

OFFICER'S REPORTS TO THE HCA MEETING, 18TH NOVEMBER 2016

Competitions Secretary – Steve Law

League & Cup matches are progressing smoothly, although there are several rearrangements for various reasons. Both Monday & Tuesdays are in short supply, so there may be problems in the KO competitions when both teams play on a Monday or Tuesday. The award for most annoying club goes to St Albans, they had too many Monday matches to fit in the season. I had to put a couple of matches in June and one on a Bank Holiday. THEN they withdrew a team, much teeth gnashing, especially as there was confusion over which team was withdrawing.

Capel, Burn & Bunce Competition 2016 - Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell

In August, I was informed that a condition of use of the Hertford Club was that a Hertford Chess Club member would always be present (not necessarily the same person at all times). Via Alan Brewis, I enquired if any Hertford CC members were prepared to make this commitment – none were.

By mid-September I was therefore required to find an alternative venue. Fortunately, Allenburys had a room available. The hire fee was very good value, just £50 for the entire weekend. The room would hold a maximum of 24 people.

I sent out two email alerts to all the names on Steve Law's list. I also produced several hard copies of the entry form and distributed these by hand as the opportunities presented themselves.

Eventually I had 7 entries paid in advance by cheque, and a similar number of entries promising to pay on the day. All the trophy holders had to be specifically chased to confirm that they were intending to enter. One entrant made first contact at 9.07am on the Saturday – delaying my departure to the venue.

I arrived at the venue about 9.50 (for a 10.00 start). Probably less than half the promised players were there when I arrived. Checked my mobile and had a message from one player withdrawn ill. I was also informed, verbally, that another player was ill and not coming.

Decided an all-play-all (6 players) was *just* viable for the Bunce despite one player only available on Saturday. Merged the Capel and Burn into a single section. This was a mistake in hindsight – should have had just one section overall.

I took a bye in R2 to give an even no. in the Capel & Burn section and disappeared after the round had started. When I got back I was informed that the last-minute entrant to the Bunce had changed his mind and taken a bye for R3 – this wrecked my APA pairings! Also, he'd sneaked off without paying his entry fee!!!

Over the Saturday night / early Sunday morning I was chasing around trying to get some fillers – absolutely no success.

Sunday morning, I was not feeling well but had no alternative but to struggle back to the venue since nobody else available to take over the running of the event. I withdrew from the Capel, and checked the mobile – another dropout in the Bunce, no reason given. Rejigged the pairings yet again – but we had a no-show in the Bunce as well (the one who hadn't paid). No message to say he wasn't coming or subsequent explanation.

After 4 rounds the results were pretty much finalised, pairing R5 was going to be impossible, and I just wanted to go home and crawl into bed. So, we called it a day at that point.

Winners:

Capel – P. Byway (2nd P. Bonafont)

Burn – D. Faulkner (2nd A. Adams)

Bunce – S. Vig (2nd P. Baker)

Despite the low entry I was still able to pay the advertised prizes (£50 and £30 per section). The event broke even.

NEXT YEAR – I don't think there is going to be a next year. I'm not prepared to carry on when so few are interested. I am also fed up with the effort it takes to persuade some players to commit themselves one way or another. If anyone does however wish to take up the poisoned chalice, then I will of course help with the handover.

It would need about 24 players to have a viable event, 30+ to have a good event. This year we had 13, dwindling to 8. Maybe a change of format would help, though I don't know what.

65th Herts Congress - Alan Brewis

The 5th congress organised by this team was a modest success. We say modest as the number of players was down to 114 from 134 in 2015. 31 were from Herts clubs. Competition from other chess events seems like one factor but moving it to another time of year would also be a risk. The brochure was available later than usual, another possibility perhaps, although the distribution arrangements were the same as previous years. The website, whilst still good, could do with a freshen up.

We moved to new software, Swiss Master, as it does the pairing to FIDE standards, something stronger players tend to notice. It also facilitated faster uploading of results onto the website. Lack of familiarity did catch us out though and the start of some rounds were delayed. The display of results, rankings, etc, was disappointing due to printing issues. Next year we will be back to normal though.

The congress has its usual strengths. Paul Kemp, whilst noticing the above problems, reeled off the reasons why players enjoy it so much: user friendly, spacious, well lit, and carpeted playing areas; adjacent, large, free car park; hot food cooked on the premises, coffee and cake service.

GM Chris Ward attended plus two IM's one of whom travelled all the way from Lithuania to play. To see the results and prize winners, please head to the website, www.hertschesscongress.com. Financially, we're around the breakeven mark.

Hertfordshire U160 Team – Mike Price

The Herts U160 team had a successful start to their season with an 11-5 victory against a much depleted Norfolk, whose captain was amongst several players heavily delayed when their car broke down on the way to the match. The resultant 5 defaults were a handicap from which recovery was always going to prove difficult, and a comfortable, though somewhat unsatisfactory, win for Herts resulted in due course.

The afternoon match against a strong Cambridge side also started well, with 5 draws on the board reasonably soon. However, after three hours play we found ourselves three down, and in dire need of a fight-back. This came in the shape of four wins within the space of ten minutes - Chris Majer, Jon Barnes, Andrew Maclaren and Russell Bailey levelling the score with a fourth loss and a sixth draw sandwiched in with this flurry of results. This left Mir Wali an exchange down but huge central pawn roller up, and Simon Morris a pawn down in an opposite-coloured bishop ending plus a pair of rooks. Wali's pawns soon stormed home, and Simon calmly hung on for the final half point that sealed the victory and a very good day for Herts. Special mention goes to Russell Bailey, who won both his games.

It is not unknown for travel delays to affect county matches, given the number of players involved. This was unfortunate for Norfolk, who have had a good record against us in recent matches. It was also tough for Ian Mutton, who was standing in for me as Herts captain. It is always a distraction when players are missing at the start, and you begin to wonder if a default is going to be the result. Players should note that the default occurs after one hour on the clock. It should not be assumed that a game is lost by default until the hour has elapsed. I well remember an occasion when we were away to Sussex, and several of our players were seriously delayed on the train. A couple arrived just before the hour had elapsed, and still managed to gain creditable results. So please remember, don't go away from the venue until you are certain that your game is won by default.

The afternoon win against Cambridgeshire was the real icing on the cake. If you look at the results sheet, you will see that we were not higher graded on any board, so a fine achievement, and an excellent start to the season. With his win in the morning against Norfolk, Tim Acton qualifies for a county award as he already had two wins without intervening defeat from last season. Well done, Tim!

We now know the dates for our remaining Herts U160 matches of the season. They are:
Sunday 5th February 2017 - 10.00 am Suffolk v Herts; 2.30 pm Herts v Norfolk
Sunday 12th March 2017 - 10.00 am Herts v Cambridgeshire; 2.30 pm Suffolk v Herts
All matches are at Turner Hall, Newmarket. First named team has white on the odd boards.

Correspondence Chess Report – Graham Williams

The Herts "B" were promoted from the Butler-Thomas to the Sinclair. They join our "A" team there. The teams were re-jigged slightly and the new competition is under way.

Teams have been submitted for the Championship and Div 2 of the BCCL, the 2 teams having finished mid-table.

Equipment Curator – Mike Price

Following the staging of the Capel, Burn and Bunce in October 2016, a further re-allocation of HCA equipment took place between the county captains

The equipment re-allocated was as follows:

Mike Price (U160) took possession of the 20 digital clocks, 16 boards and 18 sets from Peter Rice. The revised inventory of HCA equipment held by the respective county captains is now as given in the table on the next page.

It is proposed that the 20 digital clocks will be used at the next Herts U140 match (19th November).

Team		Captain	Clocks	Boards	Sets
U160		Mike Price	40D + 9A	34	38
U140		Steve Dicks	19A	18	19
U120		Peter Baker	32A (16 working)	32	16

Report on ECF AGM 15th October 2016 held at the at the Britannia Hotel Birmingham C E Majer

In the (usual) absence of the President, Non-Executive Director (NED) Julian Clissold took the Chair. Julian did a good job of chairing the meeting, in that all the agenda was covered with only a few minutes of the available extra half an hour being used.

A minute's silence was observed for members and colleagues who had died during the past year, with special mention of Richard Haddrell (the former grading administrator).

Nothing had come of the proposed National Chess Day. Discussions are continuing slowly with the British Go Association regarding a mind sports centre in London. The late arrival of this year's Yearbook was noted. The Board promised to do better next year.

The maximum number of Directors was increased from 10 to 12. The number was originally set at 9, in hopes of charitable status. 12 remains within the range suggested by the SRA as appropriate for a body such as the ECF, though this does seem like a return to BCF practice when directorships were created at whim.

The elections were dull compared to recent years. "None of the above" must have been disappointed as it was unsuccessful throughout. Thus, in addition to Directors, Chairmen of standing committees and FIDE delegate retaining their existing posts:

Julian Clissold (out-going NED) was elected to the re-established post of Non-Executive Chairman of the Board.

Sarah Longson was elected to the newly created post of Director of Women's Chess.

Mike Gunn was elected to the newly created post of Chairman of Council.

The only contested posts were for Non-Executive Director with 4 candidates for 2 posts. Julie Denning was standing for re-election and there were 3 new candidates: John Foley, who had served on a previous Board in this capacity, Stephen Woodhouse and Peter Hornsby. John Foley was perhaps tainted by last year's election shenanigans. Peter Hornsby is a youngster and spoke of his achievements in promoting university chess activities and seems like someone to watch. Stephen Woodhouse described his experience of having worked in both the legal (as a solicitor) and finance sectors. As mandated, I voted for Julie and Stephen. The elected candidates were declared to be Julie Denning (240 votes) and Stephen Woodhouse (193 votes). Peter Hornsby received 55 votes and John Foley 31.

Amongst the awards it was notable that the title of Honorary Life Vice-President was awarded posthumously to Richard Haddrell. It is not the first time that this award has been made posthumously, the recipient having died after the recommendation had been made.

Strategy Statement: The ECF has a new strategy; I really ought to read it some time.

SCCU Proposal: There was an SCCU proposal that the penalty for a Union not taking up a place it had bid for in the Final Stage of the County Championships be reduced from £100 to £25. I wasn't involved in the drafting but got stuck with presenting it. The Director of Home Chess, who oversees the competition, cunningly proposed an amendment (against SCCU

wishes) that the draw for the Final Stage be delayed until the teams being entered had been declared, thus eliminating the basis for any such penalty at all. The amendment was overwhelmingly supported by Council, and so became the substantive proposal that Council also approved.

Finance: The Director of Finance presented a revised budget for 2016 / 17. There was only one change other than adopting the motions passed by Council in April to approve proposed expenditure, but with any shortfall covered by the reserves rather than by increases in membership and game fees. The change was the provision of £10,000 for bookkeeping expenses in the light of the expected retirement of John Philpott as Financial Controller. This was approved by Council. The FD then went on to present current thinking for a 5-year plan. This envisaged increased expenditure to be covered by a mix of increased membership and game fees in the 2nd and 4th years of the plan, and by drawdowns of capital from the JRYT and PIFs. Any such drawdowns remain subject to concurrence with the stipulations of John Robinson's will and approval of each set of Trustees. David Eustace emphasised that what he was seeking was guidance from Council on "a direction of travel" that would inform future budgets. There was general support from Council for the plans.

BCF Council Meeting. As usual, during a break in the ECF AGM, the BCF Council Meeting was held and all business (nothing of great import) on its agenda was duly passed.

During the journey home the sad news of the death of John Philpott circulated.