

Nigel Birtwistle won another of the several Lincolnshire players to feature in this year's British Championships at the Ponds Forge in Sheffield. Playing in the main Championship event he was able to rub shoulders with the likes of joint winners GM Mickey Adams and GM Nigel Short.

Nigel, who lives in Boston, plays for Grantham who won the top division of the Notts League and is also captain of the Lincolnshire team in the Minor Counties and has led them to the national semi-finals in the last two seasons.

At Ponds Forge Nigel finished in equal 70<sup>th</sup> place with 4 points in the 11 round competition, perhaps a little disappointed but still creditable given the quality of the field.

Nigel's best game came in round 7 where he was paired as black against George O'Toole from Temple Sutton in Essex and we pick up the game after white has just played 32. Bb2 (see diagram) with Nigel having three extra pawns countered by white's extra piece.

Nigel played 32. ...Qg6 33. Bxg7 Qxe4+ 34. Qe2 Qxb1+ winning a rook 35. Kf2 Qg6 36. Bxf8 Kxf8 but loosing the exchange 37. Rc1 Qh7 38. Qg4 b2 and white is looking to counterattack while Nigel's pawn on b2 now threatens promotion 39. Rc8+ Rxc8 40. Qxc8+ Kg7 41. Qc3 f6 42. Na3 (not 42. Qxb2 Qh2+) Qh2+ 43. Kf1 Qh1+ 44. Kf2 b1(Q) 45. Nxb1 Qxb1 and Nigel wins the piece and with a three pawn advantage Nigel won a few moves later.

Next year the British Championships will be held in North Shields on Tyneside where hopefully a strong Lincolnshire contingent will be present.

