

The Lincolnshire County Championships took place recently at the Lindum Group Atrium in North Hykeham. A small but high quality field of 21 players were competing in the 5 round tournament for the Hewitt Trophy in its centenary year - the trophy first being presented by T.W.G.Hewitt in 1911.

After the first 3 rounds Paul Cumbers led the field winning all his matches and the key game came in round 4 when Paul was paired as white against county captain Nigel Birtwistle and we pick up the game after Nigel has just played 20. ...Bf5 (see diagram) giving Paul an opportunity to win a pawn can you see it?

Paul played 21. Bxa6 as 21. ...bxa6 22. Qxc7 would follow. Instead play continued 21. ...Bg6 22. Bb5 Rf5 23. Bg3 Rbf8 with Nigel counterattacking with his rooks on the f-file together with the passed pawn on e4 24. Rfd1 R5f6 25. a5 Bh5 26. Re1 Rf5 27. Ba6 R8f7 28. Qa1+ Bf8 29. Qxb7 and Paul calculated that 29. ...Qxb7 30. Bxb7 Rxb7 would still give him the advantage with the passed pawns on the queen's side. Nigel actually played 29. ...Qd8 30. Qxe4 with Paul winning a third pawn and he went on to win.

Paul also won his last game to become a worthy champion with 5 points out of 5. Daniel Wells from Newark came second on 4 points with Louth's Samuel Milson coming third on 3½. The Under 177 grading prize was won by Louth's Keith Palmer, the Under 162 by Lincoln's Geoff Collyer and the Under 137 grading prize by Allan Marshall from Boston all having 3 points. Paul Chaplain from Grimsby with 2 points won the Under 118 grading prize.

