

Hannover visit to Bristol, 1999

by Steve Boniface

At approximately 1945 on "Palm Sunday" (actually 30th May) 3 duty-free laden German visitors emerged from a coach in the bus station to begin yet another epic tour of Bristol. There were in fact 6 in the whole exchange party, but in order to confuse the immigration authorities, the Hannoverians were arriving in three batches. By 10 o'clock all guests and hosts were united, and plans were laid for a week of fun and frolics (and just a little chess ...).



Monday morning saw a wine-tasting courtesy of Bob Bagshaw. The rumour that our visitors' brew came from an older, more potent batch are quite erroneous. Nevertheless the home team proceeded soberly to the main match in the afternoon. With only 10 grading points separating the teams, it was expected to be a close result. However the Bristol squad were in good form, and guest player Devon Thomas, who had kindly provided his premises for the fixture (Pizza Delight, 212 Stapleton Road) opened the scoring with a fine win over an opponent ranked 20 points higher.

Another Harambee guest, Lloyd Beckford, scored a creditable draw, and then Dave Collier romped home with a powerful pawn then piece onslaught. Meanwhile Steve Boniface had sacrificed a bishop to blast open the king side, and John Richards won two pieces for a rook, then more in a tricky tactical skirmish. Both won well in the end, which just left Tyson Mordue battling against Frank Palm. Sadly just when the game was hotting up, Tyson's knight forgot that bishops can move backwards too and committed hara-kiri on d6. Match score 4½-1½ to the Brits!

Both the Collier and Richards games deserve further study; here is the miniature on Board Four:

Kutschenreiter,A - Boniface,S [E64]
Hannover-Bristol, 31.05.1999

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 c5 5.d5 d6 6.c4 0-0 7.0-0 Bf5 8.Nc3 Ne4

Seems to be the key square. In this case, occupation seems better than mere control, as White can't free himself with e4.

9.Bd2 Na6 10.Qb3 Qd7

Black can't go Qb6, but this seems to be useful in many ways, including the potential use of h3.

11.Rfd1 Rab8 12.a4

White is worried about Black playing b5, but this lets another knight across the battle line.

12...Nxd2 13.Nxd2 Nb4 14.e4

Probably still best, but most of White's pieces appear to be on the wrong squares.

14...Bg4 provoking **15.f3 Bd4+ 16.Kf1 f5!?**

Originally Bh3 was intended, but after Ne2 White's king looks to be safe on g2. Taking the bishop immediately is dangerous as after 17. fxe4 fxe4+ White has to return the piece to avoid being mated and is still under attack.

17.Ne2 If White can dislodge the Black-squared bishop he may survive. **17...Bxf3! 18.Bxf3** [Now 18.Nxf3 fxe4 19.Nexd4 cxd4 20.Qxb4 exf3 21.Bh1 Qh3+ 22.Ke1 Qxh2 and it's bad for White.] **18...fxe4 19.Nxe4 Qh3+ 20.Ke1 Be3!!** Not a bad move for an amateur. The king is locked in.

21.Nf4 Rxf4! 22.Ng5 [22.gxf4 Qxf3 is curtains.] **22...Qxh2 0-1**

The Bank holiday evening was spent in the appropriately named Eastern Delight restaurant, then with a sampling of Real Ales at the Old Fox.

Tuesday saw a split activity, with the culture buffs exploring the Photographic Museum at Lacock, whilst the jolly sailors investigated the waterfront. Both parties rejoined for the blitz match against Grendel. This went to the last game with James Knowles gallantly trying to win with Q + 3P versus Q + 2P and getting mated for his troubles. The final tally was Grendel 17, Hannover 19.



Wednesday again had a divided approach, but with a common aim: the Moorlynch Winery in Somerset. The sensible half went in Dave Collier's car; the adventurous (foolhardy) lot followed Steve Boniface via bus, train, and foot. An enjoyable meal, tasting and vine inspection was followed by re-partitioning. The groups met again at Hullabaloo for an hour or so, then yet again split into two halves. The pub games section ended honours even over contests in pool and skittles, whilst the hardened drinkers simply enjoyed themselves and tried to get lost.

There was due to be a river trip to Hanham on the Thursday, but the weather was so appalling that an indoors day was declared instead, with culture at the museums, a little bit of shopping and walking, then gravitation to Clifton club where a half-hour match was organized. This was an unusual and clever idea in that boards one and two changed partners for the reverse games, as did three and four, and five and six. Again it, was close, the home side scraping home 6½-5½. A generous buffet was provided at half time (as did Grendel on Tuesday) and a most convivial atmosphere prevailed.

Friday was the first day of the Hanham Congress, so there was only a short program of non-chess events starting at the Mall in Cribbs Causeway and ending at Dave Collier's for afternoon tea.

The Congress itself was a disappointment for the visitors. All of the Hannoverians in the Open section had tough initial games, Fritz Obert being paired with Chris Beaumont, and nearly salvaging what looked like a hopeless game. Meanwhile Bernd Watermann had started well in the Major with two wins, but Andreas Zachmann blew a fine game in Intermediate round one and never really recovered, missing a mate in his last-round fixture. In the end only Bernd troubled the Prize fund, taking a joint second place in a small, but well-contested section. One surprise entry was George Miller, who gave up chess for draughts some time ago. He then switched his efforts to playing by correspondence and is now World Champion! Rumour has it that he may try playing the more serious game next year ...

Saturday night saw another visit to Devon Thomas' Pizzeria, where with hosts, guests, and officials from the Congress, we managed to fill every available seat! The wine was sparkling and so was the conversation, though Sunday morning was somewhat muted.

Sunday evening saw a feeble assault on the 186 beers of Belgos , but there was a sadness in the air at imminent departure, and even several bottles of Chianti at Pierre's Brasserie failed to turn it into a jolly occasion.

On Monday morning the tone was set by the unprecedented occasion of Frank arriving early and all buses leaving on time. So much for 1999. But already plans are afoot for the Year 2000 visit to Germany. This will be very special, as the giant Expo is taking place in Hannover for a large chunk of the year. Now is the time to think about that special chess holiday with lots of extras. Don't worry if your only exposure to the German language is *that* episode of Fawlty Towers. You'll only need a few key words. Coaching, details, and other information from Steve Boniface on 0117 - 9393 - 262. *Bis Jahre zwei Tausend!*