

The

CHESS COLLECTOR

VOL XVI No 2. 2007



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Editor's Comment

You will notice that there are some minor changes to the layout in this issue. The details of the CCI board members, contact e-mails etc have been moved to the inside back cover, with the CCI Diary. This allows me to expand the members section opposite and introduce a new feature, "My favourite Chess Set / Piece". I invite any member to send me 1 or 2 pictures of their favourite set or piece along with a short paragraph of explanation or what the set means to them. Maybe a particular set comes with an interesting story? Then we would love to hear it.

We have recently seen a number of excellent auction sales in the UK and we have the reviews. There are also some follow-up items from previous issues:

i) Background details on the front cover picture on the last issue (VolXVI No1)

ii) Further information on Chess and Music, with links to some relevant websites.

We had hoped to be able to publish some of the talks from the CCI meeting in

San Francisco, unfortunately only one summary was submitted. Maybe they can be ready for the next issue! Again your contributions & comments are most welcome.

Keep your comments coming in!

Jim Joannou
Editor

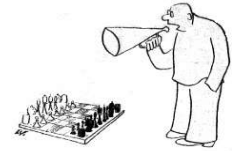
Front Cover

Chess Litho-art picture entitled "Lighting" by Ukrainian chess player Marina Valuiska. She tries to capture the emotional and aesthetic aspects of the game in her work.

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YOUR MOVE !



MEMBERS PAGE

My Favorite Chess set

Rodolfo Pozzi, Italy

I began to collect Chess sets in 1963, fascinated more by the shape and the history of the pieces than by their movement. The “number one” of my collection is an Italian wooden set of the 19th century that belonged to my paternal grandfather: (See Below)



It was with this set that at the age of ten, I learned to play from my father, and obviously the set is very dear to me.

The second in my collection is a German ivory set from the first half of the 19th century, slender with a small chessboard (See Below). It came from one of my maternal great-grandfathers, and when it eventually passes to my grandchildren, it will have been owned and used by six generations of the same family!



Members Comments

“Thank you for producing the latest issue of TCC, in which I found a lot of interesting articles to read.

Regarding the two London auctions in May I wonder if those auction houses can be approached to send CCI members complimentary copies, given that CCI promotes their sales in most issues. I think Bloomsbury did in the past, but not Christie's. “

Tony Peterson

Bloomsbury should send catalogues to all CCI members. Christie's will only send out catalogues to people who have registered at their sales.

Editor

“Can the magazine be e-mailed?”

Anonymous

The magazine is now produced in .PDF format so it is possible to be e-mailed. If a CCI member would like an e-mailed copy instead of a printed copy then contact the editor or their country representative.

Editor

“I got the Newsletter today and I see my article was included - it came out fine - there were a lot of very good interesting articles and the whole production looked top quality - congrats/.”

Dermot Rochford

E-mail the editor with your comments, good or bad, we want to know!

UPDATE ON LAST ISSUE

Information supplied by Alan Dewey

The front cover picture, Fig 1, on the last issue of "The Chess Collector" (Vol XVI No1), was described as:-

"Two Italian Chess pieces, King and Pawn, 17th Century. Carved from a draft at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London."



Fig 1

Further information on these pieces has been provided by CCI Member, Alan Dewey. The pieces are modern, carved by Alan Dewey himself and supplied to Rodolfo Pozzi. They were based on a draft of a 17th century design from the V&A museum.

A copy of the draft was supplied to Mr Dewey by Gareth Williams and it also appeared in Harry Golombek's "Encyclopaedia of Chess" (Fig 2)

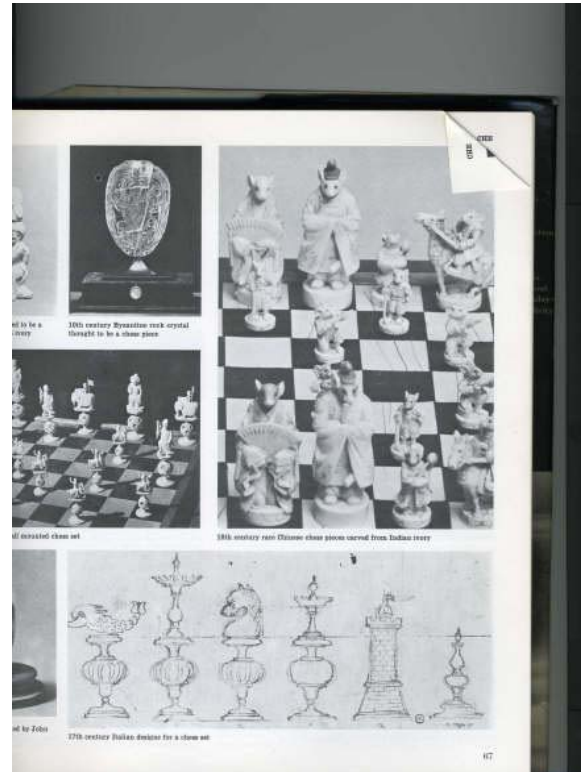


Fig 2 Encyclopaedia of Chess, (ISBN 0-7134-0878-2) page 67

Fig 3 below shows Alan Dewey's interpretation of the pieces from the draft.



Fig 3

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, DEC. 20, 1913.

Gareth Williams

Recently I had a smidgen of collectors luck. I tripped over the above I. L.N issue at a local Antique Fair to find the 'Literature' page completely dedicated to a review of a then, new book, recently published, titled '**A History of Chess**', by H.J. R.Murray.

The reviewer provides a very complimentary assessment, reinforced by four sepia photographs of chessmen illustrated from the book.

Positioned at the top of the page are five Russian 18th century pieces from a Kolmogory set carved from walrus ivory.

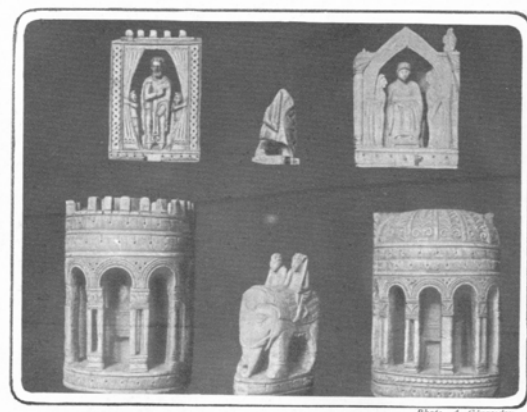


From the left– Elephant (Bishop), Czar(King), Sultan(King), Galleon (Rook), Centurion(Queen). From the Platt Collection.

Particularly impressive are Murray's credentials, reported as: "and let us say at once that he has given to the world its great standard

authority on the history of the royal game. His qualifications for the task have been a singular combination of gifts and opportunity. To brilliancy of scholarship he has added the patience of the scientific investigator and to enthusiasm for his subject the controlling influence of the highest culture".

In the center of the page, which is twice as large as a page in 'Chess', are two sepia pictures. The first illustrates chessmen at the 'Bibliotheque National', Paris.

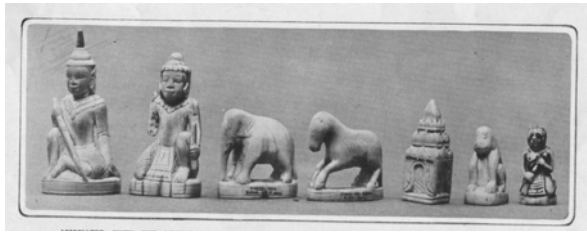


Dated from the 12th century: Six ivory so-called 'Charlemagne Chessmen'. They show from the top left, clockwise: King enthroned, Viking pawn, Queen, reverse view of king's throne, Elephant with two armed riders (Bishop) and reverse of opposing king's throne.

Followed by Burmese ivory chessmen from the Pitt-Rivers Collection,

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, DEC. 20, 1913.

Continued



Associated with the legend of Rama and the Monkeys in the 'Ramayan'.

They are always carved and often represent the legendary battle between Rama and the monkeys. The chessmen from the left are;

Great King, General, (Queen) Elephant (Bishop)Horse(Knight) Temple (Rook) Monkey and Soldier (pawns)

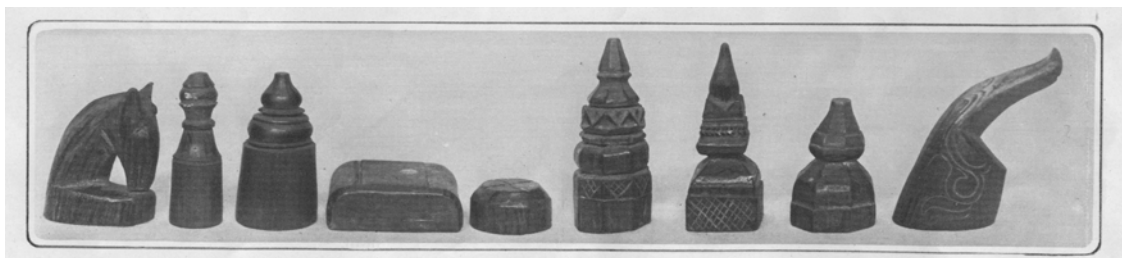
The praise for Murray continues: "His wide command of languages, his access to all sources of information as well as to original documents, and the powerful auxiliaries he called to his aid have conspired to make his book surely one of the most remarkable ever issued by the famous Clarendon Press".

The final picture sits sedately at the foot of the page showing a genre of set that is as rare today as when the

photo was taken. (See Below) (Personal Interruption; I have a Malay acquaintance to whom I gave a photo of this set and asked if he could find a similar Malay set for me. A few months later he sent me a Post card with the news, "Yes, he had found a similar chess set but regrettably he could not buy it as it was in a Museum".)

The I.L.N. review concluded with the following testimonial; "We have no space to follow further this fascinating book, which traces the story of chess through all times, in all countries. It is one which reflects the highest credit on British scholarship, and its pre-eminence must remain unchallenged for many a long day to come".

This concluding munificent assessment is as appropriate now in this twenty-first century as it was when first written, ninety-four years ago. Murray's 'A HISTORY OF CHESS' is still recognized as the world bible of chess scholarship.



Chessmen from Selangor, in the Malay Peninsula, at the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge. From the left:- Kuda (Horse) Gajah (Elephant)) Raja(King) bidaq(pawn) bidaq(pawn) Raja(King) Mantri (Minister) Ter(Chariot) Kuda(Horse).

BOOK REVIEW

Jim Joannou

Fishing for Forgeries

Author: Lawrence Totaro

No of Pages: 58

Language: English

Published by: Thinkers' Press

ISBN: 1-888710-32-2

Cost: \$14.95

Available Via Website:

<http://www.fishingforforgeries.com>

This book about collecting signatures of one of the most famous world Chess champions, Bobby Fischer. This interesting and useful book is a must if you already own or are intending to buy Chess signatures, especially with online auctions like eBay.

The author uses forged examples from eBay and authentic collectables from established collectors around the world. He offers little or no comments on these, just the facts and allows the reader to further their own investigations. There are also examples of signatures that have been electronically copied and sold as real, first hand examples.

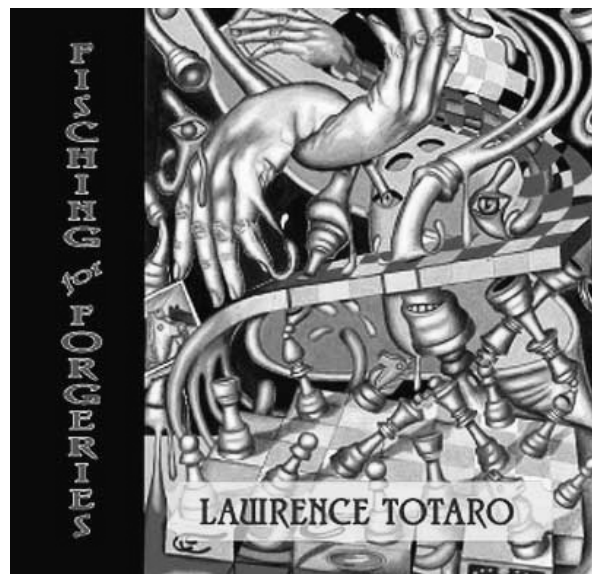
Probably the most important and useful section is where Lawrence Totaro gives a detailed analysis of Bobby Fischer's many signatures, followed by a hints & tips section on how to

avoid being conned when purchasing signature memorabilia.

Finally the author employs an expert to analyse Bobby Fischer's handwriting, American graphologist, Sheila Lowe, who gives an insight into his personality.

This book starts with an Introduction by GM Larry Evans, a Preface by chess collector, Andy Ansel, an Acknowledgements section and a Foreword. This may seem a little pretentious for a relatively small book, but these sections are vital to understanding the reasons and background for this work.

In the chess collecting world, if your interest is collecting memorabilia of famous chess players, especially if you're a Bobby Fischer fanatic, then this book is an absolute must.



The Origin of Pulpit Chessmen

Franz Joseph Lang

In an earlier contribution for The Chess Collector (Oct. 1996) I tried to point out why this type of chessmen, did not originate in Spain. Much more evidence is given that they are POW work made in English camps during the Napoleonic war.

In this first article I referred to a chess set from the "Harbeson" collection, which is very similar to lot 68 of the recent Dr. Cholet sale at Christie's, South Kensington, London. (See Picture below) The catalogue text says: "This set reputedly comes from the estate of Hugh Trevor-Roper, Baron Dacre of Glanton (1914-2003), and described as being Napoleonic prisoner of war."

When looking at the pawns this set is a valuable hint when searching the origin of the pulpit sets. Because pawns of this type show up also in usual pulpit sets (see i.e. Victor Keats, illustration 47, page 50). Victor Keats however, when writing this book in the early eighties was still following his predecessors Hammond and Mackett-Beeson. Both these dealers in antique chess sets and book authors have put to the world the story of the Spanish origin of the pulpit sets. Regrettably they never gave any proof or at least any solid evidence for their invention.

As always it is difficult to correct such wrong statements if they have found their place in the literature. So we all owe many thanks to CCI member Michael Mark who started this solid research and has also encouraged to follow his initiative.



Auction Reviews

Mike Wiltshire & Jim Joannou

Bonhams Auctions, Knowle, West Midlands, UK

This small, regional saleroom auctions chess sets and chess ephemera every six months as part of a larger sale. The sale, held on 27th Feb 2007, had 61 lots of chess items, and there were some very fine sets on offer. There were also a number of bargains to be had, for example a set of books, one by Howard Staunton "The Chess players textbook", went for just 10 Pounds.



Fig 1. "Old English" style, boxwood and ebony set. Bonhams Sale Lot 175.

There was some fierce bidding both in the room and on the phone for each of the three Jaques "In statu quo" sets and the best of these sold for 380 Pounds. There were a number of Ivory, Staunton pattern sets which all sold well, in particular a Victorian set with a verified provenance sold for 920 Pounds.

Undoubtedly the star of the sale was a superb Jaques, "old English" style, boxwood and ebony set, with 12 cm kings and a dated registration mark of 27th Sept 1893. (Fig 1) It was estimated at 1000-2000 Pounds but eventually sold to a phone bidder for 3500 Pounds.

Lot 207 was a lovely ivory "Hindu" set, C1900 (Fig 3), sold just above estimate at 600 Pounds.

Auction Reviews

Continued

This 6 monthly sale may not be very big, but there always seems to be one or two gems on offer. There were several keen bidders in the room and depending upon what you are looking for, this is a sale to keep your eye on.

Christie's, South Kensington, London, UK.

The Dr Jean-Claude Cholet Collection.

The UK CCI representative, Mike Wiltshire, organised a dinner on the evening before the sale at a London hotel (Fig 2), 12 CCI members and partners attended this enjoyable evening. This sale, on Wednesday 2nd May 2007 was, quite rightly, hailed by some CCI members as one of the most important collections to go on sale for some time. It was certainly impressive and generated a lot of discussion between various chess collectors.



Fig 2. Pre Christie's Dinner of CCI members and partners.

There were some criticism over the quality of the photographs put out by Christie's prior to the sale, as these did not do the sets justice. One had to be there to appreciate the quality of the collection. Christie's also wanted payment for reproducing their images in this issue, therefore none have been shown.

There were approx 70 people at the auction of which about 18 were CCI members, who travelled from various parts of the UK, Germany, Italy and several from the USA.

Although over half of the lots were listed with no reserve, there were only a few bargains to be had on the day. In general, prices were high, but then again, so was the quality. A wonderful French boxwood and ebony travel set in the "statu quo" style sold at 1100 Pounds against an estimate of 300-500 Pounds. Most of the English ivory sets sold for under their estimates, but a fine Staunton, Club size set, by Jaques, in a fitted box, sold for 16,000 Pounds against a 6000-10,000 Pounds listing.

The undoubted star of this sale was lot 32, a rare German Animalier set, finely carved in ivory with inset glass eyes. This set was listed with an estimate of 20,000- 30,000 Pounds but the bidding quickly passed this level. There were approving murmurs around the room when the bidding went over 100,000 Pounds, and there was a round of applause when it was eventually sold to a telephone bidder for 150,000 Pounds.

A mid 19th C German turned ivory set after a design by Michael Edel, was sold for 28,000 Pounds against an estimate of 5000-8000, and a south German lime wood figural set sold for 17,000 Pounds against a 2000-4000 Pound listing. Two French Lyon pattern sets (Lots 63 & 63) both sold for over 3 times their Top estimates of 300-500 pounds.

An anodised Aluminium Chess set by Man Ray, dated circa 1950, was sold to a telephone bidder, on estimate, for 10,000 Pounds. Most of the Chinese sets sold either on or just below estimate, like a Macao bust type 19th C set, which went for 1440 Pounds. Lot 162, a Japanese carved bone animal set generated a lot of interest in the viewings and this was reflected in the set selling for 11,400 Pounds against its

Auction Reviews

Continued

estimate of just 1000-2000 Pounds.

Overall this was a quality sale, which brought out the big money and was a fitting tribute to the memory of Dr Jean-Claude Cholet.



**Fig 3. Indian Bone "Hindu" set.
Bonham's Auction Lot 207.**

Bloomsbury Chess auction, London, UK

There were some changes to this half yearly sale, which, on Wed 30th May, started early at 10:30 am. This was because it was a "Collectors" sale and included Medals, Shares, Banknotes and coins alongside over 200 chess items. Another change was that the lots in this auction were also listed, prior to the sale, on eBay where one could place absentee bids, easily online. Coming so soon after the Christie's sale of the Dr. Jean-Claude Cholet collection there was a fear that the auction might not be successful.



**Fig 4. An English Mahogany Table.
Bloomsbury Auctions Lot 72**

However once the 71 books, postcards and games had been dealt with, that fear was overcome when an 1860 English mahogany table fetched £1,300 compared with an

estimate of £600 (See Fig 4), a Carton Pierre board fetched £1,000 against £300 and a large size board [not Jaques] fetched £750 against £300. There were 112 sets in all and bidding was very brisk especially from Internet and telephone participants.



**Fig 5. A Vegetable Ivory Set.
Bloomsbury Auctions Lot 114.**

CCI members from Scotland, London, Kent and Holland departed empty handed, such was the scramble for sets from the internet and telephone bidders as well as from a collector all the way from New Jersey, USA.



**Fig 6. Pulpit Set sold for £4,400 .
Bloomsbury Auctions Lot 124**

In particular a vegetable ivory set, Lot 114 Fig 5, fetched £800 against an estimate of £80 whilst two late 18th C English sets fetched £1,900 against an estimate of £800 and an amazing £3,800 against an estimate of £900. A 1974 silver and silver gilt set went for £2,000 whilst a "Spanish" Pulpit, Lot 124, Fig 6, set described as probably English late 18th C fetched £4,400 against an estimate of £2,000. A nice example of a Barleycorn pattern bone set, Lot 132,

Auction Reviews

Continued

reached £1,200 compared with an estimate of £300 whilst a Calvert pattern ivory set fetched £2,200. More surprises were an Indian ivory monobloc set, which fetched a remarkable £2,200, Lot 144, and a 20th C Rajhasthan set, which fetched £1,900 against a £900 estimate. Even a part Vizagapatam set, Lot 163 (Fig 7), estimated at £500 fetched £3,600 with four pieces missing!



**Fig 7. Indian Export Ivory Part Set
Bloomsbury Auctions Lot 163**

Further surprises were a Burmese pattern set which went for £1,700 against a £600 estimate and a Cambodian set, Lot 180 (Fig 8), which sold for £2,800, some £1,000 higher than a larger set sold in the Jean-Claude Cholet sale. Even 22 pieces of an old Dieppe set sold for £950. All in all, the sale was extremely successful for Bloomsbury and Luke Honey, and proved that prices remain strong as a result of more collectors becoming involved in the auction arena.



**Fig 8. Cambodian Ivory set
Bloomsbury Auctions Lot 180.**

Advertisement

Bonhams ¹⁷⁹³

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The closing date for entries is 10 August.

Our specialists are always delighted to offer free advice and auction valuations with a view to selling at auction. For further information with regard to consigning your items to this sale or buying or selling any Chess related items through Bonhams, please contact Gerry Berwyn-Jones on +44 (0) 1564 776 151 or email: gerry.berwynjones@bonhams.com

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Have Chess Set – Will Travel

A Journey in four parts. Part 1: The Early Years

Jim Joannou

Travel chess sets can, on first glance, appear to be a fairly modern development (19th C onwards), but one could argue that the idea of “Have chess set – will travel” comes from the very beginnings of the game. The spread of the game via the trade routes of the Middle & Far East meant that not only did the traders carry the sets but they also had to teach people how to play the game and may well have practiced or played chess during their journeys. This is, of course, mere speculation, however in Hans and Siegfried Wichmann’s book (4) they go further and suggest that a travelling dice and board game belonging to the Emperor Claudius (10bc—54ad) was an “indication of a prototype of the travelling set for chess”. In H.J.R. Murray’s “A History of Chess”(1), he notes three, early travelling chess incidents:

(i) The tale of a 12th century knight, Sir Tristram. “It was an essential portion of the equipment of the troubadour or minstrel that he should be a chess-player, and he carried the implements of play with him. Thus, Sir Tristram, travelling disguised as a minstrel..” This English Knight was immortalised as a travelling chess player when he, and his lover Isolde, were represented playing chess at the mast of a ship on a sea voyage. The metalwork figure, known as the “Burghley Nef” (Fig 1) was the ship they sailed on from Ireland in the 1100’s and the small figures of Tristram and Isolde can just be seen along with the chess-board (2) (Fig 2)

(ii) Louis XIII of France (1601-1643) owned a chessboard “made of wool with spiked pieces made for use when travelling”. (7) This could be the earliest



Fig 1: Burghley Nef. (Made in France in 1527/8) V&A Museum, London.

reference to a “travel” chess set, and is interesting as there have been some discussions over the existence of this style of chess set. Fig 3 shows 3 bone pieces, (3) which are sometimes described as “Spiked Chess pieces”, “Sand pieces” or “Pique-Sable” which could be used for travel play, but the current viewpoint is that these were made for the game of “Jonchette” or “Spillikins”. Wichmann (4) shows a so-called “Pique-Sable set” (Plate 143). These pieces may well have been used for chess in this way but there is no direct evidence to confirm it.

(iii) The Story of a 16th Century Italian traveller called Paolo Boi, who travelled around Europe playing chess against the best players at the time. Whilst travelling in Hungary it was said that he played chess with some Turks whilst riding on horseback.

In Wichmann’s book (4) he describes an

Have Chess Set—Will Travel

Continued



Fig 2: Figures of Sir Tristram & Isolde playing chess on the Burghley Nef.

elaborate chessboard, which folded in half and became the container for the pieces (Page 60 / Plate 58 & 59). This is exactly the style of many, more modern travel sets, but in this case produced circa 1300! Wichmann goes on to discuss 17th century, hinged chessboards, which formed boxed containers for the pieces (Pages 62-63). (Fig 4)



Fig 3 French bone pieces Circa 18thC



Fig 4: Late 17th C hinged box chessboard. (Oak, Ivory & tortoise shell), Augsburg.

War and Chess is also a recurring theme in history and there are many references to military leaders playing chess whilst traveling on a campaign. eg: King Richard I of England (1157-1199) on the crusades to the holy land, and the famous chess player, Napoleon who played chess on his Polish campaign. (5) In the early 1700's Peter the Great, Tsar of Russia, had a special folding "Campaign" Chessboard made to take on his military campaigns. (Fig 5) It was made of Leather and is now housed in the Hermitage museum in St Petersburg. (6)



Fig 5: Peter the Great's folding Campaign Chessboard

Have Chess Set—Will Travel

Continued

The nobility and the rich in the 18th century were travelling more frequently and farther than before and it is now that we start to see chess sets specifically designed for use when travelling. The English travel writer, Richard Twiss, who in 1787 wrote, “Chessboards are now commonly made for the use of those who travel by water, or in a carriage, with a hole in each square, a peg at the bottom of every man...” (7)

So, in these early years of chess, as the game spread, the seeds were being sown which links travel and chess together and just as chess became an inevitable part of life, so did the invention of a travel set. I do not believe that one person came up with the idea of a “travel” chess set, but rather it developed over time by necessity. However as more research and more discoveries are made we may eventually reach a definitive answer.

References

- 1) A History of Chess. H.J.R. Murray. Oxford university press 1913. p428, p751, p839 & p819.
- 2) Victoria & Albert Museum. <http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/1265/frost/?m=200702>
- 3) Schachfiguren. F Greygoose. Herbert Schult Verlag, Heidenheim. 1979. Page 68.
- 4) Chess. The Story of Chesspieces from Antiquity to modern Times. Hans & Siegfried Wichmann. Crown Publishers, New York. 1960. Plate 143.
- 5) Napoleon Bonaparte and Chess. Edward Winter. 1998. <http://www.chesshistory.com/winter/extra/napoleon.html>
- 6) The Art of Chess Pieces. I.M. Linder. HES Publishers, Moscow. 1994.
- 7) The Chess Collector, VolX No.1 Spring 2000. “Jonchette-Pique Sable”. Alan Dewey.

Website Review

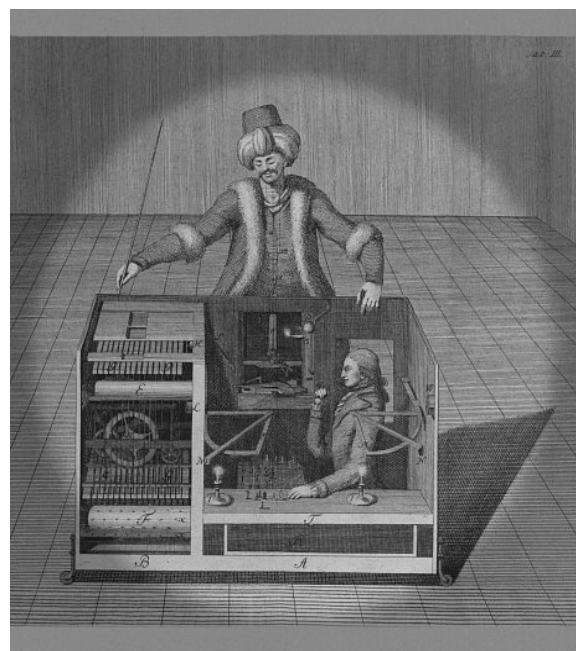
<http://www.computerhistory.org/chess/>

Jim Joannou

Collecting Chess sets and Chess ephemera can take on many forms. Some people are interested in Sets from India, or maybe they specialize in plastic sets. Others may collect ceramic chess items whilst some have collections of stamps or postcards with a chess theme. We have chess enthusiasts who research into the history of the game and those who like to look into the design of the pieces. This website is dedicated to the history and to collecting “Computer Chess”. This site entitled “Mastering the Game – A History of Computer Chess” is part of a larger site, about the history of Computers.

The history of the Chess computer dates from 1945 and is still being developed today. Chess computers are widely available in shops and recently the World Chess Champion Vladimir Kramnik played a game against the Chess program “Deep Fritz”. (Kramnik lost 4-2).

This website starts however by quoting the first example of a chess playing machine as the famous “Turk” invention by Wolfgang Von Kempelen in 1770.



Website Review

Continued

The history of the chess computer is told over four selectable sections called, Opening moves, Middle game, Chess for Everyone and Endgame. A final section shows the sites collection of documents, pictures and chess computers. In addition, at the bottom of each page, there are Forum and a Resources options. The Forum allows open discussions on Chess computers, although there are no recent postings, while the Resources has a bibliography and further Internet links.

In the first section under “Early Theorists” it states: “Computing pioneers Alan Turing in England and Claude Shannon in the United States developed fundamental theories of computation that had lasting impact on the field of computing. They also considered chess an interesting puzzle that might help solve other problems and possibly advance the dream of building a machine that could think. In 1947, before there were computers, Turing designed the first program to play chess and tested it with paper and pencil using himself as the computer”



Ken Thompson (Right) and Joe Condon, designers of Belle – a dedicated chess playing machine. ca 1977

The “Middle Game” section moves on to the 1970’s when dramatic progress in Chess software took place and a number of features were developed, like “Chess Hash Tables” and “Opening Books” which are still in use today.

The next section deals with micro-computers, the appearance of chess games in the shops and the start of organized “Man versus Machine” competitions. The Endgame tells the story of how IBM got involved and developed chess computers that were capable of challenging Grandmasters. This was the famous Deep Blue system, which eventually beat a Grandmaster for the first time on 11th May 1997 when it defeated Gary Kasparov.



Signed Chessboard and pieces used in the Kasparov Vs. Deep Blue match in 1996.

This interesting site shows another aspect of chess collecting. I’m sure that most CCI members have at some time, tried their hand against a computer chess game and indeed I’m sure that some of us have one or two items in our own collections. (I know I have!) These items are going to be the antiques of the future and I wonder how long it will be before we start seeing them sold at Bloomsbury auctions?

Chess and Music Update

In the last issue (Vol XVI No1. 2007) there was a mistake in the interview with Yuri Averbakh. CCI member, Gianfelice Ferlito, informs us "...on page 6 at the end of the second column. (six lines from the bottom). It is written: "after 43.Re1 black must seriously consider resigning". But it is the white that should resign not the black. At least my chess program says so !! This correction is also in line with Yuri's statement that the second game was favourable for him ."

Chess and Music Website Links

In the last two issues we printed articles on "Chess & Music". Here are some websites on this subject that members may find interesting.

<http://www.greschak.com/musChess.htm>

http://www.halfbakery.com/idea/Chess_20to_20music_20translator

<http://www.chessbase.com/newsdetail.asp?newsid=3522>

<http://www.chessbase.com/newsdetail.asp?newsid=320>

<http://www.chessib.com/music.html>

<http://www.chesshistory.com/winter/extra/music.html>

<http://www.kenilworthchessclub.org/kenilworthian/2006/05/chess-and-music.html>

"The Beauty of Chess"

Summary of Talk given by Dr J Wagner

CCI Meeting San Francisco. May 2007

The Beauty of Chess", a PowerPoint program by Joseph Wagner, M. D. of Los Angeles, showed some of the world's most beautiful chess sets, introduced interesting men and women of chess, touched on the history of chess and chess in art.

"No chess player, no poet, no master of the English language," said Dr. Wagner, "has ever been able to convey the world of chess to the lay public. We are left at best with the words of a great chess teacher of yesteryear, Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch (1862-1934), who wrote, "I pity the man who does not know chess, for chess, like love and like music, hath the power to make men happy." "So," continued Dr. Wagner, "let us share today our joy in *The Beauty of Chess*".

A recurring theme was how often the chessboard is incorrectly set up with a dark square in the lower right hand corner, as it is always required to have a white square in the lower right hand corner. This error appears in paintings from the middle ages through today, and even occasionally at the hands of strong chess players such as the avant-garde artist Marcel Duchamps who played for France in the World Chess Olympiads. *Marcel Duchamps' famous painting, "The Chess Players", hangs today in the Philadelphia Art Museum. ("You all know the Philadelphia Art Museum. That is where Sylvester Stallone ran up the steps training for his World Championship boxing match in the first "Rocky Balboa" movie,*

A chess set made by his friend, the post-modern artist Max Ernst, displayed in Duchamp's apartment, was set up just that way with a dark square in the lower right hand corner.

The program included numerous anecdotes, and concluded with a clever endgame and the comment that "There is nothing a chess player enjoys more than finishing an evening with a nice mate"

Kempelen Exhibition in Budapest

Budapest Sun Newspaper

An exhibition entitled "Kempelen - Man in the Machine" ran in the Media Art and Media History exhibition, Múcsarnok, from 24th March till 28th May 2007. The exhibition has now moved to the Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Budapest. Where it will be displayed until 19th Aug 2007.

This is an extract from an article in the Budapest Sun newspaper dated 11th April 2007:

"Who was Wolfgang von Kempelen (Kempelen Farkas, born in Bratislava in 1734, died in Vienna, 1804)? As József Mélyi, curator of the exhibition, explains, his name and the legend surrounding his chess-playing automaton, the "Turk," are relatively well known. But there is much more to this true polyhistorian, who served the court of Maria Theresa, was director of the Hungarian salt mines, invented a speaking machine, a typewriter for the blind, steam engines and a water pumping system for Bratislava Castle and Schönbrunn in Vienna, wrote poetry and drama, established the Hungarian Castle Theater - and the list goes on.

The two focal points of the show are certainly the Turk and the original speaking machine, with the fundamental concepts behind them followed through to their modern legacy. Surprisingly, the Turk is making his first ever appearance in Budapest, sadly in the form of John Gaughan's painstaking reconstruction, as the original was destroyed in a fire. Its next stop in Karlsruhe will mark re-appearance there, after more than two centuries.

Edgar Allan Poe was one of the leading lights of his time to fall under the machine's spell. "There is, then, no analogy whatever between the operations of the Chess-Player, and those of the calculating machine of Mr. Babbage, and if we choose to call the

former a pure machine we must be prepared to admit that it is, beyond all comparison, the most wonderful of the inventions of mankind," he wrote in Maelzel's Chess-Player, 1835." "The show here was opened with a flourish by Gaughan himself (the master behind the tricks of David Copperfield, among others), who introduced the Turk and gave a running commentary on exhibition matches with the automaton (for those who missed it, there is a video recording), deftly keeping the audience aware of the secret behind it.

Mélyi is astonished by the fact that, without fail, intelligent people want to put the lid back on the secret - and keep it a secret. The show continues the legend, rather than revealing the naked Emperor.

"I believe that the essence of Kempelen is not a didactic, linear, scientific study, but rather feeds on the secret. If you go through the exhibition with your eyes open, it will be clear anyway."

But why was the chess player cast as a Turk? "First of all, the Oriental origins of chess; the "Turk" is an enigmatic figure, inscrutable; and finally because of the Oriental fascination/fashion of the 18th century - an age of "Turkish" balls, and Maria Theresa took to wearing Turkish costume," explained Mélyi."... "Hungarian chess experts were also consulted, as were the Viennese and Hungarian Archives, and a host of other institutions.

A truly multi-disciplinary symposium was organised for the first two days of the exhibition, which covered the history of Kempelen and some of his inventor contemporaries, the history of chess, of chess-playing computers, and of automatons - connected with good and evil, the history of magic,

Kempelen Exhibition in Budapest

Continued

the history of sound as technology, and of speech - and of media archaeology from an Eastern and Islamic perspective.”

For further information see the following websites:

www.kempelen.hu

http://www.mucsarnok.hu/new_site/index.php?lang=en&t=414&curmenu=101

<http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/e/>

http://www.automates-anciens.com/english_version/main_pages/page_chess_player_automaton_von_kempelen.php



John Gaughan's reconstruction of "The Turk"

Hidden Under the Floorboards.

Jim Joannou

The National Trust in the UK relies on member fee's and donations to maintain and run national treasures like stately homes, gardens, historical sites and houses etc. as part of Britain's heritage. They also put on traditional musical events and plays all over the UK. As I was searching their website, I came across a reference to some chess pieces which had been found during some renovation work. Two wooden pieces were found under the floorboards of a bedroom used by children at Nunnington Hall in Ryedale, Yorkshire, UK. The two pieces, shown below, were pictured in an article entitled "Between the Cracks: Hidden treasures in National Trust Houses" by the area archaeologist, Mark Newman. (The article can be found at: http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/between_the_cracks.pdf)



I had seen this style before and a search through my books gave a similar set in Gareth Williams' book, "Master Pieces" (Pg 47). This showed pieces from an 18C English set owned by Philidor. I passed this information to Mark Newman of the National Trust and he stated that the dates coincided with other items found in the same place.

The National Trust is interested in the expertise and knowledge of the CCI and will contact me in future if they have a chess set that they need information on.

CCI DIARY

German CCI Meeting

7th—9th Sept 2007
Erbach, Germany

Details from Thomas Thomson
dr-thomsen@t-online.de

Bonham's Auctions

11:00am. 11th Sept 2007
Knowle, W Midlands, UK

Details from:
gerry.berwynjones@bonhams.com

World Championships FIDE

11th Sept - 1st Oct 2007
Mexico City

Bloomsbury Auctions

25th Sept 2007
London UK

Details from:
Luke@bloomsburyauctions.com

1st French Congress / 6th Italian Congress

28th Sept—30th Sept 2007
Troyes, France

Details from pplain@wanadoo or
maxchess2001@yahoo.it

The 13th CCI Biennial Convention.

30th April—4th May 2008
Boca Raton, Florida, USA.

(Birthplace of the CCI back in 1984)

Details from: Floyd Sarisohn.
Lichess@aol.com
PO Box 166, Commack, NY. 11725. USA

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As a fellow collector and CCI Member, I am also prepared to buy old English Pottery
Chess Sets or odd pieces.

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