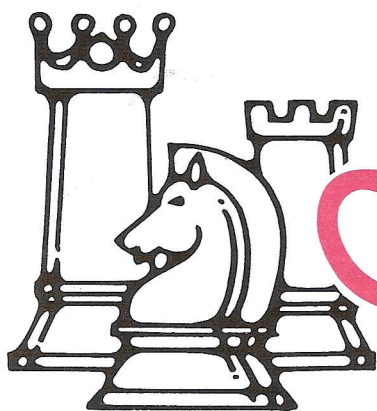




CHESS MASTER

A Publication of Chess Collectors International

VOLUME ONE, NUMBER ONE

JUNE, 1987 ISSUE

President's Message

I want to welcome you to the first issue of *Chess Master*, CCI's new publication. Though it's a modest effort, my hope is this newsletter will keep you abreast of CCI news, as well as work as a tool to recruit new members.

The preparation of *Chess Master* has been a labor of love—after all, it gave me an opportunity to think about where CCI has been, and, equally exciting, where we're headed in the future.

As I think back to our London meeting last May, for instance, I feel a good measure of pride and joy with all we accomplished and experienced. I remember the exhibitions at the Victoria and Albert Museums, the lectures at the Rembrandt Hotel, and of course the elegant dinner at the House of Commons. I remember, too, the remarkable human chess match in Hampstead Heath, which was truly a feat of human ingenuity. And the exciting auction at Phillips and Christy's was a perfect

finale to our adventure. Above all, the entire London meeting underscored what our organization is about: a shared affection for chess collecting and the chance to have a rich exchange of ideas and experiences.

Looking to the future, we have a great many challenges before us, such as increasing our membership. We can do this by effectively communicating our message—this newsletter is but one example—to a larger audience of chess collectors. And there is an audience of collectors out there who are unaware of an organization such as ours; already we have received positive responses from announcements in the *Christian Science Monitor's* international edition and in *Chess Life of America* of our next meeting. I've been hearing fellow collectors say how surprised and appreciative they are to learn that our organization exists.

I'm confident, moreover, we will see our membership grow; the By-laws Committee is defining our goals and the Finance Committee is identifying our resources so that we may achieve these objectives.

In the immediate future, we can all look forward to the next meeting in Germany (see article on pg. 2). We can expect an even larger audience than attended the Lon-

don meeting; the numbers have dramatically increased since our first meeting in Florida two years ago.

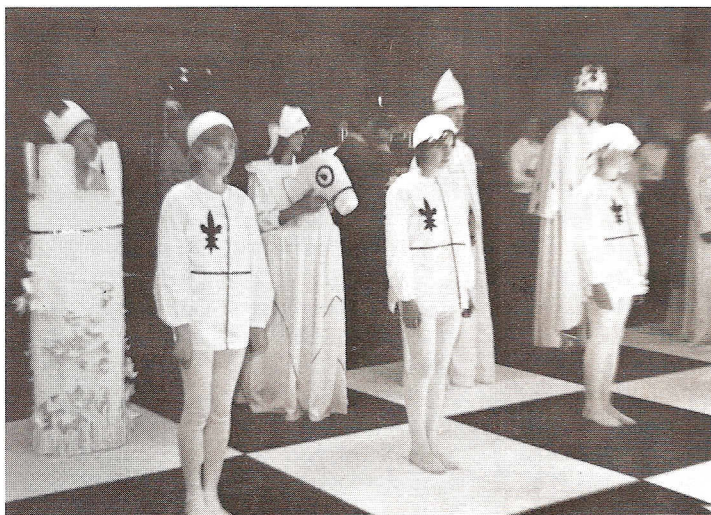
Yet perhaps our greatest appeal is that we represent—both

as chess collectors and as world citizens—a valuable example of international cooperation. Representing more than a dozen countries, our organization's common interest in chess collecting and our friendships that stretch beyond national boundaries are, in my view, rewarding and enriching.

But we all need to share in helping this organization realize its potential. We have many activities planned, and many more people whom we'd like to have join our organization. That can be achieved with your making a modest contribution. And with your support, this newsletter and the many events we have planned can only grow and improve.

I hope you find this newsletter as enjoyable an experience as I had in preparing it. I look forward to seeing you all once again in Munich.

George Dean, M.D.
President CCI



Remembering the London meeting. Participants in the human chess match at Hampstead Heath.

June CCI Meeting in Munich

The third annual CCI meeting will be held in Munich, June 9-13, 1988, and will feature a distinguished array of speakers, lively festivities and an opportunity to welcome new members to CCI.

CCI President Dr. George Dean will officially open the meeting with a welcoming address. Lectures, museum tours, and chess demonstrations will follow.

The following is a partial list of scheduled speakers and their topics for the Munich meeting:

- Dr. Georg Himmelheber — Chess Boards in the Bavarian National Museum

- Lothar Schmid — Chess Sets in Old Books (includes illustrations)
- Dr. Thomas Thomsen — Cast Iron German Chessmen
- Hans Krieger — Chess Sets of "Manufaktur Meissen"
- Dr. Rousselot — Eskimo Chess Sets
- Lindner — Chessmen from Russia
- Professor W. Indinger — Taking Photographs of Chessmen & Faces of Chessmen
- Rolf Apitzsch — Restoring Ivory, Bone, and Wood & Turing of Chessmen
- Curt Weller — Restoring Chessmen

Other planned events include:

- Visit to Porzellanmanufaktur Nymphenburg (China Manufacturing Company)
- Reception at the Bavarian National Museum, including official opening of chess set and chess board exhibition specially arranged by the Bavarian Government
- Auction of Chess Sets and Boards
- Visit to Bavarian Castles
- Gala Dinner

As you can see, the Munich meeting will be both educational and enjoyable. ■

John F. Harbeson Remembered

by David Hafler

John F. Harbeson, dean of American chess collectors, has died at the age of ninety-eight.

John Harbeson was a man of many talents and interests. He was known throughout the world for his architectural and design talents which included such structures as the Benjamin Franklin bridge (longest suspension bridge in the world at the time it was done), the Rayburn Building in Washington, and the Burlington and Santa Fe trains. He has also been known for his chess collection and his chess activities.

John was always interested in playing chess, but it was not until he was traveling in Ireland in the 1920s that he became a chess collector — a pursuit which he followed for more than 50 years. He was in Ireland at a time of major political problems, and many of the English who lived there were relocating back to England. They were selling off possessions in order to simplify moving, and there were many chess sets appearing in the antique and second hand shops. John was attracted to these and bought his first sets at that time.

Then he began to seek sets; and he was helped in this search by the fact that he traveled to many parts of the world for the United States government in his capacity as a member of the Battle Monuments Commission. This gave opportunity to search for chess sets throughout the world.

John was one of the four principal collectors of the first half of this century.

The others were Donald Liddell, Jean Maunoury, and Gustave Pfeiffer. Liddell wrote the first book on chessmen, and the others collaborated with him, supplying information and photographs. John Harbeson wrote the chapter on Chess in Art and Archeology.

John had two important sources for chess sets. One was a man named Mid-

degales who worked from a shop on rue du Bac, Paris. The other was Alex Hammond, of London. Middegales disappeared during the World War II period, but Hammond continued to be a source until his death in 1961. In later years, John (as happens with all advanced collectors) found it more difficult to find sets which would enhance his collection, so he began to create his own sets. Several of these are in the position of his son, Paul Cret Harbeson; and these are truly artistic and interesting sets.



The late John Harbeson (left) playing chess with David Hafler.

John's interest in chess led him to

1964.

John's local chess activities led to increased interest in chessmen in the Philadelphia area and stimulated others to collect. The result was that Philadelphia became a chess collecting center, with five major collection at one time. (Bronstein, Chaiken, Hafler, Harbeson, and Tyralla). Only one of these remains; but during that period, Philadelphia was a Mecca for chess collectors. When visitors came, John Harbeson welcomed them graciously. He always had time to show his sets and tell his stories about them.

At the age of ninety-one, John dispersed his collection. He had the Philadelphia Museum select

40 sets for their permanent collection. He gave individual sets to museums in which the sets were appropriate to the theme of the museum. Then the balance of this outstanding collection was sold in 1979 at Sotheby's, and collectors throughout the world had the opportunity to enhance their collections at that time.

I can think of no more appropriate statement to make about John than that which we often used to describe him: He was a gentleman of the old school. We will all miss him. ■

London Meeting Minutes

CCI President George Dean opened the May 19, 1986 CCI meeting in London by offering a motion for commendation and appreciation to Gareth Williams, Victor Keats and William Harston for their work in making the meeting a success. Twelve countries were represented at the meeting.

Dr. Dean reported he had applied for and received tax exempt status for CCI funding. In addition, he asked whether the organization should expand to include in its membership collectors of stamps, art, prints and books; and he proposed consideration of such special projects as video, public relations, publications and other media. Dr. Dean also proposed preparation of by-laws.

Floyd Sarasohn moved that \$25 dues to the organization be established, which was followed by a discussion of an initiation fee, as well as donations, goals, level of dues, contributions for special projects, activities for membership, publications, creation of video tapes, and resources. Sarasohn offered to table his motion for a discussion of goals.

A general discussion of "goals" was decided as the first topic. A more detailed discussion of goals was outlined by Dr. Dean's letter to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which included the following points:

1. Promote collection of chess items.
2. Creating or renovating chess sets.
3. Collect and communicate information on chess history.
4. Creation and development of chess sets in the future.
5. Through scholarly endeavor upgrade chess as an art form throughout the world.
6. Create harmony among people of different nations.

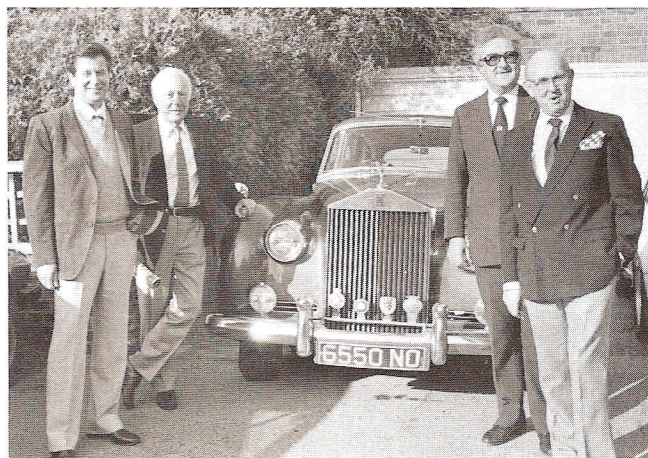
In addition, Dr. Dean proposed an international meeting every two years and a semi-annual publication.

Michael Mark moved to set up a committee that will use the IRS document as a basis to work out by-laws, goals and guidelines with a recommendation from member groups. The motion, which carried, set forth that the committee will have international representation

with each country suggesting objectives, and that a chairman will be selected.

In another action, Sarasohn moved, which carried, that the committee membership consist of the following persons: Lang (chairman), Mrs. Keats, Bird, Mrs. Rudolph, and Thomson. The committee will prepare by-laws and articles of incorporation.

A motion by Sarasohn, which also carried, established that CCI yearly dues are \$25 per member. In addition, Keats said that money was needed to expand the organization and suggested two categories of dues; he estimated that L5000 was needed for a magazine, and several thousands for film, mailings and secretarial work. It was said that L10,000 was needed for, among other things, payment of some of the deficit. Rudolph said that CCI needs money for mailing expenses and the newsletter. Ezzes suggested an amendment to establish a committee to determine expenses and set the financial structure. Sarasohn suggested there be two separate motions, the second covering this year's deficit. Ezzes



A collegial moment in London. CCI members pictured (left to right) Dr. George Dean, Ernst Boehlen, Victor Keats and David Hafler.

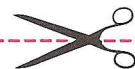
dropped his amendment and the Sarasohn motion carried.

A motion to establish a finance committee to determine the costs of running the organization—including a magazine, tapes and the deficit—carried. Dr. Dean appointed Ezzes, Hafler (ex officio), Bodega, Williams, and Keats (in advisory capacity) to the finance committee.

It was agreed the current officers be elected for another two years, though Hans Krieger declined reelection as secretary. Krieger said CCI needed both a person to collect dues and a complete list of members. He also said a secretary to take notes and communicate with members was needed. Hope Levene was nominated as secretary; the entire slate, including Levene, was elected.

Finally, it was agreed the cost of the London meeting should be covered by the convention fee, at which 80 people attended not including spouses. Though bills from the meeting had not been tallied, Dr. Dean said the convention fee may not cover all meeting expenses. ■

Let Us Hear From You . . .



Please provide the information requested below. For CCI membership dues, mark the appropriate box and return this form with your check to: CCI, 18900 West Ten Mile Road, Southfield, Michigan 48075 USA.

Member's Name _____

Address _____

Country _____

Telephone Number _____

1987 CCI Membership Dues

- ☐ \$25.00 per member
☐ \$50.00 per member
☐ I wish to make a larger contribution.

1988 CCI Munich Meeting Information

- ☐ I plan to attend the Munich meeting.
☐ I am interested in attending the Munich meeting.
 Please send more information.
☐ I do not plan to attend the Munich meeting.

My Criteria for Collecting Chess Sets

by David Hafler

When I first decided to collect chess sets, like all new collectors, I was ready to buy anything which looked superficially interesting. Fortunately, at the very beginning of my collecting career, I stumbled across the chess shop of MacKett-Beeson, in London; and this was at a time when Mac was well stocked with an interesting array of sets since he had just purchased a large collection to augment his normal inventory. That visit opened my eyes, and I realized the wide variety and beauty of existent chess sets.

Mac suggested to me that one of the most important collectors in the world, John Harbeson, was located in my home area (Philadelphia), and that I should arrange to see his collection.

I contacted John Harbeson on my return to the States, and he graciously showed me the bulk of his collection (part was boxed and not readily accessible).

This exposure to Beeson's inventory and the Harbeson collection guided my collecting efforts for ever after. I decided then to restrict my purchases to some specific categories of sets and to avoid others. This eliminated most sets which I found or which were offered to me, but I felt it better to get fewer sets if what I got were more interesting to me and my wife. My criteria for selection were simple and straightforward.

First — I decided to specialize in antique sets. There are certainly many fine modern sets of aesthetic value and rarity to make them the target of serious collectors — but I decided to limit my potential acquisitions by seeking old sets only.

Next — I decided to concentrate on figural sets — figures of people or animals. To me these have always been more interesting than abstract sets or the turned types made for play rather than for ornamentation.

Those two restrictions eliminated 90% of possible sets, but I imposed other criteria also. I started to seek sets with internal variation. I rejected sets which had only six basic figures and looked for ones in which the two sides differed by more than just color. Further variation also added to my interest — for example, if all the pawns are different; this shows more effort on the part of the sculptor or carver; and I find that it increases the interest value of the set. The ultimate in variation is, of course, to have thirty-two different figures.

Another feature which became important to me in the selection of chess sets was the use of unusual materials. Chessmen of coral, of jade, or tortoise shell, or amber are more interesting to me than the conventional materials of wood, porcelain, ivory, or metal.

The most important element of a chess set for me is one which cannot be easily defined or described. It is eye appeal. This is a matter of aesthetics, a subjective value which differs for every individual. I will buy a set only if I like its looks.

With all these restrictions it is obviously difficult for me to buy chess sets. However, I must confess that I do not stick hard and fast to my own rules. When I saw a Waterford crystal chess set, it was modern, abstract in shape, two sides differentiated only by a small

CCI Admitted to Prestigious International Chess Group

Chess Collectors International was formally admitted as an affiliated chess organization to the World Chess Federation (Federation Internationale des Echecs, or FIDE), a distinguished 63-year-old international chess organization that is headquartered in Lucern, Switzerland.

FIDE's organizational credo—"We are all one family"—complement's CCI's values of international cooperation. More specifically, FIDE has been a leader in promoting chess among nations of the world as well as enhancing chess culture through its dedication to the intellectual, scientific and cultural aspects of chess.

This new affiliation with FIDE will benefit CCI in a variety of ways. For example, it offers a large and talented population of chess experts who can help us enrich our understanding of chess, and provide resources to make us a better organization.

As an affiliated member to FIDE, CCI's relationship is legal and bound by a contract. ■

pattern change; but we bought it because we liked it! We have had no reason to regret this choice; and we deviate regularly from our plan.

Every collector gets more discriminating as his collection matures. However, he will find it advantageous to start to exercise discrimination at an early stage of his collecting career, or he may find that some of his collection no longer appeals. ■



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