

## **Introduction**

The season 2013/2014 was a particularly busy period with two major team events the European Team championship in Warsaw in November 2013 and the Olympiad in Tromso Norway in August 2014.

I was particularly pleased that for both Open Events we were able to field very strong teams and that for the Olympiad we were able to field our strongest available Women's team.

Expenditure on both events was within the budgeted figures (including the additional budget agreed at the Council Meeting in April 2014).

Council will remember that I put great emphasis on aiming to have our strongest teams playing in these events. This is important to provide goals for both our existing top players and those with potential to reach the top. We still have work to do to if we are to achieve success in these events.

I have worked with Ian Reynolds in producing a long term plan for our team development and this was presented to the Board in the Spring of this year. We now have to find the money and the players with potential to achieve it.

Prior to the Olympiad we had a two day get together for the Women's Team at the RAC in Pall Mall. This enabled the new Coach (Stuart Conquest) and the players to get to know each other and to spend some time preparing for the tough competition ahead of us. Many thanks to members of the RAC for hosting us.

Before our selections for the Olympiad the Selectors agreed a written Selection Policy so that players can see what criteria are being used.

Three of our clubs competed in the European Clubs Cup in Greece in October 2013. We faced strong competition from many well funded/sponsored teams from other countries.

I spent a considerable amount of time on fund raising during the year. I would like to thank all those members of the ECF who have made donations to help fund our teams.

Some work has been done on Elite Development and I'm hopeful we can do more of this in 2015. Our improving players need to play more often against stronger opponents than themselves and this can be difficult to achieve.

## **European Team Championships Warsaw Nov 2013**

Azerbaijan won the Open section in this nine round event with 14 match points, with France second and Russia third. We scored 11 match points to finish equal 7<sup>th</sup> (10<sup>th</sup> on tie break). We recovered from a loss to Greece in Round 2 with a draw against Russia and then wins against Montenegro and Germany. However an elusive further victory escaped us and we drew our final 4 rounds.

The Women's event was won by Ukraine with 15 match points, Russia were second and Poland third both with 14 match points. We started badly with four losses but recovered well to win four of the final five rounds and finish with 8 match points. This put us equal 19<sup>th</sup> (23<sup>rd</sup> on tie break) out of a total of 32 teams.

### **European Clubs Championship Rhodes Greece October 2013**

This is a seven round Swiss event for European Clubs. We were represented by the three clubs with the best records in the 4NCL who wished to compete in the event. Barbican, Jutes of Kent and White Rose represented us. Our teams are essentially amateur teams competing against some extremely strong and well funded clubs. For example Malachite from Russia had four players over 2700 and the remaining four players over 2670. SOCAR Azerbaijan had seven players over 2700. However it's good to see that money does not buy success and the surprise winners were the Czech team Novy Bor with six wins and one draw. Malachite came second and SOCAR third!!

Barbican and White Rose both achieved 7 match points with three wins and a draw. Jutes of Kent scored 6 match points with three wins. Very creditable performances by all three teams.

### **Tromso Olympiad August 2014**

China won the Open event with a convincing performance scoring 8 match wins and 3 draws for a total of 19 match points. Four teams tied on 17 points. Hungary took second place in Judit Polgar's final event as a professional and India were the surprise bronze medallists. Top seeded Russia were not in the medals. We performed well to get us in position for a strong result but a narrow loss in the last round to Cuba meant that a top ten finish eluded us. We finished with 6 wins, 2 draws and 3 losses for a total of 14 points in joint 24<sup>th</sup> position (28<sup>th</sup> on tie break). Michael Adams had a very strong result on Board 1 and won the silver medal for individual performance.

The Women's Olympiad was won by Russia with 20 match points (10 wins and 1 loss to the Ukraine) China were in second place and Ukraine third both with 18 points. Georgia, Armenia and Kazakstan were the three teams on 17 points. We finished equal 27<sup>th</sup> (40<sup>th</sup> on tie break) with 13 points. We had a poor start but fought back well in the final four rounds with two wins and two draws.

### **Seniors Chess**

In November 2013 it was agreed at the Board Meeting that I would also take on responsibility for Seniors Chess. Much of this has an International aspect and Stewart Reuben has been handling this area for some time. His report on the 2013/2014 period is shown below.

I want to highlight the performance of Keith Arkell in winning the European 50+ championship.

For the 2014/15 we have for the first time a small budget for Seniors Chess and I hope this will help us develop Seniors Chess both in International competitions and with increased activity in England across all standards of play. Both Stewart and I expect strong entries from English teams in next

season's European and World competitions. This will be funded almost entirely by donations/sponsorship.

## **Report on Senior Chess for the ECF Council**

By Stewart Reuben ECF Manager of Senior Chess

FIDE initiated changes in eligibility rules in Senior chess which have had several effects on English chess. They changed the definition from 60+ to 50+ and also 65+. Thus players who reached their 50<sup>th</sup> birthday by 31 December 2014 became eligible to play and similarly for 65+. The ECF decided to make no change in the definition for the British Championship for 2014. I believe however, a new British 50+ Championship title should be awarded to the highest placed eligible player in the British Championship from 2015. Understandably the ECF is reluctant to change a winning formula; more players (61) took part in the British 60+ Championship than any other event in Aberystwyth.

I paid little attention to the FIDE changes. But then Keith Arkell won the first European 50+ Championship and this raised considerable interest. There were inferior rules for the European Senior Team Championships in Croatia and we sent only two weaker teams totalling 9 players. But Tony Stebbings secured his first IM norm. Financial support from individuals enabled us to mount quite a strong team in the World 50+ Team Championship in Lithuania. Thus we were disappointed only to gain the **silver** medals. We sent a total of 18 players in four teams. Some will remember I organised the first edition of this World Senior (60+) Team Championship in the Isle of Man in 2004 and it has taken 10 years for the idea to catch on'.

Not everything has been successful. The English 60+ Championship attracted very few entries in 2014. This was partly because it was organised over Easter weekend and these dates did not seem popular with seniors.

Two of the reasons for success in this field are not hard to find: There are the demographics of the post war baby boomers. Also that England benefited more from the Fischer phenomenon of 1972 than any other federation. Thus the English Chess Explosion.

## **International Arbiters and FIDE commissions.**

David Sedgwick in his role as Manager of Arbiters (International) has been representing our interests on both selection of Arbiters for key events and looking for opportunities for English Arbiters and administrators in both FIDE and ECU commissions. He was particularly successful at obtaining an extra place for an arbiter at Tromso. Unfortunately at the last minute this could not be taken up.

David has also been active and successful in supporting FIDE titles for our arbiters.

I have valued David's general advice on many international topics.

Congratulations to Stewart Reuben and Gerry Walsh who received FIDE awards at the Tromso Olympiad for their long term contribution as International Arbiters.

### **A concluding 'Thank you'**

In closing, I would like to thank again all those members of the ECF who have made donations to help fund our teams. This is a very important contribution to the health of English Chess.

I would also like to thank the John Robinson Trust and Friends of Chess for their continued support to help the development of our improving players.

I have had help from many people and I thank them all, in particular David Sedgwick, Andrew Walker, Sean Hewitt, Stewart Reuben, Ian Reynolds, John Philpott, Natasha Regan, Jonathan Parker, Jonathan Speelman, and my fellow Board Members.

**David Openshaw September 2014**