



SKITTLES ROOM

From the Archives

Hosted by
Mark Donlan



Chess Mazes
by Bruce Alberston

From the Archives...

Since it came online over eight years ago, ChessCafe.com has presented literally thousands of articles, reviews, columns and the like for the enjoyment of its worldwide readership. The good news is that almost all of this high quality material remains available in the [Archives](#). The bad news is that this great collection of chess literature is now so large and extensive – and growing each week – that it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate it effectively. We decided that the occasional selection from the archives posted publicly online might be a welcomed addition to the regular fare.

Watch for an item to be posted online periodically throughout each month. We will update the [ChessCafe](#) home page whenever there has been a “new” item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

Confessions of a British Nightclubber

by Aaron Summerscale

While looking at a copy of *Chess Monthly*, I read with interest while Chris Ward revealed how he had been thinking during his penultimate round game with Jonathan Levitt during the 1995 British Championship. Having reached a very promising middlegame position, Chris started to daydream. I hand you over to the man himself: “...Jonathan Parker was going to hold the draw against Matthew Sadler and so I was (after a few minor formalities) going to be half a point clear with only a round to play...in all probability I would play Aaron Summerscale in the last round. As his typical British Championship evening activities (usually involving the odd drink!) surely had to catch up with him sometime and besides I had 3½ in our previous 4 clashes, basically my main concern should be preparing my Saturday morning winner’s speech!”

On reading this I was dumbfounded. It was not the fact that Chris expected to beat me that caused my jaw to drop but the fact that he thought my having “the odd drink” would be a contributing factor. The British Championships have for me always been a very enjoyable occasion where I can get together with some of my closest friends and add considerably to the trade of the local publicans. It has become a tradition at “the British” to paint the town red by night. If things don’t go according to plan over the board, perhaps you will have better luck in the local nightclubs.

Not that this has had a detrimental effect on our chess. Michael Hennigan has won the Championship, Robert Willmoth and I have both won the Major Open. Our flat's most successful year was 1995, with Gary Quillan winning the Major Open and myself finishing runner-up in the Championship.

I decided not to torture you with the game that took me to second place. It was as dull as ditchwater and it took me a very painful 6½ hours to turn Chris's dream into a nightmare. Instead I offer you a game from the Championship in 1992 that I enjoyed almost as much as the nightlife. It should also have sent a warning salvo to Mr Ward about the dangers of underestimating your opponent.

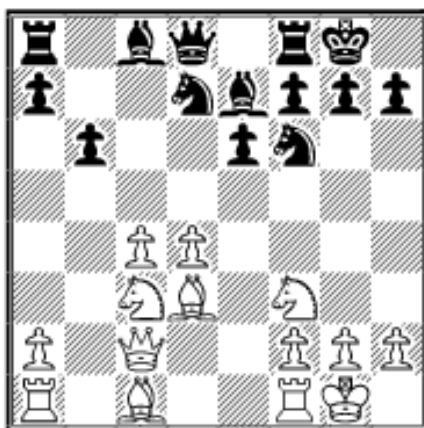
Chris Ward - Aaron Summerscale

BCF-ch (6), 1992

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e3 e6 5 Nf3 Nbd7 6 Qc2 Be7?!

In 1992 I was fairly inexperienced with the Semi Slav and so decided to try to get Chris out of his book. After the debauchery of Friday night the last thing I needed was to be rattled by the latest improvement in the main line. In fact I wasn't even sure what the main line was!

7 b3 0 0 8 Bd3 dxc4 9 bxc4 c5 10 0 0 cxd4 11 exd4 b6



At this stage I really was quite happy with my position. My opponent now had “hanging pawns” and I felt sure this had to be a good thing. Maybe these IMs weren't all they were cracked up to be.

12 Ne5 Bb7 13 Re1 Re8 14 Re3 Nf8 15 Ne2 N6d7 16 Rh3

Through patient manoeuvring Chris has managed to build up his kingside attack and now has a direct threat. I remembered having read somewhere that it is better not to make pawn moves in front of your king when he is under fire, so I decided to try to blunt White's attack in the recommended way: by exchanging pieces.

16...Ng6? 17 Bxg6

Well, all going to plan so far, I thought naively. Hasn't anyone ever told this boy about bishops being better than knights? First he gives himself hanging pawns, then he goes exchanging his best attacking pieces. Automatically I remembered another, and in this case fatal, maxim: “Capture with your pawns towards the centre.”

17...hxc6??

Normally I would have got up to have a walk around at this point, feeling very pleased with myself for having got the advantage. Should I press for the full point or cash in and offer a draw to my more illustrious opponent? As I moved my chair back I caught a look of glee in Chris's eye that chilled me to the bone. Only now did I realize the enormity of my crimes against the chessboard as he bashed out...

18 Rh8+!

I wished the ground would open up and swallow me. Chris pushed his chair back and went for a stroll. Like every other mug who has found themselves in such an unenviable position, I had a very important choice to make: resign now and ease the pain by making my way swiftly to the bar, or play on in order to avoid featuring in the next book on miniatures. I thought about the more attractive first option, but I knew that in order to savour my drink I would have to make a plan of revenge. At what could I challenge Chris to restore my ego? Maybe a showdown on the local disco dance floor? But what if Chris won on the floor as he had in the game in all likelihood he would get the girl as well. I knew he had been taking lessons in ballroom dancing. His football skills were pretty silky as well. There was only one thing for it. Pray!

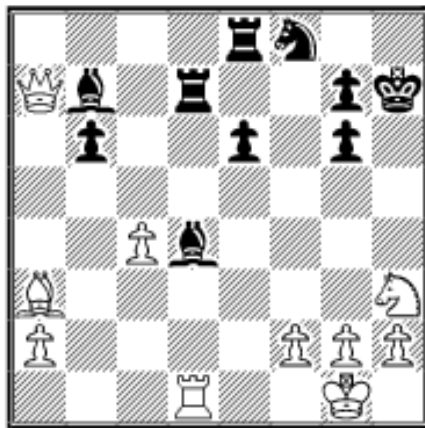
18...Kxh8 19 Nxf7+

Chris returned to the board and gave me a look of disgust: why did he have to play these patzers who couldn't accept when they were beaten? I sat slumped in my chair with a sudden headache, not helped by the knowing smiles of all those who passed my board.

19...Kh7 20 Nxd8 Raxd8

I played this move and resolved to resign at move 40 if he made the time control. He had a whole half hour left but it gave me a goal to play towards. Strangely, though, from this moment on he began to consume large quantities of time. Maybe he still had one eye on the miniature and was looking for the most brilliant win, but from now on I defended resolutely.

**21 Nf4 Nf8 22 Bb2 Bg5 23 Nh3 Bf6 24 Rd1 Rd7 25 Ba3 Bxd4 26 Qa4 Rdd8
27 Qxa7 Rd7**



I now felt a flicker of hope. Sure, the position is still lost for Black but I had survived the dreaded 25-move miniature mark and my position had certainly improved. I don't know what made Chris want to swap his d-pawn for my a-pawn, but I was most grateful. The knight on h3 looks a little offside and, what was more, he now had less than 10 minutes left.

28 Qa4 Ra8 29 Qb3 Bc6!

Played with a flourish as if to say: "I can make threats too." Chris didn't look too convinced, but his clock ticked on.

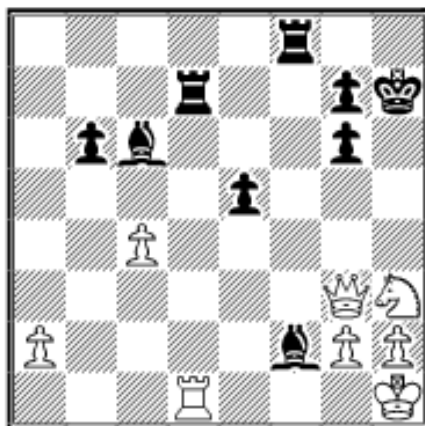
30 Qg3 e5 31 Bxf8?

Chris starts to panic here and is obviously trying to relieve some tension through exchanges, but this just brings another black piece towards his king.

31...Rxf8 32 Kh1?

He probably thought he was moving his king to a safer square. I relaxed now knowing that he had missed my next move which puts Black firmly back in the game.

32...Bxf2!



It was perhaps unfair of me to push my chair back and go for a stroll as Chris now had less than five minutes to make move 40, but I couldn't resist it. The bishop is immune from capture, of course, because of the weakness of White's back rank.

33 Qb3 Be3!

Maximum confusion! Chris looked left and right not knowing where to move. With his flag beginning to rise he reached out and

grabbed his rook.

34 Re1 Rd2

Now Black is firmly in the driver's seat and Chris began to turn red. I almost felt sorry for him.

35 Qxe3 Rxd2 36 Qe4 Bxe4 37 Rxe4 Rxa2 38 Rxe5 Rf1+ 39 Ng1 Rff2 0-1

Black is winning at least a piece. I leave the last word to Chris: “Sadly, as is too often the case, I took no heed of sayings about hatching chickens.”

The **ChessCafe** would like to extend its thanks to *Kingpin* and Aaron Summerscale for permission to reprint the above article from *Kingpin No. 26*. *Kingpin* is a humorous chess magazine that contains entertaining and instructive articles by masters on all aspects of the game.



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