

Chess Class club Raymond Keene

The annual Hamilton-Russell competition for London Clubs has been won by the Royal Automobile Club, with the Marylebone Cricket Club in close contention. On Tuesday 17 April, the awards ceremony will take place in the Mountbatten Room of the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall, combined with the annual dinner for notables of the contesting teams. It is the premier annual social event of the London chess scene.

This week, a game won by Dominic Lawson from this year's closely run event.

Lawson-Shankland: Hamilton-Russell Cup 2018; Scotch Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 c3 dxc3 5 Bc4 cxb2 This is certainly playable but capturing so many pawns is dangerous. 5 ... d6 and 5 ... Nf6 are safer lines. **6 Bxb2 Bb4+ 7 Nc3 Nf6 8 e5** Acting immediately in the centre. After 8 0-0 0-0 it is hard for White to generate much play for the pawn as 9 Nd5 is comfortably met by 9 ... Be7. (see diagram 1) **8 ... Ng4** This allows White to generate a useful initiative. Better is the natural central counter 8 ... d5, which is based on the tactical point 9 exf6 Qxf6! when although Black is a piece down, he will regain it due to the double threats against the Bc4 and Nc3. The game Stein-Spassky, Tallinn 1959 continued 10 0-0 Bxc3 11 Bxc3 Qxc3 12 Qe2+ Be6 13 Bxd5 0-0 and was soon drawn. **9 0-0 0-0** Unsurprisingly, 9 ... Ngxe5 is too greedy. After 10 Nxe5 Nxe5 11 Nd5! Nxc4 12 Bxg7! White wins. **10 Nd5 d6 11 Nxb4 Nxb4 12 exd6 Qxd6** 12 ... cxd6 is safer. **13 Qb3 13 ... Be6** Black is anxious to complete development, but this is a losing blunder. 13 ... c5 14 Rad1 Qb6 is playable for Black although after 15 Rfe1 White is very active. **14 Rad1 Bxc4** After 14 ... Qb6 White can pick off one of the vulnerable knights with 15 Bxe6 fxe6 16 Rd4, creating a fork along the fourth rank. **15 Qxc4 Qh6 16 Qxg4** With a clear extra piece, White is winning easily. **16 ... Nc6 17 Rd5 f5 18 Rxf5 Rxf5 19 Qxf5 Rf8 20 Qd5+ Kh8 21 Ng5 Nd8 22 Re1 c6**

PUZZLE NO. 501

White to play. This is from Bluebaum-Anand, Grenke 2018. Anand has been having a rough time in the elite Grenke tournament. What was the subtle move that allowed his opponent to create intolerable pressure in this endgame? Answers via email to victoria@spectator.co.uk by Tuesday 17 April. There is a prize of £20 for the first correct answer out of a hat. Please include a postal address and allow six weeks for prize delivery.

Last week's solution 1 Nxa7

Last week's winner Martin Axworthy, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Diagram 1

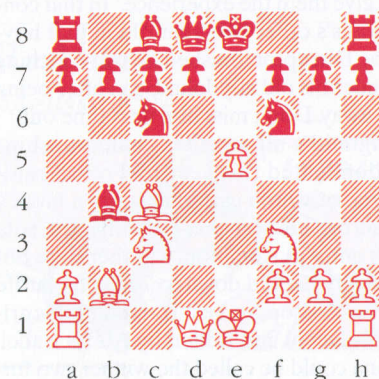
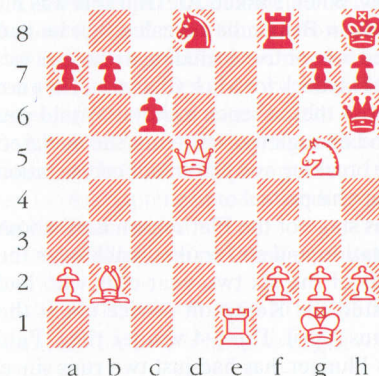


Diagram 2

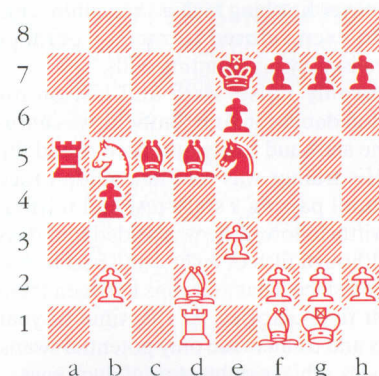


White now finishes in style (see diagram 2).

23 Nf7+! Nxf7 24 Qxf7 Rd8 24 ... Rxf7 25 Re8+ mates, as does 24 ... Rg8 25 Re8. **25 Qe8+ Rxe8 26 Rxe8 checkmate**

Overall results from the Hamilton-Russell Cup 2017/18 were as follows:

1. Royal Automobile Club 14
2. Marylebone Cricket Club 13
3. Oxford & Cambridge Club 11
4. Oriental and East India Clubs 8
5. Athenaeum Club 7
6. Chelsea Arts Club 6
7. Reform Club 5
8. Hurlingham Club 4
9. National Liberal Club 4



Competition Poison pen Lucy Vickery

In Competition No. 3043 you were invited to provide a short story inspired by the Salisbury poisonings.

Ian McEwan, a writer who is fascinated by spying, was asked recently on the *Today* programme how he would begin a novel inspired by the current confrontation with Russia. The image that comes to mind, he said, was of a lion hunting a pack of deer-like creatures in a herd. 'There's one that's trailing behind — too old, too young, perhaps, or has just left the EU...' We find ourselves, McEwan said, back in that strange Cold War world of brazen lies. Many of you clearly agreed with him, judging by the regular appearances of George Smiley in the entry.

John O'Byrne, Terence Horrocks, Roger Phillips, Bill Greenwell and Joe Houlihan all put in strong performances. But they were pipped by the prizewinners, printed below, who are rewarded with £25 each. The bonus five pounds goes to Alan Millard.

Sid Swain awoke in his squalid bedsit and, without washing, threw on his dirty rags and fried an egg in the greasy pan. He gagged on the first mouthful but still ate it. His immune system had learned to cope with rotten food. Having previously replenished his mobile snack bar with produce salvaged from supermarket waste bins, he made for his usual lay-by on the city outskirts to await his customers.

Later, on seeing the newspaper photographs of the poisoned pair, he remembered them stopping at the lay-by. He had piled tomato ketchup on their hot dogs to disguise the taste. Knowing the police were eager to learn of their whereabouts during a missing 40 minutes he was tempted to phone them but, as the investigations were well under way, he decided against it. Everyone believed the Russians were to blame. It was best to let sleeping dogs lie.

Alan Millard

Smiley sighed and slowly cleaned his glasses. He contemplated another breach of security in the Circus. An ex-Russian agent had been attacked in this country and he was sure that it was not the Russians. The episode jarred; it felt wrong. He knew it was an insider but who?

No one in the Circus shopped at Sainsbury's or went anywhere near popular pizza restaurants. It was unthinkable. After all, they might have seen a child or been exposed to a Margherita. He put his head in his hands. Who did he know who would take a risk like that?

Then he remembered. Good God, hadn't Hugh Chetwynd once had a life? Buried in his file Smiley found a footnote stating he had once got some beers in and watched a DVD. Grim-faced, Smiley reached for the phone. This man was dangerous. He had to be stopped.

Paul Carpenter

Over tea and biscuits he told me the story. In the beginning it had been easy. The memes on social