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Chess



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Christmas Quiz - Challenging positions and fun chess lore from Graham Phythian



Festive Crackers - Enjoy the creative best of Ben Graff, Joel Odom & James Essinger



**** Breaking News **** Magnus Carlsen retains world title after crushing 7.5.-3.5 win

Chess

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60 Seconds with... Sean Marsh



Born: Yes; 56 years ago on Teesside.

Place of residence: Yarm, North East England.

Occupation: Chess tutor, trainer and writer.

Enjoyable?: When I started, I said I will only do it until a real job turns up. This is my 34th year of teaching chess in schools...

And home life? I was a staunch proponent of Splendid Isolation decades before it became all the rage.

But sometimes good to escape to: The enticing and spectacular world of music.

Sports played or followed: Chess with the windows open.

A favourite novel? *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens.

Piece of music? "Heroes", by David Bowie

Film or TV series? *Doctor Who*. Jodie Whitaker may not be long for the role, but she is one of the best Doctors.

What's the best thing about playing chess? The joy of victory.

And the worst? The pain of defeat – especially against an arrogant opponent.

Your best move?

S.Marsh-K.Arkell

Redcar Open 2000



31 d6! 1-0

Perhaps not so startling in itself, but it was the conclusion of a sacrificial attack which brought my first win against a grandmaster and, subsequently, helped me to win an Open tournament for the first time. Keith resigned here and gave a splendid demonstration of dignity. We have been friends ever since.

But less memorable than your worst move?

S.Marsh-T.Corlett

Guisborough PPC College vs
Guisborough B 1982



I have played a lot of terrible blunders in my time, but this position sticks in my mind. I played **33 ♖e2??** which, of course, allows Black to trade the major pieces and go into a king and pawn ending a pawn ahead. I didn't know much at the time and thought my more active king would compensate for the material deficiency (0-1, 64).

This is not the only lesson I learned that night. Tom, a senior member of the club, had declined my offer of a draw in the middlegame, by completely ignoring me. I thought he was an ignorant old man, became annoyed and pushed too hard. In fact he was rather deaf and hadn't even heard the offer. He was very encouraging towards me when I joined the same club and was actually a perfect gentleman. I clearly had a lot to learn, both on and off the board.

And a highly memorable opponent? My late, lamented friend Mike Closs. We never pulled any punches. Each year, I organise memorial tournaments in Mike's honour and we all have to play his 1 e4 gambit lines against each other.

Favourite game of all time? Fischer-Larsen, Game 1 of their 1971 Candidates Match, made a big impression on me when I saw it for the first time. It was one of the first grandmaster games I really tried to study. It remains a fascinating encounter. It is easy to forget how creative and strong Larsen was at that time.

The best three chess books: *The Games of Robert J. Fischer* (Wade and O'Connell), *Korchnoi's 400 Best Games* (Korchnoi, Wade and Blackstock), and *The Batsford Chess Bible* (Sean Marsh).

Is FIDE doing a good job? We are two years into a global pandemic and yet chess is still being played world-wide, including at the highest level. Therefore, we have to conclude they are, indeed, doing a good job.

Or your National Federation? The English Chess Federation is stronger now than it has been for a very long time. Recent politics – fuelled by morons and "inky ruffians" – rocked the boat and upset some of my friends, but chess in this country is slowly recovering after two very bad years. Well played to all of those who did the decent thing and renewed their membership at the height of the crisis.

Any advice for either? Be the federation of which you would be proud to be a member.

Can chess make one happy? Ecstatically.

A tip please for the club player: Chess is just a game and, whether you win or lose, I am sure you will agree with me when I say: *It's much nicer to win.*

The Christmas Saga



John Henderson revisits one of the best books of 2021, a fine tribute to Ólafsson

As a rule, I really like articles I write to be published in full. But one article I wrote in 2021 for Mr. Pein's rag didn't quite live up to that rule. Nothing controversial that would have involved m'learned friends, I hasten to add, it was just that I had a truly wonderful book to review, there was just far too much material to work with, and physically just not enough space for it all to fit into the April issue.

Sportingly, your diligent editor thought it shouldn't go to waste, especially as it involved attacking gems against readers' favourites, Bobby Fischer and Mikhail Tal, so asked if I could "make something of it for our Christmas issue?" So here I am, like the proverbial ghost of Christmas past, back to make a little something more out of one of the shortlisted contenders for the English Chess Federation Book of the Year Award, *The Chess Saga of Fridrik Ólafsson*.

Put simply, Oystein Brekke's book is just a gem; with contributions by many writers who collaborated wholeheartedly on the project as a lasting and fitting tribute to the iconic Icelandic Grandmaster, whose life and varied career, both on and off the board, does indeed read like a saga. And I do hope many of the readers will have found this book under their Christmas tree, as apart from being steeped in history, crammed with many wonderful anecdotes, and not to mention the glorious black and white archive photographs, much can be learned from playing through this anthology of Ólafsson's games.

There was a natural fluency to Ólafsson's play and the way he attacked his opponent's king. It was a fluency and attacking style that was eerily similar in many respects to Bobby Fischer himself, who features on the receiving end of this brilliant 1959 Candidates takedown.

F.Ólafsson-R.Fischer

Bled, Zagreb & Belgrade Candidates 1959
Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 d4 f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 dxd4 f6 5 dxc3 a6 6 dxc4

The Fischer favourite! It's always an intriguing psychological challenge when you play your opponent's pet-line against them and, as Ólafsson says, "How does Fischer respond to his own weapons?"

6...e6 7 a3 dxe7 8 0-0 0-0 9 dxa2 b5 10 f4 dxb7 11 f5 e5 12 dde2 ddb7 13 d3g3 c8 14 d5g5 db6?!

Uncharacteristically for Fischer, this is a waste of time and he misses what proves to be a critical move.

Ólafsson in action against a 16-year-old Bobby Fischer at the 1959 Candidates tournament.

15 d5!



15...dxc3

It's really never usually wrong when we see this trademark exchange sacrifice in the Sicilian, but here, with 14...dxb6, there's a problem with f6 that Ólafsson seizes on right away. Some six years later, Svetozar Gligoric played the same exchange sacrifice a move earlier, which retained more control over what proves to be the vital f6-square, and he went on to win comfortably (Dragoljub-Gligoric, Novi Sad 1965).

16 bxc3 d5xh5

In an ideal world, Black would really like to play 16...dxe4, but here it backfires to 17 dxe7 dxe7 18 f6! dxf6 19 dxf6!, winning. That said, as Ólafsson notes, Fischer did miss a trick to defend f6, as better first was 16...dxe4, since 17 dxcg7 dxcg7 18 dxf6+ dxf6 (certainly not 18...dxf6?? 19 d5h5! when Black is forced into the humiliating retreat 19...d3g7 20 d3g4+ d3g5 21 d3xe4

and with ...d5 stopped, White is clearly winning) 19 d3g4+ d3h8 20 d3xe4 d5 with compensation for the exchange.

17 dxe7 dxe7 18 d5xh5 dxe4

Still, you would still fancy Black's chances with his central domination and powerful bishop, and certainly lesser players may well have cracked here facing the young rising American. But it is a testament to Ólafsson's resilience that he is able to create a little king-side weakness that makes all the difference.

19 d3g4 d5 20 f6!



20...d3c5+ 21 d3h1 g6

Having to constantly guard against d3h6 and d3g7 mate by retreating with ...d3f8 certainly cramps Fischer's game. He could have tried instead 21...d3g6, but that runs into trouble after 22 h4! h5 23 d3g5 and any defence is going to be problematic for Black.

22 d3ae1 d3e8

A very human response to the looming threat of a d3g5-h6-g7 mate, but the cold

and unbeating heart of the engine believes that after 22...♖xc3!? 23 ♖g5 ♗d7 24 ♗b3 ♖c6 Black has nothing to fear. However, after 25 h4! I think I'd be worried of the kingside collapsing and, likewise, Fischer doesn't fancy it either.

23 ♖h4 h5?

This is Fischer's fatal mistake, according to Ólafsson. Instead, after 23...♖f8 or even 23...♗xc2 Black's position is perfectly defensible.

24 ♖g5!

Threatening ♗xe4 and ♖xg6+ winning, so Fischer's hand is now forced.

24...♗c4 25 ♗xc4! bxc4 26 ♖e3

Again a very human-like move to make, but it leads to nothing, and Ólafsson bows to the engine's improved suggestion with the immediate 26 ♖b1!

26...♖f8 27 ♖b1! ♖b8 28 ♖ee1!



As we can clearly see with the waste-of-time little pirouette of the rooks, the engine was right.

28...♖xb1

It's pretty decisive after 28...♗xc2? 29 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 30 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 31 ♖xe5 ♗e4 32 ♖e7.

29 ♖xb1 ♗xc2 30 ♖b7 ♗f5 31 ♖e3!

Something has to give, as Black can't defend against ♖xe5 and ♖a7.

31...♗e6

At least with keeping the queens on the board and planting the bishop on e6, Fischer has slim chances to save the game, but Ólafsson very efficiently clears up.

32 ♖xe5 ♖xa3 33 h3 ♖c1+ 34 ♗h2 g5

Giving the king a much-needed flight square on g6, but any hopes Fischer had of somehow saving the game are quickly dashed by Ólafsson's ace up his sleeve.

35 ♖a7 h4 36 ♖xa6 ♗h7 37 ♖a1!



37...♖f4+

The rook is taboo as 37...♖xa1 38 ♖xg5 quickly mates on g7, and if 37...♖d2 38 ♖d1 forces Black into exchanging queens anyway.

38 ♖xf4 gxf4 39 ♖f1 d4 40 cxd4 ♗g6 41 ♖xf4 ♗f5 42 ♖f3 ♗xf6 43 ♖e3 ♗g5 44 g3 ♗d3 45 d5 1-0

All the databases seems to indicate that Fischer limped on another move with 45...♗f5, but Ólafsson says Fischer "surrendered" as he played 45 d5.

And throughout his long illustrious career, Ólafsson also had his fair share of barnstorming attacking games, with our new Nordic Saga hero also picking up many memorable best game/beauty prizes for his attacking flair. This particular one is a clear standout, with it coming against the Master of Combination himself, the one and only Mikhail Tal.

M.Tal-F.Ólafsson

Las Palmas 1975

Modern Defence

1 e4 d6 2 d4 g6 3 ♗c4 ♗f6 4 ♖e2 ♗c6!

As Ólafsson explains, Tal had a fondness for this set-up at the time, and he'd "discovered a small snag in it". And true enough, Tal stopped playing the line after this game.

5 ♗f3 ♗g4 6 c3 e5 7 ♗b5 exd4 8 cxd4 ♗d7

Continuing the relentless pressure on d4. Ólafsson's preparation for Tal is paying off, but little was he to know just how big it would be.

9 ♗e3 ♗g7 10 ♗xc6 bxc6 11 ♗bd2 0-0 12 ♖c1

Tal has held on to his central pawns, but now comes the second stage of the relentless breaking down of d4.

12...c5 13 dxc5 ♗xb2 14 ♖c2 ♗g7 15 0-0 ♖e8 16 ♖d1?!

It all begins to go pear-shaped for Tal after this error. The natural continuation was 16 cxd6 cxd6 17 h3 ♗xf3 18 ♖xf3 ♗e5 19 ♖e2 d5 20 exd5 ♖xd5 21 ♗c4 with an equal game.

16...♗xc5



After this move, Black is clearly on top.

17 ♗xc5 dxc5 18 ♖xc5

Annotating this game for *Chess Informant*, Tal recommended 18 ♗b3 ♖e7 (Ólafsson himself intended the sharper option with

18...♖f6) 19 ♗xc5 ♖ad8 20 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 21 h3 with equality, but you have to favour Black, as he has the bishop-pair against the knights.

18...♖d6!

Suddenly White has back-rank tactical threats to have to deal with.

19 ♖d1

Hindsight is always 20/20 and better was 19 ♖c2, but Tal, uncharacteristically, had simply missed a vital tactic in his analysis.

19...♗h6!

The pressure is building on Tal's position, as Ólafsson's bishop-pair springs to life.

20 ♖xc7?

Too greedy, but Tal had missed something, expecting only 20...♗xf3 which he intended to answer with 21 ♖xf3! and the threat of ♖xf7+ prevents the capture of the knight.

20...♖ad8 21 ♖1c2

Likewise, 21 ♖7c2 ♗xf3 22 gxf3 ♖d3, piling the pressure on the pinned knight is very strong.

21...♗xd2 22 ♖xd2 ♖f4!!



A brilliant queen sacrifice that highlights all of White's back-rank weaknesses. That said, I did like Ólafsson's comments about the exclamation marks: "Tal put two exclamation marks in his annotations to this game in the *Informant*, so I feel forced to do so too."

23 ♖e7

There's no way out. If 23 ♖c1 ♗xf3 24 gxf3 ♖xf3 and White can resign.

23...♖f8!!

"I am still following Tal's example as to the exclamations."

24 ♖a5

The overworked queen is simply overwrought having to protect the back rank. Originally Tal intended playing 24 ♖e2 only to realise too late in the day that it loses to 24...♗xf3 25 ♖xf3 (25 gxf3 ♖g5+ picks up the rook) 25...♖d6 and there's no defence to the double threat of 26...♖d1+ and 26...♖xe7.

24...♖d1+

It's the route one approach, but can a memorable best game win be any better? Well, yes, as Ólafsson writes: "Aesthetically speaking 24...♖g5! would have been even more powerful." The black queen can't be taken by either queen or knight, as there's an unstoppable back-rank mate with ...♖d1+ in both cases.

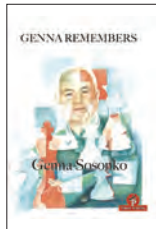
25 ♗e1 ♖g5! 0-1

Off the Shelf



Sean Marsh rounds up the best of the rest from the many new chess books in 2021

2021 brought many interesting chess books covering a whole range of subjects from forgotten games and players from the Soviet Championships to the cutting edge of modern opening theory. There simply wasn't the space in the magazine to examine as many books as we wanted to, but this time we present a round-up of some of the ones that got away, with bite-sized mini-reviews of six titles which caught my eye.



Genna Remembers

Genna Sosonko, 258 pages
Thinkers Publishing

RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

Genna Sosonko continues to occupy the niche of writing about his chess friends and colleagues, many of whom have now sadly departed for the great chess board in the sky. His previous books have been published by New in Chess and Elk and Ruby, but this time he is making his debut for Thinkers Publishing.

Subtitled 'Genna Sosonko's Memoirs of the Golden Age of Chess', this work has a linking theme to its 15 chapters and that is, of course, the Soviet school of chess – and Sosonko is better placed than most to weave such tales into a narrative. "Half a century ago I left a country whose red color dominated a large portion of the world map. One way or another, the fate of almost every single person described in this book is forever linked with that now non-existent empire."

There is an abundance of personal reminiscences featuring larger-than-life characters, such as Korchnoi and Petrosian. The book is enhanced by a fine selection of photographs, many of which were new to me. There is also the option of a hardback edition.

There is a strong sense of wistfulness amid Sosonko's memories. "The faster the twentieth century spirits away from us and the thicker the grass of forgetting grows, together with the verified power of the most powerful engines, that world of chess will be gone soon enough as well. It was an intriguing and colorful world, and I saw it as my duty to not let it disappear into that empty abyss."

Let us hope there are more books from Sosonko to come.



1.e4 Coffeehouse Repertoire: Volume 2

Gawain Jones, 568 pages
Quality Chess

RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Gawain follows up his popular first volume with a new one, completing his interesting set of recommendations after 1 e4. Volume 1 examined the Sicilian, Caro-Kann, Scandinavian and Alekhine's Defences. This volume picks up the story and offers weapons against 1...e5, the French, Pirc, Modern, Philidor and other defences.

Followers of Gawain's games will already know that sharpness is the order of the day, augmented by surprise value, such as this line against the French Defence:

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 ♗c6 5 ♗f3 ♜b6 6 ♗d3

"The d4-pawn is a real pain to defend, so instead we'll sacrifice it."

6...cxd4

"Here I want to make it an immediate sacrifice".

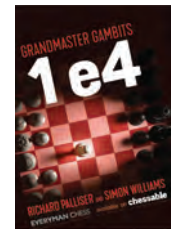
7 0-0!?



"This is rare, but I think it's challenging and definitely underrated." Noting that this possibility is not mentioned in some standard texts on the French Defence, Gawain goes on to recommend avoiding the transposition back to the normal lines of the Milner-Barry

Gambit, which would occur after 7...♗d7 8 cxd4, by meeting 7...♗d7 with 8 ♗e1!?, a line dubbed the Hector variation after the Swedish Grandmaster noted for his aggressive and original style of play.

The entire repertoire is designed to unsettle the opponent, but the advocated lines never jump the shark into the world of the disreputable. Anyone looking to refresh their white openings for the new year will undoubtedly find Gawain's brace of books to be of great interest.



Grandmaster Gambits

Richard Palliser & Simon Williams, 432 pages
Everyman Chess

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Staying with 1.e4 just for the moment, here is another book offering a refreshing repertoire. This one goes beyond the surprises offered by Gawain's book into even more esoteric territory. This means we find the Wing Gambit is the recommended way to take on the ever-popular the Sicilian Defence, the Max Lange Attack is revived to face 1...e5 and waiting for the French Defence is "Magnus Carlsen's souped-up version of the Milner-Barry Gambit." In fact, there is a certain amount of crossover with the anti-French lines in Gawain's book here.

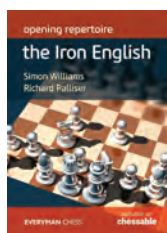
Sharp play is always to be expected from Simon Williams, but this repertoire has been considerably beefed up by top theoretician Richard Palliser. It is a big book and there is a lot to learn, but the authors keep everything highly accessible.

We note that the envelope is pushed even further with the Hillbilly Attack against the Caro-Kann, which starts with 1 e4 c6 2 ♗c4. Black already seems ideally placed to exploit the unusual bishop development and to spoil the fun with the obvious 2...d5, but according to the blurb, "Your opponent might laugh but they won't be laughing when you crash through on f7."

Indeed, accidents can easily happen when one is forced to tread along unfamiliar territory. Who knows the best move for Black after **1 e4 c6 2 ♗c4 d5 3 ♗b3 dxe4 4 ♜h5?**



Are these one-off surprise weapons or will they evolve and stand the test of time? There is no way of knowing until they have been tested in the furnace of over-the-board chess. Meanwhile, I strongly suspect there are some speedy victories, just waiting to happen. They might as well be your victories, dear readers.



The Iron English

Richard Palliser & Simon Williams, 464 pages
Everyman Chess
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Of course, despite the temptations offered by the books mentioned above, not everyone is ready to head into the murky tactical waters of obscure 1 e4 variations. The English has a long-held reputation of being ultra-solid and hard to play against. I know lots of club players who have nothing special prepared against 1 c4 and they tend to lose without a fight.

There are numerous different ways to play the English and in this book the dynamic duo pay homage to one of the greatest of all world champions. "This book focuses on the set-up popularised by the sixth world champion, Mikhail Botvinnik, the so-called Botvinnik formation with 2. d3, 3. g3, 4. g2, 5. e4 and 6. d2. This system is compact but still aggressive and rewards an understanding of plans and strategies rather than rote memorisation of moves."

This is a typical Botvinnik System position:



White has just played 10. d5! and already enjoys a riskless edge, as the knight will prove to be a pest to Black.

It would be a mistake to assume one can bash out the Botvinnik System against anything Black plays. Far from it, in fact. The repertoire given here offers a range of plans and variations to combat whatever the second player tries to do and these include the Mikenas Attack (1. c4 d6 2. d3 e6 3. e4 – guaranteed to upset anyone hoping to steer the game into a Queen's Gambit Declined), and the twin ideas of 1. c4 c6 2. e4 and 1. c4 e6 2. e4, to further frustrate any attempts by Black to dictate the opening battle.

The English Opening may still make opponents groan, but this isn't just any old iron; it will never be refuted and anyone playing 1. c4 is definitely standing on the shoulders of giants. It is also noteworthy that this book, together with *Grandmaster Gambits*, is available as a Chessable course.



The Queen's Gambit - Accepted!

Jonathan Arnott & Rosie Irwin, 224 pages
Steel City Press
RRP £12.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.49**

It has been a good year for unusual books too. This one charts the steep learning curve of Rosie Irwin, who "never considered playing chess until she saw *The Queen's Gambit* and was inspired to take up the game, identifying with the lead character's emotional struggles. Within a couple of months, she had learned enough from Jonathan to compete in league matches against experienced opponents."

Jonathan is a chess tutor and player with lots of experience, but he found playing chess during the lockdowns problematic. "I'm terrible at online chess. I can't focus properly. There are so many distractions, trying to play chess from home. It doesn't help when you're captaining teams and playing for them at the same time: checking everyone's online, entering results when they've finished, keeping the Twitter account up to date and all the other mundane tasks. Even my wins are pretty awful, and the losses are just downright embarrassing."

I am sure this is will resonate with a lot of readers. I know I found the transition to online games with longer than three minutes on each clock to be extremely difficult (the less said about my 4NCL games, the better).

"Working on the time-honoured principle that 'Those who can't do, teach', I've treated my shocking form as an opportunity to get back into the swing of things coaching-wise," writes Jonathan.

This is an interesting approach and the combination of Jonathan's experience and

Rosie's blank chess canvas offers a refreshing change, taking the reader along for the ride. The experience is summed up rather nicely by this quote from Rosie: "Have I started too late, in my late 20s? Who cares? I'm enjoying it. This is fun."



Chess Crusader

Carl Portman, 352 pages
Conrad Press

RRP £9.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £8.99**

Who is Carl Portman? Regular readers of *Chess Magazine* will, of course, know of his work, thanks to his excellent *Never Mind the Grandmasters...* monthly column. This book, subtitled 'Confessions of an amateur chess player', will help you to find out more about the man himself. The blurb sets the scene nicely:

"After 30 years working with the Ministry of Defence, Carl Portman took early retirement to concentrate on freelance photography, chess coaching, natural history travel, writing and lecturing. He is a keen arachnologist, owns a large collection of live tarantulas and scorpions, and has bred some of the rarest arachnids in the world."

The book offers the unexpurgated version of Carl and his thoughts and, just like his Twitter feed, is definitely not for the faint hearted. He does not hold back when commenting on any subject and most chapters would melt snowflakes instantly.

Carl also pulls no punches when it comes to discussing the serious health issues which have impacted on his life, but it is the club player related stories which will undoubtedly resonate most with readers, such as the time he won the Charlton School Chess Championship. "Becoming champion of the school and therefore winning honours was a life-changing event. At that moment I was the best. Being number one felt good and I did it through my own efforts. I knew then that if I worked hard at something, and did not give up at the first hurdle I could achieve anything."

Along the way, Carl provides anecdotes of time spent with a plethora of characters from Lev Polugaevsky to Patrick Moore. There is a sprinkling of photos throughout the book and a small number of games towards the end.

What better way to conclude this article than with some more wise words? "These days comedy has gone, sacrificed at the altar of liberalism and political correctness. I rail against it at every opportunity." Well said, Mr. Portman!



Chess in Staffordshire

Jonathan Blackburn has had much to muse over of late, about the development of chess in his county and on the trials and tribulations of being an adult improver

Staffordshire has a long history of chess and comprises of three leagues (North Staffordshire, Cannock and Wolverhampton), while being part of the Midland Counties Chess Union. In recent times we have entered some of the inter-county events at adult level and at junior level – getting a team together is usually the hardest part. Our junior team actually competes well enough in the EPSCA regional events, but would stand little chance against the powerhouses that make the finals.

I didn't appreciate just how big Staffordshire actually is until fairly recently. I play in the North Staffordshire League, but couldn't name you five players from the Wolverhampton or Cannock leagues. We have an excellent club in the north of the county, Cheddleton, run by Staffordshire president Robert Milner, but we also go as far south as Wombourne.

At a recent county AGM we had a grand total of six people attending, with some having to take on numerous roles. Of course, had the pandemic not been a factor, I'm sure we would have more, but I don't think we would be talking much higher than 20. For separate reasons we are indebted to the contributions to Staffordshire chess from Traci Whitfield and Ray Dolan who both stepped down from their posts. Traci has kindly offered to still consult with myself on the junior set-up and Ray and Eunice will still be running their famous Bloxwich Junior Chess club.

The south of England seems to be leading the charge in junior over-the-board events, as other regions appear more hampered. We were hesitant in Staffordshire to even start discussing the county junior championships taking place, but when the venues started to also push back, it was quite obvious this was a non-starter. Local clubs are also in turmoil; some haven't opened yet, although others have been open for months now. The typical debate of whether masks should be worn in league matches is also ongoing, with some clubs choosing not to enter teams, a tale familiar across the country.

As a teacher, I find it easier to guide students when they have a goal in mind: for example, a match against another primary school. 'Who is going to make the team?' often spurs players on to improve. It gives them purpose. Just as the answer to a chess tournament happening was 'no', some of the students had got back from an inter-school football match. This resurgence of other sports to pretty much pre-pandemic levels is



Sean Marsh was at his entertaining best, showing the new Staffordshire team the ropes at a CSC training day organised by Jonathan Blackburn, who was behind the camera and can't wait to start connecting people across the county and working to promote chess to everyone.

putting us on the back foot.

While this all sounds rather negative, I couldn't be more hopeful for the future of Staffordshire chess. At our recent AGM we actually appointed a social media advisor, the first one ever – something I think every county should have. Online chess has meant that the distance to the south of the county has shrunk and the Staffordshire Spitfires junior team in the Online 4NCL features players from many different localities. This has culminated in an upturn as our online team has competed very strongly in Division One of the online national junior league and we are now looking at entering two Staffordshire teams in the over-the-board Junior 4NCL, which is something we couldn't have dreamt of before Covid.

Five years ago I was teaching maths when I started a chess club and was shocked that the children seemed to love the game. That year I quit teaching and became a self-employed chess coach. I believed there was a massive market at secondary school age which would benefit the schools and the pupils – we just needed a way to engage them. I am pleased to report that due to the pandemic, as well as the very popular *The Queen's Gambit*, there has been more interest than ever from Staffordshire secondary schools in the past few months.

Thanks to CSC who have helped school clubs to grow, providing equipment and controlled Lichess accounts, chess is flourishing across the county. It's amazing

that several schools have entered the Under-19 National School Championships and for the very first time we have had two schools play an online match against each other, Trentham Academy against Sandbach High. For their first ever match the standard was higher than expected, but we still have to remember winning isn't the be all and end all here – we are just trying to encourage participation amongst this age group.

This was the second game between the schools and looked very closely fought.



Black's extra pawn doesn't seem too relevant due to White's active pieces. However, Sandbach as White miscalculated with their next move.

1 ♖e6+??

Oops!

1... ♙xe6 2 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 3 ♖ab1 ♖b6

Swapping off when ahead is a useful rule for juniors to remember. Black eventually got that b8-knight out and won.

With more high schools setting up clubs and online matches (which are easy to organise and better for the teacher who doesn't have to travel), the desire to improve and play better chess will deepen, and I expect the standard to go up across the county, if not the whole country.

Teachers are enthused to run clubs and with this added interest I lobbied the CSC management for a Stoke CSC Training Day, with the aim of collecting as many people as possible who were interested in teaching chess, whether in schools, libraries or even prisons. If you had asked me two years ago, I would have said zero people would show up and so was extremely happy that we had seven people go take part in the training.

Speaking of online leagues, it is important to recognise the hard work of Peter Hornsby and his charitable worldwide 2020 league, which supports Oxfam. The event is designed to provide competitive games online between clubs from around the world and I'm sure when Peter first started on this path he didn't have any idea how big it would become. Yet Staffordshire has again benefited as his Abbots Bromley online club transformed from the online arenas into over-the-board activity. Spurred on by the London ChessFest, we even created the Abbots Bromley chess fest and saw an amazing turnout.

Whilst this is a huge upturn in participation focusing on the casual and club level, we also have elite events taking place – many thanks to Lawrence Cooper on this front. In the October *CHESS* we read about his Wood Green Invitational GM/IM norm all-play-all tournament, but my focus here is that it was held in Stafford city centre! Not only are we attempting to improve our grassroots chess by increasing our tutors, but right in the heart of the county we held an elite event.

Travel restrictions for some original competitors made the tournament difficult to organise and as a late stand-in, it was great to represent the local area, despite being significantly outrated in every game. It was nice to read in Lawrence's report that I was given a great excuse for under performance (a one-hour commute), and also for allowing me to share possibly my best game which happened in round 3.

J.Blackburn-M.Turner

Stafford 2021

Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘b4 4 e3 0-0 5 ♘d3 c5 6 ♗f3 d5 7 0-0 dxc4 8 ♘xc4 b6 9 ♖e2 ♘b7 10 ♗d1 cxd4 11 exd4 ♘xc3 12 bxc3 ♖c7

I'm trying desperately hard to balance being a chess coach and working on my own improvement as a player. I'd joined Jacob Aagaard's Killer Chess Training online group



At the Abbots Bromley chess fest, a junior welcoming event was quickly followed by casual games, an online match and finally a simul, in which, yes, Jonathan's back just about survived.

and, as luck would have it, this line had been looked at there

13 ♘d3 ♖xc3 14 ♘b2 ♖a5

This was the first new move for me, but I knew I had to play actively from here on.

15 d5!

Thematic, opening the diagonal for the bishop.

15... ♗xd5 16 ♘xf6

Removing the key defender.

16... ♗xf6 17 ♗e5!



Blocking the queen from coming across the fifth rank. It is too late to be precious about material and now if 17...fxe5 there's 18 ♘xh7+ ♗xh7 (18...♗g7 doesn't help due to 19 ♖g4+ ♗h8 20 ♖h5) 19 ♖h5+ ♗g7 20 ♖g5+ ♗h7 21 ♗d3!.

17... ♗c8 18 ♘xh7+

I did consider 18 ♗ac1, which the computer says is better, bringing all the pieces into the attack: 18...♗c5 19 ♖h5 fxe5 20 ♖g5+ ♗f8 21 ♖d8+ ♗g7 22 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 (if 22...bxc5 23 ♖xa5) 23 ♖g5+ ♗f8 24 ♗c1. This is a computer line where you can see Black's rook and knight cost him the game.

18... ♗f8

18...♗xh7 fails to 19 ♖h5+ ♗g8 20 ♖xf7+ ♗h8 21 ♗g6#.

19 ♖g4 ♗e7





Here I needed to find a good continuation. The black pieces are about to be developed, so the time to act is now.

Probably better was 19...fxe5 20 ♖g8+ ♔e7 21 ♖xc8 ♔d7 22 ♖c1, but it's easy to see why Matthew wanted to keep the complications going, rather than try this line.

20 ♜xf7 ♝xf7 21 ♛e4!

The key move to find. The bishop cannot be taken and keeps Black's king in checkmate territory.

21...♞c5

This is the move that keeps the game going, whereas after 21...♜c6 the simplest way to play is 22 ♛xd5 (22 ♖g6+ ♔e7 23 ♛xd5 exd5 24 ♞e1+ ♔d6 25 ♖f7 is a nice way to keep the checkmate threats alive) 22...exd5 23 ♖h5+ ♔g7 24 ♞xd5 when it feels that Black's king should be rounded up. Instead, here after 21...♛xe4 22 ♖xe4 the only way to save the a8-rook is to give the queen, as if 22...♜c6 23 ♞d7+ ♔f8 24 ♖h7 with mate to follow.

22 ♖g6+ ♔e7 23 ♖g7+ ♔d8



Setting one last trap.

24 ♛xd5 1-0

And Black resigned in view of 24...exd5 25 ♖b7, whereas after 24 ♖b7 ♔d7! suddenly Black would be escaping: 25 ♞xd5 exd5 26 ♖xa8+ ♔e7 27 ♛f5. While White is better and should win with best play, matters are still far from clear.

A game I won't be forgetting in a while.

At my tender age of 36 I'm still trying to improve and the best way to get feedback (read *Chess Improvement* by Barry Hymer and Peter Wells for more info – a must for any coach) is to play more competitive games. I only have enough husband points in the bag for a few trips



2020 Chess supremo Peter Hornsby (left) shares a joke at Abbots Bromley with Larry Wright.



A rare shot of an arbiter playing chess. He's been busy at Stafford, Gateshead, the 4NCL and even on the Isle of Man of late, but here Matthew Carr enjoys a well-deserved break from officiating.

away staying in a hotel, and am severely hampered by the lack of local tournaments.

I could commute to Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham, but apart from one rapidplay it appears most current tournaments are London-based or involve a long trip to the coast. This is no doubt affecting other players in the area and I also understand the hesitancy from people to run events with the pandemic still looming over us. It was good to hear the Staffordshire tournament being talked about at the aforementioned county AGM and I see Crewe are hosting an event in the spring, but we are largely still very much in limbo.

Our chess landscape has changed massively with events, schools, clubs and committees all going through transition. If, and it is a big if, we are free from potential lockdowns and fear of another wave, we can expect to see weekend congresses, a one-day doubles rapidplay, school events, junior rapidplay Grand Prix series, and numbers at clubs swelling (Stafford are already reporting this), as well as more teams entered into inter-county events. The big questions to ask are:

- i. When will people feel confident enough to run events as normal?
- ii. How can we tempt online players into over-the-board play?

iii. How can we provide casual chess for players of all levels and ages?

iv. How can we help people run events given the time and energy that they require?

v. How can we cash in on the popularity of chess, attracting sponsors, while finding better venues and seeing participation levels increase?

vi. Are we going to keep some online events in the calendar?

Now is the time to go and persuade Staffordshire's biggest hero, Matthew Carr, to stop arbitring super-GM tournaments and see when his diary is free for local events!

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works, and if 1...♖h5 2 ♜f6 or 1...♗f5 2 ♜a5+ ♜e5 when White has to find 3 ♜a1! to stop Black's king advancing, and if 3...f3 4 ♖h2!, but 1 ♖g1? was too passive in the game: 1...♖h5 2 ♜f6 g5! 3 ♜f8 ♖h4 4 ♖f1 ♜h2 5 ♜h8+ ♖g3 6 ♜g8 ♜h1+ 7 ♖e2 f3+ 8 ♖e3 ♜e1+ 9 ♖d2 f2 0-1) 1...♗f5 (or 1...♜f2 2 ♖g1 ♜f3 3 ♖g2 ♜g3+ 4 ♖h2 when Black is struggling for a good continuation) 2 ♖g1 g5 (only now, keeping the rook ideally placed on a4, ready to stay on the fourth rank after 2...♖g5 3 ♜b4) 3 ♜a5+ ♜e5 4 ♜a8 ♖e4 5 ♖g2 leaves White's pieces ideally placed and Black can't really make any progress, as shown by 5...♜d5 6 ♜e8+ ♖f5 7 ♜f8+ ♖g6 8 ♜g8+ and 5...f3+ 6 ♖g3 ♜f5 7 ♜e8+ ♖d4 8 ♖f2.

24) Moroni-Bartel

1...♖g5! (the only way to win, whereas in the game White was able to save himself with a stalemate trick: 1...♖f3? 2 ♜e2+ ♖xg3 3 ♜e3+! ♜xe3 ½-½) 2 ♖e7+ (or 2 ♜g8+ ♖f5 3 ♜h7+ ♖e5 4 ♜g7+ ♖d5 when there isn't a classic around-the-clock draw in view of 5 ♜d7+ ♖c4 6 ♜a4+ ♖c3!), and if 7 ♜a1+ ♖d3) 2...♖f5 3 g4+!? (3 ♜f7+ would hope for 3...♖e4? 4 ♜e6+ ♖d3 5 ♜b3+! ♜c3 6 ♜d5+ ♖c2 7 ♖e2! when White is just in time to hold, but after 3...♖e5! 4 ♜e7+ ♖d5 5 ♜f7+ ♖c6! Black is still winning, with his king set to advance on the queenside and a-pawn ready to roll) 3...♖f4! (3...♖xg4 4 ♜e2+ leaves White with too many checks; 4...♖f4 5 ♜f3+! and 4...♖f5 5 ♜f3+ ♜f4 6 ♜xf4+

♖xf4 7 ♖e2 are both important defensive points) 4 ♜f7+ ♖e3! 5 ♜f2+ ♖d3 6 ♜f3+ (Black now queens second, but mates first after 6 ♜xd4+ ♖xd4 7 ♖e2 ♖c3 8 ♖d1 a5) 6...♖c2 7 ♜c6+ ♜c3 will soon leave White out of checks and the d-pawn deciding matters, as after 8 ♜a4+ ♜b3 9 ♜c6+ ♖b2 10 ♜f6+ ♜c3 11 ♜f2 ♜d3+ 12 ♖g2 ♖b1.

November's Studies Competition

Chris Carew of Bromley wins a £30 voucher from Chess & Bridge. The solution from Brian himself:

Brian Stephenson
3rd HM., *The Problemist*, 1996



White to play and mate in 4

1 ♖e2!

Zugzwang! A strong key that increases the reach of White's dark-squared bishop, but I was glad to find it. The idea of the problem is in the first two variations where black unguards allow a white knight sacrifice forcing Black to open a line for a white line-piece to move along to threaten unstoppable mate by the other knight:

1...cxb4 2 ♖d4+ exd4 3 ♜e4 & 4 ♖e7#.

1...♖f8 2 ♖xh4+ gxh4 3 ♜xh6 & 4 ♖e3#.

The rest of the play is by-play, needed to get the whole thing working.

1...h3 is another unguard, this time of g3 allowing 2 ♖e3+ ♖f4 3 ♖f1+ ♖f5 4 ♖g3.

1...♖b6 2 ♖xb6 & 3 ♖c8 & 4 ♖d6#.

1...♖c7 2 ♖xc7 & 3 ♖b5 (or 3 ♖e6 & 4 ♖g7#) & 4 ♖d6#.

Finally, 1...a2 2 ♖xe5 (threat: 3 ♖g4# or 3 ♖g6#) fxe5 3 ♖b2 & 4 ♜xe5# is a gift from Caissa. The line was just there in the position as a dual continuation. I hadn't planned it. To include it as a separate variation all I had to do was add the black pawn on a3.

It was this last variation that made the problem suitable for a solving competition. The top solvers at the 1996 World Chess Solving Championship in Tel Aviv scored full marks for this problem, but others dropped a point for missing out this variation, which proved very useful for separating solvers' scores.



This Month's New Releases

Chess Buccaneer: The Life and Games of Manuel Bosboom

Peter Boel & Merijn van Delft, 284 pages
New in Chess

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

This is a collection of 66 annotated Bosboom games, plus fragments and 36 combinational exercises, woven into a biography of the Dutch IM. Born in 1963, Manuel Bosboom has long enjoyed cult status, as the authors note. Despite gaining three grandmaster norms and maintaining a remarkably steady rating throughout his turbulent career, Bosboom has never achieved the highest title. Nevertheless, as we see here, he is completely fearless, and capable of beating elite opponents.

Highlights include positional victories against Leko and Gulko, and a win against Kasparov in a blitz tournament that the latter won by a huge margin. Bosboom's usual method is to disorder his opponent by

generating total chaos. It speaks for his versatility, though, that the idea for this book came when co-author IM Merijn van Delft annotated a few of his games for his earlier work *Mastering Positional Sacrifices*.

Rather like Mike Basman, Bosboom seems to operate with his own set of strategies, regularly leaving his king in the centre and hurling both sets of flank pawns forward to gain central squares for his pieces. For example, playing White, Bosboom has apparently reached the position after 1 c4 e6 2 ♖f3 d5 3 e3 ♖f6 4 a3 ♜e7 5 g4!? 0-0 6 ♜g1 c5 7 b4?! four times, scoring 50% against IM and GM opposition.

What are pawns for if not to throw themselves into the abyss as quickly as possible and to make room for the bigger pieces? Of course, a Bosboom-Basman clash had to happen: it began 1 c4 g5 2 h4 and pieces were soon flying in all directions (1-0, 24). As Black, non-theoretical Kings Indians are the order of the day, and a mixture

against 1 e4, where Bosboom seems not to have a stable repertoire.

The blunders in these games are in a sense the price to pay for an extremely high level of creativity. Perhaps *Chess Buccaneer* is not the most obvious purchase for readers seeking self-improvement, but it won't do any harm in that respect: I found it quite inspiring to play through so many non-textbook attacking games. Van Delft and Boel occasionally fall back on filler-style commentary ("Manuel grabs the initiative"), but mostly they explain Bosboom's ideas clearly and engagingly, without allowing engine variations to take over.

I enjoyed the biographical parts, too. These have benefited from conversations with Bosboom, who supplies a short preface. Anecdotes about Bosboom's improbable escapades alternate with more serious reflections on the difficult struggle he has long faced to maintain an income as a professional chess player.

This may not be the ideal book to offer as

a prize at junior tournaments. The back cover discloses that Bosboom often wins blitz tournaments “high on marihuana”. Indeed, various drugs feature prominently in the stories, with beer an even more consistent staple. A typical episode begins: “On the night prior to the crucial league match...Manuel took a pill”: yes, the warning “don’t try this at home” does appear in this book. Bosboom’s immersion in *advaita* philosophy and meditation accompanied some of this consumption. I can only salute the authors for recording these details and painting an honest portrait. It is intriguing to gain so much insight into the relatively carefree Dutch chess culture, especially prior to the computer era.

James Vigus



The Silicon Road to Chess Improvement

Matthew Sadler, 560 pages
New in Chess

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The return of Matthew Sadler to the world of chess literature is a major event. It may seem unlikely, but *Game Changer: AlphaZero’s Groundbreaking Chess Strategies and the Promise of AI* (New in Chess, 2019) is already three years old. Co-authored by Natasha Regan, *Game Changer* won the prestigious English Chess Federation Book of the Year Award and became a world-wide bestseller. Indeed, Matthew and Natasha have already built up considerable ‘form’ in this department, having previously won the 2016 award for *Chess for Life* (Gambit, 2016).

Matthew is flying solo this particular occasion, but that has not stopped him from once again writing a very thought-provoking book with a high page count. *Game Changer* was the first book on any aspect of computers and chess I found to be entertaining and instructive. The trick came in making the material relevant and accessible to club players, instead of merely eulogising whatever it was the latest computers and software could do better than a human.

This new book, subtitled ‘Chess Engine Training Methods, Opening Strategies & Middlegame Techniques’, makes for a very effective sequel to *Game Changer*. It is worth quoting Matthew’s first paragraph in full:

“This book is both a collection of games and a series of lessons on positional play, and aims to amaze, entertain, and instruct! The primary source for the games and positional lessons is a treasure-trove of brilliant games that is largely unknown by the wider chess community: the games of superhuman-strength chess engines from the TCEC (Top Chess Engine Competition). In addition, this book continues the exploration of the games of DeepMind’s *AlphaZero* that Natasha Regan and I started in our book *Game Changer*. Finally, it also makes use of the thousands of

chess engine games I have run privately in the past few years to assist me in my preparation and analysis.”

To show Matthew knows how to connect with an audience, he immediately proceeds to answer the question: “What is a chess engine?”

In all, there are 22 chapters, detailing various lessons from the games of the top engines. The topics are rich and varied. They include French structures, March of the rook’s pawn, Engine sacrifices and The King’s Indian opposite wing pawn storm.

There is so much of interest in this book that we can only offer the smallest of scratches on the surface in this short review. I found the section showing how to ‘Look to fight against passive pieces, not active ones!’ to be of great interest. It shows how the top engines prey upon badly placed pieces not with the idea of capturing them, but rather to entomb them, leading to a life of nothing but passivity, as part of a long-term plan.

AlphaZero-Stockfish Classical London 2018

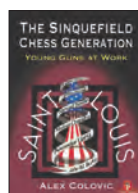


There is no doubting White’s advantage here – and the position was not achieved by accident. As Matthew explains: “Exchanging the opponent’s active pieces and leaving him with only passive pieces is a powerful tool for converting an advantage without complications. Why fight against active pieces when you could exchange them and continue to fight against passive ones?”

Matthew is keen to demonstrate how to use engines to prepare for real games and he is never afraid to practice as he preaches. As the blurb puts it: “For the first time, the superhuman powers of the chess engine have been decoded to the benefit of all players, in a rich and highly instructive book.”

It takes a writer of great skill to make the task look so easy. Is this an early contender for the 2022 ECF Book of the Year? Yes it is. Anyone who is familiar with *Game Changer* should snap up this sequel without delay.

Sean Marsh



The Sinquefield Chess Generation

Alex Colovic, 274 pages
Thinkers Publishing

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Alex Colovic is an excellent writer, as evidenced by his highly instructive posts on the Chessable blog. It makes a very pleasant change to see him appear in print, in what I see as an important addition to the plethora of authors in the Thinkers camp.

At a time when a lot of the chess public’s attention is focused on the titanic battle for the world championship, featuring the real heavyweights, Alex takes a glimpse into a number of potential futures in this book subtitled ‘Young Guns at Work’, with an examination of six notably talented – but not currently so well known – players.

Alex explains his reasons for writing the book in his introduction: “The idea was to write about the best players in the USA born at the turn of the century. These players grew and blossomed thanks to the continuous and generous support by the world’s biggest chess patron, Rex Sinquefield, and the Saint Louis Chess Club. Their success changed the scenery of American chess, set new standards and propelled the country as the promised land for new talents.”

Make no mistake; this is not simply a ‘cut and paste’ job, pulling in sparsely annotated games from all over the Internet. This book took Alex a year and a half to write, because he was determined to do the job properly, by following in the analytical footsteps of a former world champion:

“I remembered that I had always liked to analyze players’ styles and preferences as Botvinnik did in his preparations. When his secret notebooks were published, I was fascinated with how he managed to extract precise characteristics based on concrete examples. As a matter of fact, Botvinnik also called these analyses ‘characteristics.’”

This inspired Alex to take the same path. “Has Botvinnik’s way of analysis become a lost art? Now I had a chance to do it myself.”

Six young players fall under Alex’s scrutiny, namely: Andrew Tang, Jeffery Xiong, Samuel Sevian, Akshat Chandra, Awonder Liang and John Burke. Each player has a specific chapter, with a photograph, biographical information and a selection of games. There is a final, much shorter section at the end of the book, rounding up the best young players from the rest of the world.

The games have excellent annotations. Alex hasn’t chosen games featuring crushing wins for the star players, but rather those which offer the most instruction for the reader. For example, Jeffery Xiong’s games start with three really tough battles against Vladimir Kramnik, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Hikaru Nakamura. All of the games ended as draws, after many twists and turns. Therefore, Alex definitely had to work much harder on the annotations than he would have done if he had chosen more straightforward games, with the young guns dominating from start to finish.

I like Alex’s annotations. He has written

before on the Chessable blog about how to study with chess engines and this snippet is particularly relevant in that department, which is a tricky analytical variation from the game Kramnik-Xiong, Douglas 2018.



By some miracle, the white knight, which had appeared to have waded in too deep, emerges safely after 37 ♖h6!. "The knight is saved again. White is a pawn up and the engine confidently states that White is winning, but the position is still complex, due to it being quite unconventional with all the pieces scattered around the board."

This is an important point. An engine would find its way through the complications, but look at the position; could a human really relax, despite knowing White is a pawn up?

It remains to be seen how far the six American young guns can go in the chess world, but whatever happens on that score cannot change the value of Alex's annotations, which will prove to be genuinely instructive for strong club players upwards. Wanted: more books by Grandmaster Alex Colovic.

Sean Marsh



Your Jungle Guide to Unbalancing Your Opponents

Dorsa & Borna Derakhshani, 408 pages

Thinkers Publishing

RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

This interesting book, subtitled 'Tips and Tricks of Young Chess Guns', takes both readers and the authors on a chess journey, but it starts with a misstep. "We are proud to be the first chess siblings to publish a book, full of magnificent examples and reasons why we love the game." Unfortunately this claim, which is stated more than once, is not true. *Opening Repertoire: The Sicilian Najdorf* (Everyman, 2018), by FM John Doknjas and his brother Joshua immediately springs to mind.

There are four parts to the book: Opening, Middlegame, Endgame and Psychology in Chess. The authors set out their stall early on: "We have been very 'picky' when it came down to selecting the games. The best of the best examples were chosen so as to keep the

flow of the book and to make it easy to follow, as well as being more entertaining and resourceful for our readers."

They start with a run-through of the traps awaiting the unwary in the Budapest Gambit. The writing style is on the effervescent side of the coin, complete with an abundance of exclamation marks (for the moves and in the prose). This can lead to somewhat misleading statements. For example, after 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 c3!? the attendant note is: "A brilliant idea! There is no urgent need to play 3.♙c4 first."

Then again, as the target audience is 'young guns' and average club players, perhaps the authors are seeking to offer inspiration above all else.

The main theme running through the book is of younger, less-experienced players triumphing over their older and potentially wiser opponents. A significant aspect in the art of unbalancing is to be brave and to seize the moment, as demonstrated by (a then 14-year-old) Vincent Keymer, against a former challenger for the ultimate title.

V. Keymer-B. Gelfand

Douglas 2018



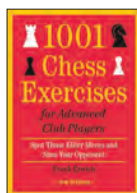
38...♙e6

"Vincent has now won a pawn and can simply move his queen away from the d8-rook. However, the "German Bobby Fischer" is in a wild mood today! How would you retreat your queen?"

It is, of course, a trick question, as instead of retreating the queen, White plays 39 ♖xd8+!. "What a fantastic dare! Vincent sacrifices his queen as he smells danger around Black's king." Gelfand resigned on move 49, after various twists and turns.

Readers will need to activate their own personal filters to navigate their way through the more hyperbolic passages of this book, but it is a worthy effort and a good one to read before heading into battles against higher-rated opponents.

Sean Marsh



1001 Chess Exercises for Advanced Club Players

Frank Erwich, 216 pages, paperback

RRP £20.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.85**

This follow-up to the popular *1001 Chess Exercises for Club Players* sees Dutch FM and psychologist Erwich aim to take readers to the next stage in their ability to spot weaknesses, recognise standard tactical patterns and calculate effectively. The key move is largely less obvious than in his older work, which is no surprise when we consider that this book was written to help those between roughly 1800 and 2300, and may especially benefit those who aren't great at finding strong *zwischenzugs*.



Attacking Strategies for Club Players

Michael Prusikin, 192 pages, paperback

RRP £20.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.85**

As will quickly become apparent, there are many new products aimed squarely at the club player this month, which is perhaps no surprise with a certain holiday just around the corner. That German Grandmaster Prusikin is a highly experienced coach quickly becomes clear in this book, as he explains the prerequisites and rules for a successful attack on the king, via 15 chapters and a number of examples well chosen for their clarity.



Double Fianchetto:

The Ultimate Workbook

Daniel Hausrath, 352 pages, paperback

RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

Thinkers Publishing are never afraid to produce original works, such as this one in which a German Grandmaster explains plenty about his favourite policy of fianchettoing both bishops. Hausrath begins by presenting 18 well annotated games with such an approach, not least in the Reti and against the King's Indian, before supplying 110 detailed exercises for readers to solve, all taken from positions involving a double fianchetto from one side or the other.

Fritz 18

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £69.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £62.95**

Even in these times of *Leela* and *Stockfish*, *Fritz* remains a household name and the latest version still boasts many tools which will help the club player. The actual *Fritz* engine has been tweaked to be stronger than ever, but the main improvements lie within the program and interface: users can enjoy an enhanced test of

their calculation or make the best use of the engine's analysis of their own games, with key threats and ideas clearly highlighted.



Magnus Carlsen: A Life in Pictures

Jonathan Tisdall, 160 pages, hardback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Chess journalist IM Jonathan Tisdall supplies some text for this new work on the world champion, released by New in Chess to coincide with the world championship match. However, it is chiefly a selection of a great many colour photographs, which show the world champion both at and especially away from the board. Those who like their picture books will appreciate the many shots from the Carlsen family archive, as well as from such excellent photographers as Alina I'Ami, David Llada and Lennart Ootes.



Mega Database 2022

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £169.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £152.95**

The latest edition of the 'Megabase' from ChessBase sees their Rolls Royce of chess databases now contain over nine million games, of which over 100,000 are annotated. The Player Encyclopaedia features over 600,000 entries and purchasers also receive a downloadable weekly update throughout 2022. Do note that it's also possible to upgrade from an earlier version of a *Mega Database* for £109.95 (Subscribers – £98.95), by notifying Chess & Bridge of your older program key or by returning the DVD itself.

Those who like their large database, but don't feel the need for any annotations, should note that the 'Bigbase' is also still an annual production, *Big Database 2022* being available too from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £64.95 or £58.45 for Subscribers.

As it's that time of year, don't be surprised either to see the arrival of *CORR Database 2022*, featuring over two million games while retailing at £169.95 (Subscribers – £152.95), or that of *Fritz Powerbook 2022*, which is based on 25 million positions taken from 1.7 million high-class games and which retails at £64.95 or £58.45 for Subscribers.



Modern Chess Opening Repertoire for White

James Rizzitano, 176 pages, paperback
RRP £15.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £14.39**

American IM Rizzitano makes a welcome return for Gambit and has taken a far from easy brief, presenting a modern 1 e4 repertoire without running into hundreds of pages of coverage. As many of the top players nowadays like to do, Rizzitano opts to keep the white king safe, bag the bishop-pair where possible and not take too many early risks. As such, the repertoire is built around the Giuoco Piano, ♟b5(+) against the Sicilian, the French Tarrasch and the Advance Caro. The coverage is far less detailed than in many a Quality Chess repertoire, for instance, but there is still more than enough detail for all but the very keenest and most theoretical of club players.



The Najdorf Bg5 Revisited Volume 1

Lukasz Jarmula, 352 pages, paperback
RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

The critical test of the Najdorf has pretty much always considered to be 6 ♟g5, even if the amount of theory and forcing lines puts many off as White. The young Polish Grandmaster aims to stop that from happening, by taking the reader on a deep and fun dive into the many intricacies of the variation. Jarmula's coverage is not designed to be biased towards White however, so the Najdorf player will also get plenty out of this cutting-edge work, especially if they counter 6 ♟g5 with something other than the Poisoned Pawn variation, which will be the subject of a second volume.



Opening Repertoire: The Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Indian Defences

Nigel Davies, 368 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Davies believes in a hypermodern, not overly theoretical, but also sufficiently solid response to 1 d4. As such, his Nimzo-Indian coverage is based around 4 ♖c2 ♘c6 and 4 e3 0-0 5 ♟d3 d5 6 ♘f3 b6, with the Queen's Indian repertoire anchored by 4 g3 ♟b7 5 ♟g2 ♟e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♘c3 ♘a6 and 4 a3 ♟b7 5 ♘c3 ♘e4. Davies also takes a good look at how to counter the likes of the London and Torre, as well as how to meet both 1 ♘f3 and 1 c4 in this work which should especially appeal to those who prefer to base their black repertoire on understanding rather than memorisation.



Play the Orangutan 1.b4!

Carsten Hansen, 220 pages, paperback
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

Featuring a foreword from Mike Basman no less, Danish-American FM Hansen's latest self-published work is part of his 'Opening Hacker Files'. Perhaps surprisingly, Hansen has himself used the Orangutan in a large number of games with titled opponents. Here he shows how he obtained a plus-score against GM opposition, while supplying a full repertoire for White. It's one which should force black players to think from an early stage of the game, whether they are on their own or head for one of the better-known lines against 1 b4.

Power Openings: Grünfeld Defence Volume 1: Systems with cxd5

Markus Ragger, PC-DVD; running time: 5+ hours
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

If you like dynamism and don't mind learning some critical theory, then the Grünfeld is an excellent choice against 1 d4, whether at the highest level or at the local club, where the opening is seen arguably much less often than it should be. Austrian no.1 Ragger is a leading exponent of the Grünfeld and here maps out a repertoire for Black after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5, while also supplying a number of interactive training positions.

The accompanying DVD, *Power Openings: Grünfeld Defence Volume 2: Systems without cxd5*, also runs to over five hours of video tuition, while completing a repertoire for Black when White declines to exchange on d5. This is also, of course, available from Chess & Bridge, retailing too at £26.95 or £24.25 for Subscribers.



Understanding Material Imbalances

Svitlana Demchenko, PC-DVD; running time: 4 hours, 30 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Canadian WIM Demchenko aims to help the club player appreciate when the value of each piece can be much more or less than its theoretical value. As such, viewers get to see a number of unbalanced positions in action, including rook and pawn against two minor pieces and queen against two rooks. Demchenko supplies a number of handy rules of thumb, while making a fine selection of high-level games to feature.

