

The British Chess Championships took place recently at the very plush Riviera International Centre in Torquay. Nigel Birtwistle from Grantham, captain of the Lincolnshire team, had been nominated as the MCCU champion and as such was eligible to play in the main Championship event.

Played over 9 rounds there were 60 entrants including several Grand Masters and International Masters but Nigel was 42nd on the start list with a FIDE rating of 2134 so was in distinguished company but not by any means out of his depth.

Nigel finished the tournament with 4.5 points out of 9 and was placed a creditable equal 25th at the end of the tournament.

Nigel's best game came in round 3 when he was paired as white against Mike Waddington from Dorchester and we pick up the game after black has just played 16. ...Rc7 (see diagram) materially equal but with black's king exposed in the centre.

Nigel played 17. d6 exd6 18. Bxd6 Rc6 19. Nb5 Nc8 20. Nd4 Rxd6 and black has to give up the exchange 21. Nxd6+ Nxd6 22. Qxd6 Bf8 23. Qd5 exd4 and Nigel is happy to lose the knight as it allows 24. Rfe1+ Be7 25. Rad1 Qc7 26. Qxd4 Rf8 27. Re3 Bc6 28. Rde1 Rf7 29. b4 a6 30. a5 Qd7 31. Qf4 Qd8 32. h4 Qd5 33. f3 Kf8 and black's latest move, presumably to give his king a safe haven.

This allowed Nigel to make the winning move 34. Rxe7 Rxe7 35. Qxf6+ Qf7 36. Qh8+ and black resigned as 36. ...Qg7 37. Qxg7+ Kxg7 38. Rxe7 follows.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the Lincoln Labour Club, Grafton House, 32 Newland. LN1 1XJ on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.
www.lincolinchessclub.co.uk

