as a boy. In spite or because of his intense application at the board his tournament performances were erratic. From about 1937 to the mid 1950s he was regarded as the strongest player in Great Britain, although he won only two (1938, 1956) of the 13 British Chess Federation Championships in which he competed; he played for the BCF in six Olympiads from 1933 to 1958. Holding a senior post at the Foreign Office, he was not permitted to play in countries under Soviet control or influence; but when he did compete abroad he achieved only moderate results. His best tournament achievement was at Hastings 1937-8 when he was second (+4=5) equal with Keres after Reshevsky ahead of Fine and Flohr; but he is better remembered for his tie with Bronstein for first prize at Hastings 1953-4. He won his game against Bronstein in 120 moves after several adjournments, and the outcome became a kind of serial in the press, arousing great national interest in the game. Alexander was the author of several books on chess, notably *Alekhine’s Best Games of Chess 1938-1945* (1949) and *A Book of Chess* (1973)’



Colonel Hugh O'Donel Alexander and Sir Stuart Milner-Barry

From *The Encyclopedia of Chess* by Anne Sunnucks -

‘For many years the chess correspondent of The Sunday Times, The Spectator (pseudonym Philidor) and the Evening News. There was probably no “chess name” that was better known to the non-chess-playing element of the British public than that of Hugh Alexander. His victory over Russian Grandmaster David Bronstein at Hastings in 1953, after a struggle which lasted for 120 moves and took 13 hours, made chess front page news in the British press.’

Born in Cork on 19th April 1909, Alexander picked up the game at prep school at the age of 8. In 1926 he won the Boy’s Championship, later to be recognised as the British Boy’s Championship, at Hastings. After coming down from Cambridge University, where he won the university championship four times, Alexander taught

mathematics at Winchester College from 1932 to 1938. He later joined the Foreign Office. One of the few British players who might have reached World Championship class if he had chosen to devote sufficient time to the game, Alexander was at his best when he faced a top class opponent.

During his chess career, he scored victories over two World Champions Botvinnik and Euwe, and he beat a number of other Grandmasters, international tournaments were all at Hastings where he came =2nd in 1938 with Keres, half a point behind Reshevsky and ahead of Fine and Flohr; 1st in 1947 and =1st with Bronstein in 1953. In 1951 tournament he came =5th. His other hobbies included bridge, croquet and philately. He was the author of *Alekhine's Best Games of Chess 1938-1945* (Bell), *Chess* (Pitman) and joint author with T.J. Beach of *Learn Chess; A New Way for All* (Pergamon Press)

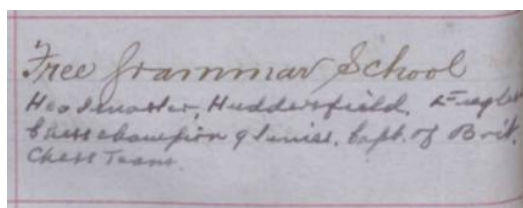
### **Remembering Henry Atkins (20-viii-1872 31-i-1955)**

Henry Atkins who passed away, Monday, January 31st, 1955.

Henry Ernest Atkins was born in Leicester on Tuesday, August 20th, 1872 to Edward (a schoolteacher) and Jane Atkins (née Threapland).

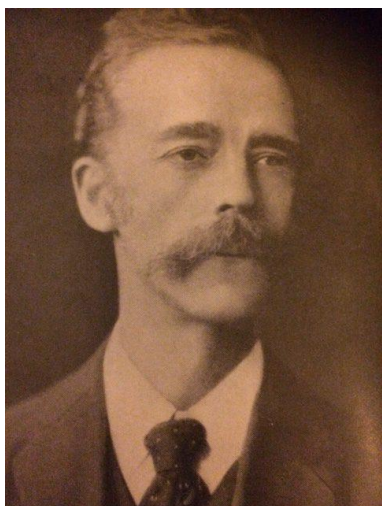
He was baptised on August 6th, 1872 in the Anglican Cathedral Church of St. Martin, Leicester. At the time of the baptism the Atkins family was living at 57, King Richard's Road, Leicester. The address in 2021 appears to be occupied by an industrial premise for Sunco Knitwear Specialists. The signatory on the baptism record is that of DJ Vaughan.

Henry was admitted to Wyggeston Boys Grammar School, Leicester on March 30th 1880 when eight years old. He was expected to leave at the end of the Winter Term in 1890. Curiously his school admission record includes the following addition (although we don't know exactly when) –



Henry, aged 18, went up to Peterhouse College, Cambridge in 1890 to study mathematics. From his year of entry he was ranked as 9th "Wrangler" studying for the Mathematical Tripos. As part of his Part II examinations he did well enough to be 'mentioned' for the Smith's Prize for examination performance. Following University Henry

became a teacher of mathematics at Northampton County Modern School and then returned to Wyggeston Boys Grammar School from 1902 – 1908. He then became the principal of Huddersfield College in 1909 and continued until 1915. Huddersfield College (founded in 1839) was merged with Hillhouse Technical School to form a new boys' grammar school at a new campus at Salendine Nook with 950 boys.



According to Ranneforths Schach-Kalender (cited by C.N.), 1915, page 55, during the period at Huddersfield College Henry lived firstly at 49 New North Road, Huddersfield, Yorkshire, and then at 36 Gledholt Road, Huddersfield, Yorkshire, HD1 4HP. On June 1st, 1915 (aged 43) Henry was registered as a teacher whilst at Huddersfield College for the fee of one guinea. Henry retired from teaching in 1936.

In the 1939 register Henry (now a retired schoolmaster) was recorded as living with his wife, Elspeth Skene Atkins (née Wilson) at 29 East Avenue, Leicester, Leicestershire. Elspeth was born on August 5th 1880 and was therefore roughly eight years his junior. She carried out 'unpaid domestic duties' but as a member of the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) she was a surgical dresser. The WVS transformed into the RVS. It would seem that Henry and Elspeth did not have children. She outlived Henry passing away in 1973 in Southampton.

On Monday, January 31st 1955 Henry passed away in The Fielding Johnson Private Hospital, and was buried at Gilroes Cemetery and Crematorium, Groby Road, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE3 9QG.

In the October 1976 issue of *Newsflash* Badmaster (aka GH Diggle) wrote -  
'... we well remember his giving a "simultaneous" at the Lincoln Chess Club in 1924, winning 17 and drawing two. One of his more elderly opponents (a notorious non-resigner) who for 30 moves had been wobbling along with a piece down until "time" had to be called, then proceeded to "demonstrate a draw" by concocting a continuation so optimistic that even clubmates with lifelong experience of his powers stood aghast. Atkins, with his greatcoat on ready to go home, made no attempt to refute this analytical masterpiece but merely remarked with great deference: "I don't think we can play it quite like that!" and then beat a craven retreat "escorted by Club Officials"

From *British Chess Magazine*, Volume LXXV (75, 1955), Number 3 (March), pp.102-3 we have this obituary written by RN Coles -

'With the passing, on January 31st, at the age of eighty-two of Henry Ernest Atkins the chess world has lost a recognized international master, and British chess one of its strongest players of all time. Yet Atkins was the despair of chess enthusiasts because he played so little international chess and confined himself largely – and at that intermittently – to local affairs, where the strength of most of his opponents could hardly extend him. One leading player recently regretted that Atkins spent so much time "in the wilds," but Atkins would have taken an opposite view and have considered that he was "in the wilds" if he had spent more of his time playing chess; teaching was his whole life, and the game of chess he insisted on treating as a game.

Consequently, as a chess-player Atkins was almost always out of practice and playing below his true strength, yet in his five international events - Amsterdam, 1899; Hanover, 1902; London, 1922; London Team Tourney, 1927; and Warsaw Team Tourney, 1935 - he scored 63.2 per cent, or if Amsterdam which was virtually a Hauptturnier is excluded, 53.5 per cent.

Sir George Thomas considered that only lack of opportunity prevented him from establishing himself in the world championship class. As it is, he will be remembered chiefly by chess-players as the man

who played eleven times in the British Championship and won it nine times, failing only at the first attempt in 1904 after a tie for first place, and at the last in 1937, at the age of sixty-five, when he shared third place, a record which has never been remotely approached by any other player and is not likely to be. Atkins played in a clear-cut strategical style which makes his games ideal studies for the beginner, and he finished them with the elegance to enchant the artist; like the Etudes of Chopin, they provide technical exercises and works of art in one.

But I believe that if Atkins had his wish – and this wish I am sure he will have – he would wish to be remembered by his many pupils, whether they be pupils of the chess master or of the schoolmaster, not for any practical achievements but for being a true guide, philosopher, and friend to all who came under his tutelage. - R. N. C.'

From *The Oxford Companion to Chess* by Hooper & Whyld -

English player, born in Leicester, International Master (1950), schoolmaster. Between 1895 and 1901 he played in seven minor tournaments, winning four, taking second place in three, and losing only three out of 70 games. In one of these events, Amsterdam 1899, he made a clean score against 15 opponents. In his first international tournament, Hanover 1902, he came third (+8=7-2) after Janowski and Pillsbury ahead of Mieses, Chigorin, and Marshall. Emanuel Lasker believed that Atkins would have joined the leading grandmasters had he continued his international career, but Atkins played in only one more big tournament (London 1922). He had a genuine concern for his profession, and preferred not to give more of his life to chess. He played in 12 of the Anglo-American cable matches, won the British Championship nine times (1905-11, 1924, 1925), and represented the British Chess Federation in the Olympiads of 1927 and 1935.

From *The Encyclopedia of Chess* by Anne Sunnucks -

'International Master (1950) and nine times British Champion. Born in Leicester on 20th August 1872, Atkins learned the game at school in Leicester at the age of 12. When he was 15, he joined Leicester Chess Club and within two years was playing on top board. In 1890 he went up to Peterhouse, Cambridge, and played top board for the University. On leaving Cambridge he became a schoolmaster.

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In the five international events in which he played – Amsterdam 1899, Hanover 1902, London 1922 and the Chess Olympiads of 1927 and 1935 – he scored over 60 per cent.

### **(1) Tartakower, Saviely - Atkins, Henry Ernest [C55]**

British CF-15 London International London (9), 11.08.1922

[Tartakower/du Mont/Maroczy]

[C55: Two Knights: 4 d3, 4 d4 exd4 5 e5 and Max Lange Attack Sources: Tartakower & du Mont, 500 Master Games of Chess, pp. 49-50; Maroczy: London, 1922, pp. 66-67 The elemental power of Rooks commanding open lines is well illustrated In this beautiful game.]

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Nc3** [Maroczy: An alternative and perhaps preferable continuation for White is 4.d3 , bringing about the regular Giuco Piano.]

**4...Nxe4 5.Nxe4 d5 6.Bd3 dxe4 7.Bxe4 Bd6 8.d4** [Maroczy: 8.Bxc6+ , doubling the c-pawn would not have been good for White, as his opponent's two bishops would have been too powerful.]

**8...Nxd4 9.Nxd4 exd4 10.Qxd4 0-0** [Maroczy: Black has now the advantage in development, as White cannot castle at once because of Bxh2+, winning the queen.]

**11.Be3** [Not 11.0-0 on account of 11...Bxh2+ . But now White puts his trust in his cluster of forces in the centre.]

**11...Qe7** [Preventing 12.0-0, as 12....Be5 would be awkward for White.]

**12.0-0-0** [Maroczy: There is generally an element of danger in castling queenside, as the king is there more exposed to attack than after castling on the kingside. 12....]

**12...Re8 13.Bd5** [As this helps Black's counter-play (14....c6)]

[the best course was =13.Bf3 with level chances.; A magnificent trap would be 13.Rhe1 Qxe4 14.Bh6 Bf4+ 15.Kb1 , and wins. But Black coolly replies 13.... Be6, obtaining the better game.]

**13...Be5 14.Qa4N c6** [Gradually Black obtains the initiative.]

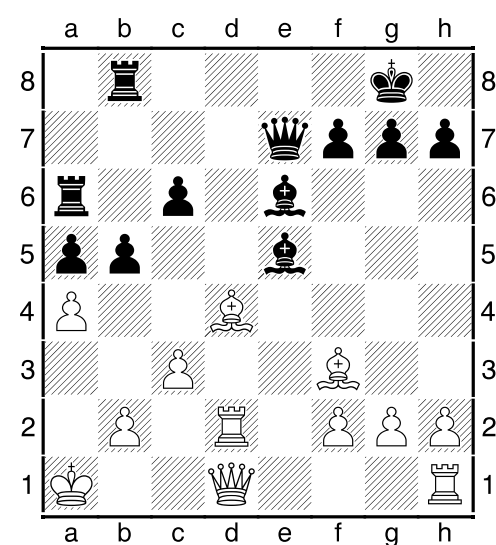
**15.Bf3** [Maroczy: Both Black's bishops are now bearing on the white king's entrenchment, whereas White's bishops are threatening nothing. 15....]

**15...Be6 16.Kb1 a5** [A strong move, threatening 17.Qb4. Maroczy: The storming of the enemy's position commences with the move.]

**17.Bd4 Bd6 18.Bb6 Bb4 19.c3 Ra6 20.Be3 Bf5+ 21.Ka1 b5 22.Qb3 Bd6 23.a4** [Instead of further compromising his position, he should have resorted to the patient manoeuvre 23.Rd2.23....]

**23...Rb8** [Now Black definitely has the better game. Maroczy: All Black's pieces are now well posted for the attack.]

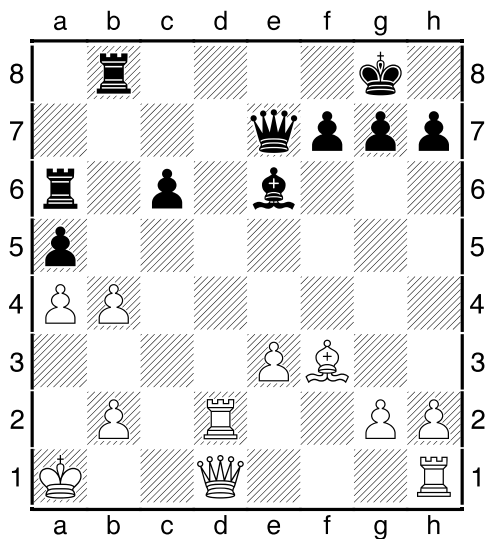
**24.Rd2 Be6 25.Qd1 Be5 26.Bd4** [



]

**26...Bf4 27.Be3 Bxe3 28.fxe3 b4** [The decisive advance, forcibly opening up the position.]

**29.cxb4** [

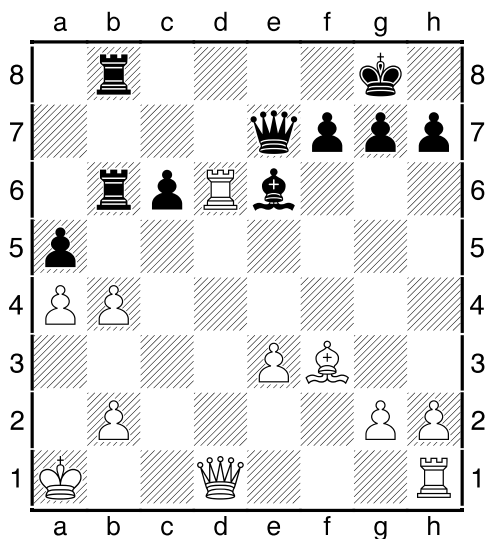


]

**29...Rab6** [Black conducts the attack with superb élan. Maroczy: Better than recapturing the pawn at once.]

[Both the following lines would have been premature: 29....Rxb4 or 29...Qxb4 (because of 30.Rd8+ ); and 29...axb4 , on account of 30.b3 , again closing up the critical a-file.]

**30.Rd6** [



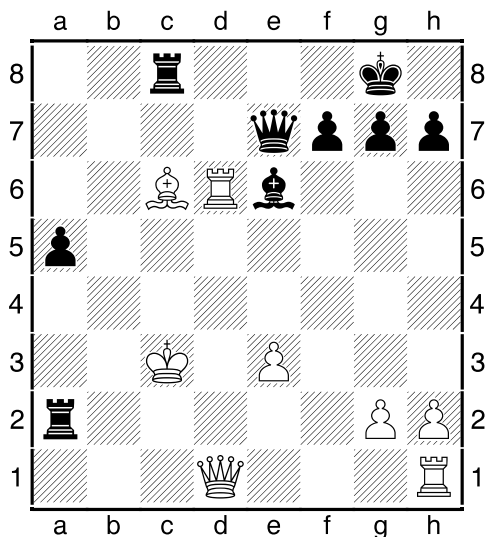
]

[The following variation loses beautifully: 30.bxa5 Ra6 31.b4 Rxa5 32.bxa5 Qa3+ , followed by mate.]

**30...Rxb4** [Threatening not only 31....Rxa4+, but also 31.. ..Bb3, followed by Rxa4+.]

**31.Bxc6 Rxb2 32.Bb5 Ra2+ 33.Kb1 Rxa4 34.Kc2** [The white King attempts to escape. If 34.Qxa4 Qxd6 , the bishop is lost.]

**34...Ra2+ 35.Kc3 Rc8+ 36.Bc6** [



]

**36...Rxc6+** [This curious break-through sacrifice is a crowning touch to a powerfully conducted game.]

**37.Rxc6 Qb4+ 38.Kd3 Qb5+ 39.Kd4 Qxc6 40.Ke5 Qc5+ 41.Kf4 Qf5+ 42.Kg3 Qf2#** [Maroczy: A very fine game played by Atkins in his best style.]

**0–1**

His devotion to teaching and his insistence on treating chess as merely a game was all that prevented him from becoming one of the leading players in the world. He died on 31st January, 1955.'

In HE Atkins Doyen of British Chess Champions, the author RN Coles points out that Atkins regularly played f4 or ...f5 early in the game and claims this was HEAs pet or signature move.

### **(1) Atkins, Henry Ernest - Blackburne, Joseph Henry [C10]**

British CF–06 Championship Scarborough/ North Yorkshire (2), 10.08.1909  
[johnu]

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Nxf6+ Nxf6 7.Bd3 Bd6 8.0–0 c6 9.Qe2 Qc7 10.c4 h6 11.Bd2 b6 12.a4 a5 13.Bc3 Kf8 14.Ne5 Bxe5 15.dxe5 Ng8 16.Rad1 Bb7 17.Be4 Ne7 18.Rd6 Nc8 19.Rd2 g6 20.Rfd1 Kg7 21.Rd7 Qb8 22.Qf3 Rf8 23.Qf6+** [Source: The Chess Weekly, 1909 (28 Aug) and BCM, Sept 1909, p385]

**1–0**

From *The Encyclopaedia of Chess* by Harry Golombek -

'British international master and regarded by many as Britain's more talented player in the history of the game. Born in Leicester and never very fond of leaving England. Atkins was a schoolmaster and devoted relatively little time to chess, and yet he became one of the strongest amateurs every known to chess. He was known on the Continent as "the little Steinitz".'

His record in British Championship is unique; out of eleven appearances he won the event nine times, in 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1924 and 1925. It should be added that in 1904 (his first attempt) he finished 1st= and only lost to Napier after a play-off and in 1937 (his last championship) he finished =3rd at the age of 65!

His international career comprises only six events. In 1895 Atkins was placed =2nd behind Maróczy in the Hastings Minor Tournament and in 1899 he won the Amsterdam tournament, leading the field by 4 points. At Hanover 1902 he scored his most notable result - 3rd prize behind Janowski and Pillsbury but ahead of Chigorin and Marshall among others. At London 1922 he finished only 10th of 16 but still claimed Rubinstein and Tartakower among his victims. He represented the B.C.F. in the Olympiads of 1927 and 1935.'

Atkins was retrospectively awarded the title of international master in 1950 on his pre-war record. (Ray Keene).

According to chessgames.com –

'He graduated from Cambridge and taught mathematics at Northampton and Wyggeston. In 1909, he was appointed Principal of Huddersfield College.'

From *The Encyclopaedia of Chess* (Robert Hale, 1970 & 1976), Anne Sunnucks -

'International Master (1950) and nine times British Champion. Born in Leicester on 20th August 1872, Atkins learned the game at school in Leicester at the age of 12. When he was 15, he joined Leicester Chess Club and within two years was playing on top board. In 1890 he went up to Peterhouse, Cambridge, and played on top board for the University. On leaving Cambridge he became a schoolmaster.

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 The logo for British Chess News features the words "BRITISH", "CHESS", and "NEWS" stacked vertically in a bold, sans-serif font. "BRITISH" and "NEWS" are in red, while "CHESS" is in white. To the right of the text is a blue square containing a white chessboard pattern (squares) and a white chess knight piece.	<p>British Chess News (<a href="http://britishchessnews.com">britishchessnews.com</a>) was founded in August 2016 by John Upham and consists of a website focusing on biographical articles about British chess players and personalities, plus a steady stream of extensive book and media reviews from a team of experienced writers. including Richard James and Andrew Martin.</p> <p>The web site is complemented by an active Facebook group of around 4,000 users and a growing Twitter account (@BritishChess) of 1,000 followers.</p>
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## Endgame Studies in 2020

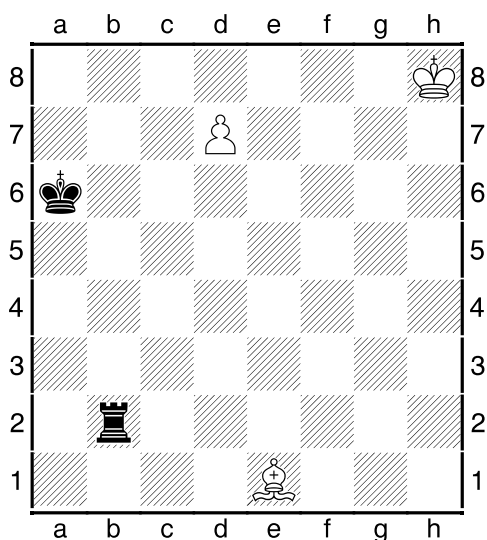
by Ian Watson

COVID has cancelled over-the-board tourneys, but it hasn't interrupted chess composing. Composing has always been a work-from-home activity, so it has blossomed during lockdowns. The publication of chess compositions has continued, too. Here are four endgame studies first published during 2020.

Before those, however, let me show you two studies from a composer who died in 2020. He was the extraordinary Richard K. Guy, who had reached 103 years old in 2019. He was a model for longevity, celebrating his hundredth birthday by trekking in the Rocky Mountains, at which age he still continued his work as a professional mathematician. Guy composed nearly 200 endgame studies, mainly in the period from his undergraduate years to his editorship of British Chess Magazine's endgame study column (which he wrote from 1947 to 1951). He also collaborated with other well-known study experts, notably with Hugh Blandford and John Roycroft in inventing the GBR code (Guy-Blandford-Roycroft), which is used to classify and index chess positions in a very few symbols.

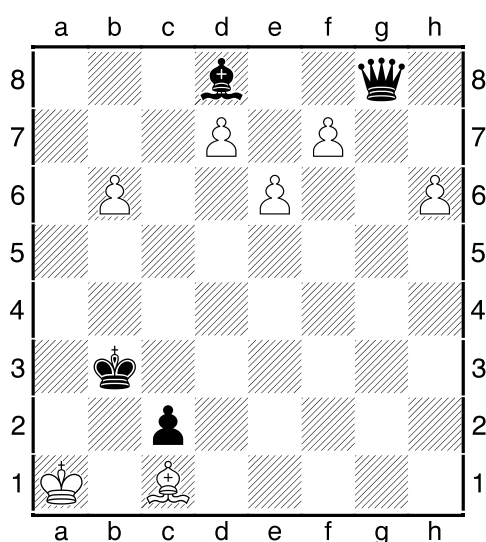
You'll find the solutions to all the studies at the end of this article, but please do try to solve them – they are solver-friendly! As usual in studies, it's White to play and White's task is given underneath the diagram.

### R Guy, *Chess*, 1939



**Win**

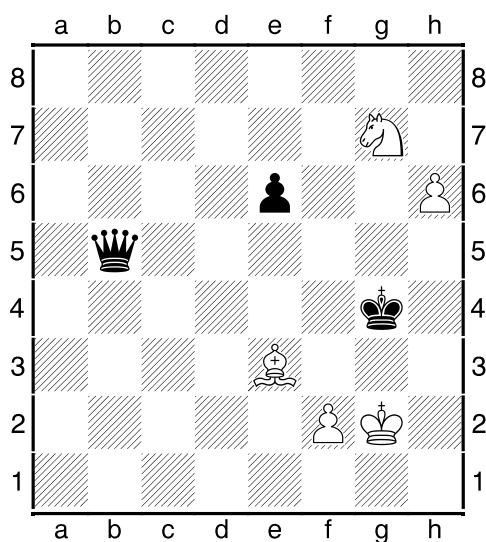
### R Guy, *BCM*, 1940



**Win**

The BCM column, which Richard Guy wrote around seventy years ago, now features four endgame studies each month. I am its current writer, and I like to publish new studies by British composers, so please do have a go at composition and send them to me at [ian@irwatson.uk](mailto:ian@irwatson.uk). The first of these is by two well-known names from the English county chess circuit, Paul Byway and Steve Law. In recent years, Paul has concentrated on composing and has become arguably the leading expert on 'miniatures' – positions with seven or fewer pieces; this study isn't quite a miniature, but it is nonetheless light and elegant. It has an eight-move main line, but it isn't too hard to find.

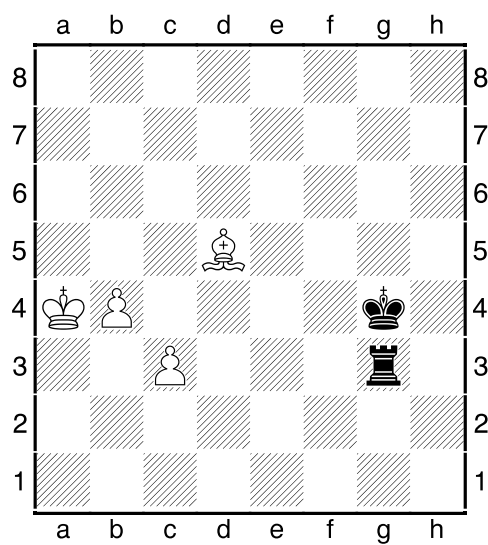
### P Byway & S Law, *BCM*, 2020



**Win**

Our next study, this time by Paul Byway alone, is indeed a miniature. The position could have arisen in a game. It may even have done – it is so natural. If it has, I doubt whether the White player found the surprising solution.

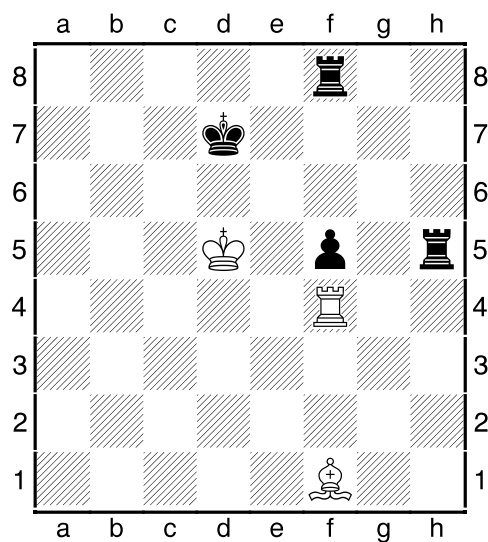
**P Byway, BCM, 2020**



**Win**

Paul Michelet is another composer whose works appear regularly in BCM. This one could have been composed a century or more ago - no sidelines, no complexity, but of course a surprise move. When you've seen that move, the draw will immediately be clear to you.

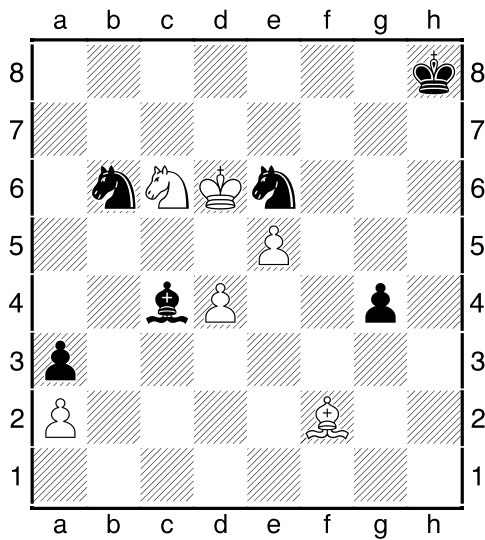
**P Michelet, BCM, 2020**



**Draw**

To round off this article, a composition by another extraordinary person, John Nunn. The studies editor of The Problemist described this study as "a player-friendly sacrificial episode ending up in a stalemate".

**J Nunn, *The Problemist*, 2020**



**Draw**

To see more endgame studies, visit the British Chess Problem Society website at [www.theproblemist.org](http://www.theproblemist.org) or the ARVES site at [www.arves.org](http://www.arves.org).

### **Solutions**

**(Guy - 1939) 1.Bb4 Rh2+ 2.Kg7 Rg2+ 3.Kf7 Rf2+ 4.Ke6 Re2+ 5.Kd5** and 5...Re3 6.Kd4 wins. (2.Kg8 and 4.Ke7 are minor duals – alternative White moves which also solve.) 1.d8Q? Rb8.

**(Guy - 1940) 1.fxg8N Bxb6 2.d8R Bxd8 3.h7 Bb6 4.h8B** wins. 2.d8Q? Bd4+, as also 4.h8Q? Bd4+. All three underpromotions. That had been done before, but not, as far as I know, with so few moves and so few pieces.

**(Byway & Law) 1.f3+ Kh4 2.h7 Qb8 3.h8Q+ Qxh8 4.Bd4 e5 5.Bxe5 Qd8/f8 6.Bg3+ Kg5 7.Ne6+ K~ 8.Nxd8/f8** winning. White sacrifices his queen merely to deflect the Black queen.

There are a lot of sidelines, but they are both understandable and findable by humans: 1.h7?/1.Bd4?/1.Nxe6? are all met by checks on the long diagonal. 2.Bf2+? Kg5 3.h7 Qb8 4.Bd4 Kg6. 2.Nxe6? Qb2+ 3.Kf1 Qa1+ 4.Ke2 Qa2+ 5.K~ Qxe6. 3.Nxe6? Qg3+; 3.Nf5+? exf5 4.Bd4 Qg3+ 5.Kf1 Qxf3+; 3.Bf2+? Kg5 4.Bd4 Kg6; 3.Bd4? Qg3+ 4.Kf1 Qxf3+ 5.Bf2+ Kg4 6.h8Q Qd1+ 7.Be1 Qd3+ 8.Kg1 Qe3+ 9.Bf2 Qc1+ 10.Kg2 Qc6+ and can keep checking by 11.Kh2 Qc7+ 12.Kg2 Qc6+ 13.Kf1 Qc4+ 14.Ke1 Qc1+ 15.Ke2 Qc2+ 16.Ke3 Qc3+ 17.Ke4 Qc2+ and so on. 4...Qd8/f8 5.Bf2+ Kg5 6.Nxe6+. 4...Qh6 5.Bf2+ Kg5 6.Be3+.

**(Byway) 1.b5 Rxc3 2.b6 Re3 3.b7 Re8 4.Be6+ Kg5 5.Bc8 Re1 6.Be6** and Black cannot stop the pawn, e.g. 6...Re4+ 7.Ka3 Re3+ 8.Kb4 Re4+ 9.Kc3 or 6...Ra1+ 7.Kb4 Rb1+ 8.Bb3. White has to push his b-pawn immediately, even at the cost of the other pawn, else Black's king has time to get across – 1.c4? Kf5! is eventually a draw.

This study shows the 'mousetrap theme' – White opens a door and then closes it, in this case by moving his bishop from e6 and back to e6, so it's also a 'switchback'.

**(Michelet) 1.Be2 Rh6 2.Bg4 Rhf6 3.Rxf5 Rxf5+ 4.Ke4 Ke6 5.Bh3** and Black cannot unlock his pieces. The bishop dominating the two rooks by the pin has been known for a century or so, but the play leading up to it here is new to me.

**(Nunn) 1.d5 Nxd5 2.Kxe6 Bxa2 3.Kf5 g3 4.Bxg3 Ne7+ 5.Nxe7 Bb1+ 6.Kg5 a2 7.Kh6 a1Q 8.Bh4 Qxe5 9.Ng6+ Bxg6 10.Bf6+ Qxf6** stalemate.

1.Nb4? Nf4 2.Kc5 Nfd5 3.Nxd5 Bxd5 4.Kxb6 Bxa2 or in this line 2.e6 Bxe6 3.Ke5 Nfd5. In the main line, 3...Bb1+ 4.Kxg4 a2 5.Bd4. Also in the main line, 4...Bb1+ 5.Kg5 a2 6.e6 a1Q 7.Be5+. Finally, in the main line, 7.Bh4? Kg7.

## Chess Problem News

*by Ian Watson*

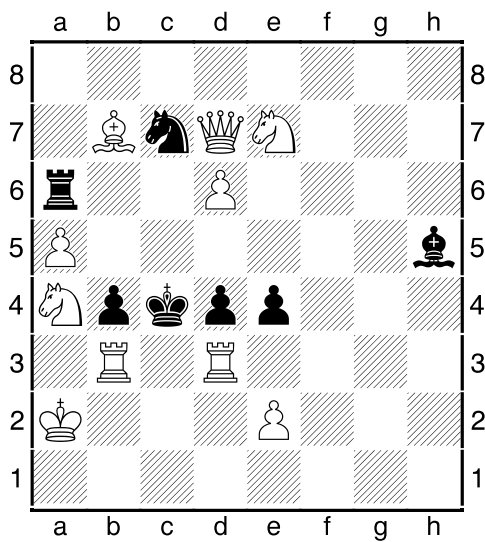
Britain has an active chess problem community, particularly the British Chess Problem Society. The BCPS publishes one of the world's leading problem magazines, *The Problemist*, from which five of our problems here are taken.

The Society also organises chess solving events, in which competitors solve chess problems and studies, against the clock, including the annual British Chess Solving Championship, sponsored by Winton. Chess solving events are held by most of the chess-playing nations, and there is a parallel world to over-the-board chess, with chess solving FM, IM and GM titles, and chess solving Elo ratings, and there is a European and also a World Championship each year. Sadly, in 2020, most solving events around the world were cancelled once COVID lockdowns started, but fortunately, the British Championship was in February, so was unaffected. John Nunn won, taking the national title for the tenth (!) time. Although most physical solving tournaments were unable to happen, there have been online solving competitions. If, for example, you visit [www.netchex.club](http://www.netchex.club), you will find regular daily and monthly solving challenges. Please do try it – the software is solver-friendly, and it will give you a solving Elo rating estimate based on how well you solve.

Solving thus continued through 2020, but all online. Composing of problems, however, continued in its normal way - which is a composer with a chess board (and a computer to check if the problem is sound...)

This composition, by David Shire, is a two-mover (White to play and force mate in two moves). Your task is to find the key move (White's first move), but be careful because there are two 'tries' (near solutions, which only fail to a single Black reply).

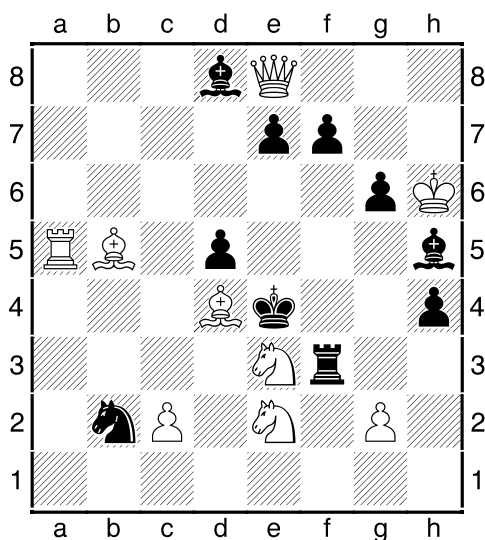
**D Shire, *The Problemist*, 2020**



**Mate in 2**

Now here's a three-mover. It was composed by Don Smedley, who died in October. Don was a fine composer both of chess problems and bridge problems, and a former President of the British Chess Problem Society.

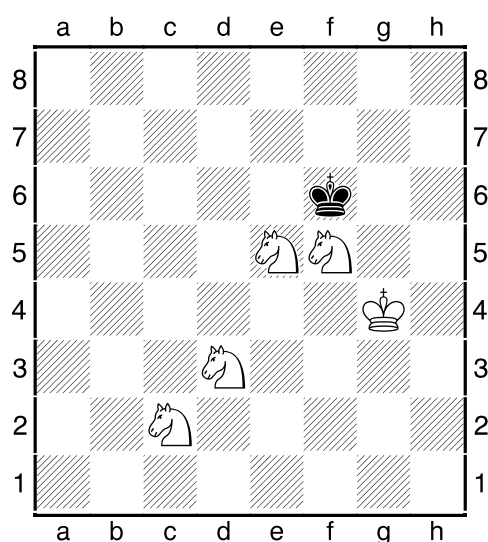
**D Smedley, *Matthews JT*, 2002**



**Mate in 3**

Many over-the-board players have taken up composing. Here's a four-mover by Paul Lamford, a strong player both of chess and bridge; it's his first published problem, although he is already known as a composer of endgame studies.

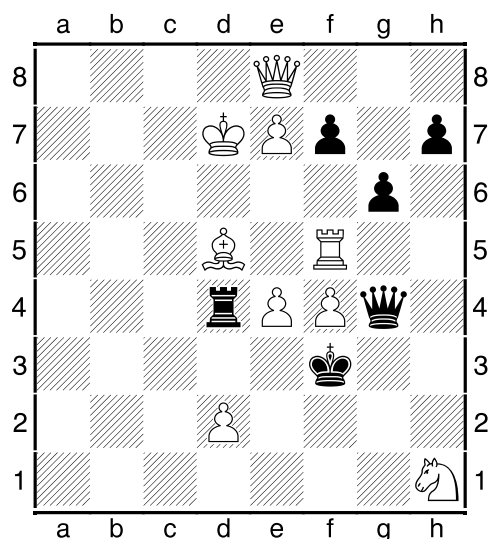
**P Lamford, *The Problemist*, 2020**



**Mate in 4**

Michael McDowell is one of the UK's leading composers (and one of its leading solvers too). His problem below is a helpmate, which means White and Black are cooperating together to give checkmate to the Black king. In helpmates, the move sequence is unusual in that Black plays first; in this two-move helpmate, the move sequence is BWBW, with the second White move giving checkmate. This particular problem is a 'twin' – solve the diagram position, then relocate the knight in the diagram to c1 and solve again.

**M McDowell, *The Problemist*, 2020**

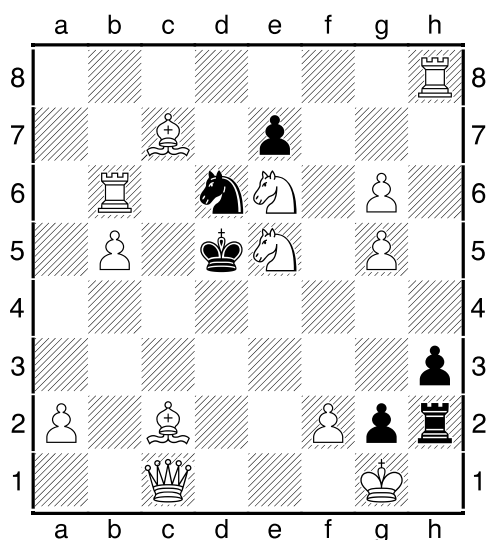


**Helpmate in 2**

(a) diagram, (b) transfer N from h1 to c1

Now for a selfmate. This one is by Cedric Lytton and Stephen Taylor. In selfmates, White is trying to get himself checkmated and Black is trying to avoid giving mate. The move sequence goes, WBWB, with Black's second move giving mate. In this one, if Black were otherwise stalemated, he would have to play ...Rh1 mate, but can you immobilise Black's king and knight?

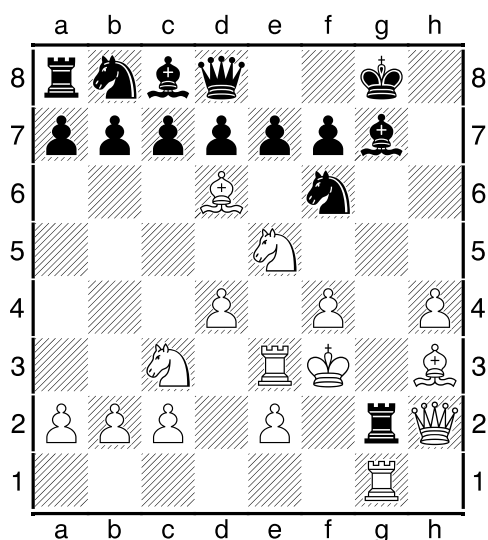
**C Lytton & S Taylor, *The Problemist*, 2020**



**Selfmate in 2**

Last year, in this Yearbook, I challenged you to solve what is called a “proof game”; here’s another – you have to find a legal game that would lead to the diagram position; the moves may be ones that would never occur in an over-the-board game, but they must all be legal moves. In Stephen Taylor’s composition, you are told that the position arose after Black’s sixteenth move. In proof games, there is only one sequence of moves that is possible, which is very useful information to help you solve it. Of course, it’s very likely that the composer has built in some surprises; a typical one is for pawns to have promoted.

**S Taylor, *The Problemist*, 2020**



**Position after Black’s 16<sup>th</sup> move: what were the moves of the game?**

To see more chess problems, visit the British Chess Problem Society website at [www.theproblemist.org](http://www.theproblemist.org)

## Solutions

(Shire) **1.Nc6** with the threat **2.Ne5**, and with defences **1...Kd5 2.Rxd4**, **1...Kb5 2.Rxb4**, **1...Rxc6 2.Qxc6**, **1...Rxa5 2.Nxa5**. To appreciate the problem, you need to see the tries, their mates, and their refutations. There is **1.Nf5?** threat **2.Rxd4** with defences **1...Nb5 2.Qe6**, **1...Rxd6 2.Nxd6**, **1...Rc6 2.Qxc6**, **1...exd3 2.exd3**, but **1...Ne6!** and there is **1.Nd5?** threat **2.Rxb4** with defences **1...Nxd5 2.Bxa6**, **1...Rb6 2.Ndxb6**, **1...Rc6 2.Qxc6**, but **1...Bxe2!** Notice how the key move gives Black's king freedom to move, which it didn't have in the diagram.

(Smedley) **1.Nxd5** (threat **2.Bd3+ Nxd3/Rxd3 3.Ndc3/Nf6**). The defences are: **1...Nc4 2.Ndc3+ Rxc3/Kf5 3.Bc6/Bd7**; **1...e6 2.Nf6+ R,Bxf6/Kf5 3.Bc6/Bd3**; **1...Kf5 2.Qxf7+ Ke4/Kg4 3.Qe6/Qxf3**; and **1...Bxa5 2.Qxe7+ Kxd5/Kf5 3.Qe5/Bd7**. A splendid problem.

(Lamford) **1.Na3 Ke6 2.Kg5 Kd5 3.Nb5 Ke6 4.Nc7**, or **3...Ke4 4.Nc3**. It's unusual for a problem to start with promoted pieces on the board, but here it looks pleasing.

(McDowell) In helpmates, because Black moves first, it's conventional to write the solutions like this, with the Black moves after the move number: (a) **1.Rxe4 Bc4 2.Rxf4 Qa8** (b) **1.Qxf4 Rg5 2.Qxe4 Qxf7**. One solver described the problem thus: "Black's rook and Black's queen try twice to self-pin, each succeeding at the second attempt, while White's queen mates along the line of the first attempt."

(Lytton & Taylor) **1.Qa3 Kxe5/Kxe6/Nc8/Ne8/Nf7/Nf5/Ne4/Nc4/Nxb5/Nb7 2.Qb3/Qc5/Rxc8/Rxe8/gxf7/Bxf5/Qf3/Qb3/Qa5/Qa8** and **2...Rh1** mate.

(Taylor) **1.d4 h5 2.Bf4 h4 3.Bd6 h3 4.f4 hxg2 5.h4 g5 6.Rh3 g4 7.Re3 g3 8.Nf3 g1N 9.Bh3 g2 10.Kf2 Nf6 11.Qxg1 Rg8 12.Qh2 g1R 13.Ne5 R8g2+ 14.Kf3 Bg7 15.Nc3 Kf8 16.Rxg1 Kg8**.

# CHESS & BRIDGE

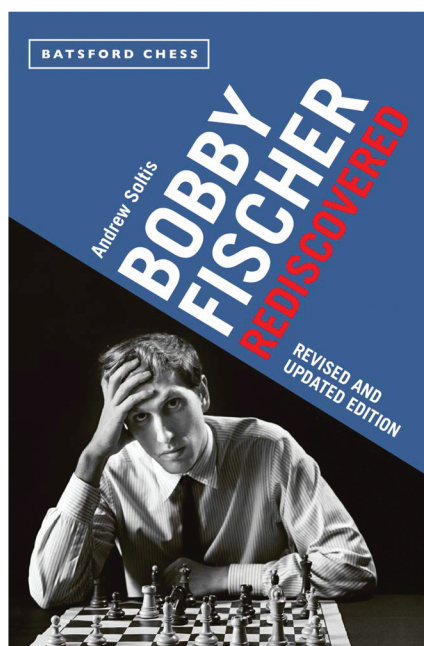
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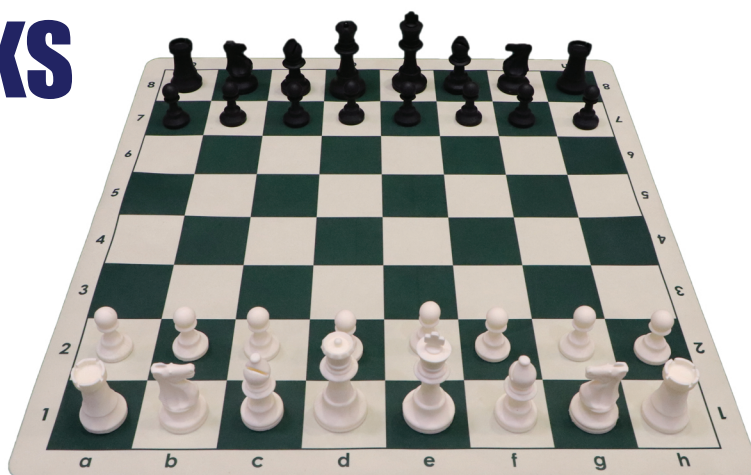
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