

# NEW ENGLANDER

## Chess Club Update – January 2014

### Chairman's Chatter

Happy New Year! The club's teams are having a tough time at the moment and at a time of fresh resolutions, a suitable subject is not hard to find. If we all can find a few ways to improve, convert those difficult positions into draws and clinch a full point when promisingly placed, we can enjoy more sporting success in 2014. Let's hope so.

*Paul Hanks*

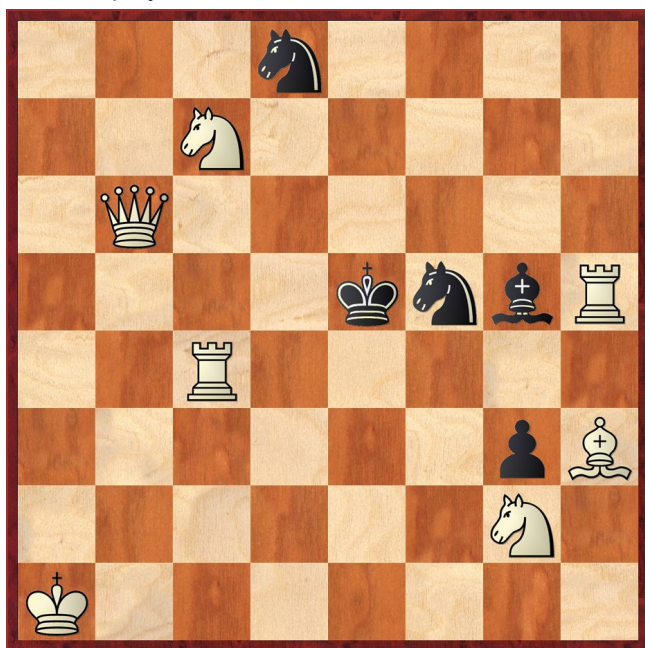
### Diary Dates

Both the A and B teams have reached the semi-final of the Fenland Plate. These fixtures obviously could not be scheduled in the initial fixture list and the captains have been in touch with their opposite numbers at St Neots and Warboys to arrange dates. The replies are overdue but with a deadline of the end of February, please expect these matches to appear at short notice.

Similarly, the original date for the RAFA AGM was only estimated in our calendar. This has now been fixed for 26<sup>th</sup> March and we shall lose use of the venue on that evening. We shall switch staging Round 4 of the club championship that was scheduled for that date to 19<sup>th</sup> March.

### Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (A Guest)

Position : 3b4/4N3/p2kP3/P2N1K2/8/8/6B1/6B1

1 Nc7 Kxe7 2 Bc5# [1 ... Bxe7 2 Ne8#; 1 ... Bxc7 2 Nc8#; 1 ... Kxc7 2 Bh2#]

### Website to Watch

The Tata Steel Chess Tournament at Wijk aan Zee is probably the premier permanent event on the calendar. The elite section will be contested between 11<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and the competition can be followed at the website [www.tatasteelchess.com](http://www.tatasteelchess.com). There are two grandmaster sections this year (normally there are three) but it still boasts players including Aronian, Nakamura, Caruana and Gelfand from the world's top 10.

### Window on the Web

They say chess is a young person's game. This is probably true given that when young we can learn quickly and retain more but as we get older the brain cells work less efficiently and we retain less.

I learned chess at the age of 12 and, armed with a copy of *Teach Yourself Chess*, joined the school chess club, finding myself within a year or so playing for the school's (not very strong) team. There was no coaching but we picked up basic tactics, mates and strategy by playing. With some exceptions, good quality chess books were hard to find in the 1960s before the UK had a GM.

Today's young players have the opportunity to pick the best of hundreds of chess books and videos and visit many chess websites, some tailored specifically to their needs. One of these is at <http://kingschesscoaching.weebly.com/> and has been set up by *The King's School Grantham*.

Here there are articles on basic endings, pawn endings, knight and pawn endings, various types of the opposition, bishop, rook and queen endings, pawn breakthrough and outside passed pawn. Several annotated miniatures can be played through. There are even biographies of the World Champions from Steinitz to Anand.

Some of the links lead to blank pages but this is still an interesting site to visit for anyone who wants to brush up on some of the basics. We all remember the "knight opposition", don't we?

*Ron Jones*

### Result Round-up

#### Cambridgeshire County Chess Leagues

Royston	4½	New England A	½
D Coleman	1	P Turp	0
L Varnam	1	M Dunklev	0
K Clark	1	P Hanks	0
P Kemp	1	D Lane	0
P Rice	½	R Jones	½

<b>New England A</b>	<b>½</b>	<b>Peterborough A</b>	<b>4½</b>
P Turp	0	A Timosenko	1
S Caraway	0	C Tandy	1
P Hanks	0	R Ilett	1
R Jones	0	F Davies	1
D Lane	½	M Connolly	½

<b>New England B</b>	<b>½</b>	<b>Warboys B</b>	<b>3½</b>
P Spencer	0	C Watkins	1
S Walker	0	J Beck	1
J Sadler	½	M Onvons	½
J Parker	0	K Harbour	1

#### Team 550 Competition

<b>Warboys</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>New England 1</b>	<b>1</b>
R Mann	0	P Hanks	1
B Duff	1	P Spencer	0
M Onvons	1	C Russell	0
K Harbour	1	J Parker	0

#### New England Grand Prix

<b>Player</b>	<b>Champ</b>	<b>Ladder</b>	<b>League</b>	<b>Cup</b>	<b>550 Team</b>	<b>Total</b>
P Spencer	1	4	1½	0	1	7½
P Hanks	1	2	½	0	2	5½
M Dunkley	2	-	2	0	1	5
I Garrett	1	3			1	5
M Tarabad	1	3	1		0	5
S Caraway	2	1	½	0	1	4½
R Jones	1		2	0	1½	4½
D Lane	0	1½	½	½	2	4½
N Wedley	0	2			2	4
P Turp	2		1	0		3
J Sadler	0	0	1		1	2
J Parker	0	½		0	1	1½
C Russell	½	-			0	½
S Walker	½		0			½
H Currie	-	0				0
B Sadler	-				0	0
S Wozniak	-	0				0
P O'Gorman	-	0				
F Bowers	-					

#### Club Championship

<b>Round 2</b>			
S Walker (½)	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>	P Hanks (1)
J Sadler (0)	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>	D Lane (0)

<b>Round 3</b>			
M Dunkley (2)			P Turp (2)
P Hanks (1+P)			S Caraway (2)
R Jones (1)			P Spencer (1)
D Lane (0+P)			S Walker (½+P)
C Russell (½)			I Garrett (1)
M Tarabad (1)			J Sadler (0+P)
N Wedley (0)			J Parker (0)
Match night : 5th February. Deadline : 28th February. Next draw : 1st March			

#### New England Club Ladder

<b>Position</b>	<b>Change</b>		<b>Player</b>	<b>Record 01/01/14</b>
	<b>Month</b>	<b>Overall</b>		
1	-	+13	P Spencer	1,1,1,1
2	-	-	S Caraway	1
3	-	+7	M Tarabad	1,1,0,1
4	-	+2	I Garrett	1,0,1,0,1,0
5	-	+6	P Hanks	1,1
6	-	-2	N Wedley	½,½,1,0
7	-	-4	D Lane	½,0,1
8	-	-7	J Parker	0,½,0,0
9	-	-1	H Currie	0,0
10	-1	-5	F Bowers	
11	-1	-4	S Walker	
12	-	-3	P O'Gorman	0
13	-	-1	S Wozniak	0
14	-	-1	J Sadler	0,0
15	-	-	P Turp	

#### Xmas Special : 18<sup>th</sup> December 2013

<b>Player</b>	<b>Round</b>					<b>Quiz</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>		
P Turp	5	5	0	5	2	4	21
S Caraway	5	2	0	5	5	0	17
C Russell	5	5	0	5	0	0	15
M Tarabad	0	5	0	5	5	0	15
P Spencer	5	5	0	0	5	0	15
S Wozniak	5	0	0	5	5	0	15
N Wedley	0	0	0	5	5	0	10
S Walker	0	5	0	5	0	0	10
D Lane	5	2	0	0	0	0	7
J Sadler	0	5	0	0	2	0	7
H Currie	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
I Garrett	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
B Sadler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J Parker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## London Chess Classic 2013

"Upppandunder!" Those of you of a certain age will remember Eddie Waring's cheery northern tones bringing us a summary of the Rugby League action every Saturday afternoon. In those days, we learned how 'unslett had fared against 'alifax but times change. Now, it is obviously impossible for a team to exist without an aggressive name like 'ornets or 'ippos. Does the play improve by ignoring noble traditions and changing names? No doubt some marketing guru banked a fat cheque for suggesting this nonsense but enough of my prejudices...

This year, the top-level event of the London Chess Classic has become the "Super 16". There is a modicum of justification for the re-branding due to the significant changes in format. The number of participants has expanded (9 to 16), the competition is shorter (5 days from 9) and it's more expensive (£25 instead of £15 for a full day's play). Importantly, gone are the classic games over a 4-6 hour session and rapidplay (with a time limit of 25 minutes + 10 seconds/move) has taken over. Four games are staged in parallel and two such quartets constitute a session.

With afternoon and evening sessions being available on separate tickets, I ventured £15 to see around 3 hours of play on the Friday afternoon. The tournament had reached Round 5 of the group stage and some of the early front-runners were virtually assured of going through to the quarter-finals. Anand and Caruana topped their pools with 10 points while the other groups had joint leaders - Kramnik/Svidler and Nakamura/Gelfand.

As I approach the auditorium, however, I am met by a wall of sound – the characteristic high-pitched hubbub of young children. The room is packed! Among the hundreds, I just manage to find one of the last remaining seats in the back row where I am surrounded by a troop of schoolgirl in hi-vis bibs. Malcolm Pein, the organiser, has them shrieking three practice cheers before traditionally, four blushing representatives for the schools are invited to the podium to make ceremonial first moves. Then, the throng quickly file from the playing area and I can move forward to within four rows of the action.

At the closest board, Vishy Anand is playing Andrei Istratescu, a Romanian grandmaster now representing France who came through the qualifying tournament. Vishy rattles off 9 moves in 20 seconds in a Queen's Gambit with White refraining from e2-e3 and is looking around as though he does not need to concentrate. In fact, he creates nothing and even comes under pressure towards the end when Black could have been more energetic. Anand's cool defence constructs a fortress position and a draw by repetition quickly follows.

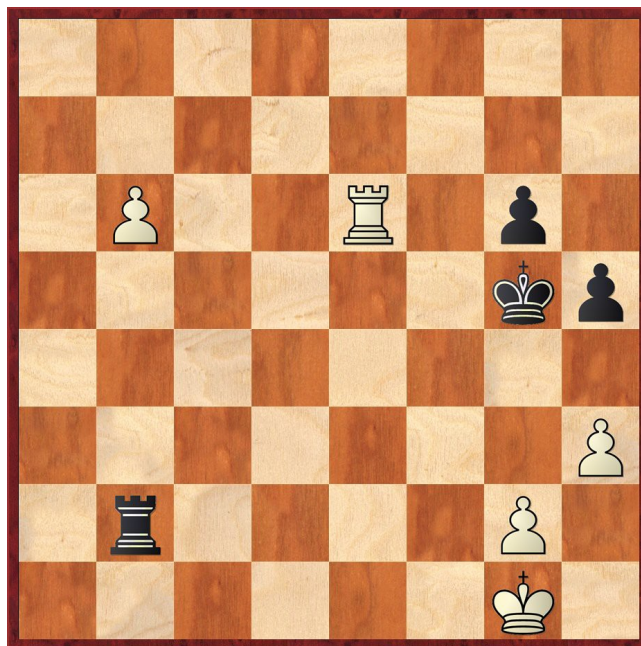
Vladimir Kramnik, on the other hand, is taking things seriously, cupping his face in his hands when facing Matthew Sadler. The ex-champion's English Opening transposes into a Tarrasch Defence with Black

acquiring the typical isolate queen's pawn. Matthew uses his extra space to co-ordinate his pieces for a late queenside initiative but he cannot make any progress and guess what? A draw by repetition...

The local derby is between Luke McShane and Mickey Adams. This is a Ruy Lopez with White preferring the quiet d2-d3 rather than the more normal d2-d4. This hardly restrains Black's c7-c5 which gains space on the queenside. Black gets a slight endgame advantage but the players enter a repetition sequence ... when McShane loses on time!

My hopes for some fireworks rest on Peter Svidler v Jonathan Rowson. In a Dragon Sicilian, White appears to have occupied the centre powerfully with knights on d4 and d5. There are some interesting speculative sacrifices which should be more challenging for the defender under the short time limit. The attacker, however, also has insufficient time to analyse the consequences and opts for caution. After exchanges, the endgame, I think, should be easily drawn but the grandmasters determine otherwise. Who is correct?

**P Svidler (2758) v J Rowson (2569)**  
5th London Chess Classic Rd 5, 13.12.2013



Here is the game continuation :

**55 h4+ Kf5 56 Rc6 Rb4 57 Kf2 Rxh4 58 Rc5+ Ke6  
59 Rb5 Rf4+ 60 Kg3 Rf8 61 b7 Rb8 62 Kh4 Kd6 63  
g3 Ke6 64 Kg5 Kf7 65 Rb6 1-0**

The players were moving quickly with little more than the 10 second increment in hand so there may well be an improvement to confirm my first impression. We all should know the many drawing mechanisms for R + P v R endgames and if Black sits tight, exchanges or any advance by White are likely to degenerate to such a balanced position.

After 55 h4+, I imagined that Black could not proceed 55 ... Kxh4 because of the surprise 56 Rxc6 Rb1+ 57 Kh2 Rb2 58 b7 Rxb7 59 g3#. The real corker in this

line though is 57 ... Rh1+ with stalemate to come!  
Who said endgames are boring?

As played, 55 ... Kf5 56 Rc6 leaves Black unable to maintain his king's protection of the pawn on g6 and it starts to look grim. There is yet another trick 56 ... g5. The natural reaction is 57 Rc5+ Kg4 58 Rxc5+ Kxh4 transposes into previous variations whilst 57 hxc5 Kxg5 frees Black and simplified towards his goal.

If the highlight of the sitting was an endgame technicality, you can tell it was a pretty drab affair. Every game took a similar course. Peaceful development – inflict damage to your opponent's pawn structure – slowly build pressure on the weakness – diffuse the tension with exchanges – take a small advantage into the endgame – hope it is sufficient for the full point. There were no tactical skirmishes, no full-blooded attacks, no risks. Is that the lot of the present-day master? Fortunately, more fighting spirit was shown in the second sitting.

The heavyweight contest was Boris Gelfand v Hikaru Nakamura. Both showed admirable pre-match focus by staring fixedly at the board for a full minute but when I glanced aside, I missed the early queen exchange. Hardly a minute later, my attention briefly returned to notice Black was repeatedly attacking some doubled pawns ... and then a handshake before they left the stage.

The distraction was the game Judit Polgar v Gawain Jones and apparently, Judit needed to win to remain in contention. Twelve moves in a main line of the Sicilian Dragon were played at rapid-fire pace. Very soon, Gawain accumulated his increments and had 2 minutes more on the clock than when he started! The game looked strangely familiar and in the back of my mind, memories of sacrificial brilliancies were stirring...

**J Polgar (2693) v G Jones (2654)**  
5th London Chess Classic Rd 5, 13.12.2013

<b>1</b>	<b>e4</b>	<b>c5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Nf3</b>	<b>d6</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>d4</b>	<b>cxd4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Nxd4</b>	<b>Nf6</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Nc3</b>	<b>g6</b>

The kingside fianchetto typically on moves 4 to 6 announces the Dragon Variation of the Sicilian Defence. It received a boost in popularity around 2008 when Carlsen added it to his repertoire before a painful loss to Anand in the final of the Mainz Rapidplay.

<b>6</b>	<b>Be3</b>	<b>Bg7</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>f3</b>	<b>Nc6</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Qd2</b>	

This configuration constitutes the Yugoslav Attack and is almost an automatic response. The model attacking game is Karpov v Korchnoi, Game 2 Candidates Match 1975 which highlighted the perils for Black. You should not enter this opening without thorough preparation.

<b>8</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>0-0</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Bc4</b>	

The first major decision point for White. Alternatives are 9 0-0-0 and 9 g4. The move chosen is the most aggressive as it deters both d6-d5 and Bc8-e6 but the exposed position of the bishop also tempts Black's queenside pawns forward.

<b>9</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>Bd7</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>0-0-0</b>	<b>Rc8</b>

Likewise, this is Black's chance to vary the play. Ideally, 10 ... Qa5 11 h4 Rfc8 would bring all his major forces together for the queenside assault but the queen has to be wary of tactics based on Nd4-b3 and Nc3-d5 in appropriate circumstances. Another option is the so-called Chinese Dragon 10 ... Rb8 which supports the advance of the b pawn and aims to target b2 rather than c3. As for 10 ... Qc7 11 Bb3 Rfc8, is it the happy medium or worst of both worlds?

<b>11</b>	<b>Bb3</b>	<b>Nxd4</b>
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The most popular variation here is 11 ... Ne5 principally with the blockading motif 12 h4 h5 but also Ne5-c4 with piece exchanges. The older, text move should come as no surprise – the two players reached this position at the London Chess Classic 2012!

<b>12</b>	<b>Bxd4</b>	<b>b5</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>h4</b>	

Previously, they followed 13 Nd5 Nxd5 14 Bxg7 Kxg7 15 exd5 a5 16 a3 Kg8 17 Rhe1 b4 but the game was eventually drawn. Judit needs and wants to be more ambitious. Bravo!

Surprisingly, 13 Bxa7 has been tried but with the open a file and the tempi gained by b5-b4 and Qd8-a5, Black has great compensation (see Bakre v Kadziolka, Pardubice 2004 for a salutary lesson). Besides, defence is difficult psychologically when going for a win.

<b>13</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>a5</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>h5</b>	

Played after a long think. It is interesting to speculate how much the players can rely on memory in a position that should be standard theory. Gawain, for instance, continues to move quickly and can even walk around the stage to watch the other games.

<b>14</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>a4</b>
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14 ... e5 was dealt with roughly in Vovk v Golubev, Ilyichevsk 2006 15 hxg6 exd4 16 Bxf7+ Kh8 17 Qxd4 when Qxf6 is threatened.

<b>15</b>	<b>Bxf6</b>	<b>Bxf6</b>
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In his notes to his game, Golubev recommends 15 ... exf6 and indeed, Fritz prefers it over Gawain's move to the tune of 0.4 pawns. White has nevertheless a 100% score with either 16 Bd5 or 16 Qxd6 in the six games I have found with this continuation. Instead, 15 ... axb3 16 Bxg7 bxa2 17 Nxa2 Kxg7 18 hxg6 is dismal because 18 ... hxg6 19 Qh6+ Kf6 20 e5+ dxe5 21 Nc3 Rh8 22 Ne4+.

<b>16</b>	<b>hxg6</b>	
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Golubev gives this move an ! but gives no more analysis. Note that in some games when Black tries to do without 10 ... Rc8, the possibility arises of Bb3-d5

gaining a tempo against the rook still on a8 (or allowing an enterprising exchange sacrifice).

**16 ... e6**

16 ... axb3 17 Qh6 is not as disastrous as I imagined though 17 ... Bg5+ 18 Qxg5 fxc6 19 Qd5+ favours White. As played, 17 Qh6 Bg5+ becomes a valid and enduring defence.

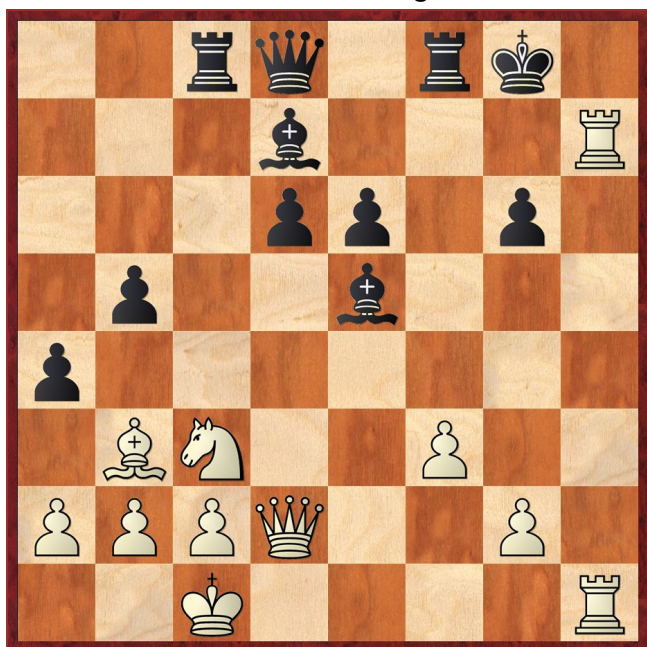
**17 e5 Bg7**

17 ... Bxe5 18 Qh6 wins material through 18 ... Bf4+ 19 Qxf4 and 17 ... dxe5 18 Qxd7 is simplest (though 18 Ne4 also has too many threats) 18 ... Qxd7 19 gxh7+ Kh8 20 Rxd7 axb3 21 axb3.

**18 Rxh7 Bxe5**

It is still not possible to grab the piece by 18 ... axb3 19 Rdh1 Bxe5 20 Rh8+ Bxh8 21 Rxh8+ Kg7 (21 ... Kxh8 22 Qh6+) 22 Qh6+ Kf6 23 Ne4+ and the king cannot survive e.g. 23 ... Ke5 (23 ... Ke7 24 Qh4+ f6 (24 ... Ke8 25 Nxd6#) 25 Qh7+) 24 Qh2+ Kd4 25 Qxd6+ Kc4 26 cxb3#.

**19 Rdh1 fxc6**



**20 Bd5**

There is always the perpetual check by 20 Rh8+ Bxh8 21 Rxh8+ when

- there is no escape by 21 ... Kf7 22 Rh7+ Ke8 (22 ... Kf6 23 Qf4#) 23 Ne4 Rc6 24 Qh6 Rg8 25 Qf4 Rf8 26 Qg4 Rg8 27 Bxe6 or
- 21 ... Kg7 22 Qh6+ Kf6 23 Rh7 - another lost cause for Black. The threat is 24 Qf4# and 23 ... e5 24 Ne4+ Kf5 25 g4#
- so Black is forced into 21 ... Kxh8 22 Qh6+ Kg8 23 Qxg6+

but White needs more!

This is where I thought White's best chance would be 20 Ne4 to negate 20 ... Bf4 with 21 Rh8+ Kf7 (21 ... Kg7 22 R1h7#) 22 Qxf4+ Qf6 23 Qxf6+. Obviously, a better defence would be 20 ... axb3 but then

- 21 Rh8+ still draws as previously

- 21 Qh6 looks very promising because Black struggles to avoid mate by passive defence e.g. 21 ... Rf7 22 Rh8+ or 22 Qxg6+. I concluded my analysis here assuming White had a forced win. Fritz gives it as mating in all lines except 21 ... Rxc2+ 22 Kd1 (no points for 22 Kb1?? Rxb2+ 23 Kc1 Qc7+) 22 ... Rxg2. Black, unfortunately for the attacker, is probably forced into this variation through the lack of other plausible defences. Visually, it looks very good for White and hard to check that Black is OK. But where is the knock-out blow? After 23 Rh8+ Kf7 (23 ... Bxh8 24 Qh7#) 24 Qh7+ Ke8 (24 ... Bg7 25 Qxg7+), probably best is 25 Rxf8+ Kxf8 26 Qh8+ Bxh8 27 Rxh8+ Ke7 28 Rh7+ Ke8 29 Rh8+ Kf7 30 Rxd8 Ke7 when Black has emerged from the minefield and is winning comfortably.

After 20 Bd5, Gawain thought for 10 minutes and succeeded over the next 10 moves to fall behind on time.

**20 ... Rf7**

**21 Rxf7**

I believe Black can be made to sweat a little longer. Certainly, more fun could be had with 21 R7h6 e.g.

- 21 ... exd5 22 Rxc6+
  - 22 ... Bg7 23 Qh6 Kf8 24 Qh8+ Bxh8 25 Rxh8+ Ke7 26 Nxd5#
  - 22 ... Rg7 23 Qxd5+ Kf8 24 Rh8+
  - 22 ... Kf8 23 Nxd5 Bf5 24 Qh6+ with a great scrap in time trouble!
- 21 ... Qf6 22 Ne4
  - 22 ... Qf4 23 Rxc6+ Kf8 24 Bxe6 when White has a winning material advantage
  - 22 ... Qf5 23 g4 Qxf3 24 Rxc6+ Rg7 25 Nf6+ with a persisting imbalance after 25 ... Qxf6
  - 22 ... Qg7 23 Ng5 exd5 24 Rh7 Qxh7 25 Rxh7 Bf4 26 Rh8+ Kg7 (26 ... Kxh8 27 Nxf7+ saves White) 27 Rh7+ finally drawing by perpetual check.

**21 ... Kxf7**

**22 Be4**

**Qf6**

Sadly, 23 Rh7+ gets nowhere against 23 ... Kg8 24 Rxd7 Bf4. The attack is effectively over and the bishop pair can assert themselves.

**23 Kb1 Rh8 24 Rxh8 Qxh8 25 Nd1 d5 26 Bd3 Qh4 27 a3 Bd6 28 c3 Bf4 29 Qe2 Qh1 30 Bc2 e5 31 g4 Be6 32 Qxb5 Qxf3 33 Qxa4 Qxg4 34 Qa7+ Kf6 35 a4 Qe2 36 Qg1 e4 37 Qd4+ Be5 38 Qc5 Qd2 39 a5 Bf4 40 Bb3 e3 41 Qf8+ Bf7 42 Nxe3 Qxe3 43 Bxd5 Qd3+ 0-1**

White actually being mated. 44 Ka1 Qd1+ 45 Ka2 Qxd5+ 46 c4 [46 Ka3 Qb3#/Qxa5#; 46 Kb1 Qd1#] 46 ... Qxc4+ etc.

Nigel Short participated in the first three Classics but was becoming uncompetitive (W1 D10 L11) and declined to enter again. Obviously, the faster tempo of

the revised format attracted him and today, he faces the Israeli Emil Sutovsky. From his "Victorian" repertoire, Nigel chose a poor man's Evans Gambit and it is heartening to see an interesting open game.

**N Short (2683) v E Sutovsky (2657)**  
5th London Chess Classic Rd 5, 13.12.2013

1	<b>e4</b>	<b>e5</b>
2	<b>Nf3</b>	<b>Nc6</b>
3	<b>Bc4</b>	<b>Bc5</b>
4	<b>c3</b>	<b>Nf6</b>
5	<b>b4</b>	<b>Be7</b>
6	<b>d3</b>	<b>0-0</b>
7	<b>0-0</b>	<b>d5</b>
8	<b>exd5</b>	<b>Nxd5</b>
9	<b>Re1</b>	<b>Bf6</b>
10	<b>a4</b>	<b>Nb6</b>
11	<b>Bb3</b>	<b>Nxb4</b>
12	<b>d4</b>	<b>Nc6</b>

White's gambit play could easily have come from an earlier era. It still has a respectable pedigree – Nigel used it with 5 ... Bb6 to defeat Portisch and Korchnoi. The modern rebuff would be to return the pawn in return for increased activity by 12 ... e4 13 Rxe4 Bf5.

13	<b>a5</b>	<b>Nd7</b>
14	<b>d5</b>	<b>Ncb8</b>

I could see nothing wrong with 14 ... Ne7 15 Ba3 Re8 16 Nbd2 Nf5. Now, Black struggles to develop.

15	<b>Ba3</b>	<b>Be7</b>
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What does Black do after 15 ... Re8 16 Nbd2? White has the upper hand after 16 ... g6 (16 ... c6 17 Ne4) 17 Ne4 Bg7 18 d6.

16	<b>Nxe5</b>	<b>Nxe5</b>
17	<b>Rxe5</b>	<b>Bd6</b>
18	<b>Re3</b>	<b>Nd7</b>
19	<b>c4</b>	<b>Nc5</b>
20	<b>Nc3</b>	<b>Qh4</b>
21	<b>g3</b>	<b>Qh3</b>
22	<b>Bc2</b>	<b>Bf5</b>
23	<b>Bxf5</b>	<b>Qxf5</b>
24	<b>Nb5</b>	<b>Qf6</b>

24 ... b6 was necessary.

25	<b>Nxc7</b>	<b>Rac8</b>
26	<b>Nb5</b>	<b>Be5</b>
27	<b>Nxa7</b>	<b>Bxa1</b>
28	<b>Nxc8</b>	<b>Bd4</b>

The passed pawns are decisive after 28 ... Rxc8 29 Bxc5 Be5 (29 ... Rxc5 30 Re8#) 30 Bb6

29	<b>Rf3</b>	<b>Qe5</b>
30	<b>Ne7+</b>	<b>Qxe7</b>
31	<b>Qxd4</b>	<b>Qe1+</b>
32	<b>Kg2</b>	<b>1-0</b>

The final game on stage was David Howell v Fabiano Caruana. I had forgotten it was still going on due to the fascinating action elsewhere. It had been an English Opening with both sides suffering isolated pawns and despite his exposed king, White had grabbed a pawn on b7 with his light-squared bishop. True to his never-say-die style, Caruana had mustered some kingside activity in the endgame. By

the last minute, the play was very rushed and the clocks on the display projection frequently went down to zero! Somehow, Black advanced his pawns causing White to give up a piece but the white king reached the sixth rank to create mating threats with his rook. Black checked. White advanced. Black checked again and the white rook disappeared.

The round had finished on a high note and I departed happy. Did I approve of the new format? I am undecided. On the one hand, the shorter session fits more conveniently into an afternoon and there was no daunting journey across London starting at 7pm. On the other, the chess is more lightweight (Short was spanked for trying 1 b4 against Caruana). As a spectator, I enjoy having the time to evaluate plans for myself and compare them with the choices made by the grandmasters. I worried that with the shorter session, it was likely that all four games could reach critical situations simultaneously. Following four complex positions is definitely beyond me! Thankfully, Polgar v Jones became knife-edged so swiftly that the excitement was phased over the second sitting.

Maybe there is a middle course between classical and rapidplay but the practicalities of a fair, financially viable competition probably mean the latter is here to stay. A pity but still good value for £15.