

Chess *moves*

Marathon Man

Keith Arkell wins
Checkmate Covid – The Return

INSIDE

Game of the Month - Michael Adams

Online County Championships

The Interview – GM Peter Wells

Return to over-the-board chess

ECF Writing Initiative – Jeremy Hart

... and much more



Welcome to the June eNewsletter, which from this edition reverts to its former title of Chess Moves. With monthly contributions from Michael Adams, Keith Arkell, Peter Wells, Ian Watson, Christopher Jones and Tim Wall, along with our regular interview feature, the eNewsletter will give members a great read every month.

This month we have an interview with GM Peter Wells, and in his monthly report ECF Director of Home Chess Nigel Towers features a short report on the ECF Chess For All Festival and Checkmate Covid Marathon. We also provide details of the British Online and the return of the physical British Championships which will take place in October in two locations ... and with an eye on the huge uptake of online coaching and streaming, we are close to launching the ECF broadcast channel, which will promote chess for all.

Our Creative Writing Initiative is attracting interest, and this month we feature an excellent submission from Jeremy Hart. If you want to submit an article (500 to 1000 words), please contact me directly at rivlinmark@gmail.com to start the process. If we receive enough pieces over the next year, we will consider collating them for a book.

--- Mark Rivlin

Cover photography by Dr John Upham - <https://johnupham.smugmug.com/>



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NEWS AND VIEWS

Director of Home Chess **Nigel Towers'** monthly report includes news of the British Online, British Championships, the return to over-the-board chess and new-to-chess members ...

ECF ONLINE

Clubs and Weekly Events

ECF online club memberships are now around 4,500 in the Chess.com ECF Open Club, 1,500 in the ECF Members Club and 1,200 in the Lichess English Chess Players Club -

<https://englishchessonline.org.uk/upcoming-club-events>. We are currently running six online rated club events per week on Chess.com and Lichess, and have also introduced an ECF U1600 rating limited Swiss on Chess.com every Tuesday.

Grand Prix

The ECF Online Blitz and Rapid Grand Prix Series continues with the third Blitz and Rapid events on the first and third Sundays in May. GM Keith Arkell is currently leading both events, followed closely by FM Harry Grieve and Theo Khoury in the blitz, and Christopher Gant and Freddie Gordon in the rapid.

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2021-online-grand-prix-series-blitz-leaderboards/>
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2021-online-grand-prix-series-rapid-leaderboards/>

Club and Grand Prix events are all ECF online rated, together with the growing number of ECF online leagues, and a great opportunity to track your rating progress.

Internationals

We have English teams in four Lichess leagues/series, including the regular Mega Team Battles on Friday afternoons, the Bundesliga/Quarantane league on Sunday and Tuesday evenings, the mid-week Champions League and the Russia Team Series.

The image shows two screenshots from the Lichess website. The left screenshot displays the 'Lichess Liga 6B Team Battle' results table, and the right screenshot shows the 'English Chess Players' statistics and player list.

Rank	Team	Members	Score
1	English Chess Players	IM SmoothAsAHedgehog 39+31+29+28+24+23+22+21	217
2	YaChess	komendart 42+38+26+23+22+21+20+17	209
3	Rheydter Schachverein 1920	biginge 33+32+26+23+23+19+19+18	193
4	DrBergerBerger und Freunde	IM DrBergerBerger 37+26+24+23+19+18+18+17	182
5	Virtual Chess	FM ZappBrannigan86 38+33+23+20+18+16+15+10	173
6	Oberhausener Schachverein 1887	nodi21 37+37+24+19+16+16+6+4	159
7	Nkwe School of Chess	Cloe_Banks 24+23+22+20+19+18+16+15	157
8	ШШК "Зарайская ладья"	andrei6269 32+32+27+23+15+8+6+0	143
9	SF Neuberg	GOGAME5000 46+25+24+19+16+5+0+0	135
10	SG Böblingen Remstal Zollernalb	Friday71 12	12

Rank	Player	Rating
1	IM SmoothAsAHedgehog	2692
2	GM gmms2694	2580
3	The_Knight_of_Spring	2365
4	IM CheckThis1	2614
5	Gigantobear	2301
6	Taviman	1977
7	khswampy	2026
8	Ferrarifan	2309
9	DavidWilson1980	2224
10	EdenHazard8	1981
11	vleeshhd	2179
12	CM gr177	2364
13	Greenbecker	1978
14	harrythebk	1963
15	Henny_Penny	2027
16	MSoszynski	1970
17	geoff_march	1886
18	ColeG1964	1942
19	chesstree7	1805
20	nazriz	2268

The English Players team started in Division 9B in the Bundesliga, and have moved up to Division 5B, with four successive promotions and some great support from the England team, including GMs Keith Arkell & Matthew Sadler, IM Richard Pert, and many others. The Chess.com Nations League Season 3 starts on Sunday 13th June with a big line-up of national teams in our Division, as per the link here - <https://www.chess.com/news/view/season-3-participating-teams>

2021 British Online Championships II - 24 July-8 August 2021

Entries are increasing for the BOCC 2, which will follow the same format as BOCC 1 over Christmas 2020, and will include Qualifiers and Finals for the 2021 British Online Open, Women, Seniors and Junior Championships. We will also be running Major Open and Rating Limited online competitions over the same period.

Counties Online Championships 2021 June-September 2021

The English Online Counties Championship starts again in June 2021. **Season 2** sees a streamlined format, with qualifying Swiss team tournaments for each of the Semi-Finals/Finals of the three Championships - **Open**, **Minor Open 1900** (maximum average team rating) and **U1800** (all players under 1800). **Qualifiers** will be on 12th and 19th June, 3rd and 17th July and 21st August. The **Semi-Final** will be on 11th September and all **Finals** on 18th September.

General Online Leagues and Competitions

We now have a huge number of online leagues and competitions, many of them running on the ECF's LMS system, which covers OTB and online events now has more than 100 registered LMS Organisations, and over 1800 registered individual users of the system. The LMS was created by Malcolm Peacock of Preston CC and is supported by Malcolm and Steve Emmerton from North Staffordshire. Steve covers the LMS in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter. One of the key advantages of the system, as well as in-built support for over the board and online competitions, is that it provides for auto-rating of events in the ECF's online rating systems.

RETURN TO OVER THE BOARD

There have been a number of over-the-board outdoor and junior events, as well as clubs starting to open up with limited rule of 6 meetings, as we continue through the steps of the Government's HMG Spring Plan and look forward to Step 4.

The working group is looking at how we can best support clubs and organisers in the return to over the board events including publication of a set of precautions on the ECF website, and updated ECF tournament regulations including potential use of hybrid events and conditions under which these can be rated.

Clubs

We now have a clubs page on the web site with a set of resources for club secretaries, and will be looking to build on that over the coming months - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/clubs-home-page/>.

Over the Board Events 2021

We are also planning a number of ECF over-the-board events for 2021.

English Counties 2021

We are looking to schedule some friendly counties events for August and September 2021, which will be open to all counties and with the potential to use some new formats including hybrid team matches, dependant on feedback from Associations and the progress of the opening up process. All being well, we are planning for the 2021/2022 OTB counties season to start in earnest with regional stages starting in September and finals next year.

British Championships 2021 2-10 October

Over-the-board Championships are now scheduled for October with separate venues in Hull and Milton Keynes. The Hull venue will host the British Open and Women's Championship, and Milton Keynes will host the British Seniors and Juniors Finals, with Seniors and Juniors co-located and on different days. The events will run daily during the week and weekends, with the junior finals over the weekend of 2nd and 3rd October. The venues will be linked with the top boards and commentary for the remote venue broadcast at each site along with commentary on the local finals. Qualifications will be based on the 2021 Summer Online competition with those who qualify for a final invited to play. There may also be a Major Open at one of the venues alongside the other events, and we are expecting to broadcast a full commentary programme on the events.

CHESS FOR ALL, NEW TO CHESS, FESTIVAL/COACHING, MARATHON AND ECF BROADCASTS

We continue to look at how we can support new players who are looking to take up the game following *The Queen's Gambit* Netflix series, and the huge community of chess improvers mostly coming from online play and interested in trying out over the board events as we get back to normal OTB chess.

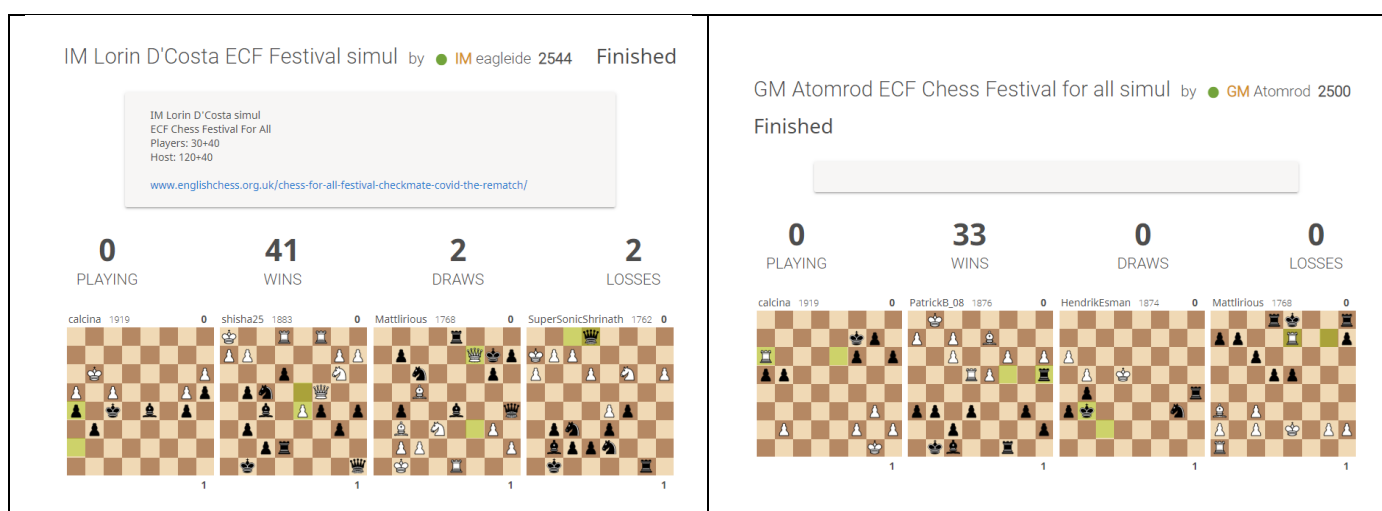
New to Chess

The latest version of our New to Chess page includes general advice, web and coaching/educational resources and links to recent broadcast streams and can be found here -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/new-to-chess/>

Festival and Coaching

The Chess for All Festival for all took place during the first week in June (Sunday 30 May-Friday 4 June). This was targeted at players from beginner level up to 1600 Elo and was very successful, with around 120 entrants for the week's events. These included coaching sessions from Lateefah Messam-Sparks and IM Lorin D'Costa, simuls from Lorin and GM Keith Arkell, and a series of very well attended training tournaments. Lorin took 45 opponents with 41 wins, 2 draws and 2 losses. GM Keith Arkell played against 33 opponents with 33 wins.




























The event was very well received, and many thanks to Lateefah, Lorin and Keith for the great coaching and impressive simultaneous exhibition play. We are now looking at establishing a series of coaching events going forwards based on the festival model and supported by regular rating limited tournaments and events.

Marathon

The big ECF online event during early June was the ECF Checkmate Covid – The Return marathon which took place on 5-6 June. This was a 24-hour arena tournament with over 250 participants taking part over Saturday and Sunday, in aid of the British Red Cross Global Coronavirus Appeal. There was a big turnout from top level titled players taking playing in all or part of the event including -

- GMs Mickey Adams, David Howell, Luke McShane, Matthew Sadler, Gawain Jones, Keith Arkell, Danny Gormally, Matthew Turner, Simon Williams and Peter Svidler
- IMs Malcolm Pein, Thomas Rendle, Ameet Ghasi, and Andrew Horton
- WIM Fiona Steil-Antoni
- WFM Maria Emelianova, Shohreh Bayatt and Louise Head

Player		
#1	 GM KeithArkell   (2506)	655
#2	 killerm3000  (2318)	522
#3	 natpaul92  (2029)	416
#4	 IsolaniAtHome  (2194)	371
#5	 KoniMonster  (2163)	363
#6	 RockTroll   (2152)	344
#7	 IM Trendle   (2654)	286
#8	 Queensandpawns   (2074)	279
#9	 Ferrarifan27  (2081)	279
#10	 FM Nachsueb   (2186)	276

GM Keith Arkell came first with a massive 655 points and a winning streak of an amazing 44 games, including games against top class opposition, followed by Shreyas Royal and Nathanael Paul in third. We cover some of the games elsewhere in this newsletter, including Keith's annotation of one of his wins against Tristan Cox (RockTroll), with Keith playing all his moves in under a minute with one second for the final combination in the double rook and pawn ending.

Tom Rendle talks us through his game against Keith where he tries Bird's Opening with a white pawn push on the K-side and a complex tactical battle.

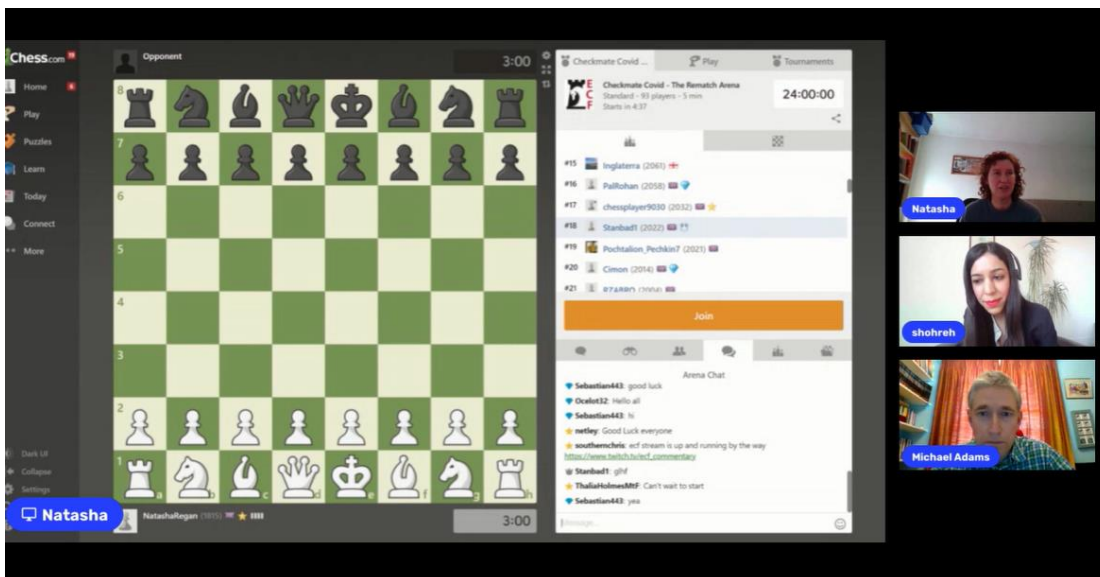
WIM Natasha Regan organised the commentary stream for the full 24 hours, with an impressive series of guest commentators on the ECF's new broadcast commentary channel on Twitch, as shown on the web page here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/checkmate-covid-the-rematch/> - and below ...

Date	Time		
Saturday 5th June	5pm – 6pm	GM Mickey Adams	WFM Shohreh Bayat
Saturday 5th June	6pm – 7pm	FM Akshaya Kalaiyalahan	WFM Louise Head
Saturday 5th June	7pm – 8pm	GM John Emms	GM Chris Ward
Saturday 5th June	8pm – 9pm	WFM Sarah Longson	FM Alex Longson
Saturday 5th June	9pm – 10pm	GM Gawain Jones	WIM Sue Maroroa (tbc)
Saturday 5th June	10pm – 11pm	GM Luke McShane	
Saturday 5th June	11pm – 12pm	WCM Zoe Varney	GM Danny Gormally
Saturday 5th June	Midnight	GM Matthew Sadler	WIM Natasha Regan
	1am	STREAMERS	Colm Buckley + Phil Crocker
	2am	STREAMERS	Julio Calcina
	3am	STREAMERS	Julio Calcina

	7am	STREAMERS	Julio Calcina
Sunday 6th June	8am – 9am	Sean Marsh	Natasha + Matthew
Sunday 6th June	9am – 10am	FM Peter Sowray	FM Terry Chapman
Sunday 6th June	10am – 11am	WFM Kanwal Bhatia	GM Nigel Short (tbc)
Sunday 6th June	11am – midday	IM Ameet Ghasi	Tristan Cox
Sunday 6th June	12pm – 1pm	IM Malcolm Pein	Jonny Pein (tbc)
Sunday 6th June	1pm – 2pm	STREAMERS	GM Simon Williams
Sunday 6th June	2pm – 3pm	GM Daniel King	GM Julian Hodgson
Sunday 6th June	3pm – 4pm	Nina Pert	IM Richard Pert
Sunday 6th June	4pm – 5pm	GM Dave Norwood	Richard Farleigh

Commentary and broadcast

WIM Natasha Regan has done a great job of building an ECF Twitch stream and broadcast channel which can be found here - https://www.twitch.tv/ecf_commentary - with some excellent commentary on recent online events from Natasha, GM Matthew Sadler and numerous other commentators. Do try and catch up on some of the recent events which including recordings of the online internationals and team battles, the festival simuls, and of course the 24-hour commentary stream from the marathon with probably the largest group of titled English players to date commentating on a single event.



ECF MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS OFFER

We're edging closer to renewal time, and with a return to OTB on the horizon please ensure your membership is up-to-date. More here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-membership-renewals/>



FIDE QUEENS' FESTIVAL (Global Women's Online Chess Challenge)

Follow this link - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/fide-queens-festival-global-womens-online-chess-challenge/>



COVID-19 UPDATES AND HELP

More here on government guidelines - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-covid-19-helpful-articles/>



LET'S GO CLUBBING

The ECF has launched its new Clubs Home Page here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/clubs-home-page/>



FOR KING AND COUNTY

News on the summer Online County Championships here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/online-county-championships-this-summer/> and here, from Mark Murrell ...

Season 2 sees a streamlined format with qualifying Swiss team tournaments for each of the Semi-Finals/ Finals of the three Championships: **Open, Minor Open 1900** (maximum average team rating) and **U1800** (all players under 1800). All games are played at 6:30pm on Saturday evening at **G60/15** on the Chess.com platform.

Qualifiers - 12 & 19 June, 3 & 17 July & 21 August

Finals - Semi-Final 11 September (advances to 4 September should the over-the-board regional competition not be held) and all Finals on 18 September

The **National U1400** will once again be played alongside R5 & the September Finals stage matches.

Contact your County Association team captains or secretaries if you are interested in representing your county. Whilst ECF membership at a minimum of Supporter level is required, why not take advantage of the [ECF's offer](#) to extend any membership taken out now until the end of August 2022 and help support your local clubs and leagues prepare for the return of over-the-board chess too – 15 months for the price of 12 !

Eligibility

A player is eligible to represent one of the following historical counties of England (or a combined county team) in the Championships) if the player is a 2020/21 ECF member or supporter, is not barred from ECF online Clubs, has an active Chess.com playing account; and meets one of the following criteria:

(i) Birth in that county;

(ii) Five years' domicile in that county at any time;

(iii) Two months' immediate previous and present membership of a club either in or affiliated to that County;

- (iv) One month's immediately previous and present domicile in that County;
(v) Present attendance as a student at a school, college or university in that County.



BRITISH JUNIOR RAPID & BLITZ CHAMPIONSHIP

Dates and details here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/british-junior-rapid-blitz-championship/>



LEAGUE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Steve Emmerton on an IT success story for the ECF

The ECF League Management System (LMS) was commissioned by the ECF in 2016 and is available, free of charge, to all affiliated counties, leagues, congresses and clubs, although the original policy was 'Free to ECF Rated Leagues'. The developer of the system was Malcolm Peacock of Preston chess club. In order to reduce his workload, and allow him to concentrate on development, I took over the administration functions and handle the creation of new LMS Organisations and Users. Both Malcolm and I are more than happy to assist with the setting up of new LMS Organisations and to answer any questions that people may have. Although Malcolm received a payment from the ECF for initially developing the system, we are both now unpaid volunteers.

The main aims of the system initially were to allow the entering of results by team captains immediately after a match, the automatic maintenance of league tables and the ability to create a grading file for sending to the ECF, thus largely eliminating the need for a local grading officer. This facility has now been extended to the point where it is no longer even necessary to create the grading file as LMS will create the file automatically and send it to the ECF Rating System automatically. This submission happens on a monthly basis and allows the ECF to create a monthly rating list. The only involvement by the designated grading officer is now just to resolve any queries on the file submitted. The first Users of the system were the Birmingham Summer League in 2017, and they were followed closely by the Birmingham League as a whole, the North Staffs League (NSDCA) and the Kent League in the normal 2017/2018 league season.

Take up of the system has progressed steadily, to the point where there are now over 100 registered LMS Organisations and over 1800 registered individual Users of the system – this includes the local LMS Organisation Owners/Administrators, Club Secretaries, Club Owners and Team Captains. It has now evolved into more than a League Management System, because it caters for individual events as well – many clubs now use it for their club championships and other internal club competitions.

As we all know, the use of online chess via Chess.com, Lichess and Tornelo has exploded during the C19 pandemic. LMS was not really designed to cater for this, but Malcolm has successfully bolted on an online facility and it has worked really well. Having said that, there have been more questions regarding the setting up and use of LMS for online competitions, although most organisers have coped very well. We are very hopeful that when OTB chess returns then all of these online organisations will see the value in using LMS for those competitions as well, and it will become the de facto system for league and club management.

Speaking now as a User, my local league – the North Staffs League – decided to start using LMS in 2017 and I was appointed as our LMS Administrator. This merged the positions of the Results Secretary and the Grading Officer. Our reasons, I imagine, were the same reasons that many other leagues have decided to adopt the system. It was no longer necessary to sit up until the early hours of the morning waiting for team captains to email me their match result, followed by updating the spreadsheets (often incorrectly!!) containing our league tables and then uploading them to our website. Suddenly everything became automatic and I could go to bed before 1:00 am!! Grading became a breeze. Twice a

year I would generate a grading file, using the facility within LMS, and send it to the ECF. But then automatic grading became part of the system and I no longer even had to do that.

Having set up the system, I then held a series of training evenings, before the start of the season, with the secretaries and team captains of all clubs, usually with two clubs in attendance at each session. The benefits of this were two fold – they got to learn about LMS and what their input would be but, also, allowed them to raise questions to which I had to find the answers, and this, in turn, gave me a better understanding of LMS.

The initial set up of the system can be time consuming, but once it is done, it is done, and there is no need to go through it again every year, apart from updating things like the names of club officials, team captains etc., but you would need to do that whatever system you were using.

Setting up a new LMS Organisation is actually a very logical process but, whilst there is plenty of help available within LMS, it would probably be helpful to create a document that details every step required in setting up an LMS Organisation from the User's perspective.

An unintended side benefit of LMS is where a club (or any other organisation) does not have their own website. They can use their LMS page as their website and then enter and format any information that they want. Their LMS page will, by default, contain things like the club secretary's name and contact details, the club venue, etc., but you can add and personalise it with any other information that you like. The URL for the club's LMS page can be a bit of a mouthful but you can use a URL shortening website to make it something more meaningful. I use the Bit.ly website to do this. For example, the URL for my own club's LMS page is - <http://ecflms.org.uk/lms/league/club/2997/2991/org>. This is a bit of a mouthful, but using the Bit.ly website, I can create a URL as follows - www.bit.ly/fentonchessclub. This will automatically send you to the Club's LMS page.

I am sure I could write a lot more but I hope that this gives you a flavour of how and why you should use LMS.



4NCL

Mike Truran with results and forthcoming events ...

9th 4NCL Online Congress 18-20 June

https://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/online/arrangements_9.htm

8th 4NCL Online Congress results

https://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/online/winners_8.htm

4NCL Online Spring Congress results

https://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/online/winners_spring21.htm

4NCL Online/4NCL Junior 4NCL Online Season 3 results

Many congratulations to all the 4NCL Online Season 3 Champions

4NCL Online

Division 1: Celtic Tigers & Sharks

Division 2: Hull & Beverley Romans 1

Division 3: MK Phoenix 2

Division 4: Barnet Knights A

Division 5: Charlton Cobras A

Division 6: MK Phoenix 3

Division 7: Newport A

Junior 4NCL Online

Division 1: Muswell Hill Bishops

Division 2: Young Dragons A

Division 3: Barnet Knights A

Division 4: Leeds Juniors 1

Division 5: Lenzie Basilisks



ECF AWARDS NOMINATIONS open until the end of June. More here -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/nominations-invited-for-this-years-ecf-awards/>. For general enquiries contact Stephen Greep Email: sjgreep@gmail.com



WINTON BRITISH CHESS SOLVING CHAMPIONSHIP

The 2021-2022 Championship details are here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/winton-british-chess-solving-championship-2021-2022/>



ECF ACADEMY

Alexander Longson reports ...

May's topic was Endgame Technique, with a focus on practical methods of handling typical endgame positions – especially converting better positions. GM Keith Arkell presented our end of the month workshop discussing some interesting moments from his own games.

For June we are returning to the theme of studying world champions' games. This time round we are looking at perhaps the greatest of them all, Garry Kasparov. Despite the mind-boggling complications, we hope students can absorb some of the creativity and energy from analysing these exciting games and of course learning about the amazing history of the Karpov-Kasparov duels of the 80s and 90s.



BCET

The British Chess Educational Trust Awards are looming. Details here -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/bcet-awards-2021/>



CHESSFEST

Malcolm Pein looks forward to three days of outdoor chess in July, including a celebration of Lewis Carroll's iconic *Alice in Wonderland* in Trafalgar Square ...

Alice in Blunderland!

Perfect timing, perfect weather, and the perfect opportunity to promote chess to a wide audience at one of England's most iconic venues, Trafalgar Square.

Welcome to ChessFest, a free family event on Sunday 18th July where Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* celebrates its 150th anniversary of publication, and children attending are encouraged to dress up as the book's characters. The event will also celebrate the 170th anniversary

of 'The Immortal Game,' acclaimed as the most brilliant game in the 1,400-year history of chess, which was played at Simpson's in the Strand, very close to Trafalgar Square.

There will be activities for players of all levels from absolute beginners to club players, with social chess, blindfold chess, human chess, simuls and the unofficial World Giant Chess Championship. There's never been anything like it in the UK - ChessFest will leave a legacy for London as CSC will work with local councils to install giant chess sets and concrete chess tables in London parks, to enable chess to be played all year round as in New York, Paris, Amsterdam and other cities.

Preceding this great day, there will be a day of chess action on Friday 16th July. 300 children from 30 inner-city schools across the UK in the charity's Classroom Chess programme have been invited to the capital for a day of chess fun. This includes a tournament and a Mad Hatter's Chess Party along with a visit to the V&A museum to see the *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* exhibition. The day will also see the children try on 15th and 16th-century armour from the Wallace Collection, and become real 'knights' on the chessboard. State schools interested in taking part in the events at Manchester Square Garden should contact us using our online form.

And for chess players of all ages, we have an outdoor Rapidplay on Saturday 17th July, also in Manchester Square, and should the weather not be on our side, we have a large canopy as back-up. We would be interested in hearing from volunteers via info@chessinschools.co.uk and all events are absolutely free. ChessFest is staged by Chess in Schools and Communities and proudly sponsored by XTX Markets. More details here - <http://www.chess-fest.com>

[Flyer](#) | [Entry form](#)



LONDON CALLING

John Sargent, Secretary of London Chess League and LOCL Organiser, on the popularity of the London Online Chess League

At the start of the pandemic, the sudden closure of over-the-board chess venues took a lot of the wind out of our sport's sails. The 134-year-old London League was no exception, where the 2019-2020 season across six Divisions came to an abrupt halt.

To keep players playing, and using our time away from the board as an opportunity to explore new technologies, the London Online Chess League was created in late 2020 as an experiment using the Tornelo platform. Unlike other popular online chess platforms, the idea is that players on Tornelo use their real names, sit on virtual 'boards' next to each other so they can see with a few clicks how their team is doing (as opposed to looking up a lot of nicknames from a list of tens of thousands of ongoing games), and could interact live via video call with an Arbiter who oversees the event. In short, the goal was to closely mimic the OTB experience, online.

With any challenger platform, there have been tech issues – although they are diminishing with time, to the point where the third season of the online chess league has started, on 9th June 2021. The League runs for 11 concurrent Wednesdays, with the final match on 18th of August. There are four Divisions of teams separated by average League rating, which is a blend of ECF/FIDE ratings and player estimates due to things like improving juniors, ratings being more out-of-date during the pandemic and so forth.

We have also learned a lot about Fair Play and analysis of chess games at a whole new level. With the help of Professor IM Ken Regan at the University of Buffalo, we now all have far more insight into the data behind chess moves than we have ever had at any point in history. In addition, the number of suspected Fair Play violations dropped significantly from Season 1 to Season 2.

The newest season sees four Divisions of teams do battle each week, with each team having four players. There are around 600 players currently registered with the League after we opened up entries to all UK-based chess clubs from Season 2 onwards to be more inclusive and bring the world of chess to as many people as possible.

There were a lot of admin problems that have slowly become easier to handle throughout the seasons, as the organising and troubleshooting team predominantly comprises of myself and John Sargent Adam Raoof. We are also indebted to John Upham for his help in adapting the London League LMS to be suitable for the online competition, to Rob Hammond for lending a helping hand on short notice for a lot of our pre-Season-3 admin and to Alex Holowczak who has been instrumental in helping level up our understanding of online Fair Play. Ultimately, with significantly fewer resources and only a couple of volunteers, the project is difficult, but also equally rewarding.

We also have a new broadcasting partnership with Chess.com (with Tornelo's full blessing, Tornelo is a playing platform but not an analysis/broadcasting platform). This is happening in Season 3 which means new analysis boards, an upgraded broadcast and being featured across the Chess.com streamers platform, which is very exciting! You can watch the matches with live commentary and interaction with chat, every Wednesday at <https://www.twitch.tv/jorosar> from 7pm BST.

You can also view current standings, cross-tables and so forth via the London League website at www.londonchess.org.uk, and the latest week's individual board pairings at <https://bit.ly/locls3-status>.

It is unclear in what capacity online competitive chess will continue alongside over-the-board chess once we are allowed to safely resume, but we hope that the foundations for holding a strong and scalable online league have now at least been set, so that we can use this as a great foundation in the future no matter when we revisit the project. Here's to an excellent Season 3!

If anyone has any questions for the League or myself, feel free to reach out via secretary@londonchess.org.uk



CHESS IN PRISONS

Carl Portman writes about his visit to HMP Hewell

It has been over a year since I visited a prison. The chief culprit for this lamentable state is of course the Covid-19 Pandemic. I was delighted therefore to meet up with the governor of HMP Hewell and some of his staff to discuss chess. Ralph Lubkowski is a forward thinking governor and when he was head of HMP Stafford we did some chess work there.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how we could ramp up chess activity once the Covid restrictions in the prison community were lifted. Chess is played in cells and sometimes on the wing but there has been no club because of the virus.

I also wanted to speak hypothetically about the possibility of HMP Hewell hosting the England team for the World Online Prison Chess Championships in October 2021. The inaugural event saw HMP Wandsworth host a team but I wanted to see if a prison outside of London could do it.

The governor was very positive in his response and his 'can do' approach led the way to us agreeing to me investigating exactly what this would entail in terms of resource and security etc, which I shall now do. We have made our agreements in principle only, knowing that it might not be possible but I am keen to explore further. Not only would media exposure be very far and wide but the prison would

also like to involve the local community – perhaps coming in to see prisoners playing chess at an open day.

I donated a quantity of chess books to the prison library. These were old, used books still written in descriptive notation, that had been given to me prior to the lockdown from the general public so I am pleased that they have finally found a home.

We also discussed chess as part of the wider education programme in prison and how the Chief inspector of prisons might acknowledge chess as a worthwhile pursuit on any prison visit and subsequent audit report.

We are not yet at the stage where I am allowed to meet prisoners again and give chess exhibitions and lectures but hopefully that won't be too long in coming. Even the prison library is still 'covid closed.' When I do visit I will be able to test the strength of the players with a view to selecting a group to compete to be in the England team at the online championships if that goes ahead.

In all, the trip was very worthwhile and I felt relief to be connecting again. I was heartened to hear that the men still play chess at HMP Hewell, and I am determined to help them get back on track the moment that all restrictions are lifted.

My thanks are extended to the ECF and to HMP Hewell for supporting my visit.



GET 'SMART'

The [English Junior Coaches and Organisers Association \(EJCOA\)](#) reports that 34 of its members from across the country successfully took part in ChessPlus's [European Chess Union 101](#) online training course for chess tutors on 15-16 May, 'The SMART Way to Teach Chess'. The course, which focuses on practical teaching techniques for chess teachers in schools and junior chess clubs, was delivered by IM Jesper Hall, Chair of the ECU's Education Commission, and John Foley of [ChessPlus.net](#).

EJCOA chair Rob Willmoth said the course was very well-received, and that the association plans to organise more training seminars for English chess coaches and teachers later in the year.



TWEET OF THE MONTH

Sean Marsh with an 'Ooh, Matron' moment



CHESS FEATURES – WRITING, ANALYSIS, STUDIES AND PUZZLES

ALL'S WELLS

Mark Rivlin interviews GM Peter Wells

A prolific chess author, GM Peter Wells has written nine books, including the recently published *Chess Improvement – It's All In The Mindset* (co-authored with Barry Hymer, an expert in psychology and education) which has received excellent reviews. Peter has an impressive portfolio of training success with the England Open and Women's squads and with England's top young players through the Chess Trust's Accelerator Programme. We are delighted that he is providing a monthly column for *Chess Moves*.

Tell us about your playing career, the highs and lows.

I was lucky to be part of a very strong generation of players in the UK: Nigel Short is just a couple of months younger than me and Julian Hodgson, Danny King, Jo Gallagher, Stuart Conquest, John Emms, Willy Watson, and James Howell (amongst others – apologies to anyone I have missed out!) were all just a couple of years either side. I think this provided a very healthily competitive environment growing up.

My career overall has had more than its share of frustrations – as happens to players who never quite solve the time management issue. I guess the two lowest points that spring to mind are the failure to even minimally control my nerves in the first round of the 1997 World Championship knockout (my only appearance at this level) and the very simple win I missed (35...Nf2!) – again, with the help of that deadly combination of nerves and time-trouble – against Julian Hodgson in the final round of the British Championship in Scarborough 2001. To be fair, some of the high points occurred in Scarborough too, including two of my three runner-up spots at the British Championships. Various tournament victories as well as my qualification from the 1995 zonal in Linares have meant a lot too, but as I get older, it is probably my reasonable number of attractive games which I appreciate most, as well as the fact that I have had a decent strike-rate against very strong players over the years.

You have been a prolific chess author with several titles to your name. Tell us more about *Chess Improvement*, it's all in the mindset which has received critical acclaim and includes an excellent foreword from Henrik Carlsen, father of Magnus.

I was fortunate to be introduced to my co-author Barry Hymer by our mutual friend Tim Kett (who was subsequently heavily involved in the project as well) at the British Championship in Bournemouth in 2016. The timing was excellent. Barry was looking to make a return to chess after a decades-long break and I was (belatedly) getting interested in the psychological causes of the kind of career ups and downs which I described above. This had already led me to the work of Carol Dweck which had made quite an impression on me, and Barry has been one of the leading UK advocates of her 'mindset theory' for many years. I was delighted when he followed up our excellent dinner with the suggestion that there could be an interesting book to write about the role of mindset in chess improvement. This appealed to another feeling I had at the time – that I was tiring of writing somewhat 'transient' theoretical opening books and keen to embark on a writing project which might better stand the test of time.

So we explored a number of themes under the broad umbrella of mindset: the importance of being motivated by a genuine love for the game, the benefits of embracing different types of feedback and of developing resilience, as well as considering how best to work on the game and how we do all of this within the social context of the chess world.

Since we believe that hard work is a more fundamental component of success than anything that might be captured by the notion of 'natural talent', we suspected that the methods which have worked for those at the top of the game, should also offer valuable insights for those at an earlier stage of their chess journeys. Consequently, we were delighted and very grateful that so many of the top English players gave very extensive interviews which we used to help enrich each of these topics. Probably my very favourite section was on metacognition – the interviews led us gradually to the tentative conclusion that serious reflection on our chess experience and a tailoring of our training regimen in line with the self-awareness which should flow from this, is perhaps *the* single most important factor in chess improvement.

The writing of the book was a major collaborative undertaking. I was keen to immerse myself in the theory as well as its application which I think improved my contribution, but also undoubtedly lengthened the process. However, it has been great to be involved in a project where I am even more convinced of the validity of our basic argument than I was at the beginning, and we have been delighted with much of the reception too.

We were also thrilled that such a fast-growing and respected publisher as Crown House was sufficiently convinced of the educational value of the book to take their first venture into the chess world – we have been delighted with their contribution. It was also great, of course, that Henrik Carlsen agreed to write the foreword and hugely flattering that his genuine enthusiasm for the work was so evident in what he wrote. His expression of regret that such a book had not been around when Magnus was a child did make me smile a bit – somehow, I felt that they had muddled through rather well without it! Nonetheless we were very gratified that someone whose own priority as the parent of a high-achieving child could be summed up in the words 'do no harm', felt that our approach was flexible enough that he could strongly embrace it.

You worked with Michael Adams and Luke McShane in their rise to prominence. Tell us about their approaches and the reasons behind their success.

To be honest, by the time I formally worked with Michael – first in 1999 at Linares – he was already pretty prominent – I can't take any credit for his rise! As I said in the book, the thing which impressed me most was his filter – vitally important when dealing with vast quantities of information. He seemed to sense very quickly which ideas/pieces of analysis could be useful to him and to dismiss the rest with admirable efficiency. I'm not sure he was always very industrious growing up, but in this period – and even more when we worked together again in about 2005-6 – he was very methodical and disciplined in his work, as well as fiercely objective. At this time this helped to steer the work towards a heavy concentration on demanding analysis of main lines and lines which were likely to prove of enduring value even against the world's best. Part of the key, I think, is that he replicates this discipline and focus at the board as well. That sounds simple, but plenty of players struggle to achieve that.

I did work with Luke at the end of his junior career – seconding him when he won the silver medal in the World Junior 2002 in Goa and also some very enjoyable tournaments in Switzerland. We then teamed up again around 10 years ago for work which culminated in the Tal Memorial in Moscow in 2012. Luke was kind enough to say in our interview that I have been around for many of his best results and certainly I have the sense that this has been a successful collaboration. He is not a natural theoretician in two senses. He has clearly dabbled in various sideline openings over the years and his fiercest weapon probably lies in his practical skills – not least his acute sense of what will create problems for an opponent. We did produce serious opening work in a fairly systematic way in the later years, but I especially valued the moments when we permitted ourselves to think a little outside the box. Every now and again in our analysis, Luke would pause the process and take a step back. The outcome was, almost invariably, some pretty profound and often actionable reflections.

Latterly you have been coaching and mentoring some of England's best juniors and in a recent *Perpetual Chess* podcast you said there are reasons to be optimistic about the future. Please expand on this.

I think a few years ago things seemed a bit bleak for professional players here and I was concerned that over time, this will necessarily impact negatively on the ambitions of the very top juniors. Now I am rather more optimistic about both of these groups, at least in the UK.

I think we have two slightly dangerous habits with regard to our top juniors. We tend to look to very strong generations such as my own or the decade or so which produced Luke McShane, Gawain Jones and David Howell and assume that these are 'the norm', when actually such players are produced relatively rarely. We also tend to lavish public attention on 'young talents' at a very early age, after which – more often than not – this weight of expectation and all that goes with it, does not work in their favour.

Right now, it seems to me that we have some very promising young players. Moreover, a number of them exhibit a truly impressive work ethic, which I believe (as I suggested above) is often the decisive ingredient in the mix. On the Accelerator it is no exaggeration to say that one of my chief tasks with maybe 3-4 of the players (I won't mention names – I think they know who they are!) was not to 'get them to work', but rather to try to stop them working excessively in ways which were not optimally productive. Especially in opening study, it is possible to be *too* systematic and to make too few judgements about which bits of theory are really 'essential knowledge'. This is an important issue to solve, but a luxurious one – it means that a high level of commitment and ambition are clearly in place already. This is why I am quite optimistic and, incidentally, the gender balance amongst those willing to go the extra mile is noticeably healthy too.

There has been a phenomenal rise in people taking up chess during the pandemic. How can the game adapt to include those who have been drawn to it, especially as a result of *The Queen's Gambit*.

I think this is a great opportunity, but one which needs to be carefully handled. I sense on social media some tension between those speaking for the new enthusiasts who are concerned that chess should simply be fun and the traditionalists whom they perceive as somehow stuffy and elitist. I think we should do everything possible to prevent this rather artificial division from becoming a 'thing'. At the same time, I do think that the long and rich history and literature of chess are a big part of what makes it special. We should be very wary of downgrading these elements for the sake of those whose enthusiasm may not prove so enduring.

One big test will surely be the return to over-the-board chess. I guess the focus of some of those recently drawn to chess will remain firmly online. However, for those who wish to play in a social setting, I suspect much could be done to make things more inviting and welcoming. Conversations which focus on the positive experience of playing and enjoying chess rather than fixating on the results, ratings and rankings which accompany it might be a positive start.

Lastly, courtesy of *The Queen's Gambit*, a large proportion of the newcomers are likely to be women. This is a very welcome development, and a great chance to break out of the vicious circle by which the low number of women in chess has then deterred others with potential interest in the game. However, whilst at present we can boast high female representation amongst the streamers and commentators, at some point there will be questions about the lack of female players at the pinnacle of the game. This was precisely the positive message of *The Queen's Gambit* – that a female player could take on the very best in the world and win – and I think, frankly, that at some point people will become a bit sceptical of all these articles in which various players ranked in the many 000s are hailed as the 'real Beth Harmon'. First of all we need to accept that there is an issue – that this problem is *partly* explained by the low numbers of female players, but by no means entirely – and then set about helping girls with

the determination and skill to be champions, without taking short cuts. With regards to how to do this, I think my view is close to that of Judit Polgar – who has herself done so much to show what is possible. The greatest impediment to girls achieving the heights in chess has probably been a limiting of ambition. By all means use women’s events and titles as great resources, as stepping stones on the road to success, but the end goal should be the achievement of a level of mastery which is, essentially, blind to gender.

What advice can you give a 1600-1700 club player who is finding it difficult to break into the 1800-plus cohort?

I think at any level it is possible to identify some ‘typical’ areas needing improvement, but there are usually individual quirks which make it difficult to generalise. This is why – again at most levels of the game – the kind of self-awareness I talked about above is so important. It is very useful – ideally together with a coach or mentor – to identify where your strengths and weaknesses lie. Work is essential on *both* of these, but there is a difference in how to go about addressing weaknesses or leveraging strengths respectively. At all costs, do not try to deal with your weaknesses by essentially avoiding the positions in which they arise. This will surely come back to haunt you at some stage!

For players around 1600-1700 I think it is vital to be crystal clear about the role tactics are playing in your games. If your games are still being frequently decided by blunders/tactical tricks then this should be the area to focus on. I think it is true in general that there is a complex relationship between knowledge and skills in chess. I have come across many players who are working hard acquiring knowledge, but still struggling to put this into practice. This is probably not a question of deficient ‘talent’. It is far more likely an issue of too much passive learning rather than actively practising to develop skills. As I said in the book, this issue is magnified with relation to tactics. Tactical exercises set up an artificial situation which alerts you to the presence of a tactic (frequently, even to the specific type of tactic). They still have their uses for sure, but part of your tactical training should be about developing tactical alertness – spotting the warning signs that tactics are present and thereby reacting with heightened vigilance.

What are your interests outside of chess?

I have two wonderful daughters aged 10 and 4 and – as any parent will know – this determines how a fair portion of my non-work time is spent. As a family I am delighted that we do a lot of outdoor stuff – country walks, camping etc. I haven’t been in the greatest health over the last couple of years, but these things certainly help. My elder daughter Emily has got very enthusiastic about football lately and I am very pleased to still be playing a (surprisingly active!) role in fostering this interest. In my own time I read a lot of non-fiction. I used to select my academic subjects largely according to what interested me and my passion for these: politics, philosophy and history is undiminished. My collaboration with Barry has further fostered my interest in psychology, education and learning as well. Perhaps playing the piano remains my best route to pure relaxation, though. As Tartakower said, ‘every chess player should have a hobby.’

Your game against Jonathan Speelman in 2006 is certainly one to watch with excellent analysis from Simon Terrington

[\(103\) Peter Wells v John Speelman 2006 Modern Defence - YouTube](#)

Tell us more about this game.

I really enjoyed Simon’s videos and was rather touched that he devoted three of them to my games. This is my favourite of the three, in part since it owed the least to theory. It was really a case of creativity borne of desperation. The tournament had started very badly and I guess I was in the mood to take risks to try and snap out of this. However, the truth is that by the time I played 14 Bxc4!!? I already didn’t like my position very much after routine moves. It sounds odd, when playing Jonathan Speelman, to look for randomness to try and take him out of his comfort zone – he is in many ways

uniquely qualified to handle it. Still, I think he prefers to be the one with the initiative, the one calling the shots. In fact, he didn't handle the shock of this very well.

At the point I played 14 Bxc4 – sacrificing two pieces, even though Jonathan only took one of them – Ray Keene walked past and after the game told me that he thought I had gone completely crazy. I guess that is kind of flattering. Certainly, I saw quite a lot at this point – all the key Rxb7 ideas which are essential to its soundness of the thing. However, as always with these sacrifices, a fair bit was left to intuition. I remember being a bit concerned about some 15...g5 idea to try and enable Black's king to wriggle out to the king-side, but my engine now tells me that 16 Nxc5+! just wins. Bonkers – I certainly didn't have that covered. Still, the whole thing was a lot of fun, and I was very chuffed to win the brilliancy prize in a field of that calibre.



MICHAEL ADAMS' GAME REVIEW



England's number one analyses Ravi Haria's win over Falko Bindrich at the recent European Hybrid World Cup Qualifier

Five English players took a shot at the European World Cup Qualifier. The highlights were a good win by Marcus Harvey to equalise the score in his mini match with Zdenko Kozul, and Ravi Haria's excellent play in his opening match which he won 2-0, we are going to take a look at the first game.

This is as complicated as it is attractive, as well as accurate calculation, assessing complex material imbalances is a continuing necessity. Given the unusual playing conditions, and demanding time limit the players do a good job of threading their way through the morass of variations.

F. Bindrich – R. Haria

European Hybrid World Cup Qualifier 2021

1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 3.Bg2 Nf6 4.Nf3 Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.b3



White turns down the option to transpose to a Catalan with 6.d4. The flexible system deployed in this game was recommended in Mihail Marin's excellent books on this English move order.

6...b6 7.Bb2 Bb7 8.e3 c5 9.d3 I would prefer 9.Qe2 here, White might want to play d4 in one move at a convenient moment, and now his position loses some dynamism.

9...Qc8 As Black's queen moves again shortly, the immediate 9...Nc6 seem a good alternative.

10.Nbd2

I think the White knight should have been developed more actively on c3: 10.Nc3. After 10.cxd5 Nxd5 possibly followed by a timely Bf6 is comfortable for Black.



10...Nc6 11.Qe2 Qc7 Due to White's slow build up Black has time to reposition the queen, and this does prevent one active White plan to play Ne5. Nonetheless the developing 11...Rd8 was quite reasonable 12.Ne5 Nxe5 13.Bxe5 dxc4 is fine, and 12.d4 a5 gives idea of a4, and the bishop might find a6 a useful square later.

12.a3 I feel White should have lined up a rook opposite the Black queen with 12.Rac1 - when the position opens up this is often useful. Instead 12.cxd5 is not too terrifying 12...exd5 limiting the knight on d2 is tempting, and 12...Nxd5 is ok.

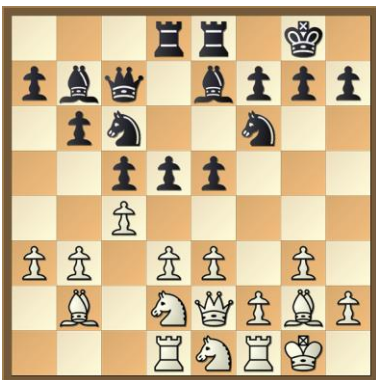
12...Rad8 13.Rad1 White is drifting without a plan, one of the rooks should have gone to c1 although it is not particularly scary; 13.Rfc1 Qb8 14.cxd5 Nxd5 15.d4 is roughly equal. 15.Nc4!?, or 13.Rac1!? are other ideas.

13...Rfe8 Moving the queen a second time has enabled Black's rooks to be placed on their best squares in the centre, this rook will have a bright future on the e-file in the game, and the opposition to the White queen proves particularly handy later.

14.Ne1 Retreating the knight doesn't inspire confidence, but 14.Rfe1 e5 isn't impressive, or 14.d4 Ba6 is an annoying pin. 14.e4 dxe4 15.dxe4 e5 planning Nd4 shows how the knight on c6 has more prospects than the one on d2.

14...e5

Black is well prepared to take more central territory.

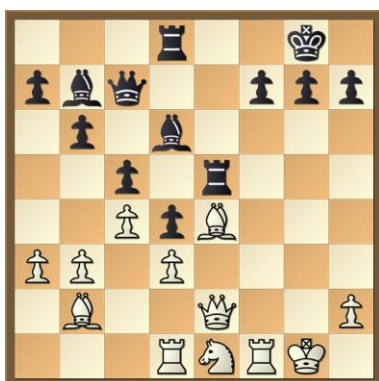


15.f4 This doesn't work out well, but 15.cxd5 Nxd5 16.Ne4 leads to a rather squashed Hedgehog.



20...Nxe4! Ravi makes the correct but brave decision to continue the game. Black has ample compensation, and with his king much safer than his opponent's practically his play is easier, but it is never simple to reject the small strategic gain of a half point with Black in the first game of a mini-match in a complicated position.

21.Bxe4 After 21.dxe4 Rde8 22.Bc1 Rxe4! is important, 23.Bxe4 Rxe4, now 24.Qg2 Re6! followed by Rg6+ wins instantly. After the better 24.Qh5 the bishop on b7 is so strong that Black can just continue slowly, 24...g6 25.Qh3 h5 and White's position gradually collapses: 26.Rf2 Bc8 27.Qd3 Rg4+ 28.Kf1 (28.Kh1 Bb7+ 29.Nf3 Qd7) 28...Bxh2.



21...Qe7 21...Rde8! was better, when Black's pieces co-ordinate perfectly, the queen can still be useful on c7. 22.Qg2 Rxe4! (cleaner than the other promising capture 22...Bxe4 23.dxe4 R5e6) 23.dxe4 Re6! leaves White's queen embarrassed the threat of Rg6 is very hard to meet, if 24.Qh3 Rh6.

22.Nf3 22.Qf3! enables White to bring his troops back into alignment 22...Rxe4 23.dxe4 Bxe4 24.Qh3 looks awkward, but Ng2 will cover the White king, whilst he has some extra material in the bank. Or 22...Bxe4 23.dxe4 Rxe4 24.Bc1 Re2 25.Ng2, and White is beginning to get organised.

22...f5 22...Bxe4 23.Nxe5 Bg6 24.Rde1 Re8 regains some material with an edge, but the game move is much more creative and enticing.

23.Nxe5 23.Bd5+ Bxd5 24.Nxe5 Qg5+ 25.Ng4 Bc6 26.Bc1 Qg6 27.Rde1 Re8 28.Qd1 Rxe1 29.Rxe1 h5 30.Qe2 Kh7 leaves Black in control - the knight will be captured when Black chooses.

23...fxe4



24.Rf7 24.Nf7 is also alright as after 24...e3 the unexpected quiet move 25.Qg4! saves the day (not 25.Nxd8 Qg5+) 25...e2 26.Nh6+ Kh8 27.Nf7+ leads to perpetual after 27...Kg8 as 27...Qxf7?? 28.Rxf7 isn't possible - the White queen covers d1. The retreat 24.Ng4? e3 leaves White marmalized by the bishop pair, the continuation 25.Rf5 Qh4 26.Rdf1 seems sensible, but now 26...Bxh2+! 27.Nxh2 Qg3+, or 27.Qxh2 Qxg4+ mates.

24...Qg5+ 25.Qg2 Qxg2+ 26.Kxg2 Ba8 Despite the exchange of queens White still has a lot of issues to deal with, the knight on e5 is hanging and a nasty discovered check will happen soon.



27.Rf5 A tricky decision, 27.dxe4? Bxe5 28.Rxa7 Bxe4+ 29.Kg1 Bc2 30.Re1 Bf6 31.Rb7 d3 and the d-pawn can't be stopped. Or 31.Bc1 Bxb3 32.Rb7 d3 33.Bd2 Bxc4 34.Rxb6 Bd4+ 35.Kg2 Bd5+ 36.Kg3 c4 and the Black bishops dominate. The related line 27.Rxa7? Bxe5 (not 27...e3+? 28.Rxa8) 28.dxe4 Bxe4+ transposes to 27.dxe4.

Exchanging rooks instead is logical, 27.Rd7 Rxd7 28.Nxd7 e3+ 29.Kg1 looks pretty hopeless for White with the knight caught behind enemy lines, but rounding it up efficiently is not so simple 29...Bf3 30.Rc1! Bg4 31.Bxd4 cxd4 32.c5 creates counter chances, or 29...Bc6 30.Nxc5 bxc5 31.Rf1 hangs on.

27...g6 28.Rg5 After 28.Nf7 e3+ 29.Kh3 gxf5! 30.Nxd8 f4 Black's imposing pawn chain will sweep all before it 31.Rg1+ Kf8 32.Bxd4 cxd4 33.Ne6+ Ke7 34.Nxd4 Be5! wrong-foots the White knight.

28...e3+ 29.Kg1 Re8 30.Ng4 White had to start returning material with 30.Nxg6! hxg6 31.Rxg6+ Kf7 32.Rxd6 Rg8+ 33.Kf1 Rg2 34.Bxd4 e2+ 35.Ke1 exd1Q+ 36.Kxd1 cxd4 37.Rxd4 leaves Black with some challenges to win the game with the few pawns remaining. 30.Nd7 Bf4 31.Nf6+ Kf7 32.Nxe8 e2 transposes to the game, but 31.Rg3 continues to resist.

30...Bf4 31.Nf6+ It must have been tempting to plug the long diagonal with 31.Rd5. Now the calm 31...Rf8! is the simplest preparing to harass the White knight with h5, if 32.Rd7 Bf3. The capture 31...Bxd5 also works 32.Nf6+ (32.cxd5 Kg7!) 32...Kf7 33.Nxd5 e2 34.Re1, now the sneaky retreat 34...Bg5! is not easy to see, but the threat of Bh4 decides.

31...Kf7



32.Nxe8 e2! 32...Bxg5 33.Nd6+ is much less impressive.

33.Rf1 The very pretty point is that 33.Re1 Be3 mates,



so White has to jettison a lot of material.

33...exf1Q+ 34.Kxf1 Bxg5 35.Nc7 35.Nd6+ Ke6 36.Nb5 Bf4 37.Nxa7 Bxh2 is straightforward, the bishops are far too strong here supporting the advance of the kingside pawns.

35...Bc6 36.Nb5 a6

White Resigned, 37.Nd6+ Ke6 38.Nc8 Bd8, or 37.Nc7 Bf4 38.Nxa6 Bb7 leave the Black knight running out of road.

To play this game through in your web browser, go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-57-june-2021-games-studies-and-puzzles/>



ARKELL'S ENDGAMES

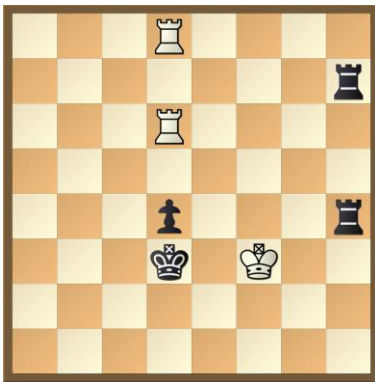


Two ducking and weaving encounters from the maestro of endgame analysis, GM Keith Arkell, followed by analysis of Keith's game with Tristan Cox over the marathon weekend

In this month's article I'm going to demonstrate how a King with pawn shelter can be used effectively in a matting attack against a King bereft of cover. The two examples were both played during the early days of 2020, before Lockdown took hold. Both games were double Rook endings against strong opposition.

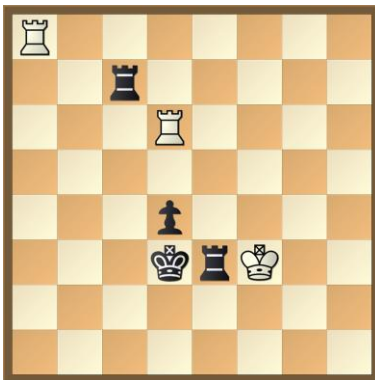
Bunratty Masters 2020.02.23 Round 6; GM Hort, Vlastimil vs GM Arkell, Keith 0-1

61. Rd6



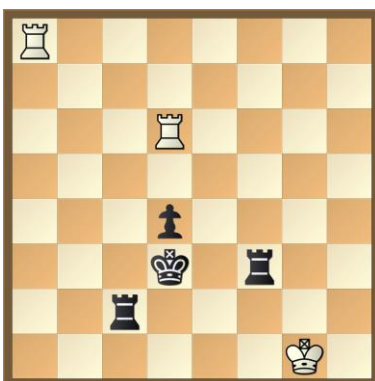
This was the position after White's 61st move in a tense last round game at Bunratty where I was playing black against legendary GM Vlastimil Hort. In order to win I will need to promote my pawn, and the most effective way to do this is to combine threats to advance it with threats against his exposed King. Notice that my King will be that much harder for Hort to get at because I can duck and weave behind the pawn.

.. Rf7+ 62. Kg3 Re4 63. Ra8 Rg7+ 64. Kf3 Rf7+ 65. Kg3 Rc7 66. Kf3 Re3+



67. Kf4

{If 67 Kf2 I will make serious progress by forcing his King to the back rank after 67...Rc2+ 68 Kf1 Rf3+ 69 Kg1

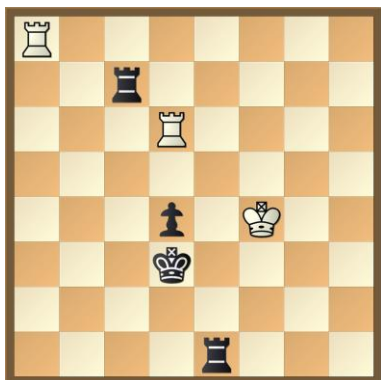


(Here we can see the first mating pattern after 69 Ke1? Re2+ 70 Kd1 Rf1 #).

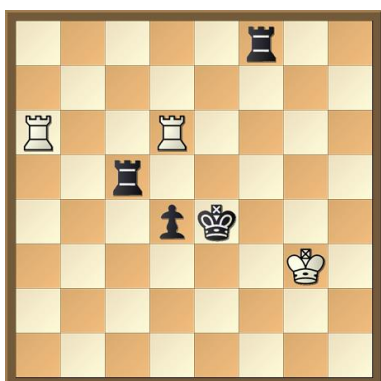
69...Rf4.

Obviously most of the time in chess we can't calculate all lines up to mate, so instead we form micro-plans with which we hope to make progress.}

Back to the game **67 .. Re1**

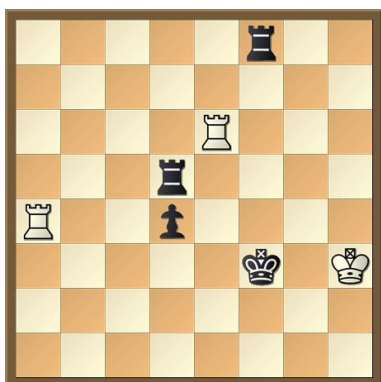


68. Ra3+ Rc3 69. Ra4 Rf1+ 70. Kg4 Rc4 71. Ra2 Kc3 72. Kg3 Rf8 73. Kg2 Kd3 74. Ra3+ Ke4 75. Re6+ Kd5 76. Raa6 Rc2+ 77. Kg3 Rc5 78. Red6+ Ke4



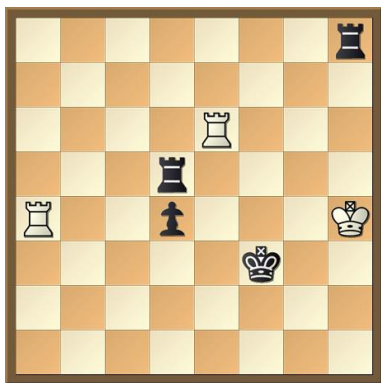
{Threatening 79...Rg5+ 80 Kh4 Rg1, when White's King will be in dire straits.}

79. Ra4 Rg5+ 80. Kh4 Rd5 81. Re6+ Kf4 82. Kh3 Kf3



{I have been continually closing in on the White King while distracting my opponent with threats to push the pawn, and finally, in mutual time-pressure, he overlooked my main idea.}

83. Kh4 {Had Hort prevented the mate then 83...d3 would have guaranteed decisive progress.} **Rh8+**



0-1

For anyone interested in a very similar endgame, see game 1 in 'Arkell's Endings' v GM Mihail Suba.

4NCL 2020.01.11; IM Milliet Sophie vs GM Arkell Keith 0-1

We join our second game Milliet-Arkell also in 2020, after Black's 53rd move.

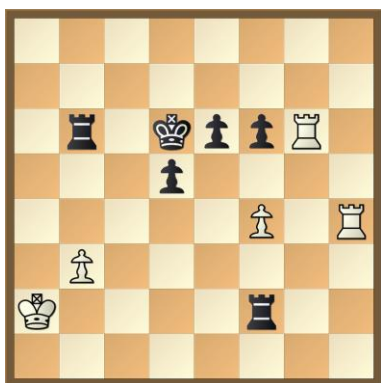
53.. Rf2+



{As in the previous endgame, the extra pawn serves as a shield against harassment from the White Rooks. In the meantime, while my opponent has been focussing on preventing the advance of my central pawn mass, I have a free hand to go after her King.}

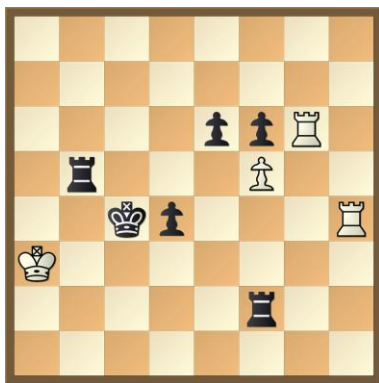
+54. Ka3

{Had the King retreated to the back rank I would have gained a decisive advantage after either 54...Rxb3 or even just 54...d4 55 Rxf6 d3, but now I can play directly for mate.} **Kc5 55. b4+**



{The only other way to prevent mate is 55 f5, but then 55...d4 56 b4+ Kc4 is curtains.}

Kc4 56. b5 Rxb5 57. f5+ d4



{Threatening 58...Ra5 # and ready to meet 58 Ka4 with Ra2 #.} **0-1**

Keith Arkell (KeithArkell) vs Tristan Cox (RockTroll)

Queen's Gambit Declined Exchange Variation

Live Chess Chess.com, 06.06.2021

[Atomrod]

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Qa4+ Nc6 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bxf6 Qxf6 [



We reach a position from the QG exchange variation. One way or another I am playing for a minority attack with long term pressure on the half open files on the Q side which is likely to last into the endgame.]

9.e3 0-0 10.a3 Bxc3+ 11.bxc3 Qg6

[



So far we are following Arkell - Ward from the Aberystwyth British of 2014.]

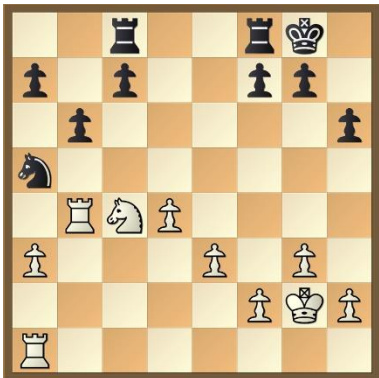
12.g3 [Rc1 was played in Aberystwith and we are now out of the book lines.]

12...Bg4 13.Bg2 Qf5 [Increasing the pressure on the weakened light squares.]

14.Qd1 [Played to allow W to castle.]

14...Bh3 15.0-0 Bxg2 16.Kxg2 Qe4 17.Qb1 Qxb1 18.Rfxb1 b6 19.Nd2 Na5 20.Rb4 Rac8 [W's plan is to advance the c pawn, open and build pressure on the Q side open files now that the Q's are off.]

21.c4 dxc4 22.Nxc4 [

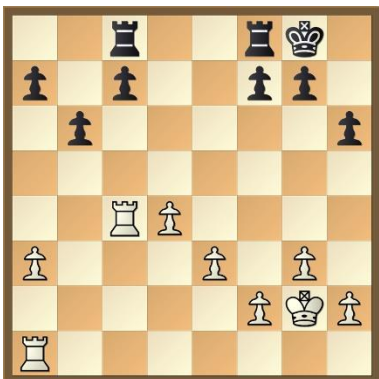


Critical move.]

22...Nxc4? [± This is a mistake as it allows W to build up on the c file unopposed.]

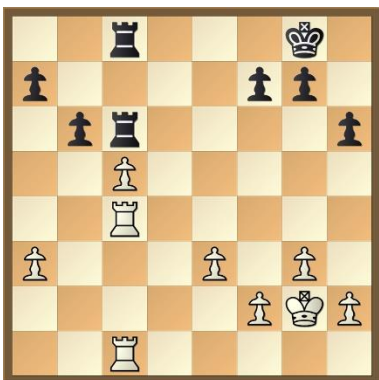
[(+0.07) The best move was 22...c5 23.dxc5 Rxc5 24.Nxa5 Rxa5 25.a4 Rc8 26.Rd1 Rc7]

23.Rxc4 [



W now has a clear target on the c file.]

23...c5 24.Rac1 Rc6 25.dxc5 Rfc8? [

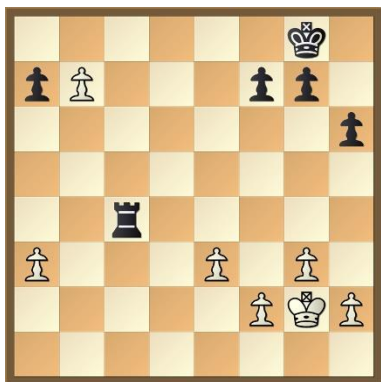


Easily played in a blitz games but this is the losing move after which black's position falls apart fairly quickly. Can you see the winning sequence without looking at the game score]

[The best move was 25...bxc5 26.Rxc5 Ra6 27.R1c3 Rd8 28.Rf5]

26.cxb6! [The critical move.]

26...Rxc4 27.Rxc4 Rxc4 28.b7!



[At this point my opponent resigned. My playing style is well suited to such things as simuls and marathons as I am able to go on auto-pilot for much of the time, thus conserving energy. Here, for example, recognition of the patterns enabled me to spend just 51 seconds on the game and 1 second on the final combination (cxb6). This was one of about 40 R + P endings I had during the 24 hours.]

[28... Kh7 29.b8Q]

1-0

To play these games through in your web browser, go to

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-57-june-2021-games-studies-and-puzzles/>



MARCUS HARVEY analyses his win over Zdenko Kozul

Marcus Harvey (2440) vs Zdenko Kozul (2597); European Hybrid World Cup Qualifier
25.05.2021 [*Annotations by Marcus Harvey*]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 [

The Four Pawns Attack. A good choice in a must-win game versus an unsuspecting opponent.]

5...0-0 6.Nf3 c5 [The main line, which is more or less forced, as sidelines with Na6 or c6 aren't great for black.]

7.d5 e6 8.Be2 exd5 9.cxd5 Bg4 [



The main move]

[9...Re8! Modern engines like this alternative, putting pressure on white's centre immediately. 10.e5 dxe5 11.fxe5 Ng4 12.e6!? Thematic pawn sacrifice 12...fxe6 13.d6]

10.0-0 Re8 [Forcing white's next move, but not deemed as best.]

[10...Nbd7 I consider as more flexible for black. Quite often black would like to play Ne8 and Nc7 followed by b5.]

11.h3 Bxf3 12.Bxf3 Nbd7 13.g4! [



This aggressive idea has been tried before, most notably by Ding Liren.]

13...h6 [13...b5!? An equally aggressive response, although tough to play without heavy opening preparation 14.g5 Nh5 with lots of crazy lines, for example 15.Kh2 b4 16.Ne2 c4 17.Be3! Bxb2 18.Rb1 c3 19.Bxh5 Rxe4 20.Bg1! gxh5 21.Ng3 Qe7! 22.Qxh5! By going even deeper white's King could end up on h4! 22...Re8 23.Nf5 Re2+ 24.Kg3 Qe4 25.Nh6+ Kh8 26.Nxf7+ Kg8 27.Nh6+ Kh8 28.Kh4!!]

14.h4 Nh7?



[A logical move, but a mistake. Instead]

[14...h5! 15.g5 Ng4 16.Bxg4 (16.Kg2! is a surprisingly tricky move) 16...hxg4= 17.Qxg4 Bd4+ 18.Kh2 Bxc3 19.bxc3 Rxe4 20.Bd2 Qe7 21.Rae1 Nb6 22.f5 Re8 23.Qg3 Nxd5 24.fxg6 fxe6 25.c4 Re2+ 26.Kg1 Qe4 27.Rxe2 Qxe2 28.cxd5 Qxd2 29.Qf3 Qd4+ 30.Kg2 Qg7 31.Qf6 c4 32.Qxd6 Re2+ 33.Rf2 Rxf2+ 34.Kxf2 Qd4+ 35.Kf3 Qd3+ 36.Kf2 Qd2+ 37.Kf3 Qd3+ 38.Kf2 Qd4+ 39.Kf3 Qd3+ 40.Kf2 Qd4+ 1/2-1/2 (40) Ding,L (2714)-Rapport,R (2693) Biel 2013]

15.g5 hxg5 16.hxg5 a6 17.a4 [White has a lovely position: 2 bishops, extra space, and potential menace along the h file.]

17...Bd4+ [



To my surprise, the first new move of the game.]

18.Kg2 f6!? [An excellent practical decision. The game becomes very sharp.]

19.Ne2?! [Played after a long think, but not the best.]

[19.Bg4! A difficult move to play, as there are a long list of variations to calculate. 19...Ndf8 (19...fxg5 20.Be6+ Kg7 (20...Kh8 21.f5! The black king is too weak.) 21.Ne2 Bf6 (21...gxf4 22.Nxd4 cxd4 23.Bxf4+-) 22.fxg5+-) 20.Be6+ Nxe6 21.dxe6 fxg5 (21...Rxe6 22.Qb3 Qe8 23.f5 gxf5 24.exf5 Qc6+ 25.Kh3! c4 (25...d5 26.fxe6 Qxe6+ 27.Kg3+-) 26.Qd1 Re5 27.Qxd4 fxg5 28.Qg4!+-) 22.f5! gxf5 23.exf5+- And black is close to paralysed.]

19...fxg5 20.Nxd4 cxd4 21.Bg4! Ndf8 [



The other knight to f8 was better]

[21...gxf4 Not 22.Be6+?? (22.Bxf4 Ne5 23.Be6+-) 22...Rxe6 23.dxe6 Qg5+ 24.Kh1 Qh4+ 25.Kg2 Qg3+ 26.Kh1 Qh3+ 27.Kg1 Qg3+=; 21...Nhf8 22.Qxd4 was my intention, but actually black is fine after 22...Nf6 23.Be6+ Nxe6 24.dxe6 gxf4 (24...Rxe6? 25.fxg5 Nh5 26.Qd5 Qd7 27.Ra3±) 25.Bxf4 Nh5!]=]

22.fxg5± Nxg5 [22...Rxe4? 23.Qf3 Qe7 24.Bd2! When white will soon exchange some pieces, take on d6, and win the ending.]

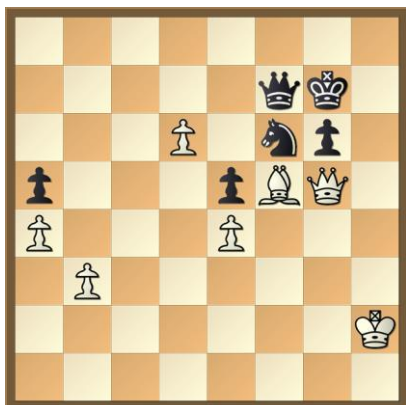
23.Rf4?! [23.Ra3! was the only move to keep the advantage 23...Rxe4 (23...Nxe4? 24.Qxd4 Re5 25.Rh3!; 23...Qe7 24.Bxg5! Qxg5 25.Rg3 Qe5 26.Bf5 Re7 27.Rg5! Qg7 now the other rook aims for g3! 28.Rf3 d3! 29.Qd2!± White retains control, but it is extremely difficult for humans to play as precisely as this.) 24.Rg3±]

23...Nf7??

39...Qe8 40.d6 a5 41.b3 Qf7 [It's important to understand that black cannot do much here. White has a strong idea to keep the position under lock and key.]

42.Kh2!

[

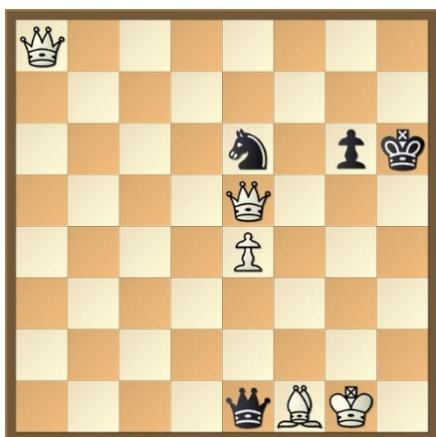


]

42...Qe8 43.Bh3 Kf7 [43...Qc6 was worth a try 44.Qxe5? (44.Qd2! Nd7 (44...Nxe4 45.Qg2!+-) 45.Bxd7 Qxd7 46.Kg3+-) 44...Qc2+ 45.Bg2 Qf2 and it's suddenly hard to convert]

44.Qd2 Qb8 45.d7 Ke7 46.Qxa5 Nxd7 47.Qd5 Nf8 48.a5 Kf6 49.Qc5! Kg7 [49...Qxb3? 50.Qb6+ Qxb6 51.axb6+-]

50.a6 Qxb3 51.Qxe5+ Kh6 52.Qf4+ Kg7 53.Qc7+ Kh6 54.a7 Qa2+ 55.Bg2 Ne6 56.Qb8 Qf2 57.Qh8+ Kg5 58.Qe5+ Kh6 59.a8Q Qh4+ 60.Kg1 Qe1+ 61.Bf1



[The checks will soon dry up.]

1-0

To play this game through in your web browser, go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-57-june-2021-games-studies-and-puzzles/>

THOMAS RENDLE shows how to play a reversed Dutch setup and how to avoid a lost endgame against Keith Arkell

Live Chess 2021.06.05; Trendle vs Keith Arkell 1-0

1. f4 {I play a lot of 1.f4 in blitz these days, especially against players as solid as Keith. I can't face another super solid Caro-Kann where he'll understand the position much better and play much faster than me. The aim is to avoid a Rook+pawn ending at all costs!}

..d5 2. Nf3 g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2 Nf6 5. O-O O-O 6. d3 c5 7. Nc3 d4 8. Ne4 Nxe4 9. dxe4 Nc6 10. e3



e5 (10... Qb6 {and Black should be happy with how the opening has gone.})

11. exd4 cxd4 12. f5



{A typical Leningrad Dutch (in this case reverse!) idea, played either as a pawn sacrifice or to build up a strong kingside pawn structure.}

12 ..f6

(12... gxf5

{allows two interesting ideas:}

13. exf5 ({or} 13. Nh4 \$5 f4 14. Nf5 {with excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn}) **13... e4** \$1 (13... Bxf5 14. Nxe5 Nxe5 15. Rxf5 {looks pleasant for White to me}) 14. Ng5 e3 15. Ne4 { with a mess of a position!})

13. g4 g5 {This blocks off the kingside at the cost of a terrible bishop on g7.} (13... Bd7 {keeps things more flexible})

14. h4 h6 15. c3 \$5 dxc3 16. Qb3+ Kh8 17. hxg5 hxg5 18. Be3 cxb2 19. Rad1 Qe7 20. Kf2



{I was very happy with this position and felt I should be close to winning - but it's never too easy to put Keith away and things start to slip over the next few moves}

..Qf7 21. Rh1+ Kg8 22. Qxb2 Rd8 23. Rxd8+



(23. Rc1 \$1

{with Bf1-c4 to come is hard to meet})

23... Nxd8 24. Bf1 Bd7 {Black is close to consolidating so it's time to throw more fuel onto the fire!}

25. Bxg5 fxg5 26. Nxg5 Qe7 27. Bc4+



{The wrong check!}

(27. Qb3+ {is simple and strong - Black must return the piece} Ne6 (27... Kf8 \$2 {loses to} 28. Nh7+ Ke8 29. Qg8+ Bf8 30. g5 \$1 {with Nf6+ coming White is completely winning})

28. Nxe6 Bxe6 29. Qxe6+ Qxe6 30. fxe6 {with excellent winning chances, although now we're into dreaded endgame territory!}) 27... Kf8 28. Nh7+ Ke8 29. Qb3 Rc8 30. Be2 Nf7 31. g5 Qc5+



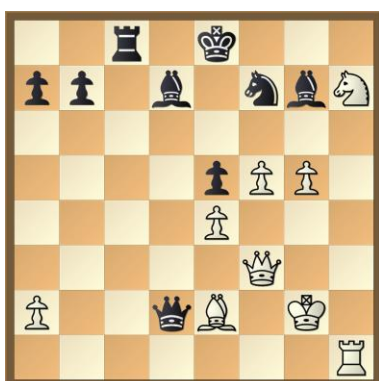
{Suddenly my own king is under all the pressure and the sensible decision is to exchange queens.}

32. Kg2

{Both players by now are very short on time and with no increment it's not surprising there are a number of blunders in this extremely complex position. It's definitely foolish to analyse blitz games with a computer!}

{32. Qe3 Qxe3+ 33. Kxe3 Nd6 {is still anyone's game although objectively White doesn't have enough for the piece here.}}

32... Qc2 33. Qf3 Qd2

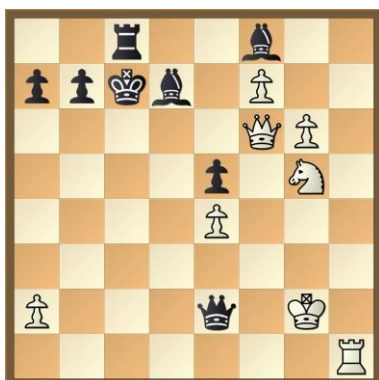


{33... Rc3 \$1 {and the tables have completely turned}}

34. Qg4 Re3 {White can safely resign here}}

34. f6 Bf8 35. g6 Ng5 36. f7+ (36. g7 Bxg7 37. Qh5+ {wins on the spot}) 36... Kd8 37. Qf6+ Kc7

38. Nxg5 Qxe2+

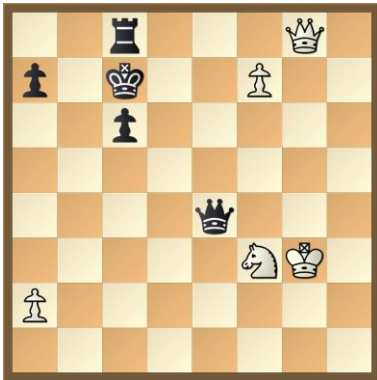


{The game descends into chaos and I shamelessly admit for playing to win on time at this stage}

39. Kg3 Bc5 40. Rf1 Qe3+ 41. Nf3 Qe2 42. Qxe5+ Bd6 43. Rc1+ Bc6 44. Rxc6+

(44. Qxd6+ Kxd6 45. g7 {is still winning for White!})

44... bxc6 45. g7 Bxe5+ 46. Nxe5 Qe3+ (46... Qxe4 \$1) 47. Nf3 Qxe4 48. g8=Q



{and here Keith ran out of time, in a position I'm assured by the computer is completely drawn.

Apologies to my opponent for far too much analysis of a silly blitz game, but congratulations to Keith for an impressive effort over the whole 24 hours!}

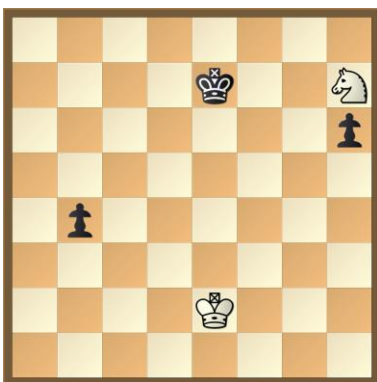
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THERE'S GOING TO BE A RESOLUTION

Ian Watson on the process of resolving a study using Nikolai Grigoriev's Knight and Pawn endgame



White to play and draw

Here's a famous classic study; it was composed, like one of last month's, by Nikolai Grigoriev. It was published in Shakhmatny Listok in 1934. Let's see how to go about solving it.

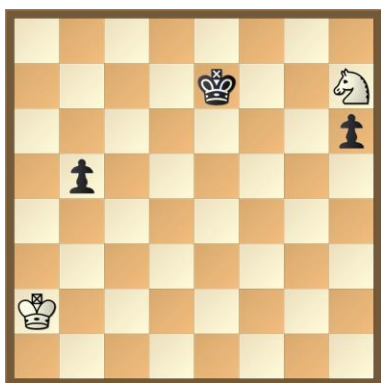
You know that White can draw, because the stipulation under the diagram tells you that. You also know that it won't be easy for White to do so, because it's a composed study and that means that White's moves are going to be 'only moves'. The first thing you'll notice on the board is that White's knight is trapped and Black's king can walk across and capture it. Does White's king have time to grab

the b-pawn and then race back towards the h-pawn? Try it: 1.Kd3 Kf7 2.Kc4 Kg7 3.Kxb4 Kxh7 4.Kc3, and you can easily see that White makes it back in time to stop the h-pawn. In a game, that would maybe be all you'd analyse before playing your moves, but obviously there has to be much more in this composed position than just that sequence. So, knowing that White draws trivially in that line, you need to find a more challenging Black plan.

Now it occurs to you to let the White knight out, by pushing the h-pawn. Well, the knight can move a lot faster than the pawn, and easily gets down the board in time and can fend off the Black king while stopping the h-pawn, and the White king removes the b-pawn and strides across. But maybe you can modify that idea a bit? Let the knight out, but only towards the left side. You find the line **1.Kd3 Kf7 2.Kc4 Kg6**, and Black will be able to push his h-pawn, so the knight has to rush around the Black king to get back and stop that pawn. Can it make it in time? Try it. **3.Nf8+ Kf5 4.Nd7 h5 5.Nc5 h4 6.Nb3 h3 7.Nd2 h2 8.Nf1 h1Q 9.Ng3+**. Yes! Just! The knight tours round the board but gets there in the nick.

Now you should ask yourself: is that the composer's main line? And, what happens if either player varies from that line? You can be fairly sure it is what the composer intended, because it's surprising, elegant, and most significantly, White has no choice at any point in the sequence. Anyway, you should look at the side-lines too, to be certain White really doesn't have any alternatives. 6.Nd3? fails to 6...h3 7.Nf2 h2 8.Kxb4 Kf4 9.Kc3 Kf3 10.Nh1 Kg2, and 5.Nb6? fails to 5...h4 6.Nd5 Ke4 7.Nf6+ Kf3.

David Gurgendize found a way to enhance the Grigoriev study. He transferred the White king to a2 and the Black b-pawn to b5, keeping the rest of the position unchanged. Your task is to solve this version, which was published in the Soviet chess magazine *64* in 1970. As I'm giving it to you as a task, it obviously won't have exactly the same solution as the original, but the position is very similar so a lot of the ideas will be unchanged. The more studies you know, the easier it is to solve them because there are frequently-occurring structures and common themes – just like in over-the-board chess, where the more games you know, the more familiar you get with the best plans for each type of position.



See the end of the newsletter for the solution. To play this puzzle through in your web browser, go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-57-june-2021-games-studies-and-puzzles/>



BROUGHT TO BOOK

Peter Wells in search of new perspectives

If lockdown has encouraged many people to explore new directions in their lives, it has, I suspect, also frequently resulted in an intensification of existing habits. For me, one of these has been my increasing failure to resist the temptation to buy chess books. This can prove somewhat expensive – in terms of shelf space as much as much money – but is I guess, in the scheme of things, mostly benign. At the same time lockdown has contributed to the context for this behaviour – chess output in all forms

(other than over-the-board games) must be at an all-time high. There is not only a seemingly endless torrent of live streaming, videos, blogs and Chessable courses – some of the latter in particular, of strikingly high quality – but also (something of a relief to traditionalists) a veritable smorgasbord of new books on the market as well. This creates issues of selection certainly, but one good way to approach this is to have a definite idea of what you are looking for. At least my purchases are filtered by reasonably clear priorities.

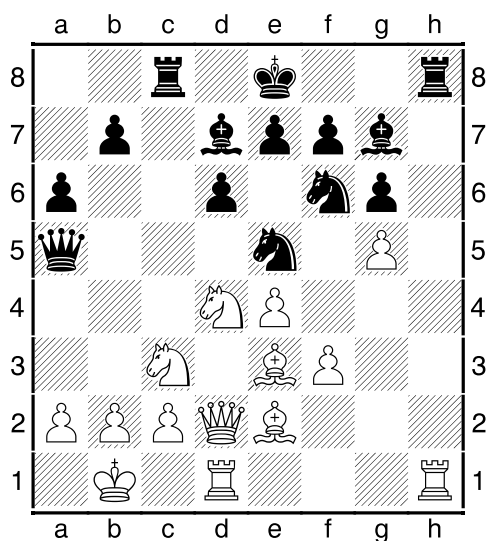
I have always been someone who likes to think quite deeply about my chess and I look especially for authors who appear to me to do the same. This has attracted me over the years to the work of John Watson, Jonathans Tisdall and Rowson, Mihai Suba and Jacob Aagaard, to name but a few. I am sometimes looking for original material, but I am even more concerned that the authors have some new narrative – an original way of looking at a position, even if the position itself may be quite familiar. My motivation is partly that of an author and trainer seeking inspiration. However, Matthew Sadler's profound thought which we discussed in *Chess Improvement* – that rethinking the fundamentals in very clear and simple language is in itself an invaluable training exercise – has made me more appreciative of the potential for all this to help me as a player too. It is never too late!

In this regard, two of my recent purchases really stand out: Davorin Kuljasevic's *Beyond Material* and above all Jan Markos's superb *Under the Surface* which won the ECF Book of the Year award in 2018. It is absolutely not my intention to turn this into a book review column. The fact that I am not keeping up-to-date could scarcely be better exemplified than by the fact that each of these authors has had further works published in the last few months... However, they have both captured my enthusiasm by their ability to explain things in a creative way which can alert the reader to fresh dimensions of familiar examples. Take a look at the following ---

Mikhail Tal – Arthur Feuerstein

Stuttgart simultaneous 1958

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 Nc6 8.Qd2 Bd7 9.0-0-0 Qa5 10.Kb1 Rc8 11.g4 h6 12.h4 a6 13.Be2 Ne5 14.g5 hxg5 15.hxg5



I expect some readers may be familiar with this position in which Black's incautious **15...Rxf1?** allowed White's g-pawn to make unanticipated progress. After **16 gxf6! Rxd1+**, I assume it was the 'backwards recapture' **17 Nxd1!** enabling a second devastating zwischenzug **17...Qxd2 18 f3g7!** which was the moment that came as such an unpleasant awakening for Black.

A brief and attractive example of Tal's crisp tactical flair, this has hitherto been easy to categorise. It is a great example of 'zwischenzug' – you even get two for the price of one – and can be used to make a

point about alertness to backwards moves as well. However, Markos finds a whole new angle on the play. For him the focus is on coordination – the superb way in which Tal’s minor pieces combine to defend each other and their king (via the d1 and c2 squares specifically) even when the black queen lands in the middle of their territory.

This emphasis on the importance of the security of the pieces is a major theme of the early chapters of Markos’s book. Of course, I already know the basics about the potential vulnerability of pieces to attack. It is, after all, immunity to attack by pieces of lesser value that leads us to revere outposts. Indeed, we come to look so instinctively for secure posts for knights that we sometimes have to remind ourselves – as a bit of an afterthought – to check that the piece will actually achieve something on these squares. It is also the impact on piece security which frequently justifies the apparently reckless grabbing of wing pawns in the opening. Try imagining some quite playable ...Qxb2 pawn grabs without the consequent undermining of the knight on c3 and you will see what I mean.

Yet Markos still manages to add something. He invites us to consider each piece in terms of its ‘three faces’: the functions it performs, its own security, but also the extent to which it may simply be guilty of getting in the way of its colleagues! This is a very useful discipline and one which for me extends existing narratives in a very appealing way.

This, I think is one reason why it is still possible to find truly worthwhile additions to the vast chess literature. Yes, there is an underlying reality in chess which may sometimes be slowly unearthed by reams of analysis and fast improving chess engines. However, it retains sufficient depth and complexity that different perspectives - a fresh pair of eyes and the creativity to frame events within new concepts – can play a great role in building up a fuller and more satisfying picture. So, I won’t be trying to kick this book buying habit too soon, but if you are joining me in this – do shop carefully!



PROBLEM CORNER

Chris Jones with another testing problem ...

In the last Newsletter I left you with this problem –



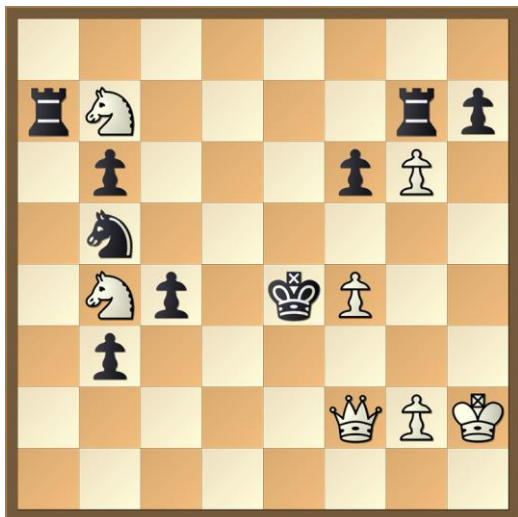
Mate in 4

Adolf Bayersdorfer; 3rd Prize, Chess Monthly 1895

I hope that the hints that accompanied the diagram may have been helpful – “if White didn’t have a Bishop at c6 then 1.Nc6, with the threat of 2.Ne7, would win out of hand. At first it appears that we can get it out of the way with check, but after 1.Bd7+ Ne6 Black has made the square g7 available for his King, so defends 2.Nc6 with 2...Kg6. But otherwise what? The composer presumably had a positive purpose in mind for the c6B, and also for the out-of-play white Queen...”. In fact, we do need to find a way of moving the Bishop off c6 while making a threat; and it turns out that to this we have to enlist the services of the white Queen. Both of them are sacrificed in the spectacular line of play 1.Qa2!

(threats 2.Qb1+ and 2.Qxh2) Bxa2 2.Ba4! (threat 3.Bc2) Rxa4 3.Nc6 and now mate by 4.Ne7 is unavoidable.

If you like that problem, you may like this one, from a similar vintage ---



Mate in 3

Franz Dittrich; 3rd Prize, Cesky spolek sachovni 1898

Here, if you want a hint (but you don't need me to tell you this really), it looks worrying that the black King could avoid immediate danger by going to f5. And those two black Rooks aren't just camouflage – if you find the solution you'll find that they feature in parallel black attempts to defend.

Solution next time! In the meantime if you have any queries or comments don't hesitate to email me.

--- Christopher Jones Email: cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

To play this problem through in your web browser, go to

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-57-june-2021-games-studies-and-puzzles/>



OFF THE WALL

Tim Wall on welcoming beginner adult players

Remembering (and Learning) How the Horsey Moves

'For those of you who didn't see The Queen's Gambit, what were you doing all quarantine? I'm happy to say that after watching the show, MILLIONS of people bought chess sets – and DOZENS of them actually learned how to play.' --- Anya Taylor-Joy, 'Saturday Night Live', May 23, 2021

Like Anya Taylor-Joy in her jokey SNL monologue, I can hear you ask, 'So, exactly where are these 'millions' of new chess players, inspired to take up the game by *'The Queen's Gambit'*?

Well, the answer to this question is probably quite simple: many of them, of course, did not actually get around yet to getting the pieces out of the box after ordering the set online – or signing up to a playing website such as Chess.com or Lichess.org.

Those who did either of those things, however, have now joined the ranks of casual over-the-board and online players, and many of them are eager to play and learn more.

The difficult bit is to help these new players take the courageous step of joining a chess club or playing in an organised over-the-board chess event.

Those new players who have played around on Chess.com and Lichess (or searched on YouTube for helpful how-to chess videos or chess streams on Twitch) will have found a lot of very useful lessons, puzzles and exercises. Many of them will actually – by using those resources, and by self-study – have become quite decent players (up to adult league standard), but many more will be closer to absolute beginner or adult newcomer level.

Recruiting and integrating these new players into our chess clubs is not just an opportunity to grow, it's actually a necessity if we are to rejuvenate the ECF membership and reverse the demographic slide over the next few years.

As we restart OTB chess this summer, it's a fair bet that our clubs will get a number of enquiries to join up.

The first step we can take is to make it easy for potential new members to contact us. That means dusting off our club's website, Facebook and Twitter accounts – and getting up-to-date info there about what we're up to.

In our case, Forest Hall Chess Club in North Tyneside has now diversified into three different types of chess: online (matches on Tuesday evenings); OTB on our traditional Friday club night, at our new club venue, the Forest Hall Social Club; and outdoors, where we now organise friendly 'Chess in the Park' sessions every Sunday from 2pm-4pm through the summer, at the Rising Sun Countryside Centre. We are just starting to get the word out about these activities, via social media and by email. Updating our (ahem, somewhat dormant) website is the next priority.

I say this not to brag, but to show the imperfect nature of what many of us are doing. Like many other clubs, we have a few volunteers doing coaching, grappling with the online tech, running teams and so on. It's a work in progress, but the important thing is to make an effort, and get started.

We should think of ourselves as beginners at promoting chess as a popular activity, just as new players are either absolute or relative beginners at the game. Many of our chess clubs are experts (even Grandmasters) at the art of organising semi-secret societies, complete with weird passwords ('What's your ECF Standard Play Rating?'), funny handshakes (elbow bumps these days) and other arcane rituals (mostly involving writing impenetrable hieroglyphics on strange things called 'scoresheets').

To make our clubs more welcoming places, here are some suggestions that may prove useful. They are culled from various sources, some from painful experience, and are far from an exhaustive list. You may have better ideas, and if you do, please send them to me at timpeterwall@gmail.com. I'd be happy to feature a selection of them in a future ECF Newsletter article.

1) Give new players a game

It might seem obvious, but if a new person comes into your chess club, make sure they are given a game. One of my club's most active and convivial members joined us because he had gone to two other local clubs and given up after not being offered a game at either. The words, 'We're all playing club championship games,' or 'It's a league match, sorry,' should be banned from the 'Speak Chess Fluently in Three Months' Phrasebook. To give new players a game, make sure that there are always a couple of players at the club who can interrupt their friendly game to induct a newcomer. Forget the fact you're in a Workingmen's Club on a wet Wednesday night in Accrington Stanley. Think of yourself as being a fun and friendly 'Club 5 to 95' rep at an exotic holiday destination and extend a friendly and respectful welcome to everyone!

2) Adjust your club to their level

Just as a nursery schoolteacher often tries not to speak to a young child by towering over them, but hunkers down to their eye level, so we should try wherever possible to find a playing partner for newcomers at or around their playing level. Don't talk down to new players, dumb down what you're saying or treat them as the odd outsider (a good tip is to remember that seasoned chess players, by their very nature, are traditionally the oddballs themselves. The chances are very high that the newcomer is actually 'The Normal One' in the room).

A good way of finding a suitable playing partner is to actually have a wide range of players in your club in the first place. Thus, a club with 8-10 members (all quite decently rated) whose main activity is to play in the league, and who don't bother with weaker players because they aren't going to help you win the championship – is going to find it difficult to recruit newcomers to competitive chess. Value your lower rated players – they are your best recruiters!

A good way to ground your chess club is to remember that we all had to learn how the horse moves once. Putting yourself in the position of a newcomer is the best way to understand the journey they are just starting out on.

For example, last winter England's GM David Howell took part in an interesting challenge as part of his work as a Chess24 commentator. He taught Aksel Lund Svindal, Norway's world champion downhill skier, how to play chess, while Svindal tried to teach Howell how to ski. The hilarious results can be seen in [this short video clip](#).

The lesson is - We are all beginners at many things in life.

It's not really a secret that many of the best teachers of chess are very modest players and have quite low ratings – but it's one we seem to forget. To teach anything, all you really need is to have an enthusiasm for your subject, and a willingness to share that enthusiasm with others.

3) Add competitions for newcomers

Whether you're running a club, local league or congress, add an extra event that is specifically for newcomers. That could be an extra division in the league, a ladder competition in your club (where the strongest players start at the bottom of the ladder, and the weakest at the top, and time handicaps according to rating if you use clocks) or a 'Foundation Tournament' at a weekend or rapidplay congress. The Northumberland Weekend Congress, for example, some years ago introduced an Under 100 or Unrated tournament for newcomers to congress chess, with two 60-minute games per round, one with White and one with Black against the same opponent, allowing players to get a rating after just one tournament. It expanded the congress considerably.

And one further tip for these newcomer events. Whatever your top players think the rating limit should be, knock a few hundred points off it. Remember that a tournament or league for Under 1200 or Under 1000 players would still leave nearly all of the world's casual chess players – such as the England cricket team, who I'm told all like a fun game of chess when rain stops play – eligible to play.

4) Above all, make it fun!

Yes, I know many of our existing clubs tend to be a mix between Trappist Orders and Mycroft Holmes' Diogenes Club, where the spoken word is banned or shushed, but the answer is to have a separate area (or time) where friendly games and friendly banter are positively encouraged. Making the extra-chessical activities of your club wider than simply a round in the bar is not only more inclusive, it will help you retain new members. Mixing chess activities with going on a ramble, playing five-a-side

football or even a book club will give an extra social dimension to your chess club, and could see you recruit more new members than you ever dreamed possible.

Anyway, these are just a few ideas. But the next time someone says, 'Where are all the new 'Queen's Gambit' players?' – remember that the answer is: 'Enjoying chess, just not yet in our club.'

Tim Wall (Twitter: @timpeterwall) is a chess coach, freelance journalist and organiser of the Northumbria Masters and Forest Hall Chess Club. The views expressed here are his own, and not necessarily those of the ECF.



A BOOK FOR CHESS BEGINNERS

Mark Rivlin reviews *The Queen's Gambit – Accepted* by Jonathan Arnott and Rosie Irwin

Adult chess beginners, you Arnott alone

Before lockdown, an adult chess beginner was someone you might stumble across on a beach, train or plane, but rarely across the board. Since the international house arrest and the superb adaptation of the Walter Tevis classic *The Queen's Gambit*, a new variant of the chess-playing world has given a tremendous boost to the game across the world. Welcome to the world of the adult beginner.

I met and played against a few of these keyboard warriors over the past 16 months in a variety of authorised venues. What struck me about these OTB encounters was how a complete beginner in March 2020 could get to around 1000 by September 2020, simply by playing on a portal and watching chess videos on YouTube.

So it was with a great deal of anticipation that I opened *The Queen's Gambit – Accepted* by Jonathan Arnott and Rosie Irwin, a book devised to help adult beginners on their chess journey. And I was not disappointed. A Candidate Master with a 2128 FIDE rating, Jonathan is well known in Yorkshire and White Rose (4NCL) chess circles. This excellent beginners' guide is the chess version of *Pygmalion*, with co-author Rosie Irwin playing the perfect Eliza Dolittle foil to Arnott's Professor Henry Higgins. The proposition is enticingly simple – a strong club player equips a beginner to make her way in the chess world – and more importantly gives Irwin a love of chess that helps her cope with trauma, depression and Aspergers.

Beginning with a main course of *Fried Liver*, Arnott guides Irwin through the potential mine fields and builds her confidence in facing sharp lines. And in a refreshing approach to visuals, the book presents easy to understand diagrams on checkmate motifs, visualisation and best next moves. Occasionally Arnott throws in a more nuanced variation, asking Irwin to suggest a move from Short-Timman, Tilburg, 1993. It's fascinating to read Irwin's thoughts on the position and after much coaxing, she sees the unlikely (from a club player's perspective) Kg3.

But it is the unique style of interaction between coach and player that makes this book stand out. Rather than explaining what has happened on the board, Arnott asks Irwin probing questions on why she made certain moves, getting into the mind of a post-beginner.

And slowly but surely Irwin understands the game to a point where she is able to take her first tentative steps into competitive chess, albeit online. And if I was a betting man, I'd put a wager on her getting to 1500 around 30 years quicker than it took me. Certainly, Rosie already has star status with her being the 60-second interviewee in the June edition of *CHESS* magazine.

This book will not only help adult beginners understand and cope with the vagaries of recreational chess, but through Irwin's persona and experience, it will also give them the determination and

confidence to improve. As Irwin says: 'That's the best way of learning a lesson: discovering something new without it actually costing you the game.'

The Queen's Gambit – Accepted is available through Chess & Bridge, Amazon or Steel City Press.



CREATIVE WRITING PROJECT

An awful move – or perhaps a rather good one

by Jeremy Hart

'No Jeremy, that's an awful move!' I had spotted a standard positional manoeuvre in the position on the screen and put the suggested move accordingly into the interactive chat window. I was pleased that I had spotted the pattern and was hoping for a positive response. I was brought back down to earth with the coach's response, broadcast across the airwaves to all the participants in the session. The response was justified, I grudgingly acknowledged – I had failed to notice the key to the position, which was taking into account your opponent's main idea. Should the opponent be allowed to castle on his next move then all his troubles would be solved.

That same weekend, I had expectantly opened an email from the same coach replying to my submission of the weekly homework. Twelve positions to solve, half of them training calculation and the other half a mixed sheet, focusing on the three key questions you should ask yourself about a position as emphasised in the daily online sessions at the academy. It was another blow. Despite the homework recently having been split into two categories, with me opting for the friendly *chess tourist* version, I had only obtained half marks.

Why was I punishing myself in this way? I hadn't played chess for years (the usual excuse) but I hadn't lost the obsession from my younger years and new chess books kept arriving at regular intervals. My wife was beginning to threaten a one-in-one-out policy on chess books. What was I doing with them all anyway, and had I not heard about the trend to declutter?

Then over the Christmas holidays a year and a half ago, I saw a post on the *Quality Chess* online blog. Jacob Aagaard was setting up *365 Chess Academy*, now known as *Killer Chess Training*, with daily interactive online classes. I hesitated, the annual subscription amounted to a good few chess books, and it could be a large time commitment, but I pressed the subscribe button and went for it.

How do they do it for the money? I have received countless hours of interactive coaching, being thoroughly entertained and instructed in equal measure. How does regular sessions from such chess greats as Jacob, Sam Shankland, Alexander Motylev and Ivan Cheparinov sound? What if you throw into the mix the excellent Ivan Salgado Lopez, Julen Arizmendi, Sabino Brunello and Renier Castellanos? They have also had so many guests to both the daily sessions and the additional extended camps. How about interacting online with Vishy Anand, Boris Gelfand, Artur Yusupov, Tania Sachdev and Gawain Jones? The list goes on.

My favourite aspect of the academy is knowing that I am in a class with a mix of playing strengths including titled players who are much stronger than me and often much younger. Who knows, I could be having classes with a future world champion! When I get a move right in that interactive chat window, very occasionally before anyone else, and get recognised for it in the class, then that makes up for the 'No Jeremy' moment many times over. There's always the 'solo' version available of watching the recording of the sessions after the event, but that comes without the adrenaline factor of the immediate yes or no response.

Early one Sunday morning, still in bed, my phone pinged. It was a very unexpected message from Jacob, informing me that the academy had decided to select a Student of the Year, Under 2000 ELO category, and the coaches' overall verdict was that it should be me. I am not convinced I deserved it, perhaps a case of mistaken identity, but I was overwhelmed and very grateful. The prize turned out to be six more *Quality Chess* books to add to my extensive collection. Domestic harmony was maintained as they only take up virtual space on my phone rather than the groaning bookcase.

All I need to do now is to start playing chess over the board again. Covid-19 has prevented this since I joined the academy, but let's hope we will soon be playing normally again. A friend has just messaged me this morning to say that he is planning to play at one of the tournaments at Wijk aan Zee next year, and would I like to come along? Now that would be a good way to start playing chess again, and I intend to put all of the lessons I have learned at the academy to good use. One of those lessons was understanding why I made my awful move. On those grounds, perhaps the move should be regarded as being a rather good one instead.



ILKLEY MORE

Andrew Wainwright on a new chess centre in Yorkshire

We are delighted to confirm that, pursuant to the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions from Monday 17th May, we can finally open our doors to adult players. Therefore, our weekly Thursday night social chess evenings will commence from this Thursday (20th May) and will be every Thursday 7pm onwards.

We would love to invite anyone wanting to come play some chess in a friendly and relaxed environment to visit us on a Thursday and see the Chess Centre. This is open to players of all ages, so whether you just want to come have a few games, learn from some of our more experienced players or just generally see what's going on then you are most welcome. Due to COVID rules we are limited in numbers at present so please let us know in advance if you can make it.

Also, please note that we are awaiting confirmation of our premises liquor licence from Bradford Council (expected June 2021). Therefore, at the present time we are not serving alcohol, but we do have a range of coffees, hot chocolates, and soft drinks available, with full table service.

Full details can be found on our newly launched website at <https://www.chesscentre.online>

On the website you will also see further details of our upcoming events, including ---

- Our first ever 'Mini-Congress' 22nd - 23rd May
- Our first ever Open Rapidplay Tournament - 29th May
- Our first ever Junior Rapidplay Tournament (16 and under) - 5th June

We have a wide range of upcoming events throughout the summer, and we would love to see as many of you as possible at some of these events. All events registrations are online, but please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

Email: andy@chesscentre.online | Web: <https://chesscentre.online>



GARY LANE BOOK REVIEW

Chess Scribe – a 50-Year Anthology by David LeMoir - <https://chess.business/blog/>



This month's taster is [here](#)
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HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY - SOLUTION

(Gurgenidze) **1.Ka3 Ke6 2.Nf8+ Kf5 3.Nd7 h5 4.Nc5 h4 5.Nb3 h3 6.Nd2 h2 7.Nf1 h1Q 8.Ng3+.**

1...Kf7 2.Kb4 Kg7 3.Kxb5 Kxh7 4.Kc4 and gets back in time, just as in Grigoriev's position. 1.Ka3 is surprising. The more natural 1.Kb3 would also work in the 1...Kf7 variation, but would block the b3 square that the knight needs in the main line.

In the main line, if White plays 2.Kb4?, we get 2...Kf5 3.Nf8 h5 4.Nd7 h4 5.Nc5 h3 6.Nd3 h2 7.Nf2 Kf4 8.Kxb5 Kf3 9.Nh1 Kg2 and wins. Also in the main line, 5.Nd3? fails in the same way as the it did in the line we just looked at. Finally, there is 6...Kf4 instead of 6...h2, which is met by 7.Nf1 Kf3 8.Kb4 Kf2 9.Nh2 Kg2 10.Ng4 Kg3 11.Ne3 h2 12.Nf1+. That's a drawing mechanism that often comes up in knight endings, so should be part of your basic endgame knowledge.

Gurgenidze's version adds the attractive move 1.Ka3, but it also has another, subtler, effect. In Grigoriev's position, the main line has Black playing 1...Kf7, 2...Kg6, 3...Kf5, whereas in Gurgenidze's the Black king takes the shorter route to f5 by 1...e6. If Black did that in the Grigoriev, it would give White an additional option after ...Kf5 of moving his knight to b6 instead of c5. That would be a dual – two White moves either of which works – which isn't usually acceptable in a composed endgame study. By transferring the Black b-pawn from b4 to b5, Gurgenidze prevented that option because if White tried Nd7-b6 in Gurgenidze's position, it wouldn't have access to c4.

A commentator on Grigoriev's study noted that the knight traces out the letter G on the board (as it also does in Gurgenidze's version). That's the first letter of the composer's surname, but of course that's just chance – it's hard enough to compose a good study without trying to make your composition draw letters too! Not to mention that the knight doesn't trace out the letter G in Cyrillic script...

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