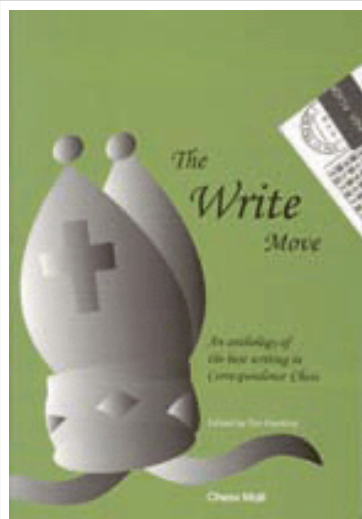




COLUMNISTS

The Kibitzer

Tim Harding



The Write Move
by Tim Harding

Evans Gambit Reloaded

This article concludes my mini-series on the open games with 3 Bc4. It is also the second part of my extended review of the interesting little book by Polish international master Jan Pinski, *Italian Game and Evans Gambit* (Everyman Chess, ISBN 1-85744-373-X). This is definitely the most reliable book in many years to deal with the positions arising from 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 (and it also briefly covers Black's other third moves apart from 3...Nf6).

My preference in opening works is generally for the encyclopaedic structure that deals with every variation on its merits, whereas books of this type, working through illustrated games, seem to be the preference of publishers nowadays, at least Everyman. In this case I withhold my regular objection, but the author of such books always has to be careful to maintain a balance between what is really important, and not exclude variations simply because suitable illustrative games are lacking. Pinski, by casting his net wide enough, and including amateur correspondence games, as well as some games from nineteenth century masters, has largely avoided that trap. Nevertheless, there remains the structural problem of all such books, that typically 10% of the information they contain is the final phases of the games, which are not really relevant to the opening. In a book of this length (160 pages) that means about 16 pages could have been devoted to opening analysis and explanations, but is not.

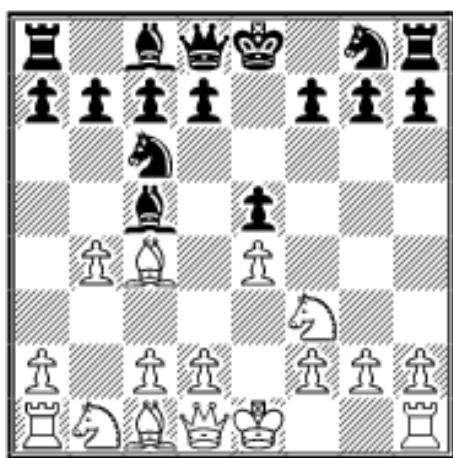
The most striking thing about the balance of Pinski's book is that pages 57-139 are devoted to the Evans Gambit, i.e. he turns the usual arrangement of Italian Game coverage on its head. Many years ago GM Gufeld (and his co-author Stetsko) wrote a book on this opening for Batsford, and did not provide a chapter on the Evans at all. The publisher commissioned Murray Chandler to provide one. Pinski, on the other hand, believes that the Evans Gambit is the way for White to go after 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6, unless you are playing at a very exalted level, and certainly that 4 b4 is White's best winning chance after 3...Bc5.

At the start of his coverage (page 57) Pinski writes: "This romantic gambit has proven to be greatly resilient to modern technology." By this, I think he means that casual computer analysis of the gambit is often not to be trusted;

White's compensation for the sacrificed b-pawn is not easily quantified, and the attack can often flare up in the middlegame just when you think that Black has a solid position. Pinski also says on the same page that "while it is not generally thought of as a path to advantage in the 21st century, it clearly has not been refuted either."

In his conclusions on page 139, Pinski believes that improvements for both sides can still be found and that the gambit (invented in the 1820s) can continue to be a dangerous weapon "especially when the opponents are not 2700+ super-grandmasters, and have not checked everything with a computer years in advance."

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4



This is the normal and best way to play the Evans Gambit, although 4 0-0 d6 5 b4 was the sequence, in fact, employed in the acknowledged first game with the gambit, played by Captain William Davies against Alexander McDonnell in London, probably in 1826 although the date is not certain (it may have been early 1827). Pinski's historical statements about Evans and the gambit are not to be trusted; he doesn't say what source he used, but of course it does not affect his analysis of

the gambit itself.

The most reliable account of Evans's career can be found in the article by W. R. Thomas in *British Chess Magazine* for January 1928 (pages 6-18). I am pretty sure about this, as I have seen correspondence between Thomas and Harold Murray, where the latter helped Thomas get some of his facts right: see Kibitzer [117](#) for more detail on that. He transferred to the postal department of the navy in 1815 (after the Napoleonic war) not in 1824, as Pinski implies. No doubt Evans was glad of a posting that brought him back to his native Pembrokeshire in West Wales.

The sailing (not steam) packet first commanded by Evans between Ireland and Wales was not called the "Oakland," as Pinski has it, but the *Auckland*, and Evans reached the rank of Captain in 1819, not 1824. At some point, a steamer was indeed introduced on the route to replace the *Auckland*, and it was apparently on this new ship that Evans got the idea of accelerating White's attack in the Giuoco Piano by sacrificing the b-pawn. Thomas got most of his facts from a letter dictated by Evans to Herr Meyer, chess editor of the *Gentleman's Journal* and published there; I checked that article to the British Library. Thomas was uncertain whether the name of the vessel in

question was the *Cinderella*, the *Sovereign* or the *Vixen*.

The National Library Ireland has several almanacs of the period, which gave details of the vessels employed in the mail packets between Ireland and Britain; unfortunately not a full set. The 1818 and 1820 volumes don't mention Evans, so presumably he was still a subordinate officer, but there could be some time-lags in these volumes, so it's possible he got his promotion late in 1819. Unfortunately the 1819 and 1821 volumes were missing and must be sought elsewhere.

The 1822 edition of *The Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanac compiled by John Watson Stewart for the year of our Lord 1822* does indeed show the *Auckland* and Captain Evans on the Milford-Waterford mail route. In the 1823 edition the same information is given. Unfortunately the 1824 and 1825 volumes were unavailable, and without them we can only guess which vessel Captain Evans devised his gambit on.

However, 1826 is usually given as the year of the first game with MacDonnell and happily the 1826 volume is available. By then, John Watson Stewart is no more and the new title is *Watson's, or the Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanac (as compiled by the late John Watson Stewart)*. Page 69 shows that the *Auckland* is also no more; by now the steam era had arrived. The vessels on the southern route between Wales and Ireland are now *The Royal Sovereign*, the *Meteor* and *Vixen*, captained respectively by Nuttall, Evans and Holland. So the *Meteor* looks like the most plausible candidate.

In 1827, surprisingly, Evans is not mentioned, so perhaps he had a period of leave or a different posting for a while. In the 1828 edition, he is shown commanding the *Sovereign* and, in both 1829 and 1831 (1830 being unavailable), he is captain of the *Vixen*. The 1832-4 almanacs were unavailable, but in 1835 he was still master of the *Vixen*. After that I have no further information.

There is also a contradiction in Pinski's text, which his editor should have caught and clarified. On page 58 he talks about Evans not having a chance to play the gambit "in an actual game before 1827 against McDonnell," but on page 103 he gives the moves and says it was a correspondence game played in 1826! (See Kibitzer [89](#) for that game.) Moreover, he gives the move order 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 0-0 d6. In both these details Pinski has been led astray by ChessBase, who include this game (wrong sequence and all) in their correspondence databases, although I have told them more than once, both directly and in reviews, that they are in error. I am afraid that ChessBase thinks they are God and refuse to take correction from mere mortals, but I shall continue to point out this double error wherever I see it.

Now it is time to put the history aside and look at the gambit itself.

Previously I wrote on the Evans Gambit, in numbers [89](#) and [90](#), with respect to Chigorin's use of it. Clearly one short article cannot cover the whole scope of the gambit, but I shall review the main lines as Pinski sees them. In many cases, he has provided some original analysis of his own, and if you are interested in seeing his full recommendations, you should buy the book.

Pinski begins his coverage with the Evans Declined, 4...Bb6 from the diagram above.

He believes that White can best deal with this "strategy for wimps" by playing 5 a4 a6 6 a5 Ba7 7 c3! Nf6 8 d3, transposing to a line usually reached from the Italian Game 4 c3 Nf6 5 d3 or 5 b4. As I have just begun an important correspondence game, where my opponent has chosen 4...Bb6, I shall not say any more about the Evans Declined, but may write about it in some future article. Although 4...Bb6 is certainly a playable move with a long history, taking this option means Black abandons any attempt to refute the gambit, and by implication accepts that it is sound and that he does not wish to risk being on the wrong end of a brilliancy.

Moving on to the gambit accepted, Pinski deals first with the unambitious 5...Be7 defence, which for a time was considered Black's most solid treatment, although White need hardly fear it. It was in this variation that Kasparov played his brilliancy against Anand, which hardly needs repeating here. As a result of that game and some others that followed it, the whole main line changed.

I present this variation with a game that was played too recently for inclusion in Pinski's book.

S. Karjakin – A. Beliavsky
Warsaw 2005

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4

Taking the pawn with the knight is inadvisable, because after 5 c3 it must retreat to c6, which is equivalent to the old variation 4...Bxb4 5 c3 Bc5, whereas a5 is probably the right square for the bishop, as we shall see. Those retreats are considered later in this article.

5 c3



5...Be7

Other retreats will be discussed later. The 5...Be7 variation is no longer considered a simple equaliser for Black, but it is by no means a bad move.

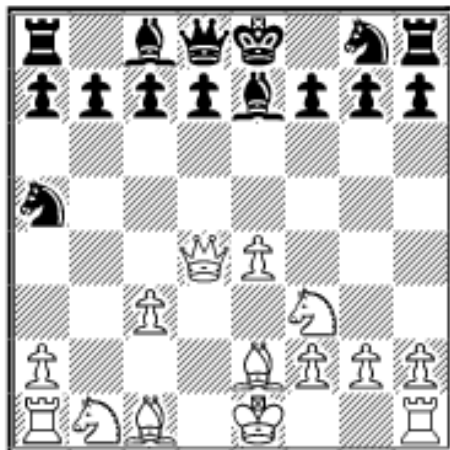
6 d4

6 Qb3!? is the move I used to enjoy playing. After 6...Nh6 7 d4 Na5, it is important to play 8 Qb5, not Qa4, for a reason that will soon be apparent. 8...Nxc4 9 Bxh6 (If the queen were on a4, Black would now have ...Nb6.) 9...gxh6 (If 9...Nd6 10 Qxe5) 10 Qxc4 and now, according to Pinski, the critical line is 10...exd4 11 cxd4 c6 12 d5. I am not sure any longer if 6 Qb3 is really playable or not, but he seems to think it may be.

6...Na5 7 Be2!?

7 Nxe5 Nxc4 8 Nxc4 d5 9 exd5 Qxd5 10 Ne3 is the old line, where Black has two traditional positional advantages: the bishop pair and two pawn islands against three. On the other hand, the black queen must move again and White has good control of squares around the centre. Experience has shown that chances are balanced.

7...exd4 8 Qxd4!



This used to be played by the veteran American postal player Walter Muir, who died a few days before the end of 1999. I don't think Kasparov was aware of the precedents when he prepared his seventh and eighth moves for his game against Anand in 1995.

8...d6

Anand played 8...Nf6 against Kasparov in the Tal Memorial, but it was not a

success.

9 Qxg7 Bf6 10 Qg3 Qe7

Black certainly has other moves here; for example, 10...Ne7 or 10...Be6, as suggested by Rohde.

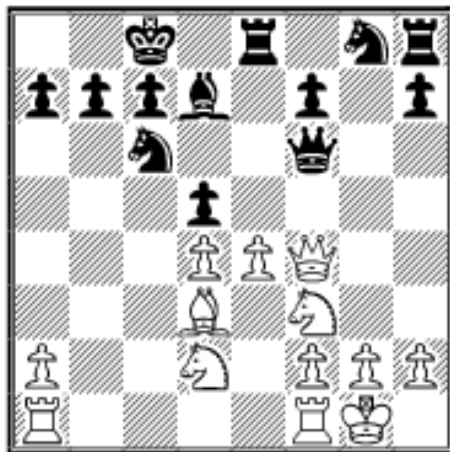
11 Qf4!?

Pinski doesn't mention this move. 11 0-0 Qxe4! has occurred in several games and Black is probably fine, though I have not examined this in detail. Pinski recommends 11 Ng5 h6 12 Nh3 Qxe4 13 Nf4 Bd7 14 0-0 0-0-0 15 Nd2 Qa4 16 Nd5 Bh4 17 Qd3 Ne7 18 Bf3 Nac6 19 Rb1 with compensation, in Short-Kiril Georgiev, Warsaw rapid 2004.

11...Bd7

In my 1997 book, a variation from the Russian analyst Nikitin was given: 11...Nc6 12 0-0 Bd7 13 Re1 h5! 14 h4 Nh6 15 Ng5 Ng4 with advantage to Black. Almost ten years on, looking at that sequence with a fast computer, several of the moves seem rather random. The final assessment is correct, but White can certainly do better earlier on.

12 0-0 0-0-0 13 Be3 Nc6 14 Bd4! Re8 15 Nbd2 d5 16 Bd3 Bxd4 17 cxd4 Qf6



18 Qg3

It turns out that the open g-file is a bad place for the queen. According to Lukacs, White should have played 18 Qe3!? Nge7 19 e5 Qg7 20 Rfb1 with good attacking chances on the queenside.

18...Nge7 19 Ne5 Reg8 20 Nxd7?

20 Qe3!? still gives White good play, according to Lukacs.

20...Rxc3 21 Nxf6 Rxd3 22 Nf3 dxe4 23 Nxe4 Nxd4 24 Ne5 Ra3 25 Rfd1 Nec6 26 Nxf7

A typical scenario when the Evans goes wrong: White regains his sacrificed pawn, but finds himself in an inferior endgame.

26...Rg8 27 Nfg5 h6

Whoops! If the knight retreats to either square on the third rank, the a3-rook simply grabs it.

28 Nf7

Into the valley of death, like the charge of the Light Brigade.

28...Rg6 29 Ng3 Ra5

“Cannon to right of them, cannon to left of them, volleyed and thundered.”

30 h4?

30 f4 was necessary to save the knight, but the pawn will be lost after 30...Rf6 31 Ne5 Rxf4.

30...Nf5?

I suppose there was time trouble. After 30...Rf6, the knight is lost and White could resign.

31 Re1! Nxg3 32 fxg3 Rxd3 33 Nxe6

White has some chances of saving the game now, but he “blows it” at move 36.

33...Nd4 34 Re7! Rg6 35 Nf7 Nf3+ 36 Kf1?

The king should have gone to h1.

36...Nxe6 37 Rd1 Rf5+ 38 Ke1 Nxg2+ 39 Kd2 Rd5+ 40 Ke2 Nf4+ 41 Kf3 Rxd1 42 Re8+ Kd7 43 Rd8+ Ke7 44 Rxd1 Rf6 45 Nd8 Ne6+ 0-1

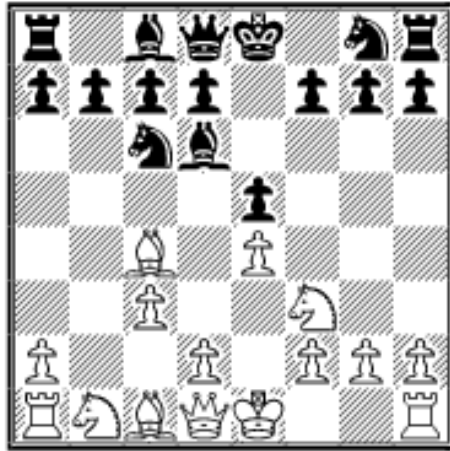
It is also possible to put the bishop on d6, reinforcing e5, although blocking the d-pawn. This possibility is not mentioned by Pinski, which is surprising, as it has been played in some games from fairly recent times. Its omission is one of the few serious faults in the book. Here is a high-level example played 12 months ago, so perhaps too recent for his book deadline. For more detailed notes, by Stohl and Lukacs, see [ChessBase Magazine 107](#).

R. Felgaer - P. Harikrishna

Dos Hermanas-A, 2005

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Bd6

This received plenty of attention in America in the late nineteenth century and it was played by Pillsbury.



6 d4 Nf6 7 0–0 0–0 8 Re1 h6

To rule out Ng5 and Bg5. If 8...Re8?, then 9 Ng5 Rf8 10 f4! commences the attack.

9 Nbd2

Stohl reckons 9 Bd5!? deserves attention.

9...Re8



After 9...exd4 (or 9...b6 10 Bb5!), 10 e5 lets Black get too many pawns for the piece, but instead White has 10 cxd4! Bb4 11 Qb3! with good play.

The position in the diagram is mentioned on page 209 of the 1997 Cafferty and Harding second edition of *Play the Evans Gambit*. We cited an example that is not mentioned by Stohl or Lukacs: 10 Bd3 Bf8 11 Nxe5 Nxe5 12 dxe5 Rxe5 13 f4 Re8 14 e5 Nd5 15 Qf3 (Markosian-

Mukhayev, Moscow open 1995) and now we said that 15...Nxc3!? has no obvious refutation. Looking at the line again with computer aid, it seems that 16 Bc2 Bc5+ 17 Kh1 Nb5 18 Qd3 Nd4 19 Qh7+ Kf8 20 f5! gives a very strong attack, so probably 15...c6 is Black's only try here.

So 10 Bd3 looks good to me now, but Felgaer finds a new move that is also very interesting.

10 Qb3

Now Black has no time for ...Bf8, so his queenside remains hard to unravel.

10...Qe7

10...Re7 11 Bd3 b6 may be better, although White should have excellent play for the pawn with 12 Bb2, perhaps best, linking the rooks and waiting to see how Black will try to sort out his central tangle of pieces.

11 Bd3

Lukacs likes 11 Nh4! here, when there is a black queen rather than a rook on e7.

11...Na5 12 Qa4!? b6 13 Nf1

Stohl prefers 13 Nh4!? g6 14 Ndf3.

13...Bb7 14 Ng3



14...Qf8

Stohl thinks it is time for Black to seek complications, as he can no longer maintain the e5-pawn, e.g. 14...exd4 15 Nf5 Qf8 16 cxd4 Bxe4 17 Bxe4 Nxe4 18 d5 Nc3 19 Qg4 Rxe1+ 20 Nxe1 Re8 21 Bb2 with compensation for White, but more chances than in the game for Black.

15 dxe5 Bxe5 16 Nxe5 Rxe5 17 f4! Ree8 18 e5 d6

It is not easy for Black, but he had more fighting chances after 18...Nd5 19 Bd2 (Lukacs) or 18...Qc5+ (Stohl).

19 Ba3 Bc6 20 Qd1 Nd7 21 Qg4 Nb7 22 Nf5 Kh8 23 Re3 Nbc5 24 Rae1 Nxd3 25 Rxd3 Re6 26 Qh4 Rg6 27 Rd2 Re8 28 exd6 cxd6?

28...Rxe1+ had to be tried, e.g. 29 Qxe1 Re6 30 Qh4 (Stohl), when White can be happy, but he has not won the game yet.

29 Ne7! Rg4

If 29...Rxc2+ 30 Rxc2 Bxc2 then 31 Bxd6!, threatening Ng6+; so it's all over.

30 Qxc4 Rxe7 31 Rxe7 Qxe7 32 Qe2 Qf6

Black has no relish for defending a lost endgame.

33 Rxd6 1-0

Finally, 5...Ba5 is the most testing, but Black also runs a greater risk of losing than in some of the other lines (I mean 5...Be7 or the Declined), because the penalty for a mistake in the opening or early middle-game can be

terminal.

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5

There is no need to spend time on the 5...Bc5 variation, which is long out of fashion.

After **6 d4 exd4 7 0-0** (7 cxd4 is also playable, as the bishop check on b4 is ineffective.) **7...d6** (It is better not to be distracted by sidelines.) **8 cxd4 Bb6** the next diagram position arises, which can also come about via 5...Ba5.



It is rather curious that Pinski writes (on page 89): “This could be called the ‘standard position’ in the Evans Gambit.” That remark, possibly a mistranslation, is curious for two reasons. One is that nowadays, and indeed for the past half century at least, it is by no means standard, as Black usually prefers to defend in some other way. The second curious point is, because for about 150 years, this has been known as the “Normal Position” (although, as I just said, it’s really no longer normal), so why does Pinski call it “standard,” when the variation has a well-established name?

I refer you to Kibitzer [89](#) and Kibitzer [90](#) (October-November 2003) for a detailed discussion of the history of that variation, which it is unnecessary to repeat. It should be noted, however, that in the old Chigorin main line 9 Nc3 Na5 10 Bg5 f6 11 Bf4 Ne7 12 h3 that Pinski (see pages 100-1) fails to mention 12...Ng6!, which gives Black winning chances; see Kibitzer [90](#) for details. Therefore, White needs to pursue new (or rather revive old) ways of playing the Normal Positions, for example by 9 Nc3 Na5 10 Bd3!?, or with the old lines arising via 9 d5, 9 Bb2 and 9 h3, which are perhaps better than their reputation.

My old articles also include some discussion of the so-called Compromised Defence, **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 0-0 dxc3?!**, which is briefly dealt with by Pinski on pages 124-5 (his Game 43).



As he says, “taking this pawn resembles the sin of gluttony” and few people do it nowadays, although it was fashionable at one time in the nineteenth century, following some analysis by Zukertort. After 8 Qb3 Qf6 9 e5 Qg6 10 Nxc3 Nge7 11 Ba3, Pinski rightly remarks: “This is a critical position for understanding the Evans Gambit. Black is in serious trouble.” Apart from the example he gives, with 11...0-0, Black also tried 11...b5?!, 11...Rb8 and 11...Bxc3 in the

old days, but usually came off worse.

In practice, after **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5**, Black is more likely to take one of the two defensive options usually recommended in books nowadays: **5...Ba5 6 d4 d6** and **5...Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 0-0 Nge7**. These are both lines that, although not totally unknown in the early decades of the Evans, are essentially twentieth century defences, as is 5...Be7. In the case of the 6...d6 line, there are ways for White to regain his gambit pawn, but he must beware of landing in a positional disadvantage by doing so, and continuing in gambit style is often a better policy. In the case of 7...Nge7 line, the jury is still very much out. For more detail on these lines, I refer you to Pinski’s treatment, which seems satisfactory.

In the rest of this article, however, I am going to concentrate on another variation that has been revived in recent years, but which Pinski does not discuss. Yet it seems that there has been a complete revolution in the variation, with a move formerly stated to be demolished found to be playable, as the supposed refutation that has stood in the books for over a century is no longer trusted. This is clearly a case where computer analysis has led to a total revaluation of the line, but also the computer judgments cannot always be trusted. The machine often looks for the move that regains the gambit pawn quickest, or maximises the material gain for Black, but that is often the wrong policy in the Evans. As yet there are insufficient modern games with 7...Nf6 from which to make a definite assessment, and several players are probably keeping their ideas secret.

At present a titanic tussle is under way in an [exhibition match](#) between two former Correspondence World Champions, which is sponsored by Jan van Reek. This is one of six games played in pre-selected sharp 1 e4 e5 lines, with each player having three games as White and three games as Black. Only one of the six games is in the Evans Gambit, but all six are worth looking at.

The progress of the game can be followed online, but with a three-move

delay, i.e. as of 9 April, when this article was finalised, Black's 27th move was the latest shown, but the game must therefore have actually reached move 30. I would not dare guess what the final result will be, but the play to this stage can be reviewed.

Mikhail M. Umansky – Gert Jan Timmerman

ICCF WebChess Gambit Match, Game 5, 2005-6 (unfinished)

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 d4

Pinski devotes an entertaining but practically irrelevant chapter to the variations arising from 6 0-0, which almost inexplicably was the choice of Chigorin and others. During the nineteenth century there was much debate about the merits of 5...Bc5 and 5...Ba5, and of 6 0-0 and 6 d4 in reply to each, but the arguments employed do not convince today. (See Kibitzer [89](#) for more on this.)

Nowadays, White almost always plays the pawn move, which Pinski incorrectly attributes to Howard Staunton. The move 6 d4 in reply to 5...Ba5 was actually first played around 1830, several years before Staunton came to prominence on the London club scene.

6...exd4 7 0-0 Nf6!?

In Schlechter's (eighth) edition (1916) of the standard old work on the openings, *Handbuch des Schachspiels*, 7...Nf6 gets a question mark, and so does Umansky's reply. It is safe to assume that both these great correspondence players have done plenty of original analysis on the variation, which may see the light of day eventually. For now we can just look at the moves they played and the sidelines they rejected.

(It should be noted that the same position could arise via 6 0-0 Nf6 7 d4 exd4.)

8 e5!?

All the books that cover this line, right down to the ones I wrote some years ago with Bernard Cafferty, accept the old evaluation and say that White should play 8 Ba3. GM Murray Chandler, in his Evans chapter in the Gufeld/Stetsko book some years ago, also said it was "dangerous" for Black, but gave no continuation. The *Handbuch* says that this move, discovered by B. Suhle, demolished the long-time favourite defence 7...Nf6. (Actually it was played as early as 1848 by Arnous de Riviere, so it is unlikely to have been pioneered by Suhle, who lived 1837-1904 according to Gaige's [Chess Personalia](#).)

So why is 8 Ba3, which looks strong as it prevents Black from castling, no longer being played? So far as I can see from databases, nobody has demonstrated a major improvement for Black, but presumably Timmerman has found something. The old analysis by Suhle and Neumann apparently appeared in German magazines between 1859 and 1865, to which I do not have access. If you show the line to a computer engine like Fritz for long enough, it will come up with several replies that it thinks are good for Black. Some of these are rubbish.

To examine the variation in detail would take too long, so I leave it as an exercise for readers, with a couple of hints. I suspect that if Umansky had played 8 Ba3 that Timmerman would have replied 8...d6 (although 8...Nxe4 9 Qb3 d6 10 Bxf7+ Kf8 comes into consideration.) and now 9 e5 looks critical:



The *Handbuch* discusses 9...d5, 9...dxe5, and 9...Ne4, even mentioning 9...Ng8, but 9...Ng4 and 9...Nxe5 are not mentioned. I have no idea which of these many moves Timmerman might have played.

Here are a few variations after 8 Ba3 d6 9 e5:

a) 9...Ng4 10 exd6 cxd6 11 Re1+ Nge5! (11...Ne7 12 Qxd4 Bb6 13 Qxg7 and

White won in Morphy-Deacon, London 1858) 12 cxd4! Bxe1 13 Qxe1 Be6 (13...Nxd4!? 14 Nxd4 0-0 15 Bd5 followed by Qb4 — Harding & Cafferty) 14 Bxe6 Nxf3+ 15 gxf3 fxe6 16 Qxe6+ Qe7 17 Qd5 0-0-0 18 Nc3 Rhf8 19 Ne4 Kc7 20 Rc1 g6 21 Qb3 Qf7 22 d5 Qxf3 23 dxc6 bxc6 24 Qc2 Qg4+ 25 Kf1 Qh3+ 26 Ke1 Qd7 27 Bxd6+ Kb7 28 Nc5+ 1-0, H. P. Montgomery-T.Lichtenhein, Philadelphia 1861.

b) 9...dxe5 10 Qb3 Qd7 11 Re1 occurred in De Riviere-Journoud, Paris 1848, and a Steinitz game. Instead 11 Ng5 was suggested by Levenfish, but it may actually be inferior.

c) 9...d5 10 Bb5 (10 exf6!? dxc4 11 Re1+ Be6) 10...Ne4 when:

c1) Morphy failed to beat Greenaway with 11 cxd4 in an 1859 London blindfold simul.

c2) GM Stuart Conquest has tried the unclear 11 e6!?.

c3) 11 Qa4 Bxc3 12 Nxc3 (Blackburne won a simul game in 1871 with 12

Bxc6+ bxc6 13 Qxc6+ Bd7 14 Qxd5) 12...Nxc3 13 Bxc6+ bxc6 14 Qxc6+ Bd7 15 Qc5 Nb5 16 Bb4 a5 17 a4 Nc3 18 Ba3 Nxa4 19 Qxd5 Be6 20 Qc6+ Bd7= Djurhuus-Egger, World Under-20 ch 1990. This could have ended in repetition by 21 Qd5 Be6 22 Qc6+ Bd7 etc., but White varied, although it did not change the eventual result.

d) Levenfish analysed 9...Nxe5 10 Nxe5 dxe5 11 Qb3 Qd7 12 Re1 e4 13 Nd2 Bxc3 (Here 13...Qf5 14 Bxf7+ Kd8 is a risky Fritz8 suggestion.) 14 Nxe4 Bxe1? 15 Nxf6+ gxf6 16 Rxe1+ Kd8 17 Qf3 f5 18 Qf4 f6 19 Qh6 with advantage to White; 14...Nxe4 looks better.

e) 9...Ne4 10 exd6 (Blackburne played 10 Re1 d5 11 Bb5 in an 1875 simultaneous, but it may not be sound.) and now 10...cxd6!? 11 Re1 d5 is probably critical.

Now we return to the actual game, where White played 8 e5.



8...d5

Not 8...Ne4? 9 Qb3 (or 9 Ba3 Regatas-Eguren, 1959) 9...0-0 10 Ba3 d6 11 cxd4 Bb6 12 Qe3 Bf5 13 Bd5 and wins (*Handbuch*, 8th ed., p. 392).

9 exf6

Probably best. 9 Bb5 Ne4 was the main line analysed in the *Handbuch*; for example, it was good for Black in the first

Morphy-Anderssen match game, Paris 1858. Compared to the Two Knights Defence (3...Nf6 4 d4 exd4 5 e5 d5 6 Bb5 Ne4 etc.), White is obviously worse as he has lost the b-pawn.

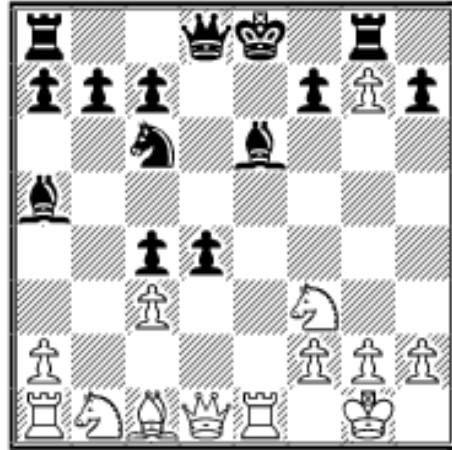
The miniature, Elaine Pritchard-Brennan, Castlebar 1969, went 9 exd6 Qxd6 (Why not castle?) 10 Ba3 Qf4 11 Re1+ Kd8?? (11...Be6 had to be tried.) 12 Nxd4 Nxd4 13 Be7+ Kd7 14 g3 1-0.

9...dxc4 10 fxg7 Rg8 11 Re1+

Not mentioned in the *Handbuch*, which only gives 11 Bg5 Qd5 12 Nbd2 Bf5 or 12...Rxc7 as good for Black. A modern game went: 11...Qd6 12 cxd4 Rxc7 13 d5 Bg4 14 Bh4 Ne5 15 Bg3 Bxf3 16 Qa4+ Kf8 17 Qxa5 Qxd5 18 Qa3+ Kg8 19 gxf3 Nxf3+ 20 Kh1 Qc6 21 Nc3 Nd2+ 22 Kg1 Nxf1 23 Rxf1 h5 24 Qe7 Re8 25 Qh4 Qf3 26 Nd1 Rg4 27 Qh3 h4 28 Ne3 Rge4 29 Nf5 hxg3 30 hxg3 R8e5 31 Nh4 Rxh4 32 Qc8+ Kh7 33 gxh4 Re4 0-1, M. Golubev-A. Panchenko, Kharkov 1984.

In A.Grosar-M.Scekic, Nova Gorica open 1997, 11 Nxd4 Nxd4 12 Qh5 Rxd7 13 cxd4 Qxd4 14 Qxa5 achieved nothing, as Black forced perpetual check by 14...Rxd7+ 15 Kxd7 Qg4+ 16 Kh1 Qf3+ 17 Kg1 Qg4+ 1/2-1/2.

11...Be6



12 Bg5

The strange game, G.Keschitz-T.Szilagyi, Hungary Cht-2 1997, went: 12 Ng5 Qf6 13 Nxe6 fxe6 14 Qh5+ Kd7 15 Bh6 Qg6 16 Qxg6 hxg6 17 Re4 Bb6 18 Na3 Rae8 19 Rd1 Ne7 20 g4 Nd5 21 Nxc4 Nxc3 22 Nxb6+ Kc6 23 Rxd4 Nxe4 and maybe the players were already in time trouble. Here 24 Nc4 seems necessary and possibly good, but instead the game concluded 24 Nd7?! e5 25 Rd1 Re7 26

Nf8 Rgxg7 27 Re1 Kd5 28 Rd1+ Kc6? (It is hard to understand why he settled for repetition here in view of 28...Kc4 29 Rc1+ Kd3 30 Bxg7 Rxd7 and Black should win) 29 Re1 Kd5 30 Rd1+ Kc6 draw.

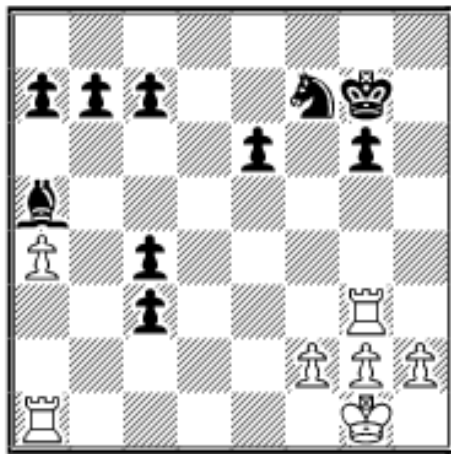
12...Qd5 13 Nbd2

A correspondence match game, Quincy club-Louis Paulsen, USA 1858, went 13 Bf6? Qf5 14 Bxd4 0-0-0 15 Re3 Rxd7 16 Nh4 Qd5 17 Qf3 Nxd4 18 Qxd5 Rxd5 19 Na3 Nf5 20 Nxf5 Rxf5 21 Rd1 Bb6 0-1.

13...Rxd7 14 Ne4 Kf8

This is apparently the first new move of the game. Sveshnikov-M.Scekic, Nova Gorica open 1998, ended in a premature draw after 14...Rxd7 15 Nf6+ Ke7 16 Nxd5+. Had the game continued, then 16...Rxd5 17 Qb1 leaves plenty of play.

15 Bh6 dxc3 16 Qc1 Rd8 17 Nfg5 Qf5 18 Re3 Kg8 19 Bxg7 Kxg7 20 Nxe6+ fxe6 21 Rg3+ Kh8 22 Qh6 Qf7 23 Ng5 Qg6 24 Qxg6 hxg6 25 Nf7+ Kg7 26 Nxd8 Nxd8 27 a4 Nf7



What can we say about this position today? Black has sacrificed two exchanges, but has three pawns in return. Although they are all on the c-file, he does have a 5–1 queenside majority. Here 28 Rb1 is useless, because Black replies 28...c6 and the b-pawn cannot be captured, so White will possibly play 28 Re3 or 28 Kf1. I tend to think that White has the better chances, but a decision seems far off.

To win the game, White will somehow have to organise a kingside attack with his rooks, without allowing the black pawns on the other wing to get too dangerous. Black has just transferred his knight to the kingside, to defend his king as well as to prepare a general advance of his queenside pawns. If the black e-pawn and g-pawn fall, and e6 and g6 are obviously both potential weaknesses, White could eventually promote a pawn on the kingside.

Here it is appropriate to quote some more from Pinski's conclusion. Although he admits that the Spanish (Ruy Lopez) "gives more promise of a theoretical advantage, the Evans Gambit gives better chances of actually winning the game. It is the opening for those players who hate to compromise."

Postscript

Some good news came through in recent days, though it probably won't be of much relevance to readers outside Western Europe. A home has been found for the collection of approximately 6,000 chess volumes in the possession of the English Chess Federation (former B.C.F.). These books, constituting the English National Chess Library, have been sitting in boxes for about 20 years. The library principally consists of bequests or other donations from Sir Richard Clarke, Harry Golombek and G. H. Diggle.

A contract was signed on 21 March between the E. C. F. and Brighton University, which is a different institution from the University of Sussex, by the way. Brighton University has a centre in Hastings, which is obviously an appropriate location for the library because of the long association between chess and that town, which is not far along the coast from Brighton. Hastings is also where E.C.F. is based. I have already been in contact with the university librarians, who inform me that they hope to be able to unpack the books and prepare for cataloguing in September, and I already offered them some tips.

The collection will take some time to catalogue and organise, and we must hope the volumes are in good condition after their long storage. It will

certainly be several months before the E.C.F. can hold its official opening, perhaps to coincide with the next Hastings congress, and make the library available to researchers. I hope to get to Hastings when the collection is opened and to write a future Kibitzer article about it. One of the big questions still remaining is what will be the ultimate fate of IM Bob Wade's library. Maybe that can be added at some later date to the E. C. F. collection.

At this stage, one can only speculate about what may turn up, but we can hope for some pleasant surprises, although there is also likely to be a certain amount of duplication, given the source of the collection. It probably consists mostly of books from the nineteenth century and the first three quarters of the twentieth century, including perhaps some rare books and runs of periodicals. For example, you will probably search library catalogues in vain for a set of the *London Chess Fortnightly*, edited by Emanuel Lasker between August 1892 and July 1893. If anyone knows where it can be read in Britain, I should love to be told.

Order *Italian Game and Evans Gambit*

by Jan Pinski

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