

# NEW ENGLANDER

## Chess Club Update – March 2011

### Chairman's Chatter

You may not have noticed. The club website has been updated with photographs at our new venue. Please check to see that you are presenting your best aspect to the camera!

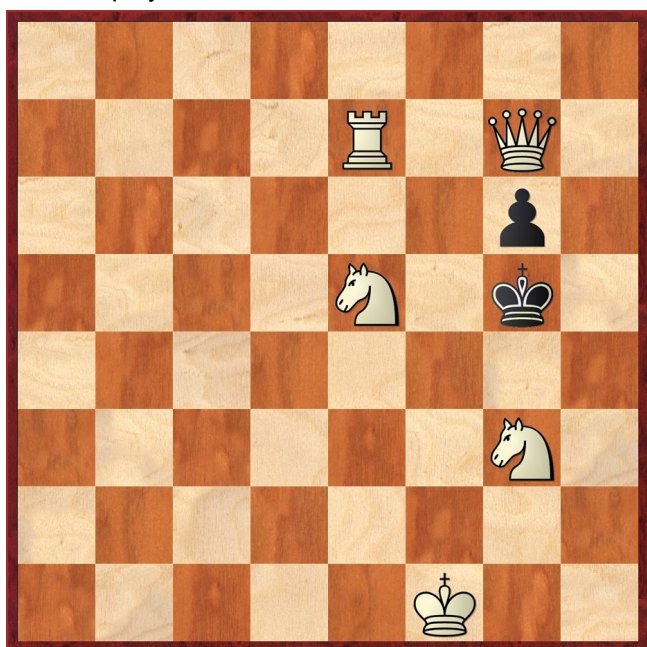
*Paul Hanks*

### Diary Dates

Please remember that the Lancaster Club holds its AGM on March 23rd and we shall lose our venue for the evening.

### Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution

Position: 8/1K6/6p1/8/1RNk4/8/5RQ1/8

1 Qg5 Ke4 2 Nb2# [1 ... Kc3 2 Qd2#; 1 ... Kd3 2 Qe3#]

### Website to Watch

Blindfold and rapid chess may seem like relaxation for the professionals but the 20th Amber Tournament has a prize fund of €227000 to attract the elite players. It takes place in Monaco from 11th to 25th March (see [www.amberchess20.com](http://www.amberchess20.com)) and sadly, it sounds like this will be the farewell staging of the event.

If you want classical chess, there are 11 rounds of the European Individual Championship from 22nd March to 2nd April (see [www.aixlesbains2011.fr](http://www.aixlesbains2011.fr)). The continent's finest cross swords with local hopefuls, some graded 1600 ELO points behind the top seeds!

### Result Round-up

#### Fenland Knock-Out

New England A	1	Cambridge B	3
C Ross	0	R McCorry	1
F Bowers	½	J Daugman	½
S Caraway	½	E Kernohan	½
P Hanks	0	D Redman	1

#### Cambridgeshire County Chess Leagues

New England A	3	Peterborough	2
C Ross	½	A Timosenko	½
F Bowers	1	P Walker	0
S Caraway	½	R Ilett	½
P Hanks	½	E Gibbon	½
P Turp	½	M Connolly	½

Warboys A	2	New England A	3
M Misson	0	C Ross	1
B Duff	1	S Caraway	0
R Mann	½	P Hanks	½
C Watkins	0	I Ramdewar	1
J Beck	½	R Jones	½

#### Team 550 Competition

New England 2	2	Warboys N	2
S Caraway	0	B Duff	1
P Turp	½	R Mann	½
R Jones	½	M Onyons	½
S Sitaram	1	K Harbour	0

Godmanchester	1	New England 2	3
M Vigor	0	P Turp	1
A Rankin	0	R Jones	1
J Wright	1	M Tarabad	0
J Griffiths	0	S Sitaram	1

Warboys N	1½	New England 2	2½
B Duff	½	P Turp	½
R Mann	½	I Ramdewar	½
M Onyons	0	R Jones	1
K Harbour	½	S Sitaram	½

#### Club Championship : at 09/02/11

Division One	CR	SC	FB	PT	PH	Total
C Ross	X	1   1	½   1	1   p	1   ½	6 / 7
S Caraway	0   0	X	½   0	0		½ / 5
F Bowers	0   ½	1   ½	X	½   ½	1   0	4 / 8
P Turp	p   0	1	½   ½	X	p	2 / 4
P Hanks	½   0		1   0	p	X	1½ / 4

Division Two	RJ	CR	AB	DL	NW	SW	JA	Total
R Jones	X		1	p	1	1	½	3½ / 4
C Russell		X		p	1	p	p	1 / 1
A Brookbanks	0		X	1			1 P	2 / 3
D Lane	p	p	0	X		1	1 P	2 / 3
N Wedley	0	0	0		X	0	p	0 / 4
S Walker	½		p	0	0	1	X	1½ / 5

Division Three	MT	DS	KT	HC	SS	PS	Total		
M Tarabad	X	p	P	1	0	0	1 / 3		
D Sivell		p	X	P	p		0 / 1		
K Talnikar		P	P	X		p	p	0 / 0	
H Currie	1	0	p		X	0	p	1 / 3	
S Sitaram		1		p	1	X	P	0 / 2	
P Spencer			1	p		p	1 P	X	2 / 2

### Match of the Month

This month, an interesting battle in the team championship of Yorkshire - the Woodhouse Cup. My opponent, a known attacker, puts a great deal of faith in the latent potential of a minor piece. Is it justified and can such conviction be the foundation on which to build hopes of survival or even of winning? This intriguing question is posed controversially in the following encounter...

**Chris Ross (2223) v Robert Newton (2024)**

Woodhouse Cup, Calderdale 05.02.11

<b>1</b>	<b>e4</b>	<b>c5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Nf3</b>	<b>d6</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Bb5+</b>	<b>Bd7</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Bxd7+</b>	<b>Nxd7</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>0-0</b>	<b>g6</b>

Since Black has recaptured on d7 with the knight, there is less pressure on d4 than there would have been if Black had developed the knight to c6. In that regard, playing for the bind with c2-c4 is not necessary. Building the centre slowly is a perfectly acceptable alternative to my usual systems.

<b>6</b>	<b>c3</b>	<b>Bg7</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>d4</b>	<b>Qc7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Re1</b>	<b>Rc8</b>

A curious choice of file for the rook because penetration to c2 is not really an option for Black. This would be the case after a pawn swap on d4 and the black queen landing on c2 but the queen exchange and Nc3 will leave the black rook very short of squares. A future Rd1 by White and a retreat with Ne1 will snaffle at least an exchange.

So, the question that arises now concerns the development prospects of Black's king's knight. Where is that knight heading?

Landing on f6 is only going to allow White to gain time with an e4-e5 thrust and then future sacrifices with e5-e6 (giving the pawn up for structural damage) is very

unpleasant for Black. Developing the knight to h6 leaves it with little to do and will become a tactical liability.

So, keeping all this in mind, how does White continue? He wants to keep Nc3 as a response to penetration ideas down the c file. The bishop on c1 then? Is it clear to where it belongs? I don't think so. And I don't believe in developing a piece before its future squares or, indeed, an ideal square for the piece can be found. At the moment, c1 seems to be its best square.

As for development principles, White should get out all his pieces to connect the rooks. If c1 is the best square for the bishop - no other square looks inviting or effective - another suitable way to connect or, at least, develop the rooks has to be found. White is not in zugzwang, but he needs a move in keeping with his positional objectives that makes Black take a decision about the role of the knight on g8.

**9 h3**

Yes, a "pawn to rook three" move but one that is well justified, as in many lines of the Ruy Lopez.

Here, the pawn is put on a light square, which is positionally desirable since the light-squared bishops have already been exchanged. Back rank mates are avoided and the g4 square is taken away from the knight on g8, which may be developed via f6 and g4, to pressurise a pawn on e5. Also, by marking time, Black is compelled to commit the knight on g8. Or, can he find another waiting move?

**9 ... a6**

Yes, he can. This useful move allows him to gain space on the queenside and the cat-and-mouse game continues. Can White find another waiting move which will again thwart Black's plans?

**10 a4**

Indeed. Black's queenside is held up and another pawn put on a light square. But take note. A previous note to move 8 highlighted that it was not apparent where the bishop on c1 intends to go and for the time being, it is best on that square. f4 would allow e7-e5 tactics and on g5, the bishop can be easily harassed with h7-h6. The rooks need attending to but they do not have to be developed horizontally. They can be developed vertically too! All will become apparent.

**10 ... e5**

Black has no more good waiting moves. By creating a safe square on f6, Black cuts out all e pawn thrusts by White and the decision about the knight on g8 has effectively been made. However, the unhealthy dark squares and the bishop on g7 are definitely a positional disadvantage.

Here, experience in the Ruy Lopez comes in very handy. From a Sicilian, similar set-ups in the Ruy Lopez are becoming apparent, but where White has rid himself of that annoyingly difficult-to-place light-squared bishop. The pawn structure has to remain in a semi-fixed state, but where White has the ability to work around things and find outposts for his pieces.

Blockading with d4-d5 would not be to his advantage now and allowing multiple exchanges on d4 would lead to Black obtaining outposts on e5 and c5. There is only one course of action now for White.

**11      dxe5              dxe5**

Not wanting to free White's f pawn by possible exchanges of knights. Also, Black did not want to be saddled with a permanently weak backward d pawn. 11 ... Nxe5 12 Na3 gives a comfortable advantage to White.

**12      Na3**

The correct development square for the white knight. It temporarily holds up b7-b5 thrusts but it is heading for that important light square c4, where it will control the weak d6 square, attack e5, hold up the black queenside advance and have future plans of Ne3/Nd5, heading for central control, or holding up any kingside ambitions by Black.

**12      ...              Ngf6**  
**13      Nc4              0-0**

Black is already struggling to hold things together. The d6 square is becoming very weak indeed. Its immediate occupation, however, is not necessary, as the pressure on it will always ensure a pull for White. No, the knight's existence on c4 has to be assured.

**14      Qb3**

Developing the queen and preventing the b7-b5 break. Also, the queen is placed on the a2-g8 diagonal, making f7-f5 breaks by Black very awkward as discovered checks will be fatal. Black has to fiddle around some more to complete his development.

**14      ...              h6**

Preventing Bg5 and Bxf6 ideas (as then Ne3/Nd5 would be strong), but also finding another square for the black king.

**15      a5**

Clamping down permanently on the queenside. The move has a far deeper connotation, as discussed on move 8 and realised even at such an early point.

**15      ...              Kh7**  
**16      Nh2**

Slightly slower than originally planned, but the knight is destined for greater things - hopefully, the d5 outpost. This can be achieved via f1 and e3 or via Ng4 to rid Black of a kingside defender and maybe to allow a capture on g4 opening up the h file for a line of attack.

The deeper concept, though, is that if Black is going to launch some kind of kingside offensive, he is going to break with f7-f5 at some point, one would imagine. In that regard, the knight on f3 has to be careful of tactics and possible sacrifices so the retreat is a cautious, preventative measure. Black still has to figure out a way to untangle his pieces.

**16      ...              Qc6**

The drawback to the previous move is that the pressure on the e5 pawn is released. Although not a major problem, the black queen has been freed.

**17      Qc2**

The queen's placement on the a2-g8 diagonal originally pestered the black king. Since the king has stepped off that diagonal, it is logical to re-position the queen to aim at the black monarch on another diagonal. At the same time, the e4 pawn is defended and f7-f5 thrusts are held up. And since the queenside has been restrained by the clamping a5 pawn, the queen is best placed here.

**17      ...              Qe6**

The white knight on c4 is hit and Ng4 ideas prevented. Now comes into being the concept first implied on move 8.

**18      Ra4!?**

The rook is so developed! Since the rook cannot enter the game horizontally, it does so vertically. We have to keep in mind too that the 4th rank is going to be opened possibly by Black with the f7-f5 thrust. After the exchange e4xf5, the 4th rank will become very handy for the rook to swing quickly to h4 and harass the black king. The rook's development conceived on move 8 has become a reality 10 moves later. Excellent positional control by White!

**18      ...              Nh5**

The first sign of Black's intention to begin attacking. Black has kingside aspirations now. Should White be concerned about f7-f5 thrusts?

**19      Rd1**

Not really. The rook is positioned on an open file and the d6 square targeted. As stated before, the thrust f7-f5 would just open up files and the 4th rank. White need not be worried about that for the time being.

**19      ...              Rc6**  
**20      Qd3**

After which, I think Black is in a great deal of trouble. The white queen remains on the b1-h7 diagonal as positionally intended but tactically, the knight on d7 is loose. If either knight lands on f6, it will block the planned f7-f5 thrust. Defending the knight on d7 with Rd8 would only pin the knight and leave things open for tactics.

How can Black resolve all these troubles? Herein lies the crux of this discussion. White has a comfortable, clear advantage here and is simply going to accumulate all of the small features and convert them into a decisive factor.

A long, long think by my opponent now. He came up with an interesting line, but based it on one strange element which needs examining deeply. I am intrigued by the concept and the perceptiveness that lies behind it.

**20      ...              b5?!**

Sacrificing a pawn for activity, founded on deep belief in the latent power of the "Dragon" bishop. More in a moment.

**21      axb6              Nxb6**

Naturally, White will not be taking this knight, as this would give Black lines and some freedom.

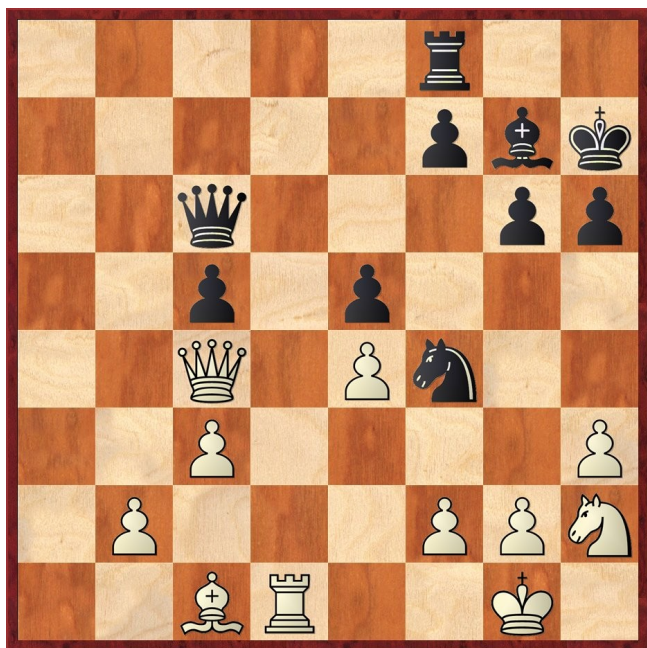
**22 Rxa6**

Simply winning a pawn and I did not see that Black had any compensation. White's cleverly accumulated positional features have resulted in a material gain and surely, it is a matter of technique from here.

**22 ... Nxc4**  
**23 Rxc6 Qxc6**  
**24 Qxc4**

For that matter, the extra material on the queenside is even a passed pawn. Black played quickly the only logical move in the position.

**24 ... Nf4**



Here we have the key and most controversial position. My opponent afterwards expounded a deep-set conviction of the tremendous potential of the "Dragon" bishop on g7. If that bishop gets into the game, Black should equalise with ease. Will it be the salvation of Black's position? Examining the text position, I took no regard of this feature and assessed the position as clearly winning for White.

All positional imbalances are in White's favour and even to imagine anything to the contrary is beyond me. No wonder I didn't appreciate Black's chances at the time.

**25 Nf3**

Bringing the knight back into the position. White is a pawn up now and it is a matter of time before he can convert it. After all, that bishop on g7 is not doing very much, now is it?!

**25 ... g5**

Ah, the dreaded hack. I have become a stronger player over the last 5 years, since I have conquered the fear of my opponents launching their g pawns at me in the vain hope of a last-gasp attack. Control is all that is needed and I have become better at dealing with it.

I have argued throughout my chess career that desperation breeds hacking ideas. My contempt for

such play is clear enough. I have discussed it many times and need not repeat myself here.

**26 Bxf4**

The bishop's first move is a capture, or exchange if you like, on move 26.

**26 ... exf4**  
**27 Rd5**

Winning a second pawn.

**27 ... Ra8**

Not so good is 27 ... Qb6 28 b3 Rb8 29 Nd2 (29 Rxc5 Qxb3 30 Qd5 Bxc3 is not so clear)

**28 e5**

I want primarily to shut out the bishop on g7, but I also give myself the e4 square either for the queen or preferably, the knight. 28 Rxc5 is probably the easiest path but I wanted to pressurise that weak king on the b1-h7 diagonal

**28 ... Qg6**  
**29 Nd2 Ra1+**  
**30 Kh2**

Still believing that Black has nothing. Another pawn is about to drop off on c5. Is it not over for Black?

**30 ... h5**

I am getting the idea of what Black is up to!

**31 Qe4**

Playing safe. Getting the queens off is the logical way to defend against the hack. Mates are difficult without the queens on the board. Naturally, the computer has a cooler recommendation and wants to play 31 Rd6 Qf5 32 Nf3 but that is just scary and unnecessary!

**31 ... g4**

Hmm, I wonder what Black's threat could be?!

**32 hxg4 hxg4**  
**33 Qxg6+ Kxg6**  
**34 Rxc5**

Now the second pawn has been snaffled. White is not being mated and the queens are off. All is fine, right?

**34 ... Kf5**

Crunch time! A difficult position to calculate fully in the time scramble. With only a few minutes to reach move 42, I didn't realise the importance of this move. I played relatively quickly, never having considered the whole deeply conceived nature of my opponent's possibilities when he lost the pawn on a6. How should White now play?

**35 Nc4?**

An amazingly natural move, but one that puts White into a great deal of trouble. There is only one move in the position and that is the aesthetically peculiar move 35 g3! which contests a vital dark square. Another key feature is that the e3 square becomes available for the white knight from where it can target the loose pawn on g4. It's a very hard idea to see since the natural repulsiveness of 35 g3 f3 frightened me. The white king has few flight squares and Rxf2 would give

me major problems. But the black rook cannot get at the f pawn and that is the point!

35 g3 f3 36 Nc4! gives me the e3 square for the knight and Rf1 doesn't work due to the fork on e3. If Black defends the g4 pawn by moving his king to g5, discovered checks with e5-e6 are fatal. All very difficult to see in a time scramble and challenging to comprehend even now but a key element in winning such a trivial-looking position.

35	...	Rf1
36	e6+	Kxe6
37	Rg5	Bh6

And amazingly, for some unknown reason, this "Dragon" bishop is starting to come to life!

38	Rxg4	Rxf2
39	Kg1	Rc2
40	Rg8	Kd5
41	Rc8	

It is apparent that the white pieces are entirely uncoordinated, the pawns on the queenside need constant protection and the white king finds itself in a great deal of trouble. An astonishing turn of events.

41	...	Bg5
42	Kf1	Bh4

The time control has been reached and unbelievably, the "Dragon" bishop has bared its teeth. Despite the pawn deficit and the poor pawn structure, Black is clearly better in this position. So, from a position of strength, dominance and winning possibilities, White is scrambling to save the game!

43	Nb6+	Ke4
44	Rc4+	

No better was 44 Na4 Rf2+ 45 Kg1 Rd2

44	...	Kf5
45	Nd5	

White has no option but to abandon the queenside pawns. He has to deal with his back rank and his king!

45	...	Bg3
46	Rd4	

The knight needs protection and Rd1/Rd2 have to be available for White. An incredibly lucky hold, but White does just have enough to scrape home. Why he has fallen into this position is anybody's guess!

46	...	Rf2+
47	Kg1	Rxb2
47	Kf1	Rf2+
49	Kg1	Rc2

After a long think, Black realised that going after the g pawn with Rc1+ and Re1+ would be too risky, as the white c pawn runs quickly down the board. Black could even lose that if he wasn't careful! Therefore, Black went for the easy solution, which is probably justice, since he was lost for most of the game and could suddenly have scrambled it towards the end.

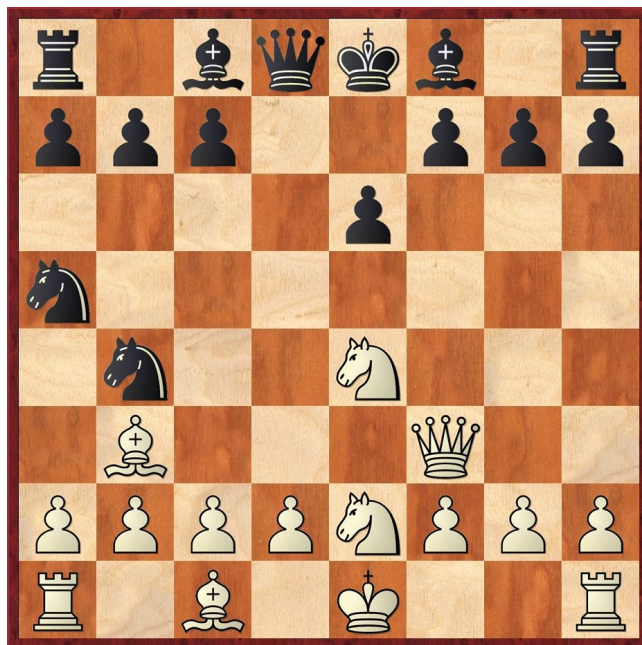
50	Kf1	Rf2+	1/2-1/2
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## Eye Opener

Often, your intuition warns you that something is in the air and it takes your conscious mind to work out the details. That doesn't necessarily make it easy to find the winning continuation but at least, the premonition will focus your efforts on the critical position. Then again, there may be nothing to arouse your suspicions. See if you can spot the opportunity that arises in the following game.

### Stam v Erkay Solingen, 1985

1	e4	Nf6
2	Nc3	d5
3	exd5	Nxd5
4	Bc4	e6
5	Qf3	Nb4
6	Bb3	N8c6
7	Nge2	Na5
8	Ne4	



So has anything given you a tingle? You are actually only one move out of a standard opening variation (8 Ba4+ is normal) but White is totally lost!

8	...	Nxb3	
9	Qxb3	Qd5	0-1

The final position has a rather pedestrian appearance. No deep tactics, no surprise sacrifice. Just a logical (but far from obvious) exploitation of two weaknesses - the knight on e4 and the fork on c2. Obviously 10 N2c3 Qxb3 11 cxb3 leads to Nc2+ but White cannot escape with 10 Qxd5 exd5 or 10 Qa4+ b5 which maintain the threats.

*Chris Ross*