



## The irrepressible Keith Arkell

**We hear from GM Keith Arkell after his recent victory at the 4NCL**

**There's news of the forthcoming British Championships  
GM Michael Adams analyses his Game of the Month from the  
Gibraltar 'Battle of the Sexes'**

**GM Peter Wells learns to love the engines!**

# EDITORIAL



Well, if a week is a long time in politics, a month is certainly a long time in chess.

I'm delighted to say that Covid restrictions have been eased, tournaments are once more being played, and many clubs are flourishing.

In this month's Clubs Corner we feature a few examples of clubs that have emerged revitalised from the pandemic.

On a similar note, a sincere thank you to all the ECF members who have rejoined or joined this year. It has been heartening to see the support the ECF has received even when the pandemic was in full flow.

We are also aware of the influx of new people who have started playing chess (or taken it up again) because of the lockdowns and/or *The Queen's Gambit*.

As part of our efforts to bring newcomers into the ECF fold, on top of our free Queen's Gambit Supporter Scheme that we introduced last year we are now working on a free student membership offering - more on that soon ...

As always, I welcome your feedback.

Danny Rosenbaum

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# COVER STORY

Mark Rivlin interviews GM Keith Arkell



It is by no means an overstatement to describe GM Keith Arkell as a national chess treasure. With a prolific presence at weekend tournaments around the UK and beyond, along with a busy schedule of writing, broadcasting, analysing and coaching chess, Keith has made a successful and fulfilling career from the game. In this wide-ranging interview that will delight and inform players of all levels, Keith shares his passion for chess.

**You recently won your 413th weekend tournament. There are many ECF members who are your age (61) but would prefer watching reruns of Columbo over a weekend than locking horns with some of the top players in the country in five gruelling rounds. How do you do it?**

I am very lucky that my stamina seems to have increased with age. In the early days I remember limping to first place in an Open tournament at Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, with three wins and two draws. I felt absolutely shattered afterwards and thought to myself that this is too hard to keep up! And in my first international tournament, the Manchester 'Benedictine' in 1978, I felt exhausted for the latter rounds as I wasn't used to long events.

I think simply getting used to the schedules and durations may be the key. We adapt! I remember feeling very tired after my first ever simul which had maybe a dozen opponents. But today I am returning from a very strong 65-player simul at the University of Warwick which I managed to dash off in just three hours. (It was followed-up with a 'night on the town' with some of the students and I'm still not feeling particularly tired). I also shared first place in the

rapidplay there, to complete a hat trick of first places and bring my tally to 414.

I've counted ties for first, such as the 2008 British Championship and the 2014 World Senior Championship, as although I ultimately lost out on the titles, I still shared first place in both tournaments and I got my half share of the prize money.

I think I am able to keep going because I still have the desire and motivation to win things and compete.

***Arkell's Odyssey* (2012) and *Arkell's Endings* (2020) were received with critical acclaim. What are the stories behind these books?**

I was approached by Bob Jones of Keverel Books in 2009 to write a book of my best games, but I wasn't very keen as so many such books already exist, featuring players much better than me. But then we decided on a full autobiography as there seemed to be far fewer of those. There are of course a number of 'chess-is-my-life' books but not many about the whole person, phobias, personal life and philosophical thoughts.

I think the idea of *Arkell's Endings* gradually materialised as I gained a reputation for endgame grinds. My good mate Simon Williams approached me with a format I really liked and bingo I began writing again! As a bonus we had lots of fun recording the 15-hour video course to accompany the book.

The nature of both the book and the video is to describe my thought processes, my assessments of various types of positions, my plans and how I attempt to execute them. I give very few long variations unless I actually saw them over the board. I have gained the impression that many readers like this format. They want information and understanding of positions and plans which they can apply to their own games rather than deep and brilliant engine lines which illuminate only the game in question. You can't please everyone though; hence we have books of all types out there.

**In his promotion of *Arkell's Endings*, the publisher, Simon Williams (GingerGM) describes your rivalry with GM Mark Hebden as 'the stuff of legend'. Please elaborate!**

Mark and myself have been the top or among the top seeds for countless tournaments over the last 43



years, beginning with Leicester 1979, at which we shared first place with 5.5/6.

We have fought each other to a standstill around 155 times including classical, rapidplay and blitz, with very few quick draws. In fact, we tied at the top again at the Warwick rapidplay, but unusually we didn't even get to play each other over the course of the seven rounds.

And through all this we have maintained a friendship, though we probably sound like a couple of old codgers moaning about how our brains ain't what they used to be, and how strong and ridiculously underrated all kids are!

**In 2007 you embarked on a chess tour in America. Tell us about that experience.**

This tour was limited to New York State and came about because I was in the process of conducting a long-distance relationship with a lady living in that neck of the woods.

In total I played in eight tournaments, winning six of them. The prize money wasn't that great and a number of GMs showed up. There were certainly bigger bucks to be made from coaching children, which I also did. In one event, at Saratoga Springs, the Round 4 top-board clash was played without chess clocks for the simple reason that neither my opponent nor myself had one! Another tournament, in the same city at the end of 2008, was the final event of the American Grand Prix. I beat Alex Lenderman on my way to 6/6 but it transpired that he won the GP that year in any case.

**What are the most important endgame principles that an average club player needs to know?**

There are no absolute rules, of course, but I think a good one is to improve your pieces, including the king, before you push your pawns. Another is not to be afraid of exchanges when playing to win.

**How much has the 4NCL (League and Congresses) improved the status of UK chess?**

The 4NCL tournaments nicely fill the gap left when Sean Hewitt stopped running his excellent e2e4 events. The 4NCL League serves many purposes. It's a social event for players to meet up when they might not otherwise get the opportunity for long periods. And it also gives the chance to enjoy

weekend chess without having to squeeze in four or five games.

**Many titled chess players make a good living outside of the game. You've chosen to make a career out of doing something you love. How important is that for you?**

Chess, the chess environment, and the whole lifestyle have always given me happiness and a sense of fulfilment. It hasn't been easy from a financial point of view but that has never really troubled me. There are always options such as writing and teaching, which are also rewarding in their own way, to fall back on. I feel privileged to have been able to travel the world and that doing so has enriched my life far more than, for example, working at the same office year after year.

**There must be many, but what is one of your favourite games?**

There was this sacrificial attack against Julian Hodgson at the 1996 Surrey Easter Congress when he was ranked 42nd in the world - <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1533004>

**You won the second British Online Championship last year and you often play online. What are your views on remote chess?**

I find online chess very relaxing, especially blitz. The Online British was a little tense because of all the necessary anti-cheating mechanisms in place. For example, not only were we screen-sharing but you could also hear all sorts of sounds emanating from various players' rooms. However, while in general I do enjoy online chess you can't beat the over-the-board version, with a game followed by a meal and drink with friends.

**Last year you joined the roster of experts writing for ChessMoves. How much do you enjoy analysing and commentating on chess?**

I am very happy to have this opportunity to analyse my own endings in ChessMoves. I enjoy explaining my approach to the game and getting feedback from readers. What I like most about writing, be it an article or a book, is not the writing itself but the feeling you get when you are satisfied with your completed work. It can take a number of edits and rewrites before I get to that point!

In some ways I think it's easier to give long variations with little explanation than to express your ideas verbally, and this is because a translation is taking place. The original language is the chess moves themselves and the translation is in explaining them using human communication.

**You beat Magnus Carlsen in 2002 when he was 11 and graded 2127. Did you notice anything that suggested he had a 'bright future'?**

The answer to that is a resounding 'yes'! The game itself scores very highly on engine-measured accuracy, and the moment I was most impressed with was Magnus's 14...c5! which I had missed - <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1325104>

**How important is it for young players who have come to chess through the Internet to participate in weekend tournaments?**

Eventually it is necessary for a promising player to practise over-the-board chess if they are ever going to make real progress, but it does not have to be in weekend congresses. There is also club chess, and better still, full international tournaments to aim for one day.

## AROUND THE COUNTRY

### DIRECTOR OF HOME CHESS REPORT

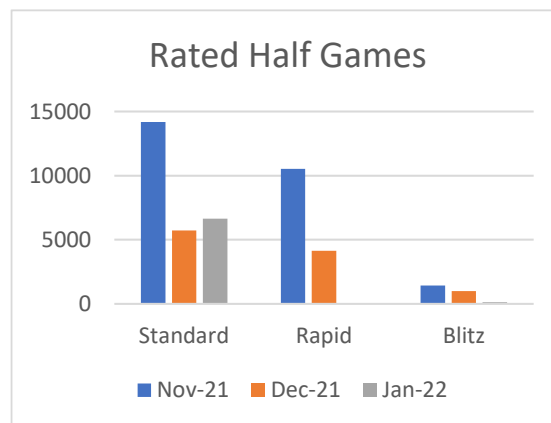
Nigel Towers writes ...

#### Return to Over the Board

**Some numbers**  
The return to over the board play picked up again in January with the 4NCL congress and league events going ahead as planned.

There were more games in January than in December although we are still at around half pre-pandemic levels of activity.

We are hoping that the return will continue in February and March with more congresses restarting as well as the ongoing programme of league and county events.



**Number of rated half-games rated in the month – 2019 figures in brackets**

|        | OTB      |          |       |
|--------|----------|----------|-------|
|        | Standard | Rapid    | Blitz |
| Nov-21 | 14174    | 10,524   | 1,434 |
|        | (25,826) | (20,266) | (0)   |
| Dec-21 | 5724     | 4,130    | 1,000 |
|        | (18,048) | (10,464) | (0)   |
| Jan-22 | 6658     | 3974     | 136   |

The move to faster time controls continues with rapid and blitz games now making up a larger percentage of total games played.

We expect to be publishing ECF blitz lists once we have sufficient results to produce a viable national list for over the board events at the faster time control.

#### Congress Roundup

As well as the 27th 4NCL congress in Harrogate there were several rapidplay and other events across the country.

| Date         | Event                            |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Jan 2        | Sussex Junior Hastings Rapidplay |
| Jan 8–9      | EACU Individual Championship     |
| Jan 9        | Hull Rapid 2022                  |
| Jan 21–23    | 27th 4NCL Congress (Harrogate)   |
| Jan 24–Feb 3 | Gibraltar Battle of the Sexes    |

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Feb 3</b>   | Hendon FIDE Blitz                                     |
| <b>Feb 5-7</b> | Junior 4NCL Weekend 2,<br>Holiday Inn South Normanton |
| <b>Feb 5</b>   | Warwick Rapidplay (7 rounds<br>at 15 10)              |
| <b>Feb 6</b>   | Sussex Junior Horsham<br>Rapidplay                    |
| <b>Feb 12</b>  | 4NCL Weekend 3 – Rounds 5 to<br>6                     |

## The Hull Rapidplay Congress – January 2022



*Organiser Douglas Vleeshouwer writes ...*

The Hull Rapidplay took place on Sunday 9th January at the Canham Turner Conference Centre. The venue is in the middle of the Hull University Campus and a couple of miles from the city centre.

The event was organised as a five round Swiss, with three sections: Open, U1900 and U1600. The time control was 20 minutes with a 10 second increment from move 1.

The event was at full capacity, with 14 players in the Open, 28 in the U1900 and 30 in the U1600.

Full results can be found here at <http://chess-results.com/tnr583585.aspx?lan=1&art=0&turdet=YES>

The winners were -

### Open

1st Paul Townsend (York) 4.5

2nd Nigel Birtwistle (Grantham), 3.5

3rd Andrei Ciuravin (Hull), Joe Kilshaw (Grimsby), Jonathan Arnott and Thomas Wills (both Sheffield) 3

Performance prize - Andrei Ciuravin and Thomas Wills, 1.16 W-We

### U1900

1st Jack Walker (Hull) 5 points

2nd Daniel Shek (Crowthorne), Paul May (Whetherby) and Roger Greateorex (Llangollen) 4 points

1st performance prize - Geoffrey Brown (Rotherham) 1.15 W-We

2nd performance prize - Bodhana Sivanandan (Harrow) 0.92 W-We

### U1600

1st Eldars Gulijevs (Nottingham) 4.5

2nd Tim Lounds (Kendal), William J Egan (Scunthorpe), Graeme C Reid and Steve J Thrower (both Hull) 4

1st performance prize - Stephen Holmes (Coalville) 1.61

2nd performance prize - Benedikt Pitel (Hull) 1.59

### Winner of the Junior Trophy - Eldars Gulijevs

Douglas would like to thank Bryan Hesler and Jo Hutchison for their work as arbiters at the event.

### Congress Reports

We feature reports and / or games elsewhere in *ChessMoves* for other congresses during January and February including :

- Sarah Longson's excellent report on the 27th 4NCL Harrogate Congress;
- A key game from the Gibraltar Battle of the Sexes which appears as GM Michael Adams' Game of the Month.

### ECF Over the Board Championships

The programme of ECF events for 2022 can be found at the calendar link here -

[https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/#start\\_date=2021-12-31;categories=677540487](https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/#start_date=2021-12-31;categories=677540487)

We are pleased to confirm details of the English Seniors Championships and the English Championships in May, and the 108th British Championship in August.

## English Seniors Championships – May 2022

The English Seniors is back with the first Seniors Championship since 2019 scheduled for May 2022 at the Kenilworth Holiday Inn.



The most recent 2019 championship was held at St John's Hotel in Solihull with IM Paul Littlewood (above left) winning the 50+ title with 5.5 points out of 6 and Kevin Bowmer (above right) winning the 65+ title with 5.5 points out of 6 -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/the-english-seniors-2019/>

<https://www.carlspix.co.uk/English-Seniors-Championships-2019/>

This year's Championship is scheduled to take place between 4th and 8th May at the Kenilworth Holiday Inn in Warwickshire.

The event will be open to eligible English players with separate 50+ and 65+ championships. Players must be born in England or have lived in England for at least the preceding 12 months. In addition, if they have a FIDE registration it must be ENG.

The congress will be ECF and FIDE rated with a total of seven rounds over five days. The playing schedule will be as follows for each of the championships:

**Wednesday Round 1** - 17.00 – 21.00; **Thursday Round 2** - 11:00 to 15:00; **Friday Rounds 3 and 4** - 10.00 – 14:00 and 16:00 – 20:00;

**Saturday Rounds 5 and 6** - 10:00 – 14:00; and 16:00 – 20:00; and **Sunday Round 7** 11:00 – 15:00.

The time control will be all moves in 90 minutes plus 30 second increment per move from move 1.

## English Championships and English Women's Championship – May 2022

The English Championships and English Women's Standardplay Championships will take place between Thursday 19th and Sunday 22nd May at a Midlands venue to be confirmed. Winners of the

events will be able to take up qualification spots for the British in August. The event will be open to eligible English players with automatic qualification for GMs, WGMs, IMs and WIMs and for players over 2200 via a wildcard entry. The remaining places in the finals will be awarded to qualifying players from an online qualifier event which will be held between 1st and 3rd April.

The Championships will be played as seven round Swiss tournaments with the schedule as follows:

**Thursday Rounds 1 and 2** - 11:00 to 15:00 and 17.00 – 21.00; **Friday Rounds 3 and 4** - 10.00 – 14:00 and 16:00 – 20:00; **Saturday Rounds 5 and 6** 10:00 – 14:00 and 16:00 – 20:00; and **Sunday Round 7** 10:00 – 14:00. 15.00 – followed by playoffs if required.

All moves in 90 minutes plus 30 second increment per move from move 1.





## THE 108th BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 108th British Championships are scheduled for Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022 in the Riviera International Centre in Torquay with further details at

<https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

These are the next championships in a long and almost unbroken series since the event started in 1904. Recent winners include GM Gawain Jones (2017 – Llandudno), GM Michael Adams (2018-2019 – Hull and Torquay), and GM Nick Pert (2021 – Hull). Recent British Women's Championship winners include WGM Jovanka Houska (2016-2019) and WGM Harriet Hunt (2021- Hull).

The championships are restricted to citizens of the UK, British Overseas Territories, or the Republic of Ireland or players who have been resident for the last 12 months in the UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man. In addition players wanting to take part in the main British championship will need to qualify as set out in the qualification document here –

[Qualification Regulations 2022](#)

The British Junior and Seniors Championships are open to all eligible players based on citizenship or residency. as above and with no specific qualification requirements.

All other events apart from of the British Championships, Junior Championships and Senior Championships are open events with no specific eligibility or qualification requirements.

The playing schedule is as follows -

### British Championships

**Week 2 – Saturday 13th to Sunday 21st August**

9 round Swiss with rounds starting at 2.30pm each day, apart from round 9 which will start at 10.00am on the final Sunday. The British Championships will include prizes/awards for the British Open and Women's Champions.

### Junior Championships U16, U14, U12, U10, U8

**Week 1 – Monday 8th to Friday 12th August**

7 rounds over 4 days with one round on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and 2 rounds on Tuesday and Thursday.

### Over 50 Championship

**Week 1 – Monday 8th to Sunday 14th August**

7 rounds over 7 days with rounds starting at 2.30pm each day, apart from round 7 which will start at 10.00am on Sunday 14th August.

### Major Open

**Week 2 – Saturday 13th to Sunday 21st August**

9 round Swiss Championship with rounds starting at 2.30pm each day, apart from round 9 which will start at 10.00am on the final Sunday.

### Over 65 Championship

**Week 2 – Monday 15th to Sunday 21st August**

7 rounds over 7 days with rounds starting at 2.30 pm each day, apart from round 7 which will start at 10.00am on the final Sunday.

### Additional Events

### Weekday Congress

**Week 1 – Monday 8th to Thursday 11th August**

Five sections – Open, U2050, U1900, U1750 and U1600. 7 rounds over 5 days with one round on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 2 rounds on Tuesday and Thursday.

## **Week 1 Rapidplay**

### **Wednesday 10th August**

Three sections in each event – Open, U1750, U1500  
Each event will be a 7 round Swiss rapidplay

## **Weekender Congress**

### **Friday 12th to Sunday 14th August**

Three sections – Open, U1700 and U1500  
5 rounds over 3 days with round 1 on Friday evening, 2 rounds on Saturday (morning and afternoon) and 2 rounds on Sunday (morning and afternoon).

## **Morning Congress**

### **Week 2 – Sunday 14th to Saturday 20th**

Five sections – Open, U2050, U1900, U1750 and U1600 - 7 rounds over 7 days with one round per day starting at 9.15 in the morning.

## **Blitz Events**

### **Saturday 13th August**

Evening Blitz as a 9 rounds Swiss tournament

### **Wednesday 17th August**

Evening blitz as a 9 rounds Swiss tournament. All moves in 3 minutes with 2 second increments

You can find further details of the championship on the website at the link below with an entry form and detailed tournament regulations to follow shortly -

<https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

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## **CLUBS CORNER**

Clubs Corner this month features three examples of how clubs have gained interest through the rise of online chess and are thriving in the new 'hybrid' environment.

It is a new era blending over the board and online chess, with WhatsApp groups and improved websites and links to the community.

The ECF hopes that other clubs will not only be encouraged by these stories but will find practical benefit from hearing some of the initiatives.

### **Telepost Chess Club**

Keeping in touch: one club's moves through the pandemic

10 March 2020 - Teams from four Shropshire clubs, including one from Telepost Club in Shrewsbury, are squeezed into a small, airless hall in an all-play-all

evening of rapidplay. Players shake hands, move from one board to another between games, share the buffet provided for the interval. Squeeze up in their shared cars for the journey home.

15 March 2020 - Several Telepost players make the trip north to Blackpool Congress. Players shake hands, move from one board to another, mingle in the public spaces of the Imperial Hotel. One of our players develops a touch of a cough.

16 March 2020 - Advice is given to avoid non-essential contact and travel, ahead of the first lockdown on 23 March. All over the board chess in Shropshire is suspended.

There is a perception and portrayal of chess amongst the public and in popular culture as a game of the mind, a cerebral activity in which the body plays little part. But those who play the game regularly know different, that it is inherently dependent on touch, close proximity and a keen awareness of the physical presence of your opponent. Two or three hours of touching the same pieces while sitting considerably less than two metres apart are bookended by the handshakes that start and finish the game. Not exactly Covid secure.

So, how to keep in touch with our members and with our desire to play the game as we entered the non-touch, distanced world of the pandemic?

John Casewell first joined our club in 1984. Since then, it has moved from a local government office block via a crown green bowling club to its current location, a sports and social club where it has been since 1988. Now in his late seventies and having become wheelchair bound over the last four years, John had become totally reliant on others to get him to the club and had sadly decided that he would become an infrequent visitor at the time Covid struck.

Having played chess online for years and having looked at a neighbouring club's website, John came up with the idea of creating an online club within the club, as over the board had been suspended. A light bulb moment brought the name Telepost Dark Knights as we were in the winter months and John much preferred the comfort of home rather than going out on dark nights. An existing need dovetailed with the restrictions of the pandemic.

A page was set up on the Lichess site and we figured out the mechanics of online competition. We held a

friendly match with our town rivals, Shrewsbury Chess Club, organised a number of internal club competitions and entered county and national leagues. One-off events included Lichess arena-based simuls, including one hosted by GM Keith Arkell. Club, county, 4NCL and Five Counties matches meant many of us soon became busier than we had been pre-covid. A calendar of online matches meant we could spectate as well as play.

Shropshire is a large inland county and because of promoting the Dark Knights we recruited players within the county who would normally have found it difficult to physically attend our club, and we also attracted players from further afield who had previously lived and played in the county. We even welcomed back one of the club's original founders, now in his 80s, who played for us from his home in Paris.

Alongside the Dark Knights initiative, we redesigned and relaunched our club website. The site had originally been built by our previous club secretary, Keith Tabner, some 18 years ago, and must have been one of the pioneers of club sites. Nick Holmes took on the redesign as a lockdown project, aiming to make it more mobile friendly and to keep it as up-to-date as possible, both to help existing members keep in touch and in the knowledge that for many prospective new members - including those whose interest was piqued by *The Queen's Gambit* - this would be their first impression of the club.

Back in the real world, when Dennis Bonner became secretary of the club in 2018 we had around 20 members and three teams in the Shropshire League. Dennis publicised the club to attract more players, with a flyer delivered to all the local Shrewsbury libraries and ensuring the club was in the county lists of Shropshire sports activities with all the relevant details. Dennis was very proactive during lockdowns, encouraging members through emails and setting up a WhatsApp group which kept the banter going. *The Queen's Gambit* provoked interest from our local radio station and Dennis and our own Beth Harmon, Kate Walker, did a number of interviews about the club and chess in general. We have gradually increased our membership and currently have 33 members and five over the board teams, with four online teams competing in the Shropshire league.

We restarted our over the board activities at the club in August 2021, with the use of masks and hand gel,

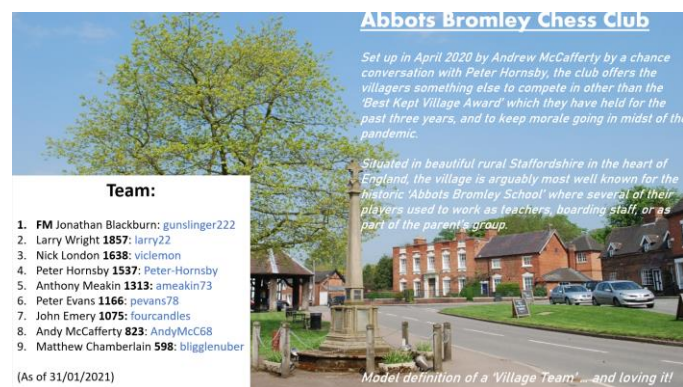
and vaccinations and lateral flow tests all recorded on forms upon entry. With the increase of members and enquiries we decided to appoint a new members mentor to introduce our new members to the club and help with their development.

In a sign of the merger of pre- and post-Covid chess, the last AGM of the Shropshire Chess Association acknowledged the benefits of online when a separate county online league was set up and a motion passed that blue badge holders within the county should be allowed to play online in over the board matches by being paired with a willing opposition player. Our club competition for this season is running in both OTB and online formats. Players like John Casewell can continue their close involvement with the club.

The pandemic has certainly been a challenge for a small club such as ours, but in some ways, it has provoked a resurgence. Our efforts to keep in touch through lockdowns generated new members and new competitions and the level of online activity helped many existing members through the darker nights. We've now entered a hybrid world that opens up the wonderful game of chess to more people who wish to feel part of a club community and to touch the game in new and inclusive ways.

### **Abbots Bromley Chess Club**

Peter Hornsby reports



**Abbots Bromley Chess Club**

Set up in April 2020 by Andrew McCafferty by a chance conversation with Peter Hornsby, the club offers the villagers something else to compete in other than the 'Best Kept Village Award' which they have held for the past three years, and to keep morale going in midst of the pandemic.

Situated in beautiful rural Staffordshire in the heart of England, the village is arguably most well known for the historic 'Abbots Bromley School' where several of their players used to work as teachers, boarding staff, or as part of the parent's group.

**Team:**

1. FM Jonathan Blackburn: gunslinger222
2. Larry Wright 1857: larry22
3. Nick London 1638: viciemon
4. Peter Hornsby 1537: Peter-Hornsby
5. Anthony Meakin 1313: ameakin73
6. Peter Evans 1166: pevans78
7. John Emery 1075: fourcandles
8. Andy McCafferty 823: AndyMcC68
9. Matthew Chamberlain 598: bliggenuber

(As of 31/01/2021)

Model definition of a 'Village Team' ... and loving it!

Until recently, Abbots Bromley has not had a chess club. The village has been through a very sad time due to the heart-breaking closure of the local school affecting the entire community. I used to work there, and there are other former staff and students involved with the team. Andy McCafferty is founder of the chess club. His wife Tracy Richards is part of the parents group attempting to re-open Abbots Bromley School.

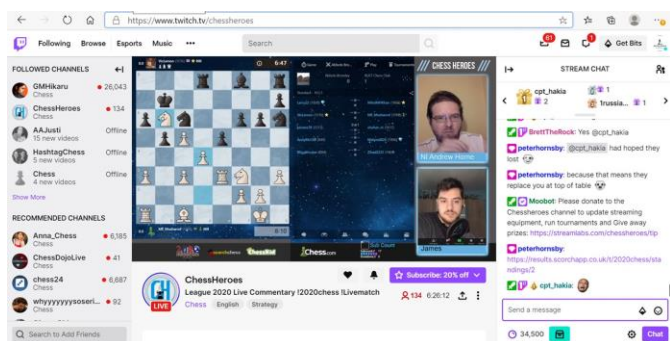


The chess club has helped the village fill the void left by the school's closure.

We currently have 30 members and has an active WhatsApp group which has proved a very effective means of social communication.

The chat often features the senior players coaching the less experienced players through post-match analysis and friendlies.

We play our competitive matches online in the World 20/20 Chess League on Chess.com - [2021-2022 World 2020 Chess Championships | ScorchChess \(scorchapp.co.uk\)](https://www.twitch.tv/chessheroes) and have been featured on Chess TV Streaming through *Chess Heroes*



Our most notable result was our win against 'Asociacion Mexicana de Ajedrez-AMA', one of the largest clubs on Chess.com with 7000 members, which was wildly celebrated on the village's Facebook page



Over the summer we met for our, and the village's, first ever 'over the board' meeting which was a lovely occasion and people who had talked and played together online for over a year were finally able to meet in person.

Following on from this 'one-off' meeting, we decided to launch a regular over the board club and with that in mind we planned, with extensive help from FM Jonathan Blackburn, a 'ChessFest' to mimic the successful events that had taken place in London and Liverpool.

We held this event in July 2021. It attracted nearly fifty people attending across the afternoon and evening with people travelling from Lichfield, Stoke-On-Trent and beyond. It started with casual games for the adults and a masterclass teaching session from Jonathan for the juniors which went down extremely well, using sets kindly provided by Chess in Schools.

After that it was time for the first 'Hybrid Chess Match' against Dundee City. We even had arbiter Matthew Carr dropping in to make sure everything was above board before he went on to help run the British Championships, and myself to ensure that there were no technological issues and that everyone logged in! It was a bruising encounter against a very strong and well-organized team; our thanks to their club and captain David Findlay. Although our team went down 19-3 it was great to get people playing online, as well as a club record turnout for a match.

After a well-deserved drink break (thanks to the Coach & Horses for hosting us in their beautiful garden and for looking after us!) it was time for the 14 board simul starring Welsh Champion FM Jonathan Blackburn. Everyone put up a really tough fight and Jonathan had to work hard for every win bar one, where new member Luke Sullivan claimed a draw and with that a medal and Chess & Bridge subscription as a prize!

As the sun was setting it was time to wrap up on a very successful day. However, the chess sun is only just rising at Abbots Bromley and will surely continue to burn brightly; since then we have met up at the Birmingham rapidplay, been nominated for 'ECF Small Chess Club of the Year', hosted a blitz tournament in the Bagot Arms and will send a team to the upcoming 20/20 over the board tournament in Birmingham in February.

We hope that these events can be modelled by clubs across the country and beyond.

We thank Jonathan and to all those involved with our 'ChessFest', and to Max Sarasini -



<http://www.maxsarasiniphotography.co.uk/> - for the photos below ...



### **Northwich Chess Club's chess revival**

A checklist by Richard Betts

Three years ago, Northwich were down to a core of six players and only one 500 team in WDCL. We nearly closed. We decided to try and build the club back. What actions did we take to save the club?

1. We contacted former players to see if they were interested in returning (some did).
2. We invested in new boards and clocks to smarten up our appearance.

3. We made joining free to new members for a year.
4. We advertised on the Northwich Facebook page (free).
5. We tried to set up a website with some success (more needs to be done).
6. We took a stand at a local village fete.
7. As membership grew, we set up three teams each with their own captain.
8. We maintained a sociable atmosphere on club nights when we didn't have a match.
9. During the pandemic we ran our Monday night chess club online.
10. We collect £10 per member in subs and invest every pound back into club facilities, if we have no expenditure then we waive the subs.

The result is that we now have 14 members with several more promising to join when the pandemic is over. In the 2019/20 season we ran three teams. So, it can be done but does need effort from club members.

What more do we have planned?

1. We are not happy with our existing venue as we keep getting pushed around from one room to another, so we plan to move if we can find a suitable alternative. We have considered pubs, a scout hut, a rugby club, a cricket club and council facilities. All of these present their challenges. We want better facilities to play social chess and league matches. Some venues we have looked at want £50 per night. We haven't got that. I suspect all clubs have this issue. Pubs want the footfall so I suspect that will be the answer, so long as we can get an area that is sufficiently quiet for matches.
2. We plan to have our website re-built. It's not just setting it up but also keeping it up to date.
3. We have agreed to support The Grange Junior School with their chess club. It currently has 30 members.
4. We have agreed to open a junior chess club at Northwich Library on Saturday mornings.

The library won't charge us as we are using a public area and they want the footfall. I'm hopeful that we will grow attendance there and it will spill over to some parents joining our Monday night club.

5. We will attach our club banner to the railings outside the library to advertise the club.
6. We will keep the online club under review as we have certainly attracted new members through this channel.
7. We will work with Chess in Schools and Communities (CSC) to see if we can grow junior chess in Northwich.

## ECF ONLINE

Nigel Towers, ECF Manager of Online Chess, writes ...

The ECF Online Clubs are increasingly popular with current membership levels as follows:

|                         |       |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Chess.com ECF Open Club | 5,052 |
| Chess.com ECF Members   | 1,686 |
| Lichess English Players | 1,439 |

We hold four tournaments per week in the Lichess English Chess Players Club and four per week in the Chess.com ECF Members Club. All of the club tournaments are ECF online rated.

### ECF Chess.com International Leagues

The ECF online clubs also take part in the three major international leagues which are just starting their new seasons.

### Chess.com Nations League



We field an England team from the ECF Members club in the Chess.com Nations League which is now

starting its fourth season. The Nations League will have weekly matches on six Sundays – February 13, February 20, February 27, March 13, March 20, March 27, 2022. Sunday, March 6 is reserved as a break week with no scheduled matches (can be used to make up missed matches).

There is a single premier division in the Season 4 Nations League with teams including:

**Argentina** - [Federacion Argentina de Ajedrez](#)

**Canada** - [Chess Federation of Canada](#)

**England** - [English Chess Federation](#)

**Greece** - [Greek Chess Federation](#)

**Jamaica** - [Jamaica Chess Federation](#)

**Kyrgyzstan** - [Kyrgyz Republic](#)

**Romania** - [Romania Chess Federation](#)

**Tahiti** - [Federation Tahitienne des echecs](#)

**United States** - [US Chess](#)

**Uruguay** - [Uruguay Open](#)

Round 1 took place on Sunday February 13<sup>th</sup> with England playing Greece over two legs (16-00 Rapid leg, 17-15 blitz leg). We won both legs comfortably by 20.5 to 7.5 in the blitz and 14.5 to 1.5 in the rapid.



### Chess.com Live Chess World and European Leagues

We also field an England team in the two leagues from the ECF Club with support from Team England Live.

### Chess.com Live Chess World League Season 9



<https://www.chess.com/club/live-chess-world-league>

Season 9 of the well-established LCWL started on 13th February 2022. England is taking part with a team from the ECF Open Club with support from Team England Live administrators. There are five divisions in the league. England are in **Division 3** with each round consisting of a blitz (5|2) and a rapid (10|2) Chess.com match with two games per board against the opposing team in each match.

Division includes the following Chess.com teams -

[Team Brazil Live](#), [Team Belarus](#), [Team Iran+](#), [Chess Federation of Canada](#), [English Chess Federation](#), [Team India](#), [Uruguay Open](#), [Team Chile](#)

Our first fixture was England v Canada on Sunday 13th February.



Following the win against Greece earlier on Sunday, we lost both legs against a strong Canadian team by 13-19 and 13-23 with some close fought games.

### Chess.com Live Chess European League Season 5

Season 5 of the LCEL started on 7th February 2022

<https://www.chess.com/club/live-chess-european-league>

England takes part with a team from the ECF Open Club with support from Team England Live administrators.

There are four divisions in the league – Premier Division and Divisions 1-3. The England Team is in Division 1 with the full list of Division 1 teams as below:

**Division 1** (minimum **12** boards are required for Blitz, Bullet and Rapid)

[Team France \(last ranked from Premier Div.\)](#)

[Team Kazakhstan](#)

[Team Italy](#)

[English Chess Federation](#)

[Team Turkey](#)

and newly promoted from Div.2

[Team Azerbaijan](#)

[Team Belarus](#)

Round 1 began on February 7th and ends on February 27th.

**Round 1** fixtures are as follows:

| Fixture | Team 1                     | Team 2                                   |
|---------|----------------------------|--|
| 1       | Team Turkey                | Bye                                      |
| 2       | Belarus                    | Team France                              |
| 3       | <a href="#">Team Italy</a> | <a href="#">English Chess Federation</a> |
| 4       | Team Azerbaijan            | Team Kazakhstan                          |

Matches are based on three Chess.com team challenges – each with two games against the opposing board as follows:

Bullet - **2min+1sec**

Blitz - **5min+2sec**

Rapid - **10min+2sec**

Entry is open to all members of the ECF Open Club on Chess.com -

<https://www.chess.com/club/english-chess-federation>

### Lichess Internationals

We continue to field an England team in the very popular Lichess team battles including:

#### Bundesliga

The Liga team battles take place on Thursday and Sunday Evenings at 7-00 pm.

The team battles include ten teams playing in Arena format for 100 mins with the top three going up and bottom three going down. We are currently moving between divisions 3 and 6 of this highly competitive league.

#### Torres de Loule/ Liga Ibera

This is a Spanish organised league with three divisions of around 14 teams each on Sunday afternoons. The league is played at multiple time controls and is highly competitive with the English Chess Players team playing in division 1 -

<https://lichess.org/team/liga-ibera>

#### Champions League

This is an international league with team battles at 5-30 pm on Tuesdays with around twenty teams and fifteen leaders at 3|0 blitz time control.

#### Other Leagues, Marathons, Bullet Events and Fischer Random



We also participate in the regular Mega A Team Battles every other week on Friday afternoons. The Mega Team Battles are the largest of the Lichess Team Battles, with up to 200 teams and twenty leaders per team participating in two-hour arena format team battles at blitz time control. We also took part in a number of the bullet leagues, and the Fischer Random Leagues.

### ECF Endgame Challenge – Rerun, Challenge 2 and Saturday Thematic Tournaments



The ECF ran a two-day Endgame Challenge on 29th and 30th December with IM Lorin D'Costa (above right) and GM Keith Arkell (above left) covering:

Part 1 – Some basic positions, pawn, knight and bishop endings

Part 2 – Minor piece, rook and queen endings

The Challenge was heavily oversubscribed with a cap on numbers and a rerun staged on Saturday 29th January.

The follow-on event Endgame Challenge Two took place on 15th and 16th February focussing on rook and pawn endgames, with a similar mix of Zoom lectures, thematic online tournaments and an online endgame simul with GM Keith Arkell. Keith avoided any draw offers and was aiming to take all games through to an endgame with rook and pawns where possible.

We have also been running a series of Saturday afternoon endgame tournaments in the English Chess Players Club open to all club members. These start from thematic endgame positions with two tournaments with different starting positions.

The tournaments on 15th January were based on some classic minor piece endgame positions including a knight v bishop endgame from Karpov v Kasparov from the 1984 World Championships. The

original Karpov v Kasparov game is reproduced below as a model game for these types of position.

### Thematic Tournament 1 – Good knight v bad bishop

(Karpov v Kasparov 1984 - Game 9 starting from Karpov's move 45).

Game 9 of the first Karpov v Kasparov World Champs match is a classic example of how to play with a good knight against a bad bishop.

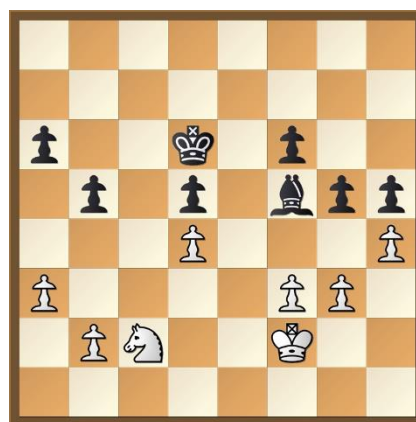
The game was played in October in the early stages of what became a marathon World Championship match continuing for five months and 48 games with the score at 5-3 and 40 draws. After 48 games FIDE president Campomanes decided the match was going on for too long and stopped it amidst some controversy over concerns for the health of the players.

Game 9 of the marathon started with a Tarrasch defense to Karpov's Queen's Gambit. We join the game after Black's 44th move Bxf5.

### Anatoly Karpov - Garry Kasparov [D34]

Karpov - Kasparov World Championship Ma Moscow URS (9), 05.10.1984

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.g3 Nf6 6.Bg2 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Nc3 Nc6 9.Bg5 cxd4 10.Nxd4 h6 11.Be3 Re8 12.Qb3 Na5 13.Qc2 Bg4 14.Nf5 Rc8 15.Bd4 Bc5 16.Bxc5 Rxc5 17.Ne3 Be6 18.Rad1 Qc8 19.Qa4 Rd8 20.Rd3 a6 21.Rfd1 Nc4 22.Nxc4 Rxc4 23.Qa5 Rc5 24.Qb6 Rd7 25.Rd4 Qc7 26.Qxc7 Rdx7 27.h3 h5 28.a3 g6 29.e3 Kg7 30.Kh2 Rc4 31.Bf3 b5 32.Kg2 R7c5 33.Rxc4 Rxc4 34.Rd4 Kf8 35.Be2 Rxd4 36.exd4 Ke7 37.Na2 Bc8 38.Nb4 Kd6 39.f3 Ng8 40.h4 Nh6 41.Kf2 Nf5 42.Nc2 f6 43.Bd3 g5 44.Bxf5 Bxf5



45.Ne3 Bb1 46.b4 Played by Karpov to fix the queenside pawns on light squares.



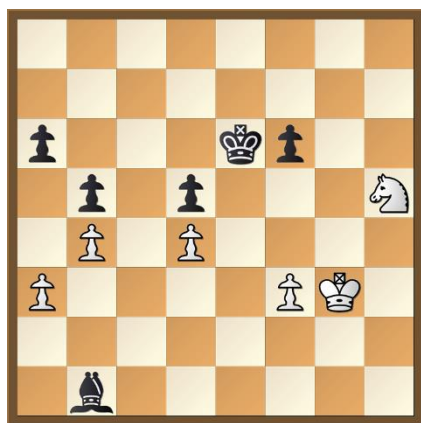
**46...gxh4**

**47.Ng2!!** Karpov thought for some time in this position before playing Ng2 with a very clever pawn sacrifice. The idea is for White to give the pawn up temporarily to keep an entry point for the knight and king into the Black position.

**47...hxcg3+ 48.Kxcg3** Now we reach a good knight v bad bishop position with K and N both able to infiltrate.

**48...Ke6**

And White will infiltrate with three Black weakness to target and only one for White.



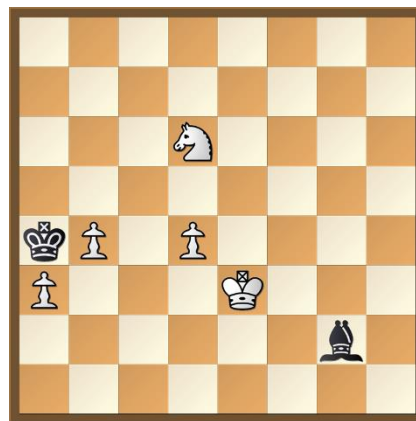
**49.Nf4+ Kf5 50.Nxh5 Ke6 51.Nf4+ Kd6 52.Kg4 Bc2 53.Kh5 Bd1 54.Kg6 Ke7 55.Nxd5+**  
Abandoning the pawn.

**55...Ke6 56.Nc7+ Kd7 57.Nxa6 Bxf3 58.Kxf6 -**  
White is now two pawns up.

**58...Kd6 59.Kf5 Kd5 60.Kf4 Bh1 61.Ke3** Saving the pawn.

**61...Kc4 62.Nc5 Bc6 63.Nd3 Bg2 64.Ne5+ Kc3 64...Kb3 65.Kd3 Kxa3 66.Kc3** Winning as White can start pushing the pawn with support from the knight.

**65.Ng6 Kc4 66.Ne7 Bb7 67.Nf5 Bg2 68.Nd6+ Kb3 69.Nxb5 Ka4**



**70.Nd6** Black resigned at this point as White will promote one of the passed pawns.

**1-0**

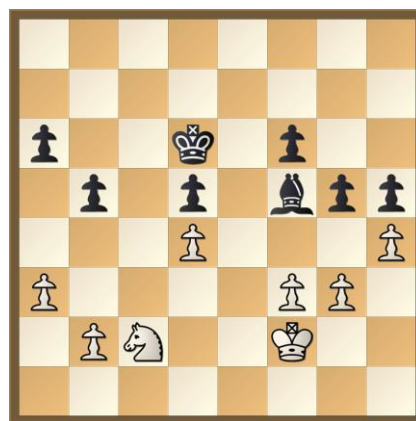
### Tournament results – Bishop v Knight – Who won?

That was how the world champions played it and you can find the two thematic tournaments at the links here to see how ECF online club members fared from the Karpov – Kasparov starting position as well as the more recent Arkell – Stubbs minor piece ending.

You can find details of the model games in the Lichess study here -

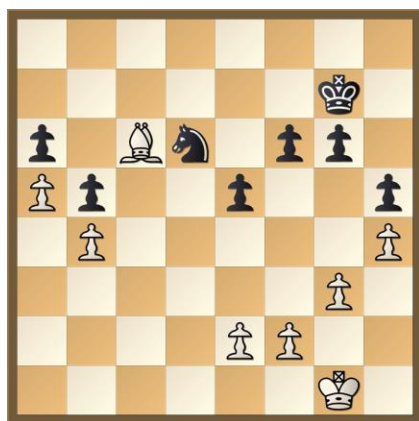
<https://lichess.org/study/sd5gNRDB>

The two tournaments are at the links below



White to move starting from Karpov v Kasparov – 1984 World Championship -

<https://lichess.org/tournament/hHZzuqMX>



White to move from Arkell v Stubbs – 2021 British Championships -

<https://lichess.org/tournament/23t24goP>

These were played in Arena format at 3|2 on Saturday 15th January. GM Keith Arkell joined us for both tournaments and was able to give some expert advice in the chat.

In general, the side with the stronger minor piece won or drew but there were a few upsets as the positions can get quite double edged.

As ever, careful play is required to convert this sort of advantage with calculation required at the right points as the position develops.

## ECF Online Grand Prix – 2022



Series 2 of the Online Grand Prix continues with the January rapid and February blitz Events.



The Rapid Arena 1 took place on 16th Jan 2022 as a six round Swiss at 10|5. The event was won by @RockTroll on 6 points out of 6 rounds, followed

by @mariner235 and Chris Davison, both with 5 out of 6.



The Blitz Arena 2 took place on 6th February as a 9-round blitz at 3|2 time control. The event was won by Woodpusher followed by Chris Davison followed by Dr\_Silver\_Fox in third.

The series will run for ten months until October with the blitz series running on the first Sunday of each month and the rapid on the third Sunday. The top six results count towards the leaderboard with ECF trophies and signed books for the winners (i.e. the highest aggregate scores on the leaderboard) at the end of October.

You can find further details and an entry form at the link here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2022-online-grand-prix-series/>

The 2022 leaderboards can be found here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2022-online-grand-prix-series-blitz-leaderboards/>

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2022-online-grand-prix-series-rapid-leaderboards/>

# NEWS AND VIEWS

| Number | Rk  | Fed | Title | Username             | Name                            |
|--------|-----|-----|-------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1      | 1   |     | GM    | Hikaru               | Hikaru Nakamura                 |
| 2      | 10  |     | GM    | FairChess_on_YouTube | Dmitry Andreikin                |
| 3      | 12  |     | GM    | Jospem               | Jose Eduardo Martínez Alcantara |
| 4      | 16  |     | GM    | SantoBlue            | Vahap Sanal                     |
| 5      | 31  |     | GM    | kp1091               | Kacper Piorun                   |
| 6      | 4   |     | GM    | howitzer14           | David Howell                    |
| 7      | 15  |     | NM    | Sviridov_Valery      | Валерий Свиридов                |
| 8      | 8   |     | GM    | champ2005            | Raunak Sadhwani                 |
| 9      | 56  |     | FM    | frederiksvane        | Frederik Svane                  |
| 10     | 41  |     | GM    | VerdeNotte           | Gawain Jones                    |
| 11     | 13  |     | GM    | Sanan_Sjugirov       | Sanan Sjugirov                  |
| 12     | 14  |     | GM    | kirillshevchenko     | Kirill Shevchenko               |
| 13     | 9   |     | GM    | BogdanDeac           | Bogdan Daniel Deac              |
| 14     | 207 |     | FM    | MustafayevFarid2004  | Farid Mustafayev                |
| 15     | 28  |     | GM    | Arseniy_Nesterov     | Arseniy Nesterov                |
| 16     | 2   |     | GM    | mishanick            | Alexey Sarana                   |
| 17     | 87  |     | GM    | Alexander_Donchenko  | Alexander Donchenko             |
| 18     | 7   |     | IM    | wonderfultime        | Tuan Minh Le                    |
| 19     | 35  |     | FM    | JonahWillow          | Jonah Willow                    |
| 20     | 18  |     | FM    | KhazarBabazada007    | Khazar Babazada                 |

## Titled Tuesday (again)

Last month we wrote about GM David Howell's great success winning Chess.com's Titled Tuesday. Well, hot on its heels we have another English success story at Titled Tuesday to report.

On 25th January England had three players in the top twenty.

Congratulations to GM David Howell (6th), GM Gawain Jones (10th), and FM Jonah Willow (19th). You can see the full standings and access all the games here -

<https://www.chess.com/tournament/live/titled-tuesday-blitz-january-25-2022-2906225>

## Arbiters

Congratulations to Ingrid Lauterbach and Tim Wall on having their arbiter title applications approved by the recent FIDE Council Meeting.

## Seniors

The ECF has published a round-up of seniors' events and dates for 2022, starting with the English Seniors Chess Championships in May. The full list and details are at

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/seniors-events-and-dates-for-2022/>

**4NCL: Elsewhere in this issue** we reprint WFM Sarah Longson's terrific report on the 4NCL Congress in Harrogate which took place on 21st January. The event was won by GM Keith Arkell,

whose victory prompted us to make Keith this month's cover story. Elsewhere in this issue you will find his interview with Mark Rivlin. For the full 4NCL Congress Open standings see <https://chess-results.com/tnr606495.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=5&flag=30>

Meanwhile the 4NCL and Junior 4NCL have returned to over the board (OTB) chess. You can find the results and tables on 4NCL website at <https://www.4ncl.co.uk/>

The website has details of various forthcoming events including the 2nd 4NCL OTB Easter Congress, which takes place from Friday 15 April to Monday 18 April 2022.

## Juniors

The ECF is inviting juniors to register for the European Schools Championship and the World Cadets and Youth Rapid and Blitz. More information at

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/announcement-for-international-junior-tournaments/>

## Women's Chess

For the first time since 2013 we have two WIM invitational women's norm tournaments in London. They take place between 7-11 April 2022.

Firstly, the ECF Women's Norm Event 2022 organised by Agnieszka Milewska, the ECF's Director of Women's Chess; and secondly, the first She Plays To Win International 2022 organised by Lorin D'Costa.

The tournaments are at the same venue and have the same format: ten players each, all play all at the London Mindsports Centre.

More details here -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/she-plays-to-win/>

## Women's Chess

FIDE have declared 2022 the 'Year of the Woman in Chess' and they want your suggestions for initiatives - more information at

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/manifesto-the-year-of-the-woman-in-chess/>

## Schools

FIDE and the International School Sport Federation (ISF) are organising the World School Championship Online Chess Cup 2022.

Tournament registration is open until 5th March (for students) and 12th March (for teachers). More information at

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/fide-isf-world-school-online-chess-cup-registration/>

### Forthcoming Event

Chess & Bridge has announced an exciting England vs Sweden Challenge Match between GM David Howell (England) and GM Nils Grandelius (Sweden) in London this March. The event is being staged as part of the 30th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the London Chess Centre and the relaunch of [CHESS Magazine](#).

For more information, please download a copy of the [press release](#).

### Research

A group at the University of Edinburgh are conducting a study on chess knowledge and memory in children. If you have a child between the ages of eight and thirteen that plays chess regularly, they would like your help by asking your child to complete some tests as part of a study. The tests can be completed at <https://tstbl.co/671-441> and should take between 20-30 minutes. Please read through the instructions with your child. You may help with questions about your child's chess experience but please do not help with the rest of the study. If you have any questions or comments, please email [s.roadnight@sms.ed.ac.uk](mailto:s.roadnight@sms.ed.ac.uk)

## CHESS Magazine taster



Click here for this month's taster -

<https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0478/2876/2775/files/chess-magazine-february-2022-sample.pdf?v=1643809580>

Click here to purchase / subscribe -

<https://chess.co.uk/collections/chess-magazine-back-issues/products/chess-magazine-february-2022>



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Danny,

I thought readers might like to know that we have a few veterans aged over 85 playing in the Metropolitan area of the Kent league.

In particular, 90-year-old Alan Sherriff of Dartford recently played 86-year-old Martin Zissell of Petts Wood whilst at Chislehurst there are 94-year-old Bob Pope-Hattersley and 89-year-old Derek Davis who both still play on a regular basis.

At the other end of the age range, 8-year-old Oleg Verbytski of Charlton visited Dartford in January, scoring a win against a strong 16-year-old pupil from St Olaves. Remarkably, Oleg recently gave a simultaneous display against 13 opponents at Charlton defeating seven, drawing one and losing five. He took White and Black pieces on alternate boards and seems destined for greater heights; my opinion being reached by having seen Matthew Sadler and Demis Hassabis play at a similar age.

Charlton have another promising junior, Kushal Parit who is seven and similar in strength to Oleg. He has performed well in junior events and last summer found himself playing Michael Adams in an open-air event.

David Fulton was another top junior from years ago, but he decided to play cricket as an opener for Kent and was the MCC player of the year on one occasion.

Best

Michael Wiltshire

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Hi Danny

I thought you might be interested to know about an online rematch between Nairobi chess club and Crewe chess club which took place on 30 January.

It was a rematch as our inaugural event took place in February of last year.

The result was 16.5-23.5 in favour of Nairobi. You can read a match report at <https://crewechessclub.co.uk/2022/02/04/international-rapidplay-vs-nairobi/>

The clubs have decided to make it an annual event. With the growing interest I hope we can increase the number of boards even more.

Your readers may be interested in an article by Roberto Villuella and myself on the Nairobi chess club website at <https://nairobi chessclub.com/traps-tricks-mistakes-eccentric-development/>

Andrew Crosby

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Señor,

I feel moved to write to you about an issue muy urgente – one that cuts to the very heart of chess in your country. I refer to the sad decline of sartorial standards in chess. Events of the past weekend forced my hand in writing this letter to you.

Picture, Señor, how ecstatic I was to finally be selected on board 14 for Surrey in the recent Essex v Surrey U140 match. To play for Surrey U140s has, for me, been a life's dream. Fue encantado!

When one plays at this very highest echelon of chess, one must show due respect. This is how it is in Cuba. So, for my part, I was dressed as one must when coming to play at such a pinnacle of chess as an away match at the famous Wansted. I wore, of course, a tailored three-piece suit, as the situation demanded. You can see below the necessary standards were observed as I waited for my opponent: a wide-lapelled single-breasted jacket and a matching double-breasted waistcoat teamed with a bottle green necktie. Por Dios, I did not let anyone down.



But Señor! You can imagine how distraught I was casting my eye around your English playing hall. My heart fell as I observed not a single waistcoat, double-cuff or highly polished zapato in sight. The hall was awash with things that I was later told are called 't-shirts', some even displaying crude

slogans. Some players had trousers that somehow reached only to their knees, leaving their lower leg naked. Still others wore a type of slip-on plastic clog that said 'Croc' on the side. Many appeared ill-shaven. One particular case exemplifies how far things have sunk – the Kent U140 board 15 player. He seemed to think it appropriate to play chess dressed as if he had just come from the campo de fútbol. Inexplicable!

What can one say? No es bueno, Señor. No es bueno. Sartorial standards are slipping. If players cannot dress correctly for a County U140 match, then I fear for the future of our fine game.

The ECF must act. Other sports bodies show the necessary pride in their play and enforce a strict dress code. One need only watch that curious English game that you call 'the snooker' to see that sport is - at all points - enhanced by the wearing of bow ties.

I realise that some keen ajedrezistas may suggest in reply that the wearing of a three-piece suit might be somehow uncomfortable in the warmer summer months, or that to play one's best chess one must be in cool and comfortable clothes. This, as I think you say in English, is 'the poppycock'

I leave it there, Señor. I'm sure that your readership will now join me in exhorting the ECF to act now to stop the continued slide into ignominy and moral ruin that comes from allowing chess dress standards to slip.

Saludos cordiales,

J. R. Capablanca

Dear Danny,

Is it in good taste to publish articles that make fun of someone who is dead; someone who did so much to improve chess playing conditions and the rewards that professional players can earn from chess?

Kind regards,

David Levy

Editor's note – this is in reference to the letter last month from Mr R. J. Fischer

## TWEETS OF THE MONTH



## HARROGATE CONGRESS

### My First Tournament as a Mum

WFM Sarah Longson reports ...



[WFM Sarah Longson](#) has written a blog about her experiences at the 4NCL Harrogate tournament. You can find the full blog and tournament study on Lichess at the links here -

<https://lichess.org/@/SarahLongson/blog/harrogate-congress-my-first-tournament-as-a-mum/qjheEwP6>

<https://lichess.org/study/sdnv3XjP>

The article below includes Sarah's commentary on the event with selected games. The game notes are by FM Alex Longson with occasional comments from WFM Sarah Longson (SL).

...

Since my last chess tournament in 2019 I've given birth twice and played precisely zero over the board games. How would this affect my chess performance? I was curious to find out.

### Introduction

Last weekend I played my first over the board chess tournament since I played for England in the European Team Championships in October 2019! I had my first child February 2020 and had planned to start playing again shortly after. Unfortunately, the pandemic was upon us and with various lockdowns and restrictions the possibility of playing over the board chess was non-existent. In September 2021 our second child was born.

Despite the challenges of having two under twos I was determined to play a competition. After all I truly love chess and have missed playing competitions. With childcare in place I set out to Harrogate for the 4NCL congress. I have played blitz online and of course a lot of junior coaching over the past two years – but no serious over the board chess. Previously I was playing maybe six big tournaments a year. Rusty would be an understatement!

I find it hard to be motivated by chess work with no tournaments on the horizon – so I was certainly very excited to be back playing again. The venue was the Old Swan Hotel in Harrogate where Agatha Christie went into hiding for ten days in 1926 sparking a nationwide manhunt. The hotel is right in the heart of the lovely spa town of Harrogate so Alex was able to have a nice weekend away as well – which isn't always the case with some venues being in out of the way conference centres.

Anyway – on to the chess!

### Round 1

My first-round play was littered with self-doubt and oversights. I was playing a young player who had

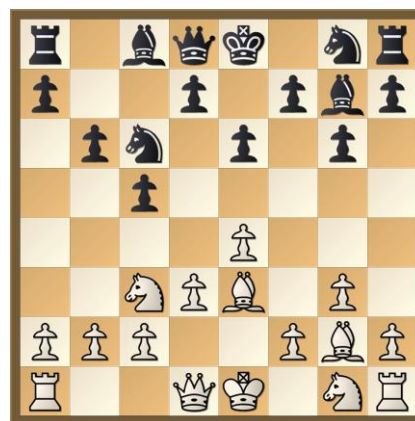
clearly improved a lot playing online during the pandemic but I wasn't really sure what to expect. After some adventures in the opening, I allowed myself to be pushed into a passive endgame and my opponent showed good technique to win - though I could have put up much more resistance.

### 27th 4NCL Congress: Sarah Longson – Sean Gordon 22.01.2022

**1.e4 c5 2.Nc3** SL: I didn't want to play an open Sicilian with my preparation being quite poor. So decided to fall back on my 'old faithful' the closed Sicilian.

**2...Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.d3 e6 5...d6 6.Be3**

**6.Be3 b6!? 6...Nd4 7.Nce2** Is the famous Smyslov game; 6...d6 7.Qd2



**7.f4?** Inconsistent with Be3 but most importantly it just keeps running into ...d5 SL: "I got myself confused with the move order and instead of sticking to my usual plan of Qd2 / Bh6 I decided to mix things up which was careless on two levels. Firstly, when a bit rusty it makes sense to stick with tried and tested ideas. Secondly, in this specific position f4 is just an awful move!"

7.Qd2 Is thematic and good 7...Bb7 8.Nge2 Nge7 (8...d5 9.exd5 Nb4 10.d4!; 8...Nd4 9.Bxd4 cxd4 10.Nb5) 9.Bh6 with some initiative; 7.Nge2 aiming for a quick d4 7...Nge7 (7...Bb7 8.d4) 8.d4 but this may be somewhat premature (8.Qd2 transposing to below looks best) 8...Ba6

**7...Nge7 7...d5** Rather spectacularly it appears Black could even play this immediately 8.exd5 exd5 9.Nxd5 Nh6

**8.Nge2 8.Bf2** White should compromise and start preparing for ...d5 already 8...d5 9.e5



**8...Bb7** 8...d5 now the move is obvious and strong  
 9.Bf2 what else? 9...d4 10.Nb1 e5

**9.0-0**



SL "Around here I was very concerned about my opponent playing ...d5"

**9...0-0 10.d4** SL "I was relieved to get in this break."

**10...d6?!** White's position has improved a lot now that ...d5 is not looming.

10...d5 is still good for Black.

**11.Qd2 a6** 11...d5 is still playable!

**12.Rad1 Qc7**



**13.dxc5?** Basically, a miscalculation. White wanted to exchange queens and play for an advantage with e5. Tactically however this shouldn't work. SL "Here I got excited about getting a slightly better endgame - as I found looking at the game later with Alex the move g4 is actually quite good and much more to my style."

13.d5 Is the most obvious continuation 13...exd5 14.exd5 Nb4 (14...Na5 15.b3! With a useful space advantage; 14...Nb8 15.g4 f5 basically forced 16.g5 White is hoping to cramp the Black position - the

position is very interesting and White's space advantage could count in the long run) 15.a3 just loses a piece; 13.g4!? is also logical maintaining the tension and taking away the f5 square from the Black knight.

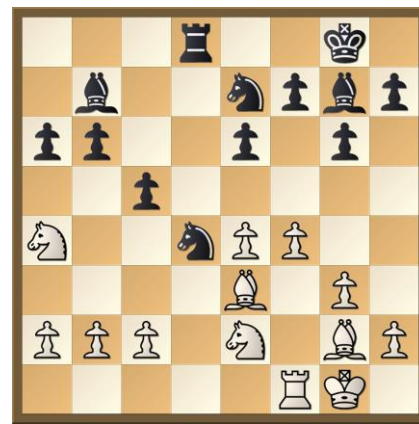
**13...dxc5 14.Qd6** 14.Qd7 Qb8

**14...Qxd6?!** 14...Qc8! 15.Qd7 Bd4! 16.Rxd4 cxd4 17.Qxc8 Raxc8 18.Nxd4 Na5

**15.Rxd6 Rad8 16.Rxd8** 16.Rfd1? Bd4! interference and intermediate move. This is what White had missed when playing dxc5

**16...Rxd8 17.Na4** 17.Rd1? Rxd1+ 18.Nxd1 Nb4

**17...Nd4!**



Black plays well.

17...Nc8 18.e5 with a pleasant position for White.

**18.Nxd4** 18.Bxd4 looks more accurate.

**18...Bxd4** 18...cxd4 19.Bd2 Rc8 20.Rc1 b5 21.Nb6 Rc6 22.Nd7 Rc7 23.Ne5 Bxe5 24.fxe5 Nc6

**19.Kf2?!**



19.Bxd4 White should go in for this forcing sequence 19...Rxd4 20.Nxb6 Rb4 (20...Bxe4 21.Bxe4 Rxe4 22.c3! taking away d4 and b4 from the rook)



21.Nd7 Rxb2 22.Nxc5 Bc6 and Black should be able to hold the balance but White isn't running any risks 23.Ra1 a5 24.a4 Rxc2 25.Nb3 Rc4 26.Nxa5 Rxa4 27.Rxa4 Bxa4 with equality.

**19...Nc8 20.Re1 Kf8 21.Nc3?** 21.Bxd4 Rxd4 22.b3 and White could play for an edge here 22...f5 23.c3 Rd2+ 24.Re2 Rxe2+ 25.Kxe2

**21...Bxc3** I think White just completely underestimated this exchange. SL "Yes. It hadn't really crossed my mind that he would take the knight."

**22.bxc3 f5** I like this move. Black is consistently now trying to bring about a favourable structure for the knight versus dark square bishop.

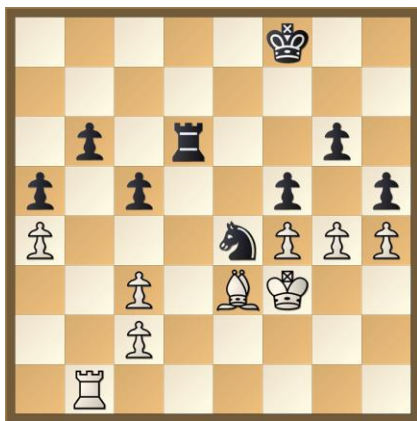
**23.exf5?** After this White's game is difficult.

23.e5! grabbing some space and taking away the d6 square from the Black pieces. I think White should be more or less OK here: 23...Bxg2 24.Kxg2 Ne7 25.Rb1 Nd5 26.Kf3 (26.Bf2)

**23...Bxg2 24.Kxg2** 24.fxg6 Bd5 25.gxh7 Kg7

**24...exf5 25.Kf3** 25.Rb1 Prevents ...Nd6 for now 25...Ke7 26.Kf3 Kd7 27.g4 fxg4+ 28.Kxg4 Kc6

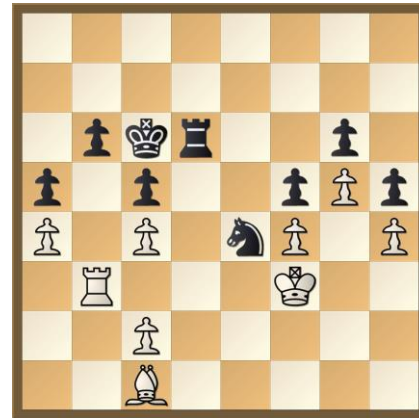
**25...Nd6 26.g4 Ne4 27.a4 a5 28.Rb1 Rd6 29.h4 h5**



**30.g5?** 30.gxh5 gxh5 31.Rg1 Kf7 32.Bc1 White just wants to sit this out 32...Rg6 (32...Nxc3 33.Rg5 is the point) 33.Rxg6 Kxg6 This endgame is extremely interesting 34.Ke3! Not an obvious decision to give up two pawns but looks like it might be the best defence (34.Bb2 Nd6 35.Ke2 b5 if Black allows Kd3 c4 White is completely fine 36.axb5 Nxb5 37.Kd3 Nd6 38.c4 can Black break through?) 34...Nxc3 35.Kd3 Nxa4 (35...Na2 36.Bb2 (36.Kd2 is perhaps simpler 36...Nxc1 (36...Nb4 37.c4 and White should hold) 37.Kxc1 Kf6 38.Kd2 Ke6 39.Kd3 the pawn

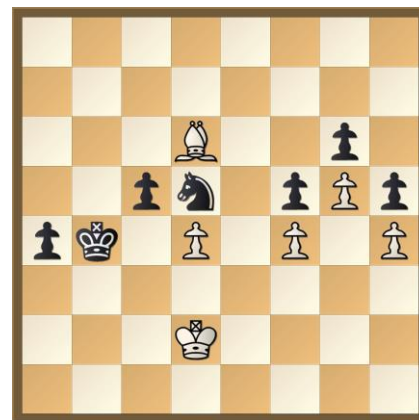
ending is a dead draw) 36...Nb4+ 37.Kd2 Nd5 38.c4 Nxf4 39.Be5 Ne6 (39...Ng2 40.Bc7 Nxh4 41.Ke2 and White will have some counterplay with the passed a-pawn) 40.Ke3 with an amazing positional draw despite being two pawns down!) 36.c4 Kf6 37.Kc2 Ke6 (37...b5 38.cxb5 Ke6 39.Bd2!=) 38.Bd2!! this key idea holds (38.Kb3 b5 39.cxb5 Nb6 is winning for Black).

**30...Kf7 31.Rb3 Ke6 32.c4 Kd7 33.Bc1 Kc6**



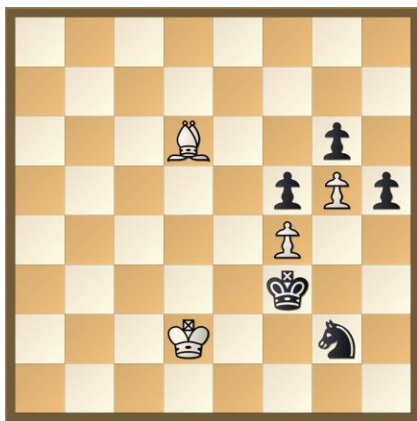
The position is just lost.

**34.Rd3 Rxd3+ 35.cxd3 Nc3 36.Bb2 Nxa4 37.Bf6 b5 38.cxb5+ Kxb5 39.Ke3 Nb6 40.Kd2 Nd5 41.Be5 Kb4 42.Bd6 a4 43.d4**



Black can even give a pawn back, as ultimately the White king will have to monitor the a-pawn and the kingside will fall.

**43...Kb3 44.dxc5 Nb4 45.Be5 a3 46.Bc3 a2 47.Be5 Nc6 48.Bf6 Kc4 49.Kc2 Nd4+ 50.Kb2 Kxc5 51.Kxa2 Nf3 52.Kb3 Kd5 53.Kc3 Ke4 54.Be5 Nxh4 55.Bd6 Ng2 56.Kd2 Kf3**



White resigned

## Round 2

Round 2 was very topsy turvy. At one point I was dreaming about showing this model attacking game to my students only to be completely disillusioned when it became clear I'd missed an important defensive resource. Thankfully I was able to hold the draw with some accurate play (and mistakes from my opponent) as otherwise 0/2 would have been a tough pill to swallow.

## 27th 4NCL Congress: Peter Hepworth v Sarah Longson 22.01.2022

**1.Nf3 Nf6 2.d4 d5 3.Bf4 Bf5 4.e3 e6 5.Be2** [5.c4 White probably has to play this way to for an advantage 5...Bxb1 6.Rxb1 Bb4+ 7.Ke2 is an interesting line]

**5...Bd6 6.Bg5** This just can't be a good move!

**6...h6 7.Bh4 Nbd7 7...c5!?**

**8.Nbd2 c6 9.0-0 0-0 10.c4 Qe7** 10...a5 is a typical move.

**11.a3 e5 12.c5 12.dxe5 Nxe5 13.cxd5** is a very serious idea looking to play against an IQP.

**12...Bc7 13.b4 Rfe8** [13...e4 is extremely tempting! 14.Ne1 g5 15.Bg3 Rfc8 really interesting as to why the computer prefers this to ...Rac8 (15...Rac8 16.b5 h5 17.Qa4) 16.b5 h5 17.Bxh5? g4

**14.Rc1** SL "I was pleased with the opening. My opponent was playing very fast but rather superficially. However I was spending too much time and started getting a bit frustrated that I couldn't 'force the issue'. Probably here I didn't find the right plan.

**14...g5 14...e4 15.Ne1 a6 16.Nc2** Black can start pushing pawns on the kingside 16...g5 17.Bg3 Bb8!?

18.a4 Qe6 19.b5 h5; 14...Bg4 15.Bxf6 Qxf6 16.Nxe5 Bxe2 17.Nxd7; 14...Bh7

**15.Bg3 Ne4** This looks a bit inconsistent - why does Black want to exchange these pieces?

**16.dxe5!?** 16.Nxe4 Bxe4 17.b5

**16...Nxb3 17.hxg3 Nxe5 18.Nb3 Ng4 19.Nfd4?** SL "I was very excited to see this and thought I was completely winning now."

**19...Nxe3! 20.Nxf5!** the only move.

20.fxe3 Qxe3+ 21.Rf2 Bxg3 22.Qf1 Bg6-- and White is too tied up.

**20...Nxf5 21.Bd3 Nxb3?** A bad oversight. SL "To be honest around here I was visualising showing my students my amazing game and completely miscalculated that after 24.Qh5 the f7 pawn is attacked".

21...Ng7! looks a bit awkward but Black keeps the extra pawn.

**22.fxg3 Qe3+ 23.Kh1 Qxg3 24.Qh5** defending h2 and hitting f7 SL "I was really annoyed with myself but managed to regain some composure and keep fighting".

**24...Bf4 24...Re7 25.Rcd1**

**25.Rf3 25.Rcd1** is very strong - though White has to calculate accurately. White wants to bring the knight to d4. Basically Black's three pawns are not relevant compared to the extra White piece here: 25...Re3 26.Nd4 Rxd3 27.Nf5 Rxd1 28.Nxg3 Rxf1+ 29.Nxf1+-

**25...Re1+ 26.Rxe1** [26.Bf1 Qxf3 27.Qxf3 (27.gxf3 Bxc1 28.Qxh6? Re6 is ok for Black) 27...Bxc1 28.Nxc1 Rxc1 29.Kh2]

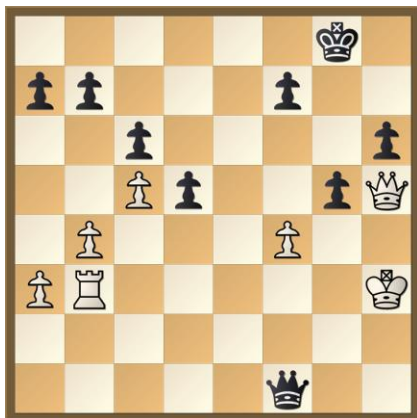
**26...Qxe1+ 27.Bf1?** 27.Rf1 is actually very strong keeping the bishop on the b1 h7 diagonal 27...Qc3! (27...Qg3 28.Bb1! Qxb3 29.Qxh6 and a key detail is that Black has no defence here) 28.Qf3 Kf8 29.Nc1 Re8 30.Ne2 (30.g3? Re3) 30...Qd2 31.Nxf4 gxf4 32.Qxf4 Qxf4 33.Rxf4 and White is winning.

**27...Re8! 28.g3 28.Nd4 Re3 29.Nf5 Rxf3 30.Qxf3** (30.Nxh6+ Kg7 31.Qxf7+ Kxh6 32.Qf6+ is a draw) 30...Qe6 was perhaps a better try for White.

**28...Re3 29.gxf4 Rxb3! 30.Rxb3 30.fxg5 Rxf3** 31.Qxf3 hxg5 with equal chances - a draw is most likely.

**30...Qxf1+** Now it is just perpetual.

**31.Kh2 Qf2+ 32.Kh3 Qf1+**



Draw agreed.

### Round 3

A win! A long game with lots of errors but some interesting and instructive moments. It felt good to get a win under my belt. Afterwards we went for a nice Thai meal with our friend Nigel Livesey from Marple chess club who was playing in the Major.

**27th 4NCL Congress: Sarah Longson - Joe Varley 22.01.2022**

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.0-0 Nf6 5.c3?** Lazy and virtually a blunder.

**5...d6?** letting White off the hook.

5...Nxe4 Black should normally take this pawn when possible in the Italian 6.d4 (6.Bd5 White can get his pawn back this way but Black is left with a very pleasant and easy position 6...Nf6 7.Bxc6 dxc6 8.Nxe5 0-0 9.d4 Bd6) 6...d5 7.Nxe5 Nxe5 8.Bb3 Bb6 (8...0-0 9.f3 White is having to find virtually only moves (9.dxc5 Nxc5 10.Qxd5 Qxd5 11.Bxd5 Rd8 12.Bb3 Nxb3 13.axb3 Nd3 Black is better) 9...Nf6 10.dxc5 Re8) 9.dxe5 and White survives though Black has a certain initiative.

**6.d3** Back to normal paths.

6.d4 is normally a bit premature but here looks quite interesting 6...Bb6 7.Re1 (7.h3 Nxe4 8.Bd5 looks dubious for Black) 7...Bg4; 6.b4 is another interesting option 6...Bb6 7.a4 a5 8.b5 Ne7 9.d3

**6...0-0 7.Nbd2** Lots of options at almost every move.

**7...a5** Rules out b4 ideas - but also now ...Na5 isn't possible and sometimes the bishop can use the b5 square.

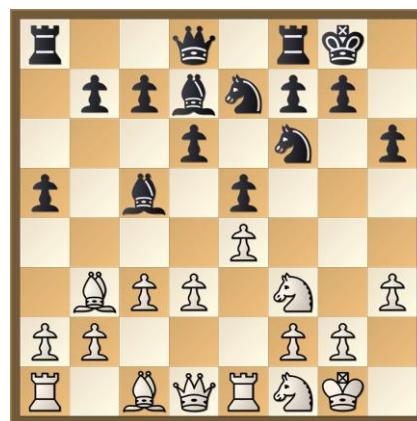
**8.Bb3** this looks unnecessary in this specific position.

8.Re1 always have to check that ...Ng4 isn't good 8...Ng4 9.Re2 Kh8 10.h3 Nh6 (10...f5!?) ; 8.h3 seems safer way to play with Re1 next 8...h6 9.Re1 Be6 10.Bb5 Qb8

**8...h6 9.Re1 Bd7?!** Seems dubious.

9...Be6; 9...Re8; 9...Ng4 is not effective now the h6 square is unavailable 10.Re2 Kh8 11.h3 f5 12.exf5 Nxf2 13.Rxf2 Bxf2+ 14.Kxf2 Bxf5 Black has some compensation.

**10.Nf1 Ne7 11.h3**



This one overly cautious move gives Black enough time to complete the regroup.

11.d4! seemed like the right time to strike as Black has to take on d4 11...exd4 (11...Bb6 12.dxe5 Ng4 13.Re2 Nxe5 14.Nxe5 dxe5 15.Rd2+-) 12.cxd4 Bb6 (12...Bb4) 13.Ng3

**11...Ng6** 11...a4 12.Bc2 Bb6 13.d4 Ng6 14.Ng3

**12.d4 Bb6** 12...a4 The engine really wants to flick this move in.

**13.Ng3** 13.a4 The computer loves this move and therefore it is worth us trying to understand why! 13...Re8 14.Ng3 Be6 15.Bxe6 Rxe6 16.Qb3

**13...Re8** 13...a4

**14.Be3** 14.a4

**14...exd4 15.Nxd4** 15.cxd4! is an interesting pawn sacrifice. 15...Nxe4 16.Qd3

**15...Ne5?!** Strange move.

15...a4 Now this move has a specific goal to weaken the White queenside - 16.Bc2 a3 17.b4 d5

**16.f4** 16.a4

## 16...Ng6 17.Qd3?!

Now there are a lot of tactics in the air.

17.Bc2 just looks much more stable.

**17...a4** 17...c5 18.Ndf5 d5! (18...Nxf4 19.Qf1) 19.exd5? (19.Bxd5 Nxf4 20.Qf1 N4xd5 21.exd5) 19...c4 is a great combination! 20.Bxc4 Rxe3 21.Nxe3 Nxf4 22.Qd2 Qc7! Good luck finding all this!

**18.Bc4** 18.Bc2 a3 19.b4 c5 (19...h5!?) 20.Ndf5 cxb4 21.Qxd6 Bxe3+ 22.Rxe3 Ra6

**18...Nf8?** An unforced retreat! I guess Black was worried about e5 Qxg6 tactics.

18...c6 looks awkward for White: 19.a3 (19.e5 d5 20.exf6 dxc4 21.Qxc4 Qxf6) 19...d5 20.exd5 cxd5 21.Bb5 Ne4; 18...Ra5 is another interesting idea.

**19.f5?** Why? SL "I thought it was cutting the f8 knight out of the game - bad choice!"

19.Ndf5 Bxe3+ 20.Rxe3 and a rook swing next looks quite harmonious; 19.a3 is also tempting to remove the ...a3 possibility.

**19...Qe7** 19...Bc6 20.Nxc6 bxc6 21.Bxb6 cxb6 22.a3 b5 23.Ba2 Ra7 and it seems that White remains with this chronic weakness; 19...c6 20.a3 d5 21.exd5 cxd5 22.Ba2 Qc7

**20.Bf2 c6** This is less effective now as Black isn't threatening ...d5 with the queen on the e-file.

**21.Qf3 N8h7 22.h4 Rad8?!** Wrong way!

22...Ra5! looks natural and strong.

**23.Bd3** A sensible idea.

**23...Bc8 24.Bc2 Nd7 25.Nh5! Nh6** 25...Ne5 26.Qg3

**26.Nxf6+ Qxf6 27.Bxa4** White has won a pawn!

**27...Ne5 28.Qg3 Bc7 29.Rad1 h5?! 30.Be3 Qe7 31.Bg5 f6 32.Bb3+ Kf8? 33.Bf4 d5 34.exd5 cxd5 35.Kh1** 35.Ba4 Bd7 36.Ne6+

**35...Qf7 36.Ba4** 36.Nf3 playing for an attack was an interesting option: 36...Bxf5 37.Bxe5 fxe5 38.Ng5

**36...Re7 37.Bb3** A bit of uncertainty creeping in.

**37...Rde8** Or a brilliant practical ploy to induce a blunder!!

**38.Nb5! Bxf5 39.Nxc7** 39.Bxd5 Qg6 40.Qxg6 Bxg6 41.Nxc7 Rxc7 42.Bxe5 would transpose to the game.

**39...Rxc7 40.Bxd5** 40.Bxe5 Rxe5 41.Rxe5 fxe5 42.Rxd5; 40.Rxd5 is crushing according to the computer.

**40...Qg6 41.Qxg6** So Black gets to survive to the endgame but White has all the trumps.

**41...Bxg6 42.Bxe5** A practical decision - giving up the bishop pair but creating a technical position where it is difficult to go too wrong (White was down to 2 minutes plus 30 second increments).

**42...Rxe5 43.Rxe5 fxe5 44.Re1** A good move tying Black down a bit.

**44...Re7 45.c4** 45.Kg1 and slowly convert is how I would play this (AL).

**45...e4** Just creates more weakness but it pays off.

**46.Re3 Ke8 47.Kh2 Kd7 48.Bxb7?** Poor practical decision. SL "I greedily took a second pawn just assuming my opponent blundered it. My opponent then got some counter play. It wasn't much but could have been. If I had just thought for a bit longer before being greedy then I wouldn't have had to rely on his counterplay being too slow! Alex kept asking me why I played Bxb7 and what I calculated. Truth is nothing was calculated - I saw a free pawn and munched it with two minutes on the clock."

48.Kg3 Kd6 49.Kf4 Kc5 50.Bxe4 Rf7+ 51.Kg5 and wins!

**48...Kd6 49.Bd5 Ke5** Surprisingly the only move to keep a large advantage.

**50.Kg3 Kd4 51.Kf2 Re5** Strange move!

51...Re8

**52.Ke2** 52.a4 Rf5+ 53.Ke2

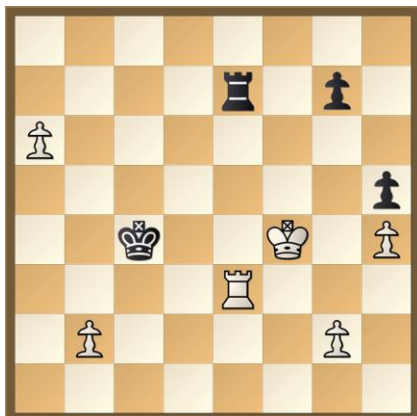
**52...Bf5 53.Kd2? Bg4?** Completely wrong set-up!

53...g5! 54.hxg5 Bg6 55.Rg3 (55.a4 Rxg5 56.Re2 Rg3 57.a5 e3+ 58.Kd1 Be4 59.Bxe4 Kxe4 60.b4 h4 61.Kc2 only move 61...Kd4 62.a6 Kxc4 63.a7 Rg8 64.b5 Kxb5 65.Kd3 and White wins) 55...Rf5 56.Ke1 Rf4 57.a4 h4 58.Rh3 Rg4 59.Rh2; 53...Be6 54.Bxe6 Rxe6 55.Rg3 Rf6 56.Ke2



**54.a4 Re7 55.a5 Bf5 56.a6 Ra7 57.Bb7 Kxc4  
58.Bxe4 Rd7+ 59.Ke2 [59.Rd3!? Rxd3+ 60.Bxd3+  
Bxd3 61.Ke3 Bf1 62.Kf3 is a spectacular way to win!**

**59...Bg4+ 60.Bf3 Bxf3+ 61.Kxf3 Rf7+ 62.Ke4  
Re7+ 63.Kf4**



Black resigned.

#### Round 4

Another round, another talented junior! This time however things went like a dream. I won a pawn in the opening and managed to convert a nice technical endgame. More like it!

27th 4NCL Congress: Jonathan McKay v Sarah Longson, 24.01.2022

**1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.g3 d5 3...Bc5 is a good alternative keeping the position closed 4.Bg2 Nc6 5.Nge2 a6 6.0-0 d6 7.h3**

**4.exd5 Nxd5 5.Bg2 Be6?! The bishop can end up a bit awkward on this square.**

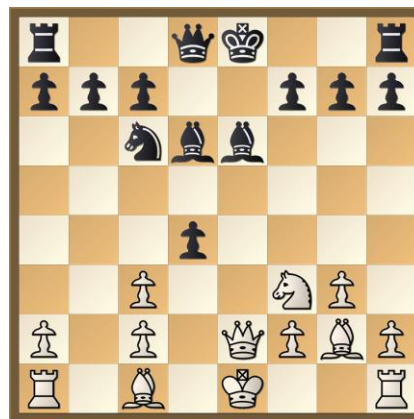
5...Nxc3 6.bxc3 Nc6 7.Nf3 and here both ...Bd6 and ...Bc5 are reasonable.

**6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Qe2 7.0-0 Be7 (7...Nxc3 8.bxc3 e4 9.Ne1 f5 10.d3 Qd7 may be the best way forward for Black with a fighting position) 8.Re1 Black can easily end up in a bit of trouble here 8...Bf6 9.Nxd5 Bxd5 10.d4 Bxf3 11.Bxf3 is good for White.**

**7...Nxc3 7...Bd6 8.0-0 (8.d4 is critical 8...Bb4! 9.Bd2 Bxc3 10.bxc3 exd4 11.cxd4 0-0 12.0-0 Nb6! Black's light square control compensates for the bishop pair) 8...0-0 and as white doesn't have d4 Black is doing well, eg 9.d3 Nxc3 10.bxc3 h6**

**8.bxc3 Bd6 9.d4!? 9.0-0 0-0 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 Re8**

**9...exd4**



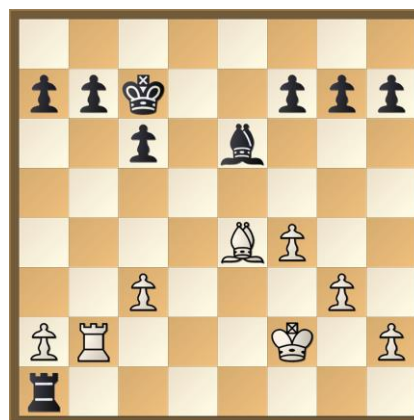
**10.cxd4??** this basically loses on the spot!

10.Ng5! leads to interesting complications 10...Qe7 11.Nxe6 Qxe6 12.Qxe6+ fxe6 13.Rb1 dxc3 14.Rxb7 Kd7

**10...Bb4+ 11.Bd2 Nxd4! 12.Nxd4 Qxd4 13.Rd1 Bxd2+ 13...0-0-0 14.Bxb7+ is less clear.**

**14.Rxd2 Qa1+ 15.Rd1 Qc3+ 16.Qd2 Qxd2+ 17.Rxd2 c6** Black is simply winning - extra pawn and White has a ruined structure.

**18.0-0 Rd8 19.Re2 Kd7 20.Rb1 Kc7 21.c3 Rd3 22.f4 Rhd8 23.Reb2 Rd1+ 24.Rxd1 Rxd1+ 25.Kf2 Ra1 26.Be4**



The best try.

**26...Rxa2 26...h6** is actually stronger though it feels strange to allow the rook on a1 to be temporarily trapped - 27.Bb1 a5 but Black is easily able to free the rook very quickly: 28.Ke3 a4 29.Kd4 a3 30.Rb4 Bxa2 and wins.

**27.Rxa2 Bxa2 28.Bxh7 a5** the bishop endgame is winning - though White can create a passed h-pawn so some accuracy is required.

**29.Ke3 a4 30.Kd2 g6** Black wants to keep the White bishop stuck but this does also make it quicker for White to create counterplay.

30...Bc4 there was another winning plan which was just to start pushing the queenside pawns and bringing the king over once the White pawns start to advance 31.g4 Kd6 32.h4 a3 33.Kc2 b5 34.h5 c5 35.g5 b4 36.cxb4 cxb4 37.h6 gxh6 38.gxh6 Ke7 39.Be4 Kf8 (39...Kf6 also wins though there is only one idea to win now 40.Kb1 b3 41.Ka1 how does Black make progress? he needs to bring the bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal. There is only one square to do this from! 41...Be2 (41...b2+?? throws away the win 42.Kb1 and Black cannot make progress 42...Be2 43.Ka2 Bh5 44.f5) 42.Kb1 Bd1 43.Bd3 (43.Bd5 if the bishop is forced off the diagonal then Black can collect the h6 pawn 43...Kg6) 43...Bc2+ 44.Bxc2 a2+ (44...bxc2+ also wins more prosaically 45.Kxc2 Kg6 46.Kb3 Kxh6 47.Kxa3 Kg6 48.Kb4 Kf5 49.Kc3 Kxf4 and wins) 45.Kb2 bxc2 and Black promotes) 40.Kb1 Kg8 41.Ka1 b3 42.Kb1 f6 43.Ka1 Be6 threatens ...f5 cutting off the bishop's defence of the h7 pawn.

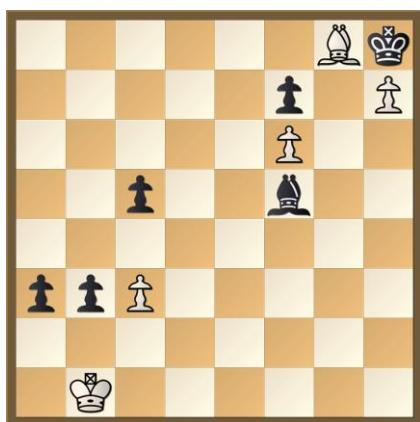
**31.f5 g5 32.h4 gxh4 33.gxh4 Kd6** Black has calculated everything through.

**34.h5 Ke7 35.h6 Kf6 36.Bg8 b5 37.h7 Kg7 38.f6+ Kh8** An amazing position - the Black king and White bishop are totally paralysed but Black will be able to create two passed pawns on the queenside and win with a bishop check.

**39.Kc2 a3 39...Be6 40.Kb2 c5 41.Ka3** It is worth noting here that although White can temporarily prevent ...b4 Black wins by means of zugzwang 41...Bc4 and the White king has to make way for the ...b4 advance.

**40.Kc1 c5 41.Kd2 b4** White is helpless.

**42.Kd1 Be6 43.Kc2 b3+ 44.Kb1 Bf5+**



White resigned.

## Round 5

My final round pairing was versus Paul Townsend, a strong player I have a poor record against. I played a nice game and at some point was on the verge of victory before blundering badly with 29.Ng5+. The cause of this mistake is complicated but it's the sort of error I need to stamp out to progress.

27th 4NCL Congress: Sarah Longson v Paul Townsend, 24.01.2022

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.exd5** The exchange Winawer contains significantly more poison than it might appear. The difference to the exchange French is two-fold. White has a knight on c3 (which is actually misplaced blocking the pawn break c4) and Black's bishop on b4 is misplaced.

**4...exd5 5.Bd3 Nf6** Prevents the Qh5 lines.

5...Nc6; 5...Ne7 6.Qh5 This move has become very popular.

**6.Bg5** 6.Nf3 is also possible: 6...0-0 7.0-0 Bg4 8.h3 Bh5 9.Bg5 c6 10.g4 Bg6 11.Ne5 is interesting.

**6...0-0 7.Nge2 c6 8.0-0** 8.Qd2 is also played.

**8...Nbd7** 8...h6 immediately is the most popular move: 9.Bh4 Re8.

**9.Ng3 Re8** 9...h6 10.Bf4 Nc5 11.dxc5

**10.Qf3?!** This appears to be dubious.

10.Nce2!? looks very thematic trying to improve the 'problem child'.

**10...h6 11.Bf4** 11.Bd2

**11...Nc5!?** 11...Nf8 12.h3 Ne6 13.Be5 Nd7 White starts to run into trouble.

**12.Bf5 Ne6 13.Be5 Bd6?!** After 13...Nd7 this is an awkward position for White - the dark square bishop is going to be exchanged. 14.Rad1 Nxe5 15.dxe5 Nf8 with a pleasant position for Black - there are lots of good alternatives to ...Nf8

**14.Rfe1 Bxe5 15.dxe5 Nd4 16.Qd3** SL "I took too long deciding between this and Qf4".

**16...Nxf5 17.exf6 Rxe1+ 18.Rxe1 g6 19.Nxf5** 19.Qd2 Be6 20.Nxf5 Bxf5 21.Re7 Qd6

**19...Bxf5 20.Qd4 Qb6** 20...Bxc2 is playable.

**21.Qd2 Kh7 22.Re7 Rf8 23.b3** 23.Na4 is a good alternative 23...Qb5 24.b3 the queen looks quite out of play on b5

**23...Qb4 24.h3 a5 25.g4 Bc8 26.Kg2** White improves the position.

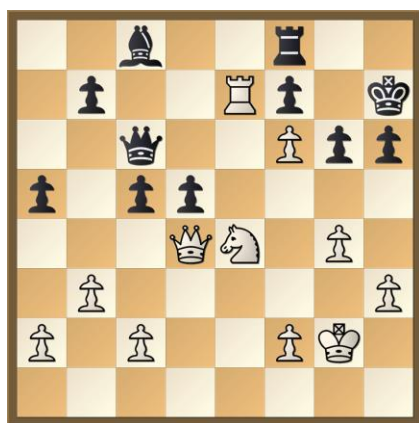
**26...Qd6?** 26...b6

**27.Qd4?** 27.Ne4! is very strong as Ng5+ next is a killer 27...Qb4 28.c3 Qa3 29.Ng5+!! hxd5 (29...Kg8 30.Ne6+-) 30.Qxd5 Qd6 31.Qh4+ Kg8 32.g5 and White wins!

**27...c5?** 27...b5 White has a number of ways to improve the position.

**28.Ne4** 28.Qxd5 Qxf6 29.Qxc5 is also great for White.

**28...Qc6**



**28...Qd8**

**29.Ng5+?** this no longer works!

29.Nxc5 was simple and strong just netting a pawn: 29...b6 30.Nd3 Qxc2 31.Qxd5 Kg8 32.Ne5 and White is crashing through.

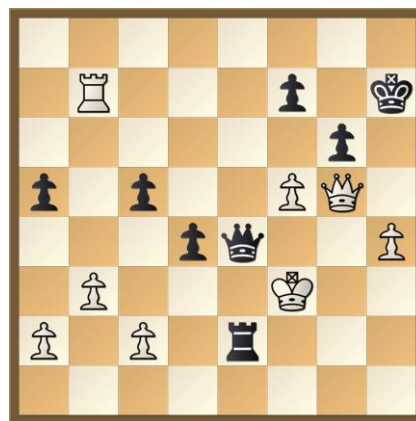
**29...hxd5 30.Qe5 d4+ 31.f3 Kh6 32.h4 Bxd4?** 32...gxd4 33.g5+ Kh5! wins; 32...Kh7 33.hxd5 Bxd4! wins.

**33.Qxd5+ Kh7 34.Qxd4 Qxf6 35.Rxb7?** it is understandable White wanted to take back the extra pawn but now Black gets far too active.

35.Qg5! and White actually has good holding chances with active pieces and not allowing the Black pieces to attack the king: 35...Qxd5+ 36.hxd5 b6 37.Rb7 Re8 38.Kf2 Kg7 39.Rxb6 Re3 the game is level.

**35...Re8** now it is very dangerous for White - probably lost.

**36.Qg5 Re2+ 37.Kg3 Qd6+ 38.f4 Qe6 39.f5 Qe5+ 40.Kf3 Qe4+**



White resigned.

## Conclusion

I feel as the tournament went on I got my form back and progressively played better. Although a little disappointed with the final result there are so many things I can learn from this experience and try and apply for next time -

I will continue to thoroughly analyse the games and pick out model games to play through to understand concepts that I found challenging.

I will make sure my opening files are up to date and fresh.

I will work on affirmations for how to cope when I am in time trouble and starting to doubt myself.

I will try to play some league chess to be fresh! I am excited for the next 4NCL congress at Easter!

# FEATURES

## GM MICHAEL ADAMS' GAME OF THE MONTH



This game has a very high degree of difficulty; there are very hard imbalances to assess throughout, with both kings leading a troubled existence in the centre for long periods. There is lots of tactical potential to keep track of as well, which must have cost the players much attention and time.

Despite these challenges the hazards are well negotiated by both during the early middlegame, until Jovanka finally completes development by unexpectedly mobilising her kingside pieces and takes control. A few opportunities to crown a well-played game in style go begging, and just after the time control Gallin is given a lifeline out of the blue which he fails to grab.

A good reminder to keep paying attention until the end of the game - saving chances can show up when you least expect them.

**G. Bwalya - J. Houska**

Battle of the Sexes Gibraltar 2022

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nc3 e6 5.g4 Bg6**

**6.Nge2** A razor sharp line. White will look to target Black's only developed piece, her light squared bishop, with knight and kingside pawns. However, on the downside his committal pawn moves leave a lot of weaknesses behind, and the knight on c3 helps the c5 advance to undermine White's centre.

**6...c5 7.h4 h5 8.Nf4 Bh7 9.Nxh5 Nc6** White has won a pawn, but Black is developing harmoniously. Although White's pieces emerge quicker, they have

more influence on the flanks than in the middle of the pitch.

**10.Bb5 Nge7** 10...cxd4 was interesting, one hair raising line goes 11.Qxd4 (11.Bxc6+!? bxc6 12.Qxd4) 11...Nge7 12.Bh6 but 12...a6! (12...gxh6?? 13.Nf6 mate would be awkward) 13.Bxc6+ Nxc6 14.Qf4 Rg8 15.0-0-0 Qb6 leaves Black with plenty of trumps too.



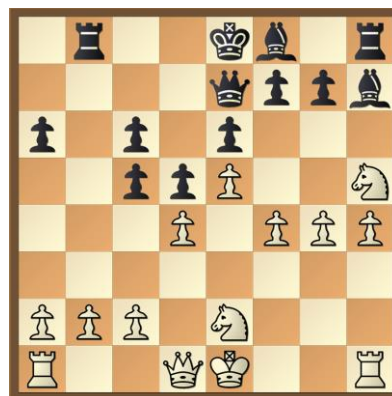
**11.Bg5 Qc7** 11...Qb6!? was another option. The White pawns on d4 and e5 can't be maintained, whilst the solid e6, d5 structure gives Black's pieces a foothold in the centre for her pieces to work around.

**12.f4 a6** I would have been tempted by 12...0-0-0 getting the king out of the centre. 13.dxc5? d4! already wins material 14.Bxc6 (14.Ne2 Qa5+) 14...Qxc6

**13.Bxe7** 13.Bxc6+! Nxc6 14.dxc5 was better.

**13...Qxe7** 13...axb5! 14.Bxf8 Kxf8 was strong, 15.Ne2 (15.Nxb5 Qa5+) 15...Nxd4 16.Nxd4 cxd4 17.Qxd4 Ra4! is the key point.

**14.Bxc6+ bxc6 15.Ne2 Rb8** It was very hard to see the powerful idea 15...Be4! 16.Rh3 Bg2! 17.Rh2 (17.Rg3 Qxh4 18.Kd2 Be4) 17...Bf3 leaves White unable to protect g4.





**16.b3 Be4 17.Rh3 Bg6** The same bishop zigzag was still available: 17...Bg2! 18.Rh2 Bf3.

**18.Neg3** 18.Qd2!? facilitating castling long looks quite practical to me.

**18...Qa7** 18...cxd4! 19.Qxd4 Qa3 was the best option, 20.Qa7 Qb4+ 21.Kf1 Bc5 22.Qxa6 0-0 looks promising.



**19.f5 Bxh5 20.Nxh5 cxd4 21.fxe6** A key moment, releasing the tension by opening the f-file allows Jovanka to grab the initiative. 21.Qd3 was wiser, but 21.Kf1 was best - nudging the king onto a light square moves it towards relative safety on g2.

**21...fxe6 22.Qd3** 22.Kf1 was still a better idea.

**22...Bb4+!** Developing with gain of time.

**23.Ke2 0-0!** Startling castling, now Black's rook on f8 is ideally placed, and suddenly all Black's pieces are playing their part.



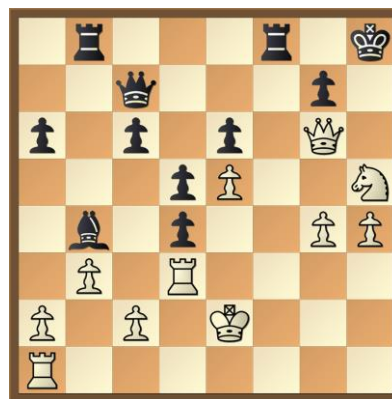
**24.Qg6** After 24.Rf3 Qc7 25.Qxd4 Bc5! is handy with the idea of 26.Qxc5 Qxe5+.

**24...Kh8!** Preventing Nf6+ and keeping her powder dry; the premature 24...d3+ looks tempting, but following 25.Kxd3 it is not so easy to follow up.

**25.Rd3** White's queen and knight are often a handy combination, but here Gillan has his own king to worry about, and the knight's position on the edge

of the board isn't ideal, if 25.Nf6 gxf6 26.exf6 Qh7 defends. Swapping material makes sense, 25.Rf1 Rxf1 26.Kxf1 Rf8+ 27.Ke2 d3+! 28.Kxd3 Rf2! threatens Rd2 mate 29.c3 Bf8! covering g7 and preventing Qe8+ 30.Qxe6 Qc5! with a threat of Qb5+ wins for Black, but this is hardly an easy line to find.

**25...Qc7!** An excellent move; the pawn on e5 can't be easily covered.



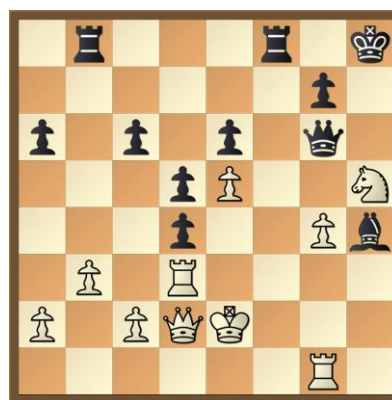
**26.Qg5 Qf7!** A powerful follow up by Jovanka, dominating the open line.

**27.Rh1 Be7** 27...c5 28.Kd1 c4 29.Rdh3 Rb7 was also good, White's lack of central presence means his position is unravelling, and he can only take desperate defensive measures trying to hang on.

**28.Qd2 Qg6** 28...c5 was still strong, but Jovanka maintains the momentum, and starts picking off weak pawns.

**29.Rg1** 29.Rxd4 is well met by either 29...Bc5 30.Rf4 (30.Qd3 Qh6) 30...Rxf4 31.Qxf4 Qxc2+, or 29...c5 30.Ra4 (30.Rf4 Rxf4 31.Nxf4 Qxg4+) 30...c4.

**29...Bxh4**



**30.Kd1 Rf2 31.Qa5 Rbf8 32.Kc1 Bg5+** Black's moves flow naturally.

**33.Kb1**



**33...Rxc2!** 33...Rf1+ 34.Rd1 Rxc1 35.Rxc1 d3 was also good, but this destroys White's pawn cover just as his king had scuttled behind it.

**34.Rh1** 34.Kxc2 Rf2+ decides.



**34...Rc1+!** Decoying the rook prevents any nasty discovered checks.

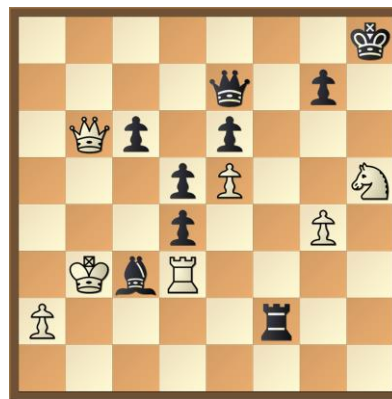
**35.Rxc1 Bxc1** It would have been cleaner, and more attractive to finish the game with 35...Qxd3+! 36.Rc2 Rf2! 37.Qc5 Qd1+ 38.Kb2 Qc1 mate, 38...Bc1+ also wins here.

**36.Qxa6 Ba3** There are many good options, but Jovanka makes sound safe decisions to reach the time control with both clocks running low.

**37.b4 Bxb4 38.Kb2 Bc3+** 38...Qxg4 was another sensible choice.

**39.Ka3 Qf7 40.Qb6 Qe7+** 40...Ra8+! 41.Kb3 Qf1 with the idea of Qb1 mate was simplest.

**41.Kb3 Rf2?** The first move after the time control is a real howler in a well-played game. 41...c5 42.Rh3 c4+ 43.Kc2 Kg8 wins comfortably enough.

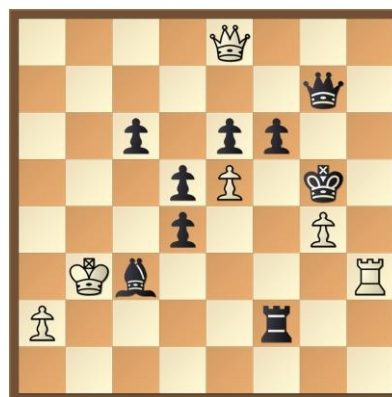


**42.Qb8+?** Probably Jovanka only calculated checking lines and missed the sideways capture 42.Rxc3! which throws the game back into the balance. 42...dxc3 43.Qxf2 leaves White better. The better 42...Qf8! 43.Rh3 Rf3+ 44.Rxf3 Qxf3+ 45.Ka4 Qxg4 46.Qd8+ Kh7 47.Nf6+ gxf6 48.Qe7+ leads to a draw.

**42...Kh7** Now things are back on track.

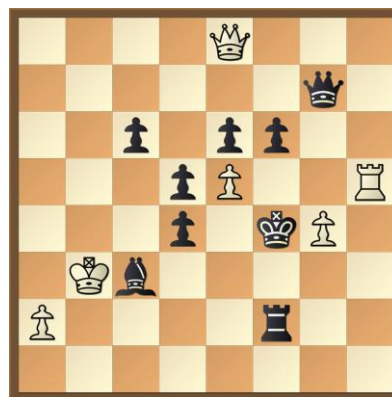
**43.Nf6+ gxf6** The cautious 43...Kg6 also works, but Black's king can walk to safety up the board.

**44.Rh3+ Kg6 45.Qg8+ Qg7 46.Qe8+ Kg5**



**47.Rh5+** 47.Qh5+ Kf4 is no better.

**47...Kf4**



White resigned, there are no useful checks left, and Rb2+ or Qb7+ are on the cards.

## LEARNING TO LOVE THE ENGINES

A homage to Matthew Sadler's extraordinary *Silicon Road* by Peter Wells



Back in my very first column for *ChessMoves* I indicated that I had no intention of using this platform to write book reviews. I am not sure how close I will sail to that particular wind here, but I am very happy to admit that what follows is largely inspired by Matthew Sadler's awesome new tome *The Silicon Road to Chess Improvement* (New in Chess, 2021), which somehow manages to weigh in at a remarkable 560 pages without ever seeming heavy going. Still, I would claim that my theme extends beyond just this book to Matthew's extraordinarily constructive and enthusiastic engagement with engines more generally – all considered in the context of how the chess world overall has managed to adapt to their growing influence. Anyone who has engaged with Matthew's output on Twitter over the last couple of years might well have predicted the appearance of a book about chess engines. For anyone who has followed it *since* the appearance of *Silicon Road* it would have become clearer than ever that for Matthew this was not just about delivering a book, but rather an ongoing passion for what chess engines can contribute to the game – one which shows no signs of abating.

Matthew was, of course, one of the players whom we interviewed for *Chess Improvement: It's All in the Mindset* and his contribution was, both for Barry Hymer and myself, one of the most inspiring. The very first sentence of the conclusion to *The Silicon Road* reminds me vividly of why. "Looking back

over my chess career, it strikes me that my most abiding memories are not of victories, but of moments of discovery." It would be difficult to capture the message of our book more incisively than this – the priority given to learning over extrinsic rewards and the constant quest for growth and new vistas.

Furthermore, the four examples he cites as the most significant instances of discovery really resonated with me. The first couple we mentioned in our book – his joyous experience of working with Dvoretsky, which convinced a player who had hitherto been something of a 'coaching sceptic' quite what a superlative coach could offer him; and the eye-opening experience of playing alongside the creative force that is Jon Speelman, in the England team of the 1990s. The third – a tribute to another England colleague – also struck a personal chord with me. He tells of how Luke McShane's 'subtle and unexpected moves' in the early part of his game against Magnus Carlsen in the 2012 London Chess Classic reinvigorated Matthew's belief in the wealth of possibilities in the game, at a time when he had been feeling somewhat disillusioned. I remember this game very well as I was seconding Luke at the time and experienced, intensely, both the excitement at his creative build-up and the disappointment as we were reminded – as chess so often likes to – that a series of fine ideas can be cancelled out by one moment of inattention.

The fourth moment of discovery is, however, the most important for our topic here. Matthew describes how he sat in DeepMind's offices in 2018 playing through the games from the celebrated AlphaZero-Stockfish match with astonishment at the sheer beauty of the play and the apparent clash of styles between the combatants. It became clearer at that moment how AlphaZero's acquisition of chess knowledge through deep learning – by playing itself innumerable times rather than by dependence on human programmers – augmented the possibility that we in turn might learn substantial lessons from studying this material.

I have long been fascinated by the differing ways in which chess players have responded to the 'encroachment' of engines on the game – as readers of my previous work will likely have noticed. I think we can identify a spectrum of responses which have been present in some form ever since it became clear quite how significant this impact would be.



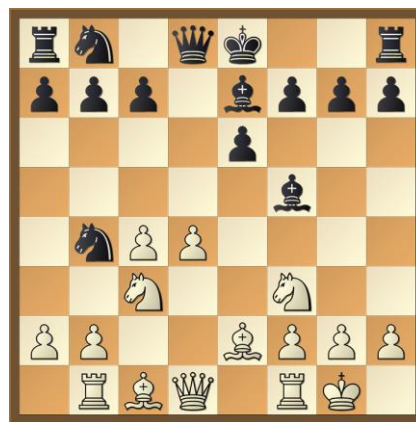
There have always been the genuine Luddites – those with nothing but antipathy towards engines, blaming them for the closure of certain exciting avenues in the openings, the near demise of older and more ‘authentic’ working methods, and – especially in the earlier days – very tangible fears that the game might be imminently ‘solved’ and abandoned. A portion of these intentionally eschewed the opportunities represented by working with engines but some, frankly, were players who had probably reached a point in their careers where the option of taking a step back seemed more attractive than engaging with this entirely fresh approach. A much larger group shared these concerns, but were content to juxtapose their unease at the role of technology with an almost insatiable appetite for utilising the efficiency which engines could bring to their opening preparation. If the creativity of the game was being strangled, they wanted to make sure they had a part of it!

A further group, of which I would probably claim ‘membership’ – at least in recent times – also had concerns about the ubiquity of engine analysis, the increasing emphasis on the opening phase and the concomitant decline in creativity, especially at higher levels. However, this was balanced by an appreciation of the new insights which the engines brought. I had a sense that, for every avenue that was closed, a new one was opening up. This didn’t assuage all of my doubts, but for me too, the positives became much more apparent with the appearance of AlphaZero’s dynamic, ‘adventurous’ brand of chess.

Once stereotyped for their extreme materialism, engines had, even for some time before this, been setting the pace in terms of a thrilling readiness to sacrifice, to look beyond ‘formal’ material values to an alertness to what the pieces could concretely achieve in any given position. I think for many stronger players the accelerating erosion of overt materialism has become normalised almost subconsciously, but it is still possible to be surprised. Take a look at the following, which I was really struck by, as I stumbled across it during some relatively casual opening work.

In a reasonably significant line of the 2... Nf6 Scandinavian I noticed that after **1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.d4 Nxd5 4.Be2 Bf5 5.Nf3 e6 6.0-0 Be7**, White’s top choice is 7 a3, presumably based upon

the assumption that after the more direct 7 c4 Nb4, White (in order to play for a win) will have to defend c2 with one or other slightly awkward knight move ( 8 Na3 or 8 Ne1). However, when I checked this, Stockfish seemed to show considerable enthusiasm for **7.c4!? and after 7...Nb4 8.Nc3 Nc2 9.Rb1 Nb4**



it wants simply to give the exchange with the impressively calm **10.Bf4!?** Eye-opening in itself, I was further impressed that the compensation – based on White’s superior piece deployment generally and specifically the fact that the knight which ‘should’ guard the kingside has wandered to b4 - would in most variations be maximised by opening the position with a quick d5 break, not always the advice when 2-1 behind in terms of rooks. This is just one example amongst many. As I said, this tendency was well under way even before the appearance of AlphaZero and has, at the very least, helped to quash the notion that the increasing influence of engines is likely to render the game increasingly dry and technical.

Finally, at the end of this spectrum of opinion is the group of almost unabashed engine enthusiasts. I am unsure how many of them there are amongst the stronger human players, but I am confident in asserting that Matthew is very significant within their number and unusually public in his belief that engine games represent a tremendous and neglected opportunity for learning and improvement. He seems to feel no need to qualify the claim that these are “the strongest chess players the planet has ever seen.” He is confident that we can learn from engines, just as we do from the stronger human players. What is more, we are not restricted by the publicly available games which they have played – we are in a position to set them to battle, generate fresh study material and analyse the ensuing action at will.



Matthew, of course, had already helped to capture the excitement which arose when AlphaZero first burst onto the scene in *Game Changer*, written together with Natasha Regan. In Garry Kasparov's words from the foreword, "After decades of stuffing as much human chess knowledge as possible into code" a self-taught program (learning for a period of just 24 hours!) showed itself more than capable of competing with the top engines. That its propensity for h-pawn pushes and long-term material sacrifices have already become the stuff of legend is in no small part because the authors did such a great job of putting AlphaZero's play into a human context and making its thought processes accessible to a wider audience.

In some ways though, I am even more impressed by *Silicon Road*, since whereas last time the authors were granted privileged access to AlphaZero's unpublished games and analysis, this time Matthew generated much of the material himself. Some was publicly available for sure, notably games played between the leading engines at the ongoing TCEC events, Matthew's gratitude for which is always in evidence. However, much of the remaining material is a direct reflection of the imaginative variety of ways in which Matthew deploys the engines.

I will mention just two here which really impressed me:

- 1) Setting engines to play matches from key positions as a route into understanding an opening:

I should mention at this point that for me, a big part of the impact of Matthew's recent work has been a reminder of how much the engines have to offer us in other phases of the game *beyond* either the opening or technical endgames. However, this recommendation, whilst opening-focused, is also a fair departure from the way in which engines are customarily used for high level preparation. This is not about deep analysis of a position with a view to generating new moves. It is very much about getting a feel for the positions and using the engines as tools at an early stage of the process. Matthew is explicit that he personally finds analysing the way in which engines handle the opening over a large quantity of games preferable to tackling, say, an advanced opening manual as a route to grapple with the fundamentals. He might choose to do the latter as well, but probably only from a feeling of strength derived from the engines' insights.

- 2) Playing against Leela (the strongest open-source engine which uses similar learning methods to Alpha Zero) with the engine restricted to one node – that is, essentially playing without calculation.

When Matthew mentioned for our interview that he plays games against engines as part of his training regimen, it came as a bit of a surprise. I guess many of us did a bit of that 20 years ago, but then came basically to heed Matthew's advice definitely not to do this "to boost your ego." In fact he does make a convincing argument for the value of playing seriously against engines at least to assist with the opening phase when seeking to capture a feeling for the difference between playing and merely studying positions. Nonetheless, it made sense to hear that he also plays games with the engines on modified settings. This time, however, my amazement was in the opposite direction. We are so accustomed, I think, to priding ourselves on the quality of human intuition and judgement, that our tendency is to regard engine superiority as almost entirely the product of calculation. So, hearing that Leela has developed sufficient positional acumen to play at a pretty decent level (scoring more than 25% against Matthew) with the immense handicap of 'not calculating' at all was quite hard to comprehend.

I am still quite baffled as to how Leela can produce anything like the following in the absence of calculation - as to be fair is Matthew himself – but it is well worth seeing!

#### **Leela Zero (1 node) - Matthew Sadler** Matthew Engine Games, 2020



#### **27.Qg2!**

1 Nd5 was also possible, but the force of the text move was overlooked by Matthew. After his slightly passive reply, the rest is a relentless onslaught.

**27...Rg8?! 28.Nd5 Qa5 29.Rxh5! cxb3 30.Nxb3 Qa3 31.Nc7+ Kd8 32.Qd5** and it's all over. The game finished **32...Bd6 33.Qxg8+ Kxc7 34.Qc4+ Bc6 35.Rh7+ 1-0**.

This seems very important to me. I have always felt that one obstacle to learning from the engines is insufficient awareness that engine evaluations will often depend upon details within a long line of calculation which may, at least in practical terms, be beyond human comprehension. However, whilst this necessarily remains an issue, to know that the engines have reached such a high level even abstracted from their calculation, feels very reassuring; relying on acquired intuition alone, Leela Zero's moves appear likely to make excellent 'human sense'.

I have focused a lot on attitudes towards engines and consequent reluctance to exploit their full potential. However, we are now beginning to touch upon another key question – the 'ability' to learn from engines. Is this really an 'elite activity', or given the right approach, can anyone hope to learn in this way? The cynic might say that Matthew's answer to this is something of an 'only move', but he utterly convinces me of his conviction that engine games are a very valuable and under-utilised resource for the wider community of chess improvers. Certainly, I defy anyone to read this book without picking up many valuable lessons.

I do believe there remain some dangers to the whole enterprise, linked in part to the problem of complex, scarcely understandable computer variations to which I alluded above. Any attempt to draw general rules about how to handle a given chess position is vulnerable to the danger that apparently convincing examples may 'work' due to specific features which may not be replicated with quite small adjustments to the position. The more complex the variations, the more this problem is likely to kick in and engines are prone, by the very nature, to offer more complex variations. For this reason, a rule of the type 'Do X in any situation Y', tends to be more vulnerable than those which argue for broadening the mind. I particularly loved chapters like the one on 'Whole Board Play', using the engines as a counter-weight to such palpable human failings as tunnel vision. At all levels, we can get fixated by a part of the board, and the exhortation to look more widely – to consider option Z even if option X is screaming at us – can

(the danger of time-trouble aside) be immensely valuable.

Similarly, Matthew was rightly impressed that after a series of overtly aggressive moves reaching the diagram position,

### Stockfish Classical – Houdini

TCEC Season 17 , 2020



White came up with the astonishingly restrained **20.Rf1!** Yes, a human player would observe the potential threats to the back rank and perhaps attend to these before resuming the attack. However, I think it is almost inconceivable that they would do so by withdrawing one of the key attacking pieces. In fact, by doing so White also puts a stop to any ...Qe3 resources and correctly assesses that Black will struggle to bring further defenders to the critical zone. It would be fraught with danger to build a 'general rule' around this decision, but as an example of keeping an open mind and not ruling any options out, it seems highly instructive.

One more cautionary note. Computer games can be very confusing and are crying out for human explanation and interpretation. This requires balance. We somehow need to understand the engine's moves in human terms without trying to assign human motives to the engines. In my view Matthew performs this tricky function superbly, treading the line convincingly throughout. Whatever the future holds for those who feel moved to 'try this at home', there is an incredible amount to be gained by Matthew doing it for us and on this basis I cannot recommend his efforts enough.

# ARKELL'S ENDINGS

## The Rook and the Bishop



*No one asks ... why the castle may only go straight and the bishop obliquely. These things are to be accepted, and with these rules the game must be played*

- W Somerset Maugham

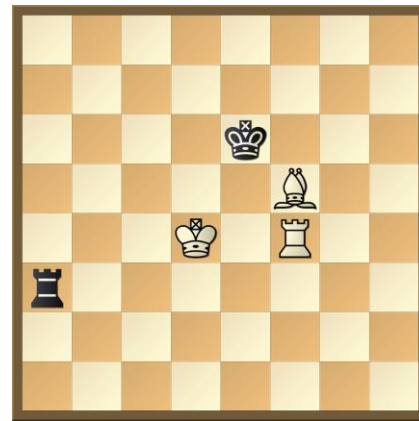
Rook and bishop v rook. I have managed to win this endgame every time, which is about once every two years. However, I have only been able to do so because I had some ideas of how to make the defence as hard as possible, whereas my opponents were either unaware of or not attentive to some key defensive techniques.

In today's article I want to highlight where some of my opponents went astray, and how they could have defended successfully.

**Arkell, Keith... - Gayson, Peter [D38]**

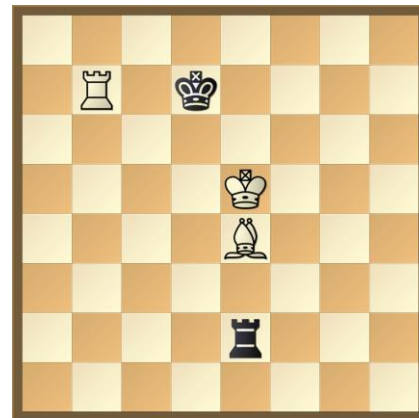
BCF-ch, 1989

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.d4 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4+ 5.Nc3 h6  
6.Bxf6 Qxf6 7.e3 c6 8.cxd5 exd5 9.a3 Bxc3+  
10.bxc3 0-0 11.c4 Bg4 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.Be2 Nc6  
14.Qb3 Qd6 15.h3 Bh5 16.0-0 Rfc8 17.Rfc1 Rc7  
18.Rc5 Ne7 19.Rac1 Rac8 20.Qb4 Rxc5 21.dxc5  
Qc7 22.Rb1 Bg6 23.Rb2 a5 24.Qb5 Qxc5 25.Qxc5  
Rxc5 26.Rxb7 Nc6 27.Bb5 Be4 28.a4 Bxf3  
29.gxf3 Ne5 30.f4 Nc4 31.Kf1 Nd2+ 32.Ke2 Ne4  
33.f3 Nd6 34.Rb8+ Kh7 35.Bd3+ g6 36.e4 Kg7  
37.Rd8 dxe4 38.fxe4 Nc4 39.Rb8 Nd6 40.Ke3  
Rh5 41.Bf1 g5 42.f5 Rh4 43.Bg2 Nxf5+ 44.exf5  
Rxa4 45.Be4 Kf6 46.Rb6+ Ke5 47.Rb5+ Kf6  
48.Rc5 h5 49.Rb5 Ra1 50.Kd4 Rd1+ 51.Bd3 g4  
52.hxg4 hxg4 53.Ke3 g3 54.Be4 Rf1 55.Rb2 a4  
56.Ra2 a3 57.Rxa3 g2 58.Bxg2 Rxf5 59.Ra6+ Kg5  
60.Be4 Rb5 61.Bd3 Rb3 62.Ra5+ Kf6 63.Rf5+  
Ke6 64.Rf4 Ra3 65.Kd4 f5 66.Bxf5+



If Peter can now reach move 116 without losing his rook or getting mated the result will be a draw through the 50-move rule.

**66...Kd6 67.Bd3 Ra1 68.Rh4 Rd1 69.Rh6+ Kd7  
70.Ke4 Kc7 71.Bc4 Rd6 72.Rh1 Kc6 73.Rc1 Rh6  
74.Bd5+ Kd7 75.Kd4 Rh2 76.Rf1 Rd2+ 77.Ke5  
Re2+ 78.Be4 Ke7 79.Rb1 Kd7 80.Rb7+**



Black has defended perfectly so far but my last move has given him a chance to go wrong. Of the three possible moves only two draw, but can you see which one loses?

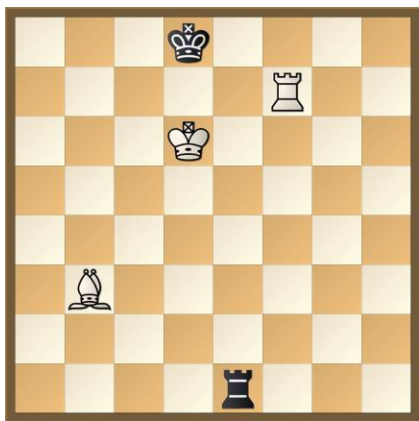
**80...Ke8**

This is the toughest nut to crack; 80...Kc8 draws but in a slightly riskier manner, whereas 80...Kd8 was the move I was hoping for. The point is that White is trying to reach the same set up with the bishop shielding the king, but pushed forward one rank.

After 80...Kd8 White exploits the threat of a back rank mate to improve his king and bishop and obtain a won ending. The play is still very complex and there isn't the space in this article to analyse it all, but the game might finish

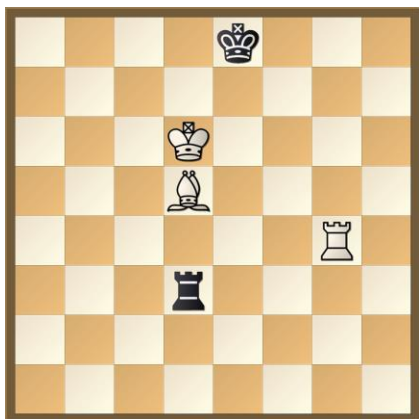
80...Kd8? 81 Kd6 Ke8 82 Bd5 Kf8 83 Rf7+ Ke8 84  
Rf1 Kd8 85 Ra1 Rc2 86 Ra7 Rc1 87 Rf7 Re1 88 Bb3!





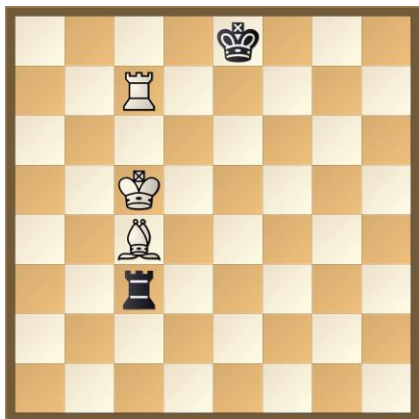
This idea is worth remembering. it is designed to zugzwang the rook onto a worse square.

88. ...Re3 ( or 88...Ke8 89 Rf4 Kd8 90 Rb4 Rc1 [ 90...Ke8 91 Bd5 Kf8 92 Rg2 ] 91 Bg4 Ke8 92 Rf4 and there is no sensible defence against Bd7+) 89 Be6 Rd3+ 90 Bd5 Re3 91 Rd7+ Ke8 ( or 91...Kc8 92 Ra7 is the end) 92 Rb7 Kf8 93 Rf7+ Ke8 94 Rf4 Rd3 95 Rg4



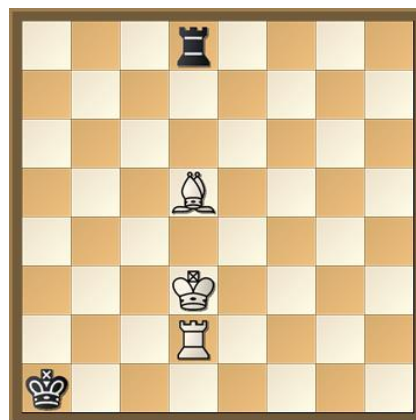
and we can now see why it was important to force the Rook onto the third rank with 88 Bb3!

**81.Kd5 Kf8 82.Bf5 Re7 83.Rb1 Kf7 84.Rf1 Ra7 85.Bd3+ Ke7 86.Bc4 Ra3 87.Kc5 Rc3 88.Rf7+ Ke8 89.Rc7**



This is another idea worth bearing in mind. I used the same concept to win against Colm Daly in the Dublin Zonal tournament of 1993. The idea is to make progress with Kd6, as the Rook now defends the bishop from c7.

Here is the position in Arkell v Daly after 80...Rcd8?

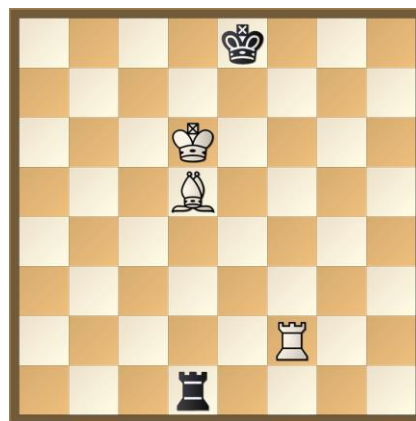


I now forced the win with 81 Kc3 Rb8 82 Bb3 Rc8+ 83 Bc4 Rb8 84 Rd5 1-0

### 89...Rc1

The secret to winning this endgame is to bring about positions in which reasonable looking moves fail to draw. If Black could pass he would still be safe, but the rook is better on c3 than c1. With the rook on c3 Black can defend as follows: 90 Kd6 Kf8 91 Rf7+ Kg8! 92 Be6 Kh8 and now after 93 Ke7 Rg3! because after 94 Rf8+ Kh7 95 Bf5+ Kh6 96 Rh8+ Kg5 97 Rg8+ doesn't win the rook, whereas it would do so were it on g1 in the corresponding variation.

**90.Kd6 Rd1+ 91.Bd5 Kf8 92.Rf7+ Ke8 93.Rf2**



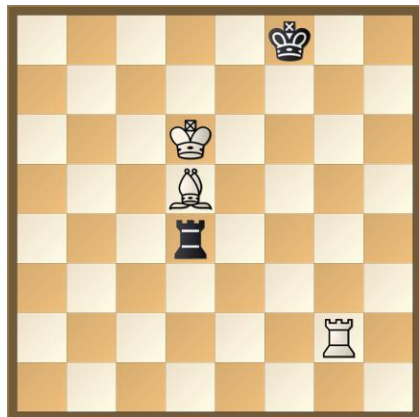
Zugzwang rears its ugly head again! Black must now put his rook on d3 or d4 and in both cases it is fatally restricted.

**93...Rd4** Or 93... Rd3 94 Rg2 and the rook can't defend on the f-file.

**94.Re2+ Kf8** 94...Kd8 95 Rh2 and the rook hasn't got access to the e-file.

**95.Rg2**

And Black resigned.



**1-0**

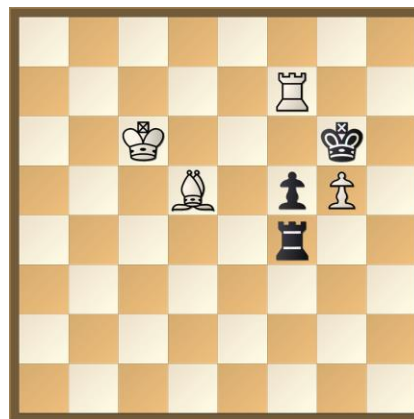
### Postscript – KA, 14<sup>th</sup> Feb

By an amazing coincidence, no sooner had I submitted this article than I had my 26th R+B v R after a two year hiatus.

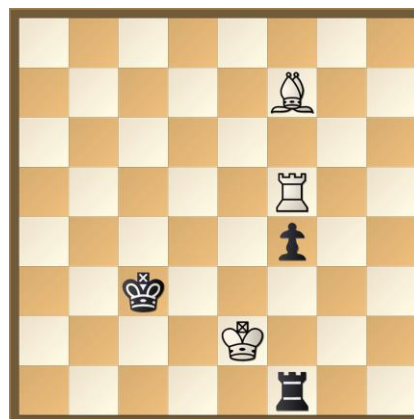
**Arkell, Keith C - Cont, Arya**

4NCL Main League 2022, 13.02.2022

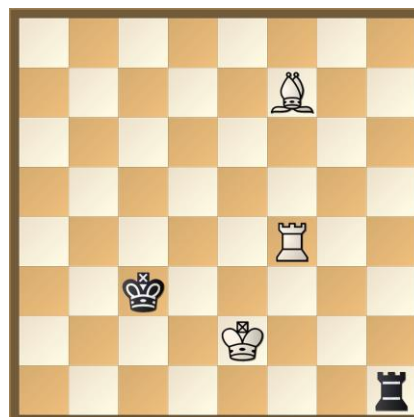
1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Qa4+ Nc6 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bxf6 Qxf6 9.e3 0-0 10.Be2 Rd8 11.a3 Bxc3+ 12.bxc3 Bg4 13.0-0 b6 14.c4 Ne7 15.Rfc1 c6 16.cxd5 Rxd5 17.h3 Ra5 18.Qd1 Bxf3 19.Bxf3 Rd8 20.Qe2 c5 21.dxc5 Rxc5 22.Rd1 Rdc8 23.Rab1 Rc2 24.Rd8+ Rxd8 25.Qxc2 Qf5 26.Qxf5 Nxf5 27.Rc1 Nd6 28.a4 Rd7 29.Rd1 Kf8 30.Bg4 Rd8 31.Rc1 Ne8 32.Kf1 g6 33.Be2 Rd7 34.g4 Rc7 35.Rd1 Ke7 36.h4 Nd6 37.Rd4 Rc5 38.Kg2 f6 39.f4 Ke6 40.Kf3 g5 41.hxg5 hxg5 42.Bd1 gxf4 43.exf4 Rc3+ 44.Ke2 f5 45.g5 Ra3 46.Bc2 a6 47.Rb4 b5 48.axb5 axb5 49.Bb3+ Ke7 50.Kd3 Ra1 51.Kd4 Rb1 52.Kd3 Rf1 53.Ba2 Rg1 54.Kd4 Rd1+ 55.Ke3 Re1+ 56.Kf3 Ne4 57.Rxb5 Rf1+ 58.Ke3 Re1+ 59.Kd4 Rd1+ 60.Ke5 Nd6 61.Rb1 Rd2 62.Bd5 Re2+ 63.Kd4 Rd2+ 64.Kc5 Rc2+ 65.Kb6 Rf2 66.Re1+ Kf8 67.Kc6 Nf7 68.Ra1 Rxf4 69.Ra8+ Kg7 70.Ra7 Kg6 71.Rxf7



71...Kxg5 72.Rg7+ Kf6 73.Rg8 Rg4 74.Rf8+ Ke5 75.Kc5 Rg1 76.Re8+ Kf4 77.Bc4 Rg3 78.Kd4 Ra3 79.Rg8 Rg3 80.Rh8 Rg1 81.Bd3 Rg4 82.Rh1 Rg3 83.Ra1 Kg5 84.Rf1 f4 85.Be2 Re3 86.Bf3 Kf5 87.Rf2 Re8 88.Rg2 Rd8+ 89.Kc3 Rd6 90.Bg4+ Kf6 91.Be2 Ke5 92.Rg8 Rc6+ 93.Kd2 Rd6+ 94.Ke1 Rh6 95.Re8+ Re6 96.Ra8 Rh6 97.Ra5+ Ke4 98.Ra4+ Ke3 99.Ra3+ Kd4 100.Kf1 Rb6 101.Kf2 Rh6 102.Ra4+ Ke5 103.Ra5+ Kd4 104.Kf3 Rf6 105.Bd1 Kd3 106.Rd5+ Kc4 107.Rd8 Kb4 108.Bc2 Kc3 109.Be4 Kc4 110.Rd5 Rf8 111.Ra5 Kd4 112.Bf5 Re8 113.Ra4+ Kd5 114.Be4+ Ke5 115.Ra5+ Kd4 116.Bg6 Rg8 117.Bf7 Rg1 118.Rd5+ Kc3 119.Rf5 Rf1+ 120.Ke2

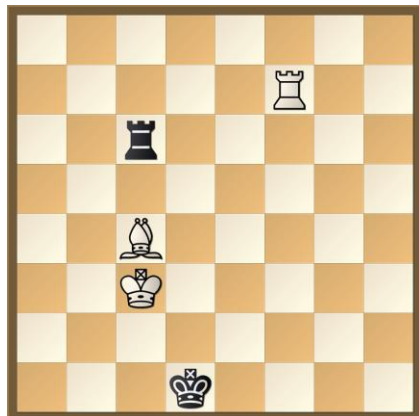


**120...Rh1 121.Rxf4** And here we are.



Rh2+ 122.Ke3 Rh3+ 123.Ke4 Rd3 124.Rf1 Rd4+  
 125.Ke5 Rd7 126.Be6 Ra7 127.Rf3+ Kd2  
 128.Kd4 Ke2 129.Rf8 Rg7 130.Bc4+ Kd2  
 131.Rf2+ Ke1 132.Re2+ Kd1 133.Rh2 Rg3  
 134.Bd3 Rg8 135.Kc3 Rc8+ 136.Bc4 Ke1?  
 137.Re2+ Kd1 138.Re7 Rc6 139.Rf7.

And Black resigned as mate is unavoidable.



1-0

## POST-TRAUMATIC CHESS DISORDER

by John Foley



This article was originally published on the Kingston chess club website at <https://kingstonchess.com/2022/01/30/post-traumatic-chess-disorder/>

I recently embarked on the task of uploading my games to a database for the first time. This has engendered the strange feeling of my life passing before my eyes as I scroll through the games. This life review experience is sometimes reported by people when they are falling from a height to their presumed death. One theory is that this is due to “cortical inhibition” – a breaking down of the normal regulatory processes of the brain – in highly stressful or dangerous situations, causing a “cascade” of mental impressions. Looking through my past games is stressful, indeed traumatic. I am recalling matters long since deliberately buried in

the recesses of my memory. Twinges of regret are surfacing to remind me of my cognitive limitations (or, if I am being cruel to myself, stupidity).



John Nunn

This late-chess-life crisis all started after I had given John Nunn a lift to Ashted for the [Alexander Cup final](#), the Surrey team knockout championship, in 2018. In the pre-digital age, we had met in the London Under-14 championship and inevitably I had lost, but I couldn't remember anything about the game. I went on to win the London [Under-16](#) (ahead of a certain Jonathan Speelman) whereas at the same time John Nunn won the London Under-18. Given his prodigious talent, he won everything as a junior in England and had set his sights abroad. By the time I won the [Oxford University Chess Club](#) (OUCC) championship in 1976, he had a doctorate in mathematics and was well on his way to becoming a grandmaster.

As we wended our way back through the Surrey Hills, I nonchalantly mentioned that he was the reason I had given up chess. He seemed abashed at my unwonted revelation. I explained that it was apparent some people were so talented that there was no point in competing with them. On the principle of comparative advantage, I should spend my time doing something else. However, I was foolish; I had misinterpreted the data by observing only those around me – the “availability bias”. I had not twigged that I was amongst a special generation – two of my university contemporaries, John Nunn and Jonathan Speelman, were the core members of the England team that went on to win the silver medal at the [Chess olympiads](#) in 1984, 1986 and 1988, behind the mighty Soviet Union. I mentally placed chess in a box called “it was fun while it lasted” and embarked on a modelling career (not that sort of modelling!).





#### *The Yugoslav Attack after 10.h4*

Soon after our trip, John sent me the game we had played in the Under-14 championship in which I had succumbed to his Yugoslav Attack. I winced as I recalled my temerity in playing the Sicilian Dragon without having even read a book on it (although to be fair maybe one had not yet been written in English). The game is too embarrassing to show, at least if I am to retain any sense of dignity. What struck me was that Doccy (as Nunn is universally known in the chess community) had recorded, studied and still remembered every opponent and probably every game he had ever played. You don't get into the top 10 players in the world by being casual; you need focused application.



Mike Truran

I recall a conversation with Mike Truran, progenitor of the [4NCL](#), the national chess league, just prior to his being ensconced as chief executive of the English Chess Federation (ECF). Over an entertaining lunch at the Fleece, his favourite hostelry in Witney, he casually mentioned that we had played in the university championships. "Oh really", I enquired, "what happened?" He had won, he beamed. I could not recall the game, let alone the result. Nor could I remember my opponent, but I

was too polite to mention this – he probably wasn't as handsome then as he is now with a trimmed goatee. It turned out that Mike had also kept a careful record of all his encounters over the board. By contrast, in those days I had seen myself as being on the grand tour of intellectual self-discovery – and, dare I admit, romance – whilst occasionally conceding to the seductive charm of chess.



Robin Haldane

It is only in hindsight that one can make sense of disconnected comments. When I resumed chess after 25 years in the "real" world, I was playing in an evening league match next to Robin Haldane, the terrific and prolific suburban competitor, who informed me that I had beaten him in a "very nice game" in the London Under-14. This was the final proof that I was in the minority of players who treated the game without the respect it deserved. I should have been keeping a record of each game. Only thus would I be able to respond to Robin with some informed pleasantries such as "but you put up a stout defence".

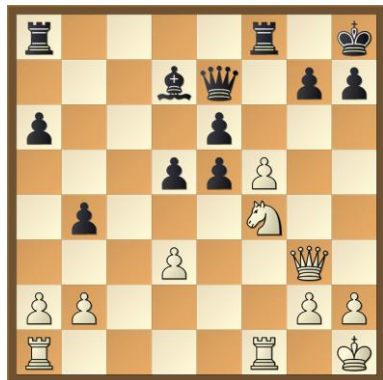


Dominic Lawson

Yet I should have been forearmed. In the OUCC championships of 1975, I played Dominic Lawson, now a distinguished journalist and the esteemed president of the ECF. Dominic played a crisp, albeit obvious, combination to win. He was surprised to

discover later that the combination had been included in a compilation book (presumably for beginners). As he [recounted to ChessBase](#) in 2014, and previously in *Chess* magazine in the 1980s, he was pleased by this recognition and cited it as his most memorable game.

*White to play and win*



*Dominic Lawson v John Foley (Oxford University Championship, 1975)*

Although not thrilled to be on the receiving end of a published combination, I drew some comfort from the dictum that it takes two players to make a game. It is only worth publishing moves in games where there is some reasonable opposition. I noted that my repertoire had moved on from the Sicilian to the French Defence, but I could still be crushed in both. My regret in reading Dominic's article was not that I had lost to a cheapo (the move, not him), but that I could not lay my hands on the game in which I beat him the following year on my way to the championship title. I recall I played the Modern Benoni with the f5 flourish, as made famous by Jonathan Penrose, who beat the then world champion Mikhail Tal in the Leipzig Olympiad in 1960. If only I had had that game, I could have fashioned some riposte. Actually, I have not quite abandoned the last thread of hope, because there are still some storage boxes in the attic which have not been disinterred in decades.



Stephen Moss v a youthful Magnus Carlsen

I fancied that a future biographer would write an encomium about how an average club player could, after years of apathy, apply himself intensively and become a grandmaster. This was more or less the theme of [The Rookie](#), the book written by my Kingston colleague, and another contemporary at the OUCC, the Guardian writer Stephen Moss, which tracks his odyssey through chess (and life).

Yet subconsciously I had evolved almost the same attitude as [Ken Inwood](#), one of Kingston's strongest players for decades. Ken discards his scoresheet after each game in what appears to be a careless disregard for self-improvement. But then Ken does not have anything to prove, having won the London Under-14 and Under-18 titles before becoming the British Boys' Champion at Hastings in 1953 and playing top board for England in the [Glorney Cup](#). He has for many decades made a pilgrimage to the Hastings international tournament at the turn of each year to watch the top games with flask at the ready. There comes a stage when chess is played for pure enjoyment, win or lose.



Score sheets

At least I had the foresight to hang on to these precious documents. Wads of distressed scoresheets have been strewn in drawers and stuffed into bookshelves. The process has begun of collating and painstakingly transcribing the moves of the games I can unearth into [Hiarcs](#), the Mac-friendly chess database and engine. Some of my games were conveniently retrieved from doubly checked online databases such as 4NCL's. That made me realise what a terrible written record I had kept of the moves.

Note on notation: the algebraic system gives rise to reflection errors when recording: a becomes h and b becomes g; 1 becomes 8 and 2 becomes 7 etc, so there is a lot of decoding required. One must play a

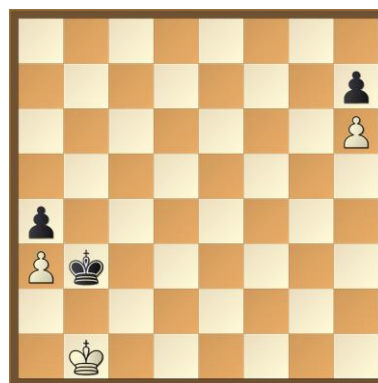
game out until the moves no longer make sense and then reverse back to the last reflection. Descriptive notation largely precludes this sort of error.

The main defect of transcription, however, cannot be cured by any notation system. The problem occurs towards the end of each game. When time is short, accuracy goes out the window. Distinguishing between moves and squiggles becomes impossible. In the worst case, when the remaining time drops below five minutes, it is no longer mandatory to record the moves. The end of the game is lost to history unless the opponent is obliging. Returning to a game years later, one plays through to a perfectly good position up to move 35 or so, but then the scoresheet puzzlingly records the game as a loss.

The advice for constructing personal game histories, learned late in my life, is to correct the scoresheet immediately after the game. Ideally, one should make some quick notes on the game – perhaps during the post-mortem analysis conducted by the players – and input the moves without delay.

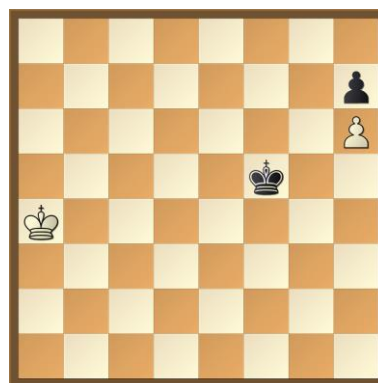
The games I am currently inputting are from random dates in the past. I am up to game 150, which must be a tiny fraction of the games played in my chess “career”. The games are not of any theoretical importance, except that each game can trigger a personal memory or give rise to a newly perceived finesse with potential instructive value. A game fitting this latter category was one I played as Black against Martin Gruau in a Surrey v Kent county match in 2018. After a hard-fought and complex game, we reached the following position. I was so sure I was winning, and the move so obvious, that I did not think I needed to calculate my next move.

*Black to play and win*



*Martin Gruau v John Foley. Surrey v Kent, 27 January 2018*

Like anybody else who has been striving for victory for five hours at the board in a chilly community hall, I was exhausted, but finally the win was within my grasp. In the diagram, Black is playing down the board. My king had advanced and pushed my opponent’s king to the back rank. I could capture the a3 pawn and then saunter over to pick up the h6 pawn, whilst the White king had to deal with the passed a4 pawn. I should be able to shoulder off the White king if it tried to race over to stop the h-pawn. This much was clear and there was no need to consider any other plan. So I played 70 ... Kxa3? There followed 71 Ka1! I followed my ill-thought plan and we reached this position after Black’s 75th move.

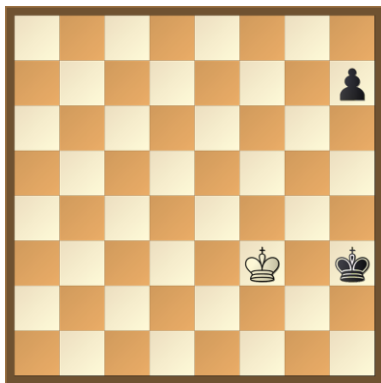


*White to play and draw*

I was on track but my opponent seemed confident, which was rather worrying- wasn’t he supposed to resign? I finally began to put my brain in gear and realised that I had sleepwalked into a draw. The final position is shown below. The Black king is forced to the edge and cannot escape without allowing the white king to reach the drawing square h8. Dagnabbit! I dealt with the anguish by

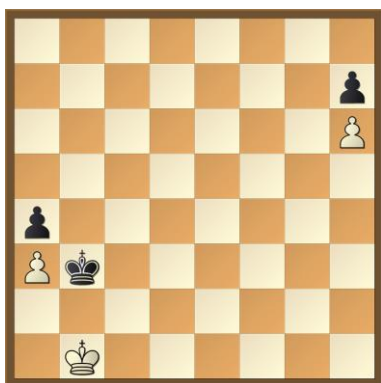


the technique of instant forgetfulness – the nostrum of choice for the disappointed player.

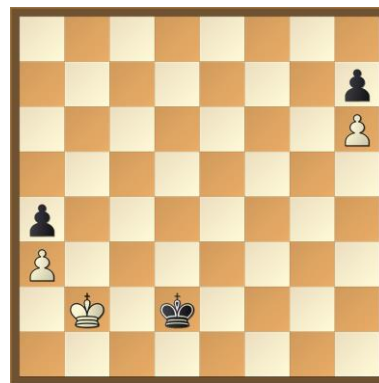


*Drawn*

So, as I was inputting and reviewing the game again, I noticed something surprising. I had been right to believe that I had a winning move in the opening diagram position. The finesse is to refrain from capturing the a3 pawn! I had played a pedestrian move, failing to recognise that I was standing at a crossroads. During a game one is not presented with a caption “White to play and win” which would immediately raise the level of awareness.



The winning move is to avoid capturing the pawn **70...Kc3!** The actual move played draws 70...Kxa3? 71.Ka1 Kb3 72.Kb1 Kc4 73.Ka2 Kd5 74.Ka3 Ke5 75.Kxa4 Kf5 76.Kb4 Kg5 77.Kc4 Kxh6 78.Kd4 Kg5 79.Ke3 Going straight to the blocking corner 79.Ke4?? This natural move is a blunder (79...Kg4 80.Ke3 Kg3 81.Ke2 Kg2 82.Ke3 h5 83.Kf4 h4 84.Kg4 h3 winning)) **71.Kc1 Kd3 72.Kb2 Kd2!**



Now White is forced to lose a tempo whereas Black takes the same number of moves to reach h6. A serious error would be to allow the White king easy access to a4 72...Ke4?? 73.Kc3 Kf5 74.Kb4 Kg6 75.Kxa4 Kxh6 76.Kb5 White wins **73.Kb1 Ke3 74.Kc2 Kf4 75.Kc3 Kg5 76.Kb4 Kxh6 77.Kxa4 Kg5 78.Kb5 h5 79.a4** Black promotes one tempo earlier and stops the White pawn.

The crucial point is that if Black captures the a3 pawn, then the White king is given a shortcut to Black's a4 pawn via a2 in two moves instead of the long way round via c3 and b4 in three moves. In an endgame, a tempo can make all the difference. White gains a move to advance and promote the h-pawn. Black should have been counting tempi rather than material. In fact, in the diagram, remove the a3 pawn and White still draws a pawn down. A common error and one which the diligent student of the game should have been able to figure out. There may be many more such gems yet to be recovered from the past.

Reverting to the classic lunch at the Fleece (or should that be the Golden Fleece), Mike Truran, who studied languages at Oxford, vouchsafed to me a line from the Aeneid: *forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*. Classical scholars still [debate](#) the precise translation, but one interpretation is: “Someday, perhaps, it will help to remember those troubles as well.” The positive take on this aphorism is that, far from forgetting unpleasant experiences, we should instead wait and integrate them into our personal experience when we are ready. There will come a point when we confront adversity and feel more complete for doing so. The more I review my historical games collection, the more I understand the narrative of my life.

*Photo credits: Sophie Triay (Mike Truran); Linda Nyland (Stephen Moss); Brendan O’Gorman (Robin Haldane)*

# JUNIOR MOVES

## LITTLEWOOD'S CHOICE



This month I wanted to look at a couple of examples which illustrate how important tactics are when playing chess. No matter how well you play, if you make a tactical error then your whole position can be ruined.

Consider the following game -

**Adithya Vaidyanathan vs Rupert Marsden**  
2021 British Chess Championships U10

**1.Nf3 Nf6 2.d4 d5 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 Bb4 5.Bg5 h6**  
**6.Bh4 Nbd7 7.Qb3 Bxc3+**



This is a rather timid move by Black which leaves White with a persistent advantage. Much better is 7...c5 which leads to sharp complications.

**8.bxc3 c6 9.e3 dxc4?** This enables White to develop naturally without loss of tempo...better is 9...0-0 when White will probably play 10.Bd3 and now Black can take on c4 if he wishes.

**10.Bxc4 Qb6?**



**11.Bxe6! fxe6 12.Qxe6+ Kd8 13.Ne5**



White is now winning because if 13...Nxe5 then 14.Bxf6+ gxf6 15.Qxf6+ Kd7 16. dxe5! with a winning attack e.g. 16...Rh7 17.Qg6 Rf7 18.Rd1+ and mate next move.

**13...Re8?** Better is 13...Rf8 but after 14.Nf7+ Rxf7 15.Qxf7 White is clearly winning.



So, consider the position. You have totally outplayed your opponent and now need to finish him off. If you look carefully then you will spot 14.Nf7+ Kc7 15.Qd6 mate. However White missed this important tactic and played:

**14.Qd6?** ...and now Black could have got right back into the game by playing 14...Re7 when White has

only a small advantage. Instead, Black blundered in return and the game finished:

**14...Qa5? 15.Nf7 mate**



As you can see, there were three blunders in a row!

Now consider the following position which arose after a complicated middle game:

**Mohammed Aayan Ismail vs Edward Jackson**  
2021 British Chess Championships U18

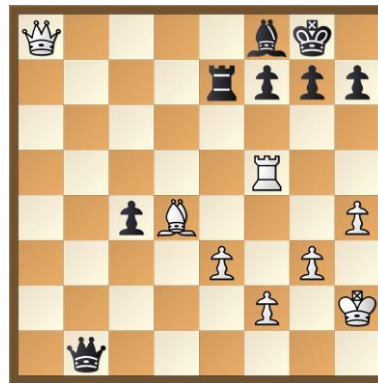


It is White's move and he played the tactical shot:

**1.Rxa6?** Now if 1...Rxa6 2.Qxe8 and White is winning.

However, this move is a blunder because Black can play 1...Qb1+ 2. Kh2 Qb8+ guarding his rook on e8 and so winning a piece, as 3.Be5 is forced or White will lose his rook on a6.

Instead, the game continued **1...Qd1+? 2.Kh2 Re4 3.g3 Qf1 4.Rf5 R4e7 5.Qd5 Rb8 6.Ra8 Rxa8 7.Qxa8 Qb1** reaching the following position:



White is winning and has the brilliant move **8.Bxg7!** and after **8...Kxg7 9.Rg5+** Black must give up his queen with **9...Qg6** because if **9...Kf6** then **10.Qf3+ Ke6 11.Qc6** mate.

However, White missed this and played: **8.Rc5**. Black could now have carried on the fight with **8...Qb7** but instead made the final blunder **8...Qc2?** and White finished beautifully with:

**9. Qxf8+! Kxf8 10.Rc8+ Re8 11.Bc5+ Kg8 12.Re8** mate.

I hope these two junior games illustrate how important tactics are ... watch out for them!

Paul Littlewood Email: [plittl@hotmail.com](mailto:plittl@hotmail.com)

## IMPROVERS

### TECHNIQUE

by IM Nigel Povah

*This is the second in a series of articles (originally written in 1978/79 but recently updated with input from engines) which attempt to make the reader more aware of certain important factors which are often overlooked or not adequately understood by many chess players.*

"Pawns are the soul of chess," said Philidor, and it is the author's opinion that he was referring to more than the ability of the pawn to reincarnate!

Collectively the pawns can determine the course of the whole game. For instance, consider the two diagrams that follow:



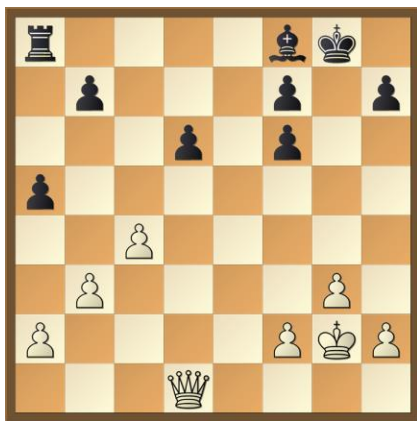


DIAGRAM 1



DIAGRAM 2

It does not need a strong player to note that Black's position in Diagram 2 is preferable to Diagram 1. However, the difference is so drastic (although material is the same in both cases) that Black ought to have no trouble drawing the position in the second diagram, whilst he is quite lost in the first case. This rather simplistic example should imply that the pawns collectively have a powerful underlying influence on the outcome of a game.

Let us consider a more realistic, although contrived, example (see Diagram 3).

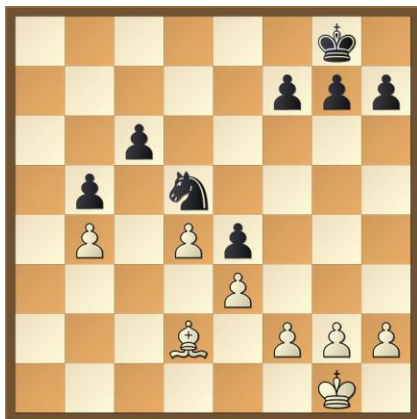


DIAGRAM 3

Material is again level except Black has knight for bishop. The question of which is better (knight or bishop) is one which often puzzles many players, or sometimes worse still they have a rigid preference.

The correct answer is that it is the pawn structure which determines which piece is to be preferred. The following principles act as a useful guide in making your decision should you be offered a choice:

1. Knights are better in blocked positions with many pawns.
2. Bishops naturally prefer open positions.
3. The disadvantage of a knight in an open position is reduced if all the pawns are on one side of the board since the bishop's ability to monitor the other side of the board becomes insignificant.
4. The bishop is far less effective if hemmed in by his own pawns (as in our example).

Now to our example. From the points above it should be clear that Black's position is preferable, but what is the winning strategy?

Quite clearly White's biggest handicap is the vulnerability of the isolated b-pawn and this factor alone should cost him the game. (For instance, the same position with White's b-pawn on c5 and Black's b-pawn on d7 is probably drawn). So, we realise that Black must somehow increase the pressure against the White b-pawn and this means getting the Black king to c4.

Hence play would probably continue **1...f5!** this pawn move enables the king to make a dash for c4, whilst supporting the important e4 pawn, so that Black can simply ignore 2.f3, should White attempt to break out of the bind.

**2.Kf1 Kf7 3.Ke2 Ke6** Black is getting ready to play ...Nf6 followed by ...Kd5-c4 (with a winning position), so now there are two variations for White to consider:

**4.Be1!** this bishop retreat protects the f-pawn thereby neutralising the threat of ...Nf6-g4

**4.Kd1? Nf6!** this knight retreat is a killer because Black threatens ...Ng4 winning a pawn and ...Kd5 followed by ...Kc4, in both cases gaining a decisive advantage eg 5.h3 Kd5 6.Kc2 Kc4 7.Be1 Nd5 8.Bd2 Nxb4+ 9.Bxb4 Kxb4 with an easy win.

**4...Nf6 5.Kd2 Kd5 6.Kc3** just in time to prevent the deadly ... Kc4

**6...Ng4 7.h3 Nh2!** this knight move has a powerful paralysing effect. White cannot move his f-pawn and moving his g-pawn allows the deadly ...Nf3. Also, his king is tied down, as he can never allow Black to play ...Kc4, when the Black knight will eventually find its way back to d5 and the b4 pawn will fall.

7...Nf6 is also good

**8.h4 8.Bd2 g5** when White has either Be1 or Kb3 with a similar finish to the 8.Kb3 line; 8.Kb3 g5 9.Kc3 h5 10.Kb3 h4 11.Kc3 g4 12.hxg4 (12.Kb3 gxh3 13.gxh3 Nf3 14.Bc3 Ng1-+ and Black's h-pawn will romp home unless White tries the hopeless 15.Be1 Nxh3 16.f4 exf3 17.Bxh4 f2 with a simple win) 12...fxg4 when Black's potential passed pawn on the h-file is decisive e.g. 13.f3 gxf3 14.Bxh4 fxg2 15.Bf2 Nf3-+; 8.g3? Nf3 9.Bd2 Nxd2 10.Kxd2 Kc4-+

**8...g6 8...Ng4** is also good 9.Kb3 g6 10.Kc3 h6 will transpose.

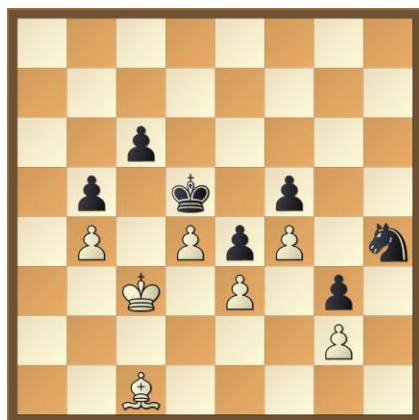
**9.Bd2 h6 10.Be1 10.Kb3 g5 11.hxg5 hxg5 12.g3 Nf3 13.Bc3 g4 14.Bb2 Ne1 15.Bc3 Nd3-+**

**10...g5 11.hxg5 hxg5 12.Bd2 Ng4 13.f3 13.Be1 f4 14.exf4 gxf4 15.Bd2 f3 16.gxf3 exf3 17.Be1 Ke4** with zugzwang leading to the collapse of the White position.

**13...Nh2 14.f4 g4 15.Bc1 15.Be1 Nf1 16.Bf2 g3 17.Bg1 Nh2-+** once again with a deadly zugzwang.

**15...g3 16.Bd2 Nf3! 17.Bc1 Nh4-+**

We may conclude from this example that the weak b-pawn and the poor state of White's bishop were too great a handicap against Black's active knight and king.



Our final example is from the game N.E. Povah - L. J. Pinto, Aaronson Open 1978.

**1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bb4 5.Qc2 0-0 6.Nd5 Bc5 6...Re8 7.Qf5!?** is a well-known line.

**7.a3 a5 8.Qf5?!** This move isn't so great here.

**8...d6?!** Black misses the best continuation.

8...Nxd5 9.cxd5 d6 ±

**9.Nxf6+ Qxf6 9...gxf6 10.Qh5 d5 11.d4 exd4?! 12.Bd3+-**

**10.Qxf6 gxf6**



This ending might appear quite good for Black at first glance since he has a lead in development. However, a closer look reveals that Black's dark squared bishop is a very poor piece whilst the White counterpart will have a better future on the a1-h8 diagonal. Furthermore, Black's doubled f-pawns may well prove to be a handicap and White's pawn structure is much more flexible. The game continued:

**11.b3 e4?** A serious error. Black is attempting to drive White's pieces back whilst increasing his spatial control. However, this move only adds to the scope of White's dark-squared bishop.

11...Bf5=

**12.Ng1!** This knight has a bright future on the unassailable f4 square.

**12...Re8 13.Bb2 f5 14.Nh3 ±** White enjoys a clear strategic advantage.

**14...Ne5 15.Nf4 c6** Black must control the d5 square.

**16.Be2 Be6 17.Nh5 Nd7 18.Rg1!** The White king is happy in the centre, since castling queenside is unnecessarily provocative and castling on the

kingside reduces White's attacking options. The impending opening of the g-file will prove embarrassing for the Black king.

**18...Kf8 19.g4 fxg4 20.Bxg4 Bxg4 21.Rxg4** intending Rg7 and Rxh7, etc.

**21...Ne5 22.Bxe5** White has to give up his powerful bishop but he will win a pawn on e4 or h7.

**22...Rxe5 23.Nf6 Ke7 24.Nxe4!** Not 24.Nxh7? Rh8 25.Rh4 and Black is more than comfortable.

**24...Rh5 24...f5** is answered by 25.Rg7+ Kf8 26.Rxh7 Kg8 27.Nf6+-

**25.Rg2** Consolidating with the advantage of an extra pawn and a good knight vs poor bishop.

25.h4 is also strong.

**25...Bb6 26.Ke2 Bc7 27.Rag1 Rd8 28.Ng3 Rg5?!** 28...Rh3 was more sensible, but White is still clearly better.

**29.h4 Rg6 30.h5 Rg5?** 30...Rf6 allows Black to play on, although his position is pretty miserable.

**31.f4** Black loses material after either 31...Rc5 32.d4 or any rook move on the g-file allowing 32.Nf5+

Conclusion: Don't be oblivious of pawn structures and be wary of the power of a 'good' knight versus a 'bad' bishop.

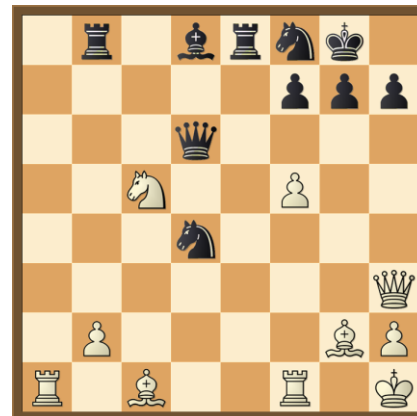
## TACTICS

by IM Paul Littlewood

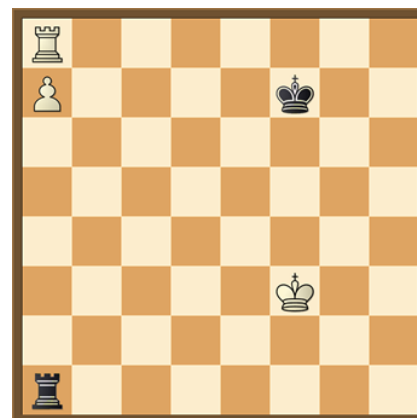
Last month we looked at pins. The next tactic I want to consider is the skewer. A metal skewer keeps meat together by piercing right through from top to bottom. In chess a piece is skewered when it is attacked through another piece.

Consider the following example from one of my own games:

**P.E.Littlewood vs A.Trangmar**  
County Match 1980



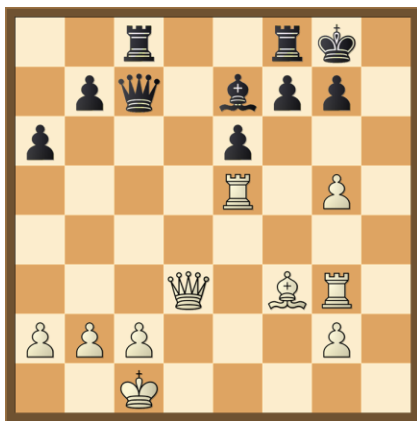
I won material by **1.Bf4** skewering Black's rook on b8. Another name for the skewer is the X-ray attack. It is a powerful tactic when exploited effectively. Take this position for example:



If it were Black to play then he could draw by 1...Kg7. However, it is White to play and he wins by **1.Rh8 Rxa7 2.Rh7+ Kf6 3.Rxa7**. The Black rook on a7 is skewered by the White rook on h7.

In this last example the Black rook had no escape but when a check is not involved it may be possible to mitigate the effects of the skewer. For example:





The White rook on g3 is skewered because if the rook on e5 moves the g3 rook is lost. Meanwhile if White plays 1.Qe2 then 1...Bd6 further enhances the skewer and wins material.

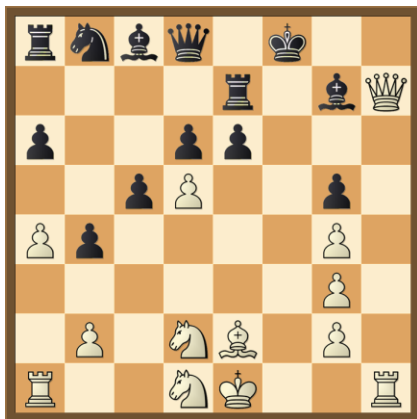
However, White can escape by playing **1.Rh3**...this threatens mate on h7 and so allows Black no time to take the rook on e5. Forced is then **1...g6** and now White can safely play 2.Qe2 or simply move the rook on e5.

Here are two examples to solve yourself. The solutions will follow at the end of the article.

#### P.E.Littlewood vs A.Kosten

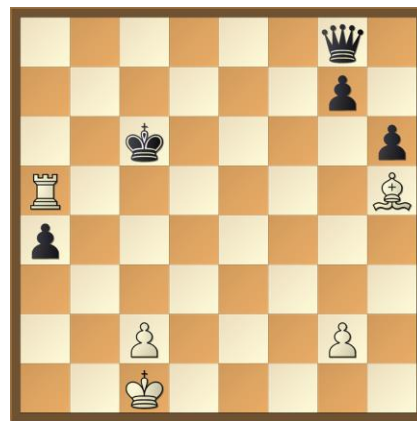
County Match 1981

White to play and win



Study by Rinck 1903

White to play and win



So, watch out for those skewers...they appear a lot more often than you think!

Paul Littlewood

#### Solutions

##### P.E.Littlewood vs A. Kosten

White wins a piece by 1. Qh8+ Bxh8 2.Rxh8+ Kf7 3.Rxd8. The Black queen has been skewered!

##### Rinck Study

This is a beautiful example illustrating the power of the skewer.

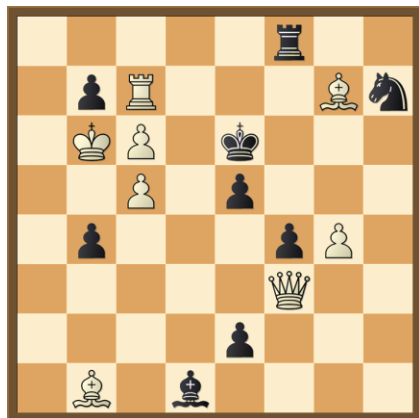
White plays **1.Ra8!** now if Black plays 1... Qxa8 then 2.Bf3+ skewers the Black Queen. There are various queen moves for Black but 1...Qe6 loses to 2.Ra6+ and 1...Qc4 to 2.Rc8+...in both cases the Black queen is skewered by the White rook. Therefore, Black tries **1...Qa2** but now White continues **2.Rxa4!** because if 2...Qxa4 then 3.Be8+ again skewers the Black queen. So Black plays **2...Qg8** but White now plays **3.Ra8** which leaves black with only one square for his queen to try that does not immediately lose. However after **3...Qh7** White plays **4.Bg6! Qxg6 5.Ra6+** and wins the Black queen by a final skewer. Brilliant!

# STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

## PROBLEM CORNER

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

In the last ChessMoves I left you with this problem to solve –



Mate in 2

Lev Loshinsky

1st Prize, *Bulletin Central Chess Club USSR* 1972, v.  
David Shire, *The Problemist Supplement* 2020

As I said last time, the queen and the b1 bishop look likely candidates to inflict mate – each of them could threaten mate by going to e4 or to d3. But do any of these moves work?

Try 1.Be4, threatening 2.Bd5. But now 1...bxc6, which in the diagram would be met by 2.Qxc6, is a successful defence. And there's another example of self-interference when we look at 1.Qe4, which would threaten both 2.Qxe5 and 2.Qc4, but would allow 1...Nf6! (because 2.Bf5 is no longer possible). So try 1.Bd3 (threat 2.Bc4) – now 1...Bb3! works as 2.Qb3 is no longer available. Or 1.Qd3, with three threats, all scotched by 1...Rd8! (another move that initially would fail to 2.Bf5). In fact, the key is made by a different piece: 1.Rd7! successfully threatens 2.Qd5, and White's mating responses to ...bxc6 and ...Nf6 have been preserved. (By the way, not 1.cxb7? Ba4!)

If you'd like a resource for regularly enjoying chess problems, go the website of the British Chess Problem Society at

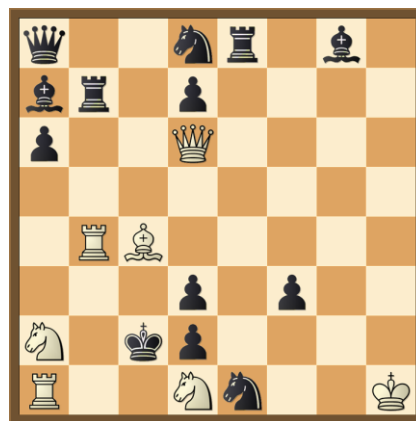
<https://www.theproblemist.org/>

There you'll find a 'Weekly Problem', always one that has been selected as one that is a good one to solve, entertaining as well as instructive. You can also click on the 'Archive' of Weekly Chess

Problems, at the foot of that page, to look at such problems that have been posted over the years; and, if, like me, you are sometimes lazy, you have a facility for clicking on the solutions, so that you can enjoy some high-quality problems without having to cudgel your brain!

Before sharing with you a couple of examples of these problems, I should also mention that among the 'Contacts' available on the BCPS website is Brian Stephenson and that he'd be happy to hear from anyone who would be interested in joining in a group – 'Chess Endgames and Compositions' – who take part in a solving ladder, regularly receiving positions to solve. Brian would be happy to tell you more.

To give you an example of a 'Weekly Problem' from the BCPS website –



Mate in 3

Siegfried Brehmer

3rd Commendation, Olympic Tourney 1948 (v.)

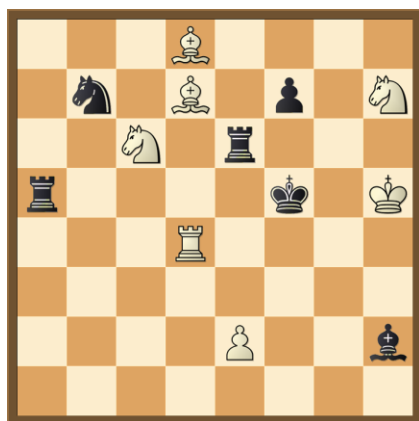
This problem is a fine illustration of 'Nowotny interferences', as will become clear. Consider the lines on which two pairs of Black pieces defend key squares near the Black king. The a7 bishop and b7 rook guard e3 (where White would like to play Ne3#) and b2 (where he'd like to play Rb2#) respectively. And the e8 rook and g8 bishop respectively guard e3 (again) and b3 (where White would like to play Bb3#).

A Nowotny interference would be for White to put his queen on one of the intersection squares of these lines of guard. If it were not for the fact that the e8 rook and the a7 bishop both guard e3 1.Qb6 would force mate straightaway – Black could capture with the b7 rook to restore the guard on b2 or with the a7 bishop to restore the guard on e3 but not both. And you can see that the position is very

similar if one considers 1.Qe6. In both cases, the idea doesn't yet work because Black has two guards on e3, and so can afford to lose one of those lines of guard.

The key move therefore is 1.Qh6, which threatens 2.Rc1+ dxc1(=Q) 3.Qxc1#. The only two defences are 1...Re3 and 1...Be3, and so we have decoyed those Black pieces away from their duty of guarding that square; thus after 1.Qh6 Re3 2.Qb6! does work; and after 1.Qh6 Be3 2.Qe6! does work (with just one bit of by-play to add: 2...Rxb4 3.Nxb4#).

That problem appeared on the website on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – the following one, which I shall leave for you to solve, appeared three weeks later:



Mate in 4

Friedrich Chlubna

4<sup>th</sup> Honourable Mention, *Europa Rochade* 1984-85

The only clue I'll give is that the distinguished late Austrian composer didn't just put the Black b7 knight on the board to make up the numbers!

As you'll gather, if you're stumped then, as well as getting your computer to solve it, there is the option of reading the solution set out in a very clear fashion, by clicking on '25.1.21' on the Weekly Problem Archive. The third possibility of course is to wait till the next ChessMoves!

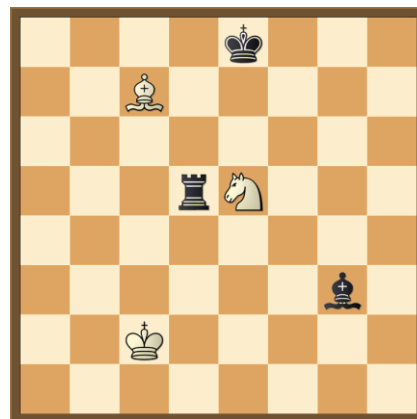
As ever, if you have any queries or comments don't hesitate to email me.

Christopher Jones Email: [cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk)

## HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

### A Flexible Fortress?



White to play and draw

In a real game, would you resign here? Maybe so, but not in a study, because you *know* White can draw – it tells you that under the diagram. So you look with confidence for an escape. And you eventually see the splendid 1.Nd7. It prevents 1...Rc5+, threatens 2.Nf6+ and leaves the White bishop attacking the Black one.

That's only the start, though. Any study has a lot more than that to it, and this one is harder to solve than many are. This original study is a composition by Paul Byway, and a very fine one, so it's worth working through all its variations.

Well, what happens after 1.Nd7? Black needs to remove his bishop from attack and protect the f6 square, which means he has to play 1...Bh4. Now what? Looks even more hopeless than before. But you have a clue now, from White's first move, so it's not hard to spot 2.Bg3. Feels like we're on the right track; that we're in the composer's intention. The Black bishop needs to move again, and 2...Be7 or 2...Bg5 allow White to escape with 3.Nb6, so it has to be 2...Bd8. Now White has 3.Ne5 or 3.Nb8, but they can't both work in a composed study, so let's try the more obvious one first: 3.Ne5. We get 3.Ne5 Bc7 4.Ng4 Rc5+, and it doesn't take too long to sort out 5.Kb3/d3 Bxg3 6.Nf6+ Ke7 7.Ne4 Rh5 8.Nxg3 Rh3 winning and 5.Kb2/d2 Bxg3 6.Nf6+ Ke7 7.Ne4 Rb5+ or Rd5+ winning. (Notice, incidentally, that the Black and White bishops have swapped positions since the diagram – a fine feature of this study.) So it has to be the unlikely-looking 3.Nb8. Can that really work? Surely the knight will never get out of jail?



We've eliminated the alternatives, so there must be a way. Black plays 3...Rg5. Maybe 4.Bd6? No, there's 4...Rg6 5.Bf4 Ba5 6.Kd3 Kd8 7.Kc4 Bc7 winning. 4.Bf4 then, and Black will harass the bishop, so play goes 4.Bf4 Rf5 5.Bd6 Rf6 6.Be5 Re6 7.Bf4 Be7 8.Bc7 Bd6 9.Na6 Ba3/f8 10.Nb8 and draws. The knight doesn't escape – because it doesn't need to! In Paul's words: "White sets up a defensive laager or marching camp such as the Roman legions built (not a fortress)." and "White sets up an exclusion zone a6-d6-d8 which gives his king just enough time to ride to the rescue." Magnus Carlsen famously said that he doesn't believe in fortresses, but this isn't quite a formal fortress, it's more flexible than that.

The full solution is **1.Nd7 Bh4 2.Bg3 Bd8 3.Nb8 Rg5 4.Bf4 Rf5 5.Bd6 Rf6 6.Be5 Re6 7.Bf4 Be7 8.Bc7 Bd6 9.Na6 Ba3/f8 10.Nb8** draws.

I've skipped over various alternatives in the later stages; here they are:

4...Rg4 5.Be5 Re4 and play returns to the main line after both 6.Bd6 Re6 7.Bf4 and 6.Bg3 Re3 7.Bf4 Rf3 8.Be5 Rf5 9.Bd6.

5.Bg3? Be7 6.Na6 Ra5 7.Nb8 Rg5 8.Bf4 Rg6 9.Bc7 Bd8 10.Bf4 Ba5 11.Kd3 Kd8 12.Kc4 Bc7 wins. (In the main line, the rook is on e6 and then 13.Kd5 draws.)

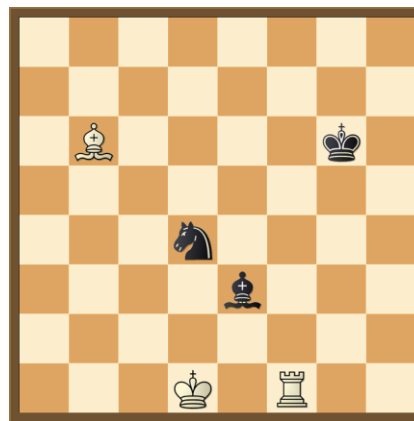
6.Bg3? Rg6 wins.

7.Bg3? Rg6 wins.

7...Ba5 8.Kd3 Kd8 9.Kd4/c4 Bc7 10.Kd5 draws.

8.Kany? Bd6 wins.

I hope you have followed the complex details of that, because now you'll need them to help you solve Paul's next study. This also is an original, meaning this is its first publication. This time, it's White to play and win, so some critical details must have changed. Good luck! Even having seen the first, this is a toughie, so some help: you'll need to work your rook up to the top of the board, and then come back again.



White to play and win

The solution is given below.

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### How to Solve a Study – solution

**1.Re1 Bf2 2.Re8 Kf7 3.Rh8 Ke6 4.Rf8 Bg1 5.Rf1 Be3 6.Re1** wins. Notice that White's first and final moves are the same, a particularly pleasing aspect.

The sidelines are:

1...Nc2 2.Kxc2 Bxb6 3.Re6+.

2.Re4? Kf5 3.Re7/8 Bg1.

2...Kf5/6 3.Rf8+ and 2...Kother 3.Rd8.

3.Ra8? Be3 4.Ra4 Nb5/f5 or 4.Ra3 Nc2.

3.Rc8? Ke7 4.Rc4 Kd/e6.

3.Re5 Bg3.

3.Rb/d8 Ke7

3.Re4? Ne2 and draws as in the first study.

3...Ke7 4.Rh2 Be3 5.Rh3/4.

These two new studies are developments of studies by Asaba, published in 1977 and 1981, to which Paul has added new ideas and also succeeded, unlike Asaba, in creating positions without any pawns at all.

## Events Calendar

- 25 February - Doncaster Congress
- 26 February - Crowborough Chess Congress
- 26 February - Poplar Rapid Tournament
- 27 February - Brentwood Junior Tournament
- 27 February - Colindale Chess Tournament
- 2-12 March - Chess and Bridge England v Sweden Challenge
- 3 March - Junior 4NCL Online League Season 5
- 3 March - Hendon FIDE Blitz
- 5 March - Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix Spring
- 5 March - Swindon Rapidplay
- 8 March - 4NCL Online League Season 5
- 12 March - Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay
- 11-13 March - 45th Blackpool Chess Congress, Imperial Hotel, Blackpool
- 15 March - Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
- 18-20 March - Castle Chess Fareham Congress
- 19 March - Poplar Rapid
- 20 March - Birmingham Rapid, Quinborne Centre

Here is a selection of upcoming events. Please make sure to check for updates with the organisers, and for more details at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/>

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