

# THE MIDDLE GAME

Volume 1, Issue 13

November 2004

## **BUMPER BUNDLE**

What with the BCF AGM, MCCU Half Year Meeting, BCF Management Board meetings, and Congresses and County matches all in full swing there has been lot to pack into this edition of the Newsletter.

Many thanks to those who provided their Congress reports & results, please keep them coming in.

If anyone has any new items for inclusion please contact the editor –

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## **BCF AGM**

Birmingham 21st October

I had the delight (??) of attending my first AGM. This was preceded by a Management Board meeting that was mainly concerned with interviewing the candidates for the Junior Director post.

Gerry Walsh was acting in his capacity as our FIDE delegate so was unable to take the chair. The CEO Roy Heppinstall was asked to take the chair in his stead.

There was little comment on the minutes of the April Council meeting and none at all on those for the EGM. Chris Majer reminded those present of the reasons behind the grading list not appearing on the web and informed the meeting that the Information Commission had been consulted. The list will be published next year, with players able to opt out of their details appearing. Information to this effect will be widely distributed, and will fulfil legal requirements.

Proposed changes to the County rules relating to Appendix D claims were being held over until the outcome of the current FIDE rules review is known.

Both the President and the CEO drew attention to the importance of the proposal that the BCF become a Company Ltd by Guarantee in their reports. Roy in particular highlighting that most broadly similar organisations had gone down this route. They also thanked the outgoing Congress and Junior Directors for their work. The CEO also mentioned that Bruce Holland had been unable to fill the role of ICT & Membership due to ill health, and David Levens was not seeking re-election to the Marketing post. Roy

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- + County Team Results supplement

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

12 Dec - [10th Bury Rapidplay](#),  
Elizabethan Suite, Bury Town Hall.  
Bernard Sharples, 7 Euxton Close, Bury, Lancs BL8  
2HY (Tel: 0161 764 6353, Email: [chess@pcfp.co.uk](mailto:chess@pcfp.co.uk))

12 Dec - [43rd Nuneaton Rapidplay](#),  
Etone Sports Centre, Leicester Road, Nuneaton.  
Roy Woodcock, 188 Coventry Road, Nuneaton CV10  
7AU (Tel: 024 7634 8097, Email:  
[CHESSROY@tinyworld.co.uk](mailto:CHESSROY@tinyworld.co.uk))

8-9 Jan - [5th Wrekin Congress](#),  
Madeley Court Sports Centre, Madeley, Telford,  
Shropshire.  
David Gostelow, 7 Field Park Lane, Kemberton,  
Shifnal, Shropshire TF1 9LR (Tel: 01952 587208)

5 Feb - [Midlands U18 Team Tournaments](#),  
St Peter & Paul School, Upper Church Street, Syston  
Cyril Johnson, 105 Central Avenue, Syston LE7 2EG  
(Tel: 0116 260 9012, Email:  
[bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk))

\* 6 Feb - [Stockport Rapidplay](#),  
The Guildhall, Wellington Road South, Stockport  
P Taylor, 10 Lodge Farm Close, Bramhall, Stockport  
SK7 3BZ (Tel: 0161 440 0733, Email:  
[bee@bramhall2000.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:bee@bramhall2000.freereserve.co.uk))

11-13 Feb - [Bentley Motors Crewe Congress](#),  
Bentley Motors Works Restaurant, Pym's Lane, Crewe  
Jim McPhillips, 7 Barnfield, Tattenhall, Chester CH3  
9HE (Tel: 01829 770762, Email:  
[j.mcphillips@btinternet.com](mailto:j.mcphillips@btinternet.com))

### REVIVED EVENT

W/E 19-20 Feb - Warwickshire [Open](#),  
Warley Quinborne  
More details will be circulated when available.

IF YOU ARE ORGANISING AN EVENT PLEASE LET ME  
HAVE THE WHAT, WHERE, WHEN & CONTACT DETAILS.  
THESE WILL BE INCLUDED FOC IN THE NEWSLETTER.

IF YOU HAVE AN ENTRY FORM IN A FORMAT THAT CAN  
GO OUT BY EMAIL I WILL GLADLY CIRCULATE THIS  
THROUGH THE MCCU EMAIL GROUP.

WANT TO REMIND PEOPLE ABOUT YOUR EVENT? I  
CAN DO THAT TOO THROUGH THE EMAIL GROUP

Contact details are given on page 1 of this issue.

*Continued from page 1*

expressed concern that the Marketing post had no nominee. The office lease is up for renewal in May 2005, but negotiations have been complicated by the deaths of the landlords.

The main accounts were adopted and the subsidiary accounts for the Chess Centre & Youth Chess Trust noted, with little comment. Robert Richmond was thanked for his work as Finance Director. The Chairman of the Finance Committee endorsed the change of accounting policies, which essentially mean that events started in the 2003/4 year, but finishing after the year end e.g. County Championships, have been included, whereas they have previously been carried forward to the next year. As a result the 2003/4 accounts show a worse loss than under the previous approach.

Neil Graham the outgoing Congress Director was not present at the meeting to receive the hearty thanks of all those present for his sterling work of the past 7 years. His report stressed his feelings that the Grand Prix was an important element in the BCFs' work and urgent attention should be given to the search for outside sponsorship to allow this to continue.

On the Home Chess front, Cyril Johnson highlighted the implementation of the Code of Conduct covering chess for the disabled, and his proposal on the agenda to create an organisation to assist those with impairments not covered for by the excellent work of the Braille & Deaf Chess Associations. Plans are also well advanced for a National Individual Knockout Tournament.

Discussions are underway regarding tests for the new post of chess referee, and early discussions have taken place on the creation of the title of BCF Chess Organiser.

The National Club and County Championship events ran smoothly and Hinckley proved to be a good new venue for the County Finals. An issue was raised regarding the Chiltern League, a county competition in that geographical area. Concern was expressed that the existing rules did not allow qualification from this to the BCF National County stage. However, the SCCU representatives indicated that they had offered a possible avenue, but had not received any response. The Home Chess Director also pointed out that this

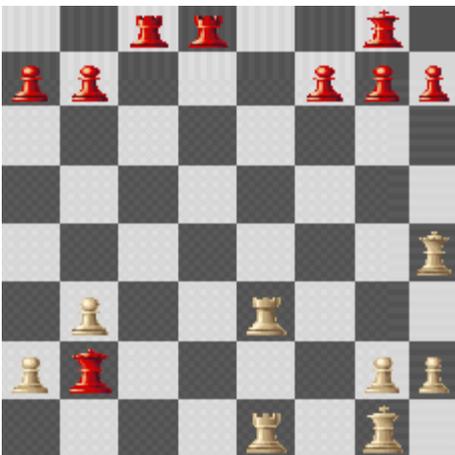
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**POSITIONAL PROBLEM PAGE**

1) Black to play and win in 2 moves.



2) White to play and win in 3 moves.



3) White to play and win in 3 moves.



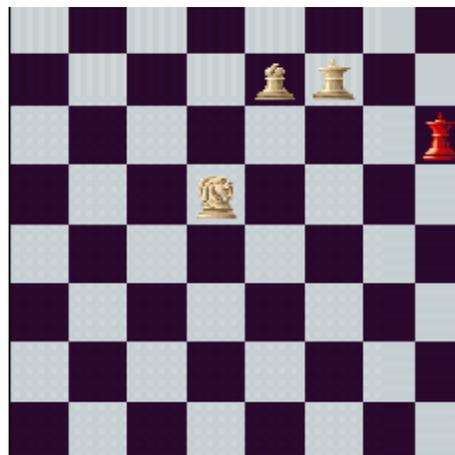
4) White to play and win in 2 moves.



5) White to play and win in 3 moves.



6) White to play and win in 5 moves.



*Solutions on page 12*

*Continued from page 2 col2*

was the first time the matter had been raised to him, and he would be quite willing to facilitate a motion at the Finance Council meeting.

Peter Turner gave his last report as Junior Director. A record number of juniors had achieved international honours, with each age group represented and teams appearing in all major Junior International events. The Certificate of Excellence continues to progress and has become an important element in the "Chess in Schools Project" which is a new initiative developed with co-operation from the Dept of Education. A junior team has been organised competing in the 4NCL. The year finished well with wins in the Glorney & Faber Cups and the EU Under 12 Girls title secured by an English player.

Peter was thanked for his sterling work over the years and the meeting also recognised the significant contribution made by his wife as an unofficial PA.

The Strategic Planning & Grading report drew attention to the prompt publication of grading printouts for Direct Members and the small number of corrections to the 2004 list. This was achieved by advance checks being carried out, which resulted in a number of corrections being incorporated into the published list. Responsibility for FIDE ratings has been transferred from the International Directorate, Howard Grist has been appointed as the new officer for this area.

Chris Majer proposed that the Strategic Planning documentation be made available as a download from the BCF website, rather than circulated in paper format, but with a paper copy available on request. There were a few vociferous dissenters to this suggestion, who felt it was unreasonable to expect Council representatives to print off reports and bring them to meetings. Whilst others felt that this could be extended to BCF reports in general. Your Editor was moved to express incredulity at the suggestion that delegates were generally either unwillingly or unable to download, print and bring reports, and to draw attention to the potential financial savings. Chris Majer responded to the reply that the costs would simply be moved to the delegate rather than saved, by pointing out that the costs of the BCF office circulating reports has to be paid for by delegates anyway, as part of game fee. (It doesn't take a mathematical genius to work out that it costs rather more for the BCF Office to print, copy and post

reports than it would for a delegate to simply download and print)

Matthew Turner was unable to attend but submitted a written report for Coaching. He highlighted the positive impact of the Certificate of Excellence and increasing numbers entering the scheme. The Chess in Schools Project was also hailed as a major initiative, along with the development of documents such as the 'Code of Conduct for Organisers' and 'Child Protection' providing useful advice and guidelines.

His report produced a significant talking point as he strongly advised that the BCF, in its capacity as an umbrella organisation for CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) clearance, make an administrative charge to those who go through clearance. He underlined that processing applications will entail significant amounts of work, with the clear inference that the BCF could not absorb these costs. In addition Peter Turner explained that whilst CRB do not make a charge for processing the application for a volunteer, they currently charge £33 for others. There is considerable doubt about whom or what qualifies as a volunteer. (It seems likely that a chess coach charging fees probably wouldn't qualify as a volunteer). The matter was referred to the MB for consideration, but a straw poll indicated that Matthews suggested fee of £15-20 was regarded as reasonable.

Claire Summerscale presented a positive report on Women's Chess. A specific website [www.chessuk.com](http://www.chessuk.com) was now well established and provides a valuable vehicle for information on women's chess & contacting the Director. A new national championship the "All England Girls Championship" has been established in conjunction with the English Counties Girls' Chess Federation.

England Ladies secured 10<sup>th</sup> place in the European Team Championships and were well represented in the European Individual Women's Championship. The British Championships were a very successful event for female players and Sheila Dines went on to win the European U12 title.

There was some consternation that there was no report from the Marketing Director.

The ill health of the Director had led to aspects of the IT and Membership Directorate being moved to other Directorates. The meeting voted to wish Bruce Holland a full recovery.

The International Director was out of the country at the World Team Championships. He thanked Peter Wells for his assistance and Allan Beardsworth for his work in seeking and securing sponsorship, along with help from Brian Smith. The team performed above its seeding of 23<sup>rd</sup> to finish 17<sup>th</sup> in the European Team event of 2003. A number of Internationally rated events have been supported as these give opportunities for players to gain titles and ratings.

The highlight of the year has been the performance of Michael Adams in the FIDE World Championship Knockout. To reach the final from a starting field of 132 was marvellous. To lose in Rapidplay playoffs after a 3-3 draw was unlucky.

The MB proposal “ That Council believes in principal that the BCF should become a Company Limited by Guarantee, and instructs the Management Board to prepare a detailed proposal for discussion and approval at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose and to be held before the end of February 2005” was discussed.

David Anderton gave an excellent summary of the issues relating to a change to Ltd company status.

- Whilst the current set up has survived for 100 years without any litigation issues, levels of litigation in society are on the increase.
- There is a possibility that chess will become involved with drugs testing, this would increase the risk of litigation.
- Under the current structure, depending on whether the MB or Council made a particular decision, those involved were in danger of being personally liable in litigation cases.
- BCF Officials make more of the decisions thus their potential risk is greatest. However indemnity insurance might be available and the BCF does have substantial assets.
- There would be problems translating the existing structure into a Ltd company, but it could be done.

It was felt that insurance cover had not been explored however, a delegate with some specialist knowledge of insurance felt that cover would prove expensive.

A range of views were expressed, from those who were completely against the idea, those who wanted to move things along at a much slower pace, to those who wanted to progress in line with the proposal.

There were those who wanted to take the opportunity to change the structure and viewed a change to Ltd status as the ideal opportunity to do this; others feared Ltd Co status would mean democracy would be destroyed. Eventually an amended motion inserting the principal that the existing structure be replicated found majority approval.

A document setting out the responsibilities of the various BCF Officers had been produced. Some minor amendments were proposed to take account of the move of international ratings to the Grading Directorate since it had been produced. Other than this the report was adopted without comment.

Elections saw the quite rare situation of competition for a post, even more rare, a 3 way contest. Existing Directors, other than those who had already announced they would not stand, were all re-elected. David Welch was accepted as the new Congress Director. Pauline Foster, Scott Kenyon & Alan Ruffle all presented themselves for the Junior Director post with Alan securing the most votes. The only change to other posts was that Paul Buswell felt that he would not be able to commit himself to the work involved with Ltd Company issues and the Constitution. He was thanked for his work as Chairman of the Constitution Committee. An existing committee member of several years, John Dunleavy, agreed to be nominated as Chairman and was duly elected.

The matter of a change of name was on the agenda. The MB proposed that Council adopted the report of the working party on this issue, also that an EGM be called by the end February 2005 to decide on the new name, date of change and make the necessary constitutional changes associated with this.

The meeting agreed and felt that soundings must be taken at grass roots level. Bill O'Rourke reported that the NCCU had already voted in favour of English Chess Federation.

The proposal of the Home Chess Director that the BCF create an organisation called “Chess for All” to encourage and support those with disabilities not covered by the Braille and Deaf Chess Associations was endorsed.

The Long Term Strategic Plan was adopted with the addition of aims to explore charitable status, a possibility which had been mentioned earlier in the meeting, due to possible changes in the criteria for

such status.

Dates and locations for 2005 Council Meetings were discussed; exact dates were left to the MB to fix. The EGM will be held in Birmingham, the Finance meeting in the North and the AGM in the South.

## MCCU Half-Year Meeting

Barn Social Club Witton 20<sup>th</sup> November

I am sad to say that the meeting was once again poorly attended. The MCCU tries to be a democratic organisation, but if counties do not attend and do not contribute any views, they can hardly complain if they do not like the decisions made by the few who do take the time to turn up. Is it really too much to ask that each county make a better attempt to ensure that at least 1 person attends?

The meeting was sorry to hear that the President Roy Woodcock was unable to attend due to ill health; we send him our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

The CEO was delighted to report on creditable performances by Midlands youngsters at the World Youth Championships. Attempts to set up a comprehensive MCCU events diary have been thwarted by a lack of response in some quarters. There has also been a lack of positive response to expansion of MCCU events. The first event, an MCCU Club Rapidplay Handicap (announced in the previous Newsletter) created interest but a lack of firm entries. If more firm entries were not forthcoming in the next few days the event would not go ahead. A Midland Individual Rapidplay was also being considered for 2005.

Early attempts were being made to set up an MCCU congress entrant database for use by Midlands organisers, on the understanding that they would feed in new data in exchange for access to the existing details. Regret was expressed by delegates to the news that no response had been received so far to an approach made to the holder of an existing database. Some delegates felt that any database should only be made available to congress organisers whose events are committed to Game Fee. The project is only in its early stages, so no firm decisions were required at this point. Other congress organisers will be contacted on the matter in due course.

The CEO noted that there appeared to be no fully amended MCCU constitution in existence, a situation she hoped to put right, provided the relevant papers could be located. It may then be an opportune time to carry out a review.

Lee Collier has found family illness and bereavements taking up a great deal of his time and felt he must tender his resignation as MCCU Secretary. Everyone was sorry that Lee was unable to continue and expressed thanks for the work he has done over the last few years. The hope was expressed that this situation will change and that he might be able to become involved with MCCU matters again in the future.

A number of other matters alluded to by the CEO in her report were the subject of agenda items.

As reported in the previous Newsletter the EACU had suggested an inter-Union match. This had led the CEO to consider the idea of holding an inter-Union event involving all 5 Unions. These 2 matters were discussed in tandem. The head to head match had been proposed by the EACU as a 50 a side, with 10 from each of the existing county team grading bands. The other Unions had been sounded out and were all in favour of an Inter Union event. The initial idea being a jamboree of 40 a side, with 8 from each grading band. The meeting agreed that both of these be taken forward, funded by "board fees" from the players taking part.

Another area mentioned in the last Newsletter was Child Protection Policy. As far as I am aware we are fortunate enough not to have had any issues around child abuse covering MCCU events, but it would be foolish to presume that "it will never happen to us". However we view it, Child Protection is an issue. Any organisation that has events for children, or in which children participate, is putting itself at risk, if it is not seen to be providing clear messages regarding what is and is not acceptable, and how breaches and alleged breaches are to be dealt with. At the very least the risk is of criticism, at the very worst litigation. Whilst much of what has gone into Child Protection policy already developed by other organisations, might be regarded as common sense by most people, it is important to remember that not everyone possesses the same level of common sense. Whether we like it or not, society in general is more likely to go down the litigation route than in the past.

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There is however another side to this issue. If parents are aware that an organisation has no Child Protection policy, the cautious ones may not be prepared to allow their offspring to participate. The existence of a policy is of course no guarantee that nothing untoward will happen, but it does give some confidence that people have clear guidelines, and that if anything does arise, there are guidelines concerning how it will be addressed.

As an organisation we also need to decide how to make use of the CRB clearance facilities available through the BCF. What parameters do we wish to set for who needs clearance and at what level?

The meeting agreed that CEO, Junior and Events Directors prepare a policy document for the AGM.

The Finance Director produced a report including a statement of figures year to date against budget.

Concern was raised that, having indicated at the AGM that arrangements for insurance had been forgotten for 2003/4, the 2004/5 YTD figures showed no insurance payment. It was agreed that it was important that events operated by the MCCU do have insurance cover in case any unfortunate accidents arise. The Finance Director indicated that he did not feel it was his responsibility to complete the relevant forms. The level of public liability cover was discussed and £1million agreed. The CEO & Events Director undertook to liaise with the BCF Office regarding the necessary arrangements.

The Junior Director drew attention to the MCCU U18 team event to be held at Syston on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2005 and the MCCU Individual Junior Championships also at Syston on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2005. He also announced that the new BCF Junior Director Alan Ruffle is looking to hold a National One Day Junior Rapidplay in the Midlands next year. He reiterated the successes of Midlands schools and individuals in the BCF Schools event and at the British Championships, already reported in earlier Newsletters.

The Events Director reported that the P C Gibbs Individual Correspondence event will start in the New Year with a new controller. He echoed the CEOs comments about the new events and announced that the Midlands Open for 2005 is likely to be at Hinckley again. He also commended the BCF Code of Conduct relating to players with disabilities to organisers. A number of delegates were unaware of this document.

(If you are a chess organiser and have not seen this Code a copy can readily be supplied, just contact either Cyril or Julie Johnson)

Neil Beasley presented 2 reports. The first as Counties Controller expressed concern about the withdrawal of 2 Nottingham teams. He is unhappy because he feels that the 4NCL competition seems to be taking over from County matches in the higher echelons of chess. It seems to him that the competition has been extended without giving any due consideration to Inter-County events or the dates on which the Unions schedule their county matches. He hopes that a full schedule of the 4NCL events will be made available before he fixes the MCCU dates for next season, and that he is informed of the teams playing in this event and hence which counties are most affected.

A questionnaire went out to Open team captains re a format with two sections, Championship and Minor, with promotion and relegation (as requested by the AGM) It has to date only produced answers from three of the Minor teams and Warwicks all of whom are in favour of the new format . A reminder has gone to captains on this question. (*Captains who have not responded to date are urged to do so*)

Nottingham delegates confirmed they were experiencing problems raising county teams. Their players seem to fall into 2 categories, those who do not play chess at weekends and those who play congress &/or 4NCL chess at weekends.

Discussion ensued on what the problems were, with no clear conclusions drawn. Jamboree events were favoured by some delegates, but were disliked by others.

The following proposals were made –

As an experiment for 2005/6 the U175 County team event be run as a jamboree using a central venue.

The deadline for entries to the County team competition be fixed as 30<sup>th</sup> July with fixtures to be circulated by 30<sup>th</sup> August.

It was agreed that team entry fees are not refundable in the event of a team withdrawing, but the game fee for any unplayed games will be remitted as a credit on the following seasons' invoice.

Each of these proposals had a majority in favour.

The possible reduction of the numbers in a team from 16 to 12 was also aired. Some delegates felt that the number in the MCCU event should mirror the BCF National stages. It was pointed out that the MCCU could make proposals to the BCF on this matter.

It was proposed that the BCF be asked to consider a reduction from 16 to 12 a side in the U175 section, 150-174 being the grading band with the fewest players nationwide.

Neil's second report was as Webmaster. He thanked all those who supply information for inclusion. The site statistics show that hits averaged 630 per month for the past year and peaked at 815 for October 2004. The total disk space available is 35 Mb and at present only 9.5 Mb is being used so we have plenty of capacity for future information. The matter of whether to renew current domain and web hosting arrangements was on the agenda. Neil indicated that he was quite content with current arrangements and the meeting saw no need to disturb these.

The various BCF reports in the Newsletters were reproduced for the meeting. The CEO indicated that when proposals had been received from the BCF Management Board she intended to consult widely and hold an MCCU Board meeting to discuss mandating for the BCF EGM.

The old Warley Quinborne event is to be revived in February 2005. The Warwickshire organisers had made approaches concerning a BCF qualifying place for the event. (which it had in the past). The meeting agreed that the BCF Congress Director be asked if a place could be awarded to the event, if this was unsuccessful one of the 2 places currently with the Midland Open would be diverted.

David Pardoe of Manchester had submitted some written information including the following –

*“The MCF is in the process of clarifying `Gtr Manchester` and its boundaries, and associated matters, including club affiliation. I think the general thrust is that clubs should register/affiliate with their `local` county association. I raise this for information, and also because it is an issue that perhaps the MCCU should discuss and canvass views in the wider sense.”*

There appears to be a good deal of confusion concerning the boundaries in the Manchester area. It doesn't help when one sees addresses for clubs and organisers with Lancs in them, which MCF indicate are within the Greater Manchester area.

The meeting felt that the matter of county affiliation was not something the MCCU should take any unilateral stance upon. It was regarded as a National matter. It was also commented that the situation in the Manchester area is by no means completely unique. There are other parts of the country where clubs are affiliated to more than one county, or to the county in which they principally play their chess, rather than the one in which they are geographically situated

It was agreed that the AGM will be held at the Barn Social club if possible, with next year's half year meeting & AGM at Syston. The date of the AGM will be fixed once other calendar dates have become clearer.

## **DARWIN SHOPPING CENTRE CHESS FESTIVAL**

This was the second year of the event, and proved very popular with the general public.

The shopping centre stage community based events and some of these are the result of a local artist Jacqueline Leech.

Following on from a visit to St. Petersburg, where she saw chess being played in the street, she conceived and created a large chess set, the major pieces standing some five feet tall. I was invited to recruit players from the Shropshire league to play games, using two way radios, and communicating the moves from a balcony above the board to a person on the board who would move the piece. As well as this there were tables set up for social chess and various tournaments.

This year we started the event with a match between Shrewsbury and West Shropshire against Telford and East Shropshire. A not to serious event which the latter won by one point and a large shield presented by the shopping centre management.

*See next page for photograph*



Later in the week the Shropshire under125 team, who recently won the national title, took on youngsters under the match of the generations and Shropshire won 31-5. During the whole week 47 games were played that qualified under this title.



The real winner was chess with approx 20 possible new members and lots of youngsters playing social chess.

It may seem a strange venue to play chess, but we feel this is bringing chess to the people, helping to lift any mystic about the game, and from feedback received from the centre staff the one event where the public do get involved.

Next years event has been fixed for 17-24 Sept with hopefully a one day event in the summer in The Square, Shrewsbury publishing the Sept event.

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## WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONS

The spotlight turns on Alekhine for the next in the series.



Alexander Alexanderovich Alekhine was born on October 31, 1892 (Halloween) in Moscow. His father was a wealthy landowner, a Marshall of the Nobility and the member of the Duma. His mother was an heiress of an industrial fortune. His older brother, Alexei, played chess and was able to draw with Pillsbury when he gave a simultaneous blindfold display in Moscow over 22 boards. Until World War I, he spelt his last name Aljechin.

Alexander learned chess from his brother and mother around 1903 & by 1904 he was playing correspondence chess.

At age the 16 of he entered the Imperial High School for Law in Moscow and was exposed to more chess. He played a match with Benjamin Blumenfeld, a Russian master in 1908, and won with 7 wins and 3 losses. In February, 1909 Alekhine travelled to Saint Petersburg and won a tournament that gained him the Russian master title.

In July, 1910 Alekhine participated in the 17th German Congress in Hamburg and ended up in 7th place (Carl Schlechter took 1st place). In the following year Alekhine defeated Stepan Levitzky, a Russian master, in a match, scoring 7 wins and 3 losses. The Carlsbad 1911 tournament saw Alekhine finish in 8th place.

In 1914, at the age of 22, he won his first major tournament when he tied for first place with Aron Nimzovich in St. Petersburg. A few months later another major tournament was held in St. Petersburg in which he took third place behind Emanuel Lasker and Jose Capablanca. Czar Nicholas II conferred the title "Grandmaster of Chess" to Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine, Tarrasch, and Marshall after they took the top five places at St. Petersburg.

In July-August of 1914 Alekhine was leading an international chess tournament, the 19th German Chess Federation Congress in Mannheim, Germany with 9 wins, 1 draw and 1 loss when World War I broke out. He was taken to Rastatt, Germany as a prisoner of war. He feigned madness and the Germans released him as unfit for military service in September, 1914.

Alekhine made his way back to Russia where he served in the Red Cross on the Austrian front. In 1915 he was wounded and captured by the Austrians. He had suffered a contusion of the spine and was hospitalized at Tarnapol where he developed his blindfold chess skills. After the war the Russians decorated him for bravery.

At the end of the war he finished his legal training and worked at the Moscow Criminal Investigation Department as a magistrate. In 1919 he travelled to Odessa and was briefly imprisoned in their death cell suspected of being a spy.

Alekhine returned to Moscow in 1920 and married a Russian baroness several years older than he. He had already fathered an illegitimate daughter in 1913. Alekhine started working in a film studio intending to be an actor. He was still an active chess player however and in October won the first USSR chess championship in Moscow.

In 1921 he drew a match against Richard Teichmann with two wins, two draws, and two losses. He then took first place at Triberg, Budapest, and The Hague. In same year Alekhine joined the Communist Party and became a translator for the Communist International and the secretary of the Communist Education Department. He then left his wife and the Soviet Union and settled in Paris where he married a Swiss Comintern delegate, Anneliese Ruegg. A few months later he abandoned his older second wife and went to Berlin. He won three straight tournaments in Triberg, Budapest, and The Hague. In Budapest he popularized what is now called the Alekhine's defence.

1922 saw him take second in London, behind Capablanca, and first at Hastings. The following year

he tied for first place at Carlsbad with Bogoljubov and Maroczy. In the next 2 years he took 3rd place in New York, behind Lasker and Capablanca and won a tournament in Baden-Baden (the first international tournament in Germany since World War I). Alekhine became a naturalized French citizen in 1925, entered the Sorbonne Law School, and wrote his thesis on the Chinese prison system. He did not receive his PhD or law degree as he only completed two of the four stages required. In the same year Alekhine broke the world blindfold record by playing 28 games blindfold simultaneously, winning 22, drawing 3 and losing 3. He then took first place at Baden-Baden with 12 wins and 8 draws.

In 1926-7 Alekhine beat Max Euwe in a match with 3 wins, 5 draws, and 2 losses.

He took second place, behind Capablanca, in New York, with 5 wins, 13 draws, and 2 losses then won at Kecskemet 1927. He was now ready to meet Capablanca for the world championship after putting up \$10,000 in gold. Jose Capablanca accepted the challenge and began their world championship match in Buenos Aires on September 16, 1927. By November 29, 1927 Alekhine beat Capablanca with 6 wins, 25 draws, and 3 losses. The only time-out was when Alekhine had 6 teeth extracted during the match. Alekhine became the 4th official world champion of chess after Steinitz, Lasker, and Capablanca. All the games in Buenos Aires took place behind closed doors. There were no spectators or photographs.

In that same year he married for the third time to another person much older than him, Nadezda Vasiliev. She was the widow of a high-ranking Russian officer.

Alekhine avoided Capablanca's challenge of a re-match and took on Bogoljubov at Weisbaden in September, 1929. Alekhine won with 11 wins, 9 draws, and 5 losses. He avoided Capablanca by insisting that the winner receive \$10,000 in gold, but this was around the time of the stock market crash, and there were no backers.

At the 1930 Chess Olympiad he scored his first 100% score when he won all 9 games as board one for France. It was the start of a marvellous winning streak covering 1929 to 1932; Alekhine took first place at San Remo (performance rating of 2812), Bled, London, and Pasadena. During this time he was also involved with large simultaneous exhibitions. He played up to 300 opponents simultaneously at various venues as far apart as Paris, New York and Shanghai. In 1933 he played 32 people blindfold simultaneously in Chicago, winning 19, drawing 9, and losing 4 games.

He was made an honorary Colonel in the Mexican army and appointed as chess instructor for the Mexican army.

In 1934 Alekhine married for the 4th time to a lady 16 years older than he, Grace Wishart. She was the widow of an Englishman and retained her British nationality. He had met her at a minor chess tournament which she had won. Her prize was one of Alekhine's books. She asked him to sign the book and their relationship developed from that moment. That same year Alekhine defeated Bogoljubov for the world championship in Baden-Baden with the score of 8 wins, 15 draws and 3 losses. He then accepted a challenge from Max Euwe.

On October 3, 1935 the world championship match between Alekhine and Euwe began in Zandvort for \$10,000 to the winner. On December 15, 1935 Euwe had won with 9 wins, 13 draws, and 8 losses. This was the first world championship match to officially have seconds. Alekhine's loss was reported in some quarters to be attributable to his liking for alcohol and the fact that he was frequently in a drunken state during play.

In 1936 Alekhine played in Nottingham which was won by Capablanca and Botvinnik. Alekhine took 6th place. His game with Capablanca was the first time they had met since the world championship match in 1927.

Alekhine asked for a World Championship rematch and in 1937 retook the title from Euwe in Holland with 10 wins, 11 draws and 4 losses. In contrast to the previous match he was reported to have forsaken alcohol.

In 1938 a tournament sponsored by AVRO (Algemene Verenigde Radio Omroep), a wireless company, was held in the Netherlands to determine the next world champion challenger. The eight strongest players in the world were invited to play. Estonian, Paul Keres and American, Ruben Fine were the joint winners. Mikhail Botvinnik came third. In fourth place were Alekhine and Euwe and Capablanca who had suffered a minor stroke during the tournament came seventh. However, Botvinnik had the backing of Russia and as a result he could offer greater financial rewards to Alekhine. Hence Alekhine accepted Botvinnik's challenge for the world champion. Flohr, the official challenger to Alekhine in the next world championship match came in last place without a single win in 14 rounds. However, World War II interrupted arrangements, which were not resumed until the war had ended.

Alekhine was competing for France on board 1 at the Chess Olympiad in Buenos Aires when World War II broke out. As team captain of the French team, he refused to allow his team to play Germany. He returned to France to enlist in the army and became an interpreter. When France was over-run he tried to go to America by travelling to Lisbon and applying for an American visa. To protect his wife and their French assets, it is alleged he agreed to cooperate with the Nazis. He wrote articles critical of Jewish chess players and participated in Nazi run chess tournaments in Munich, Salzburg, Warsaw, and Prague. By 1943 Alekhine was spending all his time in Spain and Portugal as the German representative to chess events. After World War II chess tournaments shunned him because of his alleged Nazi affiliations.

In 1946 he was about to accept a match title with Botvinnik. On the evening of March 23 or early March 24, 1946 Alekhine died in his hotel room in Estoril, Portugal. Some say he died of a heart attack. Others say he choked on an unchewed piece of meat. The body was not buried for three weeks as no one claimed the body. Finally, the Portuguese Chess Federation took charge of the funeral, which was attended by less than a dozen people.

In 1947 the FIDE Congress voted for Euwe to be the world champion since Alekhine died. However, the Soviet delegation was late for this vote. The next day, after protest from the Soviet delegation, the title was rescinded in favour of a match-tournament which Botvinnik won.

In 1956 the USSR and French Chess Federation agreed to transfer his remains to the cemetery in Montparnasse, Paris. FIDE provided the tombstone. It is in the shape of a chess board made out of red granite and there is a bust of him made out of marble. The birth and death date on Alekhine's tombstone is wrong. The tombstone reads:

ALEXANDER ALEKHINE  
1ST NOVEMBER, 1892  
25TH MARCH, 1946  
CHESS WORLD CHAMPION  
1927-35-37 TO THE END.

In world championship play, Alekhine won 43 games, drew 73 games, and lost 24 games for a total of 140 games, with a 56.8% win ratio. He was world champion for 17 years, playing in 5 world championship matches. He played over 1000 tournament games, scoring 73 percent in his games. His historical ELO rating has been calculated to be 2690.

Alekhine was a well-rounded player, combining technical skills with wonderful tactical vision. His technical skills were so well honed that when he took the World Championship from Capablanca in 1927 it was using Capablanca's own weapon - solid and technical positional play. Alekhine made his own unique contribution to chess. He decided it wasn't necessary to occupy the centre to control it. He postulated that pawns in the centre were vulnerable to attack, and thus to become cancerous weaknesses. Alekhine defence, made use of such principles and has earned him a place in chess history as one of the few players with his name attributed to an opening.

Here are some examples of Alekhine in action -

Event - Hastings

Date - 1926

White - Sergeant Edward"

Black - Alekhine Alexander

1. e4 Nf6 2. e5 Nd5 3. Bc4 Nb6 4. Bb3 c5 5. d3 Nc6 6. Nf3 e6 7. Nc3 d5 8. exd6 Bxd6 9. Ne4 Be7 10. c3 O-O 11. Be3 Nd5 12. Bxc5 Nf4 13. O-O Bxc5 14. Nxc5 b6 15. Ne4 Nxd3 16. Qc2 Nf4 17. Rfd1 Qc7 18. Nd6 Ng6 19. Nxc8 Raxc8 20. Qe4 Na5 21. Ba4 Qb8 22. Bb5 Nb7 23. Rd2 Nd6 24. Qb4 Nxb5 25. Qxb5 e5 26. Rad1 e4 27. Ng5 ( Nd4 would have been a level game) Rc5 0-1



Position just before black's final move.

"Alekhine is a poet who creates a work of art out of something that would hardly inspire another man to send home a picture post card"

(Max Euwe)

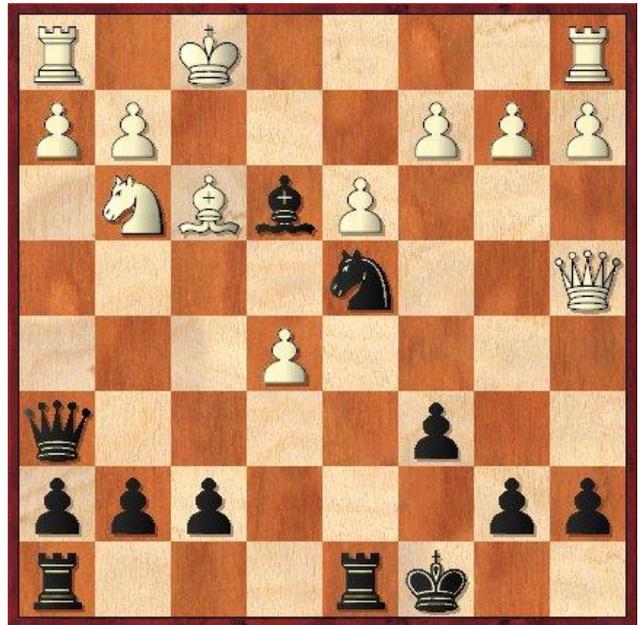
Event - New York

Date - 1924

White - Maroczy Geza

Black - Alekhine Alexander

1. e4 Nf6 2. d3 e5 3. f4 Nc6 4. Nf3 d5 5. exd5 Nxd5 6. fxe5 Bg4 7. Be2 Bxf3 8. Bxf3 Qh4+ 9. Kf1 O-O-O 10. Nc3 Bc5 11. Ne4 Ne3+ 12. Bxe3 Bxe3 13. Qe1 Qh6 14. Ng3 Nd4 15. Qb4 c6 16. Qa4 {c3 would have been stronger}



16 .....Kb8 17. Rd1 Rhe8 18. h4 Qf4 19. Rh3 b5 20. Nh5 bxa4 21. Nxf4 Bxf4 22. c3 Nxf3 23. Rxf3 Bxe5 24. Rxf7 Rf8 0-1

"Oh! this opponent, this collaborator against his will, whose notion of Beauty always differs from yours and whose means (strength, imagination, technique) are often too limited to help you effectively! What torment, to have your thinking and your fantasy tied down by another person!' (Alekhine)

#### POSITIONAL PROBLEM SOLUTIONS

No. 1) 1. Nd3+ Kf1 2. Qxf2++

No. 2) 1. Qxd8+ Rxd8 2. Re8+ Rxe8+ 3. Rxe8++

No. 3) 1. Bh8 Nd4/Ne5 2. Qxd4/Qxe5 Bxd5/any other move

3. Qg7++

No. 4) 1. Rh5+ gxh5 2. Qf6++

No. 5) 1. Qxf6 exf6 (if Kg8 then Nh6++) 2. Bxf6+ Kg8

3. Nh6++

No. 6) 1. Nf4 Kh7 2. Bg5 Kh8 3. Ng6+ Kh7 4. Nf8+ Kh8

## NOTTINGHAM 1936

On August 10, 1936 the Nottingham International Chess Tournament, one of the strongest tournaments ever held, began at Nottingham University in Nottingham, England. It was certainly the strongest chess tournament held up to that time. The event had the current world chess champion (Euwe), three past world champions (Lasker, Alekhine, and Capablanca) and a future world champion (Botvinnik). We could say it had two future world champions as Alekhine won the title back from Max Euwe a year later. Also included were the four top British players. Because the top British players were participating in this event, no British Chess Championship was held in 1936. The event also included the top two American players, Sam Reshevsky (US Champion) and Reuben Fine.

The tournament was organized by Alderman J. N. Derbyshire, President of the British Chess Federation. It was intended to mark the Jubilee of the Nottingham Tournament, held in August of 1886 (Counties Chess Association Congress). That event, held 50 years earlier, was won by Amos Burn (8 out of 9). 2nd place went to E. Schallop. 3rd-4th went to Gunsberg and Zukertort. 5th place went to Bird.

The tournament director was Rufus Henry Streatfeild Stevenson (1878-1943). He later married Vera Menchik, world women's champion, after his first wife died when she ran into an aircraft propeller blade. RHS Stevenson was the Secretary of the British Chess Federation.

Money for the tournament was raised by Derbyshire, RHS Stevenson, and Sir George Thomas.

The time limit was 36 moves in 2 hours. Reshevsky got into time trouble in almost every game. A FIDE rule was in effect at the time, that no game shall be agreed to a draw in less than 30 moves. This rule could not be enforced and was ignored in this tournament.

In round 1 the winners were Alekhine, Botvinnik, Euwe, Fine, and Bogoljubow.

In round 2, Capablanca and Alekhine met for the first time in 9 years. The game was won by Capablanca. Capablanca had three minor pieces to Alekhine's two rooks. Alekhine probably realized that he was lost, but did not want to resign at the board and in front of a large crowd. He pretended to forget that it was his sealed move when the first time control was over and made a move instead of sealing his next move in an envelope. Capablanca sealed the move instead. Later, Alekhine wrote a note to the tournament director and resigned. Capablanca became very angry that Alekhine "resigned by

letter" rather than play it out or inform Capablanca first. The two refused to talk to each other. In round 2 only Euwe had a perfect score of 2 wins.

In round 3 Botvinnik took the lead with 2.5 out of 3.

In round 4, Botvinnik remains in first place with 3.5 out of 4.

In round 5, Botvinnik and Euwe are tied for first place with 4 out of 5.

In round 6, Botvinnik and Euwe remain tied for first with 4.5 out of 6.

In round 7, Botvinnik and Euwe are still in first with 5 out of 7.

In round 8, it is still Botvinnik and Euwe, with 6 out of 8.

In round 9, Botvinnik takes the lead with 6.5 out of 9.

In round 10, Botvinnik has the bye and has been caught up. Botvinnik, Capablanca, Euwe, and Fine share first place with 6.5 out of 10.

In round 11, Botvinnik defeats Thomas and takes the sole lead with 7.5 out of 11.

In round 12, there is a 3-way tie with Botvinnik, Capablanca and Euwe with 8 out of 12.

In round 13, Botvinnik and Capablanca share the lead with 9 out of 13.

In round 14, Botvinnik and Capablanca remain the leaders with 9.5 out of 14.

In round 15, Botvinnik and Capablanca share 1st place with 10 out of 15.

The tournament ended August 28, 1936 with a two-way tie between Capablanca and Botvinnik (10 out of 14). 3rd through 5th place went to Euwe, Fine, and Reshevsky (9.5). Alekhine took 6th place (9). Lasker and Flohr tied for 7th-8th place (8.5). Vidmar took 9th place (6). 10th-11th place went to Bogoljubow and Tartakower (5.5). 12th place went to Tylor (4.5). Alexander took 13th place (3.5). Sir George Thomas took 14th place (3) and Winter took 15th place (2.5). Botvinnik and Fine were the only unbeaten players.

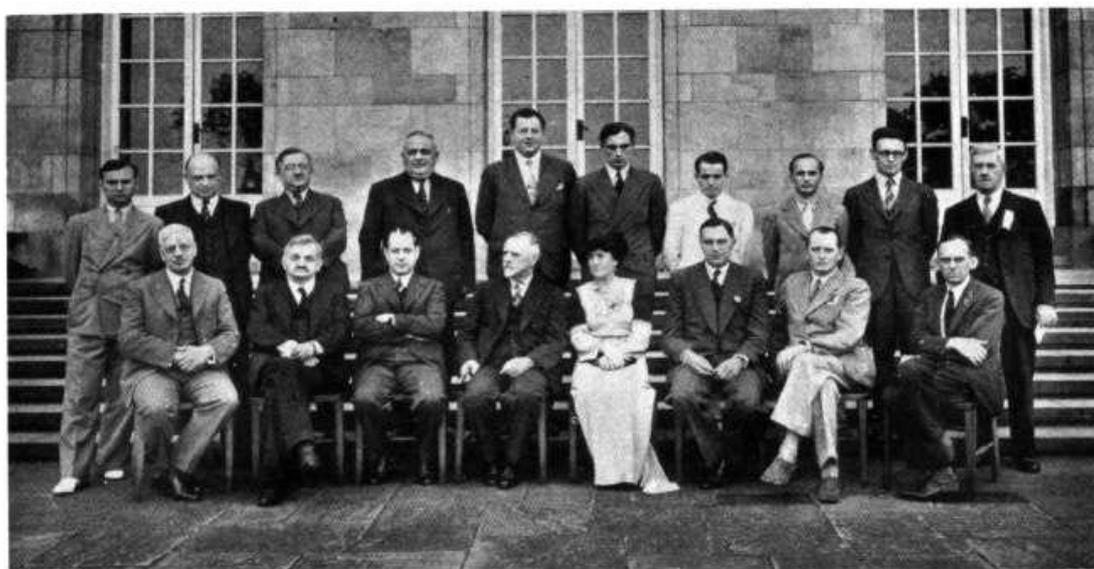
Although the British players took the last 4 places, the points they got from the leaders made a difference in the standings. Winter drew with Botvinnik in the last round, preventing

Botvinnik from taking sole 1st place. Tyler and Thomas both drew with Alekhine, preventing the former world champion from tying for first place. Winter drew with Reshevsky, preventing Reshevsky from tying for first place. Thomas drew with Fine, preventing Fine from tying for first place. Tylor and Alexander beat Flohr, preventing Flohr from taking first place. The four British players all drew with each other. The British players all lost their games against Capablanca, Euwe, Lasker, and Bogoljubow.

The prize money was 200 British pounds for 1st, 150 pounds for 2nd, 100 pounds for 3rd, and 75 pounds for 4th. In addition, 200 pounds was divided among the rest of the players in proportion to their score. 105 games were played

The tournament was probably the closest race in the history of top class tournaments. Only one point separated 1st place from 6th place. Only 1.5 points separated 1st place from 8th place. It was the last big victory of Capablanca; the first big victory of Botvinnik & was Lasker's final tournament.

THE 1936 NOTTINGHAM INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT.



Standing:—R. Fine, Dr. S. Tartakower, Dr. M. Vidmar, E. D. Bogoljuboff, T. H. Tylor, C. H. O'D, Alexander, S. Flohr, S. Reshevsky, M. Bottvinnik, A. J. Mackenzie.  
Seated:—Sir G. A. Thomas, Dr. E. Lasker, J. R. Capablanca, Ald. J. H. Derbyshire, Mrs. Derbyshire, Dr. M. Euwe, Dr. A. Alekhine, W. Winter.

*The Victoria Hotel had associations with the event*

*Nottingham University, perhaps not too far removed from '36*



*Victoria Station & Hotel, Nottingham*



## 50 YEARS AGO - - - -

My other half was looking through his collection of old CHESS magazines which date back to 1948 and my curiosity was piqued, looking at those for the later part of 1954 I came upon some interesting Midlands items -

Nottingham was on the chess map again. This time nationally rather than internationally, as the hosts for the British Championships. The title was shared, Leonard Barden and Alan Philips both scoring 8/11. The highest placed Midlands player was G F Harris of Stourbridge who came 6th, whilst P N Wallis of Leicester was 11<sup>th</sup>, followed by D G Horseman of Coventry in 12<sup>th</sup>. B H Wood of Sutton Coldfield took 16<sup>th</sup> spot and D F Griffiths of Birmingham 21<sup>st</sup>. Chess playing ladies might be surprised to note that in 19<sup>th</sup> place was Miss Sunnocks.

The Major Open section (now known as the Challengers) showed something of the international flavour that grew over the years. It was won by Dr. J A Seitz of Buenos Aires; with Dr L T Da Silva from Brazil finishing joint 4<sup>th</sup> along with Nottingham based K Whyld. D Saunderson of Chesterfield, P E Collier of Leicester, and F E Beadles of Nottingham finished 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> respectively. 2 Mansfield players came in 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> - D J S Waterhouse & L A E Chaplin.

50 years ago there were far fewer local congresses than now; the real expansion in numbers was still a few years away. The Holiday camp era, although it had been started in the mid 1930s, had been interrupted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, but the late 40's & early 50's saw the expansion in this field begin. The 2 combined at Skegness, when the first Butlins' site was used for the Skegness Chess Festival. 1954 was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the event, but the report in "Chess" indicates that it was the first time the Butlins' camp had been used. The combination appears to have been a great success, with lightening tournaments, kreigspiel & simuls for those who couldn't divert their attention away from the chessboard and plenty of other non-chess activities for those competitors who craved diversion.

The event attracted some international entries from France and South Africa. One has to wonder whether they were attracted by the £100 first prize, which was quite a significant amount, especially when compared to the British Championship top prize of £35. The winner was S Popel of Paris, D F Griffiths was 3<sup>rd</sup>. the 24 strong field included several other Midlands players J G Cockcroft of Bingley 7<sup>th</sup>; G Kaye of Coventry 14<sup>th</sup>; H F Joyson of Wolverhampton 15<sup>th</sup>; H Gosling of Whetstone 19<sup>th</sup>; & G R Maw of Hereford 20<sup>th</sup>.

## ALF LENTON 1910-2004

With Thanks to Cyril Johnson

In his book "Chess in Leicester 1860-1960", the late Don Gould described a young prospect, Alfred Lenton thus "he had left Alderman Newton's School only 6 years previously. He was a fine all-round player, with a particularly good grasp of positional play". This is an excellent description of one of the strongest chessplayers that Leicester has ever produced. He was also one of the oldest players ever to play competitive chess in England and possibly the oldest in the Midlands. He was still playing in the local Leicestershire League until illness prevented him from doing so a few months ago.

Alf, for so he was known to so many local chess players, was one of the strongest players never to win the British Championship. He played for England in challenge matches, but was never selected to play in the Olympiads.

The Midlands Individual title was his on many occasions, as was the Leicestershire Individual title. His first broke the stranglehold which V H Lovell had held on the latter event, and was followed by a tie for 2nd place in the British Championship in 1953. He was also a competitor in the Leicester International Tournament in 1961.

To many, he was the proprietor of a well known second hand book shop where any chess player could gain an education in the finer points of the game. The writer can speak from first hand knowledge of his willingness to show a defeated opponent the reasons for his demise. His encouragement of younger players was well known.

He was the strongest player Leicestershire produced until the advent of the young lions in the 1970s, and he will be long remembered and much missed.

(Alf would of course have remembered the 1936 Nottingham Tournament & the British Championships in 1954 - I wish I'd spoken to him and gained some first hand recollections from him before he passed away - Ed)

## LATE NEWS

### BCF MANAGEMENT BOARD

**BIRMINGHAM 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

The BCF Management board followed the MCCU to Birmingham University Guild of Students in the name of economy. It is perhaps in keeping with the attitude of many people that only 11 members of the board were in attendance, with several directors missing.

### CONGRESS DIRECTOR

David Welch presented his first paper, together with a budget. He had decided to use the 2003-2004 Grading List in allocating places in grading limited tournaments, but to tweak the juniors grading parameters to take this into account. The weekend congress would be reduced in size because of the potential lack of casual entrants. The controlling team would be much the same as in previous years. Savings would be made by using different means of production of some paperwork at the event. It was agreed that any franchise held by a third party in the name of the BCF must be subject to a signed written contract, which would be checked by David Anderton and a copy lodged in Battle.

### MEMBERSHIP

A wide ranging discussion took place. It was agreed that in future Standard members when renewing and new Standard members would be offered CHESS MOVES in electronic form only. It was also agreed that there would be two categories of member only, FULL and STANDARD, with the possibility of concessions for each category. It was agreed that membership would be required for BCF Arbiters, BCF accredited coaches, BCF National Coaches, and members of selection committees within 12 months. It was also agreed that new Senior Arbiters must either members of the BCF or members of another federation in good standing with FIDE.

## OTHER MATTERS

Papers were presented dealing with the lack of Standing Orders for the Management Board and for the relationship of Directors with the BCF. It was agreed that this should be addressed for the next meeting.

It was agreed to seek a new Marketing Director. An application had been received, and would be held pending other interest.

It was agreed that a charge be levied to cover the costs of CRB clearance work by the office.

### DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE MCCU MEETING

#### CLUB RAPIDPLAY HANDICAP

There have been too few entries to make this event viable. It has therefore been cancelled.

#### BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFYING PLACES

David Welch has decided that with the demise of Commonwealth entries to the British each Union will be allocated a further qualifying place. Thus the providing a ready solution to the Warwickshire request.

