

June 2013

The Russian GM Peter Svidler is the ninth highest rated player in the world. His website is at www.psvidler.net/. (Link no longer works)

Svidler is currently (June) playing in the Thessaloniki Grand Prix and his homepage has a list of his results in that, and several previous tournaments. There is a link to live games, which can be played through. The site has 3 main links: *About Peter*, *Calendar* and *Results / Pictures*.

The first leads to a few personal details (his hobbies include cricket and billiards), some career highlights and a list of nine heavily annotated games, all of which can be played through.

The second is self-explanatory and gives his playing schedule.

The third takes you to a 2010 calendar. Clicking on ten of the months leads to a table of Svidler's games played in the particular month, all of which (often more than the number listed) can be played through, although they are not annotated. What happened in the years before and after 2010 is a mystery.

July 2013

<http://www.chessvideos.tv> (Link works but site is apparently no longer supported) is a site well worth visiting.

It is similar to chesslecture.com which I reviewed in November 2011, but it contains forums and even more videos, claiming to have the most available on the web. In fact one of the main contributors of videos to chessvideos.tv is FM Dennis Monokroussos who also produces videos for chesslecture.com.

The vast majority of the videos are free to view, but recently a small charge was introduced for those deemed to have "premium" content, i.e. those by FM Monokroussos. Membership is not necessary to view most videos and other content, but registration is free, quick and easy, allowing you to post new topics in the forums and comment on existing discussions.

There are thousands of videos of various lengths on the site available to view, suitable for players of all strengths, from *Beginner Chess Strategy Videos* to *Master Hangout* videos, which contain commentary on a game in progress or analysis of a past game, by one of the many masters who contribute to the site. There are also strategy videos aimed at the intermediate or advanced player.

The section *Training Videos from the Masters* features instructional analysis by titled players, including GM Josh Friedel (who is also a contributor to chesslecture.com). There is an extensive library of *Endgame Videos*, covering pretty much everything from basic pawn endings to endings with various pieces.

Guides and free software are provided to enable any member who wishes to do so to record their own chess videos analysing their own games and post them to the *Game Analysis Videos* area of the site.

Various chess tools are offered, such as: *Diagram Generator* which can be used to post a specific position to a blog to this or another site, *Endgame Simulator* which allows you to practise typical endgames against the Crafty chess engine, *Game Replayer* which converts PGN files of past games

into a replayable format that can be posted and *Visualisation Trainer* which provides exercises against the clock with no board, to hone your visualisation skills.

This site is so large I can only offer an overview here. If you are looking for web-based chess instruction and have the time to spare why not have a look?

August

The Scottish GM Jacob Aagaard (pronounced “Oogo” in his native Danish) is a resident of Glasgow and has won both the Scottish and British championships. He has written several chess books, is a FIDE senior trainer and part owner of the chess publishing house Quality Chess.

Aagaard has an extensive on-line blog at <http://www.qualitychess.co.uk/blog/> which contains some interesting articles and comments. His blog on 8 July gives the moves of a game in which he played the Sveshnikov Sicilian as Black against Tiviakov, having recently written a book on the opening. He followed his own suggested line, but was faced with a novelty and lost – proving you should not rely on everything you read in a chess book.

The home page has links to various sections of the site including *Jacob Aagaard's Training Tips*. There are some exercises here, together with articles such as *Understand What Type of Player You Are and Adjust Your Style Accordingly*, *Ten Ways to Improve in Chess*, and *Analysing Your Own Games* (the best way to do it).

He also discusses the importance of physical fitness and writes about *Goal Setting* and asks *What is Calculation?*

There is an archive of monthly blogs going back to September 2009. I found the older ones to be a little disappointing as they consist mainly of progress reports on upcoming publications from Quality Chess (as might be expected) and reviews of various books.

One older blog that I did find interesting is *Review of Positional Play on ChessCafe*, dated 3 Jan 2012. GM Aagaard takes exception to a review of his book *Grandmaster Preparation: Positional Play*, in which Aagaard suggests that decision-making at the board can be helped by asking 1. Where are the weaknesses? 2. Which is the worst-placed piece? 3. What is your opponent's idea?

There is a link to the review, which contains some exercises from the book, with solutions.

September

If you enjoy watching chess tournaments online you could do no better than visit www.chessbomb.com (**Link no longer works**) which offers live games from matches and tournaments, without the necessity of downloading any software.

It doesn't even need you to have Java or Flash installed, and it works with all browsers. Registration isn't required. Real-time computer analysis by very strong engines such as Houdini 3 is provided.

Once an event is finished it goes into the archive. All the games can be played through using simple controls and the board is flippable. The original computer analysis of four different lines for each move is given in addition to the moves of each game.

The oldest archived tournament is the 2009 World Cup. All the London Classics, British Championships, US Championships and tournaments such as Gibraltar, Dortmund, Reykjavik and Biel are in the archive.

There is an enormous number of top-class games here to play through. The multiple-line computer analysis would probably answer the “What if ...” questions you might have while playing through the games.

There is so much here that to do this site justice you’ll need to set aside a lot of time, but you could always dip into it when you have a few spare moments.

October

The new season is upon us, with the loss of our top player to business pastures new (good luck Francis!) leading to new challenges for our league players and reserves. Some members might have found time in the last few months to brush up on their chess in the hope of improving their results, but what’s the best way to improve?

An investment of both time and money is required. Building a library of chess books, DVDs or software is expensive and the time needed to study them can be considerable. Internet coaching might be an option. Of course there are free videos on the web but the quality is variable.

One commercial site that aims to help players progress is <http://improveyourchess.com>.

GM Tony Kosten is a leading contributor, with help from other trainers including GM Glenn Flear. The material is aimed at players from novice level up to about 170 ECF / 2000 ELO, with four categories: novice, beginner, intermediate and advanced. From the home page you can take a tour of the site. There are over 12,000 tactics puzzles, *How Good is Your Chess* presented by Danny King (familiar to readers of *Chess* magazine), strategy exercises presented by Glenn Flear, *Endgame Secrets* and *Middlegame* columns from Tony Kosten, a multiple choice quiz *Your Move*, two free e-books and access to personal coaching (at extra cost). A new set of tactics puzzles for each strength category is provided every month. They are then archived and the whole of the archive can be worked through as soon as you join. A series of articles covers the main openings.

The home page has a link to the *Gym Guide* which explains all the features to be found on the site and how best to use them.

The cost for all this? An up-front payment for first time annual membership, depending on the current GBP/USD exchange rate is about £18, payable in sterling, (equating to £0.05 a day) with a money-back guarantee if you put the work in but don’t improve. After a year renewal is at a reduced rate, currently about £6 per annum.

November

<http://oldinchess.blogspot.co.uk/> (Link works but seems to stop in 2014) is a chess news website with a difference.

You will find that instead of reporting the exploits of such players as Carlsen, Kramnik and Aronian, the site provides news items from 100 years ago, involving the likes of Lasker, Marshall and Tartakover.

A new post appears every day and they all (as far as I can tell) contain at least one game that can be played through. For example, a post dated 10 October 1913 reports the death of D G Baird, an American master who was born in 1854 and during his chess career managed to defeat several of the strongest players of the time. Four of his games are given, including an outstanding win against Amos Burn, the English player and writer who gave his name to the Burn Variation of the French Defence.

All the games (some of which have light annotations) can be played through and the post on October 25 has a game between Capablanca and Edward Lasker described as a remarkable game, under the headline “Cuban sacrifices Queen in victory over Ed. Lasker”. The October 7 post has a game involving two Hamburg Chess Club players which involved an interesting double-rook ending.

For those interested in chess history, or those just looking for games to play through, this site should be worth a visit.

December

<http://www.chesslive.de/js/apps/onlinedb> (Link no longer works) is the website of the Chess Live Database.

As the name suggests it is a database of games, but is also an openings explorer. There are over 3 million games starting 1.e4 and over 2 million starting 1.d4, with 18 other first moves in order of popularity, the last being 1.Na3 (112 games).

Believe it or not, the database has 229 games starting 1.f3. To test it I entered the moves of my last game, in which I thought I'd played an inferior move early on, only to find there were nearly 15,000 games where my move had been played, so it was probably not so bad after all. However, my opponent played a novelty on move 9 so the explorer was only useful up to that point.

The board interface is clear and easy to use, with the usual flip board, take back and search features.

Many games are listed by top GMs such as Adams, Aronian and Svidler, from this year's Warsaw Men's European Team Championship won by Azerbaijan.

One of the advantages of this opening explorer is that there is no need to register to use it.

2014

January

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 <https://www.kingschesscoaching.weebly.com/> (Link no longer works) 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?

February

Since I first reviewed <https://www.chesslecture.com/> over 2 years ago, there have been several changes. The home page has been totally revamped. There is a list of the latest 8 videos available for members to watch, a blog with descriptions of the videos available in the previous few weeks and some members' comments. Over 2,200 lectures are available and the presentation quality has been maintained. Access extends to iPhone, iPad and Android phones and tablets.

Previously non-members looking for free "taster" lectures had a choice of only a couple of free lectures to view which never changed (and are still available). There is now also a Free video of the Week. This is an important change for anyone who doesn't wish to sign up, but will still be able to see one free lecture a week to get a feel of the site.

www.youtube.com/channel/UCjyaLKxiZ1bQfOPJW2yLXWg

is another new feature posting several chess lectures for anyone to view. These include lessons on attacking chess, pawn endings, blockade in the Nimzo-Indian, positional play and zwischenzugs. A good sample of what the site has to offer.

March

<https://www.chessity.com/en> is a Netherlands-based chess tactics website. Several forms of training are offered across different strength levels. There are daily tactical exercises covering many themes such as exploiting a pin, defence, removing the guard, discovered attack and various types of forcing moves. Each theme has three sets of exercises, each set being more difficult than the last. The repetition of exercises grouped by theme is intended to imprint the various patterns on the brain, making it easier for users to recognise such patterns if they arise in their own games. The goal is to complete each set of puzzles by solving nine of them correctly. Future ones presented to you are tailored to suit your strength. Your progressive results are

rated. The solutions to each set of puzzles are unlocked after completing the set and the rating of each puzzle is shown.

The site seeks to motivate members by adding a competitive element to solving the puzzles. Uniquely as far as I'm aware, four members solving the same set of exercises can compete against each other in real time, by playing challenges in which the winner will be the player who can solve nine puzzles in the shortest time. A player making three mistakes is eliminated. Each user's progress is tracked and the statistics will highlight strengths and weaknesses.

There is an area for blogs and forums, so that members can share their thoughts or have their questions answered. Users can invite each other to be friends and compete against each other.

It is a commercial site, but a free three-day membership is offered as a taster. Those wishing to pay will gain access to a visualisation training tool and master level exercises. Membership fees are quoted in Euros. A one-month membership costs € 5 (about £4.10 at the current exchange rate) and annual membership equates to about 8p per day. Lifetime membership is also offered. The free taster pass must be worth a try.

April

I recently came across <https://www.chessimprovement.net/> ([Link no longer works](#)) which contains many ideas, blogs and videos dedicated to making us better players. The content is free, apart from a game analysis service. The home page contains an introduction by the founder of the site, Majnu, with some notes about the improvement method used by GM Yasser Seirawan, which anyone who has seen his videos on St Louis Chess Club's You Tube channel will be aware of. These can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/STLChessClub?feature=watch>

The introduction is followed by reviews of a couple of endgame books and links to some of Majnu's videos, including a 35-minute one *This is How to Improve Your Chess*. Majnu has produced over 300 chess videos on his YouTube channel, and links to them are on the channel and on his site. Titles include *Chess Visualisation Training*, *Chess Calculation Training*, *Middlegame Training and Play Like Kramnik*. There are also links to articles on middlegame training, positional sacrifices and tactics and links to 13 endgame videos and other chess websites.

May

Those who like to contribute to forums, or just to read forum posts left by others, might wish to steer clear of the chess-related forum at www.chesscircle.net. The site appears to be a large bulletin board with thousands of members who can post chess questions or thoughts for discussion by the site's community. Anyone can read posts on the site but to contribute to the forums you must register as a member. This involves choosing a user name and password and providing an email address. This site is a good idea but unfortunately it appears to have been commandeered by spammers. I found one valid thread about crushing defeats, but the rest of the site is a joke.

A better site is <https://www.hilmichess.blogspot.com> ([Link no longer works](#)) which contains some valid tips for improving at chess, although there appear to have been no additions to the site since 2008. A list of recommended chess books to read is given, together with tips on how best to seriously study chess. Here you will find such pearls of wisdom as "find your weaknesses and work to improve them", "if stuck in a rut learn a new opening" and (easier said than done) "memorise up to 25 GM games". There are also notes on the best way to study openings and endings.

June

Now the league season has finished, although there will still be activities at the club, you may wish to seek out some chess puzzles to solve, to stay sharp.

One site worth a visit is <https://www.chessgym.net>. This offers access to several chess training tools with the aim to improve a player's tactical, strategic and analytical skills. The *Blitz* tactics database has over 50,000 rated puzzles. The computer makes a move and you have to reply with the best move within 15 seconds to gain the best rating. The rating reduces with time and if an inferior move is played.

The site is more than simply a tactics server. There is the facility to *Play chess* against the computer, having first set its playing strength. *Endgames* provides interactive endgame training, with a view to improving finishing skills and knowledge of middlegame strategies.

The *Positional* training database has positions taken from real games. Unlike tactical puzzles where you know you must find a winning shot, the positional trainer will offer positions that might be winning, losing or equal. You must therefore assess each position, taking 2 or 3 minutes deciding on your move. There may be several good moves based on the computer's evaluation of the position and more than one correct answer, the goal being not to play a losing move.

Memory training requires you to find or remember the best move from a small pool of puzzles that are presented repeatedly. The *Openings* database allows you to explore openings without ever needing to open your copy of MCO again.

Finally, *Attackers* and *Defenders* puzzles ask you to find all the attacked or defended pieces in a position against the clock, to speed up your assessment of a position.

It is possible to play as a guest without your results being rated, but registration is quick, easy and free. There is a site *Guide* and a *How to Play* section explains the puzzles.

July

A chess-related site with a difference is <https://www.chesspersonality.com>.

Here, for a change, there are no videos, tactical puzzles or games to play through. You are asked to "take the quiz" and answer 20 questions about your chess style. What you get at the end is an assessment of your playing style, which openings you should be playing, which (Facebook) friends are most like you and which master you are most like. I suppose we would all like to think we are so good at attacking that we play like Tal, or our defensive skills are as good as those of Lasker or Petrosian.

Each question has a choice of two possible answers. Half the questions involve assessing a position before you answer. These test your attitude to future planning or perhaps to a current threat. The other questions are short and are designed to test your mindset in various circumstances.

At the end you will find out whether you are an assassin, a mad scientist, a surgeon, a grinder, an escape artist, or whether you have one of several other suggested chess personalities. To see the other personalities you don't have to take the test again (although you could). You can click on a link for each personality to see an explanation of that particular style, which master matches it and which opening suits each style. Most often it is the Ruy Lopez as White.

Thanks to Paul Hanks for suggesting a review of this site. If anyone else has found a worthy site please let me know.

August

Rule 9 of the CCCA League Rules states that all games shall be played according to the current FIDE Laws of Chess. We need to be aware that FIDE have, from 1 July 2014, applied some changes to the Laws. The new Laws (and the previous ones) can be viewed following links at: <https://www.fide.com/component/handbook/?id=32&view=category%20>

Some of the changes are unlikely to impact our games much as they are tweaks or a general tidying-up. However, some of them are more important. I'll summarise the main changes without going as far as quoting the rule numbers.

Before 1 July if your mobile phone rang during a game, you lost the game. Now, during play, a player cannot have a mobile phone or any other electronic means of communication in the playing venue. He loses the game if he does. The arbiter has the power to have the player searched. (This must be a reaction to suspicions of or actual cheating in tournaments).

A new rule governing promotion states that the promoted pawn does not have to be actually placed on the eighth rank (but can be) and removing the pawn and putting the new piece on the promotion square can be done in any order. If an opponent's piece stands on the promotion square it must be captured.

Previously three illegal moves would lose the game. Now you will lose after only two.

The draw by third time repetition of a position and the 50 move rule (a draw can be claimed if 50 consecutive moves are made without a pawn move or any capture) still apply but there's a new rule which states that if no draw claim is made after five consecutive alternate moves, or after 75 moves have been completed by each player without a pawn being moved or a capture, the arbiter will declare the game drawn. (In theory, in the 50 move rule without a claim the game could carry on indefinitely).

A player claiming a draw by repetition can stop the clocks. Now the arbiter will stop the clocks if the claimant forgets to.

If an opponent makes his move before the first player has pressed the clock, the first player's move is deemed to have been completed.

The arbiter's role has been expanded. Now, the arbiter shall ensure fair play; and take special measures in the interests of disabled players and those who need medical attention.

The definition of Rapidplay has been changed from "at least 15 minutes to less than 60 minutes", to "more than 10 minutes and less than 60 minutes".

There are some minor changes to some other rules including Rapidplay and Blitz.

September

In April 2013 I mentioned the *St Louis Chess Club and Scholastic Centre* in connection with the video lectures they produce, presented by Yasser Seirawan and others. I have re-visited their site because the club is the venue for the 2nd annual Sinquefield Cup Tournament. This year it runs from 27 August to 7 September and it is billed as the strongest chess tournament in history, with 6 of the top 10 GMs in the world competing, whose average rating is 2802.

This is an opportunity to see top-class chess played by chess titans Carlsen, Aronian, Caruana (the world top 3), Nakamura (5th), Topalov (8th) and Vachier-Lagrave (9th). They will play each other twice and the top prize is \$100,000.

The schedule is here: <http://www.saintlouischessclub.org/civCRM/event/info?reset=1&id=62> together with more information. The 6 hour time difference between St Louis and the UK means that we will be able to view the games live in the evenings by following this link to the chess viewer: <https://www.uschesschamps.com/live>. All the games played are recorded in the viewer so that they can all be viewed after the tournament for as long as the viewer remains available. At the time of writing this, after 2 rounds Carlsen is 4th and Topalov has yet to score.

As a bonus, last year the Club produced videos discussing some of the games played in the first Sinquefeld Cup Tournament, presented by some of their GMs and it is likely that they will do the same this year.

Their library of chess training videos is expanding all the time. There are lessons to suit all classes of player from “beginner” to “advanced”, in masterclass-type format with a demo board and interaction with an audience. In my opinion this is one of the best sources of free chess instruction available.

The videos can be accessed here: <https://saintlouischessclub.org/blog/video>

October

Most chess players learn to play the game as children. Many of us, even if we have no young children of our own, will have grandchildren, nieces or nephews of school age, but can they play chess? Not every school has a chess club yet. The benefits of teaching chess to children are well known. They learn concentration, problem-solving, decision making, to accept defeat well and they become more confident.

The future of chess is in the hands of today’s youth, so perhaps we should do as much as we can to introduce them to the game and nurture their interest in it. Hopefully they will go on to join a chess club (even if not ours) and enjoy a lifetime of chess.

<https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/chess-for-kids> contains templates so that a chess set can be printed out, cut out and assembled as a basic free starter set, together with an explanation of how each piece moves and some tips on basic opening play.

<https://www.chesskids.com> is an Australian site which has several resources aimed at children, including on-line lessons (for a small fee) although there are free sample video lessons such as “The Three Golden Rules of Chess”. There is a link to a free archive of 1001 checkmate puzzles at <https://www.chessmicrobase.com>, although the answers are next to the puzzles and only the first 30 actually work. That site does, however, give free access to shared public databases of games that can be played through.

November

So, Magnus Carlsen’s 2014 world championship match opponent is Viswanathan Anand, who will be seeking to win the title back from Carlsen, having lost it to him last year. I wonder whether Anand, as part of his preparation, will have visited Carlsen’s website at <https://www.magnuscarlsen.com/en>

Here he would see the challenge “Do you dare to play Magnus?” and could take the opportunity to play chess against the “official Magnus Carlsen-tuned chess engine with exclusive Magnus Carlsen training content” by downloading a free app. Although Anand doesn’t need them, he could “earn points towards qualifying to play Magnus Carlsen live!”

The site has a biography of Carlsen and details of his career highlights. There is a link to Carlsen’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/magnuscarlsen which has been in operation for eight months. Twenty short videos have been posted on this, several of which involve the “Play Magnus” app including one in which Carlsen “plays himself” at age 5. He also reviews some tournaments in discussion with his manager, FM Aspen Agdestein.

The game of chess originated in India, and possibly that fact will give Anand an added incentive to regain the world championship.

Carlsen will not be able to visit Anand’s own website. Although he has a twitter account, Anand, surprisingly, has no personal website. While world champion in 2008, Anand wrote an interesting article for *Time* on the history of chess, which can be found here: http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1815747_1815707_1815674,00.html

December

The ECF is changing the way grades are calculated, starting with the January 2015 list, to address two issues they have identified.

The first issue is the effect of incorrectly recorded dates. At present a grade is calculated using a player’s last 30 games, whether they were played in the last 6 months or in the last 3 years. A player’s record will be inaccurate if the dates of games played at or around the 30-game cut-off point are incorrect. The order of those games could make a difference of 3 points or more to a player’s grade two years later.

The second issue is the need to indicate the strength of newly-graded players as soon as possible.

The changes being introduced are:

1. Instead of averaging only 30 games, category A grades will be calculated using the average of all games played in the last two grading periods, so category X will no longer be needed.
2. For categories below A, the calculation will still, as now, involve 30 games, but instead of a cut-off point part way through a grading period, the system will take from each previous period as many games as necessary to total 30, but the grading points from those in the earliest period used will be taken to be the average per game for the whole of that period.
3. Grade category F will be introduced, showing a grade based on only 5 games in the last 36 months, including at least 1 in the latest period. This is expected to increase the number of graded players from less than 12,000 to around 13,600 or more.

Full details of the changes can be found in the appendix to the ECF grading help pages here: <http://www.ecfgrading.org.uk/new/menu.php>

2015

January

Were you given a chess book for Christmas? Or did you buy one for yourself? If so, did it meet your expectations or did something disappoint, such as a lack of diagrams or too much impenetrable analysis? A good way to avoid any disappointment is to find out, before purchase, what other players think about a book by visiting a review website such as chessbookreviews.wordpress.com which contains reviews written by John Hartmann aimed at the club player.

The site is up to date, with Dvoretsky's new *Endgame Manual (4th Edition)* being the subject of his latest review. Jacob Aagaard's *Grandmaster Preparation: Endgame Play* earns a positive review. Another very recent review is of *Bent Larsen's Best Games*. There is an archive with posts arranged monthly starting with January 2013 and ending currently with December 2014, covering various subjects. For example, I randomly looked at the February 2014 archive and found it to be devoted to books on checkmate and general tactics.

There are links to enable searches by category, such as openings, studies, tactics and problems. There are (from 2013) buying guides for clocks and chess interfaces and databases and chess engines in addition to books..

February

In any field much general knowledge can be learned from the quotes of experts. Quotes about chess should therefore be of benefit to any player. Unsurprisingly, such quotes can be found at <https://www.chessquotes.com> ([Link no longer works](#)) which "contains a collection of wisdom and interest from world champions, grandmasters, theorists and prominent chess personalities." First published in 2010, the site contains over 1,000 quotes from over 20 players including Fischer, Lasker, Spassky and Tal, on over 40 topics such as analysis, bishops, knights, openings, endings, losing and pawns.

For example, this from the inventor of the Elo rating system: "The process of rating players can be compared to the measurement of the position of a cork bobbing up and down on the surface of agitated water with a yard stick tied to a rope and which is swaying in the wind." - Arpad Elo. On the question of whether it is better to play the position or the opponent: "Question to Rubinstein: "Who is your opponent tonight?" Answer: "Tonight I am playing against the black pieces." - Akiba Rubinstein. An opposite view: "I am trying to beat the guy sitting across from me and trying to choose the moves that are most unpleasant for him and his style." - Magnus Carlsen.

Or these on losing: "Chess is a contributor to net human unhappiness, since the pleasure of victory is greatly exceeded by the pain of defeat." - Bill Hartston. "Some people think that if their opponent plays a beautiful game, it's OK to lose. I don't. You have to be merciless." - Magnus Carlsen.

Why not follow the link and browse the wisdom of the masters?

March

As a veteran player I am often surprised while looking at chess websites (or even books) to realise how much technical chess knowledge I have acquired over the years that I fail to put into practice while playing. Maybe I have forgotten some of it, or am guilty of lazy thinking such as assessing my position as ok just because it "looks good" rather than bothering to assess, say, colour weaknesses or establishing whether I have a space advantage by actually counting the number of squares covered by my pieces. Perhaps I need to revise?

A site I found recently is <http://www.chess-games-strategies.com> (Link no longer works) which is aimed primarily at improving players but has plenty of content that experienced players might find instructive. There is a site index with links to a play area where you can either play against the *Spark Chess* program or be directed to other sites to solve puzzles. Other links take you to free chess analysis tools and to guides on tactics, strategy, openings and endgames, plus guides specifically aimed at children, beginners and “advanced beginners”. The latter is based on the subject matter of the 1960 *Point Count Chess* book. One of the concepts covered is Bent Larsen’s “8 Questions for assessing candidate moves” and another is the difference between occupation and control of a square and the idea that a piece can be a square’s owner, renter or squatter!

One of the analysis tools is *Chess Openings Analyser* which is based on theories found in GM Yasser Seirawan’s *Winning Chess* books, available as a free download because it is a beta version although said to be fully functional.

The Strategies Guide is surprisingly comprehensive and includes discussions on the various pawn structures including Seirawan’s ideas on acceptable types of doubled pawns. (Such pawns are not all “bad”).

There is even an extensive section devoted to instructive videos by the likes of Igor Smirnov (*Winning Patterns, The Secrets of Strong Players*), and Susan Polgar. Also included are several of Yasser Seirawan’s lectures for the *St Louis Chess Club* (which I reviewed in April 2013).

April

Francesco Costa is a 2200 plus rated correspondence player who has established a website at <https://www.webalice.it/costa.f/chess.html> (Link no longer works) which has some interesting content.

Under the heading *Endgames and Studies* there are some problems to solve involving such themes as double attack, discovered attack and zugzwang, plus endings with pawns (including the opposition), rook versus rook, opposite coloured bishops, same coloured bishops and bishop versus knight. Included are a few “White to move and win” puzzles and a Nalimov Database of endings. Almost all of the solutions appear in English but unfortunately one or two have not been translated from the Italian and others that have are difficult to follow. Some knowledge of Italian might be useful here, because although Google gave me the opportunity to translate the pages, some of the translation was odd. For example: “The realization of imprisonment: the Woman and the pedestrian Blacks are completely blocked by the two Alfieri. In practice, White can now play the final of pedestrians with Horse of advantage”. The solutions can, however, still be played through using the play button under the chessboard, making the notes easier to understand.

Under the heading *Opening Theory* there are some basic opening tips and more advanced advice on opening strategy such as the use of the minority attack in the Karlsbad pawn structure. There is also an archive of recent games collected in an Openings Database which is free to download.

This site is both educational and sometimes unintentionally amusing.

May

Chessbase (<http://en.chessbase.com/>) is such a large site that I’m surprised I have not mentioned it before. It is the site of the publisher of *fritztrainer* DVDs, chess engines and opening databases, with a well-stocked online shop.

There are many news pages (and I mean many: the news for Jan1st 2015 is currently on page 21) covering chess events from around the world, such as the recent blitz match between Kasparov and Short, won by Kasparov 8.5 to 1.5 (5-0 in the second half of the match). Last month also saw the 60th birthday of John Nunn which was celebrated with a 16 player blitz tournament. Competitors included GMs Keith Arkell and Jonathan Mestel. The report includes many photographs of the players and a final cross table of the event, which was won by GM Gawain Jones. Among the news items there are puzzles and links to annotated games and tutorials.

The site is home to the *ChessBase Live Database* of games which doubles as an openings explorer. There is a link to *Playchess.com* which offers live commentaries during world-class tournaments and the ability to play chess online.

June

<https://timkr.home.xs4all.nl/chess/chess.html> is the website of the Netherlands player Tim Krabbe, who has titled it "*Chess Curiosities*". It contains his chess diary, last updated in September 2014, which began in 1999 and contains 396 entries with positions and full game scores, many of them annotated.

In addition to the diary there are many articles, such as *The 110 Greatest Moves ever played*, which are mostly from GM play and all involve the common factor that a leap of faith was necessary to find the move. There is a compilation of *Babson Tasks*. A Babson Task is a very difficult chess problem to compose and solve. White mates in n number of moves. After White's first move, Black promotes a pawn to a queen, rook, knight or bishop and White then promotes a pawn to the same piece that White promoted to. The solution of the problem has only one first move for White followed by four different correct solutions, one variation for each different promotion.

In *The Mother of All Forks* there is a discussion about what a fork actually is and an example of Black making a rook move which immediately activates a fork, not by the rook, but by his king. *Promotion to Rook and Bishop* in Games discusses over 40 examples of under promotion.

You will find much more in this site than I have room to mention here.

July

The Chess Website describes itself as "your one stop shop for all things chess". It is financed by membership subscriptions which are \$7 per month or \$50 per year. If you don't fancy becoming a member there is plenty of interesting and instructive free content on the site.

On the homepage, which is at <https://www.thechesswebsite.com>, you will see 12 chessboards which represent links to different areas of the site. *Learn to Play* covers the basics. *Openings* shows a brief description of each opening with a short explanatory video and some famous games to play through via links to chessgames.com. Access is free to the Albin, Benko, Benoni, Bird's, Budapest, Dutch, English, Reti, Scandinavian and many more.

Strategy and Tactics has notes and videos on such themes as open v closed positions, good v bad bishops, outposts, decoy, development, deflection, bishop sacrifice and the windmill. There are 3 grades of *Puzzles*: easy, medium and hard. *Practice* leads to 20 free "find the best move" positions. *End Game* has 10 free basic short lessons on such themes as king & pawn, knight v rook and triangulation. *Famous Games* includes games to play through by such luminaries as Fischer and Kasparov (v *Deep Blue*), plus some more recent (not very famous) games. *Traps* contains 16 free descriptions of various traps including the Fishing Pole and Queen Amidala traps – both new to me and well worth a look!

August

Have you become rusty during the last few months? If so, you might want to dust off a chess book or two. Alternatively, you could visit <https://chesstempo.com> which is an Australian site dedicated to chess training. Basic membership is free and registration is quick and easy, giving you access to many, but not all, of the site's features. Tactics Training has over 30,000 positions taken from actual games, where you have to find the best continuation. In Endgame Training, there are over 10,000 positions to solve, again taken from actual games. The Chess Database has over 2 million games with an opening explorer. There is also the ability to Play Chess Online against other members or the computer. Guess the Move allows you to play through some master games, taking one side and trying to play the best possible moves. Each of your moves is scored, depending on how close it is to the move played in the game or the "best" move according to the computer. There is a list of tactical motifs used in the puzzles, such as clearance, distraction, interference and zwischenzug, with an explanation and example for each, together with a list of positional motifs, including centre control, domination and piece centralisation, again with examples and explanations. On sign-up you are given a rating which alters depending on your success, giving you an idea of your progress. There are help pages explaining how to use all the features. Basic membership can be upgraded, at a monthly or annual fee, to silver or gold levels which unlock more features on the site. For example, as a basic member you have a limited number of daily tactical and endgame puzzles, fewer master games in which to guess moves and the opening explorer is limited to 10 moves deep. There is a page clearly showing the differences between the membership classes. I have been a basic member for a few weeks and have found the site to be glitch-free and instructive.

September

Confusingly (especially for some quiz contestants) Southport is not on the south coast, nor is it a port. It is a popular holiday resort about 12 miles north of Liverpool. Its chess club has a website at <https://sites.google.com/site/southportchessclub/>

Apart from the items specific to the club's members, the webmaster has included a couple of sections that will interest any visitor. The link to *Food for Thought* will take you to sets of puzzles to solve, contributed by club members, including several smothered mate examples. *Featured Games* contains 14 games (mostly annotated) played by members. Several of the games feature the Reversed Stonewall (or Stonewall Attack) where White plays a Dutch Stonewall with an extra tempo. There are also some highly tactical Benko Gambit games.

By contrast, on the south coast lies the Dorset resort of Poole. The resort has a thriving chess club with a website at www.poolechessclub.org.uk. The site has a *Games* section with a mix of league and friendly annotated games to play through. Registering with the site will make more games available.

Both clubs are open one evening a week throughout the year and casual visitors are welcome. The Poole club even has a presence in a Bournemouth café one afternoon a week and again any visitors can call in for a casual game. It might be worth a visit if on holiday in either resort and missing chess.

October

Most of us have probably learned chess from books, perhaps spending a small fortune in the process. My own chess library contains several books on specific openings. Most of them old (predating the internet) and some covering openings I have never got round to playing. A better option now might be to find a website offering free instruction in many openings.

Such a site can be found at <http://www.eudesign.com/chessops/index.htm> which provides training mainly on openings, but with some endgame hints. The material is more suited to beginners and ungraded players wishing to improve, rather than experienced club players, but anyone could benefit from brushing up on some basics or exploring the more obscure openings that crop up every now and then. The site was established many years ago and employs descriptive notation but it's easy to get used to it. The interface is somewhat outdated, but thankfully there is a user guide

Chessops has a drop-down menu with links to such headings as *Chess Basics*, *Notation*, *Gambits* and *Chess History*, with explanatory text. The site claims to have over 9,000 interactive positions covering all major openings, defences and variations. There is a section on early mating, with examples of *Blackburne Shilling Mate*, *Boden's Mate* and *Sea Cadet Mate* as well as the more well known mates.

There is also a section giving the foreign names of the pieces, where we can learn for example that the knight is a cavalier in French and a caballo in Spanish. The site cannot compete with modern opening explorers but it does bring together plenty of information in one place with no charge and no need to register.

November

The town of Rushden, Northamptonshire, lies about 30 miles south west of Peterborough. Rushden chess club's website is at <https://www.rushdenchessclub.com>. They have a similar number of active players as New England.

The most interesting aspect of the site for the non-member visitor is probably the number of games available to play through. The game viewer has a feature I have not seen before: when playing through a game the result is only revealed when you play the last move of the game.

The site includes several games from the 2015 Nottingham Congress including some played by Sam Herring of Oundle School who now plays for Peterborough. There are many games to play through from league matches and their club's internal tournament.

Following the link *Daily Puzzle Sets* takes you to computer-set puzzles of varying difficulty including, on the day I looked at them, a *White to move, mate in 18* puzzle – far beyond my puzzle solving capabilities.

The link *Stuff* takes you to a page of more links to such gems as *Andrew Martin's YouTube videos*, Wikipedia's *Checkmate Patterns* and *Interference* pages, the *Chess Traps* page on the chess website (a site I reviewed in July) and *Endgame Practice* on chessvideos.tv (reviewed in July 2013).

December

Tryfon Gavriel is a FIDE Candidate Master whose current ECF grade is 199. He has an extensive online presence where he is known as *Kingscrusher*. He runs a chess website at <https://www.chessworld.net> which has a collection of links to his instructive chess videos on *YouTube*, which number more than 6,500.

The links are grouped under various headings. The first, *Popular Playlists*, has links to video collections such as 15 opening traps, 25 Caro Kann games, 45 English Opening games, 74 in the King's Gambit and 16 in the Benko, 179 videos on the games of Bobby Fischer (some over an hour long), 239 on the games of Magnus Carlsen and others on the King's Indian and the games of Kasparov and Petrosian.

Brilliant Games of Chess groups the links to 409 videos on the games of such stars as Nakamura, Aronian, Carlsen, Fischer, Anand, Tal and Larsen. *Classic Fischer Chess Tournaments* has links to videos on Fischer's 60 Memorable Games, his 11-0 performance in the 1963 US Championship, 170 of his classic games, 8 games from a blitz tournament and games from the Fischer – Spassky battles of 1972 and 1992. *Fantastic Tournaments where Super Grandmasters have played each other* has links to videos covering the London Chess Classic 2012, Tata Steel 2013 and the World Candidates Championship 2013.

Evolution of Style examines how chess playing style has changed over hundreds of years. *FIDE World Champions* looks at the games of 17 world champions from Steinitz to Carlsen. *Uncrowned Kings* has videos on the games of great players who never became World Champion, including Paul Morphy, Viktor Korchnoi and Bent Larsen. *Other Interesting Players* and *Not GMs but interesting players* have instructive games played by Pillsbury, John Nunn, Simon Williams, Svidler, Short, Kamsky, Jack Rudd and others. *Unusual Systems for White* has videos covering 1.b3 and 1.f4. There are four *Chess Openings* sections covering 1.e4 and 1.d4 for both sides. *The English Opening* has its own collection. *Chess Pawn Structures* has 7 videos, *Middlegame Themes* has 35 and *Endgame Themes* has 5. There are also sections on *Correspondence Chess*, *Puzzles* and *Computer Chess*.

Why not see for yourself what this site has to offer during the Christmas break?

2016

January

The New Yorker is an American magazine published nearly every week containing articles and commentary on many subjects and topical events. In March 2011 one issue contained an interesting article on Magnus Carlsen and chess generally, which can be found at www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/03/21/the-princes-gambit The article begins by describing tournament chess, the use of computers and the transmission of moves over the internet. It moves on to discuss Carlsen's fortunes in the 2010 London Chess Classic, which he had won the year before. He needed to win his 6th round game against Kramnik, having earlier lost two games. The description of the game is surprisingly exciting given that it uses only prose and no chess notation. Kramnik appeared to be winning for most of the long game but missed a winning move and had to settle for a draw. There are comments on the rivalry and possible ill-feeling between the two players. There is a description of Carlsen's lifestyle and a brief history of his life from starting to play chess at the age of 8 through winning junior tournaments, having tuition from top coaches, playing over 7000 online games and beating Karpov at blitz at 13 to becoming world number 1 after being trained by Kasparov. Even then, he would have preferred to be a sports star. Following that is a history of chess, including its domination by the Soviets in the pre-Fischer era and the impact of the coming of computers such as Deep Blue, which, it is argued, has altered the way humans play the game. The article then describes Carlsen's fortunes at Wijk aan Zee 2011 and ends with his preparation for the Monaco Amber tournament 2011. This is an illuminating description of the highest level of chess and the life of one of its top stars.

February

Those of you who have visited *chesslecture.com* might be aware that one of their lecturers until last year was the US National Master Dana Mackenzie. He left to pursue other interests. His chess blog at <http://www.danamackenzie.com/blog/> is worth a visit.

There is much to explore here. The Home page contains the latest post. The *Profile* link takes you (as expected) to information about the author. There are links to monthly older posts containing chess wisdom, games and positions. There are so many of these that quite a lot of spare time would be needed to read them all, but, examples at random: *January 2016* contains analysis of a very complicated ending with rooks and pawns, where one side or the other could promote a pawn to achieve a queen v rook and pawns ending. *November 2015* includes *The Perils or Rewards of Doing Nothing* which discusses whether to play it safe or take risks when playing a weaker opponent. *September 2014* has part I of *Six Games, Six Positions* with analysis of critical points in the games. *March 2014* has *The Perils of Opening Preparation* in two parts, dealing with the Caro-Kann in Part 1 and the King's Gambit in Part 2. *September 2013* includes *Prophylaxis and Flexibility* with analysis of two positions showing it is better to play flexible moves that improve your position if you can, rather than impulsive committal moves that might end up ruining it. In *October 2011* there is *The Fourth Endgame of the Apocalypse*, with instructive analysis of a difficult endgame.

There is also an index of categories of posts. *Openings*, for example, has many discussions of opening themes such as *Why Does Anybody Play 1.e4?* A good question, when you know the statistics.

March

The imaginatively named American website <http://www.chess.com> is packed with resources that should improve any player's knowledge of the game. It brings together in one place video lectures, puzzles, chess courses, articles, an openings/games explorer, the ability to play chess

against human opponents or a computer and more. The content is suitable for all players, from beginner to master standard. The site boasts over 14 million members. It is possible to join at no cost, but then access to the features is severely restricted. There are 3 upgrades of subscription on a monthly or annual basis. The most expensive equates to about 20p a day and allows unlimited access to all the features with freedom from intrusive advertising.

The site is in the process of a revamp and for the time being members can access both the old and new interfaces and swap between them. The following remarks refer to the “new” site. The *Learn* link takes you to the training features. There are hundreds of lectures in the video library, presented mainly by GMs and IMs on subjects such as knight v bishop, king hunts, Mikhail Tal’s best endgames, club player’s mistakes (a series), how to beat slow plans, the endgame secrets you must know and how to restrict and win.

Several of the videos are presented by the English “Ginger GM” Simon Williams. Some of those cover variations of the French Defence, but one is about the Monkey’s Bum Gambit. (I have no idea what that is and am reluctant to try it.)

Members can play each other at various time controls then have their games analysed by computer to identify any missed opportunities. They can also watch other member’s games in progress and *Guess the Move*, with the watching member guessing correctly the most times being announced the winner.

This site has far more of interest so I’ll be returning to it next time.

April

This is part 2 of my review of <http://www.chess.com> . Over 50,000 tactical problems are on the site covering all the usual themes such as forks, skewers, pins, in-between moves, overloading, double attack and many more. Your progress as you solve the puzzles against the clock is rated. Each puzzle is treated as your “opponent” so that if you solve it correctly you gain points but it loses points and vice-versa if you make a mistake. The ratings should be reasonably accurate when hundreds of thousands of members have attempted the puzzles. You can choose not to be rated and to tackle the problems by tactical theme or at random.

Lessons are presented in a “Chess Mentor” format. You are presented with critical positions and asked to find the best moves, again being rated on your performance. There are over 100 courses grouped under such subjects as openings, endgames, strategy and tactics. Each course has about 20 lessons exploring a different theme. For example, the 8 *Strategy* courses include weak colour complexes, the art of exchanging pieces, Silman’s lessons in strategy and roots of positional understanding.

There are 6 courses on *Attacks* including lessons on checkmate patterns, the initiative, pawn storms and premature attacks on the king. *Openings* has 18 courses including 40 challenges in the King’s Indian, 41 in the Sicilian and 3 about exploiting opening errors by your opponent. There are 13 *Endgames* courses covering, for example, knights, bishop v knight, opposite-coloured bishops and pawn play. *Games* has 6 courses based on the games of such great players as Carlsen, Kasparov and Capablanca.

On the Home page, clicking on *Share* brings up several links such as *News* and *Articles* which includes tips on avoiding time trouble, why chess players blunder and finding your real weaknesses. *Forums* takes you to member’s discussions of various aspects of the site and general chess matters. There are also links to a vision trainer and to *chesstv* which is an online TV channel specialising in chess. The new site interface seems to be error-free and the site is well worth a visit whether you want to learn something new or just review the basics.

May

Anyone interested in chess news should visit <http://www.hotoffthechess.com/> which made its first appearance on the web in January this year. The site's mission is to provide free quality reliable chess news and media services for all chess players and to promote and encourage chess at all levels.

Currently the site has the first part of a guide to playing chess, aimed at beginners, which seems to cover the basics in a comprehensive manner. There are clear explanations of how the pawns and pieces move, the *en passant* rule, pawn promotion, castling, check, mate, pins, perpetual check and stalemate, accompanied by diagrams.

If you were in any doubt that chess is good for you, the home page contains a link to *The Top 10 Benefits of Chess*, suggesting that chess, amongst other things, improves memory, helps to prevent Alzheimer's, improves recovery from a stroke and exercises the brain.

The main intention of the site, however, is to provide up to date news on chess events. There are round by round reports on the Gibraltar Tournament which was won by Nakamura, the FIDE Candidates Tournament won by Karjakin and several other events, including the US Chess Championships in St Louis. The reports contain a selection of games which can be played through. All the reports are available, beginning with the 2015 London Chess Classic. This is a relatively new chess website that shows a lot of promise.

June

The ECF has made a change on its website at <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/> by closing the chess forum and replacing it with a feature called *Ask the Directors* which is accessed from a link on the left of the home page. Clicking on the link opens a questionnaire for use by members and non-members alike who wish to ask any of the 7 ECF directors a question. The director will then reply promptly by email. The aim is to publish in due course the most pertinent and interesting questions and answers in FAQ format.

<http://www.4ncl.co.uk/> is the website of the Four Nations Chess League, which is Britain's strongest chess league, run as a business, consisting of four divisions of top class teams which meet in weekend team tournaments at venues in England throughout the chess season of October to May. Our Honorary Member Chris Ross regularly plays in 4NCL events. Some of the world's top players have taken part, including Peter Svidler.

The website has a timetable of events and details of all the fixtures and results. There are lists of teams for each division and an extensive selection of photographs of players in action. For those who like to view games there are many games available to play through on the site's viewer. The games can also be downloaded in pgn format.

July

Garry Kasparov became World Chess Champion in 1985 by defeating Anatoly Karpov. After a glittering career in chess he retired in 2005, turning his energies to writing and politics. An article he wrote in 2010, reviewing a book on artificial intelligence and the human mind, can be found here <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2010/02/11/the-chess-master-and-the-computer/> .

The article is mainly a series of reminiscences about his experience of computer chess, beginning with a simultaneous exhibition in 1985 against 32 of the strongest computers in the world, 8 of them named after him. He won every game, despite being in trouble against one of the Kasparov

models. By 1996 chess AI was much stronger and he narrowly won a match against the *Deep Blue* supercomputer, but was defeated by an upgraded version of *Deep Blue* the following year. Kasparov explains that although that event shocked many people, chess GMs knew that the AI was improving all the time and suspected that humans would soon be no match for the computers. Apparently many programmers had expected the improvements to result in a machine that could think and play like a human with creativity and intuition, rather than a brute force number-cruncher with no sign of human-like intelligence.

Kasparov believes that chess will never be solved (in the sense of tabulating every move in all possible games), because the number of possible games is 10 followed by 119 zeros. He goes on to discuss how computers have helped today's best young players to excel and reveals that in a 1999 tournament game against Topalov at Hoogoven, he was able to visualise the winning position a full 15 moves ahead, although he missed a quicker win that a computer would probably have found.

August

Nautilus is an American science magazine covering many subjects. In May this year it concentrated on ageing and one of the articles was a discussion about the joys (or otherwise) of learning chess in later life. It can be read here: <http://nautil.us/issue/36/aging/learning-chess-at-40> .

Written by a father who only knew the basic moves from childhood, it describes his wish to learn chess when his 4 year-old daughter had expressed an interest in the game. Finding the wealth of available literature too daunting, he hired a coach to teach them both. They improved together and when playing his daughter he would often blunder on purpose to keep up her interest, until she started to beat him. He soon came to the view that chess is a young person's game. (See also *Window on the Web* January 2014) While his brain was declining, his daughter's was expanding. What he found hard to take was that someone who could hardly tie their own shoelaces could beat him at chess.

The article discusses how the process of learning chess is different in children and adults and can be compared to learning a language. Adults learn grammar and pronunciation first, using that knowledge to make sentences. Children just talk. Adults playing chess need a reason to play a move. Child beginners just play. The site has a section for readers to leave their comments.

Clearly someone learning chess in later life will never be world champion, but the effort is still worthwhile.

September

The British Chess Championships 2016 took place in Bournemouth between 23rd July and 6th August. Michael Adams scored 10/11 to become British Champion and Jovanka Houska won the women's event. Adams equalled the record score set by Julian Hodgson in 1992, but is unlikely to have the opportunity to better it next year because it is planned to reduce the length of the event to only 9 rounds in future.

The ECF has a page dedicated to the competition which can be found here: <http://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/> The site includes videos of the game of the day for each round, presented by IM Andrew Martin. The link *Andrew Martin – videos* takes you to the ECF's *YouTube* channel, where videos of games from this and the previous two championships can be viewed, together with live commentary from 2015. Possibly live commentary from this year will be added in due course. *Pairings and Results* takes you to lists of participants for the various competitions with cross-tables.

PGNs2016 enables you to play through all the games of the 26 different competitions, round by round, including the “Weekender” tournaments. There are several pages of photographs of the participants.

If you wish to it is possible to download the games in pgn format.

October

<http://www.chesscorner.com/index.html> is a site aimed at the improving player but since it was created by a chess enthusiast for chess enthusiasts, chess players of any level should find something on the site to interest them.

There are various links across the top of the home page. *Learn* takes you to tutorials beginning with those suitable for beginners who need the basics, followed by many more aimed at intermediate players. They cover such standard tactical themes as Removing the Defender, Overloading, Deflection and Decoying. Each theme is explained, followed by a few examples.

Algebraic and Forsyth notations are both explained. There is a selection of quotes of the elite players, such as: Chess is mental torture – Kasparov. There are two types of sacrifices: correct ones and mine – Tal. Discovered check is the dive-bomber of the chessboard – Fine. Every pawn is a potential queen – Mason. The sharp-eyed might notice that there is even a quote attributed to one Jan *Tinman*.

Play invites you to register and play online. *Games* presents collections of games to play through, but that section seems not to be working. *World Champions* is a list of historical world champions from Steinitz to Kasparov. There are also links to Ecard sales (not chess – related) and books.

November

From the 11th to 30th November the Fide World Chess Championship 2016 will be held in New York between Norway’s Magnus Carlsen and Russia’s Sergey Karjakin. There will be a maximum of 12 games and the first to reach a 6.5 score will win the match. If you want to get close to the action and see all the games live there’s no need to go to the expense of booking return flights to New York. As an alternative (but obviously not really the same as being there) you could watch the games at <http://worldchess.com/nyc2016/#> about. The site suggests that you will experience the match as if you had a view from any of the best seats in the house, not just one.

For less than the cost of 4 pints of beer you can have access to panoramic views of the playing area and feel close to the action. There will be multiple camera views with commentary by GMs and fans, together with an interactive “Dashboard” giving move predictions, analysis and viewer discussions. An interactive board will enable viewers to play through the moves and try other moves. There will be tracking of the time spent on each move with evaluations. There will also be the opportunity for viewers to chat with other viewers and the experts.

December

The English chess historian and journalist Edward Winter was once described by Yasser Seirawan as “the chess world’s foremost authority on its rich history”. Now living in Switzerland, Winter is the author of several chess books. He began writing *Chess Notes* (a printed periodical) in the early 1980s as a forum for comments, questions and answers submitted by anyone interested in chess. Although the publication ceased some years ago the format continues and the forum can now be found at www.chesshistory.com

The home page has links to the current month’s *Notes* and over 10,000 previous articles can be

found in the *Archives*, which go back to 2004, many of them describing chess players and tournaments from the 19th century (although more modern events and characters are also covered) with a sprinkling of items on openings, strategy and tactics. So many articles obviously need an index and this can be found by following the *Factfinder* link from the main page. The main Archive page has a helpful list of featured articles. Here there are links to such items as *Chess Cunning, Gamesmanship and Skulduggery, Chess and Alcohol, Chess and Murder* and *The Fox Enigma*. This is a vast archive of chess –related history and information..

2017

January

Matthew Sadler is the third strongest English player, below Adams and Short. He has an ECF grade of 282, which is beyond the dreams of most of us. The author of six chess books including the 2016 ECF Book of the Year, he has won the British Championship twice, but is no longer a professional player, preferring an IT career in the Netherlands. Since February 2016, he has hosted his own website at <http://matthewsadler.me.uk/> where we can learn from his biography page that he learned chess at the tender age of 7, becoming an IM at 17 and a GM at 19. He has an up-to-date blog which currently has about eighty posts, the majority of which contain interesting excerpts from his games and the games of famous masters such as Alekhine, Morphy and Korchnoi. The moves are text only and the games can't be played through online. Although there are diagrams, the reader will need a chess set to play through the moves unless very good at visualising long variations between the diagrams. How to play king, rook and pawn endings, attacking with F D Yates and "Alekhine's Themes" are the most common subject of the blogs. Other subjects discussed include which rook to put on an open file, rook endings and fighting hanging pawns. There is a link to several of GM Sadler's YouTube videos with instructive excerpts from his own games and those of, for example, Capablanca and Lasker.

February

Arguably, the most famous chess players in history are those who became world champion. There are very strong players who never reached that pinnacle, but achieved fame for their ideas and their contribution to chess theory through their games and books. Let's spare a thought for some of those who could have become world champion, but never did. The website *Uncrowned Kings* at <http://www.uncrowned-kings.co.uk/> names five such players. (Click on the *Files* link.)

Akiba Rubinstein (1882-1961) won 5 consecutive major tournaments in 1912. At that time Lasker was world champion but Rubinstein, who was thought by some to be stronger than Lasker, never had the opportunity to challenge him for the title.

Well known for his books on chess strategy, Aron Nimzowitsch (1886 -1935) played his best chess in the 1920s, winning several elite tournaments. He beat Alekhine, but was never able to win against Capablanca.

Paul Keres (1916-1975) tied for first place with Alekhine at the 1936 Bad Nauheim tournament and the following year finished ahead of Alekhine at Margate. He finished equal first in the Avro Tournament of 1938. He finished equal third in the 1948 world championship tournament won by Botvinnick, followed by finishing second or equal second in the Candidates' tournaments of 1953, 1956, 1959 and 1962.

Victor Korchnoi (1931-2016) was USSR champion four times and was a candidate for the world championship cycle ten times. He played matches for the title against Karpov in 1978 and 1981, losing them both.

The strongest ever Danish player Bent Larsen (1935-2010), played in several Candidates' matches and was at his peak in the 1960s and 70s. He gave his name to Larsen's Opening (1. b3) and was known for re-invigorating such out of favour openings as the Scandinavian Defence, the Bishop's Opening and Bird's Opening.

Databases containing almost 9,000 of these players' games can be downloaded in CBV format, (familiar to Chessbase users) and apart from the games of Larsen and Korchnoi, in PGN format as

well. On the Home page there are links to downloads of more databases containing the games of other masters such as Reti, Staunton and Winter.

March

The website of Vladimir Kramnik, who was World Champion from 2000 to 2007, has had an update and facelift since I last mentioned it in 2013. The link <http://www.kramnik.com/> will take you to the site. There is a description of his defeat of Kasparov in London in 2000 to become Classical World Champion, his successful defence of that title in 2004 against Leko and his defeat of FIDE World Champion Topolov in 2006 which made Kramnik the unified World Champion.

There is a comprehensive biography where we learn that the artistic side of his chess was probably inherited from his sculptor father and music teacher mother. He won the U18 World Championship at only 16 in 1987, eleven years after learning the game. His career is documented until 2013.

There is a Games link to an index of Kramnik's games between 1987 and 2013. Clicking on a year enables you to play through the games although they are not annotated. There are hundreds of games, but there are significant differences in the numbers for each year, such as 2 for 1988 and 56 for 1991. The link to the games of 1990 does not work. It is clear that in the early years he preferred when White to play 1.e4 but later changed to 1.d4 and sometimes 1.Nf3.

There is now a link to a library of videos featuring some interviews of Kramnik and some of his games, including a selection of his rapid games.