

40TH ANNIVERSARY SUPPLEMENT

*Two articles from the archives along with four new articles
written especially for this supplement.*

THE ORIGINS OF THE CCCC **An article from January 1987 edition of CHESS minister!** **by the then President and Club Founder, Ivor Davies.**

The origins of the Clergy Correspondence Chess Club are lost in the mists of antiquity. I recall that the idea of a clerical club, to match the chess societies of other professions, occurred to me in my study at the Rectory of Talybont-on-Usk. Talybont was the parish of Henry Vaughan, the metaphysical poet, and his brother Thomas was the incumbent and a practising alchemist, but I do not suppose these connections are strictly relevant. Nor, for that matter, is the fact that I had recently painted the walls of my study purple. Anyway, having thought up the notion, I inserted an advertisement in the 'Church Times' and sat back to await replies.

The first competition attracted some six entries and play began in the autumn of 1967. It was won by Kenneth Procter, our first President and, until recently, our senior member. The prize in the early days was often a book purchased by the winner himself and suitably inscribed by the President. Among my treasured possessions is an early edition of Howard Staunton's 'Chess Player's Handbook' bearing Kenneth's autograph and commemorating the only time I won, or am ever likely to win, our premier award. The advent of Eric Bailey brought with it a more glittering prize in the shape of the Bailey Shield which now, I hope, graces Ruggles Fisher's mantelpiece at Oakham.

It would be invidious to single out names among those distinguished clerics of several denominations who have won the trophy. But the snowballing growth of our club over the past twenty years has depended as much on the administrators as on the players. Tim Partridge was the enthusiastic Secretary who built up the organisation in the middle years, aided always by Gordon Geddes who is still our Treasurer. Under Bruce Carlin's energetic regime the Club has really begun to fulfil the muddled aspirations of its founder. Nor should we forget Leslie Clifton Joy, who, as President, lent an air of canonical authority to our fellowship in the days that badly needed it.

Our twentieth birthday will be celebrated by our first Congress. I look forward to the time, not far off now, when the C.C.C.C. is accepted among those mildly eccentric but greatly loved Church societies whose names are listed in the back pages of clerical diaries and ecclesiastical yearbooks.

A CHESS ENTRAPPED TRAPPIST

by Hilary Costello

I don't know how old I was when Dad (Harry) first taught me Chess. My sisters weren't at all interested; my brothers dabbled in it; I was quite a chess fan even then, maybe I was 7 or 8 years old - possibly younger. Dad of course was an addict. He played every Tuesday for Barclays Bank (second board, I think, but sometimes top board) somewhere near or at 54 Lombard Street. Mum always knew when he had lost (so she told me sixty years later).

He taught us the basics: how to move, how to mate on the back row, how to start the Ruy Lopez, etc. But he would never allow us to beat him. Oh no! He was after all a very good player. I remember him once telling me about the Evans Gambit and how he had won with it against a very good player from one of the other Big Five Banks. He used to take the Tablet each week. He did the Senior Problem - nearly always a two mover; I did the Junior Problem. I think I got a prize once. Then the editor of the Chess column was murdered - so that was the end of that. For the record, when I was about 18 during the war, I once played Baruch H. Wood in a Simul at Trentham, near Stoke, and beat him. How I wish someone had preserved the game. My moment of Glory!

When I entered this Trappist Monastery in 1947, all that had to go. No more Chess, no more games, none at all. Yet just occasionally I would see a chess cutting somewhere, say in an old newspaper, and I would be hooked again. So I made myself a secret chess-board out of cardboard about 7" square, ink for the black squares, but they were blue. I was working on the orchard at the time, so I took some cuttings from an apple tree, stripped the bark off them, cut them into small pieces about $\frac{3}{8}$ " high, painted 16 of them dark blue with ink. Then I sneaked some old back issues of the Tablet, cut the chess column out, and pasted the little 'icons' onto my chess pieces. All very hush-hush and secret. Now I've let it out. That was my secret chess set for years. I kept the pieces in two match boxes, and I still have boxes but not the pieces. Later, much later, a friend bought me a proper chess set - 4"x 4". I have used it ever since.

By that time I had got some friends to send me chess cuttings from the Times and the Daily Telegraph. Of course, during the Fisher- Spassky drama, I couldn't get enough of the great lead up to the 1972 World Championship when Bobby wiped the board first with Taimanov, then Larsen of all people, then the great Petrosian himself, and finally those superb games with Spassky. I became hopelessly enthralled by Bobby's games. To tell the truth, I probably still am. Alas, that was the end of it for Bobby. But even before that I had already got entangled in the world chess when Spassky beat Petrosian in 1969. Only after Bobby went did Karpov really arrive, and soon we were into the Kasparov period. Yes, I remember now, by 1969 I think Nigel Short was beginning to show himself as a possible world hopeful, and so it turned out.

So I kept my obsession alive with all those cuttings which my friends kept sending. It is so much fun playing through the games of the great chess players,

working out the puzzling super-endings to a great game, hoping that you could use something from them in your own game. Anyway it keeps you on your toes. And if you weren't so old you could almost fall in love with Judith Polgar (as was)!

Later still, much later, I saw an advert in the Tablet for the CCCC from Bruce Carlin. By that time, the strict Trappist regime had relaxed a lot. So after a decent but exciting time of hesitation, I wrote off to Bruce and joined the happy throng. There's nothing like playing against real players to show you just how much you don't know! to show you how many mistakes you can make in a few moves. I had to learn quickly. I had no idea whatsoever that there were so many Openings. Gradually I acquired a few books, e.g. 'Batsford's Chess Openings', (but to tell you the truth I couldn't really grasp it). I had a few old books that belonged to Dad before he died, but they were all in the abandoned 1 P-K4 notation. What a delight it has been for me to meet so many of you by email and telephone or even by snail mail. What times I have spent pouring over a tricky move. What fun to share one of the games with a friend in the guesthouse who is also keen on chess. What a joy to find like-minded people who spend time in their busy lives to answer the latest move. What embarrassment, what dejection to find I have made that wrong move! What excitement when your opponent misses the trick you have set for him. And I must now thank all of you for allowing me to take part in the sparkling fun of the CCCC world.

SILVER JUBILEE CONGRESS
An article from October 1992 edition of CHESS minister!
by Geoff Harper

If you were involved, the bare scores bring back memories of triumph and defeat, inspiration (occasionally), blunders (not a few), solid logical play and some of the opposite. The whole range of chess emotions make the figures alive. If you were not present, then figures mean little, so I thought I would try to put some flesh on the bones and try to convey some of the feeling of what it was like at Ecton.

The house is a very gracious vicarage built in 1787 in a golden brown Cotswold sort of stone, and converted with the addition of a bedroom wing into a retreat house and conference centre. Ecton is a very beautiful little village, with many old houses and cottages, a Bakehouse Lane and a Blacksmith Yard. There is a fine old church with a deep-toned ring of six bells, useful to encourage concentration on practice night when playing a match! It is a quiet place, restful and at peace with itself.

So we arrive one by one from many miles apart on the warm Monday evening in June. Five of us met at the last Congress so we knew one another not just as voices on the end of a telephone or cunning opponents at the destination of a postage stamp. Some surprises in the folk we have not met. I had an image given by an opponent's play of size and youth quite overthrown by the gentle smiling face of a person of about my own not-so-few years in age. While the champion in

appearance quite matches up to his vigorous style of play! By the end of the Congress all will have become friends.

Supper in the gracious dining room, a cup of coffee, and then to the first battle. Calm the nerves! Make a mistake in the opening. Why do I play this game? Oh dear! Well, keep going. Make the best move now. That's a powerful move he has made. What shall I do? Knight there is best. Why has he done that? Now I can swap off and at least be equal. He tries too hard in an equal position. I gain a pawn. Is there a trap here? No, I can protect the King with that Rook move. I gain another pawn. Now even this foolish one can win. Joy!

A look at the other game still in progress. Put the scores down. Then the two of us, no longer opponents, go off for a good long walk down to the river, chatting about chess and families and countryside. This clerical gathering never seems to get into the usual boring clerical talk. So back by ten o'clock and early to bed.

The days are marked, apart from the chess games, by times spent sitting outside the house in the pleasant garden with interesting plants to discuss, walks across the fields, a visit to the church, and each day before lunch a Eucharist in the quiet chapel, a Eucharist which somehow holds together our little fellowship, all the other members of the club and our daily work and living. After the last game of the day there is the Three Horseshoes where Bank's Bitter:
"Does more than Milton can / To justify the ways of God to man."

There is a great good humour about the whole event. To win is fine, to lose a pain. But to take part and to enjoy the logic and artistry of chess, even if the other chap has more of both than oneself, is what pleases above all. I felt it was neatly summarized by the comment made to David Hulme, our Kasparov, by the one who did not often win, "You are the champion and I am the Atlas – the two most important ones here!" Another epigram that caught my fancy was, "Adam was a chess player – he lost a piece and gained a mate."

The aims of Ecton House were summarized by the Warden in his welcome as 'holiness and happiness'. This participant certainly left on Thursday feeling I had experienced both, having a lot of fun and also some genuine refreshment and renewal. Many thanks to Bruce for arranging the congress so well.

On the next page are the winners of the first forty years of the CCCC. Their names are inscribed on the Bailey Shield, the trophy given by Eric Bailey in the early years of the Club. This Shield is now full and will be replaced with a new Trophy in memory of our founder, Ivor Davies.

CLERGY CORRESPONDENCE CHESS CLUB WINNERS

| | |
|------|---|
| 1968 | K.S. Procter |
| 1969 | I.Ll. Davies |
| 1970 | K.S. Procter |
| 1971 | E.A. Bailey |
| 1972 | A.F. Mackenzie |
| 1973 | M.O.C. Joy |
| 1974 | S. Robertson |
| 1975 | H. Cullen & G. Johnson |
| 1976 | G. Johnson & A.F. Mackenzie |
| 1977 | G. Johnson |
| 1978 | M.J. Wentworth |
| 1979 | E.A. Bailey & V. Ducker & K.S. Procter & M.J. Wentworth |
| 1980 | E.A. Metcalfe |
| 1981 | T.A. Thomas |
| 1982 | T.A. Thomas |
| 1983 | R.B. Stevenson |
| 1984 | F.M. Hodgess Roper & R.B. Stevenson |
| 1985 | T.R. Fisher |
| 1986 | T.R. Fisher |
| 1987 | T.R. Fisher |
| 1988 | J.R. Morris |
| 1989 | J.R. Morris |
| 1990 | J.R. Morris |
| 1991 | J. Caldwell & D.S.H. Hulme & J.R. Morris |
| 1992 | D.S.H. Hulme |
| 1993 | J. Caldwell & T.R. Fisher |
| 1994 | T.R. Fisher & J.R. Morris & M. Smith |
| 1995 | T.R. Fisher |
| 1996 | J. Caldwell & J.R. Morris |
| 1997 | J.R. Morris & T.R. Fisher |
| 1998 | J.R. Morris |
| 1999 | J.R. Morris |
| 2000 | T.R. Fisher & J.R. Morris |
| 2001 | J. Caldwell & S. Whitmore |
| 2002 | D.S.H. Hulme |
| 2003 | J. Caldwell |
| 2004 | J. Caldwell |
| 2005 | J. Caldwell & A. Norris |
| 2006 | J. Caldwell |
| 2007 | J. Caldwell |

Most wins 10 : J.R. Morris ; 9 : J. Caldwell ; 8 : T.R. Fisher
3 : D.S.H. Hulme, G. Johnson, K.S. Procter

EARLY MEMORIES by Gordon Geddes

I can't remember in what way in the summer of 1967, Ivor Davies took the initiative to found the Clergy Correspondence Chess Club. I must have seen it in Church Times, though whether it was an advert, a letter or a feature I am not sure. I replied and received a reply which asked why, if clergy could have their cricket competition, they could not have a chess competition? There was no answer to that!

There were five of us that first season – J.G. Wright, A.Schofield, Kenneth Procter, Ivor Davies and myself. I do not know what the others' results were, but I only managed a draw against Schofield and a win against Wright. By the following season more players had joined – Tim Partridge was among the new members - and we were arranged in two divisions.

Among the early members was Henry Percy. My 1934 copy of "The Church Directory and Almanac" lists him as deacon 1910, priest 1911 – having first been a Wesleyan minister. By the time he was playing in the CCCC he was probably in his 90s. His hand writing was unsteady – but not his play. Another character was Vere Ducker. He invited my wife Marjorie and I to stay with him in Surrey on one occasion. We found, to our pleasure, that he was a connoisseur of fine wines! He had been a central figure in the preparation and follow-up of "The People Next Door", a countrywide initiative in mission and ecumenism in Lent 1967; he was, he told us, the only person to have read every one of the hundreds of feedback letters. He was also a keen follower of Derbyshire cricket, to the extent of attending and speaking at annual meetings.



20th birthday Congress at Ecton House. At the board are Charles Mason & John Morris (the finalists). Standing, from left: Geoffrey Harper; Tim Partridge (with Bailey Shield), Brian Shephard, Bruce Carlin, John Gowing, Eric Hodgess Roper, Ivor Davies, Henry Cullen, Anthony Foster, Arnould Hurt.

CHESS, AND OTHER PEOPLE

by Lisa Battye

Some of my parishioners are clearly amused when they notice several small chess-sets littering my office. I find this very strange. It appears to be a perfectly serious matter for my curate Anthony to make constant references to Manchester United in and out of sermons, for my Warden to uphold and regularly declaim the wonders of local church architecture and my Reader to be well-known as an enthusiast for choral choir-singing. Yet the thought of the Rector spending months over one game of chess is amusing. “You don’t!” was one recent visitor’s short comment, almost open-mouthed. “Really??” was her companion’s. Followed by a nod, or an “Mmm...” or something kindly, along the lines of “Well, that must be very nice for you...”.

Actually, I have started using this non-plussed ‘I-don’t-know-what-to-say-next’ reaction to good effect.

When Anthony turns to our OLM-in-training during a staff meeting and asks if she saw the match last night (She’s a Liverpool fan) I casually drop my latest tussle with my opponent’s cleverly-placed knight into the conversation. He looks up, blankly, and we return to the subject.

When the children on the front row in church are showing signs of the fidgets I break into my shorter ‘All Age Worship’ talk (which is obviously not managing to hold the rapt attention of all ages) and ask them if they have ever lost a board-game, and tell them that I had to resign my second chess game of the season last week, and then say something inane like “When you lose you feel disappointed, but you don’t stop trying, do you?” and we share a rare moment of sympathy and quiet reflection before they start chattering again.

When someone rings to tell me every detail of what they have been doing during the day and I become aware that I am no more pastoral use to them, I sometimes find I simply have to break off the call in order to email a chess move to one of my CCCC colleagues. I am guaranteed immediate release. A mild eccentricity or two in their minister seems to reassure people.

But no-one who has not enjoyed the magnificent interest of chess-playing can imagine the fun of curling up in bed with a chess-board, trying to work out what to do next. Falling asleep, and then, more fun.... having to go over it all over again tomorrow.

SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE SECRETARY

by Bruce Carlin

I had only been ordained a month or two and was still finding my feet in my title parish and my way around the area. I had not got round to joining a chess club or anything like that, when I saw in *Church Times* a mention of the Clergy Correspondence Chess Club. I wrote off to Tim Partridge (then Secretary) and duly received my season's pairings and a move from my first opponent. Then I got one from someone else. I replied that I had already started playing X and would play him next, only for him to reply that I had to play all the games at once. Now either Tim had not explained that (sorry, Tim!) or I had simply not read it, but suddenly here I was facing 8 games of chess against four opponents. However would I cope? A trip to Barnsley to invest in some miniature chess sets duly followed and I was introduced to the delights of multiple games. With other competitions I joined in later I once had 16 games going simultaneously, small beer for the dedicated CC addict I know, but quite enough for me!

I enjoyed getting to know some chess playing clergy this way, and by playing games over the phone got to know a few of you better. Occasional holiday visits to other parts of the UK enabled me to meet one or two in person, but it was our first congress at Ecton House (to celebrate the Club's 20th birthday in 1987) where I met many more of our members. We repeated this with another Congress in 1992 for our Silver Jubilee, but sadly have never had sufficient interest to run another.

Apart from our internal games, members of the Club have taken part in BFCC individual tournaments and we have had a number of friendly matches against other clubs. For several years we took part in the BFCC Club Championship, and though we were outclassed by the bigger clubs, we did once win the Ratings Prize.

Technology has affected chess as it has other walks of life. I look back at some of our old magazines and see the difference in presentation that modern word processors and printers have brought about. And now we are even considering offering the magazine electronically to those who can receive it this way. The use of computers to assist in analysis has changed correspondence chess for ever, not necessarily for the better. Most of our players now transmit their moves by e-mail (by looking for an alliterative name for the Club Ivor avoided the use of 'postal' which would have required a name change by now), thus avoiding the vagaries of our somewhat haphazard postal system that nevertheless once kept a single window envelope in use for a whole game between Tim Partridge and David Nye, making some 78 journeys between them without getting lost or irreparably damaged!

I have been a member of CCCC for 28 of its 40 years, and Secretary for about 25 of them. I am not the longest surviving member by any means (that honour currently lies with Gordon Geddes, the only surviving founder member), and certainly not one of the strongest players, but my time in the Club has given me much pleasure.