

# New Englander

## Chess Club Update – June 2026

### Chairman's Chatter

Customarily, the end of the season is a time for celebrations and reflection. So, congratulations to Peter Walker who has retained his title as Club Champion and Jamie Sutherland for capping a busy season by winning the Ladder and Grand Prix competitions.

There was also much thought at the Annual General Meeting about improvements to running the Club, particularly about recruitment and engagement. The actions decided are summarised below and I hope you will be able to give them your full support. The aim is to encourage members to visit the club sessions most weeks and to provide enjoyable chess. See you next season!

*Paul Hanks*

### Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Barnes 1956)

Position : 8/8/6K1/3p3B/3B2NP/3P2kP/6P1/6R1

1 Ne3 Kxh4/Kf2 2 Nf5# [1 ... Kh2 2 Nf1#; 1 ... Kf4 2 g3#]

### AGM Summary

The club Annual General Meeting was held on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2026 with 9 members present. The main points of business were :-

- Treasurer's report : The club made a running surplus of £484 mainly thanks to one-off funding from the CCCA and ECF for junior

events. The finances are therefore stable but the decline in membership is a concern and recruiting at least two more players needs to be a priority. Nevertheless, subscriptions could remain unchanged.

- Team captains' reports : As detailed herein, club teams competed in the Cambridgeshire leagues but increasingly strong opposition assigned us to lowly positions in divisions 1 and 2. The highlight was winning division 3 comfortably but having to concede to St Ives in the play-off. The Team7000 (North) league was yet to be completed.
- Internal events : Difficulties with match schedules and postponements played havoc and caused there to be no Rapidplay or Lightning tournaments. Also affected was the Club Championship but Peter Walker has emerged as champion. Andy Neville leads the Challengers' division but there are many missing results. The Ladder had been poorly supported and not proved to encourage play outside the set-piece competitions. Jamie Sutherland headed both Ladder and Grand Prix tables with one week to go.
- Junior Club : Ed Knox's continued sessions attracting 15 participants over 27 weeks and recent weeks had filled the room to capacity. Further expansion was thought possible if more helpers volunteered. The initiative was now self-sufficient financially. In partnership with Peterborough club, a Mega-final event had been staged at Wansford. A challenge match against Peterborough was in preparation.
- Competitions for 2026-27 : The club will enter the same teams to county leagues as in the past season. The traditional set of internal competitions would be run if time allows.
- Elections : Incumbent committee members were re-elected en bloc.
- Summer play : Using the bar area from 7pm would provide continuity and an opportunity for informal play. This would be helpful to retain juniors and to induce newcomers in the off-season.
- Other initiatives :
  - > Early rounds in the Ladder would be scheduled with nominated opponents
  - > A WhatsApp group would be created to simplify communication of reminders, the more informal events and last-minute changes

- Overlap in division 1 and 3 fixtures would be requested to give more totally free evenings
- Fixture schedules would be requested in which visits to neighbouring clubs would shorten travel distances in winter months
- More activity would be undertaken on social media (Facebook and Meetup)
- Coffee-house and alfresco opportunities (e.g. town park festivals) would be explored.

## Diary Dates

9 <sup>th</sup> June	Club Problem Night via Zoom
14th July	CCCA AGM at Ivy League Club, St Ives from 7:30pm
24 <sup>th</sup> October	<a href="#">2026 English Championship</a> until 1 <sup>st</sup> November at Holiday Inn, Thorpe Wood

## Website to Watch

You can still follow Norway Chess 2026 during the early days of the month (<https://norwaychess.no/en/> until 5<sup>th</sup> June) but then the focus shifts to the new superpower in chess – Uzbekistan. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Uzchess Cup from 7<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> in Tashkent features ten grandmasters, mostly from the upper echelons of the FIDE grading list but also a teenager from the home nation's talent production line. A bespoke website is not apparent so maybe it is best to view the tournament on the [appropriate section of chess.com](#).

## Result Round-up

### Cambridgeshire League

<b>New England B</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Rookwood A</b>	<b>1</b>
B Stephens	0	J Sneesby	1
P Hanks	1	F Bowers	0
P Spencer	1	M Teague	0
C Russell	1	D Sneesby	0

### North v South play-off

<b>New England C</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>St Ives C</b>	<b>2</b>
J Sutherland	0	P Baddeley	1
J Peoples	0	J Canamares	1
A Thobani	1	V Adoubara	0

### Team7000

<b>NE Patriots</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>St Neots</b>	<b>3</b>
P Hanks	0	C Emery	1
E Knox	1	P Barkas	0
J Sutherland	0	J Greiller	1
J Peoples	0	M Hellewell	1

<b>Peterborough D</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>NE Patriots</b>	<b>2</b>
F Biermann	1	P Walker	0
J Bell	0	R Ilett	1
B Rooney	0	J Sutherland	1
B McNamara	1	J Peoples	0

### CCCA Leagues - Final Tables 2025-26

<b>Division One</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Games</b>	<b>Pts</b>
St Ives A	8	7	0	1	27½	14
Cambridge	8	5	0	3	23½	10
Peterborough A	8	5	0	3	22	10
St Neots A	8	1	1	6	15½	3
New England A	8	1	1	6	11½	3

<b>Division Two</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Games</b>	<b>Pts</b>
St Ives B	12	10	1	1	35	21
St Neots B	12	7	1	4	26	15
Godmanchester	12	5	3	4	26½	13
Ely	12	6	0	6	24	12
New England B	12	3	3	6	20½	9
Peterborough B	12	3	2	7	17½	8
Rookwood A	12	2	2	8	18½	6

<b>Division Three</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Games</b>	<b>Pts</b>
New England C	6	5	0	1	12½	10
Bourne	6	3	1	2	10½	7
Peterborough C	6	1	2	3	8½	4
Rookwood B	6	1	1	4	4½	3

<b>Team 7000 (N)</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Games</b>	<b>Pts</b>
Peterborough D	6	3	2	1	14	8
Spalding	6	3	2	1	11	8
St Neots N	6	2	1	3	10	5
NE Patriots	6	1	1	4	9	3

### New England Club Championship

<b>White</b>			<b>Black</b>
J Sutherland	<b>Rd</b>	<b>6</b>	D Dhokia
A Neville	<b>Rd</b>	<b>7</b>	J Sutherland
E Knox	<b>Rd</b>	<b>8</b>	P Hanks
C Russell	<b>Rd</b>	<b>8</b>	S Walker
P Hanks	0	1	P Walker
S Walker	<b>Rd</b>	<b>9</b>	J Peoples
J Sutherland	<b>Rd</b>	<b>11</b>	J Peoples
D Dhokia	0	1	C Russell
S Walker	<b>Rd</b>	<b>11</b>	A Thobani

## Final stage

Champions League	PW	RI	PS	PH	EK	Pts
P Walker	X	0	1	1	1	3
R Ilett	1	X	0	½	1	2½
P Spencer	0	1	X	½	0	1½
P Hanks	0	½	½	X	P	1
E Knox	0	0	1	P	X	1

Challengers	AN	CR	JP	JS	AT	SW	DD	Pts
A Neville	X	1	½	P	1	1	1	4½
C Russell	0	X	½	1	1	P	1	3½
J Peoples	½	½	X	P	1	P	1	3
J Sutherland	P	0	P	X	1	1	P	2
A Thobani	0	0	0	0	X	P	1	1
S Walker	0	P	P	0	P	X	½	½
D Dhokia	0	0	0	P	0	½	X	½

## New England Club Ladder – Final Table 2025-26

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 28/05/26
	Month	Overall		
1	-	+9	J Sutherland	1
2	-	+7	J Peoples	1
3	-	+3	N Wedley	1,1,0
4	-	+4	P Hanks	1
5	-	-2	B Sivaraj	1,0
6	-	-4	P Spencer	0,1
7	-	-3	C Russell	0,0
8	-	-7	M Patrickson	1
9	-	-4	D Dhokia	0,0
10	-	+2	A Rouf	0
11	-	-	P Walker	1,½
12	-	+1	B Stephens	½
13	-	-6	S Walker	0

## CCCA Jamboree - 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Pos	Team	Pts	Pos	Team	Pts
1=	Godmanchester B	9	6=	Linton	6
	Ely B	9	8	Ely A	5½
3	Godmanchester A	8½	9=	St Ives B	5
4=	St Ives A	7		Peterborough B	5
	Linton	7	11	New England	3½
6=	Peterborough A	6	12	Rookwood	½

## New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League			Cup	Team 7000	Total	TPR*
			A	B	C				
J Sutherland	4	1	½	1½	3½	0	3½	14	1604
P Hanks	5	1	2½	2		1	1	12½	1757
P Spencer	4½	1	3	2½		1	0	12	1620
R Ilett	6½		2	2		½	1	12	1791
P Walker	6	1½	1½			1½	1	11½	1933
B Sivaraj	4	1		2½		2	1½	11	1829
J Peoples	3	1			5		1½	10½	1545
C Russell	3½	0	0	4	1		0	8½	1557
A Thobani	1			½	4	1		6½	1415
E Knox	4						1½	5½	1780
A Neville	4½							4½	1635
B Stephens	1	½	1½	1				4	1698
N Wedley		2						2	1617
M Patrickson		1	½	0				1½	1606
S Walker	½			½				1	1348
D Dhokia	½							½	1290
A Rouf		0						0	1574

\* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

## Match of the Month

Looking at the performance cross-tables at the end of this newsletter, it is easy to see that our league teams have been through a tough season. A run of poor results definitely dents your confidence and this can lead to further bad form. To escape this vicious circle, it can be good to refresh yourself in a different environment – at a congress, for instance. If nothing else, you get opportunities to play with freedom and it gives you a boost, even in retrospect.

### A J Billings v R Ilett

Spa Complex, Scarborough Open; 25.10.2025

1 d4 Nf6  
2 c4 b6

This is the provocative move order for the Queen's Indian Defence. Normally, 2 ... e6 would give the option of the pin seen in the Nimzo after 3 Nc3 Bb5. In that case, White has a number of continuations to attack the bishop e.g. 4 a3 (Saemisch) or 4 Qb3 (Spielmann) but these variations are side-stepped in the game while still preventing e2-e4.

3 Nc3 Bb7  
4 Nf3 e6

By transposition, we have reached one of the main lines. A kingside fianchetto is an alternative for White especially as I have already committed my bishop to b7. If the game had proceeded 2 ... e6 3 Nf3 b7 4 g3,

Black could play 4 ... Ba6 with pressure on the c4 pawn.

**5 Bg5**

Possibly driven by Kasparov's erstwhile opening preference, 5 a3 – the Petrosian variation - is more often seen in grandmaster games.

**5 ... Be7**

I could still adopt the hybrid 5 ... Bb4, a favourite with the recently deceased Jan Timman, whilst another line chases the bishop with 5 ... h6 6 Bh4 g5 7 Bg3 Nh5. The difference between the two appears after 5 ... Bb4 6 e3 h6 7 Bh4 g5 8 Bg3 when the more aggressive 8 ... Ne4 is available but you need to be prepared for the gambit 9 Nd2.

**6 Qc2 h6**  
**7 Bh4**

White could save the bishop pair with 7 Bd2 or be direct with 7 Bxf6 Bxf6 8 e4 d6 9 e5 gaining space.

**7 ... d6**

The natural moves here are probably 7 ... c5 or 7 ... Nc6 but I am aiming to delay the confrontation in the centre and leave White with the problem of forming a plan – something I do not think he manages to achieve successfully.

**8 e3 Nbd7**  
**9 0-0-0 Nh7**  
**10 Bxe7 Qxe7**  
**11 h4**

This strange move suggests White was thinking of striking on the kingside when classical development by 11 Bd3 Nhf6 12 e4 would offer better, if slower, chances. I can just make it a loss of tempo.

**11 ... 0-0-0**  
**12 Bd3 Nhf6**  
**13 b4**

Another ambitious thrust. As mentioned, White could continue to build up slowly with 13 e4 or recognise that eventually d4-d5 or c7-c5 will open the c file and 13 Kb1 might be handy.

**13 ... c5**

White may have thought his last move prevented this move but Black's position springs to life after 14 bxc5 dxc5 15 dxc5 Nxc5 with threats like 16 ... Nxd3 17 Rxd3 Qa3+ 18 Kb1 (18 Kd2 Rxd3 19 Qxd3 Bxf3 20 gxf3 21 Rd8) 18 ... Rxd3 19 Qxd3 Be4. Just something to remember...

**14 a3 Kb8**  
**15 Kb2 Rc8**  
**16 Rhg1 d5**

I could also open the centre with 16 ... e5 as 17 d5 hardly blocks the position e.g. 17 ... cxb4 18 axb4 b5.

**17 dxc5 bxc5**  
**18 b5**

White is having to keep the position closed because 18 bxc5 Nxc5 and as before, Black has the initiative.

**18 ... Nb6**  
**19 Nd2 Ng4**

**20 Be2 Ne5**

White has craftily defended f2 by 20 ... Nxf2 21 Rdf1 Ne4 22 Ncxe4 dxe4 23 Nxe4. The kingside is, however, just a sideshow.

**21 cxd5**

The computer prefers to force the issue with 21 f4 Nexc4+ 22 Bxc4 dxc4 23 a4 when Black's pawns may help White's defence as a screen.

**21 ... exd5**  
**22 Nf3 Rhd8**

Previously, the danger for White was Black's queen landing on a3 and it is hard to stop after 22 ... d4 23 exd4 Nbc4+ 24 Bxc4 Nxc4 25 Ka2 cxd4.

**23 Qf5 f6**  
**24 Nxe5 fxe5**

If you dreamt of the perfect position arising from the opening, this is probably it! Just compare the relative safety of the kings, the central presence and piece co-ordination... The steamroller is coming.

**25 Qc2 d4**  
**26 Na4 c4**  
**27 Nxb6 c3+**  
**28 Ka2 axb6**  
**29 Ra1 Qe6+**  
**30 Kb1**



**30 ... Be4!**

A pleasing finishing touch.

**31 Bd3**

If 31 Qxe4 Qb3+ mates in 2.

**31 ... Bxd3**  
**32 Qxd3 Qb3+**  
**33 Kc1 Qb2+**  
**34 Kd1 dxe3 0-1**

Behind the massive material loss, it is still checkmate. Let's hope next season can bring everyone similar satisfaction.

Ray Ilett

## Cambridgeshire County Chess Association

<b>A Team</b>	<b>Fenland</b>		<b>Cambs League – Division 1</b>								<b>Score</b>	<b>Appearances</b>	<b>Grading</b>	
	Peterborough 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	St Ives 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Peterborough A 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	St Neots A 17 <sup>th</sup> Sept	St Neots A 10 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Cambridge 29 <sup>th</sup> Apr	Cambridge 4 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Peterborough A 19 <sup>th</sup> Mar	St Ives A 8 <sup>th</sup> Apr	St Ives A 21 <sup>st</sup> Apr			<b>Opponent Average</b>	<b>Performance</b>
Peter Walker	1	0	0	½	0	0	½	½	0	0	2½	10	2062	1874
Ray Ilett	½	0	½	1	0	½	0	0	0	0	2½	10	1906	1718
Ben Stephens			0			0		1	0	½	1½	5	1873	1723
Paul Hanks	½	0		½	½	0	½	1	0		3	8	1794	1700
Mark Patrickson*			0	½							½	2	1829	1642
Jamie Sutherland						½					½	1	1819	1819
Paul Spencer		0	½	0	1		1	½	0	0	3	8	1778	1684
Benny Sivaraj*	1										1	1	1644	2019
Chris Russell					0		0			0	0	3	1785	1410
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2½</b>	<b>1½</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>½</b>	<b>14½</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1877</b>	<b>1730</b>
<b>Sum of opponents' grades</b>	7039	7814	8846	9171	9480	9325	10114	9406	9378	9519	based on September grades – excludes defaulted games * includes estimate			
<b>Sum of New England grades</b>	7489	7472	9288	9379	9035	9030	9035	9253	9253	8944				

<b>B Team</b>	<b>Cambridgeshire League – Division 2</b>										<b>Score</b>	<b>Appearances</b>	<b>Grading</b>		
	St Ives B 10 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Peterborough B 24 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Godmanchester 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct	St Neots B 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Ely 17 <sup>th</sup> Nov	St Ives B 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Godmanchester 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	Peterborough B 19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	St Neots B 9 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Ely 25 <sup>th</sup> Mar			Rookwood 16 <sup>th</sup> Apr	Rookwood 6 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>Opponent Average</b>
Ray Ilett					1	0	1					2	3	1788	1913
Paul Hanks				0		0		1	0		1	2	5	1820	1745
Ben Stephens	0	1								0	0	1	4	1746	1559
Paul Spencer	½	0	0	0	1		0		0	0	1	2½	10	1656	1485
Jamie Sutherland					1	0			½		0	1½	4	1710	1616
M Patrickson*		0	0									0	2	1669	1294
Benny Sivaraj*	½	1	0	1			0					2½	5	1639	1690
Chris Russell				½	0	0	1		½		1	4	7	1617	1670
Alim Thobani									½			½	1	1621	1621
Steve Walker	0		½									½	2	1584	1397
John Peoples										0		0	1	1555	1180
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>½</b>	<b>1½</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4d</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>½</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16½</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1683</b>	<b>1599</b>
<b>Sum of opponents' grades</b>	7275	5937	6652	6930	6613	7128	6807	-	6897	6841	6702	6259	based on September grades – excludes defaulted games * includes estimate		
<b>Sum of New England grades</b>	6905	7271	7031	7018	6774	6863	7014	-	6778	6836	6687	6999			

<b>C Team</b>	<b>Cambs League – Division 3(N)</b>							<b>Play-off</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Appearances</b>	<b>Grading</b>	
	<b>Rookwoods B 4<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	<b>Peterborough C 18<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	<b>Bourne 12<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	<b>Peterborough C 18<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	<b>Rookwood B 26<sup>th</sup> Jan</b>	<b>Bourne 5<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	<b>St Ives C 13<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Opponent Average</b>			<b>Performance</b>	
Jamie Sutherland	1	1		1	½	0	0	3½	6	1544	1591	
Alim Thobani	1	0	0	1	1		1	4	6	1240	1430	
Steve Walker			0					0	1	1956	1466	
Chris Russell						1		1	1	1569	1944	
John Peoples	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	5	7	1487	1648	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2½</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13½</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1459</b>	<b>1575</b>	
<b>Sum of opponents' grades</b>	4089	4137	4896	3849	4089	5007	4570	based on September grades – excludes defaulted games				
<b>Sum of New England grades</b>	4741	4741	4722	4741	4741	4628	4741	* includes estimate				

<b>Team 7000</b>	<b>Fenland</b>		<b>Team 7000(N)</b>					<b>Score</b>	<b>Appearances</b>	<b>Grading</b>	
	<b>Peterborough D 27<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	<b>Rookwood E 26<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	<b>Peterborough D 1<sup>st</sup> Oct</b>	<b>Spalding 18<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	<b>St Neots 8<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	<b>Peterborough D 14<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Spalding 24<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>			<b>St Neots 27<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Opponent Average</b>
Ray Ilett	0		0			1	0	1	4	1874	1686
Peter Walker		½		1		0		1½	3	1965	1965
Paul Hanks		½	0		1		0	1½	4	1784	1690
Paul Spencer	1			0				1	2	1482	1525
Benny Sivaraj*	1		½		1			2½	3	1733	1983
John Peoples			½			0	1	1½	4	1377	1283
Ed Knox				½	0		1	1½	3	1643	1643
Jamie Sutherland	0	0		1	1	1	½	3½	7	1621	1621
Alim Thobani		1						1	1	1384	1759
Chris Russell							0	0	1	1433	1058
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2½</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1½</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1665</b>	<b>1644</b>
<b>Sum of opponents' grades</b>	6770	6702	6808	6570	6807	6655	6385	6586	based on September grades – excludes defaulted games		
<b>Sum of New England grades</b>	7011	7067	7045	6496	6950	6882	7010	6655	* includes estimate		