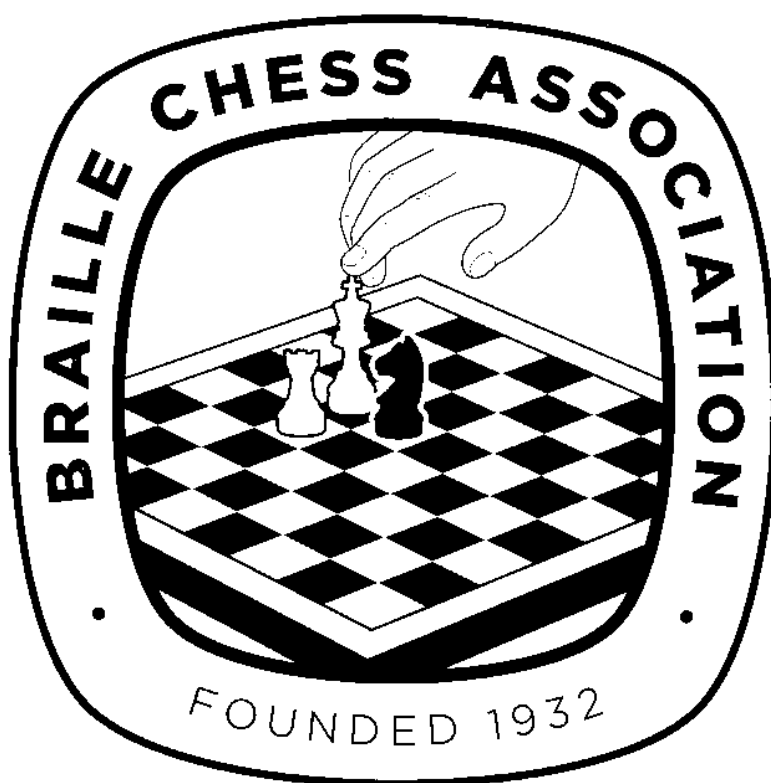


The Gazette

November 2023

Registered Charity Number 263049



BCA



Bringing Chess to Visually Impaired People.

BCA Website Address: www.braillechess.org.uk
Email: customerservices@braillechess.org.uk
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BrailleChess>
User Group Email Address: BrailleChess@groups.io (Any member wishing to join this forum should email the Editor or Audio Librarian, who will be pleased to send an invitation.)

To contact a member of the committee, please see the Braille Chess Association’s website where there is a facility for sending a message.

Honorary Members

Christine and Norman Andrews, Hazel and Steve Burnell, Alec Crombie, Celia Gibbs, Julie Leonard, Stan Lovell, Mike Murphy, Richard Murphy, Julia Scott, Joan Shorrock, Gill Smith, Gerry Walsh, Roger Waters, Norman Wragg.

Note:

The views expressed in the *Gazette* do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the BCA, nor those of the editor.

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Editorial

Recently I read that Sir Isaac Newton played chess. For him, it was not just a game, but rather a tool to increase his intelligence and ability to think innovatively. In August I visited Newton's birthplace and childhood home, a farmhouse in Lincolnshire called Woolsthorpe Manor, and I stood in the very room in which he was born on Christmas Day 1643. Aged eighteen, he left the farm to study at Trinity College, Cambridge, but returned some years later to escape the plague that was rampant in the city. In the late summer of 1666, he was in the orchard when he observed an apple falling from a tree and began thinking about gravity. What goes up must come down! However, the ratings of the winners of our 2023 Chairman's Cup and Remote Summer Cup will surely be on the up and up now! You can read all about the events in this issue. Also, there's an inspirational story from a member in Northern Ireland. Nothing will keep her down! You can look up who's playing in the 19th BCA Email Tournament, put your name down for the 2024-25 Correspondence League and subscribe to the audio version of Chess Magazine. If you're after an unputdownable read, there's a book out about the life of one of our members! You can also discover whose numbers came up in recent Millennium Club draws and get the lowdown on what your committee has been working on by catching up with all the latest officers' reports. There are events to sign up for and games to play through. Mark's puzzle is a tricky one this time, so try not to get het up over it! This issue also contains an article reminding everyone of what's expected in BCA playing rooms as well as revised Booking Conditions and Procedures. Please ensure you read this important information so you're fully up to date! Newton's famous apple tree was blown down in a storm in 1820 but it miraculously grew back from its roots and is still there today! The BCA committee is also facing something of a storm at present and needs your help if we're to survive. In this issue you can read about members who have stepped up to seek hotels for us all and about ways in which you could help. Speak up if you have ideas or want to volunteer!

This gazette might be unique in that it contains news of "a hatch", "a match" and sadly also "a despatch". See Personalia for the first two, and the tributes to our dear friend and Honorary Member, Peter Gibbs, for the other. Please let me have articles for the February gazette by the end of December. Season's greetings to all readers!

Julie Leonard

Forthcoming Events

Booking Conditions and Procedures

All bookings must be made through the named event organiser. The organiser will confirm the amount to be paid to the BCA and will notify the Treasurer to expect this payment from the entrant. Only when full payment has been received will the booking be complete.

When booking, please supply the organiser with the following:

1. Name/names of everyone the booking is for.
2. Dates of arrival and departure.
3. Room type (single/double/twin/accessible room).
4. If you will be bringing a guide dog.
5. Any special dietary requirements.
6. Any special requests: For example, a preference for bath or shower or a need for a walk-in shower; a preference to be near the lift or stairs; a need for support in case of a fire alarm at night.
7. Consent for your name, dates booked, room type and any special requirements to be sent to the hotel.
8. An emergency contact number. This is important as otherwise it puts a great responsibility on the organiser if an emergency arises. The organiser will keep this information confidential and destroy it after the event.

If you are taking part in the chess, please also give:

9. Consent for your forename, surname, club, results and gender to be sent to the ECF for rating purposes.
10. The section you would prefer to play in if you are under the rating limit for the Challengers.

If you have any queries about the hotel or the tournament please contact the event organiser, not the Treasurer. Blind and partially sighted UK residents under the age of 25 receive free entry and free accommodation when playing in BCA events. In appropriate circumstances, free accommodation is also available to a parent or guardian accompanying a junior.

Visually impaired UK residents in their first year of membership receive their first BCA weekend event free or £100 reduction in the cost of a week-long event. They may also be accompanied by a guide or companion who will receive the same concession. For a first event we ask for payment in advance and we then make a refund at or after the event.

The Treasurer will acknowledge receipt of your payment and let the organiser know. You may pay in either of these ways:

Cheques payable to Braille Chess Association should be sent to the Treasurer.

Online or telephone payments may be made to:

Account name: Braille Chess Association, sort code: 40 52 40, account number: 00082456.

If you pay by direct payment you should inform the Treasurer when the payment has been made.

Bookings accepted after the closing date are at the discretion of the organiser and are subject to a £10 late booking supplement for each person.

Bookings can only be cancelled and payments refunded within the time limit set in the conditions by the hotels. Members may consider it advisable to take out holiday insurance to cover themselves.

The BCA reserves the right to exclude from its events anyone whose behaviour towards participants and tournament organisers was unacceptable or who is currently serving a time ban for cheating.

Saturday 27th January to Saturday 3rd February 2024: The 30th Chess Theme Break

The 30th Chess Theme Break will be held at the Lauriston Hotel, 6-12 Knightstone Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 2AN. This year's event was also held there, and it was found to be very convenient, with exceptionally friendly and helpful staff. The hotel is in an excellent location, one mile from Weston-super-Mare railway station, a short walk from the seafront and the town centre shops. Beds and bowls are provided for guide dogs. The hotel also offers a dogfood service by prior arrangement, to save owners having to transport it themselves. During the winter, dogs are allowed to run on the nearby beach.

It is anticipated that the week will closely follow the tried and trusted programme developed by Peter and Celia Gibbs over many years. It will include coaching provided by more experienced BCA members, a tournament and many social events. Please refer to Tony and Irene's report on the 29th Chess Theme Break in the May 2023 gazette to get a flavour of what the week entails. Alternatively, get in touch with the organiser, Julie Leonard, to find out more.

Any visually impaired person who wishes to learn chess or improve their chess can take part. Any member with a rating of about 1400 or higher who would like to assist with the coaching would also be most welcome, as would anyone seeking a winter break with BCA friends. Let's try to make the 30th Chess Theme Break extra special! For members, the cost of dinner, bed and breakfast for the week is £420 per person in a single room or sharing a double or twin room, and £455 per person for single occupancy of a double or twin room. With these prices, the £70 members' grant has already been taken off and so no reimbursements will be made after the event this time. The cost of individual nights for anyone not staying the whole week is £70 per person in a single room or sharing, and £75 per person for single occupancy. If there is sufficient interest it may be possible to arrange an excursion for the free day at an additional cost.

The normal BCA booking procedures apply to this event. When informing Julie of your requirements, please also state whether you're attending as a trainee, a coach or a non-chess person and let her know when you have made your payment. The closing date for entries is 30th November 2023. Early booking is advised, especially if you have a favourite room or you require a single room or one with a bath as there are limited numbers of these. Rooms will be allocated on a first come first served basis and will only be reserved when the BCA has received your payment. Payments made to the BCA are refundable until such time as the money is forwarded to the hotel, which will be in the first half of December. No refunds will be possible after that time and therefore we strongly advise members to take out holiday insurance.

Friday 15th March to Sunday 17th March 2024: AGM Weekend Chess Congress in Memory of Peter Gibbs

This will be held at The Hilton Leicester Hotel, Leicester. The AGM will take place at 20.15 on Saturday evening, 16 March. We shall also aim to enable members to join in via an online platform if they prefer.

This is a new hotel for the BCA and we are sure that members will find it very satisfactory. The hotel has a fitness centre and swimming pool. It is located about 4 or 5 miles from Leicester Railway Station and close to junction 21 of the M1 for anyone travelling by car. There is a lot of green space around the hotel which should make it very suitable for guide dog owners. It is also within easy walking distance of Fosse Park Shopping Centre.

We are hoping there will be enough entries to hold two five round Swiss tournaments – an Open and a Challengers for those whose grade or estimated grade is 1300 or below. Both are open to blind and partially sighted players and to associate members of the BCA. The entry fee for each tournament is £10.

Please state when booking which tournament you would like to enter – subject to eligibility.

Rooms will be available on the Friday afternoon from 15.00 with dinner that evening at 18.00. Likely start times for the five games are 20.00 on the Friday evening, 09.45 and 14.00 on the Saturday and 09.45 and 14.00 on the Sunday, but these times might need to be changed depending on discussions with the hotel. The rate of play is likely to be 90 minutes for each player for all moves. Any player can request a half point bye in any one of the first four rounds or a delay in the start of their game in round 1 of 30 minutes.

Any enquiries about the Hotel or the tournament should be sent to John Osborne or Phil Rafferty. Phil is happy to discuss any enquiries over the phone, but requests that you call from the early evening onwards, due to work commitments.

To enter, please send your accommodation requirements to John or Phil, with a copy to our Treasurer Gill Smith. The closing date for entries is Friday 2 February 2024.

The cost of dinner, bed and breakfast for members and associate members is £65 per person per night in a single room and £55 per person per night in a double or twin room. This is also the cost for those wishing to stay Sunday night.

Please send full payment for your entry fee and accommodation to Gill Smith by the closing date. Please send any resolutions or other items for inclusion on the AGM agenda to Guy Whitehouse by the end of December. Also, let Guy know if you are planning to join the AGM online or attend the AGM without staying at the hotel so that we can let you have the AGM papers.

Saturday 22nd to Saturday 29th June 2024: BCA British Championship in Memory of Graham Lilley

This will take place at The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate. The tournament is open to all visually impaired chess players and to associate members of the BCA. The title of BCA British Champion will be awarded to the highest placed visually impaired player who has been resident in the UK for at least the last three years and has not played chess for a country other than the UK.

The event will be played over 7 rounds with one round each day. Round 1 will be played on the Saturday evening, with subsequent rounds played Sunday to Friday during the day. The exact timing of rounds and rate of play will

be confirmed in the next Gazette. Players may request a half point bye in any one of the first six rounds. If there are sufficient numbers there will be two sections, with the Challengers' section being limited to those whose grade or estimated grade is 1300 or below. If a sufficient number of lady players enter and the majority of them are in favour of having a Ladies' Championship, they will compete for the Julia Scott Trophy.

The cost of dinner, bed and breakfast to members and associate members of the BCA is £57 per night for dinner, bed and breakfast in a single room (£399 for the week), and £48 per person per night in a shared room (£336 for the week). Note that there is a car parking charge of £10 per day payable direct to the hotel on arrival.

The closing date for bookings is 10 May 2024. Bookings accepted after that date, at the discretion of the organiser, will be subject to a late booking fee of £10 per person.

All enquiries and bookings should be sent to the organiser Steve Burnell.

All Under One Roof

A note from your Congress Support Officer, Tony Elbourn:

If you would like to participate in any mainstream competitions, then why not make use of the Congress Support Scheme? It's designed to help BCA members meet the costs of entering mainstream congresses. The expenses that can be claimed are travel, accommodation and the entry fee, or just the entry fee itself. It's open to all members who have played in a BCA event over the past year and who have not also received international funding. All we ask for is a little feedback on the congress in which they have taken part.

If you are considering entering a mainstream event you may well find yourself in good company as some of them are popular with BCA members. In order to make a claim there are three simple steps:-

1. Contact the Congress Support Officer at least one week prior to the event. Retrospective claims will not normally be accepted. (See list of officers for Tony's contact details.) Please contact him either by telephone or email giving full details of the event in which you wish to compete.
2. Send a receipt or proof of expenditure to the Treasurer on return from the congress. Claims can include entry fee, accommodation, travel and any other reasonable expenses. The Congress Support Scheme does not cover claims for insurance.
3. Provide feedback on the event to the Congress Support Officer. This does not need to be formal and will be stored as an anonymous record for our database. It may benefit other BCA members thinking of attending the same event in the future.

Please note that, in the spirit of the Congress Support Scheme, failure to complete all of the above steps may mean that we cannot guarantee that your claim will be processed successfully, as the scheme is subject to available funds (the year referred to is the BCA's operating year starting on 1st October and ending on 30th September). Contact details for the Congress Support Officer and the Treasurer are in the list of officers.

If you are mainly a "home player" and have been wondering whether to take part in a local tournament and would like to find out more about playing competitively then why not join the BCA in one of its competitions, or you may recently have become V.I. in which case you can find out about the equipment we use and that you will still be able to play competitively. Our competitions are run in exactly the same way as a "mainstream" congress. If it is your first time as a competitive player then you can take part in the Challengers section which, in spite of its name, will give you some good games. If you are concerned about the expense of joining a mainstream congress, then you will have taken the first step to obtaining "Congress Support" from the BCA.

Please note that all congresses are now using the 4-digit chess ratings recently introduced by the ECF.

Guy Whitehouse has compiled the following list of mainstream tournaments that are "All Under One Roof" i.e. the accommodation and chess playing room are in the same hotel.

I approached Castle Chess to see if they had details of tournaments they planned to hold after their Fareham congress in October. I was told that they would be announcing dates of upcoming events at Fareham, so hopefully by the time you read this, details will be available on their website www.castlechess.co.uk. If not, try emailing Castle Chess.

Hampshire Chess Congress 3rd – 5th November, 2023, Lysses House Hotel, 51 High Street, Fareham.

Three sections: Minor (Under 1600), Major (Under 1900) and Open. The Open section will be FIDE-rated. Minor and Major Sections will be ECF-rated. Organiser Dave Nelson.

55th Torbay Congress, 10th – 12th November 2023, TLH Toorak Hotel, Torquay.

There is an Open which will be ECF and FIDE rated, a Major U-1950 and, an Intermediate U-1750 and a Foundation U-1500. Telephone Phil McConnell.

6th Somerset New Year Congress- Chess 4U 13th – 14th January 2024, Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon
Five round seeded Swiss tournament. Three sections- U2050, U1750, U1550. Organisers Rebecca and Colin Gardiner.

31st FIDE-rated 4NCL congress, 19th – 21st January 2024, Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate.

This is a five-round Swiss with three sections based on FIDE ratings: an Open, a U-2000 and a U-1700. Contact Mike Truran.

Blackpool Chess Conference, 9th - 11th February 2024, Imperial Hotel Blackpool, Blackpool

There are five sections and £6700 in prizes. Entry and details via the Conference website –

<http://www.blackpoolchess.org.uk> Organiser Bill O'Rourke.

5th Simon Bartlett Memorial Congress, 1st – 3rd March 2024, The TLH Victoria Hotel, Torquay

FIDE rated Open, ECF rated U1975, U1750, U1600 sections. £3400 guaranteed prize fund and loudest shirt prizes! Organiser John Constable.

Words from the Whitehouse

The committee held two meetings in September, one on the 9th and the other on the 16th. Below is my usual summary of the key points.

The meeting on the 9th was mainly concerned with upcoming changes to committee and sub-committee personnel. Gill, Voldi and Mark Hague are standing down from the committee and Steve Burnell will not continue in the role of Chair of the Tournament Sub-committee. This meant we had to discuss potential replacements for them and we also looked at all the extra tasks Gill had taken on over the years, particularly in the area of tournament organising and distribution of documents. These tasks will be redistributed to appropriate people over the next few months.

The meeting on the 16th covered our usual range of topics. We had to consider various proposals which would be put before the IBCA congress to be held during the world championships in Rhodes.

We decided to support a Ukrainian motion requesting countries to supply medical documentation stating that the degree of visual impairment of their participants met eligibility criteria. The nature of the documentation and criteria would be discussed further if the motion passed. We supported a South African motion which would reduce IBCA fees for countries where government support for the disabled was very limited or next to non-existent. We opposed a motion from IBCA America which would have divided participants in to three categories depending on their level of visual impairment and which would have introduced different time controls for those categories. This was seen as too divisive.

We also decided that countries should not be disqualified from voting for non-payment of fees until 2025. There will also be elections to the presidential board and we're supporting a team which includes, amongst others, Jorgen Magnusson, Thorsten Muller and Olivier Deville.

There was considerable satisfaction that we would at last be participating in international events again. We noted Gary Hogan's enthusiasm and we felt that, as this was his first international event, the main thing was that he enjoys the experience.

Turning to domestic matters, fundraising arrangements were reviewed and streamlined; there was concern that in some cases, letters had been sent out to donors who did not support the kind of work we do. Our finances are in a strong position and we are gradually completing what has turned out to be a rather traumatic task of changing the names on our banking mandates; this became necessary when Norman stepped down and Bill became Chairman. If we haven't found a new Treasurer within the association by the end of the Autumn International Tournament, we'll be advertising the role externally.

Our tournament programme is in good shape and we made a decision to hold the 2025 Chairman's Cup at the Marsham Court Hotel in Bournemouth. Some new volunteers have visited hotels to see if they would be suitable for our tournaments. We've also decided that because of the work involved, we'll pay the entry fees of organisers who play in the tournament. We'll also pay organisers' accommodation costs, including the cost of staying on Sunday evening. Where there are two organisers, we'll pay half the accommodation costs of each organiser.

Publicity has gone reasonably well. Abi has been interviewed on the radio and for the magazine of the Macular Society. We will be sent a transcript of the article and we have been given permission to use it for publicity purposes. The Macular Society has visually impaired members with sighted partners so there is a chance we might gain both visually impaired and associate members.

We're still trying to make contact with Visionary as was suggested at the AGM. Our involvement at the IBSA games in Birmingham was not as substantial as we had envisaged, though we were given the names of two people

connected to Birmingham City Council who might help us with outreach to the visually impaired community in Birmingham, and Bill will be trying to establish contact with them.

There's been a setback in our ability to access magnetic sets because Cambratech are not producing them anymore. However, Bittor discovered that a magnetic set was being manufactured in Spain and has said he will bring one back for us to assess at the end of November. We've reviewed the price of peg-based sets so that a large and small set now cost £59 and £42 respectively. This is to enable us to recoup increased production costs.

The IBCA has reached an arrangement with the producers of the DGT Echo clock which will enable us to purchase clocks at the massively reduced price of 60 Euros per clock. We're being encouraged to delay putting in an order until technical improvements to the clock have been made.

The new website was launched on 31st August. Olly Leonard has done a huge amount of work on this and I'm sure you'll all join the committee in expressing our thanks. We plan to upload recordings of the How Good Is Your Chess sessions and various committee members will receive training on how to update the site. After some discussion we took the decision to delete our X/Twitter account. It was felt that a better way of raising the association's profile online was to put videos on YouTube.

Finally Norman Wragg has agreed to act as adjudicator of the 2024 best game competition. Watch this space!
Guy Whitehouse.

Treasurer's Report

Since the last Gazette our fundraiser, Carl Concannon, has helped us to raise nearly £17,000. We are very grateful to him for his successful work.

We have received donations in memory of Peter Gibbs totalling £525. We would like to thank his family for their kindness in raising these donations.

If you are shopping online, please consider using Give as You Live which raises funds with many different retailers at no cost to you. Simply search for "give as you live online", sign up and choose the BCA as the charity you are supporting.

Our financial position at the end of September 2023.

Cash in the bank £94,794, of which £8,167 are restricted funds, given for a specific purpose. Accounts are held with Lloyds and CAF Bank. We have closed the Virgin Money accounts.

Funds held in investments total £43,084, these are held with CCLA.

Total funds, all cash and investments, £137,878.

The total is up by over £22,000 from £115,765 at the end of September 2022.

The BCA's financial year ends on 30th September. I will now draw up the year-end accounts for 2022 to 2023 for the rest of the committee to scrutinise. When the committee has agreed the accounts and the trustees' annual report, I will be contacting the accountants to arrange the annual independent examination of accounts.

Gill Smith, Treasurer

Membership Secretary's Report

Three new members have joined this quarter. Tina Burton from West Midlands has joined as a visually impaired life member. Two new visually impaired brothers Aleksandar Hristov Zhelyazkov and Andrey Hristov Zhelyazkov from Surrey have joined as junior members, they have both been sent tactile chess sets.

Life Membership

Marilyn Bland and James Connors have now taken up life membership of the BCA. Note this is extremely good value at a cost of only £50 and means less work for the Membership Secretary. Grin, grin!

Change of Name

Val Warner and Jim Cuthbert got married on the 30th of September and Val is changing her name. Many congratulations to Mr and Mrs Cuthbert!

Mark Hague.

Stop Press: Just before going to print we received the sad news that Julia Scott has passed away. Julia was our fundraiser for many years. She was awarded Honorary Life Membership in recognition of the huge contribution she made to enabling the work of the BCA. She was also a very lovely lady indeed. There will be a tribute to her in the next gazette.

Join our Friendly Committee!

We are looking for new committee members, in particular, we will need a new Treasurer when Gill steps down from her post in March. Gill has been Treasurer for 14 years which backs her claim that she enjoys spreadsheets! We would like to recruit our new Treasurer from within our membership or perhaps a family member or friend of a member. Gill will be available to support the new Treasurer for as long as is needed.

To be treasurer you would need to have good mathematical skills and attention to detail is also required. The Treasurer post is a trustee, previous experience as a trustee is not necessary. The committee holds online meetings 3 or so times a year as well as the AGM. If you or anyone you know, is interested in standing for election to the committee at our next AGM, for any role, then please contact the committee for further information, preferably before or during the Autumn International Tournament in Solihull.

Millennium Club, the BCA's monthly lottery

To take part in the monthly draw costs £12 per number per year. You may have as many numbers as you like at £12 each. Every month a lucky winner receives £35. If you wish to take part, please make a payment to the BCA. Recent Millennium Club winners:

July: Stan Lovell, number 36.

August: Val Warner, number 2.

September: John Gallagher, number 58.

Gill Smith, Treasurer

Hotel Hunters

John Osborne writes:

At the AGM in March of this year a request was made by Steve Burnell for help with finding a hotel for the next AGM in March 2024. Immediately I thought I would enjoy this project and with Phil Rafferty sitting next to me he too was very keen to be involved.

On the way back from Harrogate we began to talk about how we would go about this task. We received a good briefing from Steve who said that if we could find a hotel in central England that would be great.

I started to think about Birmingham and its surroundings; a big place with lots of potential! I looked on Google for potential hotels and started ringing around. It is very interesting how the first couple of minutes of a call can seriously influence your opinion. I did not like it when they said to me "Could you put all that in an email", or "We have a special number that you can ring at 10 pence per minute". The other problem in big cities is parking and no space for guide dogs to toilet.

I was not making any progress with Birmingham and then friends started to give me recommendations: This gave us the opportunity to visit a highly recommended hotel in Reading. We were invited for an 11am meeting and duly arrived in good time. A quite serious discussion took place about what we required. I do have to say at this point that we were not offered any hospitality (not even water for my dog). It's a small thing but it did upset us both! We spent nearly two hours in that hotel which we did like. They pump beautiful perfumes in the reception area which are very nice indeed. Looking around outside Phil was very clear in saying that it was not suitable for guide dogs as there was not grass and only one little side road for toileting. Anyway, we left the hotel quite thirsty and hungry! So our first impressions and the dog issue made it very easy to dismiss this hotel. More to follow in the next gazette.

Become a Steward or Tournament Organiser!

Stewards play a vital role at our events, by helping out in the chess room. Their accommodation is paid for, they receive a fee and they may claim their travel costs. We would like to add to our list of stewards that we can call on.

We also need more tournament organisers. They have their accommodation and entry fee paid. You don't necessarily have to have been the person negotiating the contract with the hotel or taking the bookings, but it is essential that we have a coordinator present at an event.

If you are interested in possibly taking up either of these roles, please contact the committee for further information.

Gill Smith

Correspondence Chess Director's Report

Paul Benson writes:

Entries to the BCA LEAGUE 2024-25, starting on 1st January 2024, are now being accepted. Closing date 23rd November 2023. Correspondence play can take place using a variety of methods, Braille, cassette, email, telephone, according to mutual agreement. For further information contact the Correspondence Chess Director, details as shown in list of Officers.

Anyone seeking an opponent for a couple of friendly games should contact myself, details given in list of Officers.

47th BCA CORRESPONDENCE CHAMPIONSHIP 2023-24

Premier - Group Leader Paul Benson

Scores: Philip Doyle 3-4, Alec Crombie 2-3, George Phillips 1.5-2, Guy Whitehouse 1-3, Malcolm Jones 0.5-4.

Challengers - Group Leader Paul Benson

Final scores: Voldi Gailans 3-4, Mike Flood 2.5, Eric Gallacher 2.5, Maria Dod 2, Eleanor Tew 0.

BCA LEAGUE 2022-23

Division 1 - Group Leader Voldi Gailans

Final scores: Alec Crombie 2-2, Voldi Gailans 0.5, George Phillips 0.5.

Division 2 - Group Leader Guy Whitehouse

Final scores: Malcolm Jones 3-3, Mike Flood 1.5, Eric Gallacher 1.5, Eleanor Tew 0.

In closing, to those about to start a game: Break a peg!

David Hodgkins Memorial Annual Best Game Competition 2023

Time is running out to get your entries for the Annual Best Game Competition to Norman Andrews!

All BCA members, including associates and overseas members, can enter games, which must have been played in a BCA event or for a BCA team during 2023. So, if you play a game you're proud of at the International Autumn Tournament in Solihull or in the 19th Email Tournament please do enter it!

Eligible games that have been published in the gazette so far this year are automatically entered. However, as this is the last gazette of 2023 any additional games must now be sent to Norman either directly or via a committee member. The deadline is the 31st of December 2023!

Etiquette Matters

Steve Burnell, Chair of the Tournament Sub-committee, writes:

It's always a good idea from time to time to remind ourselves about some of the finer points of chess etiquette and good practice. Some players are relatively new to tournament chess, and others (although more experienced), may start to develop bad habits. I thought it might be a good idea to consider a few "Dos" and "Don'ts" to help make our tournaments run as smoothly as possible.

One issue which is regularly raised is the distraction caused by noise from others in the chess room. Being distracted by those around us isn't confined just to chess players of course. Have you ever sat through a theatre performance or music concert to find the person sitting next to you is eating a very large bag of crisps or noisily unwrapping a bag of sweets? Noisy audiences are something that I've heard actors complaining about on many occasions. I recently heard of one actor who was so distracted by a front row audience member studying their mobile phone, that he marched off stage, snatched it from the person, put it in his pocket and went back on stage to finish the performance. Fortunately, our arbiters, in accordance with BCA guidelines, are a little more lenient when it comes to mobile phones. In our tournaments you will be given a second chance before a game is forfeited. However, it's worth remembering that in a general weekend chess tournament if your phone goes off, you may not have it snatched out of your hand by the arbiter, but you will find that the game will be snatched away from you and will be declared lost. Keeping noise to a minimum is something we can all help with, by considering some of the following:

To avoid any unnecessary disruption or noise at the start of the round, please try to be in the chess room a few minutes before the game starts. Make sure you have your board and pieces set up before the clocks are started.

As soon as you have finished your game, leave the room without getting into a discussion about the merits of your opening, why you really should have won, etc. In one of my former chess clubs a member of our team, having just lost his game, announced to his opponent “You deserved to win that game as much as my mother deserves to be Prime Minister”. A bit extreme maybe, but it’s always better to leave such comments until you are safely in the bar.

Try to announce your moves clearly and repeat your opponent’s moves equally clearly. This helps to avoid mismatched positions which always lead to noise. Ideally, unless you both agree otherwise, use the phonetic chess algebraic alphabet – Anna, Bella, Caesar, etc. Most people record their moves on a small pocket recorder. Ideally this means that you can record your move while you are announcing it, and likewise record your opponent’s move while you are repeating it.

On a couple of more general points about chess etiquette, if you are offering a draw then do it while your own clock is running and not during your opponent’s thinking time i.e. announce your move, offer a draw, and then press your clock. Although a draw offer is valid whenever it is made, it is considered poor practice to do this either before you make your move or while your opponent is thinking. Be aware that once you have made a draw offer, it can’t be taken back and it is up to your opponent to either accept it or decline it. This can be done either verbally or simply by your opponent making a move.

If you are asking an arbiter for a time check on the clock, you should do this during your own thinking time and not your opponent’s.

Finally, there is sometimes confusion about our equivalent of the “touch move” rule. For a sighted person, as soon as they touch a piece they are committed to move it, so long as a legal move is possible. Once they put it on a square and let go, the piece is there to stay. For us, once a piece is picked up off its square, it has to be moved, again providing a legal move is possible. Once you put it down on a square and let go of it, you can’t then retract the move. With many of us playing by correspondence, email or over the internet in some way, we may have fallen into the habit of “trying out” a particular move on the board to see what it looks like. This can’t be done in OTB chess, so if you are going to “try out” a particular move, then do it in your head rather than on the board! The arbiters watch out for this and will enforce the “touch move” rule if anyone is seen breaking it.

Our arbiters and stewards do a great job in ensuring our tournaments run efficiently. We can all play our part by being clear about what is and what isn’t acceptable during play. Our tournaments may be more relaxed and friendly than the average weekend tournament, but we all need to help ensure they run as smoothly as possible.

Reminder: Audio Version of Chess Magazine Available

Every month Hugh Lawson, our volunteer reader, records extracts from the mainstream publication “Chess Magazine” for the benefit of BCA members who are visually impaired and resident in the UK. This service has already proved to be extremely popular, but we are keen that every eligible member is aware of it.

Regular features include a comprehensive editorial by International Master Malcolm Pein on the latest developments in the game, “How Good is your Chess” by Grandmaster Daniel King, “How to Beat a Grandmaster”, “Never Mind the Grandmasters” and “60 seconds” - a short interview with a well-known chess player. Every issue features several interesting, annotated games.

The magazine can be played on a memory stick which the BCA will provide in a pouch to be sent and returned in the post. You will need a USB media player such as those available from the RNIB for less than £50. Alternatively, it is possible to use a computer to play the files from the memory stick, or they may be streamed or downloaded from our Dropbox account.

The total listening time for each set of Hugh's recordings is generally well over three hours.

If you would like to receive the magazine, please either email me or telephone Norman Wragg and we will be delighted to add your name to the growing list of recipients.

Mark Kirkham

How Good is Your Chess?

Gerry Walsh's monthly "How Good Is Your Chess?" training, held over Zoom, remains very popular! In these sessions students are taken through the opening moves of a game and then asked to predict the succeeding moves for one side or the other. Points are given to those who guess correctly, and sometimes fewer points are given for other moves. Recordings of recent sessions are available for anyone interested in finding out about this type of training. Having attended a few sessions myself, I can highly recommend them to players of all standards!

The sessions are very informal, the points awarded are a subsidiary to the main objective, which is to provide instruction, to give us an opportunity to work together as a group to find solutions and to enjoy some very exciting chess. For those not used to solving chess problems it is a wonderful opportunity to start, and an encouragement to become involved by suggesting moves at each stage of the game. There is no criticism of individuals' suggestions, and anyone is free to suggest any possible move.

At the end of each month, I will send a note to the usergroup, reminding everyone of the next session and asking for names of those interested in taking part in the next session. I will then liaise with the group and Gerry to find a suitable day. For those not familiar with using Zoom, help is available, either for accessing the sessions on a PC or an iPhone.

The scores from the September 2023 session were as follows: Voldi Gailans 28, Richard Harrington 25, Eleanor Tew and Lea Ryan 23. Abi Baker 22. Mark Hague 20, John Ramm 19, Nene Clayton 18. Well done everybody!

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the sessions.

Voldi Gailans

2023 Chairman's Cup

Once again, the Chairman's Cup was held at the Marsham Court hotel in Bournemouth with its comfortable rooms, delicious food and very friendly and helpful staff. Rail strikes aside, it was a joy to see the number of attendees back to pre-COVID levels; 23 players and 39 attendees. The tournament this year had very much of an international flavour, and in this regard, I think a special mention should be given to new member, Teresa Codina, who travelled all the way from Spain; Mahendra Galani, who once again flew all the way from Austria, and our very own regular attendee, Olle Engstrom, who travelled all the way from Sweden. It was also a wonderful joy and surprise to see Colin Chambers, who despite undergoing a very recent hip replacement, had travelled down with Barbara and Julie. As well as the joy of seeing familiar faces, it was great to meet some new members too: Teresa Codina, Alok Kaushik and Geetha Shamanna.

I always think of these seven day events as being like a chess holiday, with just one game a day and afternoons free to chill or enjoy the local surroundings with entertainment each evening.

Maybe the tournament should have been called the Chairman's Cups, as this year we had three cups: the Chairman's Cup, the Challenger's Cup for those whose grade was under 1300, and due to there being a BCA record of six female players, there was also a Ladies' Cup.

Once again, it was decided to merge all cups into one section. I'll start off by listing the players in their July grade order.

Stan Lovell 1634, Bill Armstrong 1632, Olle Engstrom 1615, Richard Murphy 1611, Ian Blencowe 1601, Philip Gordon 1488, George Phillips 1450, Mahendra Galani 1404, Gary Wickett 1358, Mark Hague 1332, John Jenkins 1308, Tony Elbourn 1286, Teresa Codina 1274, Simon Highsmith 1246, Steve Bailey 1190, Neda Koohnavard 1182, Gill Smith 1110, Tony Lawton 1077, Jim Cuthbert 1060, Abi Baker 1049, Lea Ryan 844, Richard Harrington 689, Irene Elbourn 680.

The tournament was officially opened on the Saturday evening by the Mayor of Bournemouth, Councillor Anne Filer, who gave a most moving and beautiful short speech. All but one of the results in the first round went according to grade, with the one exception being Neda's draw with Richard Murphy.

Round 2 shook things up a bit with some interesting results. Phil drew with our current British Champion Stan Lovell. Mark beat Olle. Neda beat George. Gill drew with John, and Abi drew against Simon.

On Sunday evening, our brains were further put through their paces by professional Quiz Master, Keith Lewis, with the winning team being Jim's Jellybeans: comprising Julie, Jim, Val, Tony Lawton, Abi and most importantly Beany, alias Joyce, Abi's guide dog.

Round 3 once again saw some interesting results. Ian beat our Chairman and former British Champion Bill Armstrong. Lea beat Gill. Tony Elbourn drew with Olle. However, I am told the most entertaining game of the round, which almost went the full four hours was Irene's game against Richard Harrington; Irene executing the mate just in the nick of time.

At this juncture I think it's time to have a quick peep at the leading scores. Ian is the stand-alone leader on a perfect score of 3; hotly pursued by Stan on 2.5. We then have Bill, Mahendra, John, Richard Murphy, Neda, Mark and Gary on 2.

On Monday evening our tired brains soared upon the rich harmonious voices of the Southern Union Chorus. These guys produce the most incredible harmonies and vocal arrangements in true barber shop style.

In round 4 Ian maintains his lead now having 3.5 with a draw against Stan. But now joining Stan in second place with 3 points are Bill with his win against Mark, and Neda with her win against Mahendra.

On Tuesday evening, our ears were once again indulged, this time by the sublime sounds of jazz duo, Sarah and Phil: Sarah taking care of sax, clarinet, flute and vocals (obviously not all at the same time!); whilst Phil accompanied her with some very rhythmic and jazzy piano work. In the break, Sarah had a short chat with Abi and Thuy, and the next thing you know, Abi ran off to fetch her violin, and whilst Phil was enjoying a well-earned drink, Thuy jumped on the piano stall and the daring couple joined Sarah in a rendition of "Summer Time" and "Autumn Leaves". Although completely unrehearsed, it was though the little trio had played together for years.

Round 5. Ian now secures a full point lead with his win against the up-and-coming chess goddess Neda, who despite having a bad cold is probably in the midst of her best tournament yet. Bill drew with Stan, and they now share joint second position with 3.5.

On Wednesday evening, local chess player, Martin Simons, graded about 2000, took on a recent BCA record number of 16 players in the simultaneous display, with each player permitted to choose his/her colour. Martin achieved 10 wins, 6 draws and no losses. Those who drew included: John, Colin, Stan, Bill, Ian and Norman Andrews. I was the first to resign; my game lasting just five moves; a pretty, if not embarrassing little miniature, which I will include at the end of this report.

Round 6. Ian holds on to his lead with a draw against George; Ian now having 5 points. Stan muscles in to stand alone in second place on 4.5 with his win against Tony Elbourn. Trailing behind on 4 points are: Bill with his draw against Richard Murphy; Neda with her win against Phil; Olle with his win against Mahendra; and Gary with his win against Simon. The other game of interest in this penultimate round was Abi's draw against John.

Unfortunately, due to rail strikes, a number of people had to return home a day early, including many of our much valued musician friends who would no longer be around for our traditional *soirée* on the Friday evening. We therefore decided to have two *soirées*; the first being on Thursday afternoon. The *soirées* have long become a much-loved part of BCA events. As well as the regular performers, this year it was a joy to see some new talent perform their debut acts. We were indulged with the exotic sounds of Bollywood, first of all with a couple of songs sung by Mahendra; followed by two further renditions by new member Alok Kaushik. During the Friday *soirée*, we heard the Wayward Wind by father and daughter duo, Colin and Julie. Richard Murphy also gave a rousing debut performance of an ancient folk song, which he sang unaccompanied.

On Thursday evening our brains were once again put to the test with the murder mystery. What a talented bunch we all are! Aspiring detectives aside, three of our members: Julie, Freya, Norman Andrews and James Connors bedazzled us with their beguiling acting skills as the three main suspects. There was just one team that were too wise to be fooled: comprising Gill, Tanvi, Moira, Steve Bailey and Tony and Irene Elbourn; who proved to be Clueless in name only. Returning to the subject of budding thespians, although he was not part of the cast, Richard Murphy entered into the spirit of the evening wholeheartedly and almost had me falling off my chair with laughter, adopting a persona which could have been penned by P J Woodhouse.

Round 7 is tense. Ian is drawn to play against Olle; and Stan is drawn to play against Gary. Thus, with just a half point lead, Ian needs to win to guarantee being the stand-alone champion. I am not certain which game finished first, but I can say that both games ended in a draw. I think Ian owes me a pint for that one! Other games of note are Neda drew with Bill, and Tony Elbourn drew with Richard Murphy.

As there were probably a record number of prizes this year, with a total of five people sharing third place, I'll mention the prizes first and then list the scores.

Congratulations go to all the following players, but especially to Ian Blencowe, who is the proud owner of the 2023 Chairman's Cup. In second place was Stan. Sharing the prize money for third place were Bill and Olle.

In the Challengers' Section, congratulations go to Neda Koohnavard, who picked up both the Challengers Cup and the Ladies' Cup. The prize for second place went to Tony Elbourn and third place went to Teresa Codina. Lea won Grading Group D. Grading Group C was shared by Abi, Jim and Tony Lawton. I think it's worth mentioning here that Jim had to default one of his games due to arriving two days into the tournament. Grading Group B went to Gary. Grading Group A was won by George.

Final scores. Blencowe 5.5; Lovell 5; Armstrong, Engstrom, Phillips, Wickett and Koohnavard 4.5; Murphy, Gordon, Jenkins, Elbourn T, Codina and Lawton 3.5; Galani, Hague, Bailey, Smith, Cuthbert, Baker and Ryan 3; Highsmith 2.5; Elbourn I 2; Harrington 1.

Before signing off with my miniature, please let me take this opportunity to thank Tournament Organisers John and Pam Jenkins; our Treasurer Gill Smith, who plays a key role in all our events; Arbiter Gerry Walsh and first time BCA Arbiter James Connors; our Steward Norman Andrews; Freya Smith and Moira Whittle for running the raffle and raising an impressive £154; and Julie Leonard for once again stepping into Joan's shoes and running the soireés. Finally, thank you to everyone who has contributed to making the week the wonderful success that it was.

Martin Simons – Gary Wickett

1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 Nf6 3 d4 Nxe4? 4 dxe5 Nxf2 5 Qf3 R.

Gary Wickett

Sadly, it was not possible to replicate one of Ian Blencowe's games in the gazette, but Neda Koohnavard chose the following game for publication:

Round 6: Neda Koohnavard v Philip Gordon

1. e4 e6 2. Nc3 d5 3. d3 Bb4 4. Bd2 Nf6 5. e5 Nd7 6. Nf3 Nc6 7. d4 Ne7 8. a3 Ba5 9. b4 Bb6 10. Na4 c6
11. Nxb6 axb6 12. Bd3 b5 13. c3 Nb6 14. 0-0 Bd7 15. Ne1 h6 16. Bc2 Nc4 17. Bc1 Nc8 18. Nd3 N8b6
19. f4 Na4 20. Bxa4 Rxa4 21. Nc5 Ra7 22. Nxd7 Kxd7 23. f5 Rf8 24. fxe6+ fxe6 25. Ra2 Qe7 26. Rxf8 Qxf8
27. Rf2 Qg8 28. Qh5 Ke7 29. Qg6 Nxa3 30. Bxh6 Ra8 31. Bxg7 Qe8 32. Bf6+ Kd7 33. Qg7+ Kc8
34. Be7 Kc7 35. Bd6+ Kb6 36. Rf8 Qh5 37. Qc7+ Ka7 38. Qa5 ++

2023 Remote Summer Cup

Julie Leonard writes:

The initial lineup for the 2023 Remote Summer Cup comprised of twenty-four entrants, including eight lady players and seven participants from overseas. This was slightly more than for last year's first ever BCA Summer Cup! The event was a five round Swiss tournament, with two weeks allowed for each round. Games were played on a date arranged by the players, using a mutually agreed platform such as Skype, telephone, Lichess, Zoom or WhatsApp. Usually, there was also a timekeeper to operate the clock. Gerry Walsh and I controlled the event. The aim of this tournament is to help BCA members keep their chess skills sharp from the comfort of their own homes over the summer months. Half point byes were available but not a single one was requested, which goes to show how keen the participants were to play all five games!

Round 1 kicked off on the 29th of July. Most games went according to seeding but there were a couple of unexpected results with Nene Clayton and Neda Koohnavard both holding their higher rated opponents to draws. Already they were joint leaders in the U1300 section and the Ladies' section!

In Round 2 all games were decisive and two thirds of them were wins for black. At the end of Round 2 only Steve Burnell, Stan Lovell, Paul Baldwin, Colin Fisher and Mark Hague were on maximum scores. Nene and Neda remained just half a point behind the frontrunners.

Round 3 saw Steve Burnell and Stan Lovell emerge as joint leaders on three points apiece. Nene and Neda both won their games too, staying neck and neck in the U1300 section and the Ladies' section.

The crucial clashes between Stan and Steve on board 1 and Neda and Nene on board 2 took place in Round 4. Stan managed to win and take sole lead, but the ladies drew their game and joined Steve Burnell, Norman Wragg and Colin Fisher on three points. Sadly, Lea Ryan had to withdraw from the tournament before playing her Round 4 game.

In the final round, Stan was drawn against Colin Fisher. Could Stan win and achieve a perfect score, or draw to finish outright first? Meanwhile, Nene and Neda were up against formidable opponents Norman Wragg and Steve Burnell respectively. It was a nail-biting finish! Colin managed to beat Stan and joined him on 4 points. Then Nene also moved up to 4 points by winning her game against Norman. The next day, Neda drew with Steve Burnell, meaning that for the first time in this event she slipped just behind Nene.

Congratulations to Stan, Colin and Nene for finishing joint first! The Open trophy goes to Stan on tie-break and will probably be presented to him at the 30th Chess Theme Break. The U1300 and Ladies Trophies go to Nene, who is hoping to pop in at our AGM weekend in the spring to have her trophies presented. I felt bad about Colin not getting a trophy, but he said he was just delighted to be among the joint winners! The full list of final scores is as follows:

On 4 points Stan Lovell, Colin Fisher and Nene Clayton.

On 3.5 points Steve Burnell, Paul Baldwin, Neda Koohnavard and Olle Engstrom (Sweden).

On 3 points Norman Wragg, Voldi Gailans, Eamonn Casey (Ireland) and Anthony Borg (Malta).

On 2.5 points Mark Hague.

On 2 points Mahendra Galani (Austria), Tony Lawton, Teresa Codina (Spain), Bittor Ibanez, Malcolm Jones, John Ramm and Abi Baker.

On 1.5 points Lukwesa Matapo Kalumba (Zambia) and Gill Smith.

On 1 point Eleanor Tew and Lea Ryan (withdrawn).

On 0.5 point Marilyn Bland (USA).

Thanks go to Abi Baker for taking the entries for this event and to Bittor Ibanez for collating all the games! (Please email the editor if you would like a copy of the pgn file.) Gerry and I are also grateful to every single person who acted as a timekeeper during the event, giving up their time to help others. Special mentions go to Nene Clayton, Mark Hague and Lea Ryan, who all timed more Summer Cup games than they played! I would also like to thank Gerry for controlling the event single-handedly while I nipped off to Portugal on holiday for ten days! Finally, many thanks to all the players for the friendly and flexible way in which they approached this tournament. Inevitably there were technical issues during some of the games, but everyone worked together to find solutions even if it meant re-scheduling the game. It was a real pleasure for Gerry and me to control this event. Hopefully we'll have another one next year!

Each of the three joint winners was asked to select a game for this gazette. Stan chose his Round 4 clash with Steve, describing it as his most significant game.

Stan Lovell v Steve Burnell, 2023 BCA Summer Cup R4, Played on Lichess on 11/09/2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nc3 d6 3. e4 g6 4. Be2 Bg7 5. Be3 O-O 6. Qd2 Na6 7. Nf3 c6 8. h4 h5 9. Ng5 e5 10. dxe5 dxe5
11. Qxd8 Rxd8 12. Bc4 Rf8 13. Bxa6 bxa6 14. O-O-O Bb7 15. Rd3 a5 16. Rhd1 Rfc8 17. f3 Ba6 18. R3d2 Bf8
19. a3 Be7 20. Na4 c5 21. Nc3 Bc4 22. Nd5 Nxd5 23. exd5 f6 24. d6 Bxd6 25. Rxd6 fxe5 26. Rxe6 Kh7
27. Rxe5 Be2 28. Rd7+ Kh8 29. Rxe5+ Kg8 30. Rxe5 Rd8 31. Red5 Rxd7 32. Rxd7 Bf1 33. g4 Be2
34. Bxc5 Bxf3 35. Rd3 Bxe4 36. Rg3 1-0

Colin selected his final round encounter with Stan. Colin says, "It was a Grunfeld and fluctuated throughout with almost constant tension. Possibly h3 would have solved some problems for White on move 10. Black placing his knight on d5 was strong and a bit of a thorn. Black was using more of his time, and this led to a loss of his queenside pawns and then a snatch of White's A pawn gifted a piece and the game."

Colin Fisher v Stan Lovell, 2023 BCA Summer Cup R5, Played by telephone on 25/09/2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 Bg7 7. Nf3 c5 8. Bc4 Nc6 9. Be3 O-O 10. O-O Bg4
11. e5 cxd4 12. cxd4 e6 13. Rc1 Rc8 14. Bb5 Nb4 15. Qb3 Nd5 16. Ng5 Bf5 17. Be2 h6 18. Nf3 Qe7
19. Bd2 Rfd8 20. Rfd1 a6 21. Ne1 h5 22. Nf3 Be4 23. Bg5 f6 24. exf6 Bxf6 25. Bxf6 Qxf6 26. Rxc8 Rxc8
27. Qxb7 Rc2 28. Qxa6 Nc3 29. Re1 Rxa2 30. Qc8+ Kg7 31. Qxc3 1-0

Nene chose her final round game against Norman Wragg. She said it stood out from her other games because it was the most challenging and she enjoyed it a lot!

Nene Clayton v Norman Wragg, 2023 BCA Summer Cup R5, Played via Skype on 03/10/2023

1. d4 d5 2. Be3 Nf6 3. c3 Nbd7 4. Na3 e5 5. Nc2 e4 6. f3 Bd6 7. f4 Nb6 8. g3 Bd7 9. Bh3 Bxh3 10. Nxb3 Qd7
11. Ng1 Nc4 12. Bc1 O-O 13. e3 c5 14. Ne2 Qg4 15. O-O Qh3 16. Rf2 Ng4 17. Rg2 Rad8 18. b3 Nb6
19. Qe1 Rfe8 20. a4 Re6 21. dxc5 Bxc5 22. b4 Bd6 23. Qd1 Rh6 24. a5 Nxb2 25. Rxb2 Qxb2+ 26. Kf1 Nc8
27. Ke1 Qg2 28. Kd2 Rh1 29. Ne1 Qf2 30. Ba3 Ne7 31. g4 Ng6 32. Kc2 Rh2 33. f5 Nh4 34. Kb3 Qxe2
35. Qxd5 Qxe3 36. Qxb7 Bb8 37. Rd1 Rhd2 38. Rxd2 Qxd2 39. Qxe4 Qd5+ 40. Qxd5 Rxd5 41. Nc2 h5
42. gxh5 Nxf5 43. Kc4 Re5 44. Kd3 Nh6 45. Nd4 Rxb5 46. Nc6 Bf4 47. Nxa7 g5 48. a6 Rh3+ 49. Kc2 Be5
50. Nb5 Bb8 51. a7 Bxa7 52. Nxa7 g4 53. b5 g3 54. b6 g2 55. Bc5 Nf5 56. b7 Ne3+ 57. Bxe3 Rxe3
58. b8=Q+ Kh7 59. Qh2+ Kg6 60. Qxg2+ Kh7 61. Qh1+ Kg8 62. Qg1+ 1-0

19th BCA Email Tournament

Philip Doyle and Eamonn Casey write:

Welcome to our 19th BCA Email Tournament! There are 16 participants on this occasion. We have divided these into four divisions with 4 players in each of them, based on ECF ratings, performance in previous email tournaments where applicable, and where possible, incorporated promotion and relegation. Because there are four players in all divisions, half the players will have two whites, and half the players will have two blacks, dependent on the seeding. Each player will play a maximum of 3 games. Divisions 1 and 3 will be controlled by Eamonn, and Divisions 2 and 4 will be controlled by Philip.

The composition of each division is as follows:

Division 1: Bill Armstrong, Steve Burnell, Eamonn Casey, Philip Doyle.

Division 2: John Fullwood, Malcolm Jones, Voldi Gailans, Philip Gordon.

Division 3: Marilyn Bland, Anton Emery, John Ramm, Tony Elbourn.

Division 4: Gill Smith, Lukwesa Matapo Kalumba, Michael Flood, Richard Harrington.

Ex-Champing at the Bit 12

Paul Benson writes:

As the memoirs of Simone Signoret tell us: “Nostalgia Isn't What It Used To Be”. Another trip down memory lane for your Annotator. My first real consistent opening choice for White started in my second year of competitive chess. A much stronger player at my club kept beating me up in friendly blitz games with a really strange system. I was so impressed that at the next opportunity with White in a club match I blasted it out at my unsuspecting opponent. Yes, it produced a victory, a 5-year addiction to this fascinating beast had begun.

Sokolsky - Strugatsch, White Russia 1958.

1. b4

Welcome to a respectable off-beat opening with no less than 3 names.

The Orang-utan - Named by S. Tartakower after a visit to the Bronx Zoo where an orang-utan named Susan somehow indicated to him to play 1. b4 in his next game.

The Polish - In honour of the above-mentioned Tartakower, a citizen of Poland, who often played the opening.

The Sokolsky - After A. P. Sokolsky who contributed much to theory followed by publishing a monograph on the system.

There are many sensible responses and depending on how Black handles matters White can often offer a gambit pawn. Alekhine however felt White was revealing intentions too soon permitting Black to respond without having made any commitments. It seems you can't please all the people all the time.

1. ... e5

Attempting to list the various defence options here is not appropriate. However, suffice it to say this attempt to block the a1 - h8 diagonal is rather challenging. Positional players tend to choose pawn d5 intending postponement of direct aggression to the middlegame.

2. Bb2 f6

And this is positively throwing down the gauntlet. Tactical options are now available for White, assuming the necessary homework has been carried out.

3. e4

Releasing the white d1 queen and f1 bishop for action, fine, but is not the b4 pawn now en prise?

3. ... Bxb4

Entering into the murky complications of the Tartakower Gambit. Is the sacrifice of the pawn sound? Wrong question. There is going to be plenty of action for the pawn, Black must calculate carefully, all the fun lines are available only to White. But some players will grab all goodies on offer, in the belief they can tough it through the activity and enter the endgame material up. Let the philosophical fight of "Materialism Versus Activity" begin!

4. Bc4

Taking control of the light square a2 - g8 diagonal, in particular the f7 square is a centre of attention. Black is strongly advised to neutralise this c4 bishop as quickly as possible, fine, but how?

4. ... Nc6

Planning Na5 forcing White to decide what to do with the c4 bishop.

5. f4 exf4

The apparent granite blockage of the a1 - h8 diagonal has been softened, the white bishops are beginning to look threatening.

6. Nh3 Nge7

Wisely avoiding the temptation of holding onto the extra pawn. Instead, 6. ... g5 runs into tactics with 7. Nxf5 when 7. ... fxg5 8. Bxh8 black drops the exchange for a pawn. Black can decline capturing that g5 knight but then the weak doubled f-pawns on a semi-open file would surely soon be rounded up.

7. Nxf4 Na5

Black is trying either to force the white c4 bishop off the a2 - g8 diagonal or trade it off. Either way the strength of the white bishops will disappear, right? White to play takes a considerable gulp from "The Coffee Cup Of Inspiration".

8. Bxf6

Appropriate Fischerism: "Tactics flow from a positionally superior game." No argument about that philosophy here, but was White actually superior when this bishop was back skulking on the b2 square? Each player has 3 minor pieces in play. Fine, but both white bishops were pointing into the black kingside and the f4 knight was hovering in that same area. On the other hand, a couple of black minor pieces, b4 bishop and a5 knight, are away from the potential scene of action. Add in the possibility of the white queen jumping in with Qh5+ and thoughts of a dynamic option should be rapidly coming to mind. So White is actually positionally superior but is all this enough to justify a tactical assault? And don't forget, the white c4 bishop is still en prise, so Black now has the luxury of grabbing either of the opposing bishops.

Now back to the theme of this article, nostalgia. So, has this sharp variation ever appeared for me in a competitive game? Yes, my moves were rattled out virtually immediately to achieve this precise position. The "shell-shocked" opponent haplessly wandered into a side-line given in the notes to the next black reply. White soon won!

8. ... Rf8 Sensibly declining entering into complications, some tactical ideas run:

(A). 8. ... gxf6 9. Qh5+ Kf8 10. Qf7+ mate is just fantasy.

(B). 8. ... gxf6 9. Qh5+ Ng6 10. Nxf6 hxg6 11. Qxh8+ Ke7 12. Qxd8+ Kxd8 13. Be2 White is an exchange up.

(C). 8. ... gxf6 9. Qh5+ Ng6 10. Nxg6 hxg6 11. Qxh8+ Bf8 12. Be2 White is an exchange up.

(D). 8. ... gxf6 9. Qh5+ Ng6 10. Nxg6 Nxc4 11. Nxh8+ Kf8 12. Qf7+ mate.

(E). 8. ... gxf6 9. Qh5+ Ng6 10. Nxg6 Nxc4 11. Nxh8+ Ke7 12. Qf7+ Kd6 13. Qxc4 Qxh8 14. Qxb4+ White emerges a rook up.

(F). 8. ... Nxc4 9. Bxg7 Rg8 10. Qh5+ Ng6 11. Nxg6 hxg6 12. Qxg6+ Ke7 13. O-O when White is a piece for pawn down but has queen, rook, bishop on the attack. Black should not survive this.

(G). 8. ... Nxc4 9. Bxg7 Rg8 10. Qh5+ Ng6 11. Nxg6 Rxg7 12. Ne5+ Kf8 13. O-O+ Kg8 14. Nxc4 when White has won a pawn.

Fine, but Black has a bishop pair versus a knight pair with all heavy pieces present, interesting middlegame struggle ahead. So White, with both unprotected bishops attacked, desperately needs a massive gulp from “The Coffee Cup of Inspiration”.

9. Nh5

Amazing! Only 9 moves played and White is threatening Nxg7+ mate, and even more remarkable is that a queen is not involved. Of course, Black can easily disrupt the mating pattern, but sifting out the best option is far from easy.

9. ... Nxc4

A doubler. Firstly, the white control of the f7 square is eliminated, the black king has just received some vital breathing space. Secondly, having grabbed a piece, Black now has options of offering material back in future tradings in an attempt to reduce the white pressure.

A couple of different captures needed consideration, they run:

(A). 9. ... gxf6 10. Ng7+ mate is delightfully picturesque but never going to happen.

(B). 9. ... Rxf6 10. Nxf6+ gxf6 11. Qh5+ Kf8 12. Qf7+ mate is easily avoided.

(C). 9. ... Rxf6 10. Nxf6+ gxf6 11. Qh5+ Ng6 12. Bg8 Kf8 13. Bxh7 Ne5 14. O-O Kg7 15. Bf5 Qh8 16. Qe2 with nominal material equality but all the short-term attacking possibilities are with White.

10. Nxg7+ Kf7 11. O-O Kg8

Castling by hand, black king safety achieved, right? Fine if so, but the lack of pawn cover suggests Black should quickly shuffles some minor pieces kingside to challenge the white activity.

12. Qh5

With the idea of Qh6 - Ne6 - Qg7+ mate. This is easy for Black to prevent with just a little willingness to be unmaterialistic.

12. ... Rxf6

A tripler. Firstly, a potentially dangerous attacking white unit is eliminated at the relatively cheap cost of an exchange. Secondly, the black e7 knight is no longer pinned, both it and thus the lounging d8 queen are now free to strengthen the defences. Thirdly, the white g7 knight is no longer defended and so vulnerable to capture by the black king. As hinted at previously, because Black earlier snatched the white c4 bishop it is sensible here to return some material to relieve pressure on the g8 king.

13. Rxf6

Black to play must bear in mind this appropriate Fischerism: “Obvious therefore dubious!”

13. ... Ng6

Another tripler from Black. Firstly, an unleashing of the skulking black d8 queen hits the unprotected white f6 rook. Secondly, White still has the problem of how to save the unprotected g7 knight. Thirdly, if need be, the black b4 bishop now has options of retreating to either e7 or f8 to assist the defence. And before moving on, that “Obvious therefore dubious!” Fischerism needs explaining. If (unlucky) 13. ... Kxg7 14. Rf7+ and either 14. ... Kg8 or Kh8 then 15. Qxh7+ mate satisfactorily punishes auto-greed.

White to play is yet again called upon to quaff from “The Coffee Cup of Inspiration”.

14. Rxc6

White initiated tactics with 8. Bxf6, it is almost certain that this precise position was not envisaged as the bishop charged in. With a couple of units en prise and no single move capable of saving both White searches for a move which causes the most confusion for the least cost.

14. ... hxc6 15. Qxc6

Skirmishing over, a discussion of the clarified position might assist. Black has emerged a piece up with White having a couple of kingside connected passed pawns in return. All the immediate defenders of the black king have been eliminated with White having queen plus knight still on the attack. Who stands better in this very rare type of imbalance? A good question which is not easy to answer.

White has the immediate threat of Ne6+ picking off the black d8 queen. Though further examination tells us that Ne6+ is a mating net of 2 moves. Black can stop this immediate white 2-mover threat in several ways. However, avoiding the immediate white threat does not automatically imply complete king safety. In essence, despite the simplification Black is still in danger and must play accurately.

15. ... Kh8

Stepping out of the power of the dangerous x-ray attack. Fine, but matters are far trickier than might appear. Did Black have anything better? Yes, but it requires a little tactical awareness to find the correct idea, some lines run:

(A). 15. ... Ne5 16. Qh6 Bf8 pinning and winning the white g7 knight, Black would be 2 pieces up for just 2 pawns.

(B). 15. ... Ne5 16. Ne6+ Nxc6 17. Nxd8 Be7 wins the trapped white d8 knight.

(C). 15. ... Ne5 16. Qg3 Kh7 17. Qxe5 d6 18. Qd4 Bc5 pins the white d4 queen to her king.

(D). 15. ... Ne5 16. Qg3 Kh7 17. Qxe5 d6 18. Qg3 Bc5+ 19. Kh1 Bd4 forks the white g7 knight and the a1 rook, the g7 knight must fall, the 2 white pawns are surely not enough compensation.

(E). 15. ... Ne5 16. Qg3 Kh7 17. Nf5 d6 18. Qg7+ mate will never happen.

(F). 15. ... Ne5 16. Nf5 Qf6 17. d4 Nc6 18. c3 Bf8 when Black has a piece for 2 pawns and should eventually win but could be a long struggle.

(G). 15. ... Ne5 16. Qg3 Kh7 17. c3 Bd6 Black again keeps the extra piece, long game ahead.

In the game White to play, with only a queen and knight on the attack, has an opportunity to close in for a quick kill.

16. Ne8

A doubler. Firstly, when a unit moves it vacates a square for someone else, 17. Qg7+ mate is the threat. Secondly, the black queen is prevented from drifting kingside, e.g. Qg8 challenging the white queen while also giving vital defensive support to the shivering h8 king is denied.

16. ... Qe7

Preventing the immediate mate on the g7 square. Fine, but White can now demonstrate why the claim that queen and knight work well together is true.

17. Nf6 1-0

White has twin threats of mate on the h7 and g8 squares, Black has only a single sensible move to prevent both, a couple of conclusions run:

(A). 17. ... Qg7 18. Qh5+ Qh7 19. Qxh7+ mate.

(B). 17. ... Qg7 18. Qh5+ Qh6 19. Qxh6+ mate.

Note that a diagonal-mirror move for White fails 17. ... Qg7 18. Qe8+ Bf8 and the mating attack is halted. White reaped the reward for bold play, albeit with a little help from the opponent when it became critical. Players under pressure can make unforced errors, it then just takes the required technique to push for the full point.

Puzzle from Mark

These puzzles are selected by Mark Hague from the website <http://www.wtharvey.com>, which contains many puzzles that challenge you to find a win from a position in a real game.

August 2023 Puzzle

Magnus Carlsen vs Vugar Gashimov, Moscow, 2009

8/p3rpk1/4nN1p/2pR1Q2/8/Pq4P1/4PP1P/6K1

White: King g1, Queen f5, Rook d5, Knight f6, Pawns a3, e2, f2, g3 and h2

Black: King g7, Queen b3, Rook e7, Pawns a7, c5, f7 and h6

White mates in two moves. Solution: 1. Qh7+ Kf8, 2. Qh8++ alternatively 1. Qh7+ Kxf6 2. Qxh6++

November 2023 Puzzle

Magnus Carlsen vs Alexander Grischuk, Monaco, 23/3/2011

5kr1/3q4/1p1P4/2r1Q2R/8/8/PpP5/1K2R3

White: King b1, Queen e5, Rooks h5 and e1, pawns a2, c2 and d6.

Black: King f8, Queen d7, Rooks g8 and c5, pawns b2 and b6.

White mates in three moves. The solution will appear in the February Gazette.

As this is a tricky mate in three, I've given a couple of clues below.

Clue 1: This mate involves 2 Queen moves and a Rook move but not necessarily in that order!

Clue 2: Don't forget the white pawn on d6.

Mark Hague

Silent Pigeons Coo

Congratulations to Tony Lawton, who had a book about him published in May this year! “Silent Pigeons Coo” is the story of his fight against progressive sensory loss. Written by John Moore, the book is described as a unique and balanced story of a deaf-blind man passionate to succeed in the mainstream. Born deaf and discovering encroaching blindness at the age of 16, Anthony Lawton’s future appeared to be full of locked doors. Prejudice. Delayed education. Distorted speech. Limited sight. But when benign strangers intercede and inner gifts reveal themselves the opportunity to pursue a childhood dream of speaking and participating in mainstream society become a realisable vision. He would need to do this before the consequences of dual sensory loss would again close the doors. Further details, including sound clips, photographs and information on how to purchase the paperback, are on this website: <https://silentpigeonscoo.co.uk/>.

Report of Stephen Hilton Memorial Chess Tournament

Editor’s note: Readers will recall that BCA member, Stephen Hilton, passed away in April of this year. The August gazette contained various tributes to him, including some that highlighted his work in the IBCA. Since then, it has been brought to my attention that an international Skype chess group has held a special tournament in his memory. I’ve no doubt that Steve would have felt honoured to have an event held for him by the international chess community to which he had dedicated so much of his time and energy. My gratitude goes to Viral Trivedi of India for the following report:

The Skype Chess group is a mailing list for blind chess players from all over the world. It organises different chess tournaments through Skype and Lichess.

Recently one of the finest blind chess players and a member of Skype Chess passed away: It was none other than our own Stephen Hilton. The group decided to pay tribute to Stephen by organising a chess tournament.

So, a five round chess tournament was organized on Skype from June to August 2023. A total of 48 players from 15 countries participated in this wonderful event and fondly remembered Stephen.

Ultimately, after five rounds of a closely fought tournament, Olivier Deville from France became champion, while Nirandas Devart from India stood second and third place was secured by Jairo Oswaldo Leyton Calderon from Nicaragua. Viral Trivedi was the tournament director who ensured maximum participation and fair play. The tournament was played in a very good spirit and everyone enjoyed it.

Viral Trivedi

Mary Lea's Story

Earlier in the year the committee received some wonderful feedback from our member, Mary Lea, in Northern Ireland. Mary has kindly given permission for her story to appear in the gazette. Here's what she wrote:

"I just wanted to thank you again for the board. Having been very depressed when you sent it about my sight this helped me keep playing, and I've now set up a chess club for kids and have taught a few adults to play. Today I played OTB at the City of Derry Chess Club and feel very grateful. It might have seemed a little thing, but it genuinely made a difference to my mental health, and I am able to give back to my local community. I don't feel so shut in, and you genuinely helped me. Thanks.

"I run an after-school chess club at our local library on Wednesday for children, which is well attended, and an adult session on Fridays. I've been approached to teach chess at a local youth club too, so that little seed really has helped so much. Two of my chess children took part in the UK primary school tournaments and got as far as the mega finals, while another of them is signing up to play in local tournaments this autumn. Locally I'm not the Blind Lady, I'm the Chess Lady."

Personalia

On Saturday 30th September, Val Warner and Jim Cuthbert were married in Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Wokingham. Many of their friends were present for the happy occasion, including a few from our association. Gill Smith very kindly arranged for a card to be sent on behalf of all their friends in the BCA. They had perfect weather for the big day, dry with gentle autumn sunshine. A few days later, they were heading to Weston-super-Mare, to honeymoon at the Lauriston Hotel. Let's all send them our warmest congratulations!

On 2nd October, Ednun Pourtahmasbi and his wife Emily Heathfield became a mum and dad for the first time! Baby Samuel Arthur weighed in at 2.9kg, which is just over 6lb 6oz in old money. I know all the members will join me in sending congratulations to all the family!

Julie Leonard

Peter Campbell Gibbs 28th May 1934 – 2nd July 2023

Celia Gibbs writes:

Peter was born in Bradford, West Yorkshire, the middle of three children, having an older brother and a younger sister. His father, a policeman, taught Peter to play chess when he was about ten years old. He soon began to love the game and to beat his father at the chess board. He excelled at junior school and won a free scholarship to the prestigious Bradford Grammar School. The headmaster at BGS did not hold chess in high regard saying it was an old man's game. However, Peter continued to play. An early overseas tournament was when he played in the Glorney Cup in Dublin in 1952. He became British Boys under-18 champion, which he shared with Bernard Cafferty and Peter Sanderson.

A classics scholar at BGS, he considered a teaching career but later decided to study law which he did so at Birmingham University. Whilst his fellow students were studying Peter continued his chess interests. He played in three world student events in Oslo, Uppsala and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). His opponent there was Boris Spassky, who later became World Champion. After graduating he pursued his legal career becoming articled clerk at Shipley Urban District Council. Following qualification as a Solicitor he worked for a while at Urmston Urban District Council near Manchester. In the early 1960s he became Town Planning Solicitor at Birmingham City Council. There he met his future wife, Celia and romance blossomed. They were married in 1964 when Peter became Deputy Town Clerk at Sutton Coldfield. Ten years spent at Sutton were very happy with the arrival of a son, Jonathan in 1967, and a daughter Claire, in 1970.

Sadly, Peter suffered a head injury in 1970 and months after the injury it was found he had a bleed on the brain. An operation was successful but it did leave him with epilepsy, which dogged his later life. While lying supine after his operation he continued to play postal chess. Celia took his moves to the hospital and Peter, without the aid of a chess board, gave Celia the reply move to send to his opponent. Following the accident, Peter did not play in any lengthy tournaments and concentrated on playing for his county, local chess clubs, playing correspondence chess and organising chess events.

For many years he wrote the chess columns for the Bradford Telegraph and Argus and later, the Birmingham Post. Following local government reorganisation in 1974 Peter became Secretary and Solicitor for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council until he retired in 1981. In 1975, Peter and Celia had a chance meeting with Geoff Carlin, the then British blind chess champion. After meeting Geoff and his wife Ruth socially on several occasions, Geoff asked if Peter would be his chess coach. It was then that Peter became a member of the BCA.

He accompanied Geoff to several foreign tournaments including Germany, Hungary and Poland. Celia later became a BCA member and Peter and Celia accompanied the Junior BCA teams to Belgium and Spain. The BCA became very important to Peter and Celia. They enjoyed the camaraderie and friendship of the BCA members and ran the Chess Theme Breaks in Windermere for 27 years. They were awarded Honorary Life Membership in 2012. In 1988 Peter was given the President's Award for Services to Chess by the British Chess Federation, and in 2010 he was awarded the title National Chess Master by the English Chess Federation. Apart from chess, Peter was very much a family man. He enjoyed spending time with his children and grandchildren. He loved family holidays, picnics, playing knockabout football and cricket. He was an avid reader.

We, the family of Peter shall miss his love, his humour and his kindness. May he rest in peace.

Peter's funeral took place on the 4th of August. Many relatives and friends were there to celebrate his life and give him a good send off. The BCA was represented by members Ruth Carlin, Julie and Olly Leonard, Tanvi Muir, Gerry Walsh, Gary Wickett and of course many of Peter's family who are also members. The following anecdote and poem were among the many tributes read out at the service.

An anecdote from Peter's son, Jonathan Gibbs:

Dad had a strong sense of fairness, and, I think, a visceral reaction to people looking down on others or being pompous or of one person having to kowtow to another. Although Dad was not a vegetarian, I have a very vivid memory during a family holiday, of being in a café on a Cornish beach and him expressing his disapproval at the welfare conditions of a captive bird that was enclosed in a glass case and in direct sunlight. Dad conveyed his displeasure to a rather thick-set, tattooed man – and I watched intently expecting a heated conversation or possibly even a punch-up. Dad was met with just a blank stare though. Because on closer examination, it became clear that the bird, which was 3 feet tall, and had a large plastic nose and purple fur was part of an amusement arcade game – having a mechanical grabber in with it and on the outside a slot for 50-pence pieces. Nevertheless, Dad's initial intent to take a stand for animal welfare was clear. That event remains to this day, the funniest thing I've ever experienced.

“**When in Heaven**” a poem by Peter's daughter, Claire Norman

I hope they have soirées in heaven,
For this dear Dad of mine,
With music and poetry in the bar
And a few glasses of wine.

I hope they play chess in heaven, Dad,
With friends to compete with and play,
But first have a nice little rest, Dad,
Until the break of day.

I miss your kindness and your mischievous smile, Dad,
I miss all the fun we had.
An English Chess Master,
But to me you were just my lovely Dad.

A Tribute to Peter Gibbs – A Game from the Archives

Gary Wickett writes:

The following little article was given to me some years ago by the late Peter Price.

When Peter Gibbs was a student at Birmingham University, he was already a strong chess player. In 1955 he was drawn against Reginald Bonham from the West Midlands Division of the British Championship qualifying rounds. Actually on his 21st birthday, Peter travelled down to Worcester to Bon's house to play the game, and enjoyed Bon's well known hospitality. The game is below.

Bonham – Gibbs 28th May 1955

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 g3 Bg7 4 Bg2 0-0 5 0-0 d6 6 c4 c5 7 Nc3 Nc6 8 h3 Bd7 9 Kh2 cxd4 10 Nxd4 Nxd4
11 Qxd4 Ng4+ 12 Resigns

“Oh dear,” said Bon, and laughed in his generous way. What a 21st birthday present for Peter!