

# NEW ENGLANDER

## Chess Club Update – August 2011

### Chairman's Chatter

For most of us, mixing with the cream of British chess is the stuff of dreams. To hold your own in such company stretches even the realms of fantasy. Yet, as I write this, the British Championships are entering their second week with Chris Ross on a magnificent 3½ / 6. Good luck in the closing rounds!

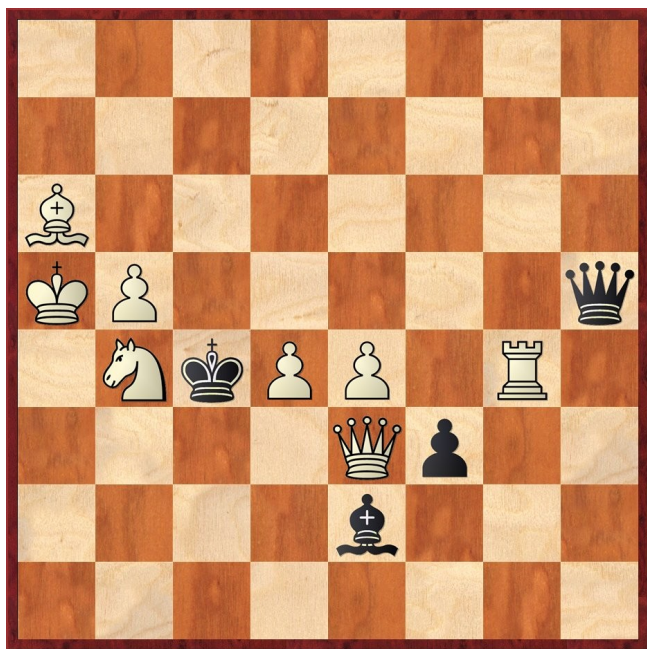
*Paul Hanks*

### Diary Dates

The Club AGM will take place at 7-30p.m. on 7th September.

### Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2. This is the starter problem for the 2012 British Solving Championship sponsored by Winton Capital.



Last Month's solution

Position: 8/8/3K4/8/3kp3/1Q6/2P5/8

1 Qa3 Kc4 2 Qc5# [1 ... e3 2 Qd3# or 2 Qb4#]

### Website to Watch

You can catch the closing rounds of the British Championships on [www.britishchess2011.com](http://www.britishchess2011.com) until 6th August.

Also spanning the boundary between months is the FIDE World Cup in Khantiy-Mansiysk from 28th August to 20th September. This 7 round knock-out tournament will determine one qualifier for the next world championship cycle and can be followed on <http://chess.ugrasport.com>.

### Eye Opener

As a prelude to the theme in the Serious Study, the Tropowsky Opening (1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5) is well-known for early traps but the innocuous-looking 2 ... c5 below probably only contains poison against a dabbler in this opening.

1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 c5 3 d5 Qb6 4 b3?!

4 Nc3 is recommended.

4 ... Ne4 5 Be3

If 5 Bd2 Qf6 attacking a1 and f2. After 5 Bh4 Qh6 is easiest e.g. 6 Nf3 (6 Bg3 Qf6; 6 g3 g5) 6 ... g5 7 Bg3 Bg7 8 Be5 Bxe5 9 Nxe5 Qf6 though other moves also work namely :

5 ... Qb4+ 6 c3 (6 Nd2 Nc3 7 Qc1 Qxh4) 6 ... Nxc3 7 a3 Qxh4

5 ... Qa5+ 6 Nd2 g5 7 Bg3 Bg7 8 Rc1 (8 Ngf3 Bc3 9 Qc1/Rb1 g4) Nxd2 (8 ... Nc3? 9 Nc4) 9 c3 (9 Qxd2 Bc3) 9 ... Ne4 10 Qc2 f5 11 Bxb8 Bxc3+ 12 Kd1 Nxf2#

5 ... Qb4+ 6 Bd2

6 Nd2 Nc3 7 a3 (7 Qc1 Nxd5 with advantage) 7 ... Qg4 and a slight edge

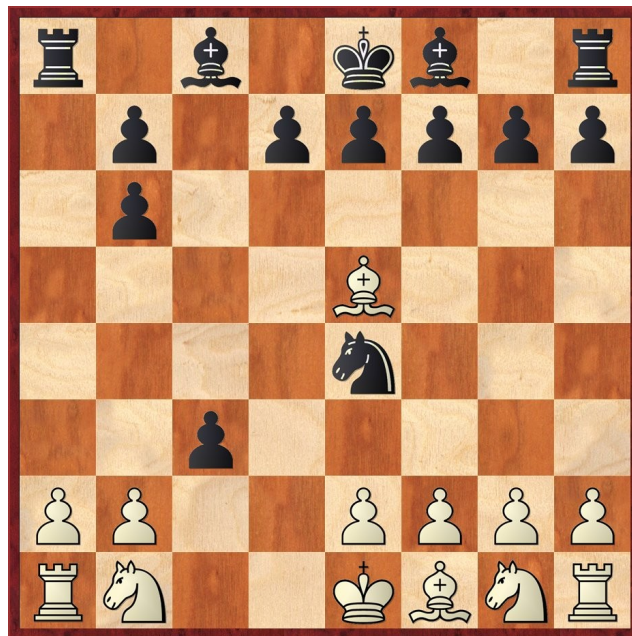
6 ... Qd4 0-1

The antidote to too much theoretical study must come from an original tactical finish.

Terentiev v Gallagher

Liechtenstein 1990

1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 Ne4 3 Bf4 c5 4 c3 Qb6 5 Qb3 cxd4 6 Qxb6 axb6 7 Bxb8 dxc3 8 Be5



8 ... Rxa2 0-1

## Serious Study

There is an old saying "Sell in May and go away". Judging from the quieter summer months, the New England Chess Club obviously numbers a few movers and shakers from the world of high finance amongst its members. So how do you fill the newsletter when there is little competitive play?

Back in December, I asked myself the same question and came up with a partial solution. I knew Chris Ross was due to appear in the British Championships in July/August and I hope a report of his efforts will appear in a future issue. Before that, however, I thought I could create an article on the preparation for the event. Maybe some training games or perhaps preparation for potential opponents... I put this to Chris and his reply was positive - opening analysis!

Now, this is not the most exciting area of chess but it does pose some novel problems as I soon found when acting as a "second".

- In the first place, there is a tremendous amount of work involved and I quickly gained admiration for the teams behind the great champions like Kasparov and Anand
- Secondly, I needed to develop a structure to convey the mass of information
- Thirdly, there are still so many opening variations that a clear focus is required on the small sample which will return the most benefit

Fortunately, Chris was able to provide clarity on the third point. One of his choices which I shall feature here was the Trompowsky Opening. Why? Well, if you are known for replying to **1 d4** with, for example, the Nimzo-Indian (i.e. **1 ... Nf6**), a well-prepared opponent can sidestep your front-line weapons with **2 Bg5**. This threatens to exchange the bishop pair for pawn structure damage with **3 Bxf6** and avoiding it with **2 ... e6** sets up an annoying pin. Obviously, you can try to transpose with **1 ... e6** but then, **2 e4** could again lead you down unfamiliar avenues. So workable options against the Trompowsky are fundamental to your opening repertoire.

Am I up to the job? Only time will tell but here is the method I used which hopefully goes some way towards mitigating my fallibility :

I identified that three documents were required for opening knowledge at advanced club level.

### i) Briefing Note

This is typically only two pages long and contains the most concentrated knowledge, possibly distilled from more extensive surveys. It gives statistical information based on published grandmaster evaluations and practice and aims to identify the most promising line(s) of play. If you only have a few minutes before the next round, read this!

### ii) Opening Rule Book

With 10-12 pages, the Opening Rule Book can explain the strategic themes, highlight typical tactical pitfalls,

differentiate the main variations and list thematic or critical games. A sample of this approach for the Exchange Variation of the Grunfeld Defence appeared in the newsletter for January 2009.

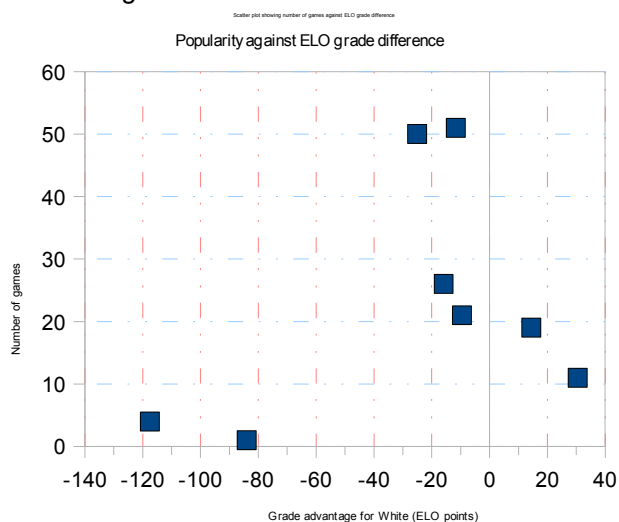
### iii) Monograph

Now space is unlimited as we enter the realm of specialist opening books, much deeper variations, internet searches for the latest material and private study of subtle positional differences.

My vision is that our club has on-line Briefing Notes and Rule Books available on all the major opening systems as a resource to members. This would also allow an obvious improvement route through self-tuition. For instance, I should like to understand (and remember!) all the Briefing Notes, be familiar with the Rule Books for openings that I face as White and be compiling Monographs for my favourite defences as Black. Wouldn't you like to contribute?

I am attaching the Briefing Note for the Trompowsky. This has the advantage that it contains little of my inferior judgement of an opening I do not play whilst hopefully, indicating current thinking and potential lines of play. You will find it insipid if startling combinations are the mainstay of your chess diet but it is the spadework that underpins master play at the highest level.

Does all this blind you with science? Let's see if the data can reveal some simple messages. For instance, six variations appear in the briefing note and there are three subvariations to the main line **2 ... Ne4 3 Bf4**. If we plot the number of games in each variation against the average ELO grading difference between the players, we can see that the bulk of the games featuring the Trompowsky occur when White is the weaker player. By comparison, the equivalent statistics for the Classical variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence (**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2**) would show that Black is nearly always at a grading disadvantage.



So the Trompowsky is primarily a weapon to try to steer strong players away from their comfort zones. As Black, it is more sensible to tackle a stronger player with a solid opening.

# OPENING BRIEFING NOTE

## A45 Trompowsky Opening

### 1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5

#### Overview statistics

In *Informator* issues 71-109 (Oct 1997 to Aug 2010) and *New in Chess* magazine (Jun 2008 to Jun 2011):

- 1) the Trompowsky occurs 140 times of which 84 are game fragments for which no result is given
- 2) of the 56 complete games, White wins 48%, 22% are drawn and Black wins 30%
- 3) the most popular line is the continuation 2 ... Ne4 3 Bf4 c5 4 f3 Qa5 5 c3 Nf6 (37 games = 26% of all games). It scores worse than average for Black (27% wins, 13% draws). [Note that a single game result creates a 4% swing in the percentages.]
- 4) the second most popular choice is 2 ... e6 3 e4 h6 4 Bf6 Qf6 (18 games = 13%) and it is slightly better average for Black (37% wins, 13% draws)
- 5) less popular are 2 ... Ne4 3 Bf4 d5 4 e3 c5 5 Bd3 (10 games = 7%) and 2 ... c5 3 Bxf6 gxf6 4 d5 Qb6 5 Qc1 (8 games = 6%). The former scores heavily for Black but too few results are available for the latter
- 6) thereafter, the published games have diverse openings with the number of games following any particular variation being 6 or less
- 7) there is only one game with 1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 e6 3 Nf3 which ended in a draw. There are 19 further games that follow the move order 1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 Bg5 with Black scoring very well (71% wins, 14% draws). These games will be included in the following review
- 8) the most common player for White is D Kotic (7 games). In the most popular variation, he has scored 100% but 0% in all others!
- 9) the most common player for Black is D Flores (only 3 games) but always as game fragments. Anand features in 2 games with 100% success
- 10) Black has two immediate concerns
  - a) avoiding the pawn structure damage after an exchange on f6 with
    - i. 2 ... Ne4
    - ii. 2 ... e6
  - b) permitting White's intended 3 Bf6 with
    - i. 2 ... d5
    - ii. 2 ... c5
    - iii. 2 ... g6
    - iv. 2 ... b5In fact, White avails himself of 3 Bf6 in only 48% of games in this section.

- A1 2 ... Ne4
- 1) 3 Bf4 is almost an automatic reaction with 80 games represented (= 89% of this line) but 3 Bh4 (5 games = 6%) and 3 h4 (4 games = 5%) have also been played
  - 2) only 1 game from the fringe continuations is given in full and none were played after 2003. 3 h4 is a favourite of correspondence games and position evaluations at the end of the game fragments slightly favoured White
  - 3) after 3 Bf4, Black faces a choice between 3 ... d5 (19 games = 27%), 3 ... c5 (51 games = 72%) and 3 ... d6 (1 game = 1%)
  - 4) the single example of 3 ... d6 was a success for Black (Burnett v Ivanov, 2003). This game is noteworthy because it arrives at an Old Indian-style formation after 4 f3 Nf6 5 e4 Nbd7 6 Be3 e5 7 d5 Be7 8 c4
  - 5) surprisingly, 3 ... d5 is the lesser choice for Black but is statistically a much better chance (50% wins, 40% draws) compared with 3 ... c5 (24% wins, 12% draws)
  - 6) after 3 ... d5,
    - a) three of Black's wins came in 2007 - the most recent outings of this variation
    - b) statistically, White's best try is 4 Nd2 though this only achieves slightly better than equality. In the most recent example, White was able to hold an extra pawn after 4 ... c5 5 Ne4 de4 6 dc5 Qa5 7 c3 Qc5 8 Bb8 Rb8 9 Qa4 b5 (9 ... Qc6 10 Qa7) 10 Qe4 b4 11 Qd4 (Perun v Golichenko, 2007) though Perun and Fritz now recommend 11 ... e5 with equality or slight advantage to Black respectively
    - c) the most popular continuation is 4 e3 which was chosen in 79% of games including by Ivanchuk (the highest graded and only successful player of the white side). He was lucky to have a cooperative opponent and gained an early initiative with 4 ... c5 5 Bd3 Nc6 6 Be4 de4 7 d5 Nb4 8 Nc3 e6 9 d6 Nc6 10 Nge2 f5?! 11 Nb5 (Ivanchuk v Jobava, 2005)
    - d) generally though, Black scores well after 4 e3 with 63% wins and 25% draws but this record is based on superior middlegame play after undistinguished opening positions. Following 4 ... c5 5 Bd3 Nf6 6 dc5 Nc6 7 Bb5, 7 ... e6 seems to leave White with a slight edge, 7 ... Bd7 makes Black search for compensation while opinions differ on 7 ... Qa5 with the most recent favouring Black due to the bishop pair and eventual central pawn mass - 8 Nc3 a6 9 Bc6 bc6 10 Qd4 e6 11 b4 Qa3 12 Nge2 a5 13 Rb1 ab4 14 Rb4 Nd7 (Stefanova v Cornette, 2007)

7) after 3 ... c5, 80% of games continue with 4 f3, 18% with 4 d5 and 2% with 4 dc5. Informator does not give many complete games but in those it does, Black is struggling in all variations. In the first instance 4 f3, Black wins 27% and draws 13%. For 4 d5, White wins in the two available results.

- a) most games feature 4 f3 Qa5 5 c3 Nf6
- b) older examples from before 2004 continue 6 Nd2 with the exception of Short v Ivanchuk, 2010 which involved the highest graded players of both colours. Short described 6 ... cd4 7 Nb3 Qf5 as "a risky line but with a good pedigree"
- c) an almost equal number of games take the alternative route with 6 d5 with 2006-7 being a rich period. Shifting from 6 Nd2 brought a reduction in Black's score from 43% to 17% as Black has yet to be convincing against the g2-d5 pawn chain after White plays 7 e4. Although 6 ... Qb6 is popular if unsuccessful, 6 ... e6 7 e4 d6 leads to positions assessed as unclear
- d) if White tries 4 d5, 4 ... Qb6 forces 5 Bc1 because the only example of 5 Nd2 turned out badly for White (Winants v Glek, 1999). Then, the continuation 5 ... e5 leads to positions akin to the Czech Benoni and an eventual f7-f5 may compensate for the tardy development of Black's light-squared bishop. Otherwise, 4 ... e6 is played when 5 f3 has been followed by 5 ... Nf6, Bd6 or (in a slightly different situation) Nd6 and Informator even notes 5 ... Qf6?! A recent example is 4 ... d5 e6 5 f3 Nf6 6 c4 Nh5 7 Be3 d6 8 Nc3 e5 9 Bf2 Be7 10 e4 0-0 11 Nge2 (Golod v Adamson, 2004) where Black ignored possibilities based on 8 ... Qh4 and Qxc4

A2 2 ... e6

- 1) of the four alternatives for White's next move (e4, Nd2, e3 and Nf3), only the latter gives the opportunity for transposition as noted earlier
- 2) despite appearing in 45% of games, White should avoid 3 Nf3 because Black has an excellent record with 3 ... h6 4 Bh4 d6. It must be said that White's play generally appears timid e.g. Adams as Black faced 5 Nbd2 Nbd7 6 e3 g4 7 Bg3 Nh5 and 8 ... Bg7 gave him good control of the dark squares (Annaberdiev v Adams, 2006)
- 3) a more promising line for White is 3 e4 and this reply was seen in 41% of games. Black won 33% of the games and drew 11% which is slightly below the average for the opening
  - a) overwhelmingly, the games continue 3 ... h6 4 Bf6 Qf6 when Black holds his own against 5 c3 (63% score) but struggles against 5 Nc3 (25% score)

b) This appears to be because 5 Nc3 Bb4 is too ambitious and 5 ... d6 is more favourable as 6 Qd2 c6 7 Nge2 e5 8 g3 g6 9 Bg2 Bg7 10 Rd1 0-0 11 0-0 Na6 12 f4 has echoes of a King's Indian Attack (Garcia Palermo v Valerga, 2008)

- 4) the only other significant line in 11% of games is 3 e3 but this has not been seen since 2001. The critical game (Gurevich v Nijboer, 2001) went 3 ... h6 4 Bh4 d6 5 Bd3 Nbd7 6 c4 Be7 7 Nc3 b6 but the annotations highlight several side variations that favour Black so White has to be careful

B1 2 ... d5

- 1) Kramnik chose 3 Bf6 but it appears in only 36% of games in this line. It initiates a highly successful line for White who has scored 3½/4. Fairly simple positions result after 3 ... ef6 4 e3 Bd6 5 c4 dc4 6 Bc4
- 2) Leko and Radjabov (against Leko!) opted for 3 e3 but the line also allows White to score 50% wins and 25% draws. Some games transpose with 3 ... Ne4 and Black's only success came after 3 ... g6

B2 2 ... c5

- 1) again White should go for 3 Bf6 and this time the players agree in 57% of practice. White scored 2½/4 although the line of play 3 ... gf6 4 d5 Qb6 5 Qc1 f5 6 c4 Bg7 7 Nc3 is often assessed as unclear
- 2) 29% of games go 3 d5 - Black scored 2/3
  - a) in the most recent outing, the continuation 3 ... Qb6 4 Nc3 Qb2 5 Bd2 Qb6 6 e4 e5 7 f4 led White to have a decisive kingside attack (Bruzon v Nijboer, 2004). In fact, there are several examples in which White occupies the open b file and sacrifices the exchange Rb1xNb6 to maintain a bishop at c4 and continue the attack

b) the main alternative is 3 ... Ne4. There are transposition possibilities with 4 Bf4 Qb6 5 Bc1 and an attempt to save a tempo with 4 Bc1 ran into 4 ... e5 5 g3 f5 (Huzman v Sutovsky, 2003)

- 3) Informator also gives game fragments starting 3 Nc3 and 3 dc5 with fortunes in line with the grading difference between the participants

B3 2 ... g6

- 1) There is only one example from 1999 and was not repeated.

B4 2 ... b5

- 1) There is only one example of this enterprising move. It came in 1998 and was not repeated.

#### **Promising lines for Black**

- i. **1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 Bg5 h6 4 Bh4 d6**
- ii. **1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 Ne4 3 Bf4 d5**