

July 2022



WORLD CHAMPIONS

ENGLAND SENIORS TAKE THE WORLD BY STORM
The Triple - Over 50, Over 65 and Women's Over 50

**Another bumper issue including
our new puzzle section!**



The Chessable British Chess Championships

When: 8 to 21 August

Where: The Riviera International Centre in Torquay

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All the details and entry form at <https://bit.ly/britishchamps>

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EDITORIAL



England - Triple World Champions! What a fantastic achievement by our seniors. Many congratulations to all those involved.

We are delighted to have special coverage brought to us by two of the many architects of the achievement, Nigel Povah and Keith Arkell. Many thanks also to Richard Palliser for permission to use his game annotations.

I have to say I was smiling broadly as I watched the video footage of our gold medal winners being crowned, with Queen's *We are the Champions* blaring away in the background!

So well done to the 50+, 65+ and Women's 50+ gold medal winners and please don't forget the other English teams who scored some notable successes and added greatly to the overall camaraderie.

So, next up on the world stage is the 2022 Olympiad. The English teams are -

Women's team – WGM/IM Jovanka Houska, WGM Katarzyna Toma, FM Akshaya Kalaiyalahan, WIM Lan Yao and WCM Zoe Varney, supported by Captain IM Lorin D'Costa and ECF Women's Director Agnieszka Milewska.

Open team – GM Michael Adams, GM Luke McShane, GM Gawain Jones, GM David Howell, GM Ravi Haria, supported by Captain IM Malcolm Pein.

Good luck to them all! As I write these words, according to weather.com it is 33 degrees in Bedford and 36 degrees in Chennai, and one can immediately empathise with how difficult it is to operate in very hot conditions. So it is very pleasing that the England women's team are taking a very rounded approach to their preparation including breathing techniques etc, as reported in The Times of India at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/chess/in-a-first-england-women-rope-in-performance-coach-ahead-of-chess-olympiad/articleshow/92962380.cms>

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England Triple World Champions

by Keith Arkell and Nigel Povah

The World Senior Team Chess Championships (WSTCC) were held in Acqui Terme in Italy from 19-30 June and this year we decided, after nearly two years of little or no over the board chess, to really give it a go.

In 2014 FIDE began to recognise two categories of senior chess: 65+ and 50+. Until then the single category was 60+. We were very fortunate to be able to persuade Mickey Adams and Nigel Short to lead our 50+ first team and similarly to persuade John Nunn and Paul Littlewood to head up our 65+ first team, ensuring we would be competitive in both sections, with four past and present British Champions at the helm! Indeed Mickey, who made his debut in senior chess, became the highest-rated player to have ever played at this level.

England had a strong contingent of 34 players, the largest delegation of all, and this enabled us to field seven teams: five in the 50+ age group including our Women's team, and two in the 65+ age group.

The 50+ section

Keith Arkell had been privileged to be selected for England's 50+ first team on all eight occasions, sampling the chess on all four boards; so it's fair to say he had a good inside perspective on our journey - one which has seen the team come agonisingly close to winning the gold medal numerous times.

2022 was by no means the first time England had been seeded number 1, but we had never sent such a strong team to the World Championship, largely because we were able to field England's two greatest-ever players - Mickey Adams and Nigel Short. Yes, surprisingly Mickey is now a senior! To complete the team we had Mark Hebden, who is enjoying his best year for some time, team captain John Emms, who plays at a consistently high level, and Keith Arkell, now back to full strength after a couple of years in the doldrums of probable long Covid.

The team spirit was positive and we were all eager to play, so John had a free hand to select four players from five each round.

From the competitive viewpoint there were two factors to consider - match points as a priority and, as a tiebreak, winning by the biggest margin possible.

The event had strength in depth, and we expected tough challenges from Hungary, Italy, Iceland, Georgia and particularly the second seeded team, the USA.

We began with a 4-0 drubbing of the team from Oslo followed by a 3½-½ victory vs England 2, with Glenn Flear doing his team proud by holding Mickey with Black.

Then in round 3 we would face our first stern test. The team from Iceland consisted of the same players as their successful Olympiad side of days gone by. The last time we played them, three years ago, we didn't have the luxury of Mickey and Nigel on the top two boards, but Keith Arkell managed to bring home the bacon in a tactical skirmish v ex-Candidate Hjartarson. This time the mathematician in Keith understood that when you are facing a team of four equally strong GMs, and you are two GMs and two Super GMs, the job of the two GMs is to neutralise boards 3 and 4. For Keith it was therefore sensible to draw quickly with White vs Jon Arnason. Mark held Petursson on board 3, leaving Nigel and Mickey to complete the job, which they duly did. Adams obtained a powerful passed pawn vs Olafsson, finally breaking through in a queen ending, while Short was brutal vs Hjartarson

Notes by Richard Palliser - reproduced with the kind permission of CHESS Magazine.

**Short, N (2617) - Hjartarson, J (2472) [B06]
World Senior Teams 50+ Acqui Terme ITA (3.1),
22.06.2022**

1. e4 g6 Short's set-up against the Modern is reminiscent of one of his most famous games: 1... Nf6 2. e5 Nd5 3. d4 d6 4. Nf3 g6 5. Bc4 Nb6 6. Bb3 Bg7 7. Qe2 Nc6 8. O-O O-O 9. h3 saw White setting up in similar vein in Short-Timman, Tilburg 1991. **2. d4 Bg7 3. Nf3 d6 4. Bc4 Nf6 5. Qe2 O-O 6. e5**



One of the key points behind White's approach, aiming to stifle Black's fianchettoed bishop and counterplay with the bridgehead on e5.

6...dxe5 7. dxe5 Nd5 8. h3 Be6

9. O-O Nd7 10. Re1 c6 11. a4



Maintaining control. Black's set-up is very solid, but also slightly on the passive side.

11... Qc7 12. Bd2 a5 13. Na3 b6 Rather slow and 13... Nc5 14. b3 Rad8 restricted White to an edge in V.Gurevich-Lai, German Bundesliga 2019. **14. c3 Rad8 15. Nc2**

Threatening Ncd4. Black now finds himself facing a choice of evils, with 15...

Nc5 16. Ncd4 Bc8 17. b4 Ne6 18. bxa5 bxa5 19. Qe4 also rather unpleasant for him with Qh4 on the way. **15... c5 16. Na3 Qc8 17. Qe4** The same plan as in the

previous note. With White controlling the queenside, Black is devoid of counterplay and so vulnerable to a kingside attack.

17... Nc7 18. Bg5 Rfe8 19.

Qh4 Bf8 Ugly and the similar 19... Bxc4 20. Nxc4 Bf8 was the lesser evil. **20. Bh6** Straightforward play, but 20. Nb5 would have been very strong, intending to cause chaos on e6, whether with an exchange there or Bxc4 21. Nxc7 Qxc7 22. Qxc4 when e5-e6 will

follow, and if Nb8 23. e6 f6 24. Bxf6. **20... Bxh6 21. Qxh6 Nf8 22. Qh4**



Reminding Black that e7 might easily become weak. Observe how Short isn't in a rush, being content to slowly improve his pieces while keeping Black bottled up. **22... Kg7 23. Ng5 Bxc4 24. Nxc4 h6 25. Nf3 Nd5 26. Rad1 Qc6** Allowing White to break through, but 26... Ne6 27. Qe4 Qc6 28. Ne3 Nec7 29. e6 also would have done, and, if 29... Qxe6 30. Qxe6 fxe6 31. Nc4 Rb8, 32. Nce5 with superb compensation for the pawn. As such, perhaps 26... Qe6 was best, if still clearly better for White after 27. Rd2 Rd7 28. Qe4 Red8 29. h4. **27. e6 fxe6** Hjartarson has largely defended his sub-optimal position well, but now collapses. He was no doubt concerned about 27... Nxe6 28. Nce5 Qc7 29. Nxc6, but better this, then 29... Kxg6 30. Rxd5 Rxd5 31. Qe4+ Kg7 32. Qxd5 or even 27... f5 28. Qg3 Qxa4 29. Nxb6 Nxb6 30. Rxd8 Rxd8 31. Qc7 Qe8 32. Qxb6, than the game. **28. Nfe5 Qxa4 29. Nf7!**



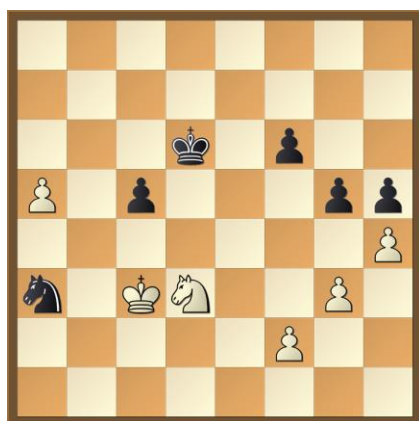
A silent sacrifice and one which the six-time Icelandic Champion had clearly overlooked. **29... g5** Of course, if 29... Kxf7 30. Ne5+ wins the queen and in any case there isn't a defence. **30. Qxh6+ Kxf7 31. Ne5+ Kg8**

32. Qxg5+ Kh7 Likewise, 32... Kh8 33. Qh5+ Nh7 34. Rd3 is devastating. **33. Qh5+ Kg7 34. Rd3 1-0**

In the crucial match versus the USA, Mark Hebden missed the moment to steer his game to a draw, and, in the end, it required exquisite endgame technique from Michael Adams to break the resistance of Gregory Kaidanov and salvage a drawn match, enabling England to maintain the lead on game points:

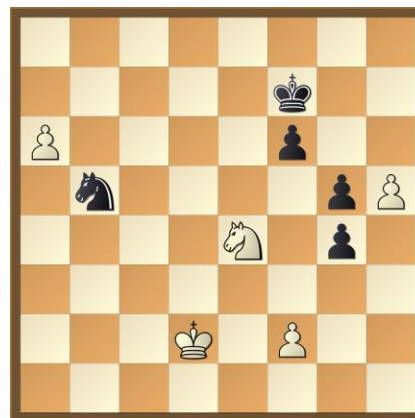
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Adams, M (2690) - Kaidanov, G (2557) [C50]
World Senior Teams 50+ Acqui Terme ITA (4.1),
23.06.2022



Black has just advanced his g-pawn from g6 to deal with the threat of Nf4. Those familiar with the work of Tim Krabbé or the recent articles in CHESS magazine by James Plaskett and Jose Vilela will no doubt now be wondering about 59. g4, but after gxh4 60. gxh5 Nb5+ 61. Kd2 h3 62. f4 h2 63. Nf2 Ke6 Black is in time to draw. As such, Adams prefers another advance...**59. a6**

59... Kd5? ...and is immediately rewarded. 59... Kc6 was correct when even 60. Ne5+ fxe5 61. hxg5 Nb5+ leads to a draw after 62. Kb3 (and not 62. Kd3 Kd5 63. g6 c4+ 64. Ke3 Ke6) 62... Kb6 63. g6 Nd4+ 64. Kc4 Nf5 65. a7 Kxa7 66. Kxc5 Kb7 67. Kd5 Ne7+ or 59... Nb5+ 60. Kc4 Kc6). **60. g4!** Now it works since the black king is outside the square of the a-pawn. **60... Nb5+ 61. Kd2 hxg4** 61... gxh4 62. gxh5 h3 and here even 62... Ke6 63. Nf4+ Kf7 64. Kd3 is an easy win for White. 63. Nf4+ reveals Black's main problem. **62. h5 Ke6 63. Nxc5+ Kf7 64. Ne4**



64... Kg7 The knight also finds a way to defend the h-pawn after 64... f5 65. Nxg5+ Kg7 66. Ne6+ Kh6 67. Nf4 when Kg5 68. Kd3 wins. **65. Kd3 Na7 66. Ng3 Nc8 67. Nf5+ 1-0**

Excellent wins with Black for Mark Hebden and Mickey Adams steered us towards a 3-1 win against Hungary in round 5. Keith even stood slightly worse with White by the time he repeated moves, but the only two half-points he dropped in this competition were against the best individual performers from Iceland and Hungary, so he was happy enough that he was doing his bit for the team.

An off day for Nigel left Mark and Mickey needing their best efforts to edge out a tricky Italian team in Round 6, but then we increased our tiebreak lead to 1½ game points over the USA by winning 3½-½ vs the team from the Netherlands.

Round 8 was very important for deciding the final standings. England were up against the third seeded Georgia while the USA faced Hungary. The Magyars pulled off a 2-2 draw despite defaulting board 4! This meant that if we could beat Georgia we would need only a draw against a significantly weaker team in the last round to win the whole thing. John over-pressed in an unclear endgame and Nigel drew. To win the match Keith needed to beat GM Nona Gaprindashvili, (who was World Champion when Keith was just 12 months old) with Black, and Mickey would have to defeat Keith's perennial rival on the senior tour, Zurab Sturua.

In the end Keith won a scrappy game during which Nona and he both missed things, but at this stage of a competition all that matters is the result! The scene was set for Mickey Adams.

Adams,M (2690) - Sturua,Z (2530) [C42] World Senior Teams 50+ Acqui Terme ITA (8.2), 28.06.2022

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nf3 Nxe4 5. Nc3 Nxc3 6. dxc3 Be7 7. Be3



An aggressive set-up against the Petroff, not least when Black opts to castle kingside. **7...Nd7 8. Qd2 O-O 9. O-O-O c6 10. Kb1 d5 11. h4** Adams wastes no time in launching his attack. **11... Nf6 12. Bd3 Bg4 13. Rde1**



A new idea, placing the rook on the open file while unpinning the knight. **13... c5 14. Ng5 b5** A tempting advance, but it's not so easy to get at the white king with that extra queenside pawn on c3. As such, Black should probably have stayed calm with 14... Bd6 15. f3 Bd7 16. g4 Qc7, and if 17. h5 Rae8 18. h6 g6, threatening to break through with ...d4. **15. f3 Bd7 16. g4 Rc8 17. Bf4**



17. h5 d4 was presumably Black's idea, but after **18. cxd4 c4 19. h6 g6 (19... cxd3 20. hxg7 dxc2+ 21. Kc1 Kxg7 22. d5 wins) 20. Be4 c3 21. Qd3 cxb2 22. d5** White's king is safe enough and he should be doing pretty well. Instead, in classic fashion, Adams calmly improves a piece while preparing to target h7 after Be5. **17... Re8?** The decisive mistake. Black needed to find **17... c4. 18. Be5 h6 (18... cxd3 19. Qxd3 g6 20. h5** is simply far too strong an attack, followed by **Nxh7** or **Be8 21. f4**), although even after **19. Bf5 Bxf5 20. gxf5 Bc5 21. Qg2** he would have remained under heavy pressure. **18. Be5 h6 19. Qf4**



More simple and very strong chess, keeping the queen in touch with h2 while threatening **20 Bh7+**! Alternatively, **19. Nxf7 Kxf7 20. g5** would also have been pretty strong. **19... Qb6** Black had nothing better than to allow the threat as if **19... hxg5 \$2 20. hxg5** followed by **Qh2. 20. Bh7+ Kf8** Naturally not **20... Nxh7 21. Qxf7+ Kh8 22. Qxg7#** and **20... Kh8 21. Bf5 Bxf5 22. Nxf7+ Kg8 23. Nxh6+ gxh6 24. Qxf5 Nh7 25. g5 h5 26. Bf4** would also have been a massacre. **21. Bf5** Once again, a very good case might also be made for **21. Nxf7 Kxf7 22. g5 21... Bxf5 22. Qxf5 g6** There's still no time for **22... hxg5 23. hxg5,**

and if g6 24. Qf4 Ng8 25. Bg7+ Kxg7 26. Rh7+ Kxh7 27. Qxf7+. **23.Qf4 Kg8 24. b3!**



Yet more vintage Adams, making a useful prophylactic move, while giving Black every chance to go wrong. The text is strong, although the engines are undoubtedly right that so too would have been 24. Nxf7 Kxf7 25. h5.

24... Rc6 (24... Qc6 25. Re2 would have maintained the pressure, but now even Adams is content to strike. **25. h5 hxg5** (25... gxh5 fails to 26.gxh5 hxg5 27. Qxg5+ Kh7 28. Bxf6 Rxf6 (or 28... Bxf6 29. Qf5+ Kh6 30. Rxe8)

29. Reg1. **26. Qxg5 Nxh5** Hopeless, but so would have been 26... Nh7 27.hxg6 Rxg6 28. Qh5. **27. Qh6 Bf6 28. Bxf6 Rxe1+ 29. Rxe1 Nxf6 30. Rh1** The open h-file remains decisive. **30... Nh7 31. Qxh7+ Kf8 32. Qh6+ Ke8 33. Qg5!** Maintaining the pressure and threatening to round up the d-pawn. **33...Rd6** There's no respite for the exposed black king and now 33... d4 34. Re1+ Re6 35. Rxe6+ Qxe6 36. cxd4 cxd4 37. Qxb5+ would also be an easy win. **34.Qe5+ Re6 35. Rh8+ Ke7 36. Qg5+ Rf6 37. Qxd5 b4 38. Rc8 bxc3 39. Qe5+ Re6 40. Qxc3** We see the point of Adams' 24.b3, as White goes a safe pawn up and still has all the threats. **40... Rc6 41. Qe5+** The c5 pawn drops and Black's position is hopeless.



Keith had to excuse himself for the last round, because the rather large sty under his left eye was playing up, but he had faith in his teammates to carry us over the line against a Canadian side rated about 300 points less than us on each board. Adams won by default on board 1 against former England Glorney Cup player, David Cummings, and we cruised to a 3½-½ win.

In the end, it's fair to say that we thoroughly dominated the event. A record four of the team gained individual gold medals for the best performance on our respective boards - Mickey Adams, Nigel Short, Mark Hebden and Keith Arkell, with Mickey and Keith remaining undefeated.

On behalf of the team, Keith would like to conclude by thanking the organisers of the event, the selectors for their wisdom in bringing together a nicely balanced team, captain John Emms for conducting a potentially difficult job exceptionally well, and Nigel Povah who did so much to help assemble such a strong team.



England Women 50+

England Women also won the Women's World Over 50 Championship. England's Women's team was headed up by WGM Sheila Jackson and achieved some notable successes in the Open competition against Norway and Poland in particular.

In round 4 they met the powerful Icelandic team, comprising four grandmasters, and although they went down 4-0 they weren't without chances, as the following encounter on board one shows.

Jackson,S (2072) - Hjartarson,J (2472)
World Senior Team 50+ Championship, Acqui Terme
(4.1), 23.06.2022 [Notes by Nigel Povah]



In this position GM Johann Hjartarson stands slightly better but here he blundered with 18...Rad8? (18...Be6!=/+ was best) and Sheila failed to spot her opportunity to get the advantage against her GM opponent who was rated 400 points above her, playing 19.Rd1?! and after the subsequent exchange of rooks on the d-file Black went on to win. Instead Sheila could have played 19.Nxg7! Kxg7 20.Qxf6+! Kxf6 21.Nd5+ Kg7 22.Nxc7+/- when White has won a pawn and clearly stands better.



Natasha Regan, Ingrid Lauterbach, Petra Nunn and Sheila Jackson

The 65+ section

As already mentioned, England 65+ 1 was led superbly by John Nunn, who was making his over-65 debut and did so in spectacular style, scoring an undefeated 6½/7 with a performance rating of 2719.

England 1 started off with a 2½-1½ victory over England 2, after Tony Stebbings slipped up in an unbalanced but

level position against Kevin Bowmer, who didn't hesitate to pounce. In round 2 England 1 had a convincing 3½-½ win over a German team, S.C. Kreuzberg, with Paul Littlewood having a good win on board 2.

Littlewood, Paul E (2342) - Simon, Ralf-Axel (2115)
[B95]

World Senior Team 65+ Championship, Acqui Terme
(2.2), 21.06.2022 [Notes by Paul Littlewood]



I had managed to build up a very dominant position and now my opponent makes a fatal error, moving the wrong rook to **20.Qg3** d8 **20...Rad8??** 20...Rfd8 prevents the 21.N4f5 tactic, as Black has 21...exf5 22.Nxf5 Qf8. However, White is still well on top after 21.Nxc6 bxc6 22.Rc3+- with a clear advantage, as the c-pawn will drop. **21.N4f5!** Black will end up losing his queen or allowing mate on g7 **1-0**

In round 3 we met Germany 2, who proved to be stronger than their ratings suggested, and we were held to a 2-2 draw, with all four games being drawn. Then, in round 4 we faced Germany 1, the third seeds, just behind ourselves and we had a convincing win by the score 3½-½.

John Nunn won an important game on board one against the strong German GM Rainer Knaak.

Knaak, Rainer (2479) - Nunn, John D M (2568) [E73]
World Senior Team 65+ Championship, Acqui Terme
(4.1), 23.06.2022 [Notes by John Nunn]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Be3 A rather unusual system which aims to gain space on the kingside before developing the knight on g1. **6...e5** 6...c5 is an alternative line. **7.d5 a5?!** The most commonly played move, but possibly inaccurate since White can now chase away the knight from f6

without having to spend a move defending the e4-pawn. 7...Na6 8.g4 Nc5 is better, since now White must spend a tempo on 9.f3 or 9.Bf3. **8.g4 Na6 9.g5 Nd7 10.h4** This position should be good for White, since he has already made substantial progress on the kingside while Black lacks immediate counter-play. **10...f5 11.gxf6 Nxf6 12.h5 Nc5** 12...gxh5 13.Bxh5 Nc5 14.f3 Nxh5 15.Rxh5 also favours White, since he has an obvious plan of Qd2, 0-0-0 and switching the queen and d1-rook to the kingside. **13.hxg6 hxg6** I thought about 13...Nfxe4 but after 14.Nxe4 Nxe4 15.gxh7+ Kh8 16.Nf3, with Nh4 to come, Black's position looks very unattractive. **14.Bf3** By now I was regretting not thinking longer about my seventh move, since it is clear that Black doesn't have a great deal of counter-play. **14...Kf7**: an innovation, and probably a good chance, aiming to gain control of the h-file before White can complete his development. **15.Nh3 Bxh3** Black's good bishop disappears, but the knight cannot be allowed to land on g5. **16.Rxh3 Qd7** 16...Rh8 is less risky, since now 17.Rxh8 (17.Rg3? Bh6 is fine for Black) 17...Qxh8 18.Ke2 Bh6 19.Bxc5 dxc5 20.Qb3 b6 21.Rh1 Kg7 gives White only a modest advantage. **17.Rg3 Rh8 18.Qd2 Rh3** This was the idea behind my 16th move, but there is a flaw. **19.0-0-0** 19.Bg4! is obviously critical; then grabbing material by 19...Rxd3, so I intended to play 19...Qxg4 20.Rxg4 Nxd3 21.0-0-0 Rxd3 22.Rg1 Nxe3 23.fxe3 Bf6 when Black has chances to set up a fortress despite White's material advantage. 20.Bxd7 Rg1+ 21.Ke2 Rxa1 22.Be6+ Nxe6 23.dxe6+ Kxe6 24.c5! gives White too strong an attack. **19...Rxd3 20.fxd3 Rh8** White may still have an edge but Black has survived the most dangerous moment; note that if Black manages to play ...Bh6 he will be completely safe **21.Kb1 b6 22.Rf1 Kg8 23.Bg5 Qh3!**



Suddenly Black becomes ambitious 23...Nh7 24.Be3 Nf6 would have led to a repetition. **24.Qf2?!** I had to calculate 24.Bg2 carefully, since it temporarily wins a

piece, but Black has a choice between the drawish 24...Nfxe4 (or the sharper 24...Qxg3!? 25.Bxf6 Rh2 26.Qg5 Qxg2 27.Qxg2 Rxg2 28.Bd8 Na6 which gives Black chances to play for a win). 25.Nxe4 Nxe4 26.Qc2 Qxg3 27.Bxe4 Qxg5 28.Bxg6 Rh4; 24.Qe1! was the best chance, with perhaps still a slight edge for White. **24...Nd3 25.Qg1** 25.Qe2 Qxg3 and; 25.Qg2 Qxg2 26.Bxg2 Rh2 are just bad, so this is forced. **25...Ng4!?** Again playing to win; 25...Qh2 is dead equal. **26.Bxg4** 26.Be2 Nh2 27.Bxd3 Nxf1 28.Bxf1 Qh1 29.Be3 Rh2 is unclear. **26...Qxg4 27.Qe3 Nc5?!** Time shortage starts to play a part; objectively speaking, this is going a bit too far with Black's winning attempts 27...Rh3 28.Qxd3 Qxg5 29.Rg1 Bh6 30.Nb5 is level. **28.Bh4?!** 28.Qf2! Qd7 29.Be3 gives White some advantage. **28...Rh5** Threatening ...g5. **29.Bd8 Qd7 30.Bg5?** Now it all goes wrong for White, since Black is not obliged to repeat moves: 30.Bh4 would have maintained the balance. **30...Qh3!** driving the rook away from its active position on the open f-file. **31.Re1 Qg4** White is in serious trouble since he no longer has the possibility of doubling on the f-file. **32.Bd8 Bh6 33.Qe2 Qxg3 34.Bxc7?** loses at once, but even 34.Qd1 Be3 35.Bxc7 Nd3 gives Black a large advantage. **34...Rh2 35.Qd1 Rd2 0-1**

Nigel Povah also managed to register an important win in the following interesting game.

Kiefer, Gerhard (2212) - Povah, N (2201) [B15], World Senior Team 65+ Championship, Acqui Terme (4.3), 22.06.2022 [Notes by Nigel Povah]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.Qc2 Re8+ 9.Ne2 h5 A currently fashionable line in the Classical Caro-Kann. Black saves his h-pawn but plays aggressively, with the option of using 'Harry' as a weapon. **10.Bd2** This move surprised me, as I was expecting the main line move 10.Be3, which he had played before in at least two games. So I spent a few minutes trying to determine how this might be different in the lines I had been examining. For example, it would rule out the ...Rxe3 possibilities and might allow him to play c4 and Bc3. In any event I decided to continue as planned. **10...Nd7 11.0-0-0 b5** 11...Nf8 is the main move after 10.Be3 and it is here too, but I chose to play more directly. **12.Kb1 12.d5!?** is the recommended move against 10.Be3 but here it is less effective: 12...c5 13.Bxb5 Rb8 when the best move 14.c4 is not available due to ...Rxe2 14.Bd3 Ne5=+/; 12.Ng3! Nb6 13.Rde1 favours White. **12...Nb6= 13.Bf4?!** This came as a real surprise, as it now means that Bd2 and Be3 are no different and it allows me to

win two pieces for a rook. **13...Be6-/+** I spent some time looking at the 13...Rxe2 line and also 13...Nd5 but then thought it made more sense to continue developing and to follow my plan of attacking on the light squares. Stockfish prefers 13...Rxe2 14.Qxe2 Bxf4 15.Qxh5 Bh6-+ but I didn't like 16.g3 with f4 to follow and my bishop is shut out of the game: 16...Be6 17.f4 Qd7; 13...Nd5 14.Bxd6 Qxd6 15.Ng3 Nf4-/+ is also good. **14.Bxd6 Qxd6 15.Ng3?+/-** This misplaces the knight and ignores the growing threats against his queenside. 15.g3-/+ **15...Qd5 16.b3 a5** The thematic advance, threatening to soften up his light squares with ...a4. **17.Nf1**. He decides his Ng3 isn't doing much, so chooses to re-route it to e3 17.Ne4 a4-+. **17...a4!** Sticking to my plan and intending to grab the g-pawn, as tactics rule out his Be4. **18.b4 Qxg2-+** Stockfish now gives this as -4. **19.Ne3** Not 19.Be4? Qxe4! 20.Qxe4 Bxa2+ 21.Kxa2 Rxe4-+. **19...Qf3 20.Rhg1 h4** Harry does a useful job of preventing Rg3. **21.Ka1?** White tries to tee up the Be4 threat but this runs into another tactic. **21...Bb3!** Now it's -5. **22.Qd2** Clearly not 22.axb3 axb3+-+. **22...Bxd1 23.Nf5!** This came as a bit of a surprise, as he goes on the counter-attack and I now have to be very careful to avoid getting caught in a mating net. **23...Kf8!** By far the best way of dealing with his threats. 23...Qg4?? looks like a way of avoiding trouble and keeping the advantage but it loses to the clever and unobvious 24.Nh6+!! (24.Rxg4? Bxg4-+) 24...gxh6 25.Qxh6! with mate to follow on f7 due to Bh7+ etc. **24.Rxd1**



After a long think he rejects the captures on g7. I was expecting 24.Rxg7 when I had seen two reasonable continuations, including one which involved a mate in 8! 24...Bc2! I particularly liked this clever move which is Stockfish's second choice at -4 (24...Qh5!; this move, which prevents White's two threats of Qh6 and Rh7 was the more obvious move and is best, with Stockfish giving it -5.6 but I was less keen because of 25.Qf4! Rad8 26.Qc7 but now again we have the clever 26...Bc2!-+ 27.Bxc2 (27.Qxb6 Qd1+ 28.Kb2

Qb1+ 29.Ka3 Qc1#) 27...Re1+ 28.Bb1 (28.Kb2 Nc4#) 28...Rxb1+ 29.Kxb1 Qd1+ 30.Kb2 Nc4#); (24...Qxf5? 25.Bxf5 Kxg7 26.Qxd1+/=) 25.Rh7 when I'm pleased I saw a mate in 8! (25.Rg1 best: 25...Re6 26.Qh6+ Ke8-+ and White is in big trouble: 25.Bxc2 Qh1+ 26.Bb1 Re1 27.Qd3 Nd5 28.Rh7 Ke8 29.Rh8+ Kd7 30.Rxa8 Nxc3-+; 25.Qxc2 Re1+ 26.Kb2 Nc4+ 27.Bxc4 a3+ 28.Kb3 bxc4+ 29.Kxc4 Qd5+ 30.Kd3 Qxf5+ 31.Kc4 Qb5+ 32.Kb3 Qd5+ 33.c4 Qf3+ 34.Qc3 Rb1+ 35.Kc2 Qd1#) 25...Qh1+ 26.Kb2 Qb1+ 27.Ka3 Qb3+! 28.axb3 axb3+ 29.Kb2 Ra2+ 30.Kc1 Ra1+ 31.Kb2 Rb1+ 32.Ka3 Ra8#. **24...g5!** Defending h4 and ruling out Qh6. **25.Ne3 Rad8 26.Bf1 Qf4 27.Bg2 Nd5 28.Bxd5 Rxd5!** I wanted to keep my queenside pawn structure intact and I knew the rook and pawn ending would be an easy win. **29.Nxd5?!** Although this wins material, it makes the finish very easy for Black. **29...Qxd2 30.Rxd2 cxd5 31.Kb2 Re1 32.h3 Ke7 33.Ka3** He was clearly hoping to engineer a stalemate: **33...f5 34.c4 dxc4 35.f4 Re3+** Ruling out any stalemate hopes and, more importantly, winning his rook with ...c3+ next, so he resigned. **0-1**

Meanwhile Paul Littlewood had an exciting and somewhat fortunate finish to his game.

Littlewood, Paul E (2342) - Chevelevitch, Evgueni (2369) [E92]
World Senior Team 65+ Championship, Acqui Terme (4.2), 23.06.2022 [Notes by Paul Littlewood]



46.dxc6 We reach an interesting position where I have just captured on c6 and now my opponent played the clever and critical **46...Qd1!** **47.cxb7+ Be6**. 47...Kg5 fails to 48.Rg6+, a key line clearance. 48...Kxg6 49.b8Q Qxf1+ when I'm saved by 50.Qg1 with a winning position. **48.Rxe6+ Kxe6 49.Qa6+ Kd7 50.Qb5+ Kd6??** Foolishly allowing me to promote with check. 50...Ke6! when Black has enough resources to

draw, e.g. 51.c5 gxf3 52.g3 Rb8=. **51.b8Q+** It's all over, as after 51...Rxb8 52.Qxb8+, White will be able to bring his queen back via either Qa7/Qb6+ and then Qf2 or Qb5+ followed by c5. **1-0**

In round 5 we faced another one of our key rivals and joint leaders, France, and we managed a close 2½-1½ victory, thanks to another win from John Nunn on board 1 and Tony Stebbings' opponent allowing a strong mating attack.

In round 6 we beat Israel 2 by 3-1 thanks to wins from John and Paul on the top two boards, with the latter's being a particularly crushing victory.

Littlewood,P (2342) - Peretz,M (2139) [B30]
World Senior Team 65+ Championship, Acqui Terme
(6.2), 26.06.2022 [Notes by Paul Littlewood]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 A surprise. I had prepared for 2...Nc6. Bearing that in mind I chose not to play the sharpest response 3.e5. **3.Nc3 Nc6 4.Bb5 Nd4 5.e5 Nxb5 6.Nxb5 Nd5** The first critical position. Mark Hebden told me that he had played 7.Ng5! in a game in the 1980s and this was regarded as best. Instead, I chose a quieter line. **7.0-0 a6 8.Nc3 e6?** And my opponent immediately makes a mistake. Best was 8...Nxc3 9.dxc3 d6 10.exd6 Qxd6 11.Qe2 when White is fractionally better because of his lead in development, although Black does have the bishop pair. **9.Nxd5 exd5 10.d4 d6?** 10...c4 11.b3 b5 12.a4 Bb7 13.Ng5 h6 14.Nh3 Be7 15.axb5 axb5 16.Rxa8 Qxa8 17.f4+/- and although White isn't winning any material yet, he's in full control. **11.Bg5+-** Black is in big trouble because the natural ...Be7 loses a pawn and he must now lose further time moving his queen. **11...Qb6 11...Be7?** 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.dxc5 and the d5 pawn drops. **12.dxc5 Qxc5 13.Re1 Be6 14.Nd4** With tremendous pressure for White, so in desperation Black tries **14...Kd7**



but then I had a strong finish with **15.b4!** deflecting the black queen from the defence of e7. **15...Qc4** When White now invades the Black position. 15...Qc7 is well met by 16.c4! with a winning attack. **16.Nxe6 fxe6 17.Qf3 dxe5 18.Rxe5 Bd6 19.Qf7+ Kc6 20.Rxe6 Rhf8 21.Rxd6+ Kxd6 22.Be7+ 1-0**

At the start of round 7, England 1 led on 11 match points, with Germany 1 on 10, Hungary on 9, Israel 1 on 8 and Switzerland on 8. We were paired against a dangerous Hungary side, who had already defeated top seeds Israel 1 by 3½-½ and the useful Germany 2 by 2½-1½, so we knew this could be tricky if we weren't careful. Fortunately, once again John delivered a solid and impressive victory on board one, whilst Paul, Nigel and Ian all managed to draw, allowing us to win by 2½-1½.

In round 8 we were on 13 match points, still one match point ahead of Germany 1 and four match points ahead of third placed Switzerland, whom we were paired against. However, Covid intervened and three of the Swiss team had to default, but the Swiss proposed a one-board match against their healthy board one. We contested this, quoting the FIDE Olympiad regulations which state that it needs to be two boards to be valid and we tried to claim a 4-0 victory by default, but the chief arbiter and the Swiss captain argued that the top board game should be allowed to go ahead. After much discussion, John, who by this stage was quite distracted by the whole controversy of playing such a pointless match, not to mention the concern that his opponent had been mixing with team-mates who now had Covid, proposed that he would rather default board 1 and we be granted a 3-1 victory, with none of the results being rated, and this was finally agreed.

Meanwhile our main rivals, Germany 1, were paired with Germany 2 and much to our surprise and delight, Germany 2 showed themselves to be real fighters, just as we had found when we only managed a 2-2 draw with them, and they managed to beat Germany 1 by 2½-1½. So we became World Champions in round 8 without even moving a pawn!

Round 9 was obviously a bit of an anti-climax and we were paired against the top seeds, Israel 1, who had now climbed back up the leader board and stood to secure bronze if they could defeat us. John wanted a rest after having had a very tough string of games and so for the first time we didn't field our top two. A tough match ensued in which we succumbed by 1½-2½.

The final top standings were -

1. England 15 match points (24 game points)
2. Germany 13 (20½)
3. Israel 12 (22½)
4. Germany 2 12 (21½)
5. France 12 (20½)
6. Hungary 11 (20½)

England 2 finished 13th (they were seeded 12th) with 8 match points and 19 game points, with Kevin Bowmer and Peter Wood being their best two performers.



John Nunn, Tony Stebbings, Nigel Povah, Ian Snape, Paul Littlewood

In conclusion, this was a most successful event for English chess. England last won a World team title in 1978, when we won the World U26 team championship title. and as Stewart Reuben said to me, he had been waiting for a long time for another such success and, a bit like London buses, not one came along but two and in this case three!

It is also worth noting that England is the first nation to have won both Seniors age groups simultaneously.

Thanks are also due to those who kindly made donations to help support our ambitions in this event. They include the ECF, the Chess Trust, the Friends of Chess and numerous individuals, including many of the players, with specific thanks to Nigel Povah, Stewart Reuben, Nigel White, Natasha Regan and Chris Gant for their generous donations. A big 'thank you' to them all, as none of this would have been possible without their support.

Finally, we'd like to conclude by mentioning that we had stated on the Seniors page of the ECF website that the England teams were competing in Acqui Terme in memory of David Anderton, who had been a wonderful servant for English chess and we think we can all agree that we did him proud.

However, we would like to go further and dedicate this success to Stewart Reuben, who has undoubtedly made one of the largest contributions to the development of English chess for over 50 years and most recently seniors chess, where he is of course the architect of the English seniors chess scene. This is his last year in charge of English seniors chess and we're absolutely delighted that we have been able to give him this send-off.

Final scores for the English players were as follows -

England 50+ 1: 1. Mickey Adams (7/8); 2. Nigel Short (6½/9); 3. Mark Hebden (6½/8); 4. John Emms (3½/6); 5. Keith Arkell (4/5)

England 50+ 2: 1. Glenn Flear (5½/9); 2. Steve Dishman (2½/6); 3. Chris Duncan (3/8) 4. Russell Granat (5½/7) 5. Clive Frostick (3½/6)

England 50+ 3: 1. Chris Fegan (3/7); 2. Nigel White (3½/6); 3. Stephen Homer (3/7); 4. Edgar Wilson (3/6); 5. Bill Ingham (2/6)

England 50 + 4: 1. John Hickman (3/7); 2. Bob Kane (2/7); 3. Kevin Winter (2/5); 4. Rob Merriman (1/7); 5. Matthew Ball (2/6)

England 50+ Women: 1. Sheila Jackson (2½/8); 2. Ingrid Lauterbach (4½/8); 3. Natasha Regan (3/8); 4. Petra Nunn (3½/8)

England 65+ 1: 1. John Nunn (6½/7); 2. Paul Littlewood (6½/9); 3. Tony Stebbings (3½/6); 4. Nigel Povah (3/6); 5. Ian Snape (4½/7)

England 65+ 2: 1. Mark Page (4/8); 2. Geoff James (3½/8); 3. Kevin Bowmer (5/7); 4. Stewart Reuben (1/5); 5. Peter R. Wood (5½/8)

Board prizes

England players won seven of the 30 board prizes on offer.

Mickey Adams, Nigel Short, Mark Hebden and Keith Arkell all won the gold medal board prizes for their boards in the 50+.

In the 65+ section, John Nunn and Paul Littlewood both won the gold medal board prizes, whilst Ian Snape won the silver medal for board 5.

FEATURES

Michael Adams' Game of the Month



This month I am annotating a game by Chris Ross, Britain's strongest ever visually impaired player. This game is included in his enjoyable book **Blind Faith**, published by Steel City Press, which has been featured in a previous issue of *ChessMoves*. The book is a

personal account of his own games, with the emphasis on general commentary, capturing his own thoughts and feelings during the game. It's an easy read with several humorous touches.

As Chris mentions in his introduction, he didn't use a computer for his own annotations. I initially approached my notes here in the same way and point out in my comments where the machine intruded later on. Analysing a game in this rigorous manner reminds us how a ream of computer lines can hopelessly fail to connect with the over the board experience. I felt Chris had been a bit over-optimistic overall in his comments, but the computer is much more sceptical. However, this doesn't really reflect the struggle in practice, where Black had a hard time coping with the complexities.

C.Ross – J.Dannenberg

Woodhouse Cup 2012

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Bd3 Nc6 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.c4 Nf6 8.0-0 Not 8.e5? Qa5+.

8...d5 8...e5 is another option to contest the centre.



9.Nd2 White can try to use his lead in development instead with 9.cxd5. Now 9...cxd5 10.exd5 Nxd5 11.Nc3 Nxc3 12.bxc3 is quite dangerous, or 10...Qxd5 11.Nc3. The IQP proved problematic for Black in the famous game Fischer,R - Petrosian,T Buenos Aires 1971 which continued 10...exd5 11.Nc3 Be7 12.Qa4+ Qd7 13.Re1 Qxa4 14.Nxa4.

The computer suggests the unexpected 9.Qa4 as an alternative, with ideas of 9...Bd7 10.e5, or 9...dxe4 10.Bxe4 Nxe4 11.Qxc6+ Bd7 12.Qxe4.

9...Be7 10.Qc2 10.e5 Nd7 11.Re1 is standard here, but Chris tries a different plan, keeping more flexibility in White's structure.

10...h6 11.b3 0-0 12.Bb2 a5 13.cxd5 I would have preferred 13.Nf3, or 13.Rad1. Here, it is a long-term problem for Black to find a role for the bishop on c8, with a lot of pawns blocking it in. Once the c-pawns are swapped, Black will have an easier time completing development.

13...cxd5 14.e5 This feels inconsistent with White's earlier play - the pawn will impede White's fianchettoed bishop. As Black's structure is solid, and his king well defended, White needs to maximise piece activity.

14...Nd7



15.Rfc1 Chris astutely points out that his intended 15.Qc6 is well met by 15...Bb7! 16.Qxb7 Nc5 17.Qb5 Rb8, regaining the bishop. An important detail to realise at the board. The rook move enables White to be first to control the only open file, but with plenty of dynamic features in the position, this is not so important.

15...Nc5 The thematic 15...Ba6 was my instinct - developing and offering a swap is a better idea. If 16.Bxa6 Rxa6 17.Qc7 Bg5! drives White backwards. The alternative 15...a4!? was also interesting, undermining White's queenside: 16.bxa4 (16.Qc6 Ra5) 16...Nc5 17.Bb5 Bd7 regains the pawn.

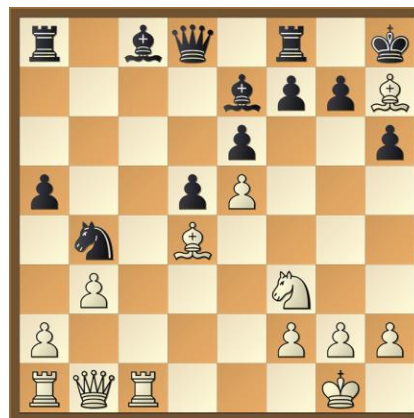
16.Bh7+ White's plan over the next few moves isn't endorsed by the machine, but practically it is pretty interesting. First, the bishop is moved away with check, and then Black's knight is driven backwards.

16...Kh8 17.Bd4 Na6 I considered 17...Ba6? but the computer points out the tactical flaw, after 18.Bxc5 Rc8 the neat 19.b4! (19.Bxe7 Qxe7 works out OK) 19...axb4 20.Bxe7 Qxe7 21.Qa4 wins material.

18.Nf3 Moving another piece towards the kingside, but without any targets in that sector of the board there is little danger, and White's bishop and queen are awkwardly placed. Ideally, their positions on the diagonal would be reversed.

18...Nb4 The very hard to see 18...Ba3! 19.Re1 Nb4 20.Qb1 Ba6 is very strong - Black's pieces control all the key squares from the edge of the board.

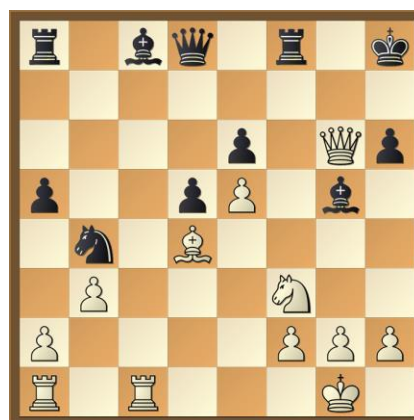
19.Qb1



19...g6 Chris mentions that he plans to expel the knight with a3, but 19...Bd7! is a good way to counter this, developing a piece and preparing an exit route, as 20.a3 Nc6 is fine for Black. This is a key practical moment. This developing continuation is very safe for Black. In the game, although Black wins material, once his monarch is exposed White's play is much easier.

20.Bxg6 fxe6 21.Qxg6 White has two pawns and a dangerous initiative for the sacrificed piece.

21...Bg5



22.Be3 I felt 22.h4! should be the right continuation here, although I didn't see the correct follow-up. 22...Bxc1 (22...Bf4 23.a3! (23.Be3 Bxe3 24.fxe3 Ra7 gives White the helpful extra move h4, but Black is still better.) 23...Na6 24.Rc3 keeps good compensation: g3 will inconvenience the black bishop in the future.) 23.Rxc1 Qd7! Importantly, the bishop on d4 prevents Ra7 defences. 24.Qxh6+ Kg8 25.a3! (25.Ng5? My idea, but 25...Qg7 26.Qh5 Nd3! Is a great defensive concept: 27.Rxc8 Raxc8 28.Nxe6 Nf4 and White is running out of ammo - 29.Nxg7 Nxh5 30.Nxh5 Rc1+ 31.Kh2 Rd1 and Black's passed pawn will be a factor.) 25...Na6 (25...Nc6 26.Qg6+ Kh8 27.Rc3 Bb7 28.Ng5 Nxd4 29.Qh5+ Kg8 30.Rg3 Qg7 31.Nh7 Ne2+ 32.Qxe2 Kxh7 33.Rxg7+ Kxg7 leaves material roughly balanced,

but White's queen will make hay in this type of position with Black's king open to checks.) 26.Ng5! Now Black's knight is sidelined this is much more dangerous. Qg7 27.Qh5 Bd7 28.Rc3 keeps good attacking chances after the rook lands on g3. Some sample lines: 28...Rf5 (28...Be8 29.Qd1 Qg6 30.Rg3 Kh8 31.h5 Qf5 32.Qc1 Bxh5 33.Rh3) 29.Rg3 Nc7 30.Be3 d4 (30...Be8 31.Nxe6! Rxh5 (31...Nxe6 32.Qxf5) 32.Rxg7+ Kh8 33.Rxc7) 31.Bxd4 Nd5 32.Qe2 Kh8 33.Nxe6.

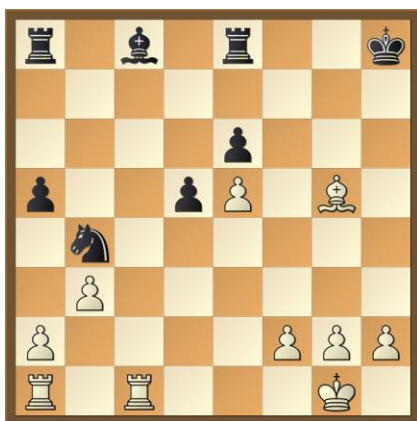
Chris mentions 22.a3 as an alternative, when 22...Na6 is the best response.

22...Qe8 I thought 22...Bxe3 23.fxe3 Ra7 was best; bringing this unemployed piece to the kingside is very sound. The rook is useful covering the second rank. 24.Qxh6+ Rh7 25.Qg5! (25.Qg6? Rxf3! 26.gxf3 Rg7) 25...Qxg5 26.Nxg5 Rh5 leaves White struggling in the endgame.

Chris mentions 22...Rg8!?, when he intended 23.Qf7; 23...Rg7! is a good reply, though (23...Bxe3 24.Rc7! (24.fxe3? Bd7)) 24.Qh5 (24.Bxg5 hxg5 25.Qh5+ Kg8) 24...Bxe3 25.fxe3 Kh7. Not 23.Bxg5, when Qxg5! is the only move, but a very good one.

Instead, 23.Qh5! is better: 23...Bxe3 24.fxe3 Kh7 (24...Ra7 25.a3 Na6 26.Qxh6+ Rh7 27.Qf6+) 25.h4!.

23.Qxe8 Rxe8 24.Nxg5 hxg5 25.Bxg5 The opposite-coloured bishops favour the attacker in this endgame. White will plant the bishop on f6 with check and advance the kingside passers. Black has trumps as well, but due to the exposed king the position is very difficult to handle in practice.

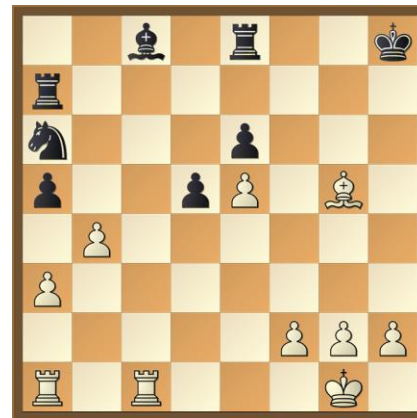


25...Ra7 25...Kg8 26.Rc7! (26.a3? Nd3 27.Rc7 Nxe5) 26...Ba6 27.Bf6 looks deadly, but 27...Rab8! intending Rb7 hangs on: (27...Rac8? 28.Rg7+ Kf8 29.h4) 28.Rac1

Rec8. The machine also considers 25...Kh7 26.Rc7+ Kg6 27.Bf6 Rg8 possible, although this looks equally scary.

26.a3 Na6 26...Nd3 was safer. 27.Rc3 Ba6 28.Rd1 Rb7 29.Rcxd3 Bxd3 30.Rxd3 Reb8 simplifies matters.

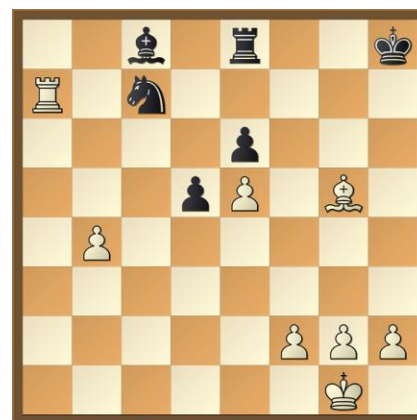
27.b4! Mobilising the queenside pawns and angling to get the rook on a1 into the game; this is not at all easy to counter.



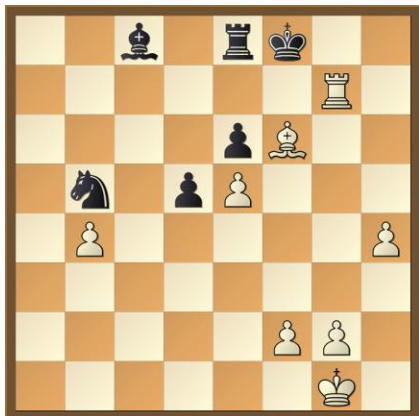
27...axb4 27...Nc7?! 28.Be3! Rb7 29.bxa5 isn't good. 27...Bd7! was a clever idea; after 28.bxa5 Rb7 Black's minor pieces cover entry squares on the c-line, and he can activate his own rooks on the b-file.

28.axb4 Rc7 If 28...Rf7 29.Rxc8! Rxc8 30.Rxa6 is good. The bishop covers the back rank. To human eyes the pin on the a-file needs resolving, but the machine points out 28...Bd7! as the best try.

29.Rxc7 Nxc7 30.Ra7 White's other rook enters the game with a vengeance.



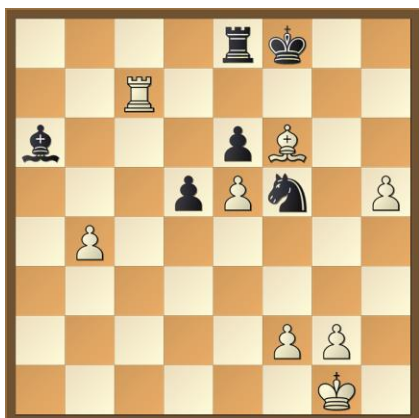
30...Nb5 31.Bf6+ Kg8 32.Rg7+ Kf8 33.h4



33...Nd4 Chris gives the line 33...d4! which is the only chance. Black desperately needs a distraction. If 34.h5 d3! 35.Rg3, White collects the d-pawn, but there is a saving try: 35...Nc3! 36.Rxd3 Ne2+ 37.Kh2 Nf4 38.Rf3 Nxe5 39.Bg5+ Kg7! 40.g4 Kg6.

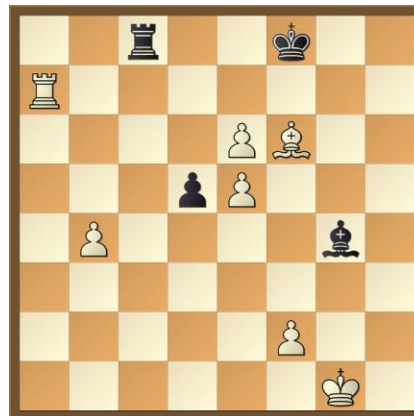
The stronger 34.Kh2! shows how few useful moves Black has: 34...d3 35.Rg3 Bb7 36.Rxd3 leaves Black fighting a multitude of foot soldiers.

34.h5 Nf5 35.Rc7 Ba6 White's last move, keeping an eye on Black's bishop, prevented 35...Ne7 36.Bxe7+.



36.g4 Rc8 36...Nh6 37.Bg7+ wins the knight. The only hope, 36...Ne7! 37.h6 Bd3, temporarily halts the h-pawn. However, White can choose between the decoy 38.b5 or the interruption 38.f4 d4 39.f5 exf5 40.h7.

37.Ra7 Be2 38.gxf5 Bxe5 39.fxe6 Bg4 Or 39...d4 40.Rh7.



40.Rf7+ Ke8 41.Rg7! The final finesse, collecting the bishop.

41...Bxe6 42.Re7+

1-0

Maintaining Chess Strength

Peter Wells contemplates an age-old problem and finds room for optimism



We are constantly reminded these days that top chess players are becoming younger and younger, perhaps spurred on by the increasing use of powerful engines to generate complex and very concrete opening theory which naturally benefits those whose memories are in peak condition. We have just witnessed a new generation breaking through at the level of the Candidates tournament, whilst the chase to follow Abhimanyu Mishra into the record books as the world's youngest grandmaster continues unabated, however unmatchable his achievement of 12 years, 4 months might appear to be. Even as I write these words, Dommaraju Gukesh has just become the youngest player ever to reach 2700, which - even factoring in difficulties comparing ratings realistically over time - is a hugely impressive achievement.

There is much truth to all this lauding of youth. Yet this is why it feels so refreshing that, at least in a UK context, those at a much later stage of life have been stealing the show in the last couple of months. At a team level, England enjoyed a triumph at the World Senior Team Championships with all three of our teams in the Open 50+, Women's 50+ and Open 65+ taking gold (as reported elsewhere in this issue). Hot off the press, there have also been very notable successes in the European Individual 65+ with Terry Chapman (seeded 10th) taking the silver medal and Anthony Stebbings achieving a very creditable bronze.

In case these are open to the suggestion that they are in a sense 'English' successes rather than 'senior' successes by virtue of the tournaments in which they were achieved, it should be noted that there have also been notable achievements by senior players in open events. Mark Hebden has been in extraordinary form, following up his success at the English Seniors by

scoring 6/7 to dominate the Chessable English Championships, including (as reported last month) wins against such central figures of our younger generation as Marcus Harvey and Borna Derakshani. Most recently, he again looked in good shape at the July 4NCL Congress in Leamington Spa, beating Danny Gormally and only dropping half a point in the last round as he secured first place. I do think such senior successes have been more conspicuous at home - partly a hangover (in the most positive sense of the word) from the English Chess explosion and a reminder of the demographic of many of our GMs. However, it is not only happening here. Last week Simen Agdestein - former trainer of the World Champion Magnus Carlsen and probably still unique amongst GMs for having enjoyed a significant career in professional football - added an astonishing victory to his career successes. Exactly 40 years after he first won the Norwegian championship as a 15-year-old, he struck again, scoring a sensational 7/8 in a field headed by Jon Ludvig Hammer - one which well reflected much of the strength which Norway can now boast as a result of Simen's former pupil's inspiring example.

I can also make a claim to have struck a blow for the 'oldies' by winning the South Wales International with 8/9 last week, a score which I never recall achieving at any open in my younger years (notably and most disappointingly, the occasion on which I led the Bad Woerishofen Open in Bavaria with 7/7 proved no exception to this)! Prior to last week, it looked from the outside as if - at least on my return since lockdown - I was achieving little more than slowing my descent or perhaps stabilising my level on a good day. This has been discouraging for sure, but I have tried to remain optimistic that, given more time for working on my own chess and finding greater motivation to do so, I should still be able to perform again at something much closer to my level of 20 or so years ago. I guess the question for me and others in my position is this. In spite of the outliers such as Kortchnoi and Smyslov who offer a shining example in this respect, can these hopes be regarded as realistic?

I claim no originality in posing this question. Matthew Sadler's and Natasha Regan's well-received debut book *Chess for Life* was devoted to an analysis of how a number of strong players have retained both their enthusiasm and a fair portion of their playing strength over time. There have also been further notable

contributions on Barry Hymer's *Chessable* blog, giving food for thought and in the main some comfort to those facing the ravages of chess ageing. There has also been interesting research from Matt Jensen which suggests that the oft-cited peak age of 30-35 may apply only to stronger players and that in lower rating bands there is much more scope for development through middle age, with the expected peak at a much higher age – see [At What Age Do Chess Players Peak? - Chess.com](#). This is a very encouraging thought for many adult improvers, but I suppose I have been left to seek solace with the thought that my perceptible decline may at least be a function of how strong I became. So - great news!

I guess my own views on the matter could be summarised something like this. Yes, age brings issues of stamina and a greater probability of error towards the end of long sessions. It also impacts on memory and, for the majority of players, it seems to reduce their capacity to calculate long complex variations reliably. I have certainly felt a bit of all of this. However, it feels as if there ought to be some compensating gains arising from what we have learnt - and continue to learn - from experience. The problem is that the losses seem very tangible. The compensating gains, perhaps less so!

I have had an additional worry – to some extent echoed by John Nunn in *Chess For Life* - revolving around playing style. Given that we have identified memory and calculation as elements especially vulnerable to decline, players who relished sharp, complicated positions at their peak - often backed by openings which carried a bit of a punch too - may simply find their styles of play present them with daunting challenges as they advance in years. If this has been bad enough for 'the Doc' then it will likely prove tougher for me, with a clear tendency towards perfectionism contributing to poor time management to throw into the mix. That older players tend to struggle to handle extreme time pressure - this seems frankly beyond dispute.

Indeed, it was strongly implied by Matthew and Natasha's extensive coverage of Keith Arkell's play, that his style offers one attractive model for ageing players: largely eschewing complex theoretical openings; exhibiting a deep familiarity with structure and elements of the game which endure both within

positions and over time; seeking positions in which decisions will be relatively light on calculation and thus on time consumption, all combined with proficient and confident endgame technique. Mark Hebden's style is somewhat different and displays, of course, an excellent feel for the initiative - a much more obvious evolution from his early attacking years. Yet there are common elements, not least the speed with which he makes decisions, a strong feeling for positional elements and a deep familiarity with his opening systems. In 2019, when we coached together in the Czech Republic, I certainly impressed him with the *breadth* of my opening knowledge – clearly an asset in that domain. However, for practical purposes, the *depth* of knowledge which he has developed in part by a high degree of loyalty to (mostly not tending towards an irrational inflexibility!) and finessing of his systems clearly pays dividends.

Nonetheless, I am largely in agreement with John Nunn. Attempts to manufacture a wholesale change of style would simply not be true to self and would likely prove counterproductive. Yes, even at my age I think there is a lot to be said for trying to take small steps towards a more universal style (and certainly steps to consume less time!), but a player's essential approach will more than ever need to be based on fundamental strengths. The absolute crux of the matter, though, is that we must ask these questions and think in these terms. Just as we concluded in *Chess Improvement: It's all in the Mindset*, the key ingredient remains metacognition. Yes, we might pick up some useful things here and there just by the experience of playing a lot, but the real lessons are there to be gained by subjecting that playing experience to thorough and reflective scrutiny and thinking hard enough to realise that the crucial lessons to take away from them may not always be those which jump out at us. We then need to reflect on how to incorporate these into our strategy going forward – keeping in mind both our strengths and weaknesses and possibly the desire to narrow the gap between the two.

Metacognition is good for everyone (apart possibly from some manifestations of the bowdlerised version of it to which children in UK schools now often seem to be subjected from a very young age). However, our ability to think metacognitively should definitely improve with age, as psychologist Trevor Harley made clear in his nice guest contribution to Barry's blog – see

[The Aging Chess Player - Revisited - Chessable Blog.](#)

When we look for the expanding capacity which compensates for the shortfalls we have already identified we should look here. Yes, this is about wisdom, but the trick is to keep expanding that wisdom by reflecting on our experiences to make sure that we tangibly 'learn from defeats', rather than just trotting it out as a soothing slogan. This is how we can keep compensating for the elements of our play which are not wearing well and done assiduously, I don't see why it cannot fully compensate. On a good day, I still believe that I can buck the trend. For, as Barry Hymer said in [Chess – An Older Person's Game? - Chessable Blog.](#), "even the best designed research, conducted meticulously and with huge sample sizes, has little to say about the individual."

As I suggested above, there is no one chess trajectory which is likely to encapsulate the experience of all players. Sometimes, of course, retirement from a demanding career can bring with it fresh opportunities for chess for players who have endured a prolonged enforced break – resulting in higher levels being achieved at a relatively advanced age. This was the pattern for Terry Chapman in the early stages of his return to the game. The following – from his recent silver medal success – suggests that he may be able to aspire to resuming this healthy trajectory.

Leon Lederman – Terry Chapman

65+ European Senior Championship Round 8

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bd3 0–0 8.Qc2 Re8+ 9.Ne2 h5(!)

A move which has built quite a following, likely further boosted recently as Erwin L'Ami made it a pivotal component of his advocacy of 5...exf6 in his superb *Chessable* course on the Caro-Kann. In the sharp lines where White castles queenside, this move (perhaps counter-intuitively) seems to form less of a target for White's attacking designs than 9...g6 which was once the main line. If White heads for short castling as here, then Black frequently pushes the h-pawn further which helps disrupt his opponent's attempts to prove that any h-pawn move simply constitutes a weakening of the light squares.

10.0–0 h4 11.Bd2 Nd7 12.Rae1 Nf8 13.f4 g6!?

The engine isn't very enthusiastic about this, but Terry threatens 14...f5, which all but forces White's hand and

invites a structure in which either pressuring the centre with ...c5 or creating play along the b8-h2 diagonal seem to offer decent chances. White will need to play with great energy to reveal the downsides of this structure.

14.f5 g5



15.Kh1

Stockfish wants to try and chip away at Black's pawn chain with 15 g3!?, inviting the h-pawn to detach itself from its colleagues with 15...h3, enabling White to round it up with 16 g4 followed by Rf3. This makes sense, but it remains complicated after 16...c5 17 d5 b6 and none of this would have been easy for White to assess.

15...Qc7?!

This looks entirely reasonable, but Stockfish makes a convincing case that striking in the centre with 15...c5! was much safer. The point is that after the text move White could ignore the threat and play 16 c4! intending to meet 16...Bxh2 with either 17 Qd1 swinging to the king-side, or 17 c5!? interfering with the bishop's retreat. Neither does 16...c5 17 Nc3! provide a solution. It is true that c4 and Nc3 are often on the agenda for White in these lines, but the detail here is far from straightforward and Lederman's response therefore is eminently understandable.

16.h3 Bd7 17.Qd1?! c5!

Having provoked weaknesses on the dark squares around White's king, it makes sense to switch to the centre break, in advance – as we have seen – of White advancing his c-pawn with Nc3 on the cards.

18.Ng1?!

It looks plausible to manoeuvre this knight to defend h2, but it was still the case that it could have achieved more by heading for an active square and playing the role of distracting Black from his ambitions. Over the coming moves an elegant dark-square strategy crystallises very nicely and Terry executes it with great energy.

18...Nh7 19.Qh5 cxd4 20.cxd4 Bc6 21.Rc1 Qd7 22.Nf3 Bxf3!

I like this move. It can be appreciated on a positional level (removing a piece which can impact dark squares for one which cannot) or a more dynamic level (removing one of the impediments to a kingside attack, aiming ultimately to land a blow on h2)! Best of all is that we don't have to choose. Both goals are legitimate, and White will suffer problems in both regards.



23.Qxf3 Rad8 24.Qd5 a6 25.Qf3?! Bb8 26.Be3



26...Rxe3!

Again, a beautifully thematic sacrifice in which positional and dynamic goals neatly reinforce each other. One thing I like about this decision in conjunction with the previous minor piece exchange is that Black is methodically constructing a position with

opposite-coloured bishops which beautifully illustrates why these are so favourable to the attacker. White's queen being tied to the defence of h2 will be woefully inefficient!

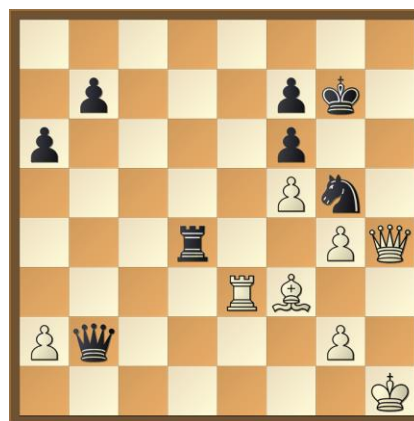
27.Qxe3 Qd6 28.Qg1?!

I think Lederman's last chance was to try 28 g3. This is just too passive!

28...g4!

Another simple but attractive clearance sacrifice. Black's knight will be beautifully placed on g5 and his rich compensation becomes clearer to the naked eye.

29.Be4 Qb4 30.Rc3 Ng5 31.Re1 Qxb2 32.Rce3 Bg3 33.hxg4 Bxe1 34.Qxe1 Rxd4 35.Bf3 Kg7 36.Qxh4



36...Rd8!

Not the only way, but there is something very logical about punishing Qxh4 by threatening a return to the h-file.

37.Qe1 Rc8 38.Re2 Qd4 39.Qf2 Rc1+

0-1

An unusual and attractive game. Terry chose a modern variation and interpreted it with creativity and vigour. For anyone inclined to stereotype seniors chess, I think this should give pause for thought!

Arkell's Endings

Moments of truth in Bridgend



*After a bad opening, there is hope for the middle game.
After a bad middle game, there is hope for the endgame.
But once you are in the endgame, the moment of truth has arrived ...*

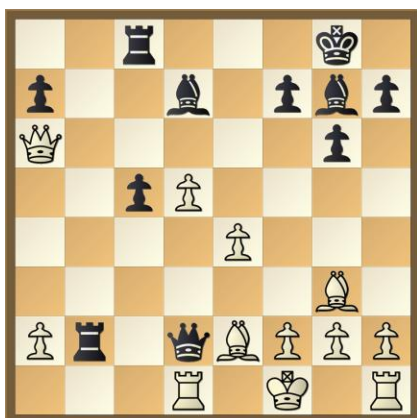
Edmar Mednis

In this month's 'Arkell's Endings' I'm going to show the final stages of two games which catapulted me from 4/5 to 6/7 in the recently completed South Wales International. In the first, I escaped from a horrible middlegame into an endgame the exchange down but with good coordination between my pieces.

GM Keith Arkell - IM Jose Camacho

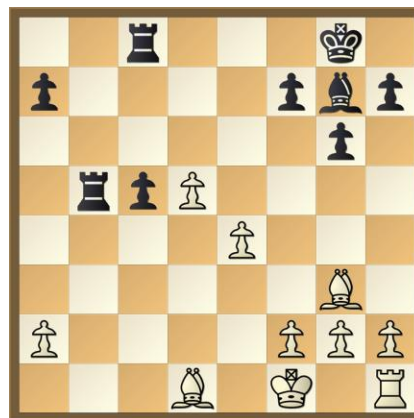
South Wales International (6), 10.07.2022

1 d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nc3 g6 7.Nd2 Bg7 8.Nc4 0-0 9.Bf4 Nbd7 10.Bxd6 Re8 11.Bg3 Ne4 12.Nxe4 Rxe4 13.e3 Nb6 14.Rc1 Bg4 15.Qb3 Nxc4 16.Bxc4 Qa5+ 17.Kf1 b5 18.Qxb5 Qd2 19.Re1 Bf5 20.Be2 Rb4 21.Qc6 Rc8 22.Qa6 Rxb2 23.e4 Bd7 24.Rd1



I have been completely outplayed and thoroughly disliked my position. In fact, the situation is so dire that I was actually hoping my opponent would grab the exchange, after which I might at least achieve some coordination between my pieces.

24...Qxd1+ 25.Bxd1 Bb5+ 26.Qxb5 Rxb5



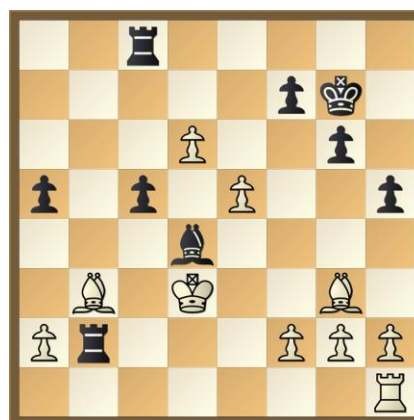
27.Ke2 Rb2+ 28.Ke3 Bd4+ 29.Kd3

29...h5? Understandable, as Jose didn't want to give me play after 29...Bxf2 30 Bg4, but this was the critical moment and he could then continue 30...Re8. After that I can't hurt him in time with my d-pawn no matter how I play, e.g. 31 Bc7 f5! and Black is first.

30.Bb3 a5 By contrast, if now 30...Bxf2 there is a lot of energy in White's position after 31 Be5 Bd4 32 Bxd4 cxd4 33 d6 Rf2 (to prevent Rf1) 34 e5.

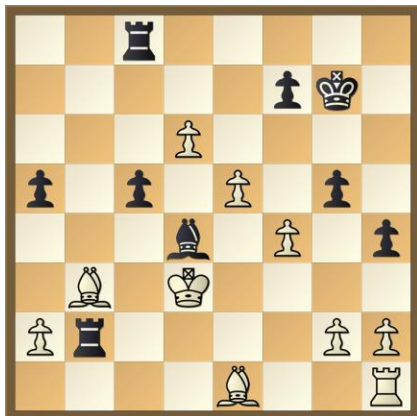
31.d6 Despite the exchange deficit, I was growing in confidence. My bishops coordinate far better than his rooks and my d-pawn is close to touchdown.

31...Kg7 32.e5



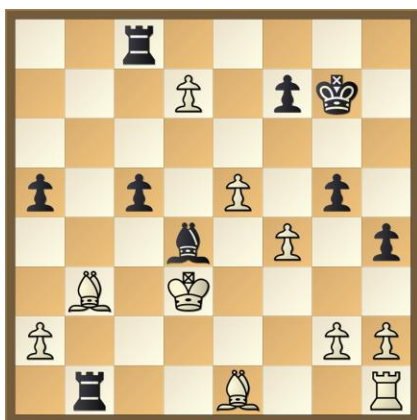
32...g5 In time trouble Black tries to muddy the waters, but I found the strongest continuation after which I begin to get well on top.

33.f4! h4 34.Be1



Suddenly the bishop switches from ambitions on the h4–d8 diagonal to the one from a5–d8.

34...Rb1 35.d7



35...Rh8? The last chance to hang on was 36...Rd8 37 Bxa5 Rxb3+ 38 axb3 Rxd7 39 fxg5 Bxe5+ Kc4, but it will be an uphill struggle.

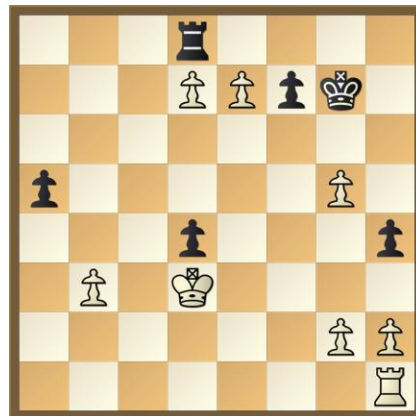
36.fxg5 Bf2



Preventing Rf1, but allowing a different finish.

37.Bc3! Rxb3 Or 37...Rxh1 38 e6+ Bd4 39 Bxd4+ cxd4 40 e7.

38.axb3 Rd8 39.e6+ Bd4 40.Bxd4+ cxd4 41.e7

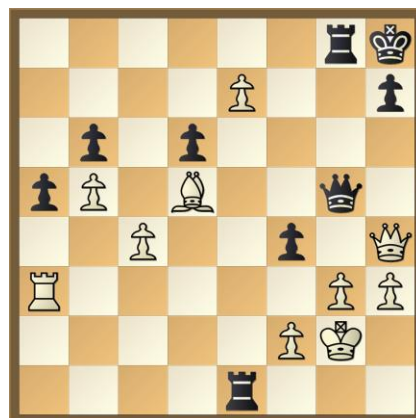


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FM Joakim Nilsson - GM Keith Arkell

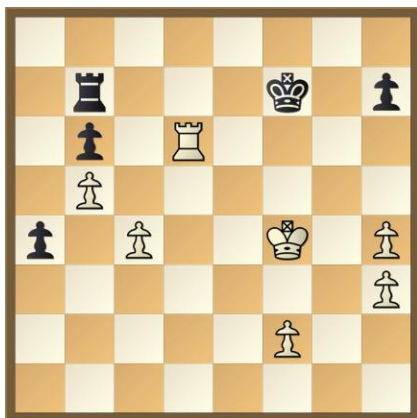
South Wales International (7), 11.07.2022

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nc3 g6 7.Bg2 Bg7 8.Nf3 0–0 9.0–0 Na6 10.Nd2 Nc7 11.a4 b6 12.Nc4 Ba6 13.Na3 Qd7 14.Re1 Rfe8 15.h3 Re7 16.Qb3 Qe8 17.Bf4 Rd8 18.Nab5 Nxb5 19.axb5 Bc8 20.Ra4 Nh5 21.Bg5 f6 22.Bd2 f5 23.Bg5 Bf6 24.Bxf6 Nxf6 25.Rea1 Qf7 26.Qa2 Rdd7 27.e3 Rc7 28.Qc4 Nd7 29.Qh4 Ne5 30.e4 Nd3 31.exf5 gxf5 32.Qg5+ Qg6 33.Qd2 c4 34.b3 Nc5 35.bxc4 Nxa4 36.Rxa4 Qf6 37.Ne2 Bd7 38.Bf3 a5 39.Qf4 Rc8 40.Nd4 Re1+ 41.Kg2 Qe5 42.Qh4 Re8 43.Ne6 Bxe6 44.dxe6 Kh8 45.Bd5 f4 46.Ra3 Rg8 47.e7 Qg5



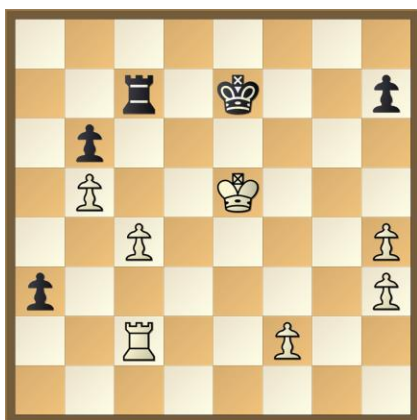
This time it was my turn to be the exchange up, but I never managed to stabilise my position and Nilsson always seemed to have enough compensation. I now tried my luck in a rook endgame, but really shouldn't have been allowed to play for a win.

48.Bxg8 Qxh4 49.gxh4 Kxg8 50.Rd3 Rxe7 51.Rxd6 Rb7 52.Kf3 Kf7 53.Kxf4 a4



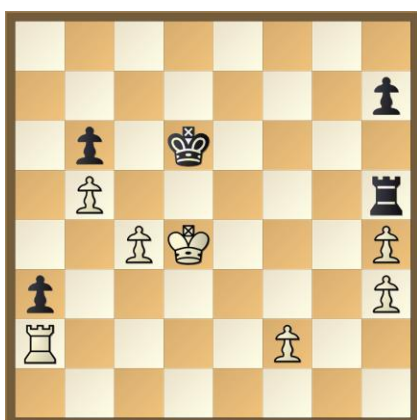
Oh dear, I'm now two pawns down, but with the passed a-pawn there is still some hope.

54.Ke5 a3 55.Rd2 Rc7 56.Rc2 Ke7



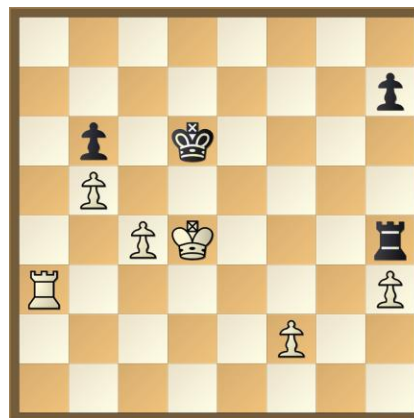
57.Kd5? An instructive mistake. If immediately 57 Kd4! I will be fighting for a draw, but now I can fantasise about playing for more.

57...Rc5+ 58.Kd4 Rh5 59.Ra2 Kd6



Maybe Joakim didn't see that I could throw in this useful move.

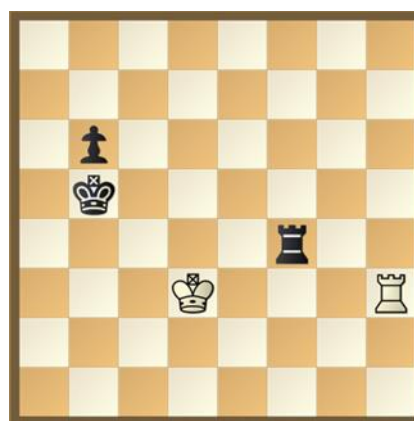
60.Rxa3 Rxh4+



61.Kc3?? The only explanation for this horrendous double blunder is that the heat was getting to us both after nearly 4 hours of struggle.

61...Kc5?? Obviously simply exchanging rooks followed by queening my h-pawn wins trivially!

62.Ra4 Rxh3+ 63.Kd2 h5 64.Ke2 Rc3 65.Ra8 Rxc4 66.Rf8 Kxb5 67.Kd3 h4 68.f4 h3 69.Rh8 Rxf4 70.Rxh3

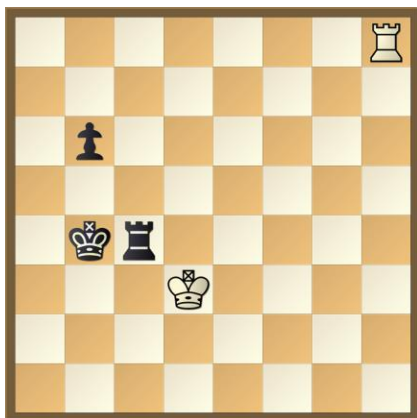


So I have gone from two pawns down to one pawn up, but with perfect play it's a draw.

70...Rc4 71.Rh1 Kc5 I know enough about this position to understand that the defence isn't trivial. What would you play here, with time getting low?

72.Rh8 Blunder! The drawing moves were 72 Rg1, Rf1, Re1, Rb1 and Ra1. Now I get to playKb4 for free:

72...Kb4!



The only winning move.

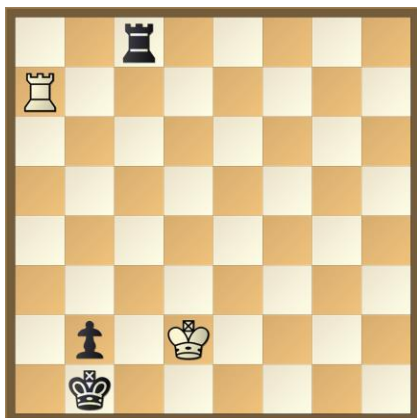
73.Rh1 Rc3+

Again the only winning move.

74.Kd2 b5 And again!

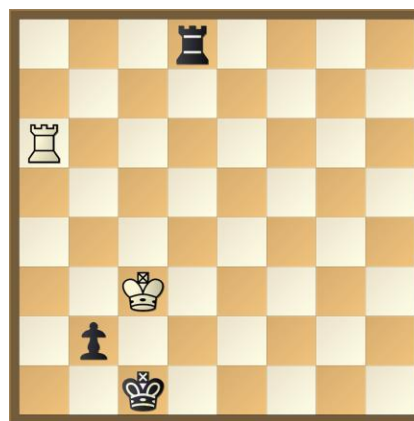
75.Rb1+ Rb3 And again.

**76.Rc1 Rb2+ 77.Kd3 Kb3 78.Rc3+ Ka4 79.Rc8 b4
80.Rc7 Kb3 81.Rc1 Rh2 82.Rb1+ Ka3 83.Kc4 Rc2+
84.Kd3 b3 85.Ra1+ Kb2 86.Ra7 Rc3+ 87.Kd2 Rc8
88.Rd7 Kb1 89.Ra7 b2**



To convert I will need to build a 'bridge' to shield my King from checks. Thus: 90 Ra6 Rd8+ 91 Ke2 Rd5 92 Ke3 Kc2 93 Rc6+ Kb3 94 Rb6+ Kc3 95 Ke2 (or 95 Rb8 [95 Rc6+ Kb4 96 Rb6+ Rb5] 95...Rd1) 95...Rd4 96 Rc6+ Rc4 97 Rb6 Rb4.

90.Ra6 Rd8+ 91.Kc3 Kc1 0-1



Bridge Building and the Lucena Position

In his commentary on the game against Joakim Nilsson, Keith mentions the need to 'build a bridge' from the position here after Black's move 89.



This is an example of the famous Lucena position which is one of the fundamental winning positions in rook and pawn endgames and a must know position.

The position is named after Luis Ramírez de Lucena who published the first extant chess book in 1497.

The winning technique from the diagrammed position is to play ...Rd8+ to force the white king two files away to the d-file. The black rook then moves to d5 allowing the king to make its way up the board to b4 at which point the black rook can shield the king from further checks and the pawn promotes as the white king is still two files away.

Book of the Month

Ben Graff

The best new writing and the greatest classics under one roof... in association with Forward Chess

'It's hard to imagine another spectator sport where the audience could be as animated as at a chess tournament. It's enough to move your eyes a bit, and from the fiery passion of one game you'd get to the quiet calmness of another one.'

- Grigori Roshal (Quoted in *Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championships Volume II (1938-47)* by Sergey Voronkov)



There is nothing quite like a chess tournament. Perhaps the best moment comes immediately prior to the first round, when everyone is still cheerful, hopeful, when the mistakes are yet to be made and all things seem possible. Every event is its own world within a world, an opportunity to be the best we can be, a chance to lose ourselves in the game we love.

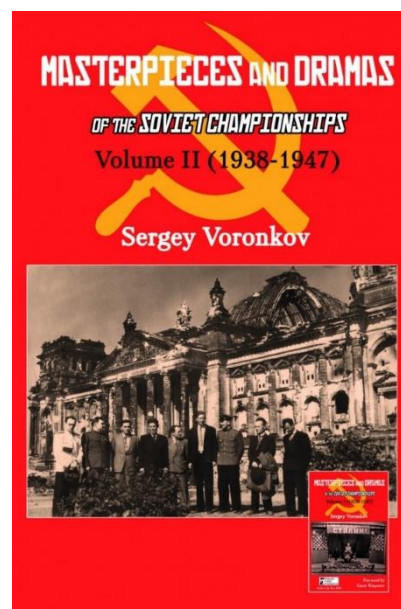
From our own battles at the board, through to the enjoyment that comes with witnessing others squirm while we watch on sagely, there are few better ways to spend time than in the tournament hall. Yet perhaps the next best thing is to relive the great events our chess heroes have taken part in, to learn more of their struggles at the board, and to gain a better understanding of the players as people, with their distinct personalities. It takes the very best writers to get us up close to the action.

This month, we explore three books that all centre on chess tournaments. *Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championships Volume II (1938-47)* by Sergey Voronkov and *Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2021* by Daniel Fernandez are our contemporary offerings. We then go back one hundred years for this month's classic, *London 1922* by Geza Maróczy.

Next time you play in a tournament, whatever your result, you can console yourself that the very best have trodden the same path in the past. We are all destined

to have good days and bad days. This month's books encapsulate what it is about chess tournaments that draws us in. That keeps us wanting to go again. They are all a fitting tribute to the noblest of sporting encounters.

Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championships – Volume II (1938 – 1947)
by Sergey Voronkov (Elk and Ruby)



'The sporting struggle of the tournament is very exciting, but the other, creative side of chess is equally important. Tomorrow, hundreds of thousands of our vast country's chess players will analyse these games, study them, learn from them as examples of chess art. The tournament participants know about that – and that's why they think about their moves so intently...'

- Alexander Kotov – Ogonyok, No.25, 1940. (Quoted in *Masterpieces and Dramas*)

In 2021 the first volume of *Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championships* was the well-deserved winner of the English Chess Federation Book of the Year. The ECF jury noted that Sergey Voronkov's seminal work read '...like a novel. A most remarkable, absorbing, and entertaining chess history which fully lives up to its title, Masterpieces and Dramas, on and off the board.' Now Volume II is out, and it is every bit as exceptional as its predecessor.

Voronkov highlights that 'The images of chess players here are quite different from those we knew from books. They are more nuanced, controversial, warts and all.... I wanted you to see the chess players as they were known by their peers: in development, in creative

crisis, in constant struggle with themselves and their rivals.'

What follows is a brilliantly sourced, anecdote-rich telling of the battle for national supremacy within the strongest chess-playing nation on the planet. These struggles at the board took place during the darkest of times. It is as much history as it is chess history. Any student would get a better sense of what it must have felt like to live through these bloody years from this contribution than a conventional textbook.

Voronkov quotes the Soviet competitor Romanov who noted that 'In 1937-1938 a huge wave of arrests surged the country. Then the endless trials began, which were all over the place in the newspapers.' This was an era when anyone in the Soviet Union could be denounced, imprisoned, or executed entirely arbitrarily, and many were.

Romanov went on to write that 'The fear of the punitive system was so great that we even stopped being scared. We pushed it down into the subconscious, otherwise you just couldn't live. You just knew that at any moment you could be thrown into the grinder of prisons, deportations, camps, executions, but you didn't think of it...'

Indeed, the action in volume II opens with Nikolai Krylenko, who had doubled as both the head of Soviet chess and the nation's top prosecutor, being arrested and executed as the purges began to swallow up their own. A man who had pursued the ridiculous notion that chess could be viewed only through a political prism and had played such a large part in the denunciation of many chess players showed through his downfall that no one was safe, no matter how ingratiated with the Soviet regime a person considered him or herself to be.

Within the broader historical tapestry, Voronkov brings to life the Soviet Championships of the period through a host of contemporary (and more recent) recollections and sources, including newspapers, cartoons, player anecdotes and eighty-four games and extracts, often annotated by the players themselves.

Despite the immense strength of the Soviet chess stars, I was struck that they appeared to be sceptical of each other's ability. Botvinnik reflected that 'The conclusion is obvious: our masters, as a rule, lack positional technique.' Viktorov wrote in similar vein that 'The

endgame technique of quite a few players is still poor, and, as Levenfish rightfully noted, even the masters probably should take some kind of an "endgame exam".'

Botvinnik himself was not immune from criticism. On winning a pawn against him for the fourth game in a row, Bondarevsky was heard to remark, 'I wonder how this man can be the Soviet Champion?'

Botvinnik emerges as the lead protagonist in *Masterpieces and Dramas*. This was a time when the ailing and alcoholic Alekhine was world champion. Whoever was seen as the top Soviet player would be recognised as his most legitimate challenger, and Botvinnik had his eye firmly on the prize.

Voronkov acknowledges that he has been criticised for his somewhat negative portrayal of Botvinnik in Volume I and he may well be criticised on this point again here, but for me his portrait feels about right. He neatly captures what it was like to watch Botvinnik in action – 'The tournament participants circle around Botvinnik's board, watch his every single move, his every gesture. But he's withdrawn, self-absorbed, suspicious, he asks everyone to step away from the board.'

Voronkov goes on to give a detailed account of Botvinnik's various political manoeuvres. These include highlighting that Botvinnik apparently took over from the loathed Krylenko as the Head of the Soviet Chess Federation for a year. While there are no records of any decisions Botvinnik personally took in this capacity, this was certainly a dubious position to hold at the height of the purges.

Voronkov also illustrates the careful way in which Botvinnik laid the groundwork for issuing a challenge to Alekhine by courting senior Soviet officials such as Molotov. At another point when he ran into opposition to a contest, he skilfully worked to have a different dissenting official removed from his position.

Botvinnik always had an answer to any question. When challenged as to how he could bring himself to take on an antisemitic communist hater, he '... answered coldly that if he didn't play a match with Alekhine, then Euwe would declare himself world champion, then lose a match to Reshevsky, and the world champion's title would forever stay in America.'

It might seem today that there was a certain inevitability surrounding Botvinnik's climb to the

summit of world chess, but this was not how things appeared in the early 1940s to his two predecessors as world champion. Capablanca placed both himself and Paul Keres ahead of Botvinnik as worthy contenders. Alekhine in similar vein, when asked who his main competitor was, simply pointed at Keres and said, 'There he is.'

The little matter of playing poorly in the 12th Soviet Championships in 1940, and trailing in sixth, threatened to be an even bigger problem when it came to Botvinnik's legitimacy as a world title challenger. However, he proceeded to blame his reversal on the acoustics in the playing hall and with great political skill set about creating a new contest, the 'Absolute Championship,' to reassert his supremacy. Lilienthal, who had been the joint victor in 1940 noted that 'This news was a bolt out of the blue. I was seething.' Voronkov notes that even twenty-five years later, Keres' naivete meant that he '...still couldn't understand the depth of Botvinnik's scheme'.

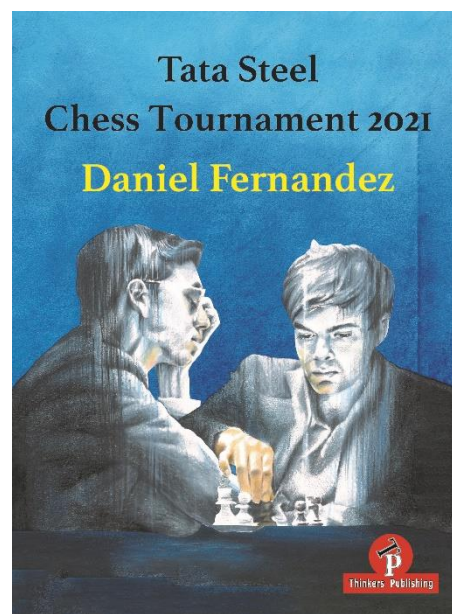
Yet these were such difficult times, and even Botvinnik was not immune to the challenges they presented. When Leningrad fell to the Germans in World War II, he needed special permission to be on one of the last trains out of the city and was initially sent to chop wood in the forests, before seeking and getting a special dispensation from Molotov to continue with his chess.

The travails of another player, Levenfish, also aptly sum up the chaos and misery inherent in war. Levenfish wrote, 'The harsh winter of 1941 was approaching. The fierce Urals colds reached minus 52 degrees. The plant barely had enough firewood for the production lines, and there was nothing left to heat the apartment blocks. In the night, grabbing my sled, saw and hatchet, I would cut down a birch in a restricted area, cut it up for firewood and drag it home.' He goes on to tell the story of an eighteen-mile walk on foot followed by a journey in a freezing railway truck which he was fortunate to survive on his journey to safety.

The truth is that I could happily write ten different reviews of *Masters and Dramas of the Soviet Championships Volume II*, such is its quality. Here, I have only been able to give a flavour of some of the stories and themes, but any reader will happily discover so much **more** that is fascinating and insightful about this book.

Voronkov originally started out on this project with the intention of writing 'a dozen or so articles' and 'leaving it at that'. Thank goodness he chose to continue. For me, this is the definitive work on an era that will always be remembered for the struggles it wrought on and off the board. A wonderful contribution, destined to take its place in the very first rank of brilliant chess histories.

Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2021 **by Daniel Fernandez (Thinkers Publishing)**



'Finally, today was the day: playing chess with real pieces and boards again!'

- Michael Hoetmer (quoted in Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2021)

What better way to move on from lockdown than with a major chess tournament? They do not come any bigger than Wijk aan Zee, and, as Herman Grooten notes in his preface, the event is sometimes known as the 'Wimbledon of chess'. Daniel Fernandez has produced an epic worthy of any grand slam.

Fernandez dedicates 794 pages to this single event, compared with the 524 pages Voronkov utilised to cover ten years of the Soviet Championships, in Volume II of *Masterpieces and Dramas*. This level of depth has its pros and cons. However, it is unlikely that future generations will have any need to look beyond Fernandez's contribution to gain a full understanding of the Tata Steel event.

As a grandmaster himself, Fernandez was of course well placed to analyse the games, and he supplemented his own eye with intensive engine work

and internet research, allowing him to look deeply and learn a lot. It is impossible to fault his effort, and the care he has shown, in his quest to uncover and share the full story.

There are elements of *Tata Steel Chess Tournament* that are perhaps a little puzzling. The games are analysed on a player-by-player basis from the perspective of the white pieces, starting with those of Alexander Donchenko who came last, and working through the field in reverse order. Trying out a different format is to be applauded, but a more conventional round-by-round telling might have heightened the tension.

To a significant extent, this is a book that centres on very deep opening analyses. As such it breaks new ground but goes beyond what most club players (and certainly this one) need and can easily follow. That said, while this is probably not a work that most of us will study every page of, it is something that can be dipped in and out of happily enough. The games I did play through I enjoyed. Equally, readers can of course pick and choose how deep they want to go, and Fernandez does provide a lot of insightful and more general commentary to draw on.

In terms of the event itself, Jorden Van Foreest truly announced himself on the world stage, claiming victory ahead of Anish Giri in a blitz play-off, after both scored 8.5/ 13. Meanwhile Caruana was placed fourth and a since resurgent world champion Carlsen limped home in sixth. It seems the result came as something of a surprise to Van Foreest, who modestly noted 'To come first would be bizarre. I could never have expected this before the tournament, I was placed as one of the lowest.'

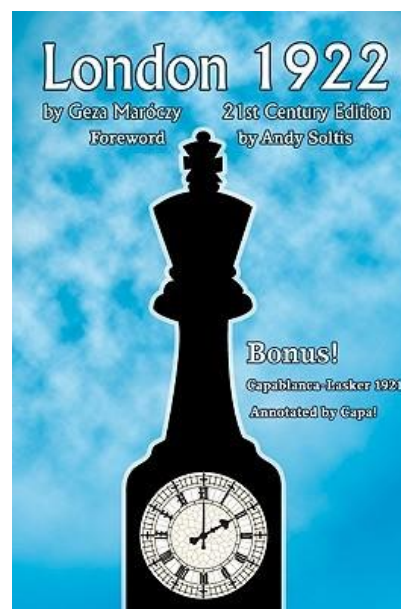
Yet, while everybody rightly heralded Van Foreest's monumental breakthrough on the world stage, it was put to him by Gert Devreese in an interesting interview Fernandez shares that Van Foreest's eleven-year-old sister Machteld might 'one day become a better chess player than yourself'. To which Machteld 'who is sitting next to Jorden at the table, with a slightly threatening voice, [said] 'Look out, Jorden!''

To say that the chess world should continue to look out for Jorden and Machteld van Foreest is to state the obvious. Yet we should also keep a close eye on what Fernandez chooses to write next. In a world that tends

toward the superficial, he offers real depth and clarity of thought. He can continue to make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of the game in the decades ahead. *Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2021* is a worthy contribution and a tribute to his efforts.

London 1922 by Geza Maróczy (Russell Enterprises)

Foreword by Andy Soltis



Geza Maróczy was one of the strongest players of his generation. Highly regarded by Capablanca, his achievements on the board were matched by his contributions as a theoretician, writer, and chess coach. 'The Maróczy Bind', where pawns are placed on e4 and c4 to inhibit Black's counterplay in some lines of the Sicilian, remains an important chess concept to this day. Maróczy also coached Vera Menchik and played a key role in her development as a player. At one point he was due to take on Emanuel Lasker for the world title, but the match fell through.

His works as a writer include *London 1922*, which was reissued in 2010, with an excellent foreword from Andy Soltis. Soltis notes that one of the reasons why a tournament would be remembered is '...if it was memorialized in a great book. That helps explain why London 1922 achieved its reputation whereas... any number of other great events largely held between the two world wars have been largely tossed into history's outbox.' As a bonus, this offering includes all the games from Capablanca's world title match against Lasker, with Capablanca's original annotations.

Maróczy would creditably come slap bang in the middle of the field at London 1922, placed eighth out of sixteen. This put him ahead of the then twenty-one-year-old future world champion Max Euwe who was 11th, but behind Bogoljubow (5th) and Reti (6th). Without question, London 1922 was a glittering gathering of the chess stars of their generation – with only Lasker missing.

The appearance of chess's 'superstar' Capablanca, who was playing his first significant chess since defeating Lasker fifteen months previously, certainly contributed to the aura of the event. Soltis highlights that Capablanca's charisma and prowess were doubtless a major factor in the 'wholly unprecedented' turn out from spectators.

Yet it takes two to tango. The appearance of Capablanca's eventual nemesis Alekhine also added a further dimension to the proceedings. This would be the first event at which Capablanca and Alekhine had played each other in a decade, and for Soltis, '...this was where their rivalry truly began.' Given Capablanca's superiority, coming in ahead of Alekhine by a full point and a half without a single defeat, few would have imagined in 1922 that a mere five years later Alekhine would wrest the title from the brilliant Cuban.

In a nice anecdote, Soltis highlights that Capablanca who was then six years into what would ultimately prove to be a staggering eight-year run without a competitive defeat, was in deep trouble in his game against Tartakower. On eventually securing a draw, Capablanca remarked to his opponent that Tartakower was '...lacking in solidity.' Tartakower wittily replied, 'That is my saving grace.'

Soltis notes that the event will also be remembered for the creation of the 'London rules' governing how future world title matches might be conducted. He paints an intriguing picture. 'Capablanca invited the seven other strongest players in the tournament to meet him at cocktail hour at one of London's priciest hotels. Over champagne and small talk he revealed the reason for this extraordinary get-together...'

Capablanca's proposals received 'little dissent', even if they would not pass modern-day scrutiny, weighted as they were in favour of the reigning champion. (Something Capablanca might well later have rued, when Alekhine refused to grant him a rematch after his

shock defeat in 1927.) However, they did represent the very first attempts to codify a set of rules for title matches. From our own vantage point a hundred years later we can reflect that determining world title arrangements has not always proved to be an easy task for later generations either.

Maróczy's annotations of the tournament games, both his own and those of the other competitors, are clean and crisp. There are many helpful diagrams, and the action is easy to follow. Realistically, this isn't a book that you buy for the colour or the anecdotes, but squarely for the games and the analysis. It is somewhat of its time, and we are left wondering what Maróczy thought of his fellow competitors as people. However, as an intriguing look at the action in an epic tournament it is a good effort.

Perhaps Maróczy had a certain tendency to play his achievements down, a certain modesty. One of only four players to draw with Capablanca in the tournament, his concluding comment on the encounter reads: 'The game was perfectly even and a draw was the legitimate result.' Where a modern writer in similar circumstances might have been more likely to exclaim 'Get in!' or 'How about that?' before regaling us with tales of his or her subsequent celebrations in the pub.

Still, there is a dignity that goes with being understated. Maróczy's contribution to our game is significant. Perhaps London 1922 would still be remembered without this book. But it retains its prominence and vitality thanks to the power of Maróczy's pen.

Final Thoughts

Wherever you happen to be competing next, whether in the 2022 British Championship in Torquay, or elsewhere, hopefully these three tournament books will inspire you. They certainly have me. I am taking a break next month but will be back with more reviews in September. Until then, good luck at and away from the chess board. Enjoy your summer!

It's a Puzzlement!

Welcome to our new puzzles section. The puzzles below have been hand-picked by [ChessPuzzle.net](https://chesspuzzle.net).

The puzzles all have an English connection, whether it's the players or the venue or both, and cover a range of difficulty.

The solutions will appear in next month's *ChessMoves* but with each problem we provide a link to the relevant ChessPuzzle.net page and a QR Code so you can try the puzzles interactively and get hints if needed or even the solutions!

The puzzles are arranged in order of difficulty (easiest first). We would be interested in your views about the level of difficulty and whether we graded them about right. When you click on the links below you need to play a move to see the hint and/or solution

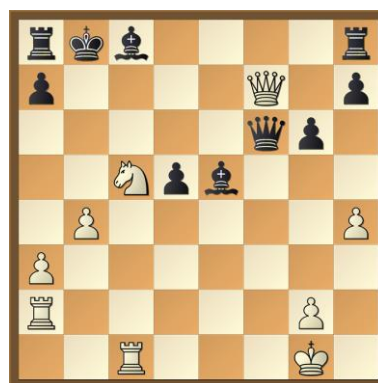
Puzzle 1 - IM Marcus R Harvey - GM Mark Hebden Chessable English Championship 2022



Black to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 2 - CM Tim Kett - Jean-Luc Weller 4NCL 2021-22



White to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 3 - Theo Khoury - Soham Kumar Chessable English Championship 2022



White to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 4 - FM Rhys Cumming - Viktor Stoyanov 4NCL 2021-22



White to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

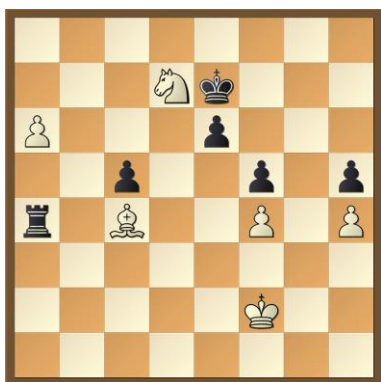
Puzzle 5 - WFM Sarah N Longson - Ashley Stewart
4NCL 2021-22



Black to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 6 - Oskar A Hackner - Shabir Okhai
Chessable English Championship 2022



White to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 7 - IM Peter T Roberson - GM Mircea-Emilian Parligras
4NCL 2021-22



White to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 8 - S White - C Mackenzie
4NCL 2021-22



White to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 9 - Elis Denele Dicen - Alaa Gamal
Chessable English Women's Championship 2022



White to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 10 - IM Dietmar Kolbus - Mark E Page
4NCL 2021-22



White to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 11 - Jacob Watson - FM D Haydon

Chessable English Championship 2022



Black to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

Puzzle 12 Anusha Subramanian - Alaa Gamal

Chessable English Women's Championship 2022



White to play and win

[Click here to solve or for a hint and/or the solution](#)

For all the puzzles on one page just visit [ChessMoves](#)

[July Puzzles](#) by clicking the link or via the QR Code

below ---



Interview with Brian Smith

Questions by Mark Rivlin



After a stellar chess career as Secretary of the London Chess League (LCL), you are retiring from the role. Tell us about how you became associated with LCL.

Like most players I learned to play chess at school and the school team. I then joined Wood Green Chess Club when I was 16 and have been with them for over 60 years and always enjoyed playing for them. At 18 I joined their LCL team. LCL is the world's oldest chess league with several hundred to a thousand players attending every season.

How much will you miss the buzz around a night's league chess?

It is always great to see 100-plus players smiling and 'shaking their opponent firmly by the throat' before they start the white clocks. I'll certainly miss those nights.

What are your plans for the future? Will you still be involved in chess?

Hopefully I will still be around, despite ageing. And I'll continue to support and hopefully sponsor Wood Green CC.

Tell us about your professional career and achievements.

Like many chess players I managed to pass my 'O' and 'A' Levels and then went on to get a business degree. I then did the best thing of my life and became a waiter and joined the National Union of Seamen working on SS Canberra for two years. This was followed by two years on the QE2 when she was just six months old. S, I have sailed around the world many times, including my first cruise on SS Canberra when we were about to go through the Suez Canal in 1967 when it closed because of the Six Day War. We had to sail back through the Mediterranean and around Africa to Cape Town before going on to Australia and New Zealand. After five years at sea I became a salesman and worked for several companies before ending-up in the computer industry, where my career finished, and I retired.

What are the main changes you have seen in English chess over the decades of involvement in LCL?

The move to electronic clocks, to control timing and chess analysis on mobile phones!

Outside chess, what are your interests?

Like many people, I enjoy being with family and friends. I also enjoy playing bridge for its analysis and sociability.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

The English Counties Championships Finals 2022

*A report from Home Director
Nigel Towers and Counties
Controller Mark Murrell*



The Lowenthal Trophy

The finals for the different sections of the 2022 Championships were held on 2 July with six sections at four different venues across the country.

The Counties Championships is one of the longest-running and most prestigious chess competitions in England.

The first final was played in 1908 between Middlesex and Yorkshire, with Middlesex becoming the first English Counties champion.

There have been 100 finals over the years since 1908, with the championship changing hands many times since the first Middlesex victory. You can find Anthony Fulton's report on the first 100 years and a full list of previous winners on the ECF web site at the links here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/100-Years-of-the-Counties-Championship-1.pdf>

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CountyChampsHistoricalWinners.pdf>

The last Championships took place in 2019 with Yorkshire defeating Surrey to become the Open Champions for 2019.

Winners of the 2019 Championships and defending champions for the 2022 events were as follows -

Open – Yorkshire
Minor Counties – Lincolnshire
U180 – Essex
U160 – Middlesex
U140 – Yorkshire
U120 – Essex
U100 – Staffordshire

This year's event was the 101st County Championship, and the first since lockdown with finals as follows based on the new Elo-based rating limits –

Open – Northumberland v Yorkshire
Minor Counties – Devon v Norfolk
U2050 – Essex v Surrey
U1850 – Leicestershire v Middlesex
U1650 – Surrey v Warwickshire
U1450 – Essex v Surrey

The event was also the first played with live boards which were broadcast live on the internet from three venues with live commentary from WIM Natasha Regan and GM Peter Wells.

The 2022 finals produced some close matches with some great games and the competition is now in a good place to move into a second 100 years of county competitions under the stewardship of Mark Murrell as Counties Controller.

The final of the Open Championships was an all-Northern Counties match between Northumberland and Yorkshire held at the Dolphin Centre in Darlington.

The Mayor of Darlington Anne-Marie Curry (pictured here) attended the event to open proceedings by playing the first move on Board 1. The control team included IA Matthew Carr (also pictured) supported by local club secretary Carl Stephens.

There were 16 boards in total with all games from the event broadcast from live boards at the addresses below ---

Lichess –

<https://lichess.org/broadcast/ecf-county-championships-finals-open/round-1/Cz2qawjk>

LiveChessCloud –

<https://view.livechesscloud.com/#db57e803-5e71-4c28-a4f7-2e4271f32f40>



The Mayor of Darlington, Anne-Marie Curry, makes the first move for IM Richard Palliser on board 1 [all photographs of the Open Final courtesy of Carl Stephens]



2022 Open Counties Championships Final in Darlington

Full details and match card can be found in LMS here
– <https://ecfms.org.uk/lms/node/97271>



Waiting for the final to start

The Open final was extremely close with Yorkshire taking an early lead and Northumberland catching up to reach an 8-8 tie. **Northumberland** won the trophy and Championships title on board count to become the 101st English Counties Champions to add to their online and NCCU titles.

Here is the game from board 1, with Northumberland GM Danny Gormally winning out against Yorkshire IM Richard Palliser.

Richard Palliser - Daniel Gormally [B10]



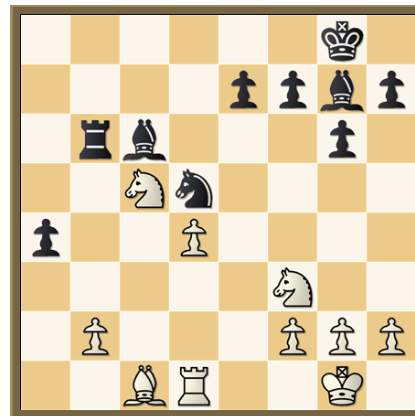
1.c4 c6 2.e4 d5 3.cxd5 cxd5 4.exd5 Nf6

Reaching a line in the Caro-Kann Panov where White can try to hold on to the d5 pawn for a while.

5.Qa4+ Nbd7 6.Nc3 g6 7.Nf3 Bg7 8.Bc4 0-0 9.d3 a6

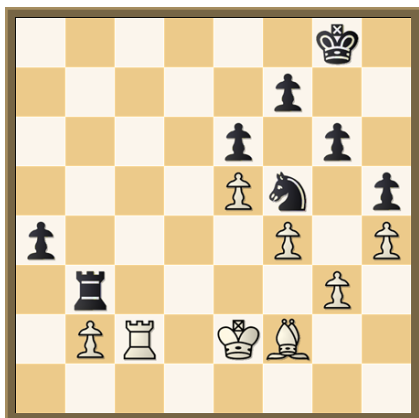


10.Bb3 10. Qa3 is better. Bb3 allows Black's next, with the d-pawn likely to fall shortly. **Nc5 11.Qc4 Nxb3 12.Qxb3 b5 13.a4 Bb7 14.axb5 Nxd5 15.Ne4 axb5** Recovering the d-pawn. Black is now better, with the two bishops now very active. **16.Rxa8 Qxa8 17.0-0 Qa4 18.Qxa4 bxa4 19.Nc5 Bc6 20.d4 Rb8 21.Rd1 Rb4 22.Nd3 Rb3 23.Nc5 Rb6**



Black is now in control with the better minor pieces and the b-pawn as a target, tying down the white bishop on c1.

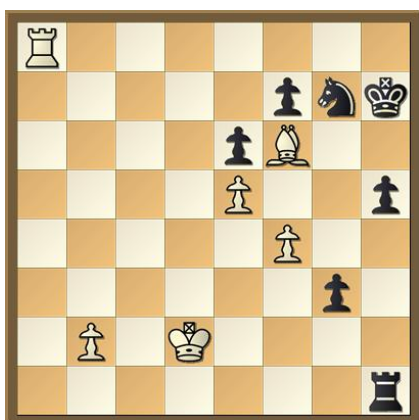
24.h4 h6 25.Ne5 Be8 26.f4 h5 27.Kf2 e6 28.g3 Bf8 29.Ned3 Bb5 30.Bd2 Bxd3 31.Nxd3 Bg7 32.Be3 Rb3 33.Rd2 Ne7 34.Nc5 Rb4 35.Nd3 Rc4 36.Ne5 Rc8 37.Ke2 Nf5 38.Bf2 Rb8 39.Rc2 Bxe5 40.dxe5 Rb3



41.Bc5?

This is probably the losing move, allowing the black rook to infiltrate on the third rank. Better is 41 Kf1.

Nxg3+ 42.Kd1 Nf5 43.Kc1 Rh3 44.Rc4 Rxh4 45.Rxa4 g5 46.Bb6 Rh1+ 47.Kd2 g4 48.Ra8+ Kh7 49.Bd8 g3 50.Bf6 Ng7



0-1



IA Matthew Carr presents the trophy to Northumberland captain FM Tim Wall

Minor Counties Final at Knaphill, near Woking

As the dramatic Open Championship was unfolding in Darlington, an equally close Minor Counties Championship was taking place over 250 miles to the south at Knaphill, near Woking.

The Minor Counties was played between Devon and Norfolk, with Devon winning by 9-7. Full details and match card can be found in LMS here - <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/97264>



ECF Events Director Shohreh Bayat presents the trophy to GM Keith Arkell and Devon captain Jonathan Underwood

Here is the board 1 game from the final played between Devon GM Keith Arkell and Norfolk's Martin Walker, annotated by Keith.

Martin G Walker - Keith C Arkell

Minor Counties Final, board one., 02.07.2022

I've had a busy time since Team England returned from its triumphs at the World Senior Team Championships. Instead of returning to Devon, I hung around the Woking area for a couple of days catching up with my good friends Simon Williams and Blair Connell, who both live nearby.

Devon were due to play Norfolk in the final of the Minor Counties Championship, and Woking had been chosen as a neutral venue.

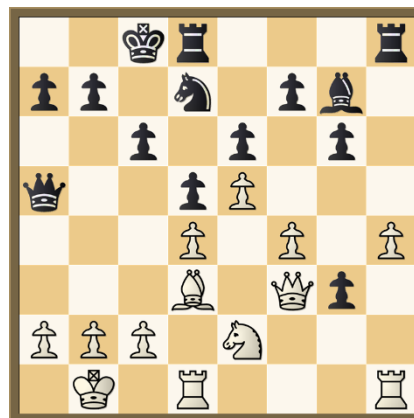
Devon were favourites on the top boards as we fielded a GM and an IM (Jack Rudd), and also on the bottom boards, but Norfolk were slight favourites on the middle boards, so a close contest was anticipated. In the end Devon ran out 9-7 winners, so two days after being presented with team and individual gold medals at the World Senior Team Championship I got to hold the Minor Counties trophy! Here is my game against Norfolk's top board:

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c6 4.Be3 d5 5.Qd2 Qa5 6.e5 h5 7.0-0-0 Nh6 8.f4 Ng4



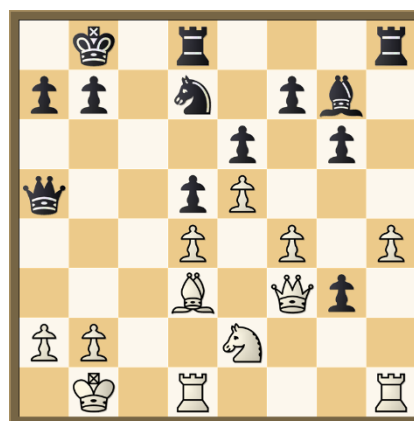
Give me this position again and I'll sit tight on the kingside for the time-being, and first expand on the other flank with moves like ...b5, Nbd7 to b6, etc.

9.Nf3 Nxe3 10.Qxe3 Bg4 11.h3 Bxf3 12.Qxf3 e6 13.Kb1 h4 14.Bd3 Nd7 15.Ne2 0-0-0 16.g4 hxg3 17.h4



Vigorous play by Martin. He can forcibly open up lines with h5 followed by f5. I felt a little uncomfortable around here, but it was clear that I needed to obtain some counterplay with ...c5.

17...c5 18.c3 cxd4 19.cxd4 Kb8



This is a bit slow. It didn't occur to me that I could simply play...Nb8 to c6 here before getting my king safe.

20.Nxg3 Bf8 21.h5 gxh5 22.Rxh5 Be7 23.f5 Qb6 24.Bc2 Rxh5 25.Nxh5



25...Rf8?? This was over-cautious and left me in big trouble. Instead, the straightforward 25...Qc6 26 fxe6 fxe6 27 Qf7 Rc8 28 Bb3 Bg5 would have been fine.

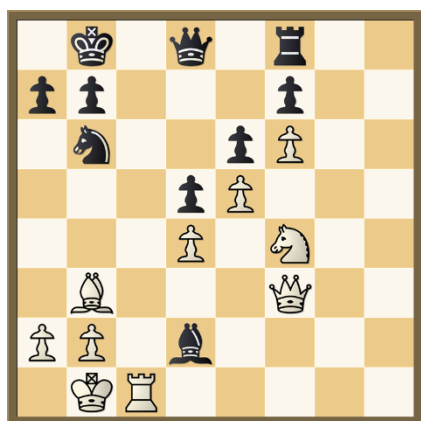
26.Ba4 Suddenly I have a problem defending my knight.

26...Qc7

I thought that by provoking Rc1 I would at least gain access to the d2 square for my bishop. Both of my pieces are short of squares!

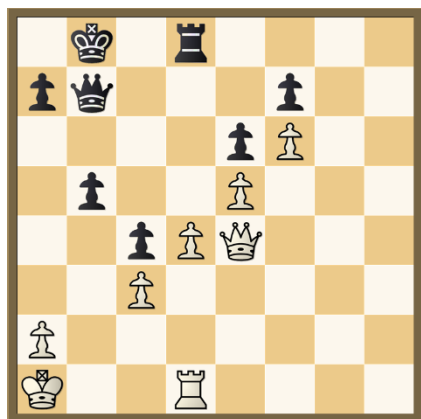
27.Rc1? White returns the favour. Instead the immediate 27 f6 Bb4 (or 27...Bd8 28 Qa3 Rh8 29 Rc1) 28 Qb3 Ba5 29 Qb5 would have forced me to give up a piece with 29...Nxe5.

27...Qd8 28.f6 Bb4 29.Nf4 Nb6 30.Bb3 Bd2



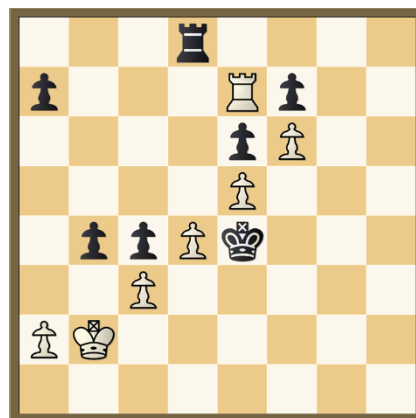
Now I am out of the woods and can even dream of winning the game.

31.Rg1 Nc4 32.Bxc4 dxc4 33.Ne2 Qc7 34.Rd1 Ba5 35.Qe4 b5 36.Nc3 Bxc3 37.bxc3 Rd8 38.Ka1 Qb7



I thought the rook ending presented me with the best winning chances, as there would be opportunities to break up White's position with a well-timed ...b4.

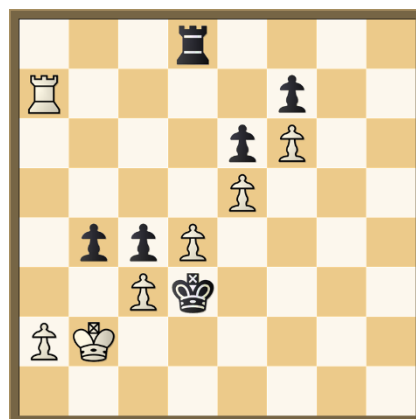
39.Qxb7+ Kxb7 40.Rg1 Kc6 41.Rg7 Rd7 42.Kb2 Kd5 43.Rg8 b4 44.Re8 Ke4 45.Re7 Rd8



46.Rxa7

The losing move. 46 Rxf7 Kd3 47 cxb4 c3+ 48 Kb3 Rc8 49 Rh7 c2 50 Rh1 draws because I can't grab the Rook as 50...c1=Q? 51 Rxc1 Rxc1 52 d5! wins for White, so instead I have to settle for 50...Kxd4 which is equal.

46...Kd3



Now White's rook is stranded and unable to prevent my c-pawn from queening.

47.cxb4 c3+ 48.Kb3 Rc8 49.Rxf7 c2

0-1

U2050 at Wanstead House

The U2050 match was played over 16 boards between Essex and Surrey at Wanstead House and resulted in a win for local team Essex by 8.5 – 7.5. Essex had to

come from behind and overcome a four-point deficit to steal the title.

Full details and match card can be found in LMS here - <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/97257>



Counties Controller Mark Murrell presents the trophy to the Essex U2050 Captain

U1850 at Ullesthorpe

The U1850 match was played over 16 boards between Yorkshire and Middlesex in Ullesthorpe, South Leicestershire, with Middlesex winning by 9-7, having had to start their campaign in the preliminary round and being outrated in the final.

Full details and match card can be found in LMS here - <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/97236>



The victorious Middlesex team outside the venue

U1650 at Wanstead House

Surrey v Warwickshire (Wanstead House)
– Surrey won the U1650 by 13.5 – 2.5 with a powerful team including several players with notable rating increases over the season.

Full details and match card can be found in LMS here - <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/97250>



Counties Controller Mark Murrell presents the U1650 trophy to Surrey Captain Mike Gunn

U1450 at Wanstead House

The U1450 match was played over 12 boards – Essex won the U1450 by 7-5. Essex reached the winning post at 6-1 (and a safe board count) in quick time.

Full details and match card can be found in LMS here - <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/97243>



Counties Controller Mark Murrell presents the U1450 trophy to the Essex Captain

All of the games can be replayed at ---

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/replay-the-games-counties-championship-finals-2022/>

2021/2022 4NCL

Winning captain Zahed Miah reports on a successful season for Chess.com Manx Liberty

After serial champions Guildford 1 left the stage of premium 4NCL team chess for the 2021/2022 season and competed without several top UK grandmasters, it was clear that only Wood Green, Chessable White Rose 1 or Chess.com Manx Liberty could realistically win the event.

The Manx team still consists mostly of members who used to play in the Bundesliga for Trier, a mid-table team between 2006/2007 and 2016/2017. Unfortunately, the former chairman and pillar of SG Trier, Kurt Lellinger, passed away and the club collapsed due to a lack of funding and support. While the Trier chess club still exists, it is just a shadow of what it used to be.

As a consequence, Manx Liberty was established by International Master Dietmar Kolbus, a Manx resident and former Trier sponsor in 2016/2017 and entered Division 3 North. I also became a director of the Manx team.

The transition to move the team to the UK could not have been done without ongoing co-sponsor and Trier organizer Stefan Muellenbruck who ran a very successful campaign to finish SG Trier's last 2016/2017 season in the Bundesliga in style by winning all three matches.

During the same season, Manx Liberty under Dietmar Kolbus secured with other Trier members promotion to Division 2. It shows the exceptional spirit of all the team members to push both teams to success at the same time.

The Manx Liberty team moved to 4NCL Division 1 within two years and became the first challenger of serial 4NCL winner Guildford, but could never match the outstanding quality of Guildford across all games.

With the promotion of Manx Liberty to Division 1, Alan Ormsby and the Scheinberg Family joined the sponsorship team and the team was renamed Chess.com Manx Liberty. In 2021/22 Alexei Shirov joined the team on an occasional basis and was a ground-breaker this season with a flawless performance of 7/7 on board 1.

Julianna Terbe from Hungary played her first season as female player and finished the season undefeated and with important wins over Wood Green and Chessable White Rose.

Constantin Lupulescu was another pillar of strength for the team and now celebrates five seasons of 4NCL chess undefeated on the team's top boards.

Matthew Turner became another addition this season and, while he is an experienced grandmaster, he has also helped the team relentlessly with organisational issues and with his driving services.

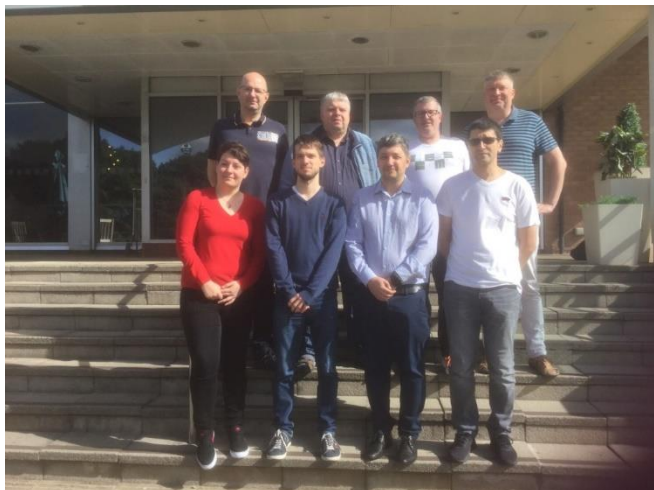
Balazs Csonka joined the team after an impressive performance at the Manx Liberty Masters which was held in September 2021 in Douglas, Isle of Man.

Manx resident Dietmar Kolbus finished the season with $+4 = 7$, undefeated over all 11 games.

While some players are highlighted here, it would be unfair to ignore the contribution of all the other team members who have made the success of the season possible.

It is expected that Chess.com Manx Liberty will remain competitive during the season 2022/2023, but will expect to be challenged again by Wood Green, Chessable White Rose and other teams.

Chess.com Manx Liberty won both matches of the last weekend by 6.5-1.5 and finished the season as the new 4NCL champions.



Players at the last weekend included front left to right: Julianna Terbe, Balazs Csonka, Constantin Lupulescu, Mircea Parligras. Back left to right: Lukasz Cyborowski, Dietmar Kolbus, Matthew Turner, Alexei Shirov.

Here is an important game annotated by the winner Constantin Lupulescu

Lupulescu, Constantin (2627) - Fodor, Tamas Jr. (2526) [D30]

4NCL Main League 2022

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 e6 In another hard-fought match against Cheddleton I had also faced Tamas with the white pieces in a game that finally ended in a draw. This time he chooses to go with his pet line which he has played in a multitude of games.

5.b3 White tries to take advantage of the move order by placing his bishop on b2 as fast as possible to put a dent in Black's normal e5 break.

5.Nc3 Nbd7 would transpose to normal Sem-Slav positions.

5...Ne4 Black is now trying to get to a Stonewall type of position.

5...Nbd7 6.Bd3 Bd6 7.Bb2 0-0 8.0-0 b6 There are many games starting from this position.

6.Bd3 Qa5+?! But now Black combines too many plans while still being underdeveloped. This queen sortie involves a strategical risk as he could end up losing quite some time.

6...f5 would have been the normal approach but probably Black didn't like 7.0-0 and, if 7...Bd6, White

can play directly 8.Ba3, saving a tempo by not having played Bb2.

7.Nfd2!



White prepares to challenge the most advanced black piece on e4 by also preparing f2-f3 if need be.

7.Bd2 Nxd2 8.Nbxd2 g6 is less convincing as Black would enjoy good control of the dark squares; 7.Nbd2?? Qc3+ would be embarrassing.

7...Nd7 8.0-0 Nxd2 Black has managed to swap one pair of pieces which will help with his cramped position. However, he has lost a lot of time in the process.

8...f5 would just weaken Black's position after 9.f3 Nxd2 10.Bxd2 Qd8 11.Nc3.

9.Bxd2 Qd8 A sad necessity, but the alternatives were no better. At least on d8 the queen can safeguard against the e4 break for a while.

9...Bb4 10.a3 Bxd2 11.Nxd2 0-0 12.b4 would have given White very easy play.

10.Nc3 White enjoys a significant development advantage, but the position is not so simple as his bishop on d2 is quite awkwardly placed.

10...Nf6 11.Qc2 11.e4? would just spoil White's advantage. 11...dxc4! 12.Bxc4 Qxd4; although Black is very underdeveloped, White cannot really use this, due to his awkwardly placed pieces.

11...Be7 12.Rad1!



Completing development before taking action.

12...b6 Black tries to place his bishop on b7 before White has time to play e4.

12...0-0 13.Bc1 was my idea, finally being ready for the e4 break.

13.e4 dxc4 14.Bxc4 Qxd4? Black doesn't want to just suffer in a passive position, but this move loses by force.

14...0-0 15.Bc1 was preferable.

15.Bf4!



White wins some vital tempi by pushing the black queen around.

15...Qc5 16.e5+— Black's knight doesn't have a good square to retreat to.

16...Nh5 16...Nd5 17.Ne4 Qa5 18.Bxd5+—; 16...Nd7 17.Ne4 Qa5 18.Bxe6! fxe6 19.Qxc6 Rb8 20.Qxe6+— with Nd6 coming as a killer blow.

17.Ne4 Qa5 18.Be2 Suddenly Black's king is in mortal danger.

18...Nxf4 19.Qxc6+ Bd7 19...Kf8 20.Qxa8 Nxe2+ 21.Kh1 Qa6 22.Nd6 Bxd6 23.exd6 with d7 coming with decisive effect.

20.Qxa8+ Bd8 21.Bb5



A nice finishing touch from several winning lines.

1-0

Interview with Holmfirth Chess Club's Rob Mitchell *by Steve Westmoreland*

Rob Mitchell is the Club Secretary and Junior Manager at Holmfirth Chess Club. The club is located at the Stumble Inn near Holmbridge.

Rob is well thought of by all and regarded as an immensely nice guy who is keen to do events for the community. Recently, Rob has organised two Macmillan Cancer Charity fundraising events at Holmfirth that were to see simul held with adults and juniors. This was alongside a prodigious amount of cake and some awesome savouries (thank you Saba for the spring rolls and samosas!). This was to raise sponsorship for a 27-mile hike in the Peak District.

Rob kindly agreed to a ChessMoves interview.

So Rob, please could you give us some detail about yourself?

I live in Meltham as a confirmed bachelor. My two main loves are chess and reading, particularly the classics and especially Charles Darwin. I am 43 years old and very much like the quiet life.

At this moment the interview was interrupted by a huge door slam and shouting, as the interviewer's children kicked up a huge fight (Jacob and Olivia feature in various places in the article). The interviewer stared wistfully at the words 'quiet life'.

I have recently taken up walking as a brand-new adventure and was not previously outdoorsy.

What is it you do?

I am a Teaching Assistant at a primary school in Huddersfield, having previously worked as a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). I have done this line of work for over 20 years in two different schools, finding my career choice immensely rewarding. I currently work at Wellhouse Juniors and Infants.



It has gone a bit wrong for Harley

What makes you such an avid chess player?

I remember an old quote that 'chess is a playground of the mind'. I love a fun, interesting game with lots of problems to solve but I do not like theoretical dead draws! I love the problem-solving and this helps in real life for seeing what is coming down the line in non-chess situations. Chess helps me with real life skills, especially organisation and planning.



Andrew Drabble in his demolition (bar one draw) of the adults

You have taken over as Junior Manager this year for Holmfirth and thrive in the role. Why do you enjoy this so much?

Several of the kids are older than those in my day job, which provides a good challenge. I really enjoy developing the kids, improving skill levels and also doing the little stuff like the Player of the Week trophy.

There is a core of kids whom I am very proud to see developing into adults and the club is less of a social club now. It is a proper chess club.

We now have some really keen and studious kids, that have developed from giggly 12-year-olds to genuine contenders. I am really enjoying the journey there.



Steve Westmoreland realising he may be in for a tough game against Awen. Olivia is in the background, helping the younger ones.

You also took over this season as Club Secretary. What possessed you?

I volunteered as we had one person doing almost everything. It was important to pitch in and avoid burn-out. It is important to share the load for a healthy club and, as everyone chips in, we have a great team in place.



Awen and Jacob in the adult simul.

What was the driver behind the Macmillan's charity walk?

The team name is the Wellhouse Wanderers. Scott (my colleague) approached me with the idea of raising funds. It is a team effort from the school with Scott (teacher), Katie (Classroom Assistant) and Michelle (Classroom Assistant).

We are doing the Macmillan Mighty Hike in the Peak District to really maximise the challenge. I have been training since March and expect to walk around 27 miles.

Macmillan is a charity close to my heart after losing my Dad to cancer. I absolutely wanted to step forward, raise the money and complete the walk for him.



'Louis the Lion' on his first outing at Holmfirth

How well has the event gone?

Fund-raising has been far more than I ever hoped for. I was anticipating £50 but the take-up from club members, parents and the Stumble Inn has been immense. I would particularly like to thank Kaz, the landlady, for continuing to seek sponsorship from customers.

People made cake and savouries, and club members agreed to complete simul and set up early. On the adult night we raised £180 and £60 for the juniors. Kaz initially raised £190 and is doing another drive now that should see us raise in excess of £300.

I am quite emotional just thinking about this.



Steve and Rogan engage in a Queen's Gambit vs the Dutch.

Can people still contribute?

Yes; here is the JustGiving link - [Robert Mitchell is fundraising for Macmillan Cancer Support \(justgiving.com\)](https://www.justgiving.com/Robert-Mitchell-is-fundraising-for-Macmillan-Cancer-Support)



Our club secretary Rob and Kaz, the Landlady of the Stumble Inn, pose and eat cake.

ECF Online

Nigel Towers reports on ECF Online Clubs and Tournaments

The number of online chess clubs and competitive events continues to grow alongside the return to over the board chess. This month saw an increase of around 400 new members in the Open Club. The current membership levels (mid-July 2022) are as follows:

Chess.com ECF Open club - 5,509

Chess.com ECF Members - 1,774

Lichess English Players - 1,517

We continue with three tournaments a week in the Lichess English Chess Players Club and four per week in the Chess.com ECF Members Club. All the club tournaments are ECF online rated with events submitted for rating on the 14th and 28th of each month.

ECF Online Classical Swiss



This month saw the first two ECF Online Rated Classical Tournaments on 3 and 17 July. These will now be fortnightly events open to all English Chess Players team members, with four rounds at 50|10 time control on alternate Sundays. Rounds start at 10.30 am, 2.00 pm, 5.00 pm and 8.00 pm and the event provides an opportunity to get an online standard play rating at a classical time control.

ECF Online Grand Prix – 2022

We have reached month 7 of the ECF Online Grand Prix which runs for ten months from January until October 2022. We are following the same format as the 2021 series with the blitz events running on the first Sunday of each month and the rapid on the third Sunday. The

leader board can be found here for the two series - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2022-online-grand-prix-series/>

Rapid Events Six and Seven (Sunday 19 June and 17 July) - Rapid Events 6 and 7 were won by Chris Davison who moves back into the lead in the rapid leader board - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2022-online-grand-prix-series-rapid-leaderboards/>

Blitz Event Seven (Sunday 3 July) – Blitz Event 7 was won by @Firead, followed by Chris Davison and @rocktroll. Michael Harris is still in the lead, followed by Chris Davison. <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2022-online-grand-prix-series-blitz-s/>

ECF Online Marathon: Some tactics along the way – Answers

Here are the answers to the Marathon tactics puzzles from last month



Anato1iy22 (2043) – GM Mikhail_Golubev (2427)
Black to play. Checkmate in 8 moves.

Answer

19... **Rexg3+ 20.fxf3, Bxg3 21.Nxf6+** (throwing in a check), **gxf6 22.Rf2 Bxh2+** with mate to follow on h2.
[Mikhail_Golubev won by resignation .0-1



Checkmatealot (2261) - chess4ever64 (2103)

Black to play. It's the same theme as the previous puzzle and once again checkmate in 8 moves – this time all forced.

Answer

Another destruction sacrifice on g3 followed by a king hunt. **22... Rxc3+ 23.hxc3 Rxc3+ 24.Kf1 Rf3+ 25.Ke2 Rf2+ 26.Kd3 Rxd2+ 27.Ke3 Bxf4+ 28.Kxf4 Qd6+ 29.Kf3 Qg3#** chess4ever64 won by checkmate. 0–1



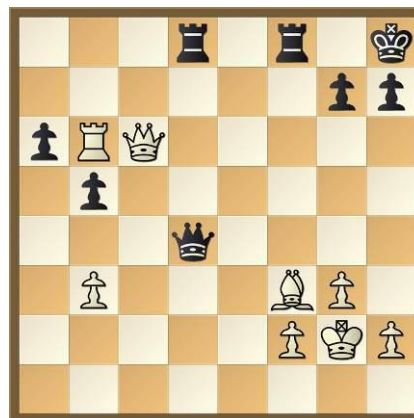
AlexRoyle10 (2013) - m00nmaker (1724)

White to play and win.

23.Rxd8 Rxd8 24.Rxg6+ Kxg6 25.Ba6 d5 26.c7 Re8 27.c8Q Rxc8 28.Bxc8 d4

AlexRoyle10 won by resignation.

1–0



RichardABates (2327) v Exlsambard (1905)

Black to play and win.

Answer

33... Rxf3 34.Kxf3 Rf8+ 35.Kg2 Qxf2+ 36.Kh3 Qf5+ 37.Kh4 g5+ 38.Kh5 Qh3+ 39.Kxg5 Rg8+ 40.Kf4 Qf1+ 41.Ke5 RichardABates won on time 1–0

Endgame Challenge – Mastery more than prize-worthy

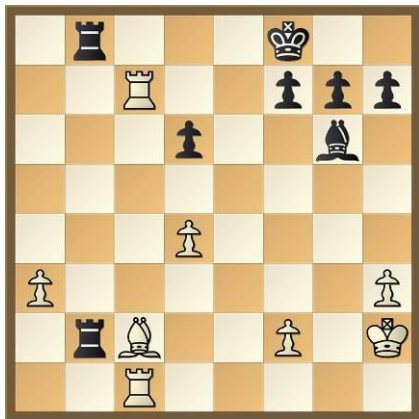
The June Jubilee bank holiday weekend saw a welcome return for the English Chess Players Endgame Challenge on Saturday 4 June with two thematic arenas based on positions from the games of endgame master Akiba Rubinstein. Here is the game behind one of the positions used in the online tournament.



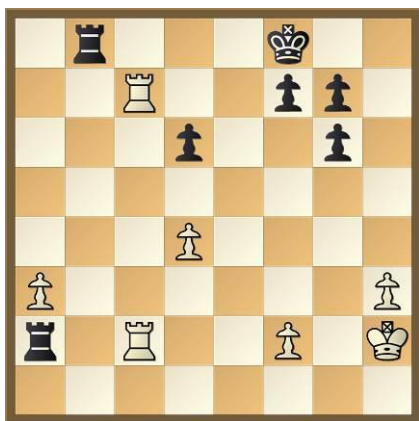
Akiba Rubinstein (pictured) was a Polish Grandmaster who played tournament chess between 1903 and 1932. By 1912 Rubinstein had established himself as one of the strongest players in the world and was due to play in a World Championship match against the great Emanuel

Lasker which had to be abandoned due to the outbreak of World War 1. Rubinstein's style was positional, and he often aimed for an endgame position where his mastery of rook and pawn endings in particular was second to none.

The first of the bank holiday online arenas started from the position after Spielmann's move **37 Bc2** from the game Spielmann v Rubinstein in the St Petersburg tournament of 1909.

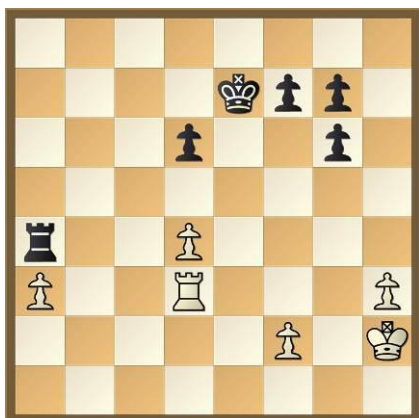


The 1909 game continued **37... Ra2 38.Bxg6 hxg6 39.R1c2**



40. Rxc2 40 Rxa3 wins another pawn but allows Rd7 when White's rooks become very active. **40 ... Ra8 41.Rc3** the only way to defend the a- and d-pawns **41...Ra4 42.Rd3 Ke7**

White's position is already very difficult with four isolated pawns and the white rook tied to the defence of two of them. Rubinstein's plan was to activate his king to pick up one of the two weak pawns.



43.Kg3?!

Lasker's annotation notes that '43.d5 was necessary, stopping the advance of Black's king. Then if 43...Kf6 44.Rf3+, or 43...f5 44.Re3+ and 45.Re6'

43...Ke6

Again, Lasker notes here that 'the mastery with which Rubinstein implements the following endgame is more than prizeworthy'.

44.Kf3 Kd5 45.Ke2 g5 !

46.Rb3 f6 47.Ke3 Kc4 48.Rd3 d5 49.Kd2 Ra8 50.Kc2 Ra7 51.Kd2 Re7 52.Rc3+ White loses a pawn anyway. If 52.Re3 Rb7 53.Rd3 Rb2+ 54.Ke3 Ra2 and White is in zugzwang.

52...Kxd4 53.a4 Ra7 54.Ra3 Ra5 55.Ra1 Kc4 56.Ke3 d4+ 57.Kd2 Rf5 58.Ke1 Kb4 59.Ke2 Ka5 60.Ra3 Rf4 61.Ra2 Rh4 62.Kd3 Rxh3+ 63.Kxd4 Rh4+ 64.Kd3 Rxa4 65.Re2 Rf4 66.Ke3 Kb6 67.Rc2 Kb7 68.Rc1 Ra4 69.Rh1 Kc6 70.Rh7 Ra7 71.Ke4 Kd6 72.Kf5 g6+ !

73.Kxg6 Rxh7 74.Kxh7 Ke5 75.Kg6 g4

0-1

News and Views

ECF

At the close of nominations for the direct members' representatives for 2021-22 there were two nominations in each category of membership except for the silver posts, where there were five nominations. Read more at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/direct-members-reps-elections-2022/>

Arbiters

The arbiters for the Chennai Olympiad have been announced. The English Chess Federation is the only Federation to have more than one senior appointee. Congratulations to Alex Holowczak and Shohreh Bayat, and also to Lara Barnes who has been appointed as a Match Arbiter.

Caplin Menchik Memorial

The event was a great success. Congratulations to IM Joanna Dworakowska who pipped WIM Lan Yao, who was leading going into the last round. You can read a report at <https://www.chessdom.com/im-joanna-dworakowska-is-the-winner-of-1st-caplin-menchik-memorial/>

National Schools Championships

Congratulations to Westminster School who are this year's National Champions. Please find a full report at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/national-schools-championships-finals/>

Seniors

Hot on the heels of the World Senior Chess Team Championships, covered in depth elsewhere, came the European Seniors Individual Chess Championship. Many congratulations to Terry Chapman who took silver and Anthony Stebbings who took bronze in the 65+ section. Final standings at <http://chess-results.com/tnr642034.aspx?lan=3&art=1&rd=9&turd=et=YES&flag=30> See Peter Wells' article elsewhere in this issue for analysis of a fine game by Terry Chapman.

There are more important seniors events scheduled this year – access their details via <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/seniors-events-and-dates-for-2022/>

Junior Tournaments

The following international junior tournaments are coming up: the World Youth Championship (U14,16,18) 5 – 17 September; the World Cadets

Championship (U8,10,12) 15 – 28 September; and the European Youth Championship (U8,10,12,14,16,18) 5 – 15 November. Find out more at

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/announcement-for-international-junior-tournaments-june-22/>

Retirement

Andrew Butterworth of Chess Direct has announced his retirement. He and his business partner Anne started the company just over 30 years ago. Andrew cites as some of the most significant events for the business over the years: Nigel Short's 1993 World Championship match against Garry Kasparov, the rise of the internet, the pandemic, and Brexit. Throughout all these events, he says: 'We (Anne and I) always tried our best'.

4NCL

Congratulations to GM Mark Hebden on winning the 28th 4NCL Congress, which was held at Leamington Spa earlier this month. You can find the final standings at <https://chess-results.com/tnr653403.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=5&flag=30> and the list of prize-winners at

https://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/prizewinners_28.htm

GM Danny Gormally has written an annotated report at

https://www.4ncl.co.uk/reports2223/rep.gormallyd_leamington22.htm

Many thanks to GM Nigel Davies for his annotated game below against Aron Sanders.

Sanders, A - Davies, N [C07]

4NCL Open Leamington (1), 08.07.2022

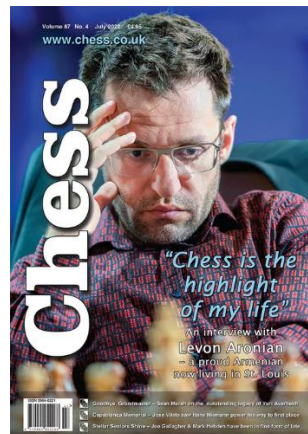
This was my second 4NCL Congress and I must say that the venue was superb. Factoring in the great organisation, I was left with little excuse for my lacklustre performance (one win followed by four draws). I can say that it was not through lack of trying, and I hope that by continually beating my head against the wall I will eventually break through and become a shadow of my former self. Here is my first-round game, a win against a very polite young man who I hope will go far.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5 4.exd5 Qxd5 Probably Black's most solid option against the Tarrasch (3.Nd2). **5.Ngf3 cxd4 6.Bc4 Qd6 7.0-0 Nf6 8.Nb3 Nc6 9.Nbxd4 Nxd4 10.Qxd4** This has the reputation of being a drawing

line, but there's still lots of play left in the position. 10.Nxd4 is the standard move. 10...Bd7 11.Bf4 Qxd4 12.Nxd4 Rc8 13.Bb3 Bc5 14.Nf3 Ke7 15.Rfe1 Rhd8 16.Ne5 Be8 17.h3 h6 18.g4?! This weakens the kingside and gives Black chances. 18...Nd7 19.Rad1 g5 20.Bg3 Nxe5 21.Bxe5 Bc6 Suddenly Black wants to play 22...Bf3 to take control of the d-file. 22.Bc3 Bf3 23.Rxd8 Rxd8 24.Bc4 h5?! Apparently a mistake. Black should play 24...Bd4 25.Bxd4 Rxd4, with slightly the more comfortable game. 25.Be2?! The engine points out that White could play 25.gxh5, after which 25...Bxh5 26.Re5 Bd4 27.Rxg5 Bg6 28.Bxd4 Rxd4 29.Bd3 Bxd3 30.cxd3 Rxd3 would be a draw. Black can do slightly better with 25...Bd4, but it's not much for him. 25...hxg4 26.hxg4 Be4 27.Rd1 Rc8 And not 27...Bxc2 because of 28.Bf6+. 28.Bb5 Bd5 29.Rd2 Bd6 Suddenly White is in serious trouble because of the possibility of Black bringing his rook to the h-file. 30.Bd4?! Bf4 31.Be3 Rh8 32.Rxd5 Understandable desperation. 32.Kf1 a6 leaves White without a good move: retreating to either a4 or f3 allows 33...Bf3. 32...exd5 33.Bxf4 33.Bxa7 Kd6 should also be winning for Black, though it might have been more difficult. 33...gxf4 34.Kg2 Kf6 35.Bd3 Kg5 36.Bf5 Re8 37.Kf3 Re1 38.a4 a5 39.b3 Re7 40.Bd3 Re6 41.Bb5 Rh6 42.Bd7 Rh3+ 43.Kg2 Rc3 44.Bf5 Kf6 Black's king is heading for the queenside and the newly weakened dark squares. 45.f3 Ke5 46.Kf2 Kd4 47.Ke2 Re3+

0-1

Chess Magazine - taster



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Tweet of the Month



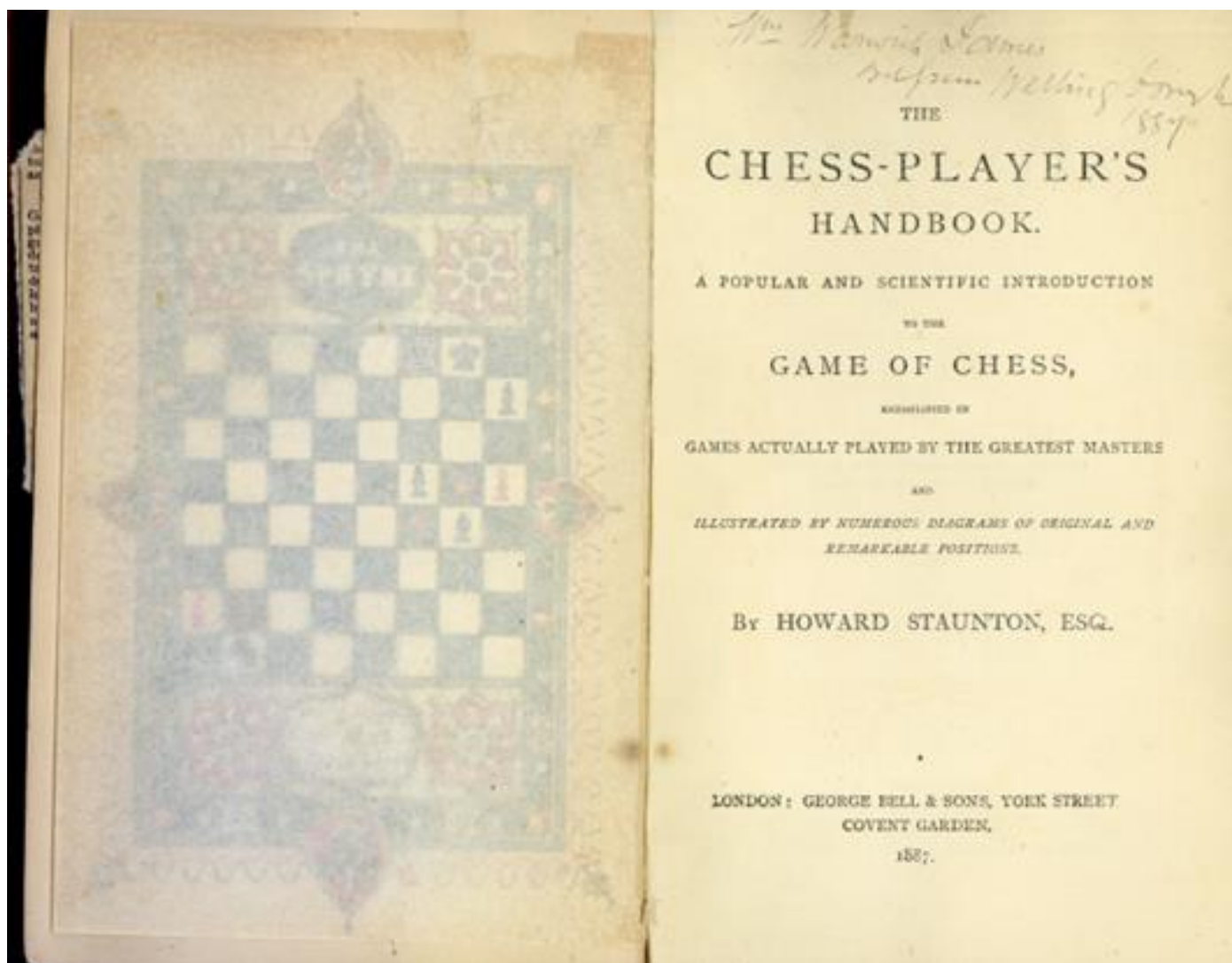
Natasha Regan
@NatashaRegan123

Nice moment on the plane on the way to the World Seniors when the pilot announced there were some very special passengers and wished us the best of luck, hoping that the English and Welsh teams bring back the trophies @ecfchess @ecf_women @christheanimal @GMJohnEmms

Gems from the Library

The Chess Player's Handbook

by Katharine Short

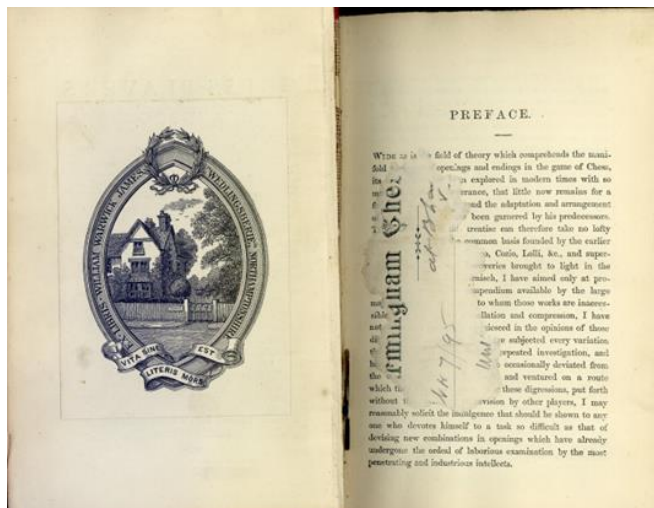


For this issue I have chosen the *Chess Player's Handbook* by Howard Staunton (1810-1874). Staunton was an English chess master, considered the best player in the world between 1843 and 1851. He was the main organiser of the first international chess tournament, held in London in 1851 coinciding with the Great Exhibition. He also promoted the use of standardised chess pieces of clearly distinguishable shape. In 1845 he started writing a chess column for the *London Illustrated News*, writing over 1,400 columns for the paper by the end of his career.

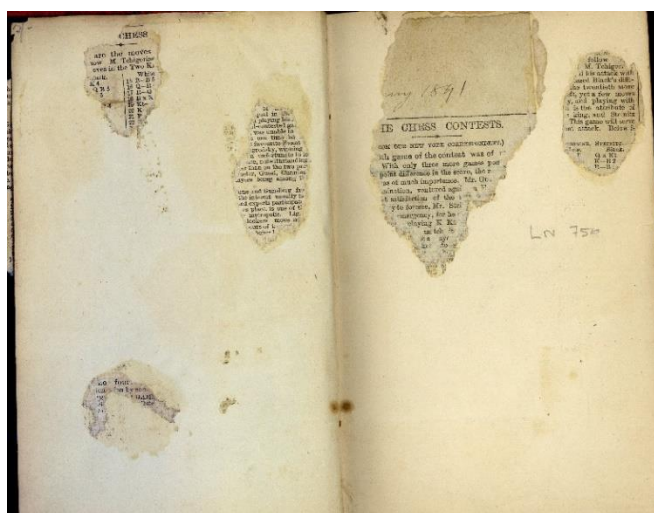
At DMU Special Collections we have an extensive run of *London Illustrated News* and were able to find

Staunton's columns, a nice bit of cross-referencing across our collections.

The *Chess Player's Handbook* was Staunton's most famous work, first published in 1848 and reprinted several times. These three copies date to 1887, 1890 and 1893. I want to focus on the 1887 edition. The book contains an inscription; it's hard to read but you can make out 'Wm Warwick James, Wellingborough, 1887'. Then there is a bookplate on another page which confirms that the book belonged to William Warwick James.



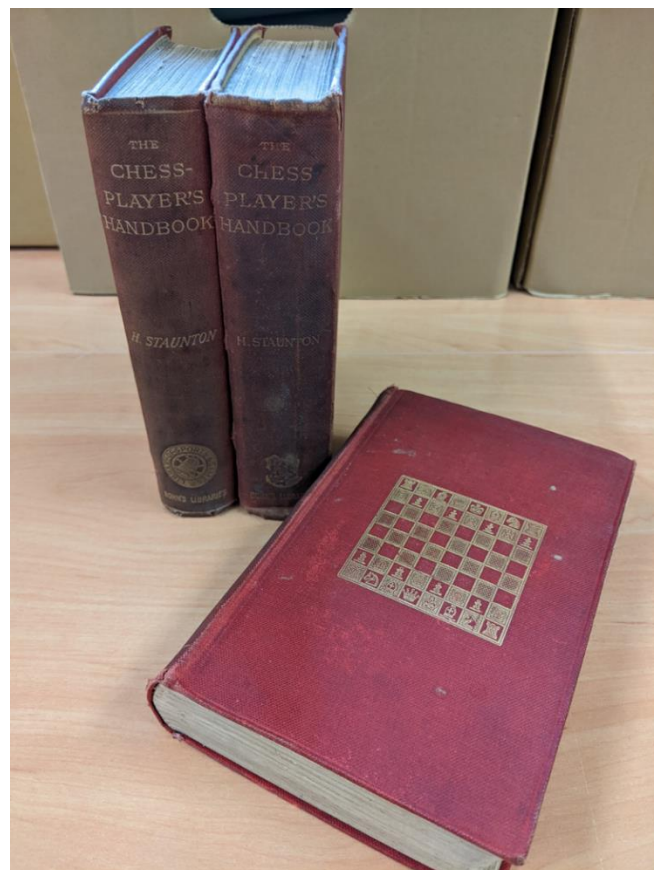
There are also the remains of newspaper clippings about chess, which have been glued into the book at some point and then removed, leaving damage and tantalising traces of the original articles.



William Warwick James, OBE (1874-1965) was a noted dental surgeon who worked at the Royal Dental and Great Ormond Street hospitals. He is best known for his work at the 3rd London General Hospital during the First World War. As a member of the maxillo-facial unit he was responsible for reconstructing the jaws of wounded servicemen. His biography in Plarr's *Lives of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons* notes that he was born at Wellingborough School, where his father was a teacher, and that he "took a special delight in playing chess and solving chess problems".

These are the plain facts: we know that William Warwick James owned this book in 1887, and we know he enjoyed chess enough for it to be mentioned in his biography. How delightful though to permit some speculation! This copy of *The Chess Player's Handbook* was given to Warwick James in 1887 when he was

thirteen years old, perhaps as a gift. Perhaps this book nurtured an existing interest in chess – or perhaps it was the spark that began that interest? As an adult Warwick James ensured his bookplate was added to the treasured volume. And then, perhaps after his death in 1965, his library was dispersed. The book found its way to chess player and writer Peter Clarke and then, 135 years after it was published, to the ECF Library, to be treasured for many more years.



Remember that the ECF Library and archive at DMU Special Collections are open for everyone; please contact archives@dmu.ac.uk for enquiries or to make an appointment.

--- Katharine Short, Special Collections Manager

JUNIOR MOVES

Littlewood's Choice

An interesting question is whether children of strong chess-players are inclined to emulate their parents and take up the game.

Clearly in my own case I followed in the footsteps of my father and did reasonably well at the royal game. However, none of my siblings were inclined to do the same and this also proved the case with my own children, who decided to explore other avenues in their life.

There are at the moment in British chess some examples of children of good players doing very well; for example, Nina Pert, who is the daughter of IM Richard Pert, has had some good results.

This encouraged me to look for other examples and I came across the following game by Alannah Ashton who is the daughter of Adam Ashton.

Alannah Ashton vs Robert Clegg

Nottingham Major 23/04/22

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bd7 6.Bd3 cxd4 7.0-0!?



This is a well-known variation of the Advanced French and the normal continuation is 7...cxd4, when the main line runs 7...Qb6 8.0-0 Nxd4 9.Nxd4 Qxd4 10.Nc3 and White has compensation for the pawn sacrifice. Alannah's choice is very enterprising and sets her opponent a whole new set of questions to answer.

7...Qb6 Simplest for Black is 7...dxc3 8.Nxc3 Nge7 9.Bg5 a6 with slightly the better position.

8.Re1 Nge7 9.h4 h6 10.h5?! Better for White is 10.Nbd2 dxc3 11.bxc3 Nc8 12.Rb1 Qc7 13.c4 with dynamic compensation for the pawn sacrifice.

10...0-0-0?



This exposes Black to a vicious attack. Much safer is 10...Rc8 11.a3 a6 12.b4 when there is everything to play for.

11.cxd4 Kb8?! Stronger is 11....Nxd4 12.Nxd4 Qxd4 13.Nc3 which is only slightly better for White.

12.Nc3 g5 13.Na4 Qc7 14.Nc5?! Better is the preparatory move 14.Bd2 which gives White a clear advantage.

14.....Nc8? 14...Nf5! would have given Black a good chance of equalising.

15.Be3 Bxc5 16.dxc5 Rdf8? Black would have more chances after 16...g4! 17.Nh4 d4 18.Bd2 Nxe5 19.Bf4 Nf3+ 20.Qxf3 gxf3 21.Bxc7+ Kxc7 22.Nxf3 when White has only a slightly better ending. Now Alannah really goes for it!

17.b4!? Nxb4 18.Rb1 Nxd3 19.Qxd3 Bc6 20.Nd4 Ne7 21.Rb2 Ka8 22.Reb1 Rb8 23.Qa3 Nc8? The last chance for Black to defend was 23...Nf5! when the position remains very double-edged.

24.Rb6 Ne7 25.Bd2 Rhc8 26.R1b5! Re8? Losing immediately, but both sides were in time pressure and so Alannah momentarily missed the winning move.

27.f4? Rg8? However, given a second chance she makes no mistake.

28.Qxa7+!



Kxa7 29.Ra5 mate

The winner of this game is only ten years old but she displayed great energy in executing her attack and is clearly a bright prospect for the future.

If you have played any exciting games as a youngster that you would like to have published in my column, then please send them to me at plittl@hotmail.com. I cannot promise that they will appear, but I will give them every consideration.

--- Paul Littlewood

Hola from the FIDE World School Chess Championships 2022 in Panama!

A contemporaneous report by Joseph Morrison, from Room 609 in the Wyndham Panama Albroom Hotel, Panama City



The author Joseph Morrison (right) with team-mates Eugenia Karas and Alexander Kairat

It has been a very exciting chess tournament over the last ten days with over 400 players from all over the world. The opening ceremony was amazing with acrobats hanging from ropes in the ceiling and lots of Panamanian music and dancing. The playing hall is enormous and there are cameramen walking around filming while we play to live streaming inside the playing area for the parents and coaches watching the screens in the hall outside. Lots of players queued up to meet GM Pepe, who is commenting on the games as they are being played. I met him too and asked him who his favourite player was and, of course, it is Magnus Carlsen.

England have played really well. Alexander Kairat was so close to getting a medal in the U9 Open and U1400 Blitz tournament, coming fourth overall in both.

Eugenia Karas came ninth in the U15 Girls tournament; she got a draw in her game against the section winner.

I played in the U13 Open and the game I enjoyed most was against Oliver Boydell from the USA in round 2.

Morrison, Joseph - Boydell, Oliver [A36]

World Schools U13 Championships Panama (2.10),

18.06.2022

I was a bit nervous before this game as my opponent is a two-time American Champion who has his own chess website! He has even been on Good Morning America to advertise the chess book he has written. I was worried he had written more chess books than I have read and he's only one year older than me!!

1.c4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.e3 d6 6.Nge2 e5 7.0-0 Nge7 8.Nd5 Nxd5 9.cxd5 Ne7



10.e4 10.d4 I now know is the main move played here, e.g. 10...cxd4 11.exd4 0-0 12.dxe5 Bxe5 13.Nc3 Bf5 14.Bh6 Bg7 15.Bxg7 Kxg7 16.Qd4+ and White is better.

10...f5 11.d3 0-0 12.Kh1 Probably a wasted move. I should play f4 straightaway as there is no danger on the a7-g1 diagonal.

12...Bd7 13.f4 Rc8 14.Qc2 b5. 14...c4, which we both missed, could have been strong. 15.dxc4 fxe4 16.Bxe4 b5 17.b3 bxc4 18.bxc4 Bb5 and Black has some serious pressure.

15.fxe5 Bxe5 16.Bf4 Bxf4 17.Nxf4



I feel that I have some control now with Ne6 coming.

17...c4 18.Rae1 cxd3 19.Qxd3 Now things are getting clearer. I am glad I played Kh1 and now I am in a better position than him.

19...fxe4 20.Bxe4 Nf5 20...Qc7 21.Bxg6 doesn't quite work: 21...Nxb6 22.Nxb6 Rxf1+ 23.Rxf1 hxb6 24.Qxb6+ Kh8 is a draw unless I get too clever. 25.Rf7 Qc1+ 26.Kg2 Rc2+ and Black wins.

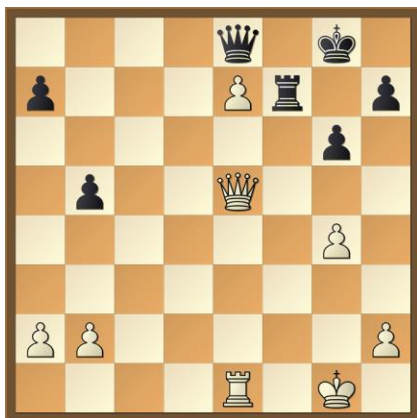
21.Ne6 Hoping that my e6 pawn will be huge.

21...Bxe6 22.dxe6 Rc5 The losing move, but the position was quite hard for Black.

22...Ne7 23.Rxf8+ Qxf8 24.Qxd6 was what I was going to play but the computer says that Black's pieces are well coordinated and that he has chances to hold on.

23.Bxf5 Rxf5 24.Rxf5 Rxf5 25.e7 Qe8 26.Qxd6 And here the co-ordination isn't so good for Black to defend successfully. He doesn't have his best blockader (the knight) any more. All I have to do is break through now, but it took me a little while to work it out.

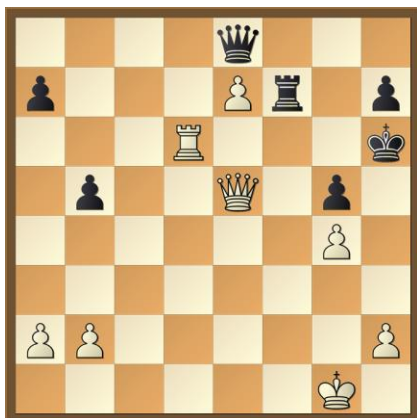
26...Kf7 27.Qe6+ Kg7 28.g4 Rf7 29.Qe5+ Kg8 30.Qd5 Kg7 31.Qe5+ Kg8 32.Kg1



Avoiding later checks by the black queen and rook.

32...Rg7 33.Qd5+ Kh8 34.Qd8 Rg8 35.Qd4+ Rg7 36.Rc1 Kg8 37.Qd5+ Rf7 37...Kh8 is a tougher defence. **38.Qe5 h6** What else? This, at least, gives Black another move (Kh7) as he is fast running out of moves with the queen and rook: **39.Rc8 Qxc8 40.e8Q+ Qxe8 41.Qxe8+ Kh7 42.Qxb5.**

38.Rc7 Kh8 39.Rd7 Kg7 40.Qe5+ Kh6 41.Rd3 g5 42.Rd6+



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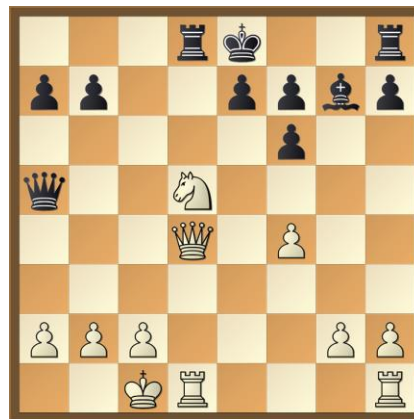
We had a surprise guest before round 8. The wife of the President of Panama came and talked to the players. We started the round very late as so many people wanted to take photos. I really enjoyed playing lots of chess in Panama and have learnt a new Spanish word which is everywhere here 'ajedrez', but it still quite difficult to say!

IMPROVERS

Paul Littlewood on Tactics

In modern warfare when an enemy missile is deflected it has its course changed so that it will miss its original target.

A chess piece can also be deflected so that it can no longer perform the earlier task it was required to do. Consider the following position:



Girsch v Man
Canada 1963

The black queen was deflected from the defence of c7 by **1.Qa4+** whereupon Black resigned because if **1...Qxa4** then **2.Nc7+ Kf8 3.Rxd8+ Qe8 4.Rxe8** mate.

A more complex example is the following:



Penrose – Blau
Hastings 1958-59

One of the greatest English players of his generation, Jonathan Penrose firstly deflects the black pawn on f7 from guarding g6.

1.e6 fxe6 and then he follows up with a multi-deflection move that beautifully illustrates the rickety nature of Black's position: **2.Nxd5!** At this stage Black resigned because of the variations:

(a) 2...Qxd5 3.Qxe7 mate (b) 2...Nxd5 3.Bxg6+ and wins the black queen (c) 2...exd5 3.Rxe7+ wins (d) 2....cxd5 3.Bb5! A deflecting pin... and if the bishop is taken then 4.Qxe7 mate.

Defending against deflection motifs requires you to take preventative action before the deflection occurs, otherwise you will be helpless. Consider the following position:



Farbood – Panno
Varna 1962

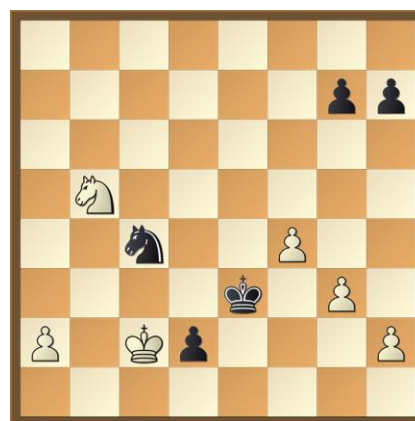
White has several ways to get out of check and he needs to be very careful not to allow his opponent a deflection chance. In the game he chose **1.Kf1?** but then resigned after the brilliant deflection **1...Qh4!** His only chance of survival was 1.Kg2 when Black has a very strong attack after 1...Rxf3! but he still has to prove the win.

Here are two examples to solve yourself, with the answers being at the end of the article ---



N.Littlewood – Roth
Havana 1966

How did my uncle, playing White, win with a pretty deflection?



Barcza – Simagin
Budapest vs Moscow 1949

How did Black cleverly use deflection to queen his pawn?

Answers

N.Littlewood – Roth

White wins by 1.Re8! with the main variation being 1....Kg7 2.Rxf8 Kxf8 3.Qxf6+ Ke8 4.Bf7+ Kd7 5.Qe6+ Kd8 6.Qe8 mate.

Barcza – Simagin

Black wins by 1...Na3+! 2.Nxa3 Ke2 and the black d-pawn cannot be stopped from queening.

NM Alfie Onslow – A Chess Journey

National Master Alfie Onslow tells his story of chess playing during the pandemic and his return to over the board.



The Covid pandemic has affected us chess enthusiasts in many ways. Despite the lack of over the board chess in the first year of the pandemic it was great to see the game we love grow significantly. Many returned to chess as a result of the online boom where streamers partnered with chess stars to bring about wider audiences. Others were reinvigorated by hit series *The Queen's Gambit*, or simply just having extra time on their hands to dabble in hobbies once forgotten.

However, my return to chess was slightly different. By early 2019 I had started losing my passion for the game as my focus turned towards sports, having fun with my mates and my education (sort of!). For a few years I wasn't sure if I would play much competitive chess again. In October 2020 I caught Covid. Having been a fit teen I assumed it would merely be a cold or slight flu. Unfortunately, the virus changed the direction of my life as I was diagnosed with long Covid and missed my last year of school and first year of university.

During this period, I was completely housebound, unable to play any sport or spend any quality time with my friends. Understandably, I was pretty low and didn't see a future for myself. Having felt like I had exhausted Netflix at this point I remembered my childhood passion for chess.

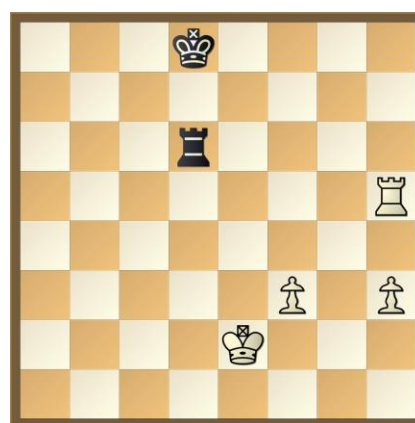
I really enjoyed playing some casual online blitz, training my brain to work again. At first it was tough, playing pretty much on intuition (calculating was too hard a task), but gradually I began to play a little more each month. By October 2021 I left the house to play my first over the board chess in years.

Since then, I have played about 40 games – admittedly with mixed results, having made some pretty inexcusable blunders! I'm very grateful that Covid has given me a re-energised enthusiasm for, and time to play, chess and look forward to becoming as strong a player as I can be.

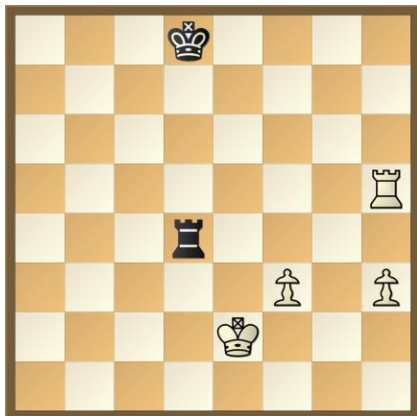
Going forward, I'm enjoying playing in weekly Titled Tuesdays (thanks to qualifying via the new English National Master title) and am considering starting streaming or blogging about my chess journey.

Below is some analysis of a theoretical ending which particularly fascinated me from my most recent tournament. Despite losing the game, I believe that if you learn from every game you play you will always improve, whatever your strength.

Thomas Villiers (2219) - Alfie Onslow (2077)
64th Southend Easter Congress (4)



61...Rd4??



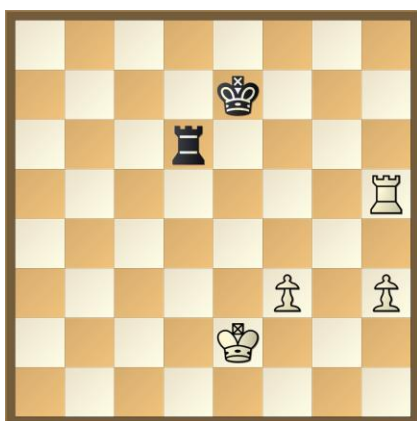
Blitzing out a losing move, completely forgetting my own king could be cut off, giving White a very simple win. When defending rook endgames cutting off the king is rather ineffective as White can offer a trade of rooks (knowing the pawn endgame is winning), leaving all attempts in restricting the white king ineffective.

Instead, the defender should look to give infinite checks.

White has been pushing in the endgame and chose to trade down into rook vs rook, f+h pawn. I was playing off the 30 seconds increment and felt extremely relieved we had simplified to this ending, knowing it was drawn. However, sometimes knowing the result isn't enough and this is one of the tougher endgames to hold if you don't know the general themes.

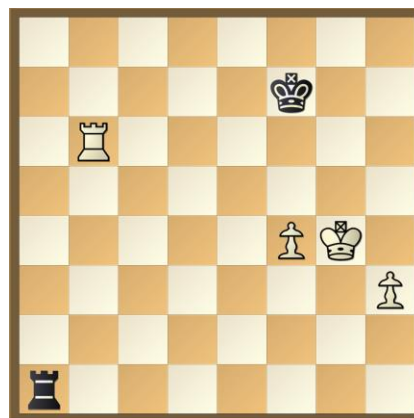
I rushed my 61st move and my position was lost but I thought I'd explain how Black goes about holding this endgame in the variation below.

61...Ke7!



Very logical as the black king must fight off the advancing pawns which cannot be done if the king is cut off and restricted to the d-file.

62.Ke3 Kf7 63.Kf4 Ra6 64.Kg4 Ra4+ 65.f4 Ra1 66.Rb5 Kf6 67.Rb6+ Kf7



White has a few different ways to push for the win but all involve the underlying plan of promoting the f-pawn. In any case Black holds with the same concept which we shall look at below.

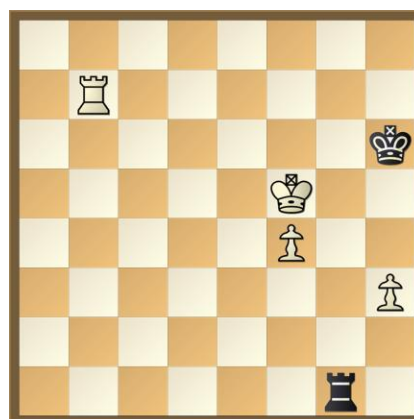
68.Kg5

(68.h4 Rg1+ 69.Kf5 Kg7 70.h5

(70.Rb7+ Kh6 71.h5 Ra1 72.Rb8 Ra2=. Here is a perfect example of White over-pushing his pawns and not being able to cover the black checks.)

70...Rh1 71.h6+ Kh7 72.Ke5 Re1+ 73.Kf6 Kxh6 will transpose to 68.Kg5).

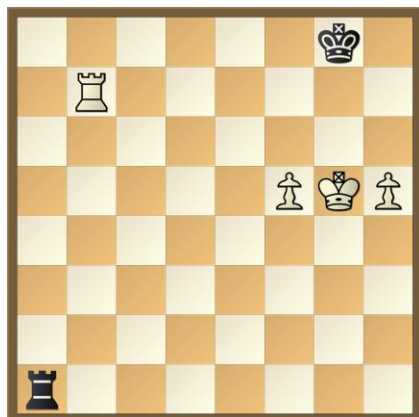
68...Rg1+ 69.Kf5 Kg7 70.Rb7+ Kh6!



The only drawing set-up is for Black to put his king on h6 as it serves the dual purpose of preventing the h-

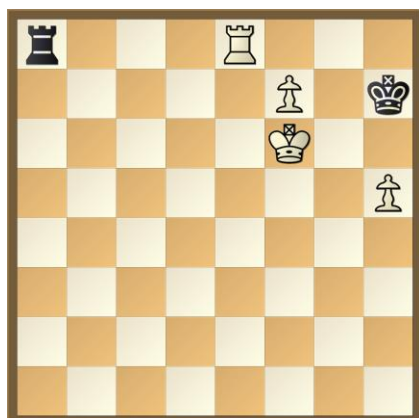
pawn advancing too far and keeping an eye on the f-pawn. However, the most important concept is that Black wants to bring his rook to the a-file to give pesky side-checks; thus the black king needs to be on the h-file to prevent getting in the way.

(70...Kg8? It is important to understand why the retreat loses. 71.h4 Ra1 72.h5 Ra5+ 73.Kf6 Ra6+ (73...Rxxh5 74.Kg6+—) 74.Kg5 Ra1 75.f5

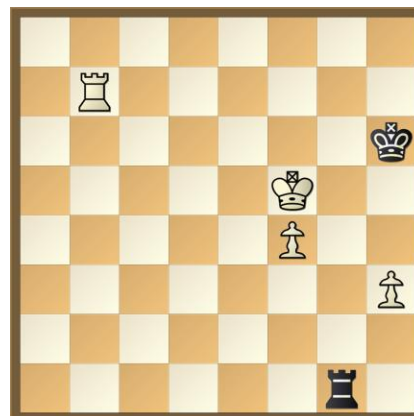


Black's king is very passive on the eighth rank and fails to prevent White from invading. However, if left on h6 White can never organise advancing his pawns without being subject to infinite checks (as Kg5 would never be possible). Black needs both his remaining pieces to be as active as possible if he hopes to draw.

75...Ra2 76.Kg6 Rg2+ 77.Kf6 Rg1 78.Rb8+ Kh7 79.Kf7 Re1 80.f6 Rf1 81.Ke7 Re1+ 82.Kf8 Rf1 83.f7 Re1 84.Re8 Ra1 85.Re6 Ra8+ 86.Ke7 Ra7+ 87.Kf6 Ra8 88.Re8+—)



Back to the main line:



71.Ke5

a) 71.Rb6+ An example if White tries to keep both pawns. 71...Kg7 72.h4 Rh1 73.Kg5 Rg1+ 74.Kh5 Rf1=;

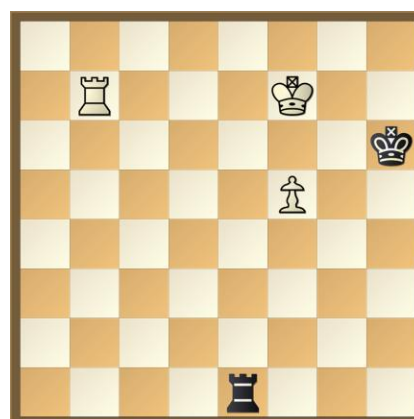
b) 71.Kf6 Rg6+ 72.Ke5 (72.Kf5 Rg1 White isn't making any progress.) 72...Rg3 will transpose to 71.Ke5.

71...Rg3! Now we hunt the h-pawn. 72.f5 Rxxh3 73.Kf6.

(73.f6 Re3+ 74.Kf5 Rf3+ 75.Ke6 Ra3 76.Kf7 Ra1 77.Re7 Ra4 78.Kf8 Kg6 79.f7 Kf6 80.Kg8 Rg4+ 81.Kf8 Ra4=)

73...Ra3 74.Ke7 Re3+ 75.Kf7 Ra3

(75...Re1?

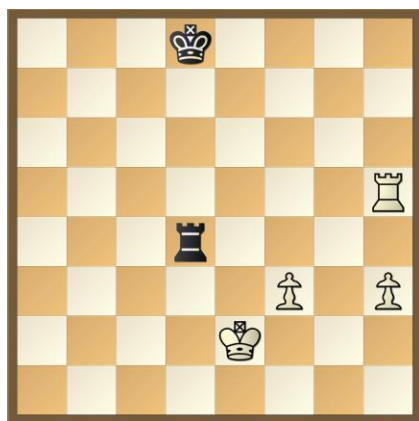


loses as Black cannot give any side-checks, giving White the room he needs to organise promoting the f-pawn.)

76.Rb6+ Kh7 (76...Kg5 77.f6 Ra1 78.Kg7+—) 77.Rb2 The mating trap forces Black to either misplace his king or rook. 77...Rh1 (77...Kh6 78.Rh2+ Kg5 79.f6+— Transposes to 76...Kg5.) 78.f6 Rh3 79.Rf2+—) 76.f6 Ra6

77.Ke7 Ra8!! The only move, and it is important to remember we meet f7 by putting the king on g7 and rook on a8. White's rook must remain passive to prevent the side-checks. (77...Ra1?? 78.f7 Re1+ 79.Kf8 Kh7 80.Rb2 Rd1 81.Rh2+ Kg6 82.Kg8+-) 78.f7 Kg7 79.Rd7 (79.Rb1 Ra7+ 80.Ke8 Ra8+= (80...Rxf7?? would be rather tragic, falling at the last hurdle. 81.Rg1+ Kf6 82.Rf1+ Kg6 83.Rxf7+-)) 79...Rf8 80.Ke6 Ra8=; 61...Ke8= With the same idea: 61...Re6+

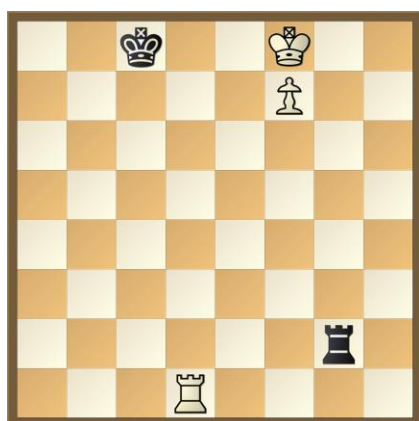
And now back to the game after 61 ...Rd4.



62.Ke3 Ra4 63.Re5! Restricting the king to the d-file.

63...Rh4 64.f4 Rxf3+ 65.Ke4 Kd7 66.Kf5 Rh5+ 67.Kf6 Rh6+ 68.Kg7 Rh4 69.f5 Kd6 70.Re1 Rg4+ 71.Kf7 Kd7 72.Rd1+ Kc8 73.f6 Rg2 74.Ke7 Re2+ 75.Kf8 Rf2 76.f7 Kc7

76...Rg2



I could have forced the Lucena position where White will build a bridge and win. 77.Rd5 Kc7 78.Ke7 Re2+ 79.Kf6 Rf2+ 80.Rf5+-

77.Rg1+- I resigned **1-0**

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STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

PROBLEM CORNER

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

I was chastened, when reading Ian Watson's studies column in the last issue, to realise that in the problems column I've never mentioned the possibilities for solving problems (as well as studies) online. In particular, I should before now have put in a recommendation for the solving competitions available from netchex.club. If you have Ian's article in the last issue you'll be able to read more about how it works, and there is even more in the way of problem-solving there than study-solving. If you are potentially at all interested do pay it a visit. Brian Cook, whose brainchild it is, is always delighted to have additions to the ranks of solvers.

With problem-solving in mind, I thought that, before giving you the solution to last month's teaser, I'd headline this column with what is one of the best solving problems I know. I'm certainly not alone in my high estimation of this problem. As you'll see it won first prize in a Problemist tourney (that is, in the magazine of the British Chess Problem Society – for more details go to www.theproblemist.org/) but it was also employed to destructive effect in a leading solving competition.

This combination of attributes – aesthetic beauty (the quality recognised in the awarding of a first prize) and solving challenge – is quite rare. Usually, a composer's attempt to show a particularly intricate and attractive passage of play is one that can't be deeply disguised when seen through the eyes of a solver who has got used to the sort of thematic play composers like to show.

Not so in this case!



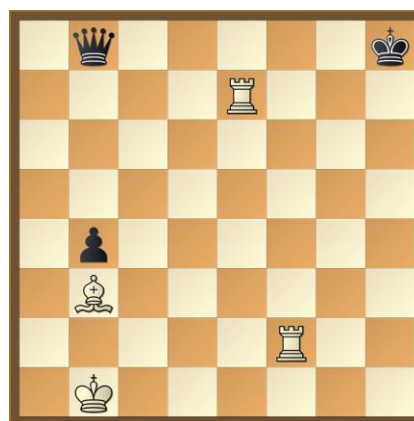
Mate in 2

Sally and Tony Lewis

1st Prize, *The Problemist* 2004

I'll give the solution later in this article. The idea is to encourage you to have a go at it before reading the solution!

Meantime, in the last *ChessMoves* I left you this problem to solve –



Mate in 3

Otto Wurzburg

1st Prize, Sam Loyd Memorial Tourney 1942

I remarked that we'd want to overload the black queen. In the diagram position the queen is focussed on h2 and f8, preventing 2.Rh2# and 2.Rf8#. Most moves away from b8 would be fatal, e.g. 1...Qe8 2.Rh2+ Qh5 3.Rxh5#, etc. One black move, though, would continue to prevent both mates: ...Qf4(!). White needs to set up a position in which the queen is focussed on two squares and doesn't have such a saving resource. 1.Rf1 is an attempt (now, after 1...Qf4?, 2.Rh1+ does the trick), but 1...Qa8! successfully defends. Similar

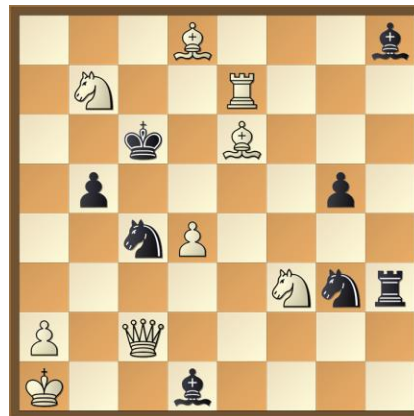
tries are 1.Rf3? Qc8!, 1.Rf5? Qe8 and 1.Rff7? Qg8!. If the rook moves along the second rank, stalemate defences abound, e.g. 1.Rg2? Qg3!. The only move that works, the key move, is 1.Ra2! and now, e.g. 1...Qg3 2.Ra8+ Qg8 3.Rxg8#. (That's why we needed a bishop at b3!)

And now, going back to that two-mover by Sally and Tony Lewis, you may have seen that in the diagram there are some black moves for which mating responses are already set – 1...Qc5 2.Re6; 1...Ne7 2.Rd5. Will discovered checkmates feature in the solution?

There are a number of candidate moves by the white queen. One is 1.Qe4 (for 2.Rd5, after which the queen would now be guarding e7). If 1...Bxe5, then 2.Qxe5 is mate. However, 1...Qxa5! is a successful defence (since after Rd5 the queen would no longer be guarding c6). Another try is 1.Qe3 (same threat; and now 1...Qxa5 would be met by 2.Qc5) but here, because it would only be the g8B providing support in the 2.Rd5 mate, the response 1...Nf7! refutes. Trying from a different angle, as it were, 1.Qh5 has a different threat: 2.Re6, and now that pesky 1...Nf7 defence runs into 2.Qg6 – but 1...Rd5 defends successfully!

At any stage in the above thought processes the solver might think “aha, I’ve provided against the weak point in my previous try – this must be the true solution”. A quality of top solvers is to exercise scepticism about apparently attractive solutions – and in this case, then to think the unthinkable, which is that the solution might not be a queen move at all. In fact, it is the unlikely-looking 1.Bc1!. Very well done if you spotted this. The threat is 2.Qf6, and the responses to 1...Bxe5 (2.Bxa3!) and 1...Kxe5 (2.Qf4!) are hard to foresee. Other defences are 1...Rd5 2.Qxd5 and 1...Bc4 2.Nxc4.

Tony Lewis was for many years the driving force behind the British Chess Problem Society, as well as its indefatigable treasurer (in which role he often went above and beyond the mere requirements of financial management). He is greatly missed. His wife Sally, who is an Honorary Life Member of the BCPS, was a key collaborator in some of his best problems, and as such is one of the few women to have published chess problems. I’ll leave you with another of their collaborative ventures to solve for next time.



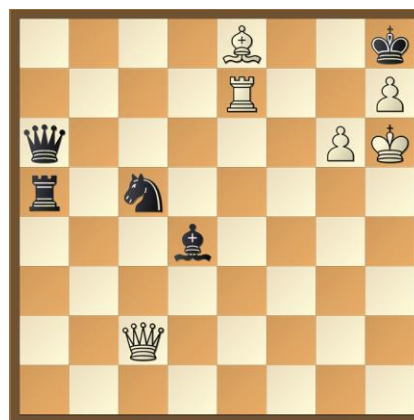
Mate in 2
1st Prize, St. Petersburg Congress 1998
Sally and Tony Lewis

HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

Sacrificial Orgies

'Endgame studies' can be a misnomer; they are often not positions that over the board players would call 'endgames'. They can be 'middlegame' positions, with lots of pieces scattered all over the board. Some of those studies have extraordinary sequences of sacrifices, and our first diagram this month is an example. It's composed by Martin Minski and is published this year in *Magyar Sakkvilág*.



White to play and win

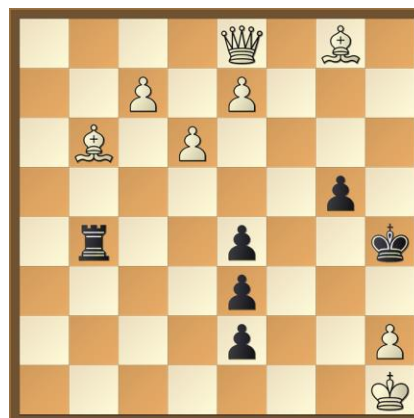
When there are major pieces on an open board with few pawns, kings are obviously in great danger and striking at once is often essential. One first looks, as one would in a real game, at checking moves. Here, however, White has no check because his g-pawn is pinned, so you should look at how to prepare a check while fending off Black's checks. Routine stuff for players, but as it's a composition and especially because it's a 'heavy' one (meaning lots of pieces) you know that there are going to be many surprise moves to justify the number of pieces. So look for deflecting sacrifices. Here, you would like to clear the way for the white rook to e8 and the move 1.Bd7 is a candidate... except that it's too prosaic. The composer has opted for this moment in the struggle to be the diagrammed start, so the first move is probably going to be cleverer than that. Maybe 1.Bc6, but Black can capture that and protect the e8 square, while the bishop guards against g7 mate. So what else? Maybe deflect the bishop first? The white queen does not have an obvious role, so perhaps we can give it one - the job of being sacrificed. Together, those thoughts suggest the move 1.Qf2 and that is indeed the key.

Now you explore 1.Qf2, while keeping in mind that you haven't disproved moving the bishop first. 1.Qf2 Bxf2 and 2.Bc6 is now viable. Black's fate seems sealed, but in studies it is not only the white moves that are clever, it's the black moves as well. And composers like black sacrifices too... which makes you think of deflecting the white rook. And that Black might be able to stalemate himself if he can ditch all his army. You find 2...Be3+ 3.Rxe3 Ne6 4.Rxe6 Rh5+ 5.Kxh5 Qa5+ but what now? You feel that you're on the right track and it's a good thing that you do, otherwise you probably wouldn't see 6.Bb5 - another deflection! 6...Qxb5+ 7.Kh6 Qe5/Qd7 8.Re8+ (yet another deflection!) Qxe8 9.g7 mate. White has sacrificed all his pieces - which is what I vaguely suspected when I first looked at the diagram.

Having found that, you can be pretty sure that it's the correct solution, but it's wise to look at some alternatives, just to be certain. 1.Bd7? Qa8 2.Re8+ Qxe8 3.Bxe8 Nd7 4.g7+ Bxg7+ 5.Kg6 Nf8+ 6.Kf7 Ra7+ 7.Bd7 Rxd7+ saves Black. There's also an option for Black on move 1: 1...Qf6 2.Qxf6+ Bxf6 3.Bc6 wins. And a white option on move 6: 6.Kg4? Qb4+ 7.Re4 Qe7 8.Kh3 Qa3+ 9.Kh4 Kg7 and Black is safe.

The full solution goes **1.Qf2 Bxf2 2.Bc6 Be3+ 3.Rxe3 Ne6 4.Rxe6 Rh5+ 5.Kxh5 Qa5+ 6.Bb5 Qxb5+ 7.Kh6 Qe5/Qd7 8.Rd8+ Qxe8 9.g7** mate.

That was how I went about solving it, but it's a toughie; I haven't mentioned all the wrong alleys I went down! Our second study for you to solve is (somewhat) easier. It's by Amatzia Avni and was published in *Shahmat* in 1982.



White to play and win

Those two studies were used in recent solving events. The Minski study was used in the German Chess Solving Championship in June, and the Avni in the Azerbaijani Chess Solving Championship, also in June. Those events included a mix of various types of chess problem, together with some studies.

I told you last month about the online study-solving tournaments at www.netchex.club. They are solving events in which only studies are used, not problems, and you can do them online from your home. The next two are now available on the netchex site; go to the home page and click on "July Study Tourney". As before, there are two tournaments: a tough one and a slightly easier one. Category 1 is the harder one. Do try them and e-mail me your comments and suggestions.

The solution to the Avni study is given below

--- Ian Watson Email: ian@irwatson.uk

How to Solve a Study – solution

1.Qh5+ Kxh5 2.e8Q+ Kh4 3.Qxe4+ Rxe4 4.Ba5 Rf4 5.Be1+ Kh3 6.Be6+ g4 7.Bxg4+ Rxg4 8.c8R wins. An underpromotion to finish is a fairly frequent feature of studies. It's necessary here to avoid stalemating Black, of course. This study isn't hard, because White has very few ways to prevent his lonely king being mated. Sacrifices galore can be afforded when there are plenty of pawns about to promote.

Event Calendar

For details on all the events listed below visit <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/>

July 23-24	UKCC Southern Gigafinal - U10
July 23	Poplar Rapid Tournament
July 24-28	CSIT Rapid & Blitz Chess Championships for Workers and Amateurs
July 24	UKCC Southern Gigafinal - U11/U18
July 25	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup
July 31	Chalfont Junior Summer Event 1
July 31	Kensington FIDE Rapid Chess
August 4	Hendon FIDE Blitz
August 6	Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay
August 6	Maidenhead Junior Tournament
August 7	Chalfont Junior Summer Event 3
August 8-21	118th British Chess Championships
August 13	Chalfont Junior Summer Event 4
August 14	Chalfont Junior Summer Event 5
August 20	9th Martlesham Heath Chess Tournament
August 26	Northumbria Junior Rapidplay
August 26-30	Northumbria Chess Masters
August 26-30	Northumbria Masters GM & IM Tournaments
August 27-29	56th Berks & Bucks Chess Congress
August 27-29	1st Brentwood FIDE-Rated August Bank Holiday Congress
August 27-29	Leyland Chess Congress
August 28	1st Brentwood FIDE-Rated Rapid Play

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