

The

CHESS COLLECTOR

VOL XVII NO 2. 2008



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Editor's Comment

Congratulations to Floyd Sarisohn for organising another successful CCI meeting. Comments and pictures from Boca Raton are reported inside. We also carry reviews of the Bonham's chess auction in London and the Chess exhibition in Newport, Wales.

It is always good to get responses to published articles etc, as they stimulate discussion, thought and maybe further research. Roldofo Pozzi's article on "Pin cushion/Sand sets" in CCI-USA Vol 2008 Issue 1 has prompted numerous comments and a response article. If members have further comments, views or information on this subject, then please send them in and, if sufficient we will review and publish these in order to clarify and maybe further the research on this controversial subject.

Keep your comments coming in!

E-mail me at: jimjoannou@btconnect.com

Jim Joannou.

Editor

Front Cover

Bears of Berne King from a rare Swiss set dated 1890. Auctioned at the CCI meeting in Boca Raton. USA for \$2400 against an estimate of \$4000-\$5000.

Members Comments

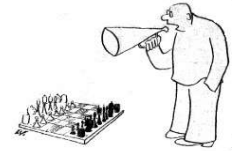
"I just received my copy of the CCI magazine No1 2008. what a treat! Articles by Jim Joannou, Guy Lyons, Gianfelice Ferlito, John A Mazzucco, Joost Van Reij and, Rodolfo Pozzi. Also enclosed is a very impressive flyer for a facsimile edition of, De Ludo Scachorum. (I'm guessing it will be expensive) Well done Jim Joannou, Mike Wiltshire and all those involved in publication and contents...."

Alan Dewey. UK

The last issue was even more enjoyable than most...it seemed to have an especially nice blend of personal experiences, research, information, critiques, pictures and ideas....Despite the "imperfection" of CCI, it provides an overall support, tolerance, and acceptance of others who are novices as well as experts, beginners and long time collectors. **Bravo, CCI.** The organizers and key members (such as executives and board members, etc.) should be commended for their work and their contributions (seen and unseen) to the chess collecting world!

John Mazzucco. USA

YOUR MOVE !



MEMBERS PAGE

My Favorite Chess Set

Billy (Dr. B. F.) Levene

The year was 1944 when I, a young US Navy officer, said to my wife, Hope, "We're going to win the war. In five years I'll bring you back to Europe as a tourist" Actually it was 1950 when we left our children with Hope's mother and boarded the Cunard line "Corinthia" for a summer in Europe.

London was our first stop and a few days later found us walking down Burlington Arcade. We drew up, entranced, before a shop whose window was filled with chess sets. In the center was a glorious set in red and natural ivory. The pieces were perhaps 5 inches (~13cm) tall, the lower half as fluted columns, the upper half beautifully carved figures. I was deeply devoted to chess but had never owned a special set.

We went in, looked around at the spectacular collection, and enquired about the price of the lovely set. The shop owner was a short, sturdy looking, black haired jovial gentleman. (Alex Hammond) "Sixty pounds," he said. We caucused. 60 pounds, then 300 dollars, represented a significant portion of the money that was to last two months. In those days a popular book was entitled "Europe on \$5 a day"



(You couldn't do it. We managed on \$10). We offered £50. He declined. Dispirited we left and reported to our English friend. He called the next day and Hammond said "To an Englishman I'll sell it for 50 Pounds". So we bought through a friend.

It is a superb set, beautiful to look at and perfect to play with. The pieces are heavy and easy to identify and each is a small work of art. The queen's curls are beautiful.

On very special occasions I play with it.



A Response to Mazzucco

Lawrence Totaro

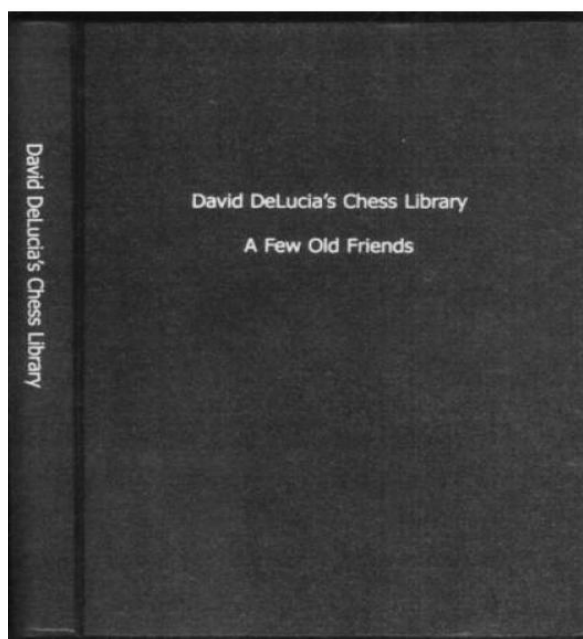
Mazzucco's article titled "Board (Bored) with chess sets(?)" points out generalities, which are important and no doubt helpful, but some specifics should be mentioned. The author's understanding of chess memorabilia is well observed and the article, written with a cautious hand, is most informative for the chess autograph community; the following material is added for the more advanced chess collector, or better yet, those who want to know more about chess autographs, collecting or eBay.

A clever title, "Board (Bored) with chess sets(?)" can catch the attention of a collector who purchases either chess sets or only autographs; it is the latter in which the author focuses his attention, so it is pertinent to begin there.

'Chess collecting, over the last few years, has exploded' writes Mazzucco, and indeed it has. But who or what was responsible for this, "explosion"? A man by the name of David DeLucia (Darien, CT), privately published his gorgeous book, *David DeLucia's Chess Library A Few Old Friends*, in 2003. Limited to 150 copies, *A Few Old Friends* led new and established collectors in the search for more material, that is, quality material. Mr. DeLucia is a private collector but has offered helpful information to *Chess Notes*, Edward Winter's series of historical tidbits featured at Chesshistory.com. In *Chess Facts and Fables* (McFarland, 2006), Mr. Winter wrote of it on page 119 under a section titled, "Most beautiful chess books": *'...now we have received a new book so stunning in terms of both production and content that we can only marvel at it...Readers who find a way of procuring one of them will be fortunate indeed.'*

Mr. DeLucia's acquisitions are impressive as some major purchases have been: the Reginald George Hennessy collection of Los Angeles in the eighties, the Sam Ennis collection in the nineties, and the famous

"Russell Collection" in 1999/2000. We must also include the 1,000 Emanuel Lasker documents which were purchased several years ago through Jeff Kramer. One only begins to wonder what more could a collector have and so, *A Few Old Friends* illustrates this beautifully.

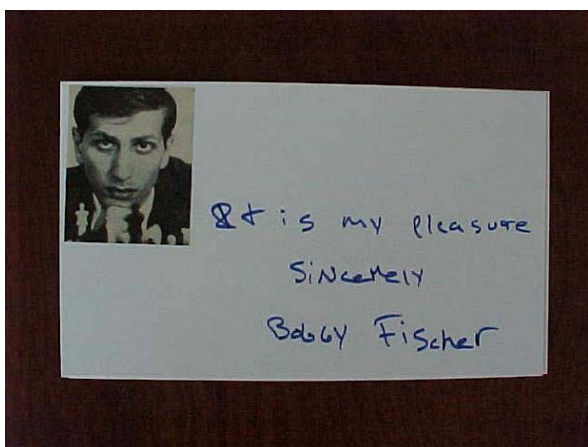
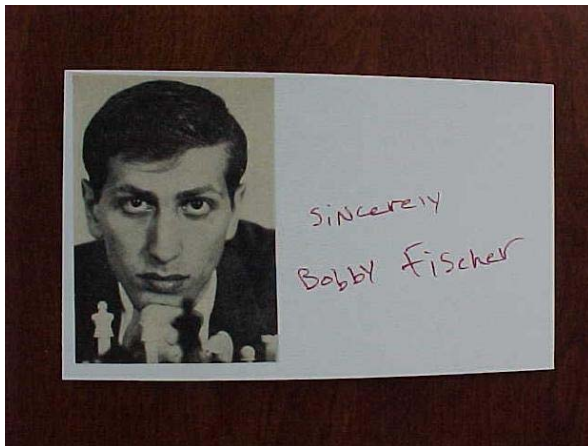


The next step in understanding the explosiveness of chess collecting in recent years is seemingly obvious. Which auction website offered opportunities for collectors to add or delete items from their collection, communicate a market value for such items, and led several enthusiasts to decipher between authenticity and forgery? The answer to most is eBay as Mazzucco clearly delved deeper into authenticity and from here, any collector, beginner or expert, can falter.

'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,' writes Mazzucco. Unfortunately, items of similar descriptions have been sold, but not for \$400. The following scams (scans) illustrate a potential purchase described by Mazzucco:

A Response to Mazzucco

Continued



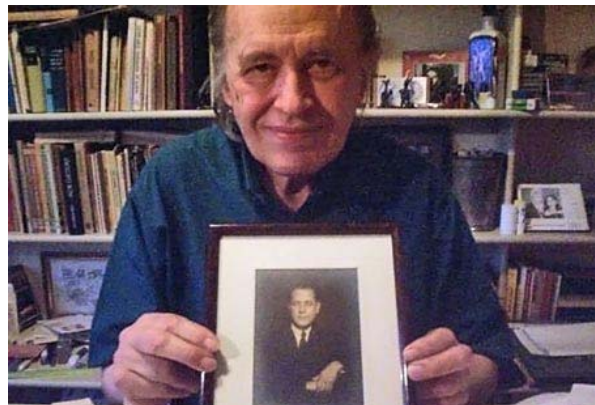
Mazzucco is quick to point out the ridiculous price of \$10,000 for a 3-volume book set, allegedly signed by Bobby Fischer on eBay. This item has been offered for several years and obviously, has yet to be sold. The seller writes: 'An utmost rarity. 3-volume set from the personal library of world chess champion Bobby Fischer who signed all 3 books. LEHR-UND HANDBUCH DER ENDSPIELE (HANDBOOK OF ENDGAME). Published by Siegfried, Engelhardt, Verlag, Berlin, 1952. Fine condition.

Readers can visit the following site to observe the item, however, there are no pictures to investigate the signature:

http://cgi.ebay.com/BOBBY-FISCHER-TRIPLE-SIGNED-CHERON-ENDSPIELE_W0QQitemZ3511817627QQihZ016QQcategoryZ378QQrdZ1QQssPageNameZWD1VQQ_

In *A Chess Omnibus* (Russell Enterprises Inc, 2003) Edward Winter writes, under a section titled, "Valuable books": 'In similar listings we have noted some very optimistic pricing. One dealer is prepared to sell a signed copy of Znosko-Borovsky's *The Middle Game in Chess* for \$1,250 (few chess collectors would probably wish to pay one twentieth of that) [presently listed for \$995 L.T.] as well as, for \$10,000, three of Cheron's endgame books, signed by Fischer. There is also a tendency for exorbitant sums to be asked for books inscribed by lesser-lights to leading figures (most notable to Fischer).' Another item of ridiculous value: a signed portrait of Jose Capablanca auctioned through Bent Larsen (October 9, 2006) . His listing began with an opening bid of \$22,000.00 (which did not include the \$50.00 for shipping). From Chessbase.com it was written:

'This picture is claimed to be the only existing portrait of the world champion from the period when he was challenged by Alekhine. In fact it was taken on the day before the start of the match.' It did not sell.



A Response to Mazzucco

Continued

<http://www.chessbase.com/newsprint.asp?newsid=3337>

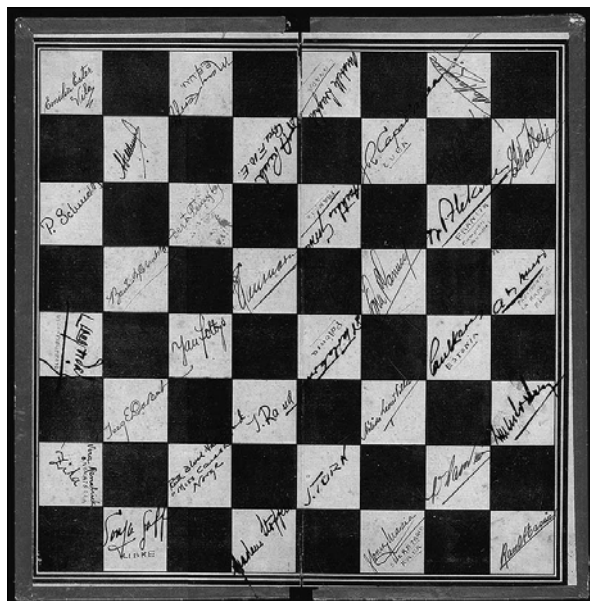
Under "Whose turn is it anyway", page 7, the author submits a list of signatures that a collector might want or "need" in their road to completion. The first list mentions autographs of players and the second, autographs from writers, historians, and teachers. No doubt the players mentioned in the list are very desirable, but several collectors purchased everything there was on the market. This includes: Steinitz material from Kurt Landsberger (a great-grand nephew of Steinitz) and Lasker items possessed by David DeLucia. The latter possessing almost everything available on Paul Morphy. Fischer and Capablanca items will appear every so often, as Philidor, Anderssen, Labourdannis (not so desirable) and Staunton are quite hard to obtain. Super rare autographs include: Pillsbury, Reti and Nimzovitch. Alekhine memorabilia resides in the great collection of Guy Gignac; the other players in Mazzucco's list are either easily obtainable or not desirable. In the second list which includes writers, historians, and teachers, none of them will reach "rare" status or better yet, desirable, with the exception of H. J. Murray. However, to a new collector, Yuri Averbakh, Larry Christiansen, Larry Evans,

and Harry Golembek might be worth seeking depending upon the chess content.

The author points out, "Collector Cards" which offer signatures of well known players but it should be noted that another "Collector Card" in the same series, is Arnold Denker (making five total in the run) They are numbered individually up to number 999. It is very doubtful that these cards will increase in value since so many were produced and the players' signatures are easy to come by. However, a beginning collector might enjoy these and move forward into serious chess autographs in the future.

On page 8, in discussing signed chessboards, one of particular interest was sold several years ago, twice, with a starting bid of \$999.00. One begins to question the double auction as several collectors were a bit doubtful regarding the signatures, most notably the Alexander Alekhine. It presently resides in the collection of Jon Crumiller. Number 10 in the list of "other sources" the author mentions Ray Alexis' *Chessstamp Review* #120, Volume 27, Number 4 October-December 2005, in regards to Bobby Fischer forgeries.

The following issue (Jan-Mar 2006) is of more interest, written by NM Richard Benjamin. He explains to a greater degree the importance of authenticating a signature from its historical context. The article is both agreeable and worth noting; Page 9 Benjamin writes: 'While some may want a complete signature I feel that there are so many variations of Fischer's signature that historical context is far more important.' Page 11 he finishes: '...I think it is important to buy signatures that have a historical context which can be verified and if you can't do this then at least have on hand legitimate models for comparison.'



A Response to Mazzucco

Continued

"Board (Bored) with chess sets(?)" by John A. Mazzucco is an article well written, desirable to read and deserves more attention. It offers new material, personal investigation into authenticity, and historical analysis of chess documentation. It is recommended that the reader seeks membership to the following associations. From here, one will enter a world full of interesting people and a bundle of information.

Ken Whyld Association (www.kwabc.org), UACC (Universal Autograph Collectors Club, www.uacc.org), The Manuscript Society (www.manuscriptsociety.com), The Ephemera Society (www.ephemerasociety.org), visit Markus Brandes' fantastic website, www.isitreal.com and the German Autograph Society (www.autograph-club.org) To observe just chess autographs, please visit Gehard Radosztics site: www.evrado.com/chess and isitreal.com expert, Peter Mueller's homepage: <http://www.isanhalt.de/home/sportautogramme/Sports.html>

Recommended material:

Fishing for Forgeries, (www.fishingforforgeries.com) eBay material regarding Bobby Fischer autographs, Lawrence Totaro
Georgia Chess July/August and September/October, 2006,
articles by Kurt Landsberger and Lawrence Totaro
Chess Life, August 1998, Hanon Russell explains his collecting acquisitions.
SQUARES, Summer 2004, Bob Long's informative but short run magazine.
Chessstamp Review #119 Volume 28 Number 1 Jan-Mar 2006,
"Bobby Fischer's signature" by NM Richard Benjamin

Chess Collections on Picasa

Jim Joannou

The "Google" search engine website offers internet users a number of free tools for their use. These include a very useful FREE picture album option called Picasa, which a number of chess collectors are utilising quite effectively to exhibit their collections and to view other collections online.

Picasa allows you to load up pictures into user-defined albums along with a caption / text description. You can make the albums private or public. Viewers of your Picasa site are able to add comments and you receive a list of recent comments and you are able to reply to any comments made. It also provides a search facility on the caption texts, which makes it a useful research tool.

It did take me some time to get my whole collection uploaded, but it was an enjoyable and useful exercise. I would encourage members to photograph their collection and upload it onto a Picasa site.

Here is a list of current Picasa sites with public albums that anyone can view and make comments on. Other links can be found from these sites.

<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/ACF1515>
(My own collection)

<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/chesspurr>
(Collection of Guy Lyons)

<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/palechescol>
(Collection of Peter Armit)

<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/Fersht>
(Collection of Alan Fersht)

<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/chessspy>
(Not a Collector but a CCI Member with an interesting and useful Picasa site)

Checkmate Exhibition Review

Jim Joannou

The Newport Museum in South Wales, UK had hosted an exhibition of Chess sets from the collection of CCI member, Gareth Williams. Running from 20th March through to 10th June 2008, the “Checkmate” exhibition was free to enter and was a display of historic and modern sets. It used the “Alice in Wonderland” chess theme for its publicity posters.

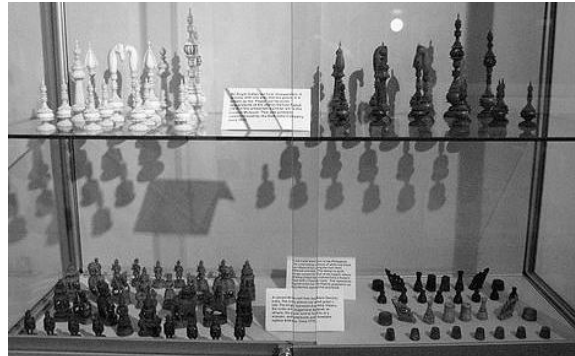


General view of Exhibition

The exhibition consisted of a varied mix of over 30 carefully selected sets, posters and pictures. There was also a “chess trail” for children leading you throughout the museum. There was a good, varied selection of sets dating from the 1600’s to modern times and were also representative of chess sets from all over the world from UK to USA, Africa to India and the far East. As the exhibition was based in a Welsh museum there had to be one local



Local Welsh ceramic set C1987 on the top shelf. Two English sets on lower shelf



Impressive Vizagapatam set on top shelf with another Indian set and a Filipino “Moro” set on the lower shelf.

set, which was a ceramic set from “Llandrindod Wells”.

Amongst the other sets on display was a superb Indian Vizagapatam set C1820 (Pictured above), a Cambodian set with shells as pawns and an Anglo Indian set on a modern cloth board made by CCI member Vel Williams. There were quite a number of posters and pictures (Pictured below) on display, which included views of an international chess tournament held in London in 1883.

Overall it was a good exhibition although the relatively small size left you wanting more, but maybe that was the intention! It was certainly worth the 2.5 hour trip for me, and one other UK based enthusiast combined his trip with a visit to Gareth and Vel’s home to view the reminder of their collection.



Some of the posters and pictures on display

13th CCI Congress. Boca Raton, Florida, USA. May 2008.

At least 40 CCI members from 9 countries descended on Boca Raton, Florida, USA for the 13th CCI congress in May recently. This location was particularly significant as this was where the first meeting of the CCI was held back in 1984.

Floyd Sarisohn, who has organised many of these meetings in the past is to be congratulated for the overall smooth running of the event. The feedback received by the magazine has been most favourable and everyone enjoyed meeting old friends and discussing chess. Due to the busy schedule there was no formal business meeting. (There is no requirement for the CCI to hold one as we are not a formally constituted group) however discussions were held on the location of the next congress and it was decided to hold this in Cambridge, UK in 2010.

Amongst the events that took place were talks on diverse chess subjects, such as Mammoth ivory Russian sets, Reproduction Indian sets, English porcelain sets and designing your own chess set. Other events included the usual chess market, auction and a display of sets from the Dean collection.

The auction event, conducted by "Auction Gallery of the Palm Beeches" has caused numerous comments before and after the sale. Premature criticisms were voiced prior to the full release of the auction list, and was followed by comments on incorrect item descriptions. After the sale some comments were made regarding the number of unsold items and for those who are interested, just 13% of the 137 items were unsold. Overall it appears that the sale was a success with a number of bargains being picked up by members. On offer at the sale was a Modern acrylic set from Brazil (Pictured right) which sold for \$1600 and a Swiss

Bears of Berne set (See Front cover), which sold under estimate at \$2400. A Jaques boxwood and Ebony set also sold under estimate at \$1900, which was considered a bargain as it has a provenience of being owned by John Marshall. A hand painted Anri set (Pictured over) went for 3 times it's estimate at \$2200, whilst an English 19th Century games compendium, Lot 100, sold for less than half it's estimate at \$1800.



Brazilian Acrylic set. Created by Averham Palatnik. (Lot 7).

There has been reports of a communications failure with the auction house after the sale and one CCI member, who purchased with an on-line bid, has suffered a bad experience with import duties, incorrect descriptions and poor communications.

A comprehensive congress book was produced, which was given free to delegates. It is a thick 184 page paperback which contains copies of all the lectures given with many colour pictures and will serve as a useful reference volume in the future.

13th CCI Congress, Boca Raton.



Italian hand painted Musqueteers Anri set.
1970—1986. (Lot 91).

There is also a 10-page introduction with a greeting from CCI president, Thomas Thomsen, an Honorarium to Dr George & Vivian Dean and a memoriam to CCI member Ralph Kent.

This book is available to CCI members at a cost of \$50 (Plus postage) and non members for \$65 (Plus postage) Also available is a CD containing ALL back issues of The Chess Collector Magazine and ALL back issues of CCI-USA, up to the end of 2007. The issues are in .pdf format and costs \$25 to CCI members (Plus postage) and \$35 (Plus postage) to non members.

Both items can be obtained from Floyd Sarisohn. He can be contacted at Lichess@aol.com or by writing to 350 Veterans Highway, Commack, New York 11725. USA.



One of the sets from the display of the Dean collection.



Mike Wiltshire playing chess with
Grandmaster Susan Polgar.



Floyd Sarisohn dressing up for the
occasion

Advertisement

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Auction Review

Jim Joannou

Bonhams London 13th May 2008

This was Bonhams first chess auction with Luke Honey. Bonhams other chess expert, Gerry Berwyn-Jones, was also present and acted as auctioneer. Prior to the sale CCI members and other chess enthusiasts met for lunch at the local pub where we studied and discussed chess sets and played a few games in the London sunshine. In the saleroom there were at least 70 people present, mainly

from the UK, but some overseas visitors made the journey. The sale started with games and playing cards followed by chess ephemera like a porcelain "tazza", Lot 83 which sold on estimate at £575 and Lot 90, a chess themed stereo photograph, (Fig 1) which sold for £195. (All prices are hammer prices).



Fig 1. Lot 90. Chess Stereo photograph.



Fig 2. Lot 109. A n English 19th C board/box.

Auction Review

Continued

There were 21 boards and games tables in the sale and most of those that sold were on or below estimate. One exception was Lot 109 (Fig 2), which fetched £820 against, and estimate of £400-600.

A lot of interest was shown on Lot 123 a good Calvert style ivory set, which sold in the room for £900, and also lot 135, a Lund pattern set which sold for three times it's top estimate at £2400. There were some bargains to be had, like Lots 137 and 145, both English bone sets and both sold for just £90 each whilst one of the better Jaques Statu Quo travel sets sold above estimate at £820. Most of the Jaques sets sold well, although a lovely Ivory set in a Cartonpierre box, Fig 3, only managed to make £1500 against a £2000-3000 estimate.



Fig 3. Lot 168. Jaques Ivory set. King 7.5cm

The highest price on the day was for a mammoth ivory, Russian "Animalier" set (Fig 4) which went for £10,000 to a phone bidder. Most of the European sets sold on or around their estimates, but one dealer in the room was confused whilst bidding for Lot 194, an Austrian metal figural set, as he thought he was bidding against his own shop on the phone! He won the set for over twice it's estimate at £6800.

Two of the three African tribal sets sold well as did an "Inuit" sperm whale tooth set from Canada. Most of the Indian sets sold well including Lot 241, an 18th C Anglo-Indian Ivory set which went for £2500 and Lot 247 (Fig 5) a Kashmiri export set, which had highly detailed



Fig 4. Lot 173. Late 20th C Russian Animalier set designed by Fiodor Shidlovski

carving and piercing which sold mid estimate at £3900. A lot of interest was shown for the first of the Chinese sets, Lot 256, a "King George III" ivory set from Canton.

There were mixed feelings about this sale from collectors some of whom thought it went well but other have said they thought some of the prices were low. Certainly those of us on low budgets did not manage to buy anything, but some dealers were spending their money. Maybe they could see a profit in what they purchased! With regard to Bonham's itself, everyone I spoke to thought it was very professionally handled, from the reception through to the room assistants. Luke Honey and Bonham's considered it a successful sale and their next sale will be in October 2008. The regional sales held by Bonham's in Knowle will also be continuing and their next sale is set for 2nd September 2008.



Fig 5. Lot 247. Indian export ivory set. Kashmir. C1830.

News in Brief

Recent e-Bay items

There has been a number of quality sets appearing on e-Bay recently, mainly due to several collectors selling some of their collections and a new, London based, dealer. Members are advised to exercise caution when bidding and check the sellers credentials / e-Bay ratings as some adverse comments have been made against one seller and also regarding excessively high starting prices.

However a Greys of Cambridge Silette set, Yellow and Blue, sold for just £46 and an English "railway" travel set also went for £46. (€52 / \$90). A copy of F. Lanier Graham's book "Chess sets" (Collectors Blue book) sold for just \$4.25.

A nice 19th century German "pierced barleycorn" set in Bone with it's original box (Kings 9.2cm) sold for £707 (See Picture below)



German CCI Group meeting 17th– 19th Oct 2008

Thomas Thomsen is organising a local CCI meeting in Braunschweig, Germany. This is the town where Gustavus Selenus originated. The meeting will coincide with the opening of a specialised exhibition.

For further details or to book your place at the meeting, contact Dr Thomas Thomsen.

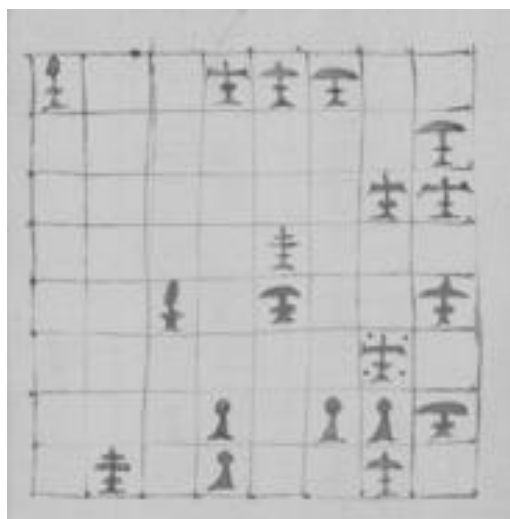
Update on insert from last issue

The last issue of the magazine (VolVII No1) carried an insert regarding a facsimile of the De Ludo Scachorum manuscript from Aboca Museum, Italy. There was no contact details on this flyer, so interested members should contact Roberta Vannini Direct on rvannini@aboca.it

In addition, the following is an extract from an article from the "The Times On-Line" on 10th March 2008.

Renaissance chess master and the Da Vinci decode mystery

"A masterpiece from the early literature of chess has recently resurfaced after being thought lost for five centuries... it has been suggested that its chess puzzle diagrams were not only designed by Leonardo da Vinci, but also drawn by him and, the most tantalising prospect of all, perhaps even composed by him.



The book, De ludo schacorum (about the game of chess), was written by the Renaissance mathematician Luca Pacioli who lived from the mid-15th century to early in the 16th. Pacioli's long-lost book was said to be a series of educational positions and chess puzzles featuring both the old and new styles of chess.."

Chess Curiosities

Gareth Williams

Curiosities in Chess by - H. J. Holmes, 1899.

The above article appeared in the "Penny Pictorial Magazine", which proudly declared; "Over Two Million people now read this Magazine every week." The article is from the October 1899 issue, 'with photographs,' an exciting new development at the time.



Fig 1. Some Pieces of a set of Chessmen cut out of tin

Holmes tells the story of how he came to own this set (Fig 1); "I found it in the possession of a man working within a steam circus. The man had made the set from an empty peach tin can, cutting out a tolerable chess set with a scissors, good enough to stand on a board even when the players were traveling in a van. I could not resist presenting this enthusiast with a proper set in exchange for his."

Holmes weaves a wonderful story of how this chess set (Fig 2.) was owned by Hung Sew-tsuen also known as the "Heavenly King" who had led the Tai-ping rebellion. Holmes also suggests that the set could be three hundred years old. In 1860 General Gordon (of Khartoum fame) was sent to China with extra support and crushed the Tai-ping rebellion. The chess set, which is extraordinarily impressive would have been made in Canton, carved by Chinese craftsmen, during 19th century for the East India Company and then exported for sale throughout the British Empire and America. A similar set is at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.



Fig 2. King and Queen from Chinese Canton set. Ivory Chinese Chessmen owned by the "Heavenly King"



Fig 3. Some Home Made Chessmen.

This set (Fig 3) belonged to a friend of Holmes. His friend obtained the set on a visit to the Isle of Wight. Caught in a heavy shower he found refuge in a local cottage. His hosts were playing chess with their home made set made out of wood cotton reels.

Chess Curiosities

Continued

As the rain continued to fall he was persuaded to play chess with them. When the rain cleared and it was prudent to leave, his hosts insisted on his having the homemade chess set as a keepsake of an enjoyable wet afternoon.

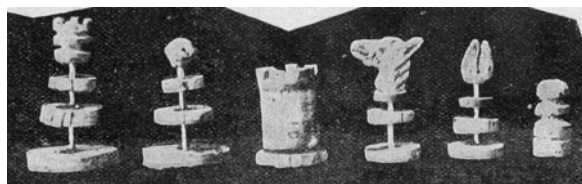


Fig 4. A Cork Set of Chessmen.

A prominent London journalist had discovered this chess set made out of cork. He had a fondness for the game and treasures the set that he claims as being unique in the annals of the game. The set is made out of corks from beer bottles. The journalist had obtained the set from a street vagrant.

Also included in the “The Penny Magazine” article were two other chess items. Firstly a decorated chessboard with the caption; “The Most Artistic Chessboard in the World... It measures thirty inches square, and on every other square is a beautifully finished oil painting by Van Hier, the famous Dutch artist. It cost 250 guineas, and was made specially for a wedding present to the Marquis of Bourbon”.

The final set appears to be the perfect set to match the Marquis of Bourbon’s board. Looking like a standard Staunton set it’s claimed to be ‘Fit for a King’, belonging to a well-known millionaire. The chessmen are made of solid gold and silver, and are set with diamonds. It value is £5,500.

Well I suspect one can add a few more noughts to that figure today, assuming the set survived the depression!

Friendship Gesture

Guy Lyons

When I first started to collect chess sets, it became clear that contact with fellow collectors was a must. I have a few collector friends, who I share my passion with, I admire them, respect them and hope to meet more of such people in the future.

I always wanted a Lyon set and recently one collector friend sent me an early 19th century Lyon set in boxwood. (King height 3.4 inch) The bases of the king and queen pieces are decorated with bone.

This lovely set was a GIFT!!!

Yes, a gift from John Mazzucco, a genuine chess-loving collector. Why would John do such a thing? Well maybe my name is a clue, Lyons...such a collection needs a Lyon set!

This is a gift to treasure, a total life keeper set and probably the nicest present I have ever received from any friend in my 54 years of living on this earth. As a gift this set is almost priceless and it is a reminder that chess collecting, to me anyway, is also about people.



Further pictures can be seen on my Picasa site:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/chesspurr/FriendshipOfFellowCollectors>

(Note: The small amount of damage is being restored by CCI member, Alan Dewey)

Have Chess Set—Will Travel

A Journey in 4 parts. Part 4: The Final Journey

Jim Joannou

This is the 4th and final article tracing the development of travel chess sets. In this article we start in the early 20th C when the new materials of the age were “plastic” and many traditional items were being made from this very flexible modern material. However apart from a few exceptions, it would be a few more years before plastic Travel Chess sets were to appear and in the meantime ivory and bone were the favoured material for the pieces in travel sets of this era. (Figs 1 & 2)



Fig 1. English Ivory Staunton Pattern travel set. Early 20th C



Fig 2. German Bone set. C1920's

A simple, all wood, set based on the sliding lid Whittington design (Ref 1) was produced in limited numbers prior to WWII (Fig 3) These, less expensive, sets were aimed at the general public but did not become popular as this was a time of economic recovery throughout Europe and the USA due to WWI and the depression. World War 2 put many restrictions on materials for everyday and household items and ingenious use of materials emerged to make playing sets (Ref 2). However governments provided



Fig 3. Pre WWII Wooden set with the sliding lid Whittington design. (From the collection of Guy Lyons)

travel chess and other games specifically for service personnel as morale boosters. Figs 4 and 5 show a German and an English set respectively. Two types of chess games were made for both English & German soldiers whilst in the USA, three types were produced; The Mackle set, The United Services Organisation set and a compendium of travel games produced by Wm. F. Druke.

Also during the war years, in 1942, Mildred Rose patented the well known “Rose chess set”, but what is less well known is that it was originally designed as a travel set with a special board (Ref 3) (Which was never commercially produced) that contained slots into



Fig 4. German WWII Soldiers set.

Have Chess Set—Will Travel

Continued



Fig 5. English "Ajax" WWII set. (From the collection of Gareth Williams)

which the metal base of the pieces twisted into.

It wasn't until the 1950's that commercial travel sets started to appear again, some in wood (Fig 6) but most were made from plastics. At this time they tended to be called "pocket" sets (Ref 4) and different materials were being tried, wood, card, metal and plastics such as Bakelite, Perspex (PMMA), Nylon and Polycarbonate were all being used in commercial items during the 1950 – 60's.

Fig 7 Shows a small Russian travel set made in the Gulag work camps which (unusually)



Fig 6. 1950's English wooden travel set.

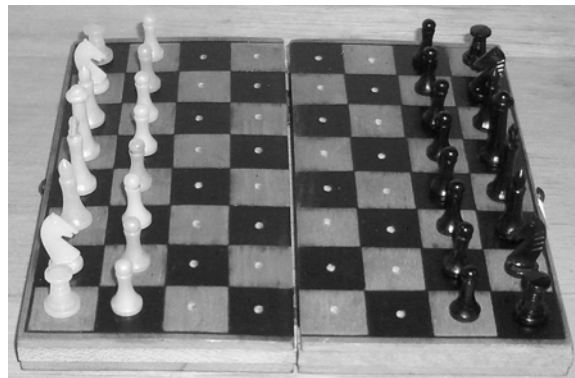


Fig 7. Russian "Gulag" travel set. 1960's, with polythene pieces.

used polythene for the pieces.

It was during the 1960's – 70's that a number of "toy" manufacturers produced travel sets and these are becoming more sought after as time goes on. (Fig 8) Names like House Martin, Spears, K & C, and Merit were common and some still produce similar items in the 21st C. Other names like Druke, HB Fairbrother

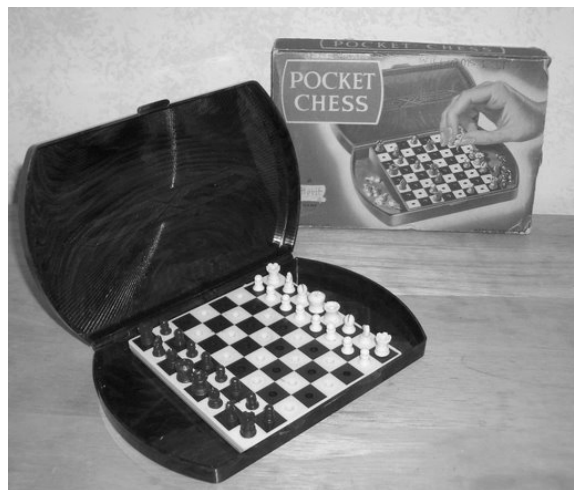


Fig 8. Plastic Pocket travel set made by "Merit". 1960's / 70's

and Mattel are also known. These plastic sets are going to be the antiques of the future!

Advances in electronics, computers, manufacturing techniques and new materials enabled many new portable items to be produced. One of the first commercial, portable chess computers was the "Chessmate" computer.

Have Chess Set—Will Travel

Continued



Fig 9. Chessmate chess computer by Commodore. C 1978.

Produced by Commodore in C1978 it had the “Microchess” programme embedded in it. (Ref 5) (Fig 9) The advent of the digital age took travel chess another step further. Fig 10 shows a small digital chess computer with a small magnetic board. We have had computer chess for some years now and the expertise level of this digital opponent can be very high indeed, and today software is available for Laptop computers, Palm tops, PDA’s and game consoles.



Fig 10. Small digital chess computer. 1990’s

Fig 11 shows an example of a readily available software package for the popular Nintendo DS system.

For the ultimate in travel chess design we have to turn to Russia and the “Cosmic” chess set (Ref 6). Fig 12. Specifically designed to be used in space on manned missions, although there is

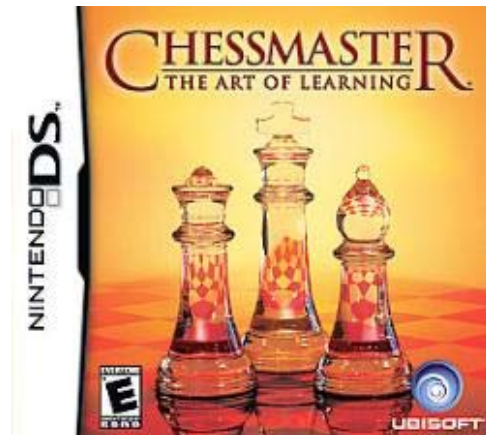


Fig 11. Software package for the Nintendo DS games console. 2008.



Fig 12. Russian “Cosmic” travel set. C1970 .
Designed for space travel

no evidence that a set like this actually went into space or even made it onto a spacecraft, but I’m sure it will be only a matter of time!

Where will it all end! Man has travelled and explored since his very existence on earth and he will continue to do so. My hope is that Chess will travel right alongside him as he goes.

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CCI DIARY

Bonhams Auction

2nd Sept. 2008
Knowle, UK

Details from: Gerry Berwyn-Jones

Bonhams London Chess Auction

Oct. 2008
Knightsbridge, London
Details to be announced

German CCI Group Meeting

17th—19th Oct 2008
Braunschweig, Germany
Details from Thomas Thomsen

Schaakkunst European Touring Chess Art Exhibition

Haarlem: August during the BDO Chess Tournament
Enschede: October, November, December at the office of DGT Projects

Further details from: www.schaakkunst.nl
and www.chess-art.eu

World Championship Match. FIDE. Anand Vs Kramnik

11th—30th Oct 2008
Bonn, Germany
Details: <http://www.fide.com/news.asp?id=1549>

The 14th CCI Biennial Convention.

2010
Cambridge, UK
Details to be announced

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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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