



THE MIDDLE GAME

Volume 1, Issue 24

Sept/Oct 2006

MCCU GETS THE GO-AHEAD TO OPERATE THE ECF MEMBERSHIP SCHEME!

YOU CAN SIGN UP NOW!!!
SEE PAGE 14 FOR FURTHER DETAILS

FORTHCOMING ECF AGM

The ECF AGM promises to be an interesting event, with several of the posts up for election being contested. The norm over recent years has been for only 1 or 2 posts to have more than 1 candidate. As the list below shows, 2006 is a rather different story.

Candidate	Post
Gerry Walsh	President
Brian Driscoll	President *
Roy Heppinstall	Chief Executive
Martin Regan	Chief Executive *
Geoff Steele	Director of Finance
Robert Richmond	Director of Finance*
Sean Hewitt	Director of Home Chess
Peter Sowray	Director of International Chess *
Claire Summerscale	Director of Junior Chess & Education
Andrew Moore	Director of Junior Chess & Education
Peter Wilson	Director of Marketing
Cyril Johnson	Director of Marketing
Mike Truran	Non-Executive Director
John Wickham	Non-Executive Director
Gerry Walsh	FIDE Delegate
Nigel Short	FIDE Delegate *
Mike Adams	Chairman Finance Committee
Ray Clark	Finance Committee
Alan Martin	Finance Committee

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- + Bumper Events Supplement covering British Champs, EU Champs, UK Chess Challenge & local results

REMINDER TO DELEGATES (BOTH ECF & MCCU)

The ECF AGM is on 21st October, if you are a delegate who cannot attend please make sure you use your vote by appointing a proxy or sending in postal votes. I plan to attend & am happy to act as proxy and follow your voting instructions. Just email me - juliedjohnson@yahoo.com or call me on 0116 2609012 & complete your ECF attendance forms accordingly.

A BCF AGM is also scheduled for the same date – Yes, in case you had forgotten, the BCF does still exist and its' AGM is scheduled immediately before the ECF equivalent.

The main item on the agenda, apart from the usual past minutes & financial reports, is an update on John Robinson's estate.

The MCCU Half-Year meeting is on 19th November at Erdington Conservative Club, Orphanage Road, Erdington starting at 2.30pm. I would again urge MCCU delegates to make every effort to attend.

If you have anything you wish to have aired at the MCCU meeting please contact your delegate or as an alternative contact me. The deadline for formal motions 22nd October.

MIDDLE GAME ISSUE 23

It has come to my notice that the articles

“I lost my game because...”

&

“What those comments on chess books really mean”

in this issue, included items which I was unaware were written by Marek Soszynski, and first appeared on the Sutton Coldfield Chess Club website

www.suttonchess.org.uk

Further examples in the same categories may be found on this website & are recommended reading, especially if you need cheering up after a bad loss.

Continued from page 1 col 2

David Rowe	Finance Committee
John Philpott	Finance Committee
John Dunleavy	Chairman of Governance Committee
Richard Haddrell	Governance Committee
Andrew Leadbetter	Governance Committee
John L Paines	Governance Committee
John A Philpott	Governance Committee

* candidates who are members of the “Way Forward” team put together by Martin Regan

Several current directors are not standing for re-election to their current posts, Chris Majer is bowing out from Home Chess, & Roy Lawrence is standing down as Marketing Director, Cyril Johnson is standing as Marketing Director instead of Junior.

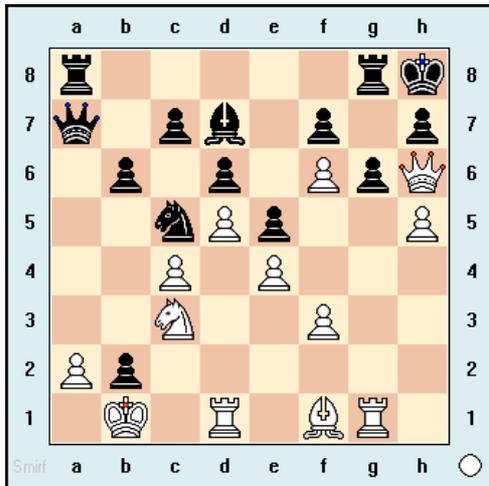
So what of the “Way Forward” ticket of Martin Regan? The objective of putting up candidates for all Directors on the Board has not been realised, with candidates for nominated for only 4 of the 9. It also appears that the stance of “all our candidates must be elected” if any of us is to take up post has changed. It is interesting that, following my comments about this “all or nothing” stance in the previous newsletter Mr Regan emailed me as follows :-

“I have been sent a copy of your most recent newsletter in which you (or another author) mention my decision to stand for election on a single ticket as making a “mockery” of the election process. As I do not expect your vote, for obvious reasons, I do not benefit from explaining, but all those who organise chess deserve to be as fully informed as possible, whether or not they agree with me.

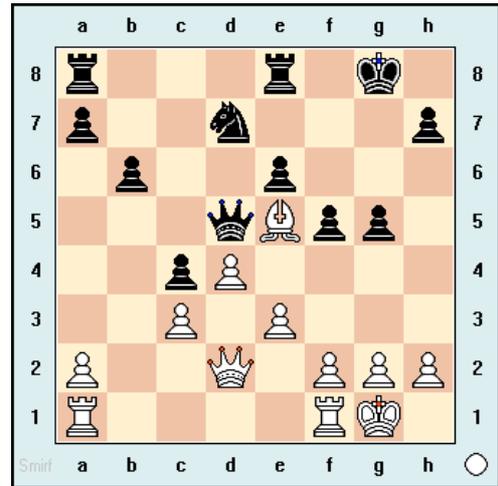
Perhaps I flatter myself, but I am pretty certain that if I stood alone for the post of chief executive I would win comfortably. Whereas, I am not sure of winning by adopting the “all or none ” approach. It would be to my own electoral advantage to stand in the usual way.

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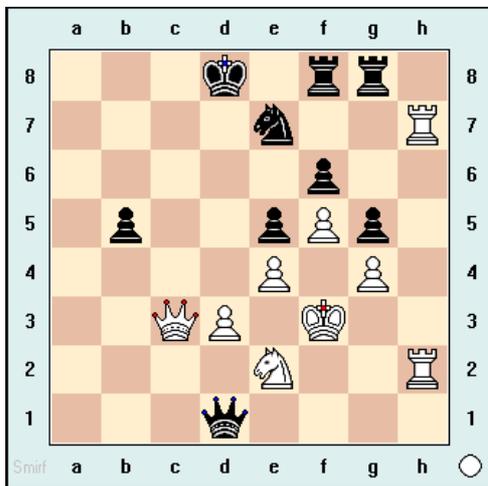
POSITIONAL PUZZLES



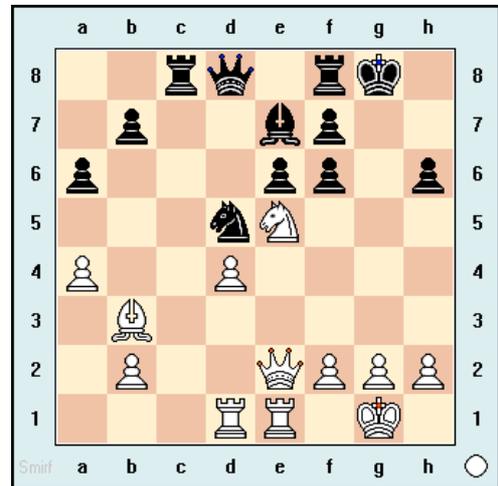
a) White Mates in 6



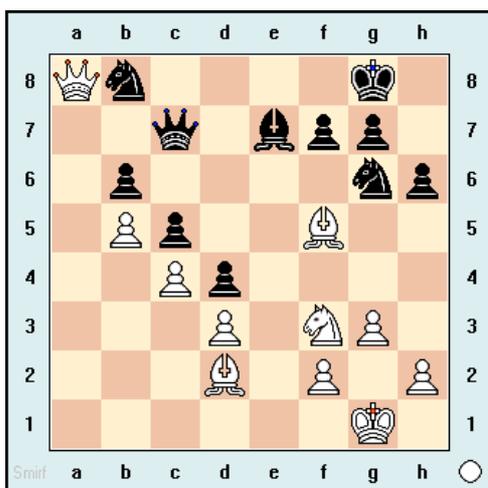
d) White to move and win



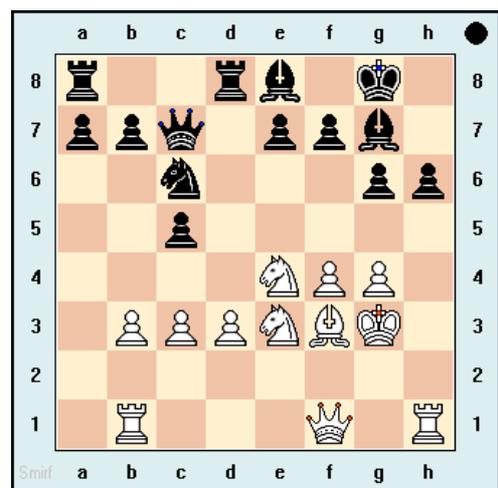
b) White Mates in 7



e) White to move and win



c) White to move and win



f) Black to Move and Win

These are all games of Vera Menchik the featured chess champion in the issue – see page 14 for solutions & details

OUT OF THE BLUE

I was engrossed in TV programme when the phone rang, almost making me jump. I didn't recognise the number showing on the caller display, but then that was nothing new, we tend to get chess related phone calls from all over the place. I answered the phone to start what turned out to be an unusual and unexpected conversation. The lady at the other end of the line explained that she was the daughter of C A Brown, that was a name I recognised seeing in a chess context, but could not immediately place where. C A Brown was in fact involved with the MCCU executive committee for part of the period between WWI and WWII.

His daughter Audrey went on to explain that her father had died in 1985 at the age of 85. Amongst the items she had found following his passing was the MCCU minute book for the period 1897 to 1928. Some recent internet research had led her to the MCCU website and my name. She had been a little wary of calling me. Would an old, somewhat battered minute book really be of interest, she had wondered?

Regular readers of the newsletter will be aware that I have lamented the fact that the MCCU archive material passed down to me was all relatively modern. As someone with an interest in history this was a very sad state of affairs. So the fact that the first minute book of the organization had come to light was quite exciting. A few days later I had the book in my hands.

Most of the spine has gone, and the front & rear covers are somewhat battered and bruised, but the inner pages are intact. I rather expected to see pages of copperplate handwriting with verbatim accounts of meetings, so I was surprised to find that the minutes are in the main quite brief, and that an Annual Report was regularly produced, printed and distributed. Whilst the early secretaries pasted a copy of the report into the minute book, for many of the years there is reference to an Annual Report, but no copy to tell

us exactly what it said. The book is therefore not quite as informative as it might have been, but nevertheless it is in my view still an important "find".

I also found some interesting items simply tucked between pages, including a 1921 BCF yearbook and various press cuttings.

This leads me to make a further appeal, in the hope of tracking down more archive information. It seems likely that any minute book(s) following the first one may have remained with the person who filled the last page, with only the then current book being passed on to the next official. But, how many years any other minute book(s) might have taken to fill is impossible to tell. Bearing in mind that we know a new book began in 1928, & the first typed minutes in my possession date from Sept 1954, it is quite possible that 1 book covers the period 1928 to 1954. Does anyone have an information that might lead to tracing further archive material? Does anyone actually have any archive material that I might have, or at borrow?

I have not yet had time to fully read & digest what I have received, but one thing I recognised in skimming through was that some things haven't changed. I found reports of meetings that were poorly attended. In those days it appears in such cases they were adjourned & reconvened at a later date, in the hope that they would be better attended and allow business properly dealt with.

The book will undoubtedly provide a good deal of material for Middle Game articles. The first one of these appears later in the newsletter, and starts at the most logical place, the beginning – except that it isn't truly the beginning - there were clearly various meetings leading up to the one that created the first minutes. Perhaps there are some even older minutes of these meetings, but it would even more of a surprise if these came to light.

Continued from page 2 col 2

However, my becoming CEO is completely unimportant. The key question, if I were to become CEO, is would I be able to deliver the promises I should have made in order to secure the vote. Without a full and totally committed team, the answer is no.”

I note that Martin Regan does not appear on the ECF grading list, having only 1 graded game in 2005/6.

Roy Heppinstall is the current CEO, he was the prime mover in recognising the need for the Federation to become a Limited Company and taking that forward. Whilst he has been ill for the latter part of the year, he has been feeling much better in recent weeks. As a result he would like the opportunity to return to duty and realise plans he had in mind before becoming ill.

The contest for President has the present incumbent Gerry Walsh opposed by Brian Driscoll. The prime tasks of the President are to attend meetings with Government representatives and the like & to be “the public face” of the ECF.

Brian Driscoll was one of a group of 3 delegates involved with the NMS pilot who attended the SGM in June. This group left the room without any reference to the Chairman, had a meeting of their own, on their return Mr Driscoll announced to the meeting that he and his colleagues did not like the way things were going and would be leaving. Having been updated with proceedings during their absence they decided to stay. He has submitted no election address for inclusion in the AGM papers.

Gerry Walsh has a track record of getting politicians and other influential parties “on side”, his report & election address outline progress on recognition as a sport and a charity.

Robert Richmond resigned as Finance Director earlier in the year but now seeks to make a return. He clearly was not happy with decisions taken by the Board relating to the NMS, despite initially supporting them. It seems likely that he would not

be prepared to work with a Board consisting of several Directors who were on the Board at the time he resigned. ECF delegates may recall a certain amount of embarrassment arising at the 2006 ECF Finance Council Meeting due to correspondence not being copied to NMS representatives, and that a number of errors & flaws in the budget papers were highlighted by delegates. There is no election address from him in the AGM papers.

The other candidate Geoff Steele is the ECF Company secretary and was the BCF auditor. He stepped into the breach following Robert’s resignation and seeks build on his brief tenure.

Seam Hewitt stands unopposed as Home Chess Director. He has been active in chess administration in Leicestershire and more recently the MCCU. He has experience of running congresses, has undertaken arbiter training & has practical experience of the current grading system.

Peter Sowray stands unopposed as International Director. I know little about him other than that he is an FM who has competed in international events. There is no election address from him in the AGM papers to provide additional information.

Junior Chess has Claire Summerscale and Andrew Moore both nominated for the post. Claire is the current Manager of Women’s Chess, she has considerable national experience with juniors, promoting girls’ chess, organising junior events and coaching. Andrew Moore has experience of promoting junior chess, organising junior events and coaching in the West Midlands.

Marketing could see Cyril Johnson taking on yet another different role within the ECF. Over the past few years he has been involved with several directorates, including Home Chess, Management Services, Junior & more latterly acting CEO. He is also a journalist. He has a track record of setting up a team to handle different aspects

within a directorate & his election address indicates he plans the same approach with Marketing.

Peter Wilson is an experienced chess administrator & arbiter who has been involved with FIDE. He is also a journalist. Much of his election address outlines the posts he has held & his chess playing activity, his emphasis in relation to the Marketing Directorate plans is on the publicity aspects of the directorate.

The final contest is for FIDE delegate; the following is the remit for that post -

In conjunction with the Director of International Chess, represents the interests of the Federation to FIDE and the ECU; communicates all relevant decisions by FIDE and the ECU to the Federation. Promotes the appointment of suitable English candidates to FIDE and ECU posts and committees. Works with the Manager of Congress Chess and the Director of Home Chess to advise the Federation of all FIDE and ECU matters.

Gerry Walsh currently fills this role; Nigel Short seeks to replace him. Nigel is of course a well-known international player who currently lives in Greece. The election address from Nigel refers to his role with Commonwealth Chess Association, of which he is president. Gerry Walsh refers to his involvement with FIDE & with the ECU, of which he is Deputy President.

Apart from reports & elections there are a few other agenda items. Essex & Kent seek to amend the County Championship rules so that instead of a central venue for the finals, a venue or venues sanctioned by the Home Chess Director would be used. The issue for Kent & Essex is that they have found themselves playing each other in the finals and do not want to travel up to the Midlands to play each other. They site the example of split venues for the National Club Finals. However, what I feel the proposers fail to recognise is that the geographic make up of the County finals is not known until 3 weeks before the day. Booking a halfway venue for a single county match at 3 weeks notice is viable, booking a venue or venues, & arranging catering

& arbiters, for up to 6 matches is not. The National Club finals involve far fewer players and thus smaller venues. In addition the geographic spread of clubs entering is rather different to the county event. Venues can be booked further in advance than 3 weeks before the National Club Finals, to cater for any eventual split, because the size required is modest. Larger venues in the main have to be booked further in advance.

The SCCU, WECU & London League have made proposals to freeze the current game fee level and introduce similar discounts for payment of game fee to those in place for membership. These areas prefer game fee to membership & seek to put it the same footing as membership. Currently only a 2.5% discount is available for payment of game fee by specified dates, & unlike membership there is not frozen.

There are some proposals relating to bye-laws connected with the decisions taken at the SGM and to tidy up the Articles & Bye Laws.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

In theory the ECF Board might find that all Directors other than the non-executives are different. In practice I do not believe that this would be good for continuity. An Organisation can only move forward if it properly takes account of its past, particularly its' recent past. That kind of knowledge can only come from being there as things have developed, it cannot simply be gleaned from minutes, or from the one dimensional view of a single individual who was there.

The old idea of the new broom is all well & good, but the danger is that it sweeps away more than just dust & debris.

This does not mean that change is undesirable, any Organisation can benefit from the injection of new blood. It is a question of balance.

I firmly believe that any candidates for posts on the Board need to have considerable experience in chess administration to have a proper

understanding of the organisations & chess players they will be serving. They also need to have an awareness that they are the servants of the Federation not its' masters. Yes, they should come up with ideas & prompts for the future, but must recognise that under the current structure, if Council does not wish to be led down the path the Directors suggest, Council has the final word. Council can be infuriating, perverse, but at the end of the day, it has the right to get it wrong.

The BCF Board at the time would have much preferred a somewhat changed structure for the ECF; some delegates were in agreement. But, the majority were adamant that they would only support the concept of ECF Ltd if the existing structure were replicated as closely as possible.

Now a number of those delegates who were so adamant about the structure, are realising that there are issues created by it, (some of which have been discussed in previous Newsletters) & that a different structure would work better.

There are those who advocate using the same approach to running the ECF Ltd as to any other commercial Ltd company. This fails to recognise that the ECF is **not** a normal Ltd company, it is not like Joe Bloggs Engineering Ltd, it is not a company out to make a "personal" profit for its owners and/or shareholders.

That is not to say that none of the wise concepts adopted in running a trading or production operation can be applied to an Organisation like the ECF; just that a proportion of them would be unsuitable.

Whilst there is an acceptance in many quarters that the ECF structure should be altered, I cannot foresee a situation where Council would accept a Board of Directors dictating policy, with the only sanction of Federation members being to vote out those taking a line they are unhappy with.

There will be opportunity to question the candidates who are competing for the various posts at the AGM, as well as to hear a brief

statement from each of them. The number of candidates to be heard & questioned will limit the amount of time available, so it is important that any questions should be designed to be incisive. I hope delegates will think carefully before raising a hand to quiz a candidate.

Where candidates have not provided an election address for a contested post I feel it begs the question why? Where they have provided an address, it is relevant to the post they seek? Is the candidate actually giving information on what they would like to do, & if they are, are they addressing all of the main aspects of the directorate they seek? If they are only homing in on 1 or 2 areas, does this mean they have not given proper consideration to the totality of what the directorate encompasses?

In some ways the choice being offered in the elections is between the old trade union approach of "the slate" – elect a particular group who are saying they are all of one mind over policies, or the principle of electing the best person for each job.

The problem with "the slate" is that the candidates take it that, if you vote for us you are accepting all of our policies. The argument for "the slate" is that you create a group who will co-operate better than individuals who have been thrown together.

The argument for simply putting together those people felt to be the best individual candidates is that you create a Board where there are checks and balances applied. The proposals of any one member of the Board can be critically examined by the others. Others argue that a Board of individuals forced together, will not work together & those individuals will simply pursue their own agendas.

Those of us who will be voting on 21st October have a duty to our colleagues to ensure we have read the AGM material and thought carefully about the issues involved.

CHESS CHAMPIONS

I felt it was high time I featured a woman in this series & who better than the woman acknowledged as the first official Women's World Champion.



Vera Menchik

Born Vera Francevna Mencikova in Moscow on 16.2.1906 of a Czech father who may have been Jewish, and a mother who was probably half English. The latter suggested by her maiden name of Illingworth, combined with a forename of Olga.

Vera received a 9th birthday present of a chess set and early tuition in the rudiments of the game from her father.

It was the Russian Revolution that led the Menchik family to flee the country of her birth and come to that of her maternal grandfather. This was in the autumn of 1921, when Vera was 15. It is unclear whether all of the family came over, but her mother and younger sister certainly moved with her and shared a home with their grandmother in St Leonards.

In the circumstances, the natural chess "home" for Vera was the Hastings club. Whether by luck or providence, that club was also home to another chess émigré Geza Maroczy, a player of no mean standard. Vera undoubtedly benefited from his tutelage.

In 1923 she competed in her first Hastings Congress and obtained a draw against Edith Price, the then British ladies' champion. By 1925 her chess had moved forward leaving Edith Price on the losing end of 2 meetings between them. Although she had a valid claim as the strongest female player in the country, she could not enter

the national championship, which was at that time only open to British nationals.

Her standing in chess was further enhanced when she won the first Girls' Open Championship at the Imperial Club in London the following year, with her sister Olga taking third place. In 1927 she retained this title and Olga came second. (Vera was too old to enter the 1928 competition leaving the field clear for her sister, unfortunately Olga again came second, losing a play-off for first place)

Going back to 1927 ladies chess took a huge step forward when an international tournament was held in London, which Vera won with a score of 10.5/11. She was unaware at the time that the International Chess Federation would later decide to give the tournament the status of the women's world championship. Vera successfully defended her title at Hamburg in 1930, Prague in 1931, Folkestone in 1933, Warsaw in 1935, Stockholm in 1937 and Buenos Aires in 1939, losing only one game in all of those tournaments. (Olga also competed in the 1935 & 1937 events) She also played two matches against Sonja Graf, her main rival in 1934 and in 1937 at Rotterdam & Semmering respectively, but in truth no other female player could come close to her standard. Given the lack of effective competition against her own gender, it is not surprising that Vera would look to the male ranks for sterner tests of her ability.

Despite the male chauvinism rife at the time, Vera began to secure invitations to men's international tournaments. This did not go down well in some quarters. An invite to the Carlsbad Tournament of 1929 led to a sceptical, if not derisory Viennese master Albert Becker, giving voice to the disquiet amongst his fellow masters by declaring that none of his ranks should be defeated by her, and if they were, they should be given membership of a Menchik club. He was hoisted on his own petard by becoming its first member! Other well-known members included Euwe, Reshevsky, Colle, Samisch and Opocensky.

Her best international results were at Ramsgate in 1929, where she did not lose a single game against top British opposition and at Maribor in 1934 where she came third. In tournaments at Carlsbad (1929), Moscow (1935) and Lodz

(1938) she struggled, but all of these events included a good cross section of the top male players of the day. She took part in the premier UK event held by her adoptive home club Hastings, from 1929 to 1937, only being absent for the 1935-36 event.

Despite the attitudes of the time, her standing in chess was such that the Empire Social Club at Bayswater, London, the hub of London chess in 1931, invited Vera became a resident coach at the site. She also assisted in the social club's magazine 'The Social Chess Quarterly'. In 1935 the Empire Social Club came to an end. The 'Social Chess Quarterly' continued after the closure of the chess centre in Bayswater, but from July 1936 it came to be published as a quarterly supplement to B H Wood's 'Chess' magazine. In 1941 Vera was appointed as the games' editor for the main magazine.

A significant number of the top female players of this era remained single, but despite the description of her "as plain and plump" Vera married Rufus Stevenson in 1937. She retained her maiden name in chess circles and is often recorded as Vera Menchik-Stevenson. Rufus Henry Streatfeild Stevenson was a player of reasonable standard, but not in the same league as Vera, he was better known as an administrator. For many years he was secretary of the Kent Chess Association and in 1938 he took up the same post for the British Chess Federation. Vera was his second wife, his first wife Agnes Lawson was also a strong female player, but had been killed in an accident in 1935. Vera's marriage to a British national meant that she was now eligible to compete in the British Championship, and in 1938 she scored 5.5/11 in the men's event at Brighton and was probably the first woman to play in the competition. Her standing in English chess was cemented in 1938 when she was chosen to play for England against Holland. The following year saw her appointed as manager of the new National Chess Centre in London. This post was short-lived, the centre succumbing to bombing in 1940.

Early in 1943 Vera's husband died. Her mother and Olga joined her in London. On 26th June 1944 the house was destroyed by a German bomb and all three women were killed. Vera was

38 years old, Olga 36 and their mother (also Olga) 59. Outrage was expressed not just in chess publications, but by the general local, national & international press.

Unlike Judit Polgar, the next female to provide genuine competition against the top male players of her day, she had an extremely solid - almost dry - positional style. She was a superb exponent of endgame play. If she had any weaknesses, it was that it that she lacked imagination and flair. As a woman in what was regarded as a "man's world", one might have expected her to be a strident, extrovert character, but nothing was further from the truth. Vera would sit calmly pondering the course of the game. She had a shy and kind nature, but nevertheless demonstrated a genuine interest in other people and became a popular figure. She was a sought after speaker in chess circles, and a much-respected coach.

Whilst Vera Menchik was not the first noteworthy female player, she was the first of the modern era who could hold her own amongst the top male players of her day. She proved that, contrary to popular belief; it was possible for a woman to do so. She is the role model for many of the ladies who followed her.

13 years after Vera's death team Olympiads commenced for lady players. The naming of the trophy after her perpetuated Vera's memory.

Here are some examples of Vera in action. Bear in mind that Sultan Khan was a top international player of his time, and George Thomas considered the best English player in that period.

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Event "Hastings"  
Date "1931.12.28"  
White "Sultan Khan,Mir"  
Black "Menchik"
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1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5  
5.Nf3 c6 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.e3 Nbd7 8.Bd3 O-O  
9.Bd2 Re8 10.h4 Nf8 11.O-O-O b5 12.Ng5  
a5 13.e4 b4 14.Na4 dxe4 15.Nxe4 Nxe4  
16.Bxe4 Be6 17.Kb1 b3 18.axb3 Rb8 19.Nc5  
Bxc5 20.Qxc5 Bxb3 21.Rde1 Ne6 22.Qc3  
Qxd4 23.Qxd4 Nxd4 24.f3 a4 25.Bf4 Rbc8  
26.Bd3 Ne6 27.Be5 c5 28.Bb5 Red8 29.Re4  
Nd4 30.Bxd4 cxd4 31.Bd3 Rb8 32.Ka1 Rb4  
33.Rhe1 Be6 34.Re5 a3 35.b3 Rxb3 36.Bc4  
Rb2 37.Bxe6 fxe6 38.Ra5 d3 39.Rxa3 d2  
40.Rd1 Rc2 0-1
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Event "Paris"
 Date "1929"
 White "Frederic Lazard"
 Black "Menchik"

1.f4 e5 2.fxe5 d6 3.Nf3 dxe5 4.e4 Nf6
 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.d3 Bg4 7.Be3 Qd7 8.Be2 O-O-O
 9.O-O Kb8 10.a3 Bxf3 11.Rxf3 Nd4 12.Rf1
 Bc5 13.Kh1 Bb6 14.Bg5 Qc6 15.Bh5 Rhf8
 16.Nd5 Nxd5 17.exd5 Rxd5 18.c3 g6
 19.Bg4 h5 20.Bxh5 gxh5 21.cxd4 Qg6
 22.h4 Rxd4 23.Qe1 Qxd3 24.Qxe5 Qe4
 25.Rxf7 Qxh4+



26.Bxh4 Rxh4+ 27.Qh2 Rxh2+ 28.Kxh2 Rxf7
 29.Re1 Kc8 30.Re5 Bd4 31.Rxh5 Bxb2
 32.Rh3 c5 33.g4 c4 34.g5 Be5+ 35.Kg2 c3
 0-1

Event "Podebrady"
 Date "1936"
 White "Menchik"
 Black "George Alan Thomas"

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 c6 3.c4 e6 4.g3 Nd7 5.Bg2
 Bd6 6.O-O f5 7.Bf4 Bxf4 8.gxf4 Nh6

9.cxd5 exd5 10.Nc3 O-O 11.Rc1 Nf6 12.e3
 Ne4 13.Ne5 Qh4 14.f3 Nd6 15.Qe1 Qxe1
 16.Rfxe1 Be6 17.Na4 Rfe8 18.Bf1 Nh7
 19.b3 Re7 20.Rc2 Ne8 21.Re1 Nxe5
 22.fxe5 f4 23.Nc5 fxe3 24.Rc3 g6
 25.Nxe6 Rxe6 26.Bh3 Re7 27.Rxe3 Ng7
 28.Bg4 Rf8 29.b4 a6 30.a4 Rf4 31.Rd3
 Ne6 32.Bxe6+ Rxe6 33.Kf2 Rh4 34.Kg2 g5
 35.Rc2 Reh6 36.Kg1 Rh3 37.Rg2 Kf7
 38.Rb3 R6h4 39.Rd3 g4 40.Rg3 Rxh2
 41.fxg4 Rh1+ 42.Kf2 R4h2+ 43.Rg2 Rxg2+
 44.Kxg2 Rb1 45.Rf3+ Kg7 46.b5 axb5
 47.axb5 Rxb5 48.e6 Rb2+ 49.Kf1 Ra2
 50.Rf7+ Kg6 51.Rf8 1-0



The Vera Menchik Memorial held in Maidstone marked the 50th anniversary of her death. This was rather unusual tournament in that there was no prize money. Despite this 5 GMs were among the competitors, along with several other titled ladies and gentlemen.

One of the event organisers was Geoff Steele the current ECF Company sec & Finance Director. He told me that the Kent County Association came up with the idea of a commemorative tournament, but never expected the idea to progress further. The BCF provided the bulk of the finance to cover the expenses, but there was not enough available for prize money. The competitors were accommodated at Oakwood House where the event was held.

The feeling was that the event should not be an all female affair, after all Vera Menchik had spent much of her chess career playing in mixed tournaments. Her Czech roots were reflected in 3 Czech players being invited to take part, they drove all night to get to Maidstone.

The age range of the players was quite wide, at one end of the scale a 70 year old David

Bronstein, at the other a 16yr old Harriet Hunt, along with 14yr olds Adam Hunt (Harriet's brother) & Jovanka Houska.

The result of the event was as follows: -

1. JONATHAN LEVITT	ENG G 2425	6
2. BOGDAN LALIC	CRO G 2530	5.5
CHRISTOPHER WARD	ENG M 2490	
PETR VELICKA	CZE M 2416	
NEIL DICKINSON	ENG 2290	
3. JOHN EMMS	ENG G 2535	5
COLIN McNAB	SCO G 2465	
DAVID BRONSTEIN	RUS G 2440	
NEIL McDONALD	ENG M 2420	
SUSAN LALIC	ENG wg2375	
STEWART RUBEN	ENG 2260	
SILVIE SALJOVA	CZE 2250	
J. HAJKOVA-MASKOVA	CZE wm2220	
14. ALEXEI IVANOV	RUS IM 2455	4.5
HARRIET HUNT	ENG fm 2225	
PAUL FENN	ENG 2160	
INGRIS LAUTERBACH	ENG wm2155	
18. SIMON BIBBY	ENG 2275	4
PETRA FINK	GERFM2095	
20. ADAM HUNT	ENG 2205	3.5
21. JOVANKA HOUSKA	ENG 2015	1
22. JESSICA HO	ENG -	0.5

HOW THE MCCU BEGAN

Whilst there has been a previous article on the history of the MCCU, the re-appearance of the actual minutes documenting the inception of the MCCU (or MCCA as it originally was) leads me to reproduce the actual text from the first minutes.

GENERAL MEETING

Held July 24, 1897, at the Athletic Institute B'ham

Present:- Messrs Franklin (chair), Penney, Campbell, Davies, Labone, Robinson, Grundy, Derrington, Bodfish, Gittens,

Lock, Arrowsmith & Mackenzie.

The Provisional Committee, appointed at a General Meeting held on May 8, presented its report and it was Resolved, on the motion of Mr Labone, seconded by Mr Bodfish, "that in view of the satisfactory nature of the report of the Provisional Committee, the Midland Counties Chess Association be herewith formally constituted"

The Rules of Constitution, as drafted by the Provisional C/tee were taken seriatim, and finally adopted in the form of which a copy is here enclosed.

The election of President, Vice-Presidents & Treasurer was deferred, and Mr. A.J. Mackenzie was appointed Hon. Secretary. The following gentlemen were elected to serve on the Executive Committee:- Messrs E. Arblaster, M.A. (Birmingham St George's), J.F. Arrowsmith (Stafford), T.H. Billington (Handsworth), H. Bodfish (Birmingham Bohemians), D. Campbell (Kidderminster), A.H. Davies (Birmingham Central), J.P. Derrington (Birmingham Y.M.C.A.), J.W. Franklin (Worcester), F.R. Gittens (Sparkbrook), O.H. Labone (Birmingham Central), G.H. Lock (Shrewsbury), A.E. Palmer (Smethwick), G.E. Sherwin (Birmingham C.C.) W. Troath (Dudley), and Rev. J.H. Robison (Walsall Y.M.C.A.), together with two representatives to be chosen from the Leicester and Nottingham Chess Clubs.

Resolved that the best thanks of this meeting be given to the Provisional Committee for their labours in connection with the formation of the Association & the excellent results attending thereon.

A cordial note of thanks to the Chairman concluded the proceedings.

The original Rules of Constitution referred to are missing. However the original rules for the Inter-County Championship are not. Below is a reproduction of the very document.

Regulations Governing the Competition.

1.—Each county team shall consist of 12 players, and the games of all players not presenting themselves within half-an-hour of the time arranged for commencing the match shall be scored against them. Only one game shall be played by each player, and arrangements must be made so that there shall be not less than three hours' actual play for *every* game.

2.—The names of players constituting his team, arranged in playing order, shall be sent by each county secretary to the secretary of the opposing- side at least seven days before the date of the match. No reserves shall be allowed.

3.—Unfinished games shall be adjudicated by the Captains, and, failing their agreement, shall be forwarded within three days to the Secretary of the Association, together with a fee of 55. (which shall be considered as part of the expenses of the match), and such games shall be decided by the Association's official adjudicator.

4.—The whole of the expenses incurred in each county match shall be equally divided between the two competing teams.—(Expenses to mean railway fares and refreshments.)

5.—No person shall be eligible to play for any county unless he be a member of a club affiliated to the Association, or qualified under Rule 8 of Constitution, and shall have been resident in such county since the first day of October in each season. Collegiate students and members of Universities shall be eligible if in residence at time of play.

6.—Drawn matches must be replayed within fourteen days, the visiting- team in the drawn match to have choice of rooms.

7.—The time-limit shall be twenty moves an hour, and any player giving seven days' notice to the Secretary of the Association may call for a timing-clock. (Chess clocks will be provided by the Association, if necessary, but carriage must be prepaid. Expenses of carriage to be dealt with under Rule 4 above.) The play shall be governed *by* the Rules of the British Chess Code.

8.—Any team failing to keep an appointment to play an Association match shall be adjudged to have lost the match by forfeit.

9.—The results of all matches shall be notified to the Secretary of the Association by the winning team, or by the home team in the case of a drawn match, within three days of the match.

10.—All disputes relating to Association matches shall be referred to the Match Committee of the Association for decision

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS

Imagine a chess tournament, you play just 1 game of chess each day & in the evening your fellow players are invited to provide musical entertainment. If the option were your club colleague, who you know is tone deaf, you'd probably want to retire to your hotel room post haste. But how about this collection of chess playing musicians, or in some cases musical chess players.

Philidor gained a pension from Louis XV for his musical compositions, but is rather better known as the top 18th century player.

More firmly in the chess playing musician category is Prokofiev, although he can claim wins against Capablanca, Lasker & Rubinstein, albeit in simul. He took part in a match with David Oistrakh a top concert violinist, who was also classed as a category 1 chess player in the USSR. The combatants are pictured below in action. Oistrakh won.



Another violinist Mischa Elman played with Lasker on a regular basis and was rated by him as a very good player. However, yet another violinist was rated by Lasker as the best musician he ever played, he was Moriz Rosenthal. Other chess playing Violin players include Yehudi Menuhin & Fritz Kreisler.

A whole host of composers were also decent chess players including Schumann; Mendelssohn; Shostakovich; Verdi; Rossini; Dvorak; & reputedly Beethoven & Chopin.

Those who have read the Chess Champions series in the newsletter may recall that Smyslov was a budding

Opera singer, (he was a fine baritone who auditioned for the Bolshio Theatre)& Tiamanov a concert pianist. The later is featured as amongst the 100 greatest pianists of the 20th Century. In the previous century Zuchertort also had a reputation as a pianist.

If classical music is not your cup of tea, how about jazz? Ronnie Scott would be useful both as a musician and concert organiser for the event. He could call on Dizzy Gillespie whom he played over the board during a British gig, drummer Gene Krupa, & Paul Whiteman. Art Blakey underlined his interest in chess with "The Chess Players" on his album The Big Beat. On vocals how about Ray Charles, who played using a Braille set & whose interest in chess is reputed to have helped his efforts to kick drugs?

Johnny Marks who was connected with the New York Marshall Chess Club probably isn't a well-known name, but the Christmas Classic "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was penned by him.

Another popular tune "Sussex by the Sea" was composed by W. Ward-Higgs. Correspondence players may recognise the name as county teams compete for his Ward-Higgs Trophy.

If more modern music would suit you better there is choice of genres available. Willie Nelson would cater for the C&W fans, whilst the "folkies" among you may be familiar with Nic Jones whose album "the Noah's Ark Trap" was named after a trap in the Ruy Lopez. Pop music could be well represented with Bobby Darin & Adam Faith for ladies & gentlemen "of a certain age" along with John Lennon whose promo film for the song "Imagine" included he & Yoko Ono playing chess & Ringo Starr who designed a chess set.

Younger pop fans could try Sting, Dr Robert of the Blow Monkeys & the Hanson brothers. Whilst rock fans would be kept happy by Thin Lizzy's Phil Lynott, U2's Bono, Jon Lord of Yes & David Bowie. It isn't clear whether any of Jefferson Airplane played chess, but their song "White Rabbit" included the line ".....when the chess pieces start to tell you where to go", but then again if any of them did play, it probably wouldn't be a good idea to have them compete, they'd probably fail the doping test!

MCCU LAUNCHES ECF MEMBERSHIP SCHEME

As reported in the last newsletter, and in a separate information release, the MCCU AGM voted that, provided the mandatory element was removed from the ECF Membership Scheme motion at the special meeting in June, the Union should seek to operate the scheme.

The ECF have agreed that the MCCU be accepted as a Member Organisation for the scheme and I have just signed the agreement papers on behalf of the MCCU.

I am aware that some parts of the MCCU have decided to operate as Member Organisations themselves, others have decided they wish to actively promote their players to join via the MCCU. In addition some areas have decided that, whilst they may wish to operate as Member Organisations in the future, they wish to wait until next year before making such a decision, whilst others feel players in their area play relatively small amounts of chess and would not benefit from membership.

I have raised the issue of whether events in the MCCU area can use the same principle as Congresses, offer a discount to ECF members & take account of those members in calculating their initial game fee payment. The verdict is that, if an Organisation is willing to give a rebate for ECF members, it can reduce its game fee to allow for that. If it does not wish to become involved in calculating an apportionment between games played by members and those by non-members, a rebate to the member will be claimable via the MCCU. The grading database will allow identification of which events have been wholly game fee based and how many games a particular member has played in those events. This means that rebates can be claimed based on the grading print out for each member.

This will mean that initially some players may find themselves paying the membership fee, with their league/club still charging them the same as non-members. In the short term this will mean paying more, but remember there will be a rebate to come after the end of the season.

A number of leagues have indicated that, having set their budgets prior to the current scheme coming into being, they do not feel able to change their finance arrangements for the coming year. There are ways of leaving a basic budget unchanged, whilst allowing rebates to members and paying a reduced game fee to allow for their games. Rather than going into detail here, I would suggest that any league wishing to look down this avenue get in touch with me to explore the options.

At the moment geography seems to be an important factor in attitudes towards game fee and membership.

The North was the prime mover in membership as the preferred option. The South and West clearly prefer game fee (see the ECF AGM report) Whilst the Midlands & East are very much a mixed bag.

My personal feeling is that the MCCU has a duty to all Midlands players to provide the opportunity for them to join the ECF at the lower rates available under the new scheme, compared the existing Direct Membership scheme. A Midland player is classed as anyone who lives in the MCCU area, is in full time education in that area, or is a member of a club affiliated to a league in the MCCU area. Thus if you fall into any of these categories you can join the ECF via the MCCU.

Issues around membership were covered in the July Newsletter. What I would assert is that I believe that many chess players across the Midlands would find it personally beneficial to become ECF members. Financially a significant number of players would actually pay less to get their games graded than they do through game fee contributions. Philosophically there is the argument that a player should support the activity they take part in financially, not just from the standpoint of what they get in return, but to benefit the expansion of that activity. I would also reiterate that at £10, the membership fee is modest, it is only the price of an average music CD, around the cost of a pint each for a 4 man league team in the local pub, and a lot cheaper than membership of the local golf club. When organisations are seeking sponsorship or other financial support, or indeed looking for opportunities to benefit the people involved with their activities e.g. discounts with other parties, the first question they are likely to be asked is – how many members do you have? A significant level of membership clearly must be a plus, low membership a minus. I would therefore urge you to consider becoming an ECF member. If you have any questions about membership please contact me. If you wish to become a member please download the ECF form from either the ECF or MCCU website & send it to me Mrs J D Johnson 105 Central Ave Syston Leics LE7 2EG with your cheque for £10 made out to the Midland Counties Chess Union. If anyone is unable to download/print the form, please give me a call on 0116 2609012 & I will provide you with a printed form.

VERA MENCHIK POSITIONAL PUZZLES

- a) Vera Menchik vs George Thomas, London, 1932 [hxg6]
- b) White Mates in 7. Vera Menchik vs Victor Buerger, Margate, 1937 [Qa5+]
- c) Vera Menchik vs George Thomas, Margate, 1937 [Bxg6 w/Bf4]
- d) Vera Menchik vs Brian Reilly, Margate, 1935 [e4]
- e) Vera Menchik vs Maria Mora Iturralde, Buenos Aires, 1939 [Nxf7 w/Qxe6+]
- f) Black to Move and Win. Abraham Baratz vs Vera Menchik, Hastings, 1927 [...Qxf4+]