

The

CHESS COLLECTOR

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Editor's Comment

I would like to thank those CCI members for their season's greetings over the recent holiday period and the many complimentary e-mails on the last issue. Several members pointed out an error on a published e-mail address. I apologise to members who may have got frustrated with this. An erratum correcting this mistake is published on this page.

The sad news of Bobby Fischer's passing was on news channels around the world, and this triggered many memorials about his life and chess games. There has also been a surge of Fischer memorabilia appearing on auction sites! The good news is that the chess expert and auctioneer, Luke Honey, who has supported the CCI many times in the past, has now secured a position at Bonhams auction house in London. (See CCI Diary for his next auction date).

As promised in the last issue we have two more book reviews, and two updates on a items from the last issue. We also have two CCI members writing about their views on chess collecting.

If any member has any suggestions for articles, layout or features, please email them through to me. This is your chance to have your say in the magazine.

Keep your comments coming in!

Jim Joannou.
Editor

Front Cover

A silver and silver-gilt chessmen in a leather case. Dated to 17th century. Artist unknown. Donated to the V&A museum, London.

Erratum

In the last issue (Vol XVI No3), there was an error on page 16. Book Review for Alan Fersht's book, Jaques Staunton Chess Sets. The authors e-mail address was incorrect. The correct e-mail address to contact the author is:

Jaques.Staunton@gmail.com

Members Comments

“Another great issue..” Floyd Sarisohn. USA

“What a great issue! Everything was of interest and everything was presented in an excellent manner..” Allan Savage. USA

“Thank you for publication of my articles and pictures in TCC and CCI-USA News, and many compliments” Roldofo Pozzi. Italy

“...I enjoy the CCI magazine very much.”
Rick Knowlton. USA

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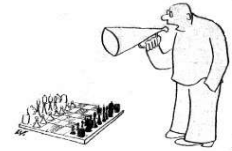
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YOUR MOVE !



MEMBERS PAGE

An interesting Chess Story Gareth Williams. UK

When we lived in London, Vel and I used to love a visit to Paris as it is a great place to find antique chess items, especially sets. However, we were not always lucky and, on this particular visit we had had no luck.

We were wandering among the narrow streets south of the river Seine feeling tired and down when unexpectedly out of the corner of our eyes there was this one ivory Cambodian chess knight winking at us as we were passing an antique establishment.

Inside, a charming lady greeted us; she insisted she could speak no English. Never the less she let us inspect the knight, in the meantime we had noticed another knight, one carved from horn and identical to the ivory one. Vel said, 'Pity these are the only ones' to me in English of course. Overhearing Vel, our charming lady went to a drawer pulled out a tray that held all the other chessmen with the exception of the pawns.

We then indicated we would like to buy the set, she quoted a reasonable price and we paid her. Then I turned to Vel and said 'The pawns are missing but they are cowrie shells, we can buy them in London'. On hearing this, our lady 'who could speak no English' went to another drawer.

This time she withdrew a straw bowl that held a mixture of small trinkets. Among them were these two hundred year old cowrie shells that had been cut to have flat bases, eight left naturally white and the other eight with blacked uppers, identifying which side they represented.

We walked out of that antique shop on air, suddenly we were no longer tired and once again Paris was wonderful.

However we were not home yet! The following day when we did arrive back and unpacked our prize, to our horror the small horn Cambodian Queen was missing. Panic! It must have been lost in our hotel room, the only place we had taken the set out of the box.

I made a phone call, to the hotel and tried to explain the problem. 'Had they found a Cambodian chess piece' 'No, our room cleaner is away for a few days, they would phone us back when they found it. Could Sir describe it again, how big was the queen's chest, Sir!' 'O hell, all is lost.'

A few days passed, no phone call from the Hotel, a few more days and then an envelope from Paris, there was no need to open it, the bulge in it could only be the 'Queen's Chest' could be felt through the envelope. Great!! It was there wrapped in tissue paper with no accompanying letter.

Safely home at last.



Cambodian Chess pieces on authentic board

Are we really getting closer to the truth?

Gianfelice Ferlito

I read with great curiosity the article of Jim Joannou in the last issue of TCC (Vol.XVI n.3 2007) entitled 'Getting closer to the roots. More hard facts for the Origin of Chess in India'.

I was hoping to eventually find '**more hard facts**' on the Indian origin of chess and an update report on the research trip organised by Mr. Eder to Uttar Pradesh in March 2007, but I was rather disappointed. For a week the group visited Allahabad, Varanasi, Kannauj, Kanpur and Lucknow tracing some significant-for them- terracotta figures in the local museum of Kannauj.

These terracotta artifacts depicted warriors, armed soldiers on horses, elephants and charriots.

According to Eder and Dr. Seyd the Maukhari Rulers used to play chaturanga with cabinet terracotta before venturing into a military campaigns. Actually, during the late Gupta period they had a military school, where cadets were taught about tactical warfare through terracotta pieces (game pieces) on a board called Ash-tapada and this war game was called Chaturanga, a primitive chess game. The only proof of this theory of Dr.Seyd is -at least so far- the poem 'Harsha-carita' (625 AD) written by Bana for the King Harsha Bana.

There are two passages in which the **Ash-tapada-board**, and the game of **Chaturanga** are mentioned.

The first passage is when an Indian sage, by nature excessively choleric, '*seeing her (the divine Sarasvati) smiling, 'Wretch!' cried the sage, 'vain in the conceit the gain of ill-got knowledge, dost jeer at me'. With these words, shaking his head so that his matted locks streaming from the broken fillet, seemed by their outpouring yellowness to flood the heavens with an issuing fire of passion; gathering a frown that darkened the chess board (ashtapada) of his forehead....(1)*

The second explicit reference to the game chaturanga is: '*Under this monarch (Harsha) are found only the cloths worn by devotees in meditation, and not forged documents; the royal figures of sculptors and not the vulgar disputes With kings; only bees quarrel in collecting*

dews- the only feet ever cut off are those in metre, only chessboards (i.e.ashtapadas) teach the position of the four 'members' (i.e.chaturanga), there is no cutting off the four principal limbs of condemned criminals'...(2)

These references, are well known by all chess historians.

Certainly they indicate that the **ashtapada board** and the game of **chaturanga** were well known to Bana but nothing so far could convince us that the game of chaturanga '*was invented around 450 AD (or even earlier) in Northern India and precisely in Kannauj 'as stated by Dr.Seyd'*. Nor that the terracotta figures found in the museum were gaming pieces. Unfortunately, we do not know, if these terracotta artifacts were found in the same place during an excavation. Finding one terracotta elephant in eight different locations is far less interesting (for chess history) than discovering eight terracotta pieces, depicting warriors, elephants, horses and chariots, in one location.

It is known that **ashtapada**, a race game on a board of 8x8 played with dice was mentioned in **Vinayapitaka** work of the III or IVc.BC, it is known that **chaturanga** was the name of the Indian army which was composed by four (chatur) members (anga) namely charriots, elephants, horses and infantry. The name of the Indian army was mentioned in **Arthasastra** which goes back probably to the 3rd C BC.

So the names of ashtapada (game and board game) and Chaturanga (Indian army) were well known in India since the 3rd C BC. Chaturanga as a game on an ashtapada board was certainly of later origin. We still do not know **when** and **where** this originally took place.

Many chess historians have put forward different views as to where and when the chess game may have had its origin. So far, no one has a definitive acceptable scientific answer to this question. In my opinion, Dr.Seyd's ideas have still, to be proved.

Notes

(1) From Chapter 1 of ' Harsha-carita ' translated by E.B.Cowell and F.W.Thomas, London: Royal Asiatic Society 1897

(2) From Chapter 2 of 'Harsha-carita' idem.

Board (Bored) with chess sets(?)

John A. Mazzucco

Black or White? (How about Grey!)

For some, it can take 15 days; for others, like me, 15 years. To keep interest from waning and the motor humming, some other related activities might help. Communication and sharing, intensive research, *and/or diversifying* might help. Some of us like to focus, like a finely crafted microscope, on a particular style of chess set. Others, like the horizon-searching Hubble telescope, like to expand our general knowledge base, and see what the universe has to offer in the world of chess collecting. I might liken the former to Alan Fersht, who wrote the excellent book, "Jaques Staunton Chess Sets 1849-1939", and also liken the telescopic tendencies to myself and the subject here. Year after year when the same opening is played, or when the pursuit and display of chess sets becomes old hat, we may need to add some spice to life. Try different positions, try various combinations, move those sets around, vary mating tactics... Better yet, Diversify!

To ask the questions directly, *are you bored yet with collecting mere chess sets?* Have you run out of space? Has your budget (or spouse's patience) reached a limit? Well, what can be better than diversifying? Businesses do it, companies do it, investors do it, even some marriages seem to do it. Why not chess? Chess books, related artifacts and autographs can provide a nice place to re-focus one's attention. Searching for autographs, autographed or non-autographed books, collecting "antique" or modern day instructional books, reading novels with a chess theme, and/or collecting books on chess sets can all keep the heart pumping, between blitz games and games of slow-moving death.

Closed game. Open Season.

The recent death of Bobby Fischer seems to have brought a flurry of activity from some critter-like sellers intent on making a fast "buck" from others fame and (mis)fortune. The critics of this world may be busy and justified in finding fault with a forsaken fallen "American Hero" - at least in some eyes - but it pales when compared with some of the villainous vermin scurrying among the Internet channels. So, what are we talking about here? And what does this have to do with chess collecting? For some of us, at least, there is more than just collecting

chess sets or pieces. Take a look at the chess "museums" and the myriad chess-related artifacts that have cropped up over the last few years, and you will see how prolific the chess collecting world has become. From Santa and Simpson sets to Selenus and Staunton Sets; from boards to books; from key chains to computers; from block chess puzzles to improbable Pulitzer prize winning Kasparovs; from Dresden figurines to dilapidated rook finials; from Capablanca to charismatic chess caps; and from magnificent masterpieces to mass-produced Mumbai Indian Sets: *Chess collecting, over the last few years, has exploded.*

Motivation and Strategy

There are several aspects to this phenomenon of collecting chess related autographs that can be explored. In other words, why on earth would any of us want to collect autographs? The following is a partial list of those aspects/factors. 1.) Rubbing elbows. Some of us seem to be children of mediocrity. We play chess recreationally - or even occasionally in tournaments, and collect what we each consider to be acceptable chess sets and artifacts. For those of us, with a limited income, to be physically close to someone of greatness brings potential, albeit short term, relief to a ho hum kind of living. Then again, as it is often said by the wise, "beauty... or is it greatness?... is in the eye of the beholder." To know that one has in his/her hands, a signed document or book or mere piece of paper that was handled and autographed by a World Chess Champion or well-known International Grandmaster can bring a (potential) feeling of importance. That is or can be one reason why some of us collect Chess related autographs.

2.) Investing. This is one of the chancy areas where speculating, research, experience, and luck can come into play. Who would have known that in 1991, the relatively new Easton Press publishing company, would have made available to the public, a book written and signed by Anatoly Karpov? And who could have foreseen the sky high increase in it's market value..

3.) Competition for the relatively unique or rare. "I have something you don't have."

4.) Diversifying; variations on a theme.

Board (Bored) with chess sets(?)

Continued

Tallying up the Points

The price or market value of an autograph, an autographed book, autographed score sheets, or a book with a chess theme depends - as with many other collectible items - on a number of factors:

- 1.) The date of release from the publisher. Often, first releases, can command premium prices. On the other hand, if the book takes a while to become recognized as a work of literary art, initial asking prices may be relatively low.
- 2.) The quality of the writing / story / plot.
- 3.) The degree of association with chess.
- 4.) The manner in which a book is promoted. e.g. "The Emperor of Ocean Park" by Stephen Carter has two pawns on the cover, however, aside from the occasional association with chess strategy, the chess association is apparently relatively weak. Contrast it with *The Eight* by Katherine Neville whose initial cover showed a symbol of infinity rather than chess pieces. However, *The Eight* has an exceedingly higher association with chess pieces. Subsequent editions of *The Eight* show a cover adorned with a knight chess piece on an abstract chessboard-like floor within a cavernous room.
- 5.) The rarity of the autograph. e.g. authentic ones of Frank Marshall and Fischer show up much less than Kasparov and Karpov.
- 6.) The reliability of the seller / publisher, with respect to the seller's ability to convince the potential buyer of the autograph's authenticity.
- 7.) Supporting documentation (or lack thereof) which either gives credence to the claim of authenticity or encourages suspicion.
- 8.) The number of areas which make the item collectible. e.g. An autographed science fiction novel, signed by the author - especially if he/she is a chess player or world champion, may well have more appeal to several groups: Chess Collectors, Science Fiction fans, Autograph collectors, Chess players, and Investment speculators. Here is an example of an autographed book, available for a relatively brief period of time in the past by the publisher. (Availability was probably via a book contract arrangement with the publisher whereby the buyer receives one book per month, on a variety of topics and by various authors).

The cost of the book itself was likely below \$60.00 US: Signed Easton Press First Edition - Anatoly Karpov - KARPOV on KARPOV: -

Memoirs of a World Chess Champion. PUBLISHER EASTON PRESS, USA, 1991. FINE book bound in full black leather, with hubbed spine, satin bookmark, 22 kt. gold gilding on three edges and gilt on front and back covers and spine. SIGNATURE by Anatoly Karpov on a special limitation page.

Over the last few months, various sources, including ebay sellers, have offered the same book for between \$300 and \$1000 US. Most purchases have been made with the selling price of between \$300 and \$600. However, the same book is still up for sale on various website locations for up to \$1000.

Recently, Garry Kasparov came out with a book entitled "How Life Imitates Chess", with a subtitle "Making the Right Moves from the Board to the Boardroom", published by Bloomsbury USA. When it first came out with an autograph (he signed the book at various promotional events, such as bookstores and libraries) it was sold for as high as approx \$60. Overall, it appears to have come down in price, but some sellers are still asking well over \$60.

Currently, Easton Press sells Kasparov's recently published book for *less than* \$80 US. However, specialty collectors who are also ebay sellers, for example, have secured a number of such books directly from the publisher, and increase the asking price to 2-3 times the initial cost. At the present time, most of the first signed editions of this book are being sold for between about \$120 - \$180, but some sellers are asking up to about \$200 for their copies. The benefit of buying one of these books is that the publisher essentially guarantees the authenticity of the autograph by a page *within the book* with a statement: "This book was personally signed by...". At times such books also come with a "COA" (Certificate of Authenticity). When a "COA" accompanies a non-Easton press book, I believe that it carries less weight than one that comes with an Easton Press book. Anyone can attempt to duplicate or forge a signature.

However, a.) close examination b.) the presence or absence of an accompanying date of signing, c.) the presence or absence of a COA (while not in itself an absolute determining factor) can add or detract from belief in the signature's authenticity.

Board (Bored) with chess sets(?)

Continued

Easton Press books tend to be much more reliable with respect to autograph authenticity. The reason for this, as mentioned, is that the signed Easton press book has an autographed page that is an integral part of the book. Other examples of publishers with the same or similar feature of a specially designated "autograph" page are Franklin Press, Farrar Straus Giroux, and Horowitz & Harkness. "ARC"s ("Advanced Readers Copies"), which come out before the book is available to the general public, strongly tend to command much higher prices than later releases (*if and when it becomes popular*). Kasparov's book "How Life Initiates Chess" is a book that had an ARC. Some autographed books are numbered (e.g. 738 of 1000... 41 of 200, etc.) Those autographed books tend to be more sought-after editions.

What about Bobby Fischer "signed" / "autographed" items? In October 2004, I bought a Bobby Fischer autograph, which was on the back of a postcard-like, and apparently, mass-produced picture of Bobby Fischer, for \$400. The seller was a fellow chess collector who specializes in stamps and other related items. He "guaranteed" its authenticity and added that he bought it himself from a reliable source. I trust this fellow collector. Comparing it to a number of other authenticated autographs supports the contention that the autograph is genuine. However is it possible that it is not genuine? Yes, that is possible, but there comes a time when a decision must be made in any purchase. The only advice to any and all is: buyer beware.

Well, to extend this commenting game to a few more moves, a book supposedly signed by Bobby Fischer was recently sold on ebay for about \$300. As of late February 2008, a 3 volume collection of books, allegedly signed by Fischer, and up for bid on ebay, had an asking price of \$10,000. Want to take a chance and pony up the cash?

Whose turn is it anyway?

So, whose autographs might a collector seek? Steinitz, Alekhine, Marshall, Euwe, Botvinnik, Petrosian, Fischer, Karpov, Kasparov, Reshevsky. Anand, Kramnik, Polgar (Susan), as well as Lasker, Capablanca, Korchnoi, Spassky, Tal, and Smyslov. Some of us might take a

liking to Rueben Fine, for some reason. And if any of us are feeling especially lucky, then we might venture to search out Staunton, Bourdonnais, Labourdonnais, Anderssen, Morphy, Khalifman, Ponomarev, and Philidor.

And how about those of prolific or well known writers of books on chess instruction, chess sets, and chess history? Writers such as the following might be pursued:

H.J.R. Murray, Professor Sir Alan Fersht, Victor Keats, Issac Linder, Yuri Averbakh, John Collins, Garreth Williams, Frank Greygoose, Larry Christensen, Larry Evans, Allan Savage, Bruce Pandolfini, Donald Liddle, Larry List, Marilyn Yalom, Henry Davidson, Anthony Saidy and Norman Lessing, David Thompson, Gene Zelazny, Ee Newman and Rick Helk, Asrid and Halvor Jaeger, Filanier Graham, Charles Wilkens, Alex Hammond, Collen Schafroth, A. E.J. Maskett-Beeson, John Saunders, Raymond Keene, Harry Golombek, Ned Munger.

So many possibilities; so many choices... But which is the best move for me?

According to Issac Asimov, the number of possible ways of playing just the first four moves on each side in a game of chess is 318,979,564,000. Reportedly, in 1979, Asimov wrote that on page 68 of his book, *Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts*. However, reviewer and chess aficionado, Bill Wall, apparently believes the number to be 84,999,425,906.

So, *how many* variations in the chess collecting world of related artifacts (including autographs) might there be? There are even chess related "Collector Cards" (e.g. *rookie cards*, like those of baseball and basketball players) with pictures of chess players and their autographs.

Examples are Yasser Seirawan (Grandmaster; won a game against Victor Korchnoi; 1979 World Junior Chess Champion;) Susan Polgar (Grandmaster and Womens World Chess Champion 1996-1999; in 1986 - the first ever female player to qualify to compete in the Men's World Chess Championship), Irena Krush (International Grandmaster; at age 14, won 1998 US Women's Chess Championship and became the youngest U.S. Women's Champion ever) and Hikaru Nakamura (Grandmaster; 2005 US Chess Champion) .

Board (Bored) with chess sets(?)

Continued

Occasionally the appearance for a lecture at a local chess club (e.g. Dartmouth College) affords chess players the opportunity to obtain an autograph of a Grandmaster on his/her vinyl roll-up chessboard. Recent ebay items by well known chess collectors such as Frank Camarratta has shown the attractiveness and relative popularity of signed chessboards. At times, signed chess boards placed up for bid (by him and/or other sellers) have appeared to contain the autographs of one or several grandmasters.

Chess Novels for a rainy day.

There are probably at least as many novels and anthologies involving chess as there are chess pieces at the opening of a game of chess. The following is a partial list of books with a.) A chess theme (in one way or another) and/or b.) A strong or weak references to chess strategy or pieces, and/or c.) A situation where a character is a chess player. Publishers, of course, vary. I suggest that you first read a synopsis of each book before purchasing (or taking out of the library).

Tower Struck by Lightning, Fernando Arrabal. **The 64-Square Looking Glass: Great Games of Chess in World Literature**,

(*anthology*) Burt Hochberg. **Alekhine's Anguish: A Novel of the Chess World**, Charles D. Yaffe. **The Chess Team (A Novel)**, James H. Sawaski. **The Royal Game & Other Stories**, (*anthology, not all chess*), Stefan Zweig. **The Lunenburg Variation**, Paolo Maurensig. **Immortal Game**, Mark Coggins. **Sinister Gambits: Chess Stories of Murder and Mystery**, (*anthology*), Richard Peyton.

Shadow Without a Name: A Novel, Ignacio Padilla. **The Chess Garden**, Brooks Hansen.

The Emperor of Ocean Park, Stephen Carter. **Through the Looking-Glass**, Lewis Carroll. **Discipline: A Novel**, Paco Ahlgren.

The Flanders Panel, Arturo Perez-Reverte. **The Eight**, Katherine Neville. **The Yiddish Policemen's Union: A Novel**: Michael

Chabon. **The Chess Players**, Frances Parkinson Keyes. **Pawn to Infinity**, (*anthology*), Fred Saberhagen. **Los Voraces, 2019: A Chess Novel**, Andy Soltis. **The Defense**, Vladimir Nabokov. **Reality Inspector**, John Caris

Reportedly, Issac Asimov wrote at least a couple books ("Pebble in the Sky" and "Nightfall") whereby chess is mentioned in some interesting ways

Some Internet sources for autographs, autographed books, and books with a relationship to chess:

www.bookcollectorshop.com (e.g. signed tournament score sheets)

www.eastonpressbooks.com (signed books)

www.amchesseq.com (signed collector cards)

www.ebay.com

Other sources:

1.) Chess collectors (via, CCI, Ebay Chess Collectors Group, etc.)

2.) Book publishers (e.g. Easton Press)

3.) Autograph hounds

4.) Used book stores

5.) Auctions

6.) Yardsales / Garage Sales / Moving Sales, etc.

7.) Promotional events at Bookstores

8.) Chess players.)

9.) Libraries (where books are donated and placed up for sale in an effort to raise money for the library's budget)

10.) Associated areas of chess related collecting (e.g. COSSU: Chess on Stamps Study Unit of the American Topical Association; publishes the quarterly journal "Chesstamp Review" (editor: Ray Alexis). Of special interest is Chesstamp Review # 120, Volume 27, Number 4 October-Dec 2005; Bobby Fischer Forgeries.

The Real End Game

The Queen of my own castle merely sighs with a slight rolling of the eyes and murmurs "...I have no need for autographs and autographed books... I, myself, feel ok without a book that is autographed. Why don't the whole bunch of you just get a life...?"

The King's response? "Well, yes, dear, as soon as I sign this check."

Check, Mate!

(Copyright March 2008)

Have Chess Set—Will Travel

A Journey in four parts. Part 3: The Booming Years

Jim Joannou

This is the third part of four articles tracing travel chess sets through history. We have already looked at the beginnings of travel chess and at the “pocket” chessboard.^{1,2} We now look at how travel sets flourished from the 1800’s up to the early 20th century.

We have previously seen¹ that by 1787 Chess sets were being produced that were specifically designed for use when travelling, but there are few, if any examples existing from this era. A number of early European travel sets dating from the 1840’s and 50’s have been written about.^{3, 4} (Fig1). Travelling amongst the rich and famous was becoming more common by the early 1800’s and a whole industry in travel items sprung up producing compact household goods.



Fig 1. German Ivory Travelling set. First half of 19th C⁴

In the mid 19th C, the Jaques Company marketed the “In Statu Quo” sets in two sizes, 23cm and 32cm (although slight variations in sizes can be seen.) The smaller size was produced in two styles, one with additional holes for captured pieces, the other without. (Figs 2 & 3). These sets are highly sought after at auctions and sales. Some sets also retain

their original “slip case” (Fig 2). These were made in black leather with a dark blue velvet lining. These leather-cased sets generally command the highest prices at auctions.



Fig 2. Jaques In Statu Quo set with leather slip-case. (Photo from [http://www. antiquechessshop.com/](http://www.antiquechessshop.com/))

All Statu Quo sets were stamped on the outside, top edge of the mahogany case. The markings can vary, but they all carry the mark “IN STATU QUO” and “PATENT” or “PATENTEE”. These sets were produced from 1853 onwards⁵ and they also carry, the



Fig 3. Jaques In Statu Quo set with additional holes for captive pieces. (From the collection of Guy Lyons)

Have Chess set - Will Travel

Continued

“JAQUES” or “JAQUES & SON” mark. Some sets were retailed by other stores, eg: “Fisher 188 Strand” and these sometimes carry the retailer’s marks as well. The slip-cases were also marked with “THE STATU QUO CHESS BOARD. JAQUES & SON LTD. PATENTEES LONDON” The unique feature of these sets was the locking mechanism. The Jaques Company filed an initial design patent in 1852, but then in July 1853 filed a new patent with the Statu Quo locking mechanism design. The pieces were made of bone with one side stained red and they have a locking stud on the base. This locking stud fits into slots in a sliding zinc plate under the board which was operated by a spring and lever / button. See Ref 6 for a pictorial study of the locking mechanism. The pieces were designed in a simplified Staunton style and M & I Klopogge in their recent book³ calls them “Squat Staunton”. As good as the Staunton design is, it doesn’t reduce in size very well, which is why the pieces have their “squat” appearance, however Jaques and other companies did make larger travel sets with classic Staunton design pieces (Fig 4).



Fig 4. Large travel set with Staunton pieces.
Late 19th C. 61cm x 53.5cm.

In December 1866 the writer Lewis Carroll, who wrote “Alice in Wonderland”, owned a Jaques Statu Quo set and it has been reported that he pulled out this set during coach and rail journeys and played with his fellow travellers.⁷ Jaques also produced two other travel chess designs from the late 1800’s to about 1940, The “Whittington” set, (Fig 5) produced (like the Statu Quo sets) in two sizes and styles and the “Railway” set.⁵ (Fig 6). It is possible that the production of these sets were sub-contracted to outside craftsmen as small differences can be seen when comparing sets. (ie: quality and colour of the wood/varnish, differences in size and shape). This may also account



Fig 5. Whittington pattern travelling set.
Late 19th / Early 20th C.



Fig 6. Railway pattern set.



Fig 7. Whittington set with sliding lid.
Early 20th C.

Advertisement

GARRICK COLEMAN

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Visit our web site and online showroom at

www.antichechess.co.uk

The site has a large selection of fine antique and collectors chess sets which is regularly updated.

Have Chess set - Will Travel

Continued

for the fact that these two folding styles were not marked by the Jaques Company, although some Whittington style sets can have a retailers label. Some sets have appeared on the market with a "printed" Jaques markings on the inside of the folding flaps. It is generally believed that these markings are probably not original!

One question that arises is: Where did the name "Whittington" come from? After some investigation the Jaques Company themselves suggested that it may have been named after the designer, who may or may not have worked for Jaques at the time. Research has not revealed anything definite, however one possibility does arise, that of a Sheffield based carpenter and turner of ivory and bone, a Mr. Thomas Whittington and his son John Whittington. As the Jaques company records were destroyed during the

WWII London Blitz, we may never know for sure.



Fig 8. French boxwood and ebony travelling set with a similar locking mechanism to the Statu Quo design. Late 19th C

Have Chess set - Will Travel

Continued

A simplified and cheaper version of the Whittington set was also produced in the early 1900's. (Fig 7) This had a sliding lid to keep the bone pieces in place and is sometimes also referred to as a Whittington pattern set.

Another set, similar to the "Statu Quo" design was produced in France during the end of 19th C. (Fig 8) These had a modified locking system and are quite rare.⁶ Designs similar to the Whittington set were also produced in the USA.

The De La Rue Company are known for their wallet or Pocket chess boards,¹ but recent research has revealed that they also registered the design of a "stud" or "cufflink" travel set in

1846 and patented an updated version in 1900. (Fig 9). The earlier style had straight holes in the board to hold the pieces, which had straight pegs. These sets are extremely rare and may not have been produced in any great

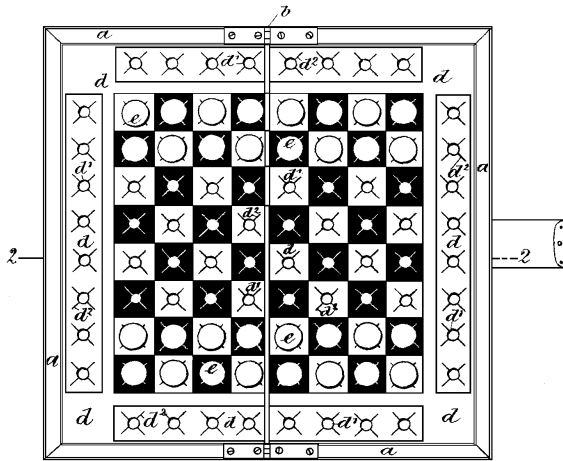


Fig 9. Design patented in 1900 by the De La Rue Company.



Fig 11. Travel set for Chess and Draughts, by The De La Rue Company. Dated as 1878, but probably early 20th C.



Fig 10. De La Rue patent "Stud" or "Cufflink" set with holes for captive pieces. (From the collection of Guy Lyons)



Fig 12. Austrian travel set. C 1880. (Ref 3). With a unique lifting system that moves the playing surface into position.



Fig 13. German travel set with bone pieces. Late 19th C.

Have Chess set - Will Travel

Continued

quantity, if at all! The later update had diagonal slits added to the holes and a retaining “stud” on the bottom of the peg, which makes the pieces more stable and secure.

These “Stud” or “cufflink” style sets, were initially produced exactly as the patent design (Fig 9) and were stamped “DLRL”, (De La Rue Ltd), on the fold over clasp. These early sets are now quite rare. Later versions had modified pieces and locking clasps and were marked only with the word Patent” on one edge, which has led to these sets sometimes being called “Patent Travel Sets” (Fig 10) This later design was produced both with and without additional holes for captive pieces and they are often mislabeled as dating from 19th C.

A number of Dutch stud (or button) sets were produced and examples of these can be seen in the Bellerive Museum in Zurich³. In Klorogge’s book³ he states that these “button” sets were “invented” in 1885, but the initial De La Rue registration of 1846 pre-dates this! Hans & Barbara Hollander⁸ show another De La Rue travel set (Fig 11) which they date to 1878, however in light of this recent research it is more likely that this style was produced in the early 20th C.

The demand for travel sets increased during the late 1800’s and early 1900’s and many versions of travel sets were produced all over Europe and the USA and Fig’s 12 & 13 show a couple of examples.

This period were booming years for travel generally and travel accessories. Travel chess sets enjoyed their “glory” years during this time and undoubtedly this is when the best quality sets were produced. In this article. I could not hope to cover all the possible designs and styles ever produced at this time. A quick Internet review of USA patents revealed another 5 different travel chess applications, but quantity does not mean a lack of quality. Manufacturing industry from the mid 19th C to early 20th C was probably the best, in terms of quality, there has ever been. This is why chess sets from this period now command high prices at today’s auctions and sales.

References:

- 1) The Chess Collector. Vol.XVI No2. 2007. Pg 12.
- 2) The Chess Collector. VolXVI No3. 2007. Pg9

- 3) Chessmen Art and History. M & I Klorogge. Gopher B.V. 1st Ed 2007.
- 4) Chess. Hans and Siegfried Wichmann. Crown Publishers, New York. 1964.
- 5) British Chess sets. Michael Mark. 2nd Ed. 1996
- 6) <http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/chessspy/StatusQuo>
- 7) <http://lewiscarrollsociety.org.uk/pages/lewiscarroll/randrchess.htm>
- 8) Schachpartie Durch Zeiten Und Welton. Hans & Barbara Hollander. Edition Braus. 2005. Pg. 236. Fig 225

Auction Review Bonhams, Knowle. UK

This regular six monthly sale included just 34 chess related items. This, lower than normal, number of lots may be due to the impending CCI meeting / auction in Boca Raton and the anticipated first auction from Luke Honey at Bonhams, London in May. The estimates given for some lots appeared lower than one would expect and the opinion of some, but not all, collectors was that the sets on offer were “nothing special”. Despite this some of the sets sold well, like a late Victorian Jaques Staunton pattern ivory set, (Lot 175) which sold for £750 and an early 19th century Indian export ivory set from Vizagapatam (Lot 197) (See picture below) which sold for £2700. This included a sandalwood games board inlaid with ivory and sandalwood squares, shakers, dice and counters. There were a few lots that went unsold so there was an opportunity to pick up the odd bargain like a mid 20th century cast lead “Rose” chess set in good condition with it’s original box which failed to sell even at just £30.



Lot 197. A fine Indian Export ivory and sandalwood Vizagapatam set with pierced finials and crowns.

Book Review

Joost Van Reij & Jim Joannou

Chessmen Art and History

Author: Mathieu & Ine Kloprogge

No of Pages: 375

Language: English

Published by: Gopher B.V. Amsterdam

ISBN: 9051795327

Cost: €69.90 (~\$100)

Includes: CD

Available: <http://www.chessmen.eu>

M & I Kloprogge, antiques dealers and CCI members, have written an interesting and engaging book. Divided into centuries from the 16th to the 20th, they look mainly, but not exclusively, at European chess sets. Each section starts with a general historical background to set the scene for the chess items they examine. They look, in detail, at the sets with technical details on the design styles and the sizes of the pieces.

The authors have done extensive research into the literature, museums and other collections and have done very well in combining their knowledge and sources into easy readable and entertaining stories, all richly illustrated. Their historical understanding and ability to connect this to chess set development is very impressive. This adds an extra dimension when reading this book.

The layout of the book and in general the quality of the pictures are very good indeed. In spite of the many good researched and informative subjects, there are some mistakes in the book. There are some minor translation errors, however there are also some chess orientated mistakes which does spoil the effect somewhat. A double check should be made if anyone references this book in future works.

The book contains an excellent list of references, which includes a long list of Internet addresses. It also comes with a CD, which contains further information and pictures. Overall it is a good publication with a lot of new and detailed information.

My Passion for Chess Collecting

Guy Lyons

When I first saw eBay listings for chess sets in late 2003 I was intrigued. Then my lady bought me a set and board from "the bay" as a Christmas present. This was clearly well intended, but the fall-out was pretty significant. - I became hooked.

Having played the game since I was 12, and very much self taught, the chess set was always very important to me, how the pieces looked and handled, along with the board, all very much mattered.

My father gave me two sets in the mid 1960's after he argued with my mother and I kept them safely, but never considered myself a chess collector. However when in the late 1960's, and early 70's I visited Portobello Road, I remember seeing some antique sets, but the prices were beyond me.

Then in September 1976 at the famous Dublin chess club, I saw a set I really loved. Weighted wooden with xylonite knights heads 3.5 inches, or bigger, British chess company (I cannot remember the actual size) with a stunning patina, these delightful sets and true quality boards were very special. Clearly there was no way I could buy one from the club, but the memory of them stuck in my mind for 28 years! Then in the spring of 2004 the fun started, and boy did I collect. Clearly eBay was risky, so I also used the dealer route, and mixed it up big time. Good buys, expensive ones, and the usual turkeys, but all the time I was in communication with collectors and dealers, learning.

The collectors' books were important, and none more than Gareth Williams' Masterpieces, simply because it was not expensive and easy to read. My first chess auction in the autumn of 2004 was the killer. No turning back, just seeing so many interesting sets was incredible. When I returned home I thought how on earth am I ever going to get a decent collection going as I considered the pricey sets I saw at the Bloomsbury auctions. I became depressed and determined all in one.

I clearly knew that I had choices, but what would make me happiest and this was decision time. I dithered and continued the tried and trusted route of getting the normal collectors' books sets, and built up the collection. But

My Passion for Chess Collecting

Continued

something was missing - passion - so finally I changed direction, and went for sets I really liked, but not in collector's books - unproven sets that looked interesting. To get these sets was difficult, and the competition was stiff, but the satisfaction of winning was far greater, and I was happier even with auction losses, because I knew the buyers were important collectors in their field.

Then came Robert Van De Veur's eBay chess collectors group invitation in 2006, and suddenly seeing from a limited number of collectors true passion for chess collecting, then I knew I was not alone. I then joined the CCI, and met more and more collectors and dealers. The friendships I developed over the past 4 years have strengthened my passion, and much good advice has been given, and used, including by dealers that I now know quite well.

Meeting collectors of my level was most important, as getting a top collection going was impossible, and meeting top collectors a bonus. The so-called 'lesser' collectors getting excited about bashed up antique sets was fantastic. We were all singing the same song and smiling as we sang. This pleasure was exactly what I was hoping for, and not endless discussions on only the value or rarity of the sets. No, but pure love of chess collecting, meeting these people, e-mailing and phoning them, and talking for hours on occasions. Sharing information, chess research, competing for sets, losing, winning, and we all had one thing in common. We wanted this to happen, and would accept victory or defeat with grace.

As our collections grow, our research is mutually beneficial, and the influence of our views is appreciated and welcome. What is my dream, I ask myself? Well, to continue to build the collection, expand my friendships, see as many collections of others as possible, also to improve my chess knowledge, and to enjoy research to its fullest.

One collector suggested I should deal in sets and trade up to get the best sets. I thought about it and decided "no way", as the sets I like the most are the most difficult to replace. The idea of buying sets I don't really want, to make a profit, but at the same time deny a

true collector of lesser means a nice bargain is not exactly consistent with making new chess friends. It's a choice I know may be one that is going to hinder my collection's quality in the long term, but its one I feel far happier with, and good luck to dealer collectors as they have their choices too. The way I see it as a chess collector, I have one visit to this planet, and being a happy collector is a lot more important than the collection itself.

Collectors groups and research

As I have built up my collection, and met fellow chess enthusiasts, the idea of finding out as much as possible about the sets I own is becoming more and more important to me. There are varied ways to do it, but getting the best possible results are now so much easier than ever before. This is because of the internet, and increasing numbers of collectors photographing their collections. Once a collector can send images via e-mail, fellow friends can offer opinions, and even surprising information on sets both parties have, with far greater speed than ever before. Also possession of the set is a huge advantage, as the owners can offer the maximum details on their item. In the late summer of 2006 an eBay collectors group was formed with this idea of collectors meeting through the internet, but sadly it has failed. The reasons for this are debatable, but my research suggests that the reluctance of many to share information was the biggest obstacle to it working. So many members were bidding against each other for desired sets.

So the old idea of trusting auction catalogues, web sites, and eBay listings were used by most, and a few collectors did communicate with each other and shared information. Yet I saw serious errors or something worse with chess sets on offer, and eager buyers being duped, all because they knew too little, paid too much, and clearly had little idea of how internet buying should be done. Some examples are worth noting:-

i) A Chinese ivory Staunton pattern set 19th century, being described as English by a euro seller, who took partial info off a web site,

My Passion for Chess Collecting

Continued

and added his own country or origin for the set .
To make matters worse, is a CCI member!!!
He well and truly shafted an unfortunate euro
buyer with a pack of lies .

ii) An English bone set with a Burmese king
and queen of ivory, and a poor Japanese col-
lector took an embarrassing hit.

iii) A standard Burmese ivory set being bid up
in an e bay auction, which made the seller a
nice profit ,but was re-listed two weeks later,
by the same seller and bought by a collector
for twice as much as the bogus auction price .

All easy to spot, but then the auction catalogues
are hardly that trustworthy either, and even in
the Cholet sale there were serious errors on
some items.

Then there are the more difficult problems of
chess research to consider:-

One dealer /collector mailed me some photos of
his magnificent Irish 19th century chess set.
Problem: Except for arbutus and yew sets, the
evidence that antique sets were made in Ireland
is pretty thin. I have been in touch with varied
collectors, and one said this In all my years
of collecting, I cannot claim to have ever seen a
chess set which I could prove was of Irish
manufacture!!! Jaques' Dublin sets were actu-
ally made in England.

A well known web site had this incredible in-
formation on offer, St George sets were made in
France in the 19th century, so I mailed this fel-
low ,and asked where his evidence was No
reply!!!

Some collectors' books on chess have serious
errors, and existing web sites have inaccurate
descriptions of some sets. How many collectors
have trusted these research tools and acted on
them? Are the opinions of some experts lacking
in some areas?

The simple answer is yes they are, and past un-
sound research, is being trusted time and time
again. It may not matter to some, as a nice set is
always worth having. However it clearly does
matter to collectors I know, and they like my-
self do wish to collect sets, and get their desired
information correct.

I have submitted this article to the CCI for a

good reason, as I hope to encourage collectors
of varied levels to consider an idea.

My idea is simple, to try to encourage a few
CCI members to join me in forming a true col-
lectors internet chess group, with the idea of
sharing information on their chess collections.
The group collectors would be encouraged to
have their collections photographed, offer e
mail contact with fellow members, and as a
group to expand their collecting knowledge. If
this group could be created, then some top
people in the research area of chess collecting
that I personally know, just might help us fur-
ther in our goal, at collecting well, and most
important enjoying it too.

Some say knowledge is power, assumed
knowledge is dangerous in our collecting
World.

If any CCI member finds my idea of interest,
please mail me .

guy.lyons@ntlworld.com

Chess Stamp Revival?

The world of Chess Stamps seems to be enjoying a
revival in recent months. There has been an in-
crease in the number of Chess stamp items on e-
Bay and also the number of dedicated "thematic"
websites has increased.



These two Indian
chess stamps from
21st Chess Olym-
piad in Nice,
1974, recently
sold on e-Bay for
just \$2.25.

Here is a list of websites dedicated to the collecting
"Chess on Stamps"

<http://www.tri.org.au/chess/>

<http://www.queensac.com/chessstampintro.html>

http://www.geocities.com/chess_on_stamps/

[http://www.geocities.com/siliconvalley/lab/7378/
stamps.htm](http://www.geocities.com/siliconvalley/lab/7378/stamps.htm)

http://www.trussel.com/f_stamps.htm

<http://www.russott.com/stamps1.htm>

<http://www.acmborges.com/stamps/>

<http://www.faulquemont.com/phil.html>

[http://www.chessvariants.org/d.photo/stamps/
index.html](http://www.chessvariants.org/d.photo/stamps/
index.html)

<http://users.libero.it/ricky.and/>

THE WASHINGTON D. C. BRONZE A DEFEAT OF MORPHY IS IMMORTALIZED!

Roldofo Pozzi

After reading my article "A chess game in bronze in Washington D. C." in "L'Italia Scacchistica", December 2007, the Italian chess player Ivo Fasiori wrote to Director Adolivio Capece that in 1999, while browsing the internet, he chanced upon the web site <http://mpcc.freesevers.com> of the Masonic Postal Chess Club, a group of freemason's correspondence chess-playing. Because of his big chess database, he was able to find the game represented in the sculpture and he supplied it to the web-site.

The position of the pieces on the 1983 bronze group refers to the final phase of a match played in 1855 (at Springhill or at New Orleans in Louisiana) by no less than by Paul Morphy, who then was eighteen years old, and his friend Charles Amédée de Maurian, seventeen years old, of French origin, who mated him in 12 moves.

The sculptural complex is monochromatic, therefore, without other information, it is almost impossible to disentangle oneself, and nearly all my technical notes on the last issue of our magazine should be discarded. Still valid are my comments on the inversion of the colors of the cases, on the absence of the captured black Knight and the doubt from me pointed out, that the man on the far right plays without one Rook. Later on, proceeding in my research, I actually found the web site <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1238147>, where you can see that Morphy, playing with white, has in fact given the advantage of the Rook a1, A fact that was not forgotten by the artist.

It is possible to follow the whole game, and, after the eleventh move of the white (Qe2: Ba6) the position reproduced in the sculpture appears: the black Bishop is still in the hands of the gentleman who captured it (*Fig 1*), who does not seem to realize the imminent danger of checkmate.

It is possible that the brilliant American champion is the person reproduced, but I think that the sculptor didn't want to draw two youths of one century and half ago, but to imagine, as I previously pointed out, two grown-up lawyers who are playing chess outside a court.

From this enjoyable teamwork effort, among enthusiasts, these interesting conclusions were reached.

Here is the Morphy-Maurian game.

1.e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. Bc4 Qh4+ 4. Kf1 b5 5. Bd5 Nc6 6. Nf3 Qh5 7. d4 Nf6 8. Bb3 Ba6 9. Qe2 Nxd4 10. Nxd4 b4 11. Qxa6 (Fig 2) Qd1+ 12. Kf2 Nxe4 mate (Ng4 mate is related in others texts).

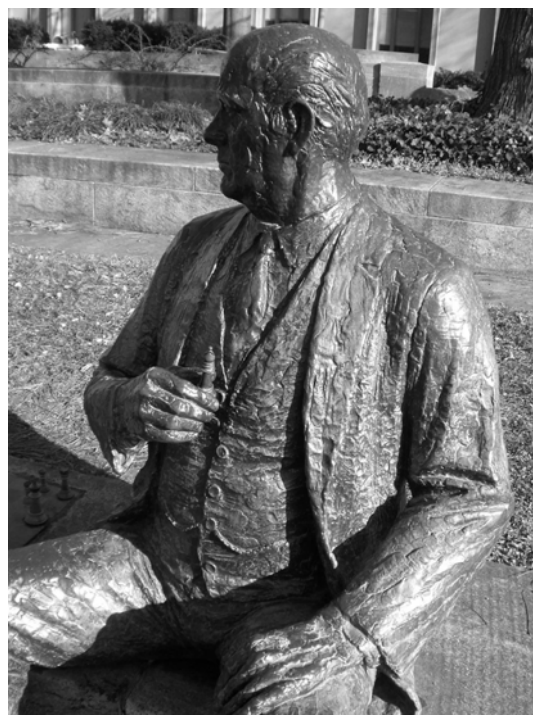


Fig 1



Fig 2

Book Review

Gianfelice Ferlito

Scacchi. giochi da tutto il mondo Chess. sets from all over the world

Authors : Gianni Gini & Rodolfo Pozzi

No. of Pages: 240

Language: Italian

Published: casa editrice stefanoni

ISBN: 978-88-6249-014-6

Cost: €55

The Italian publisher Stefanoni from Lecco (www.stefanoni.it) has recently produced a glossy and extremely well illustrated chess book. The dimensions of the book are 30 cm x 30cm, 238 colour photos. These very impressive photographs by Carlo Borlenghi give artistic great relevance to all the chess pieces shown in the book, even if some of them are of modest value. All the pieces belong to the chess collections of the co-authors.

The aim of this book is to enlighten the world of the game to new chess comers, readers or collectors. Rodolfo Pozzi has two sections of writings in the book. The first section in which he gives a brief and general introduction to the game of chess and its legendary origin (Sissa), he briefly describes its history during the centuries and the evolution that the chess pieces underwent in different countries and in different periods. He then informs the novice reader about the phenomenon of chess collecting, its international structure (CCI), and its Italian section (www.cci-italia.it) and the various materials in which chess pieces are made.

The second section of Pozzi's writing regards the Mongolian chess pieces of his collection. This part of the book is dealt with great authority and masterly expertise. Pozzi gives a dissertation about the Mongolian Chess pieces, discovering and explaining their subtle cultural, philosophical and social meanings. His curiosity is an enriching and inviting prism through which to understand and appreciate the Mongolian pieces.

The co-author of the book is Gianni Gini, a new entry in the world of chess collection with a casual interest in the history of chess pieces. He describes in a few pages the role of the five important pieces (K, Q, B, N & R) and their

functions. Nothing new but however maybe a good reading matter for a newcomer to chess. Gini is also the author of a mystery novel entitled "L'ultima partita" (The last chess game), in which we meet Ernesto Mendoza (Capablanca), Ivan Alexej Ivanov (Alekhine), Tom Brady (Fisher), Mikhail Kulishoff (Tal). A story in which the four champions meet for a tournament.

A good Bibliography on chess collecting and on Mongolian chess pieces is given by Pozzi at the end of this book.



SALVADOR DALI GIVES THE FINGER TO A CHESS SET



A chess set designed by Salvador Dali reproducing his own fingers sold for \$23,400 at Auction Gallery of the Palm Beaches.

CCI DIARY

Checkmate

An exhibition of historic & modern chess sets.

20th Mar—10th June 2008
Newport Museum, Newport, S Wales. UK

www.newport.gov.uk/museum

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

If you are thinking of attending I suggest that you reserve your room at the Marriott Boca Raton Hotel as soon as possible. We have a limited amount of rooms reserved for us at the very low price of \$119 (plus tax) per night. Be sure to mention CCI to get the low rate.

Email:

www.bocaratonmarriottbrochure.com
or phone them at 888 888 3780.

Bonhams London Chess Auction

Tue 13th May 2008
Knightsbridge, London

Details from: Luke Honey
Lukehoneyfineart@aol.com
Mobile: 07900 887054

World Championship Match. FIDE.

Anand Vs Kramnik

11th—30th Oct 2008
Bonn, Germany

Details: <http://www.fide.com/news.asp?id=1549>

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Genuine Wedgwood Jasper Chess Sets Designed by John Flaxman 1784.
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All stamped Wedgwood. Made in England with year 06 and Initials of Moulder.

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

Please contact Tony Raynes in England Tel: +44-(0) 161-980-8881,
Fax: +44-(0) 161-980-1972, e-mail: aeraynes@aol.com

