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Dear Member

Happy New Year from the ECF and welcome to the January 2020 edition of the Newsletter.

In this edition we are delighted to launch the ECF internet service (please see Nigel Towers's piece headlining the Newsletter below). We also feature an excellent piece from John Hennessy, secretary of Northenden Chess Club in south Manchester that has recently organised its first tournament. John ticks every box around contributing to grass-roots chess and I would welcome contributions from other club secretaries and players who have an opinion on any chess-related issue, or just want to advertise a tournament or event. Please send submissions to [manager.publicity@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:manager.publicity@englishchess.org.uk)

We look at the World Rapidplay and Blitz Championships held in Moscow through the eyes of one of one of the few English people there, our Director of Junior Chess and International Arbiter Alex Holowczak. There was no English presence at the board for this prestigious championship, which World Champion Magnus Carlsen won on both time controls (more on the tournament itself here - <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/jan/03/chess-carlsen-wins-double-speed-title-after-controversial-game>, and John Ashworth, CEO of Caplin Systems writes about his company's sponsorship of the Hastings International Congress.

There are vacancies for ECF roles to fill along with an update on Monthly Grading and a review on the play *Ravens* currently running at the Hampstead Theatre. Finally, it is not unusual to lock horns with chess players in their fifties and sixties (myself included) but hats off to 87-year-old David Hamilton of Lewisham Chess Club, who gave me a lesson in middle and end-game technique in a recent London League encounter. To paraphrase the former football manager Ron Atkinson, I was lucky to get nil.

--- *Mark Rivlin*

**ECF online chess launch**

*Nigel Towers writes* - The ECF is pleased to announce that after much planning and several months of beta testing with a team of volunteers, the long awaited ECF internet chess service is now ready for live use. We have established a number of ECF clubs/ teams across different provider platforms with chess.com and lichess clubs currently available and ready for use. The online clubs are open to all ECF members and supporters and will allow you to play in regular ECF organised online tournaments, as well as international matches, and will also let you receive an online rating which will be published monthly from February/ March 2020 onwards. The online rating will be a 4 digit elo rating based on internet club games against other ECF members or supporters, and will be completely separate from your ECF OTB grade. Full details including joining instructions, details of upcoming and previous events, and full grading records from the beta test competitions to date are now available on the ECF online site at <https://englishchessonline.org.uk/> Please do join one or more of the clubs so that you can take part in the club events and give the online service a try. Any questions or feedback to help improve the service are very welcome and should be directed to [office@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:office@englishchess.org.uk)

**Hastings 2019-20 - a big success!**

Indian GM Magesh Panchanathan won the 95th Hastings Congress with a 7.5/9 performance. GM Romain Edouard came second with 7 and four players finished on 6.5 - GM Kantor Gergely, GM Simon Williams, IM Mate Bagy and GM GA Stany. More here - <https://en.chessbase.com/post/hastings-congress-2020-r9>

*John Ashworth, CEO of Caplin Systems, the new prime sponsors writes* - This is our first venture with chess sponsorship, and we couldn't be more thrilled. It was a tweet from Simon Williams which alerted me to the opportunity to get involved. From the moment Pam Thomas at Hastings introduced me to Malcolm Pein and Stewart Reuben in our City of London offices, I knew we were onto something very special in the history of chess. As a specialist software company serving banks globally with internet trading technology, we wanted to raise our profile and explore a different angle for recruiting talented engineers. Chess players make great programmers. I was personally delighted to see that our investment helped to entice a few more GMs than in previous years, which in turn attracted 50 percent more entrants in the main Masters competition. It was a huge privilege to

meet David Howell and play his first move (g3) against Yao Lan as part of the opening ceremony with Dominic Lawson, as well as getting to know many of the other GMs and club players from 27 countries over the course of the week. An adult beginner myself, I decided to throw myself in at the deep end and enter the U130 to see how the whole thing worked. The U130 certainly fought back, but I took my first ever tournament point, played against some encouragingly talented youngsters, and ended the Congress with the unique (if dubious) honour of playing both the top board (by ceremony) and the bottom board (by merit). After the prizegiving, a few of the GMs and I shared a glass of wine in the Hastings Old Town late on Sunday night. Keith Arkell remarked that the buzz in the playing hall was as intense as he can remember, which really makes it all worthwhile. We're looking forward to 2020/21. Finally, I'd like to thank Pam Thomas and Marc Bryant on the Congress committee, the Hastings Chess Club, officials at Hastings Borough Council, Steve Smith and Jaimie Wilson at Chichester Chess Club, and, individually, Stephen Moss, John Saunders and Phil Makepeace for all helping to make this such a success for Caplin. Much more on the official Hastings website, including pictures, [here](#)

### **Our man in Moscow**

Mark Rivlin interviews International Arbiter and Director of Home Chess Alex Holowczak [here](#)

### **Problem Corner**

Chris Jones with another set of teasers [here](#)

### **Small is Beautiful**

Manchester-based Northenden Chess Club is a small club with aspirations. Secretary John Hennessy writes about the club's first tournament, a pre-Christmas Blitz [here](#)



Chess rocks! [left to right] Daniel Sheppard, Stockport CC (Winner) John Hennessy, Northenden CC and Raimund Klein, Stockport CC (Runner-up).

### **Theatre Review**

Mark Rivlin is less than impressed with *Ravens*, a new play about Fischer-Spassky 1972 - [here](#)

### **Castling Long**

An excellent radio show from comedian and scriptwriter Josie Long on getting back into chess - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000cnby>

**Director of Home Chess** Adrian Elwin reports --- An ECF Arbiters' Course will be held at Daventry Court Hotel in Daventry on 15th-16th February. Adrian Elwin and Alex Holowczak will be leading the course. Further details and link to registration can be found at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-arbiters-course-february-2020/> and more here about general arbiter opportunities.

Manager of Arbiters Alan Atkinson has been appointed as ECF Manager of Arbiters, taking over from Tom Thorpe. Please direct any arbiting queries to him using the email on the ECF website. The ECF has also published an Anti Cheating Policy document to help prevent and punish cheating. This can be viewed at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Anti-Cheating-Document.pdf>

**Monthly Grading** - an opportunity to support an important development for English Chess Brian Valentine reports --- The ECF is progressing the monthly grading project with the aim of having a core system in place by March/ April 2020 and the full system ready for operation by July/ August, to support production of monthly lists from September 2020 onwards. Further details can be found here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/monthly-grading-proposal/>. The system is being implemented in PHP, Python 3

and MySQL and is re-using a number of existing system components. We have a core team working on the implementation and would like to ask for additional volunteers to support the coding work (in any of the above languages) and/or testing. If you are interested in helping with this please contact Brian Valentine at [manager.grading@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:manager.grading@englishchess.org.uk)

### **New Junior Selection Policy**

More here from director of Junior Chess Alex Holowczak - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/new-junior-selection-policy-2020/>

### **Chess Magazine**

January 2020 taster [here](#)

### **UK Blitz Final**

More games and videos from Justin Tan and Simon Williams here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/uk-blitz-final-this-weekend/>

### **ECF Vacancies**

Please contact ECF Office if interested on [office@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:office@englishchess.org.uk)  
Chairman of Council - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/nominations-sought-for-post-of-chairman-of-council/>  
Awards Committee Chairman - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/vacancy-chair-of-awards-committee/>  
Manager of Disabled Chess

### **Forthcoming Events**

24th 4NCL Congress Friday 17 - Sunday 19 January 2020 at The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate -

[http://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/information\\_24.htm](http://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/information_24.htm)

Junior 4NCL 18-19 January 2020 at Holiday Inn, South Normanton - [http://www.4ncl.co.uk/j4ncl/jn\\_entry\\_1920.htm](http://www.4ncl.co.uk/j4ncl/jn_entry_1920.htm)

ECF National Schools Girls' Chess Championships 2020 - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/nscg-girls-chess-championships-2020/>

### **Chess Tweet of the Month**

It's all kicking off in Surrey!



### **World Senior Chess Team Championships**

Stewart Reuben on the forthcoming competition here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/wstcc-prague-2020/> and more here - <https://www.ecforum.org.uk/viewtopic.php?f=47&t=10493&p=237171&hilit=World+Senior+Chess+Team+Championships#p237171>

Note that this is not a FIDE rated event!

### **Obituary**

Lander Arrasate Bedialauneta 1973-2019 - <https://www.ecforum.org.uk/viewtopic.php?f=46&t=10532>

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