

## Chess

Varsity match  
Raymond Keene

On Saturday 5 March the 134th Varsity Match between the teams from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge takes place at the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall. As has become traditional, the annual clash between our premier academic institutions is supported by Henry Mutkin, the doyen of the RAC chess circle. The scores so far are 58 wins to Cambridge, 53 to Oxford with 22 draws. Spectators are welcome, although standard dress rules for London clubs are in force.

It is a source of constant bemusement to me that although Cambridge award half-blues for representation in the Varsity Match, Oxford still deny that honour to their chess representatives. Given Oxford's great chess tradition, which includes grandmasters and British champions such as Adrian Hollis, John Nunn, Jon Speelman, George Botterill and Peter Lee, it is strange that the university authorities continue to deprive their outstanding chessplayers of due recognition.

This week a game between two former top boards from the Oxford and Cambridge sides and a puzzle from the Varsity Match of 2013.

Keene-Lee; County Match 1970; King's Indian Defence

**1 Nf3 g6 2 c4 Bg7 3 d4 Nf6 4 g3 0-0 5 Bg2 d6 6 0-0 Nbd7 7 Nc3 a6** Unusual, but cunning. Black's intention is to meet 8 e4 with 8 ... c5 9 d5 b5 gaining active play for his pieces on the queenside. **8 d5** Since Black's obvious intention is to play ... b5 at some point I decided to manoeuvre a knight towards c6 to take advantage of this. The advance d5 is the necessary preliminary to this operation. **8 ... e6 9 e4 Nc5** In the later game Anic-Theon, France 2002, 9 ... Re8 was tried. **10 Nd4 exd5 11 cxd5 Re8 12 f3 a5** To secure the position of his knight against the possible threat of b4. **13 Kh1 Qe7 14 Nb3 b6 15 Nd4 Ba6 16 Nc6** The triumph of White's plan but in the meantime Black has gained considerable activity along the a6-f1 diagonal. **16 ... Qd7 17 Be3** (see diagram 1) I was not attracted by moving the rook since Black can invade with his knight on d3, hence my

Diagram 1

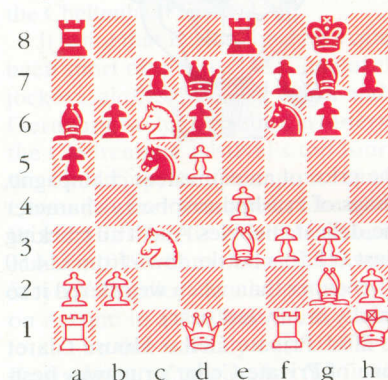
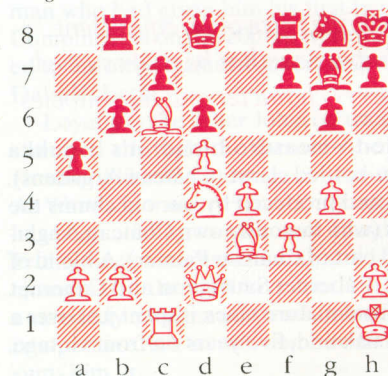


Diagram 2



decision to sacrifice the exchange in return for light square control. **17 ... Bxf1** Falling in too readily with White's schemes. The critical line is the explosive 17 ... Nxd5 when various complications all work out in Black's favour. **18 Bxf1 Kh8 19 Qd2 Ng8 20 g4 Rf8 21 Bb5 Qc8 22 Rg1 Nd7 23 Ne2 Ne5 24 Ned4 Nxc6 25 Bxc6 Rb8 26 Rc1 Qd8** (see diagram 2) Black has missed his chance and now White's pieces dominate the board. **27 Bb5 Bxd4 28 Bxd4+ f6 29 Qc3 Rf7 30 g5 Kg7 31 Bf1 Qd7 32 f4 Qe7 33 Re1** Very strong but 33 e5 was immediately decisive. **33 ... Kf8** The last chance is 33 ... h6 to undermine the g5-pawn. **34 Bh3 fxe5 35 fxe5 Qxe5 36 Be6 Re8 37 Bxf7 Kxf7 38 Rf1+ Black resigns**

Competition  
For their eyes only  
Lucy Vickery

In Competition No. 2937 you were invited to submit extracts from the diaries of the famous that their writers did not wish the world to see.

Josh Ekroy impressed, lifting the lid on F.R. Leavis's and C.P. Snow's chummy trysts; Alan Millard wasn't alone in outing God-botherer Richard Dawkins; and here's a snippet from Sylvia Fairley's Wordsworth:

Walked around Ullswater in pensive mood,  
unable to find a suitable rhyme for 'hills'. My  
dear sister, as ever, solved my predicament ...  
the muse inspired her, and she has completed  
the poem already.

It was an enjoyable entry: hats off all round. The winners take £25. The bonus fiver belongs to Basil Ransome-Davies.

*Sunday:* another away draw yesterday. We mustn't suffer a slump in morale, though. I see it as a point gained, not two lost. Some of the lads think differently, as if they'd been reading Schopenhauer, but I say pessimism is a self-fulfilling prophecy. I did a spot of knitting to relax in the p.m. (after a truly wonderful quiche!), then read *Pale Fire* till dinner. I don't know why, there's something about metafiction that really grabs me. It's almost as if there is nothing beyond the text. *Monday:* a physio session to get me limber. Then I centred myself to do some reflecting on Jose's dismissal. Was it karma or just a sequence of poor results? Or are those false alternatives? Do we delude ourselves that there is always a defining moment?

*Tuesday:* home to a bunch of fucking cloggers tonight. We'll show them who can clog.  
*Basil Ransome-Davies/John Terry*

I was frightened by a mouse today. A diary is a confessional and I am glad to confess this *paura*. It was not the thing you feel when the man next to you takes a bullet and his last sound is a word you cannot hear and you will never forget. But it was a fright. Mice do this to me, not rats. Rats turn to fight, teeth bared, eyes glaring defiance. I learned how to club a rat before I was ten. But who goes *mano-a-mano* with a mouse? They leap in a grey blur and skitter from sight and the air fills with a silent terror. It is good to write these things and set down the open truth. But there are people who turn their envy into bile and take any chance to belittle my work. So I shall tear out and destroy this page tomorrow.  
*W.J. Webster/Ernest Hemingway*

*Monday:* woke mid-morning. Ish. Couldn't remember a thing about last night's soirée. Did this and that until lunchtime, as one does. Unmemorable lunch. Took my constitutional in the afternoon; one of the usual routes, though I can't recall which, not that the remotest significance could be attached to the decision or its consequences, even if I could. Anyway, I bumped into some compe I used to run into at parties years ago. We blathered inconsequentially about something — art, probably, or some classical ditty of which neither of us knew the provenance

## PUZZLE NO. 398

Black to play. This position is from Scbior-Chiu, Varsity Match 2013. Black now powered through into the white position. What was the key move? Answers to me at The Spectator by Tuesday 8 March or via email to victoria@spectator.co.uk or by fax on 020 7681 3773. 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 ... h2

**Last week's winner** Mary Davis, Salthouse Haven, Hull

