

THE MIDDLE GAME

Volume 1, Issue 26

January 2007

MCCU WEBSITE

If you are reading a hardcopy of this newsletter, but have internet access and have been having trouble getting onto the MCCU website, please remember to use the newer address, i.e. www.mccu.org.uk This new address has been mentioned in earlier newsletters, but the old address had a link through to it. As our "hire" of the old address has expired this is no longer the case. So please amend your "bookmark", or "favorites" accordingly.

New Rapidplay Grades Online

These include results up to the end of November 2006, and supersede the earlier 2006 Rapidplay grades. They may be found on the ECF website www.englishchess.org.uk

PRESIDENTS AWARD FOR SERVICES TO CHESS

We are delighted to announce that this award has been conferred on Jill Barber of Manchester

Jill has been a central figure in the development of Junior Chess in Manchester for a number of years.

The core team of Julian Clissold, Andrew Wilson, Pat Murphy and Jill Barber have sustained a very large programme of junior chess activity since the early eighties. This has included Manchester Junior Chess Congresses (three per annum), Junior Coaching events, Manchester teams in the EPSCA County Associations matches at Under 9, and Under 11, and a County Association girls team. There have also been other junior representational events over the last ten years for children over 11 years.

Jill has played a full part in helping to create successful Manchester teams that year on year have succeeded in reaching national finals.

She has also helped to open up chess in a particular school in the Didsbury area of Manchester. From a zero start, with no previous history of chess activity, Jill has encouraged the school and supported their children over a long period so that they are now active in the UK Chess Challenge and the EPSCA Schools team events, getting through to the final last year.

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Guidance on the Quickplay Finish

From David Welch, Chief Arbiter of the ECF

The game of chess is always evolving and the quickplay finish has risen in importance as adjudications and adjournments have slipped out of favour. Even the quickplay finish could be eventually replaced by events with a single time control (e.g. all moves in 2 hours) or by a Fischer-style time control.

Each system of timing brings its own problems and difficulties, and each system affects the style of play. The quickplay finish has itself changed over the years. Originally different congresses had different rules, then the BCF brought out a unified set of rules. Eventually FIDE incorporated the QPF in to the main Laws of Chess. Even the FIDE Laws have changed since they were introduced.

As the rules and Laws have changed, so has the guidance to Arbiters and players. I have been asked to state the ECF's present position. It is obvious that when a claim under Article 10.2 is made, there is the same problem that occurs when a game is adjudicated: the two players are expecting to receive 1½ points out of a position that is only worth a total of one point.

I would ask the reader to read the [Laws of Chess](#) (Article 10 and Appendices B and D.) This information is available on the ECF website, as are my notes on the Changes to the Laws of Chess, effective 1 July 2005.

Article 10.1 A 'quickplay finish' is the phase of a game, when all the (remaining) moves must be made in a limited time.

Note that the placing in brackets of the word 'remaining' indicates that there is no need for a previous time control.

Article 10.1 makes it the duty of the player to allow sufficient time to finish the game, just as a conventional time control makes it the duty of the player to allow sufficient time (for example) to complete the first 40 moves

Continued on page 5

Jill has been particularly helpful in helping to open up and develop girls' chess in Manchester. She initiated girls only training events and provided strong support for a girls team in the EPSCA events.

Finally she is also an active member of her local chess club. She plays for representative teams and has been active in organisation in the club as a team captain and a committee member. She has also been active in the organisation of Manchester league chess.

MCCU COUNTY TEAM CHESS

An U18 county team event has not so far been scheduled for this year. It has been poorly attended in recent years. Feedback suggested that the timing in February was a problem, but no one has suggested when would be better.

Yes, the chess calendar is congested with all sorts of events, but is 1 Saturday in the year really beyond counties?

The question is, is it the timing that is the problem, or is it more fundamental than that. The grading database suggests that virtually every county in the MCCU area has enough players to put out a team, even without taking ungraded players into account. Is the problem getting organisers? Is it that potential players are already committed to other chess events? Is it that counties don't feel they could field a strong team, so won't enter because of that? Is there just no interest in an U18 team event?

If counties want to have an U18 event and can give some feedback as to what time of year, format etc they would prefer, I am quite happy to ask the Junior & Events Directors to put their heads together and organise something.

It is up to counties to indicate whether they just want to see the event die altogether, or see attempts made to revive it.

Please contact the CEO on 0116 2609012 or juliedjohnson@yahoo.com or the Events Director at the same phone no. or cyriljohnson@yahoo.co.uk, or the Junior Director Graham Humphries on 01384 571486.

CHESS ON THE BIG SCREEN



1) Who is the actor centre screen & what's the film?



2) Name the film & the 2 lead stars.



3) What's the name of the computer & the film?



4) This is from the big screen version of which film? Who was the quintessential Englishman, which actors played him in the film & in the small screen version?

If you need some clues to help you, go to page 9, the answers may be found on page 11.



5) Can you identify the film & the leading lady above?



6) Who is the sleeping actress & what's the film?



7) Which film is featured above & who was the lead actor?



8) The subject of this film actually played chess, who was he & who played his role in the film of his life?

This second set of stills includes some "oldies"



9) Who has his back to the camera & in what 1948 film?



10) The cartoon character is easy, but what about the film?



11) Can you name this 1940 film & actor?



12) Who is the actor & the 1936 film?

Remember the answers are on page 11.



13) The actor should be easy, but which of his films is this?



14) Can you name the film & both actor & actress?



15) This film has a chess title, can you identify it?



16) Who is the character making his move & in which film?

Continued from page 2 col 1

There are two differences, however. Firstly, it is in the interest of a player who is getting short of time to try to avoid the longer endings e.g. if he allows himself to end up with K + Q against K + Q + P, then he must expect to make a very long sequence of moves. Secondly, the opponent may try to extend the game unnaturally by avoiding any progress towards the end of the game or by considering it reasonable to play on in a position where there is practically no chance of a win over the board.

Article 10.2 affords the player some protection if his opponent employs either of these tactics.

Article 10.2 If the player, having the move, has less than two minutes left on his clock, he may claim a draw before his flag falls. He shall stop the clocks and summon the arbiter.

The first sentence is unfortunate, as witness the following conversation:

Young player to arbiter: 'I am claiming a draw because I have less than two minutes on my clock.'

Arbiter: 'Why are you making a claim?'

Young player: 'Because I was coached always to claim when I had less than two minutes unless I thought I could win.'

The next part of 10.2 implies that the player must say why he made a claim, because the arbiter is invited to agree with the player.

Article 10.2 (a) If the arbiter agrees the opponent is making no effort to win the game by normal means, or that it is not possible to win by normal means, then he shall declare the game drawn. Otherwise he shall postpone the decision or reject the claim.

'...making no effort...' is the rarer claim and presents the greatest immediate problem for the arbiter. It would be unwise to interrupt the game at this point to investigate the claim. However, when he asks the players to resume, there is a good chance that the opponent will sacrifice a piece to try to achieve a breakthrough, something which he might have tried many moves before. On balance, it is probably better to ask for play to continue and to base the final decision on the events which then unfold. It would be a brave arbiter (but possibly an astute one) who would observe flag fall and then investigate the part of

the game leading up to the initial claim.

There was one case of '...making no effort...' when black with lone K on e5 claimed a draw against a K on f2 and a rook on a4. Play continued 1. Rb4 Kd5 2. Ra4 Ke5 3. Rb4 and black's flag fell. The arbiter correctly awarded a draw. Note that the artificial prolonging of the game is the key point of the decision.

The claim '...making no effort...' is actually easier to demonstrate when there is no arbiter present. The game MUST stop at that point and the evidence be gathered.

It is always rare for an arbiter to reject a claim out of hand, unless he suspects delaying tactics. Therefore the arbiter will ask the players to play on, to gain as much evidence as possible. I would only adjust the clock of the opponent by 2 minutes if there was good reason, particularly with electronic clocks, but I think this is down to whether the arbiter thinks he will do more harm than good.

Let us now concentrate on the claim '...not possible to win by normal means...' It is normal for a player to make a blunder if he has not demonstrated a total grasp of the position. It is not normal simply to make a player run out of time in a position where it is practically impossible to win over the board. It is not normal to expect the player to under-promote to a bishop so that the opponent can set up a help-mate. If a player has shown that he has the technique to draw a position such as White K(e4) versus K(e6) + P(e5), the arbiter would not require that all the moves up to the eventual stalemate be played and would award the draw. In K + R versus K + R, the award of a draw would be immediate, except for beginners, when it might be wise to observe a few moves first.

Under Appendix D, it is harder for the claimant to have his claim upheld, because the appeal arbiter is deprived of the information that the 'over-the-board' arbiter can gain by saying 'Play on.'

A serious problem arises when the player has a good position, but is short of time. In some junior

events, the opponent with Q + 3P versus the claimant with Q + 7P is asked if he would be prepared to play for a win if the clock were removed. Objectively, the arbiter cannot award the claimant a draw if there is any reasonable chance that the opponent would win. The claimant had perhaps behaved unwisely by not allowing himself sufficient time to exchange pieces in to a position where he could not lose.

Rules of Thumb for the Arbiter

- 1) Always gain maximum information, usually by asking the players to play on.**
- 2) If the opponent has prolonged the game, or could only reasonably expect to win on time alone, the draw should be awarded.**
- 3) If the player who makes the claim has himself contributed to his own time trouble, or has been forced to spend time countering his opponent's good moves, he weakens his claim for a draw.**
- 4) Any benefit of the doubt is given to the opponent of the claimant.**
- 5) Don't make a decision which brings the game in to disrepute.**
- 6) If you are out of your depth, ask for advice before making a decision, because there is no appeal.**

Suggestions for the Players

- 1) Leave yourself enough time to finish the game under normal circumstances.**
- 2) If the opponent of the claimant blunders and is no longer seeking to win, he should offer a draw in the presence of the arbiter. If the original claimant refuses, the claimant will no longer be protected by the arbiter.**
- 3) If you play for a win, you risk losing unless your opponent could not possibly checkmate you.**

CHESS CHAMPIONS

It was disturbing to find that the champion of the last issue of the newsletter David Bronstein passed away just after publication. Our Champion in this issue was one of the most feared players of his time. However, many chess histories seem to mention him more as an afterthought. This does not properly reflect the stature of the man, his play or his contribution to chess.



Salomon Mikhailovich Flohr

(November 21, 1908 – July 18, 1983).

Flohr was born in Horodenka which was then part of Austria-Hungary, but is now part of the Ukraine. He was the second son of a middle class family. He and his brother were orphaned in the First World War when his parents were killed in a massacre. Fortunately family connections led the brothers to safety in the fledgling country of Czechoslovakia.

Flohr settled in Prague and gained a reputation playing for stakes in the Coffee House circuit in the city. As a 16 year old he was involved in simultaneous exhibitions by Richard Réti and Rudolf Spielmann. This introduction to the "simul" was clearly enjoyable. He relished being the central figure in many simuls following his rise to fame, so much so, that he continued to play these long after he had effectively retired from other competitive play.

Flohr supplemented his income by taking a job as a chess journalist and one of his first assignments had been to cover the 1928 Berlin tournament where he continued to win money on the side by playing chess.

He came to prominence in the late 1920's winning the Kautsky Memorial tournaments of 1928 and 1929 which were held in his adoptive home city & making his international debut at the Rogaška Slatina tournament in Slovenia, finishing second to Akiba Rubinstein. The 1930's saw Salo Flohr at his best. He became Champion of Czechoslovakia in 1933 and 1936 and played widely across Europe, rarely being placed outside the top 3. He shared top spot at Bad Sliach in 1932 with Vidmar; with Botvinnik in Moscow in 1935; with Petrov & Reshevsky at Kemerli in 1937 and was outright winner at Poděbrady in 1936. The Hastings tournaments of the early 1930s saw him take 1st place 4 years running in 1931/32, 1932/33 and 1933/34 and 1st= with Max Euwe and Sir George Thomas in 1934/35. The following year he won the prestigious Margate tournament ahead of José Raúl Capablanca. It is a mark of his standing at the time that he was one of the players invited to the Nottingham International event of 1936.

His form for his adopted country in the Chess Olympiads was equally impressive and on his debut in Hamburg (1930) Flohr scored 14½/17 on Board 1. He went on to win 2 individual gold medals, 1 silver and 1 bronze from five Olympiads and his country won bronze in 1931 and the silver in 1933.

Flohr pushed his claim to a tilt at the World Championship by arranging matches against his main rivals. He drew a 16 game match against Euwe in 1932 and also drew against Botvinnik the following year. He beat Gosta Stoltz by 5½-2½ in 1931 and Mir Sultan Khan, the British Champion of 1932 and 1933, by 3½-2½. By 1937 he had been nominated by FIDE to be the official candidate to play Alekhine for the World Championship. However the Second World War loomed and it proved impossible for Flohr to raise the required stake money in Czechoslovakia. The event fell by the wayside. By the time of the Nazi invasion of his country in 1938 Flohr, as a Polish/Ukrainian Jew, was in serious personal danger and he and his family had to flee, first to Sweden, and then to Moscow with the help of his

friend Botvinnik. These upheavals undoubtedly contributed to a downturn in his form at the famous AVRO tournament of November 1938, where he finished last.

After the War his form recovered putting him in contention for a possible World Championship match, he finished 6th at the 1948 Interzonal in Saltsjobaden, which gave him a place in the 1950 Candidates tournament in Budapest. The revival stalled with Flohr finishing joint last and retiring from World Championship events. He still competed in various events, until 1967 (always at least finishing in the top 10), but was never regarded as a serious contender for 1st place in any of them. He became a Soviet citizen in 1942 and became much published in Soviet chess journals. He also supported his long time friend, becoming an analyst on Botvinnik's team, and writing chess articles for the vast Soviet press. Following his semi-retirement from top flight competition he also became a notable chess organiser - he was awarded the title of International Arbiter in 1963.

Flohr was one of Czechoslovakia's greatest ever chessplayers. His tournament record was impressive with his sheer tactical skill and excellent endgame technique securing him many famous victories. He was awarded the International Grandmaster title by FIDE in 1950 and he made a number of contributions to opening theory - a 'Flohr variation' can be found in no fewer than six major openings including the Caro-Kann Defence and the Grünfeld Defence.

He became a national hero in Czechoslovakia and his name was used to sell many of the luxury products of the time, including Salo Flohr cigarettes, Salo Flohr slippers and Salo Flohr eau-de-cologne. How much he benefited financially from this is unclear, but perhaps he can claim to be the first chess player to be used to endorse non-chess products.

Unfortunately the Second World War killed off any chance he had of winning the World title and the stress of becoming a refugee for the second

time in his life affected his style of play. He has been assigned the label of a dull, unenterprising draw specialist in his post-war period. It is perhaps this reputation that has led to his being overlooked by some for inclusion in the premier group of players. This is to conveniently forget that the 1930's probably had the largest concentration of exceptionally strong players than any era that preceded it.

In this game Flohr demonstrates that he could have been a genuine World Title contender by beating Botvinnik, with the latter playing one of his own attacks

[Event "Russia"]
 [Site "Match, Leningrad/Moscow (1)"]
 [Date "1933"]
 [White "M Botvinnik"]
 [Black "S Flohr"]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6
 6.Bg5 dxc4 7.d5 Ne5 8.Qd4 Nd3+ 9.Bxd3 cxd3
 10.Bxf6 exf6 11.Qxd3 Bd6 12.Nge2 O-O 13.O-O Re8
 14.Rad1 Bg4 15.Rd2 a6 16.Ng3 Rc8 17.h3 Bd7
 18.Rfd1 g6 19.Re2 Rxe2 20.Ngxe2 f5 21.Nd4 Qe7
 22.Qd2 Re8 23.Nf3 Qf6 24.Re1 Rxe1+ 25.Nxe1 b5
 26.a3 Kg7 27.Nf3 Bc8 28.Kf1 Bb7 29.b4 Kf8 30.Ke2 a5
 31.Qd4 Qxd4 32.Nxd4 axb4



33.Ncxb5 {axb Bxb4 followed by Ndx5 would have been better} bxa3 34.Nxd6 a2 35.Nc2 Ba6+ 36.Ke3 Ke7 37.Nxf7 Kxf7 38.Kd4 Bf1 39.h4 Bxg2 40.Kc5 f4 0-1

This second game won Flohr the brilliancy prize at the event concerned

[Event "It"]
 [Site "Anvers"]
 [Date "1930"]
 [White "Flohr Salomon (RUS)"]
 [Black "Landau Salo"]
 [Result "1-0"]

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 d5 4. e3 e6 5. Nbd2 Be7 6. Bd3 Nbd7 7. O-O O-O 8. b3 c5 9. Bb2 cxd4 10. exd4 dxc4 11. bxc4 b6 12. Qc2 Bb7 13. Ne5 Qc7 14. f4 Rfd8 15. Ndf3 h6 16. Qe2 Nxe5 17. fxe5 Nd7 18. d5 Bc5+ 19. Kh1 exd5 20. Ng5 Nf8



{ Black cannot play 20. - hxg5? due to 21. Bh7+! Kf8 (21. - Kxh7 22. Qh5+ Kg8 23 Qxf7+ Kh8 24. Rf3! threatening Rh3X) 22. Rxf7+! Kxf7 23. Qh5+ Ke7 24. Qg5+ Kf8 (24. - Ke6 25. Bf5X) 25. Rf1+ and black will be crushed.} 21. Nxf7 Re8 22. Qg4 Re6 23. Bf5 Rae8 24. Bxe6 Rxe6 25. Nd6 Bxd6 26. exd6 Qd7 27. Ba3 Nh7 28. h3 dxc4 29. Qxc4 Nf6 30. Rxf6 gxf6 31. Re1 Bc8 32. Rc1 Bb7 33. Qg4+ Kh8 34. Rc7 Re1+ 35. Kh2 Qxg4 36. hxg4 1-0

Salo Flohr, a world championship contender who is probably already forgotten by the young players and soon to be disappearing under time's shadow from most of our books. There are many such players today who but for chance circumstance would be guaranteed a more prominent place in history. – John Saunders

Chess, like love, is infectious at any age. – Salo Flohr

CHESS & BIG SCREEN QUIZ

The Clues

Here are some clues if you are struggling to identify the films etc.

- 1) This was based on a George Orwell novel. The actor would be pained at not being recognised.
- 2) Double what some jobs require and only half of what other specify. The actress is not quite the opposite of a cow & her leading man might have run to Brigit Jones.
- 3) Do you really need a clue for what is probably the most famous Stanley Kubrick sci-fi movie of all time?
- 4) There is no satisfaction to be exacted if you needed a clue for this film. Perhaps the leading male character should have travelled on horseback rather than by car. His film actor shares the same surname name & initial as an explorer. His small screen counterpart has Scottish & anatomical connections.
- 5) The devil incarnate might do this behind the wheel at night. The leading lady used to be an item with the leading man from the second still.
- 6) This latin lady might be at home on a ship with a musical man in charge playing an old stringed instrument.
- 7) Surely this title is transparent, current, but perilous. The leading man might cross over a river at the appropriate point.
- 8) You must be blind not to recognise the piano playing soulful singer. You might expect the actor concerned to be cunning.
- 9) Marion by another name. You normally expect 2 of these at the christening of a boy, but there was 1 extra here.
- 10) Numeracy & slight of hand are alluded to in the film title.
- 11) There are reputed to be plenty of these in the location in the title at the moment, & most of us wouldn't want to be there. The actor's surname alludes to an equitable financial institution.
- 12) A much-covered Led Zeppelin song bears the same name. Although famous, the actor concerned is often forgotten in the list of those who played James Bond.
- 13) The actor played a very different role as Harry Callahan in another series of films. The film was one of a trilogy, all with titles concerning American currency; this one alluded to additional funds.
- 14) The film title has canine and grain harvest connections. The leading actor had many famous films, not all in "male" roles. This film was the highlight of the career of the actress, she also had a role in "Twinky"
- 15) Looking for a clue to this film forced you into a disadvantageous move.
- 16) Affection from a cold war country? The chess-playing mastermind had a name sounding like the chess champion of the last Middle game.

ECF MEMBERSHIP (& other ECF matters)

It is clear that the current ECF Board does not want the existing membership scheme, under which a number of MO's are currently operating, to continue.

The ECF CEO has sent out some information on a small circulation list, of which I am part, about the way the Board wishes to move forward on membership. However he has flagged this up as "not for publication in newsletters or on websites"

I find this approach to be rather at odds with his stated intent of better communication from the ECF. What is the point in saying this is what we are planning, will you support us, but it isn't for open debate? What I as one of a small group of recipients might think is not the point. This kind of "communication" is in my view not really communication at all.

On the matter of the attempts by the MCCU to become an MO. The feedback I received was very much along the lines that, with a significant part of the membership year gone, and the prospect that the current scheme would not survive beyond the 1 year; there was little point in trying to enforce what we believe was a valid agreement between the MCCU & ECF.

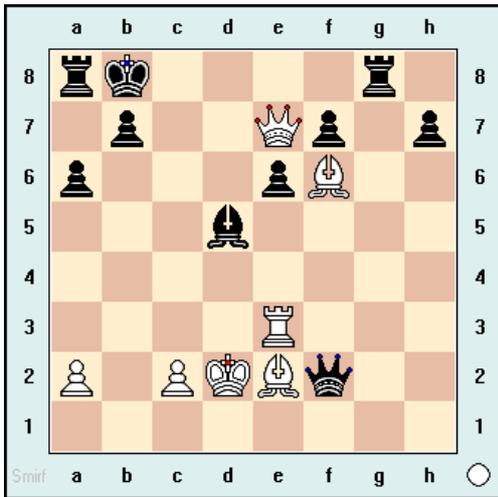
If membership under MO's is to continue, the MCCU will urge Council to make it clear that all applicants must be treated under the same basic criteria, and must not suffer inequity simply because the make up of the ECF Board may change.

An interesting point was raised outside the MCCU. The current MO agreement sets March as the deadline for withdrawing for the following membership year. As this is before the April ECF Council Meeting when fees are voted on, unless an MO withdraws, it is agreeing to continue the scheme without knowing what the fee will be. The suggestion was made that all MO's would be wise to notify withdrawal because of this.

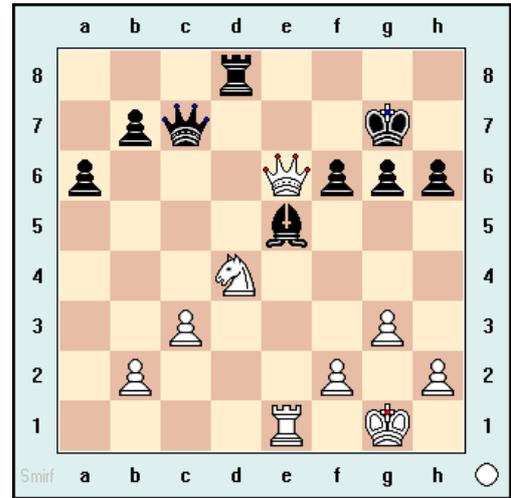
We still await the appointment of a Director of Home Chess, this is expected soon. There are reported to be 4 applicants of varying levels of chess admin experience, and varying stature in the chess world.

POSITIONAL PUZZLES

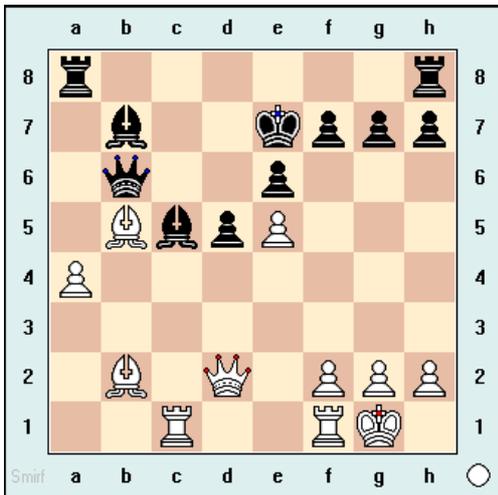
These puzzles are all taken from the games of Salo Flohr



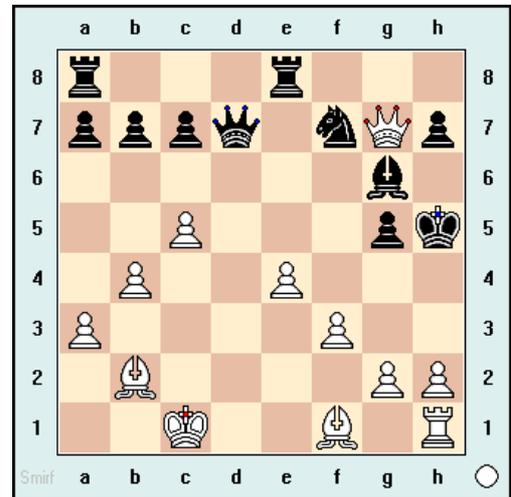
a) White Mates in 6



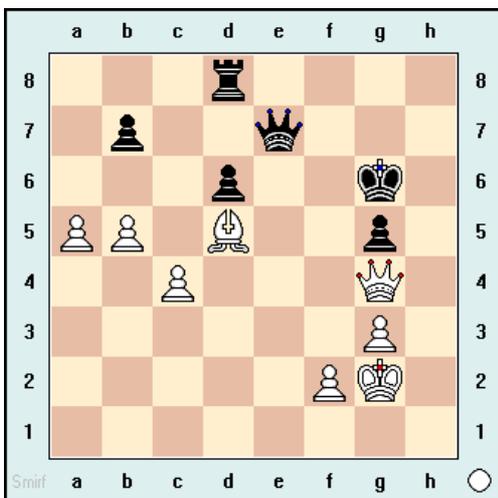
d) White to move & win



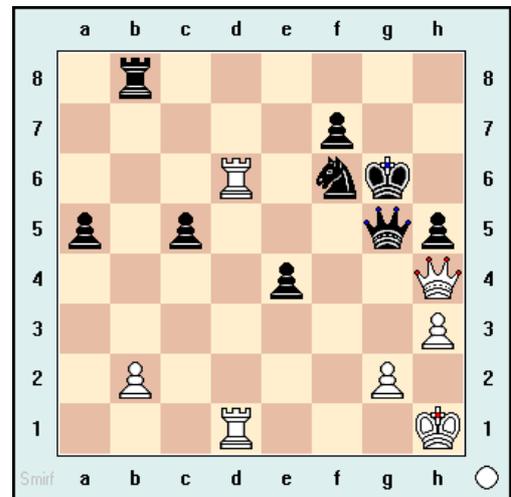
b) White to move & win



e) White Mates in 8



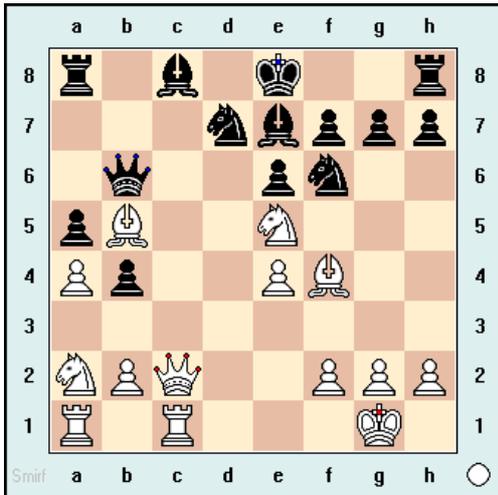
c) White to move & win



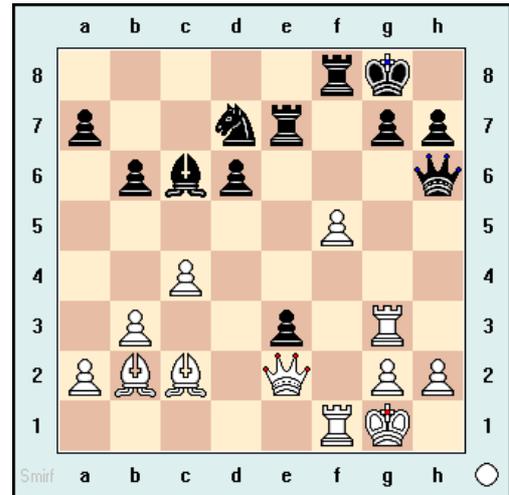
f) White to move & win

More positions from Salo Flohr

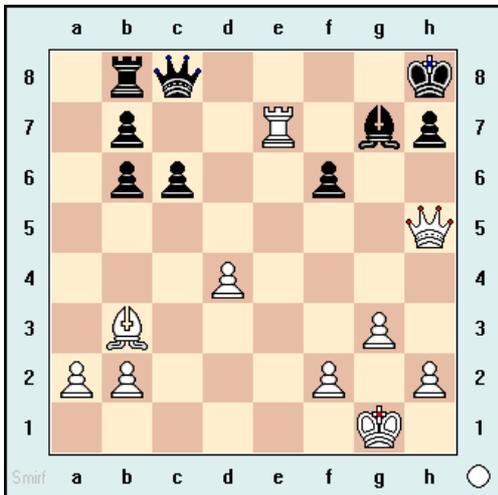
Answers to these puzzles may be found on page 14



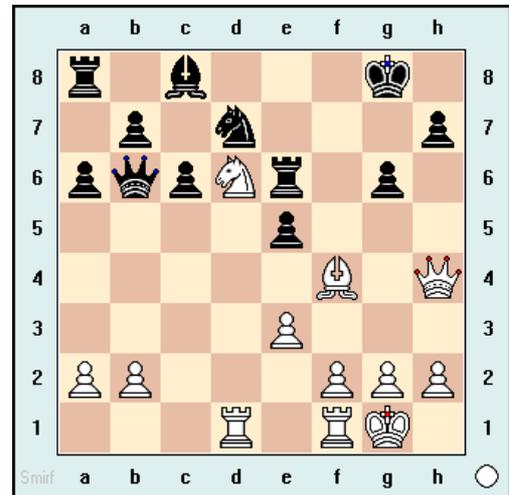
g) White to move & win



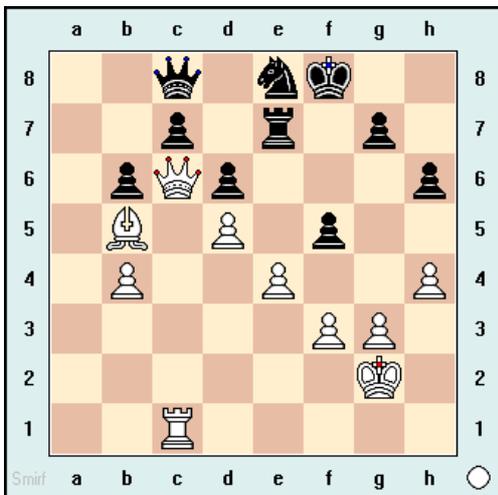
j) White to move & win



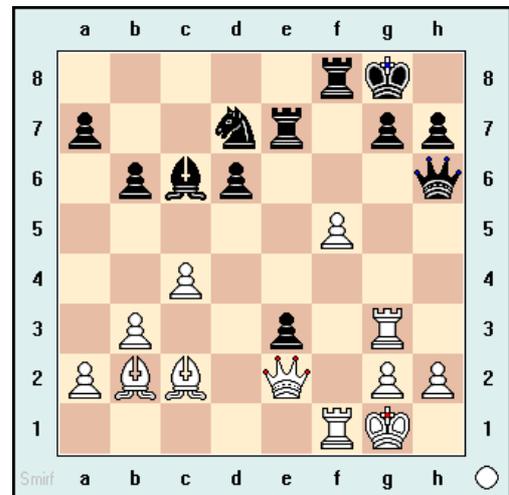
h) White Mates in 8



k) White to move & win



i) White to move & win



l) White to move & win

CHESS & THE BIG SCREEN

The Answers

- 1) The still shows John Hurt playing the ill-fated rebel Winston Smith in the 1984 release of George Orwell's classic 1984.
- 2) Two Weeks Notice starred Sandra Bullock & Hugh Grant, the still shows them with an interesting modern architectural chess set.
- 3) The computer that became increasingly malevolent was HAL 9000 in the 1968 sci-fi classic 2001: A Space Odyssey.
- 4) The Avengers TV series was something of a cult classic, many fans panned the 1998 big screen version. The quintessential Englishman was John Steed; Ralph Fiennes portrayed him in the film version & Patrick McNeen on the small screen. When the series was introduced to America, the producers decided to introduce the show to the audience with a specially made sequence. It is known by Avengers fans worldwide as "the chess board intro"; hence the chess sequence in the film.
- 5) Bedazzled was released in 2000. Liz Hurley, the one time partner of Hugh Grant, played the incarnation of the devil.
- 6) Penelope Cruz played opposite Nicholas Cage in the 2001 release Captain Corelli's Mandolin. Set on the Greek Island of Cephalonia.
- 7) This was one of Harrison Ford's many movies, it was based on a Tom Clancy novel of the same name "Clear & Present Danger". This term is derived from US legal history concerning laws limiting free speech, but is often quoted in justification of actions taken.
- 8) Jamie Foxx won an Academy award in 2004 for his portrayal of the blind rhythm & blues singer & pianist Ray Charles in the film Ray. He genuinely played chess.
- 9) John Wayne, whose actual forename was Marion, seems to have donned this same clothing in a number of his Western films, so you could be forgiven if you couldn't pinpoint which one. The clue should have helped any John Wayne fan to home in on The 3 Godfathers.
- 10) Shamed on you if you couldn't identify Donald Duck, the feature length cartoon film in which this chess scene appeared was Donald in Mathmagicland.
- 11) The Arab garb coupled with the clue should have helped point to The Thief of Baghdad. The actor behind the garb was Douglas Fairbanks.
- 12) This is an early David Niven performance in Stairway to Heaven. He was Sir James Bond in Casino Royale, not the soon to be released version, but a spy spoof released in 1967.
- 13) You should have easily identified Clint Eastwood, but as he has appeared in many "spaghetti" westerns, you would be forgiven for needing a clue to decide which one the still came from, which was For a Few Dollars More.
- 14) Dustin Hoffman is more readily recognisable than the actress, for whom this was probably the most famous film appearance, Susan George. The film is Straw Dogs.
- 15) Those outside chess would not have recognised Zugzwang as a film with a "chess" title. Though it also has chess content with the central character a concert pianist and chess whiz on the path to self-destruction.
- 16) The chess playing master planner was called Kronsteen, an answer that probably only James Bond fans would come up with. The film was From Russia With Love, the second Bond film (the first being Dr No).

UNION PAST & FUTURE

On the next page the first Annual report of the MCCA is reproduced. For those new to the background of the MCCU, I should explain that the MCCU was originally the MCCA.

The Midlands was not the first region to form a chess union. The South was some 5 years ahead, being formed in 1892. Whilst the comment in the Midlands Annual report referring to "the stirring up of the Northern Counties" was spot on, in that the NCCU was formed the following year.

The WECU was somewhat later in coming about with 2 World Wars passing before it was formed in 1947. The EACU is a mere youngster dating back only to 1983.

What was unusual about the MCCA, was that despite being a Counties Association, its membership was at club level – hence the accounts refer to "club subscriptions" It was later that counties were the direct affiliates, with club affiliated through their county.

In contrast both the SCCU & MCCU appear to have been exclusively County based. It is only in recent years that the SCCU changed its rules to allow other organisations like the London League to affiliate.

The current MCCU constitution does allow wider membership than Counties. That said only Counties & officers have any voting rights. Which is probably why we only have Union members. Why join the Union if you do not get any representation?

With a constitution review starting, the question of whether for example leagues not affiliated to a county should have representation and voting rights is a pertinent one.

There are of course issues around whether it would be appropriate for such organisations to vote on County competition motions or other specific county matters.

There is also the argument that, if they are game fee payers, the Organisation concerned will be likely to have representation at ECF level, so what would be the point in being affiliated to the MCCU.

Those who have been around chess for any length of time will be well aware that game fee is relatively new, and may not last forever. Any revised constitution should be "built to last" for many years and thus needs to allow for change.

MIDLAND COUNTIES CHESS ASSOCIATION.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT, 1897-8.

Vice-Presidents:—

COUNCILLOR C. T. BISHOP, J. T. BLAKEMORE, Esq.,
A. H. GRIFFITHS, Esq., J.P.

*Hon. Treasurer:—*COUNCILLOR C. T. BISHOP.

*Hon. Secretary:—*A. J. MACKENZIE, 59, Algerion Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham.

Executive Committee:—

REV. J. H. ROBINSON AND MESSRS E. ARBLASTER, J. F. ARROWSMITH, T. H. BILLINGTON, H. BODFISH, D. CARPENT, A. H. DAVIES, J. P. DERRINGTON, J. W. FRANKLIN, F. R. GITTINS, O. H. LABONE, G. H. LOCKE, A. E. PALMER, H. ROSENBAUM, T. SHARLAND, G. E. SHERWIN AND W. TROATH.

The Midland Counties Chess Association was formally called into existence on July 24th, 1897. Preliminary enquiries by a provisional committee showed that there was sufficient reason for the interests of the increasingly numerous body of chess organisations in the Midlands to be bound up in common for the furtherance of the well-being of the pastime; and results have shown abundantly that the step was a wise one.

The forming of this Association has probably had not a little to do with the stirring up of the Northern Counties, more especially Lancashire, and the constitution of a Northern Counties Chess Union is likely soon to be taken in hand. After this, the pressing need for a British Chess Federation should not be long in being met.

The Midland Counties Chess Association has—wisely, no doubt—not undertaken a too ambitious programme for its first session. It is very encouraging to know that not a single club of any standing remains aloof from the Association; absolutely all are enrolled. The whole of the ten Counties in the area of the Association were induced to take part in the Inter-County Championship Competition, promoted by the M.C.C.A., and thus the contest has been a unique and remarkable success. The results of the Competition are:—

FIRST ROUND.

Herefordshire beat Shropshire 6½ to 5½.
Leicestershire beat Nottinghamshire 7 to 5.
Derbyshire beat Staffordshire 5½ to 4½.
Warwickshire beat Oxfordshire 8 to 4.

SECOND ROUND.

Worcestershire and Northamptonshire had byes.
Worcestershire beat Herefordshire 10 to 2.
Warwickshire beat Northamptonshire 10 to 2.
Leicestershire and Derbyshire had byes.

THIRD ROUND.

Worcestershire beat Warwickshire 7 to 5.
Leicestershire drew with Derbyshire 5 all.
Leicestershire beat Derbyshire 9 to 3.

FOURTH ROUND.

Leicestershire beat Worcestershire 6½ to 5½.

In accordance with the objects of the Association set forth in its original prospectus, the assistance and countenance of the M.C.C.A. were furnished towards the launching of the Birmingham and District Chess League last autumn.

Six Chess Tuning Clocks have been purchased for the use of the Association, and Silver Medals have been presented to the twelve members of the Leicestershire team, in honour of their winning the Midland Counties Championship.

A. J. M.

FIRST ANNUAL BALANCE SHEET, 1897-8.

(PRESENTED TO EXECUTIVE MEETING, MAY 7, 1898.)

RECEIPTS.		EXPENDITURE.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Vice-President's Subscriptions	3 3 0	Minute and Receipt Books	3 5½
34 Club Subscriptions	7 10 0	Hire of Rooms for Committee Meetings	2 6
1 Private Member	2 6	Printing	1 19 0
		Stationery and Postage	2 2 0
		Hire of Clocks and Attendant Expenses	8 0
		Balance in Hand	6 0 6½
	£10 15 6		£10 15 6

SUPPLEMENTARY BALANCE SHEET, JUNE 8, 1898.

Balance as above	6 0 6½	Six Chess Clocks	2 8 0
3 Club Subscriptions	1 0 0	Twelve Medals for Leicestershire Teams	3 0 0
	£7 0 6½	Balance in Hand	1 12 6½
			£7 0 6½

Audited and found correct (Signed) E. ARBLASTER, M.A.
H. BODFISH.

AWARDS AWARDS & MORE AWARDS

The ECF gives a number of Annual awards and now is the time to be thinking about nominations & submissions for these.

CLUB OF THE YEAR & SMALL CLUB OF THE YEAR

Submissions should detail the clubs participation in local leagues and competitions, but also cover such items as how the club encourages membership among groups under represented in the general chess population, the contribution made to chess locally and nationally, the activities organised for juniors and comment on how the club interacts with schools and the local community.

The ECF is seeking club that stand out from the rest and ones that their members feel proud to belong to.

3C's were winners last year.

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

Nominations are sought from either readers or editors of Chess magazines that are produced by volunteers.

WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

Nominations may come from users or webmasters of Chess Websites that are run by volunteers.

PRESIDENTS AWARD FOR SERVICES TO CHESS

These are another annual award aimed at those people, who often operate in the background, organising and arranging so that other can enjoy their games.

Peter Gibbs & Neil Beasley are both past Midlands recipients of this award, and as mentioned earlier in the newsletter, Jill Barber received the award last year.

Nominations should be sent with a short citation to John Wickham, 55 Shakespeare Way, Taverham, Norwich, NR8 6SL or by email j.r.wickham@btinternet.com by 14th April.

John is also the person to send nomination for the other awards to. The deadline for Magazine or Website nominations is 31st March, for Club of the year it is 31st May.

Let's have some nominations from the MCCU area for these awards.

To the Lady that Scorned Her Lover
by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517 - 1547)

Although I had a check,
To give the mate is hard;
For I have found a neck,
To keep my men in guard.
And you that hardy are,
To give so great assay
Unto a man of war,
To drive his men away;

I rede you take good heed,
And mark this foolish verse;
For I will so provide,
That I will have your ferse. (queen)
And when your ferse is had,
And all your war is done;
Then shall yourself be glad
To end that you begun.

For if by chance I win
Your person in the field;
Too late then you come in
Yourself to me to yield.
For I will use my power,
As captain full of might;
And such I will devour,
As use to shew me spite.

And for because you gave
Me check in such degree;
This vantage, lo! I have,
Now check, and guard to thee.
Defend it if thou may;
Stand stiff in thine estate:
For sure I will assay,
If I can give thee mate.

FLOHR POSITIONAL PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

- a) Flohr vs Lowing, Prague, 1926 Qd6+
- b) Flohr vs Gosta Stoltz, Prague, 1931 Rxc5 if Qxc5 Rc1 w/Ba3 mates
- c) Flohr vs Jindrich Engel, Bad Sliac, 1932 Qe4+
- d) Flohr vs Vera Menchik, Hastings, 1932 Qxe5
- e) Flohr vs Philip Milner-Barry, London, 1932 g4+
- f) Flohr vs M Bernardo Rosseli, Folkestone, 1933 Rxf6+
- g) Flohr vs Grigory Ravinsky, Moscow, 1944 Qxc8+ w/Rxc8+ Nxd7 & Rd1
- h) Flohr vs Hermann Joss, Zurich, 1934 Rxq7
- i) Flohr vs Hans Johner, Zurich, 1934 Ra1
- j) Flohr vs Ilya Rabinovich, Moscow, 1935 Rh3 w/Rh5
- k) Flohr vs Paul Keres, Warsaw, 1935 Nxc8
- l) Flohr vs Ilya Rabinovich, Moscow, 1935 Rh3 w/Rh5