

A LETTER TO BERT

(A medley about chess libraries, dealers and collectors)

2001

Bob Meadley

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FOREWORD

This letter to Bert Corneth was expanded to include the dealers and collectors I have met over the years and a chapter on how I acquired the Christmas Series and finally three pages on how chess gradually ensnared me throughout my life.

I apologise for the disjointed approach taken and don't wish to rewrite it. As I am unable to use OCR scanning because of the poor quality of the manual typewriter the fact that I have to retype this ensures I won't rewrite it. Most of the facts are there and all those interested in chess libraries & c can add more and correct mistakes.

I'm told a floppy disc holds 250 A4 size pages of text so I have hardly half filled this disc. One of my real future delights would be to receive a disc in return with additions and corrections to my material.

As for the disc it seemed to me that sharing information as cheaply as possible was simply done by sending a disc in the mail. Those of you who wish a hard copy should be able to get the disc printed out at a secretarial service.

The last 3 months have been quite enjoyable (including the 1996 period) and the hardest part was the chapter on the Christmas Series as it had to be dug out of files.

What makes a collector? Well, in my case, in rural NSW, I needed a library to keep me sane. I don't drink nor am I a club person. I do like to research and find interesting facts that have been forgotten or need republication. As I near 60 I can say that I must like this as I still do it. Collecting costs money and one reaches a stage where one has to cease. Ken Whyld said I wasn't a true collector nor was he; and that we are fact finders. He has a great library simply because it is convenient. But that said, it is enjoyable to research in great public libraries.

I like collectors who use their libraries and I also like public institutions that continue research into their holdings.

We owe a debt to the great collectors – even those who just collected. Niemeijer was the greatest collector and fact finder as judged by his writing. Van der Linde ran him close. J.G. White was a generous collector and a fact finder. So also was M.V. Anderson. But they gave their libraries for the greater public good and that makes me like them a lot. I would love to see The Hague and Cleveland libraries 'one day' and I continue to hope.

I would like to finish this with a 1999 short story on collectors by Richard Guillatt.

He writes so beautifully about us and wherever you see 'record' just change it to 'chess book' and you have us as a species. (Good Weekend March 20 1999 Herald):-

ONE TRACK MIND

(He has spent a lifetime of lunch-hours in musty, testosterone-filled second-hand record shops searching for rare John Lee Hooker masterpieces. So what's wrong with that?)

An acquaintance of mine whom we'll call Richard G – an otherwise normal and well-adjusted middle aged breadwinning father of two with no outward signs of mental illness – enacts an odd and obsessive ritual whenever he enters a hotel room in an unfamiliar city. Before he has even unpacked his bags and toothbrush, he hauls out the Yellow Pages from the dresser drawer, turns to the section marked "Records – second hand" and begins scribbling notes furiously onto the blank page of a small spiral notebook. What he's doing is writing down the address and telephone number of every record store in town that might even remotely possess a copy of, let's say, 'On the Waterfront' by John Lee Hooker (Wand Records, 1970) or 'African Cookbook' by Randy Weston (Atlantic Records, 1972) somewhere in its dust-choked shelves.

You see, this hapless individual (who, of course, bears absolutely no resemblance to the author of the article you are now reading) is plagued by the thought that he could be driving around this unfamiliar city during his short visit and, without realising it, pass within metres of a pristine vinyl copy of the above mentioned artefacts or, for argument's sake, the obscure Kenyon Hopkins album 'The Sound of New York' (ABC, 1959) which, as you're no doubt aware, features an appearance by the alto sax great Phil Woods and a deluxe gatefold sleeve mocked up to resemble a coffee- table book.

You might think this sounds like pathological behaviour and, well, you'd be absolutely right. But on any given lunch-hour in any large Australian city you will find people like this hunched over the racks in shops like Ashwood's of Sydney, a musty smelling second hand record store located at the flophouse end of Pitt Street which, coincidentally, I myself have wandered into about twice a week for the past five years just because I happened to be passing by. In silent communion, the customers in here comb through endless rows of discarded Jimmy Barnes and Uncanny X-Men albums, eyes flitting left and right whenever a fellow scrounger pulls something from the racks (please God, don't let it be a mint-condition copy of "The Two Sides of Laura Lee' (Hot Wax, 1972). The truly committed are down on their knees with their heads buried inside the bottom cabinets, sifting through the effluvia for some pearl that they can bring back to the surface.

One thing you will notice immediately about this place, apart from the smell, is that there aren't too many women around. The odd girlfriend might be idly staring at the walls, lured in here by some misguided notion that she will be able to participate in her companion's quest, but you're very much in an oestrogen-free environment because, by and large, collecting records is a Bloke Thing. Just why this is so was something I'd never really analysed until I came across 'High Fidelity', Nick Hornby's best-selling 1995 novel about a London record shop owner who spends his life immersed in the insular milieu of the committed record collector, his brain a vast database of useless information from the history of Western pop music. "High Fidelity's' protagonist, Rob Fleming, is the kind of guy who gets into long, passionate arguments with his girlfriend about why Art Garfunkel and Solomon Burke cannot possibly coexist on the same compilation tape. At moments of peak stress, he re-categorises his vast collection of albums. "Is it so wrong, wanting to be at home with your record collection?" asks Fleming plaintively. "It's not like collecting records is like collecting stamps, or beer mats, or antique thimbles. There's a whole world in there, a nicer, dirtier, more violent, more colourful, sleazier, more dangerous, more loving world than the world I live in....." Leaving aside the fact that Fleming is an emotionally retarded loser whose inability to communicate his feelings borders on the pathetic, I have to admit I identified with the guy. In fact, judging by the sales of 'High Fidelity'-which made Nick Hornby a multimillionaire-there's an entire global community of blokes out there who see Fleming's obsessive immersion in the world of records as some kind of metaphor for the male condition, a symbol of some deeper primordial urge that several millenia of civilisation have apparently failed to ease. One shouldn't generalise about these things, of course, but I'll give it a go.

It has been my experience that women simply do not understand the point of record collecting. My own collection of 12-inch albums finally outgrew the lounge room a few years back and had to be transplanted to the children's bedroom-where it now occupies the entire south-east wall from floor to ceiling, like the towering obelisk from '2001:A Space Odyssey'-and I was standing there one afternoon admiring the orange-and-black colour scheme of an Impulse! Album spine when my sister-in-law walked in. "When are you going to get rid of all these?" she asked with a sweep of the hand. A pretty stupefying question, I'm sure you'll agree-particularly to a guy who's still suffering post-traumatic stress disorder from the day he lost his copy of 'Funhouse' by the Stooges (Elektra,1972).

Perhaps collecting records is the closest the contemporary male can get to the hunter-gatherer role of his forebears, some throwback to the Neanderthal retrieve-and-hoard instinct. Women collect stuff, of course-antique thimbles, dolls and other depressingly gender-specific items-but there's a certain gigantism to the way men accumulate their possessions. Their collections become monuments to their own egos, domestic versions of Bruno Grollo's towers. Sir Thomas Phillips, the British book and manuscript collector, was so hell-bent on possessing every

book in the world that he canvassed his friends to find him a rich wife to finance his quest.

In his 1986 book 'The Recording Angel', Evan Eisenberg tracked down the modern-day equivalent of Sir Thomas – a New York record collector who filled virtually every square inch of his 14-room house from his parents, along with a large fortune which he spent almost entirely in pursuit of his dream of owning every jazz album, every pop album, every movie soundtrack, ethnological field recording and 101 Marimba LP ever foisted on an unsuspecting world. His collection became so vast and unwieldy that he ended up with records in his stove and refrigerator; rock stars such as David Bowie would drop over to borrow items of ultra-rare quality.

Freud explained this kind of mania as the by-product of some childhood trauma. And when you consider that Freud himself collected 4,000 Roman, Greek, Egyptian and Chinese antiquities of a generally phallic nature, this is one subject on which he was probably qualified to pontificate.

In his book 'Collecting: An unruly passion', the New York psychoanalyst Werner Muensterberger theorised that collecting was a way of overcoming childhood anxiety by creating a sense of order and completion.

Unfortunately, Werner Muensterberger didn't answer his telephone when I called him recently for a free telephone consultation, so instead I rang Marcus Taft, an associate professor of psychology at the University of NSW. After reading countless case histories of people who had filled their oven with jazz albums or dreamed of amassing the ultimate stuffed-elephant collection, I was beginning to get uneasy. Was I the dysfunctional product of my mother's incompetent potty-training back in 1959 or was it perfectly reasonable for a 40-year-old to think that one of the most important things in the world was locating a mint-condition copy of 'The Battle' by George Jones (Epic 1976)?

"I'm doing this column about record collecting," I told Taft, when he picked up the phone. "You see, I collect vinyl albums, particularly rhythm n blues stuff and jazz albums from the 1950's. Blue Note Records, that sort of thing....."
"Really?" Taft replied. "I've got piles of those at home."

"What?????!!!!!!"

"Just kidding," he added, with a carefree psychologist's kind of chuckle.
"Hah – very funny. You got me there. The thing is, I have this recurring dream: I'm in some unidentifiable city that I seem to have visited before and I have this vague recollection of finding an extraordinary record shop on my previous visit, a shop I'm determined to find again. I walk across town, down side streets and alleys, until I find the place, and I walk inside, and there inside the shop, stuffed into cardboard boxes and racks all around the interior are wrapped, the entire

Kenyon Hopkins back catalogue, even 'The Battle' with its cover depicting the tragic break-up of George Jones and Tammy Wynette (symbolised by a photograph of George's cowboy boots at the end of the empty marital bed)...I pick them up. I hold them in my hands, I'm exultant. Then I wake up".

*"Oh, that's normal," replied Taft. "I've had dreams about my own collecting."
"Really?" I asked. "What do you collect?"*

"Old grocery items – tins, packets, supermarket packaging, that sort of stuff. Things that mark the era."

Suddenly, Marcus Taft was waxing lyrical about his grocery items collection, about its significance as social history, the way the shapes and designs of consumer packaging evoke and preserve the past, about the colour-scheme of an old Vegemite logo.

But by then my attention was wandering. I mean, come on – grocery items? What a loser!

And after that, there is little more to be said. Happy reading.

Bob Meadley 41/5th Avenue Narromine 2821 NSW Australia
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41/5th Avenue Narromine
2821 NSW Australia 1/2/1999

Dear Bert,

I actually completed most of the enclosed on libraries in early 1996 and never sent it to you. One of those many projects that sits and festers because of other goals. It started with John van Manen's categorisation of chess historians and I projected that onto chess book collectors as follows:-

1.The Great Collectors; 2. Dealer/Collectors; 3. Player/Collectors;
4. Problemist/Collectors; 5. Historians/Authors/Collectors; 6. Specialist Area Collectors and 7. General Collectors. I admit it is open to correction.

**1. The Great Collectors:- Niemeijer/van Der Linde; J.G.White;
M.V.Anderson and Lothar Schmid.**

This group primarily collected and still collect for the greater public good and the first four collectors libraries are now deposited in Public/Special Collections libraries with access to most people. In my opinion Lothar Schmid's collection will become part of a great German Public Library in the not too distant future.

Dr. Meindert Niemeijer (1902/1987) was a Dutch chess historian and problemist who wrote copiously on chess and acted as the dealer for the Royal Hague Library, buying and selling chess books over a period of 40+ years and greatly adding to the collection's status. His chess book lists were a regular feature of my contact with him through the 70's and 80's. He was a kind man and worked in the insurance field. He gave his collection to the Royal Library in 1948.

Antonius van Der Linde (1833/97) was one of the greatest chess historians of all time. A Dutchman, his chess history books are classics and in 1876 he sold his library of 750 volumes to the Royal Library. At the time it must have contained the greatest chess books of the day and was a fine acquisition for f 3000.

This library now contained in The Hague and called the van Der Linde/Niemeijer collection held 20,000 items in 1982. Recent years have seen a decline in books purchased.

John Griswold White (1845/1928) was the greatest chess book collector of his day. Being a bachelor, nature lover and successful lawyer he was all-powerful in gaining chess contacts world-wide and from the late 1860's until his death – a period of 60 years, he was the 'ever-seeking' pursuer of all that was rare in chess. His collection was used by H.J.R.Murray and other authors for various books. A strong chess player, he gave his collection of 12,000 books on chess and checkers to the Cleveland Library. It's value was appraised at \$300,000. With other collections and cash he left the library assets over \$1 million. By 1962 the chess component only had grown to 14,500 titles and was estimated to be "*about five to six hundred titles short of everything written on chess*". By 1982 it was about level with The Hague. In the later 80's the generally held view was that it had fallen behind but with the stricture on The Hague lately it may well be back in front numbers-wise.

Magnus Victor Anderson (1884/1966) started collecting in 1918 and collected until his death in 1966 when he gave the collection to the State Library of Victoria. He was an accountant and a fine chess historian but tended to be in the 'background' publishing little apart from his forays into 'Quotes & Queries' in BCM and Chess World. He also collected art works and these were donated to the Ballarat Library. He left funds of \$10,000 which enabled the purchase of the 1561 Alcala Lopez and a catalogue of the collection to 1900 compiled principally by Ken Fraser, the curator of the collection. This collection held 10,000 books in 1994.

Lothar Schmid (1928) said by Ken Whyld to now hold the largest collection in the world. This being so it must number 30,000 items. Generous in allowing research, the most recent user was the late Walter Goldman with his book on

Schlechter. An Australian, Joseph Reiff, was invited to inspect the collection when he met Lothar Schmid but he declined! Mr. Schmid attends all the great auctions and continues to add to the Bamberg Library. A chess grandmaster, he has been in the forefront of the chess world and has travelled widely and visited the Anderson Collection in 1971. He said of the periodicals in that collection that they were “*particularly fine*”. A book publisher, his contacts there have helped with further growth of his library.

John van Manen’s classification of chess historians in his 3/8/1982 letter follows:-

Group	Characteristics	Merits
1. Professional Historians (including archivists & archaeologists)	Schooled from an early age in historical research.	Most likely to find original sources to or make original discoveries.
2. Amateur historians	Chess players who get deeply interested in the history of the game, becoming historians at chess.	Most likely to produce reliable interpretation of the discoveries
3. Copyists	Writers of historical articles on chess, using the writings of groups 1 & 2 but without adding original opinions etc.	Most likely to get players interested in the games’s history due to popular interest.
4. Plagiarists	Writers superficially interested in history, mainly picking up sensational bits and pieces for ‘cheap histories’.	Most likely to distort the facts and introduce or repeat outmoded theories.

Comments:-

1. The boundaries between the groups are not sharp. An occasional member of Group 1 could be a reasonable chess player, able to talk sensibly about chess history as such; or a member of Group 2 could get immersed so deeply in the history, that he can be classified as a professional, even although he started late (especially if he had some special skills say as a linguist). Etc.
2. Although Peter Blommers says: “Most literature on the history of early chess and its origin is of popular nature and can be dismissed at one stroke”, this would only apply to their scientific contributions to the subject. These ‘Group 3’ people play an important role in disseminating historical knowledge to the chess world in general, and might even in particular cases

contribute something to our knowledge, when temporarily taking on the mantle of a Group 2 member.

3. Although I feel that real progress depends on the work of members of Group 1, results from that Group will probably only be achieved by accident, when working on quite a different line of research they stumble on something of importance for the history of chess. It is quite possible that the importance of such a discovery will only be fully realised by a member of Group 2 who happens to become acquainted with such a discovery i.e. the proper incorporation of new knowledge will most likely result from the combined efforts of Group 1 and Group 2 members.”

The “Peter Blommers’ mentioned above was writing in *CHESSHISTORICAL RESEARCH*, a survey compiled and edited by Egbert Meissenburg. One would expect that all those surveyed in that booklet were collectors of some strength as well.

These historians are a passionate group and meet regularly along with *Chess Collectors International* and they appear to have a ball.

The great historians are comparable to the great collectors in that they go all out and are generally solitary. I believe most collectors are solitary and wish to complete their collections just like completing a jigsaw puzzle. It could even be a substitute for human contact. I prefer a collector who likes to talk about books and their contents along with anecdotes about collecting and their aims and aspirations for the collection. What follows is more of a ‘*memory lane*’ trip through various books, letters and magazines that I’ve received over many years and made references to in a brief way in an old exercise book of chess miscellanies that interest me. I will conclude the letter with a resume of my collection sent to Harald Ballo for publication In Germany ‘one day’. Sadly I have to report that one’s intentions to publish (my own included) usually outweigh actual publication

Another public collection achieving prominence is the **Max Euwe Centrum** which holds over 10,000 chess books from a late start in the 1980’s.

Other public or semi public collections include the late **Carl Jaenisch** (1813-1872) collection which in the 19th century was reputed to be the finest in the world and was acquired for the Helsinki Public Library in Finland.

The late **Charles Gilberg** (1835-1898) had a collection of over 2000 books which were sold to the Columbia University in New York. This library was resold privately on more than one occasion but eventually ended up in the library of Harvard University in Cambridge Massachusetts.

Likewise the great library of **Eugene B Cook** (1830-1915) another problemist like Gilberg had 2500 volumes. Cecil Purdy in Chess World p.89 1964 stated that this collection had grown to be the third largest in the world and was now in Princeton University at New Jersey. Later information suggested that it had stagnated.

2. Dealer Collectors

Dale Brandreth (1931) Undoubtedly the finest collection held by a dealer and it must number near 10,000 today. In 1977 it was at 8,000 and a fine article written by Dale appeared in 'Bonus Socius' 1977, the 75th anniversary book to Dr Niemiejer the great collector and problemist. In this article Dale gave his reasons for collecting and like Alain White (1880 –1951) the great problemist/book publisher, he likes making order out of chaos by buying odd lots of books and magazines and then linking up missing family members. Another reason given was to build a reference library for study due to the lack of public chess libraries. And the final reason for collecting was to fill gaps in the collection. Dale is a chess book publisher and conducts 'Caissa Editions' from which many fine volumes have appeared. In 1977 he broke up his collection into 6 categories:- tournaments (books and bulletins)-2500, general works-1500, openings –750, magazines (complete years or bound volumes)-1500, ephemera pictures pamphlets-1000, miscellaneous-500. One interesting comment made was that he did not have very many early works as the upkeep on such works was not comparable to holding 50 books of lesser value. To use early works one needed to almost be a mediaeval scholar. His strongest interest is the modern era from Morphy onwards, He made one very strong and valid criticism of all the great chess libraries in public ownership in that they did NOT collect game scores of all the national, state and local tournaments. As books did not appear, these games were lost. His most significant acquisition was the 'Morphy' Library of the late David Lawson (1886-1980) who wrote "The Pride and Sorrow of Chess-Paul Morphy" in 1976.

Kenneth Whyld (1926) Not as active in the dealing area as he once was, Ken holds a fine library of some thousands of volumes including H.J.R.Murray's DSZ's. One of the great chess historians of the day, his Oxford Companion to Chess with David Hooper (1915-1998) is the finest history of all facets of chess ever written. He published many limited edition books on tournaments. His most sought after work being "The Chess Reader" 1955-1963 which gave reviews and bibliographical news on the chess books of that era and earlier. He has had a varied love of chess books and sold an earlier collection proceeding years later to build up his present holdings. He is a retired computer programmer, worked for Boots chemists and others and his home in Caistor is a chess 'castle'.

Clive Farmer (?) Another English dealer more oriented today to book binding from which he makes a good living. His collection must number in the thousands. A kind man and I recall one request of mine for a photocopy of a missing issue of

the Westminster Papers which he sent though I had not ordered anything from his list. That was in 1989. He and his wife visited Australia and we had one long phone call when he was in Sydney.

Michael Ehn (?) The Austrian dealer and publisher who, judging by the photo in DSZ p.72 1996 has a very fine library. He is a chess historian of note. I swapped a Whyatt for Sacharov's Chess Bibliography plus some cash in 1991. This was James E Gates copy and came from Fred Wilson. It is marked "Not for Sale".

Other Dealer-Collectors It is difficult to imagine many of the other dealers not being collectors of certain type. I get the impression John Rather of Maryland USA holds a good library. Likewise Fred Wilson of New York, Michael Sheahan of England and perhaps Barrie Ellen. Recent dealings with a European dealer Jacob Feenstra now resident in New Zealand, reveal that he is selling his private collection which doubtless was gathered with love over many years. Jacob's latest catalogues (1999) indicate he is now buying for resale. If I was a dealer I would gradually build up a good library by simply replacing poor copies in my library with better ones as collections were purchased.

3. Player-Collectors

Harry Golombek (1911-1995) Great English chess player, British champion twice and umpire at worlds championship matches had a library of over 5000 volumes and reputedly one of the finest chess libraries in Britain. The collection was donated to the British Chess Federation to form the nucleus of a national chess library along with the bequests of Sir Richard Clarke, R.J.Broadbent and G.H.Diggle (The Badmaster). He was also a prolific chess author. This bequest is a wonderful one as Britain does not have a semi-public chess library. Even the Bodleian at Oxford which is difficult to visit only has approximately 1500 volumes. I would assume the British Library has a fair holding but many of the rare volumes were lost in a fire during WW2.

Alexander Alekhine (1892-1946) In an interview with the Toronto "Daily Star" November 14th 1932 and given in full in ACR April 20 1933 p.106/7 Alekhine replied to the statement: "*He has a library of 1,600 books on chess. "Read them all?" we asked. "No", he says off hand, "I know what's in them". He has written eight books on chess himself.....*"

Frank Marshall (1877-1944) The American Grandmaster had a library of 6590 volumes and 185 pamphlets and this was later placed in the New York Public Library.

Ludwig Bledow (1795-1846) The great German master and member of the Berlin Pleiades had a magnificent library and after his death it was sold to the King's

Library in Berlin for \$500. There were between 700 and 800 volumes and it must have been a superb collection 150 years ago.

Tassilo von Heydebrand und der Lasa (1818-1899) is considered by Divinsky to be the first Grandmaster before Anderssen. He too, was a member of the Pleiades and a diplomat and chess bibliophile. The catalogue of his library published for private distribution in 1896 contains a list of 3358 separate works. His travels to many parts of the world included Rio de Janeiro where in 1858/60 he was resident minister and located a Lucena in that city. He retired in 1865 and devoted the remainder of his long life to chess literature and the enlargement of his library. It would seem that John Griswold White and der Lasa were great rivals in the building of their libraries. Again too, he stood alone against Paul Morphy for the title of world chess champion. They never played but a chess journalist in Europe coined the following:-

“One more remains; ere thou depart,
“At him thy dart be hurled,
“Der Lasa conquered, then thou art
“The Champion of the World”.

In 1887 der Lasa travelled to Australia and New Zealand and whether he met the Australian Champion Frederick Karl Esling (1860-1955) is not stated but he did receive from der Lasa a copy of “Zur Geschichte und Literature des Schachspiels” with his bookplate and signature “v. Heydebrand”.

His library proved quite a quandary after his death. Von der Lasa’s son had no interest in chess and was prevented by law from selling it. (See Alain White-Chess Amateur p.38 Nov. 1907). In 1935 the collection was put up for sale by Munich antiquarian book dealers van Karl und Faber. Dr. A. Buschke may have got some but Heidenfeld says the library was lost after WW2 and ended up being found intact in a Polish castle in 1957. Where is it today??

Max Lange (1832-1899) The great German theorist and author had a library which was sold by auction through Gustav Fock of Leipzig in 1900 a year after his death.

To more modern days, many of the Russian chess elite hold libraries. In Karpov’s 1990 Chess Encyclopaedia are the bookplates of **Paul Keres, Nona Gaprindashvili, Anatoly Karpov, Tigran Petrosian** and **Maia Chiburdanidze**.

4. Problemist-Collectors

Alain White (1880-1951) who was briefly mentioned earlier in the Brandreth article was probably the greatest chess author the world has seen. Every Christmas from 1905 until 1936 at his own expense he sent out as gifts one problem book, sometimes two, to his various chess friends. And then in 1941

with Frank Altschul they brought out the Overbrook series of problem works. These are choice volumes with fine printing and bindings and there were eight of them until the end in 1945. His work with the Good Companions 'Our Folder' magazines with James Magee junior was another highlight from 1913 – 1924.

He wrote of his own library in the Chess Amateur 1907 p.38:- “ *My own library numbers somewhat less than 2000 volumes. I have largely confined myself to works containing problems or dealing with the history of the game, only getting works on the play of the game incidentally. My collection embraces nearly all the collections of problems from Lucena and Damiano to the present day, and most of the magazines. I have found the collecting of magazine files great fun – and it is a pursuit I can warmly recommend. It is less expensive than the promiscuous purchase of books, and the long hunt that must be made for some refractory numbers appeals to the collecting spirit and keeps the interest awake. Further most magazines contain more varied reading matter than the average book, with a few important exceptions. I have also collected upwards of 200 large scrapbooks of chess columns, and my collection includes many volumes of problems sent by their composers – either bound up when sent me or arranged by myself. I hope to have in the course of time the problems of all leading composers in practically complete form for ready reference.*”

In 1911 a 'List of desiderata' was published by White in 11 pages giving an alphabetical list of books and periodicals required to complete the library of J.G.White. Whether the reference which this item is taken from has mistakenly put the name of J.G.White instead of A.C.White is unclear (Betts p.5) but either way Alain White's interest in libraries continued.

A truly amazing man with varied interests, he wrote books on history and botany. He also founded at Litchfield Connecticut 'The White Memorial Foundation' where many acres of land including Kent Falls, Macedonia Brook and Mohawk Mountain were purchased by the Foundation and donated back to the State of Connecticut for park and wildlife sanctuary purposes.

I have been unable to locate where his library is today.

Eugene B Cook (1830 – 1915) an earlier reference has been made to his library now in Princeton University Library. Here is a description of the library and the man by Alain White:- “ *Another large chess library, besides that of Mr Gilberg, which I have had the privilege of visiting, is that of Mr Eugene B Cook, of Hoboken, N.J. In a quiet street overlooking the Hudson River where it begins to form New York Bay, has been Mr Cook's home for years, and no suggestion does it offer from outside of the wealth of books within. Mr Cook does not collect only on chess. There are thousands of books in every room of the house, thousands of pamphlets in boxes in every corner. Books on history, books on cats, books on music, books on every subject; and then upstairs the books on chess! These include a Lucena and other great rarities – but the favorites are the splendid*

series of Philidor's, for Philidor combined Mr Cook's two particular hobbies, chess and music. To chess visitors he is very fond of showing a large portfolio, saying it contains something of Philidor's the visitor has not seen; and so it does, a full set of his operas and his violin compositions, many of them extremely rare. Among his books Mr Cook lives very quietly, for years have dulled the energies which in the past were a proverb. There were few more enthusiastic mountain climbers in the state at one time, and as for chess one has but to remember the large number of problems he has published in every quarter and his monumental collection of American Chess Nuts to appreciate in some manner his activity. Other signs of it appear on every shelf of his library, in his voluminous card catalogue, and his volumes and volumes of hand-written extracts from books and manuscripts of every kind."

Inspirational, breathtaking, what other words are there to describe this great collector. And he was a problemist too.

Charles A Gilberg (1835-1898) has also been mentioned before. Alain White had this to say:- "*...In the same way, perfect orderliness of his library made the visitor approach Mr Gilberg in a spirit predisposed to an agreeable interview – nor again was he disappointed – for Mr Gilberg was of all men a good host, kindly, patient, and always ready to show his books. It was the first large library on chess I had seen – and the queer old Italian treatises in parchment, the Japanese volumes on rice paper, the Philidors with their bookplates, kindled my first taste also to build up a great library like this. Alas, Mr Gilberg has gone from us, and that noble collection, neglected and partly forgotten, awaits a purchaser to restore it to the position of prominence it so richly deserves."*

One might wonder why Alain White did not try and acquire it – perhaps he did try but the collection is now in Harvard.

There is a lovely description of Gilberg's capture by chess in Brentano's p.442+ 1882:- "*It was an early period of Mr Gilberg's eventful chess life that it happened to him to observe at a bookstall as he was passing along Carmine Street in the City of New York, a broad, gilded Chess-board on the cover of a book there exposed for sale. Ignorant at the time that such a thing as a book on Chess existed, but knowing somewhat of the game, he stopped to see what was the subject-matter of a book so oddly embellished, and then discovering its nature, he bought it and took it home. It was Professor Agnel's 'Chess for Winter Evenings' then, as now, the most fascinating and attractive of elementary works on the game. A perusal of that book fixed the young Chess student's enthusiasms for the game, and made him forever a slave to Caissa's charms; and more, it originated in his mind a passion for chess literature that has never slumbered since. Mr Gilberg began the collection of books on the game, and his accidental purchase was the foundation of a Chess library not excelled by any on this continent, except, perhaps, by that of the late Prof. George Allen, of Philadelphia. His collection contains upwards of 900 volumes of Chess books, and a large and valuable*

accumulation of rare MSS., and pictures relating to chess; these have been selected with great judgement, and without regard to expense. His Chess Museum – for such as it is – contains almost all the highly prized ancient editions of the rarest works, and it is replete with the most interesting and curious productions of art, illustrating the game in all its aspects, a sight to delight the soul of the Chess enthusiasts which Mr Gilberg takes pleasure in exhibiting at all times to those who desire to revel amid the treasures of Chess. In fact, we can truthfully say that, herein Mr Gilberg displays his only vanity; he is justly proud of his noble collection, concerning which many pages of description might be profitably filled.”

The Agnel book was first published in 1848 and was renamed ‘The Book of Chess’ in the first reprint in 1852. Perhaps Gilberg commenced his collection at age 13?

Dr Adriano Chicco (1907-1990) This wonderfully kind man, a lawyer by profession was a world-class problemist with 500 problems composed. In later years he became a learned chess historian and promoted the case of the Venafro chess pieces as being before the accepted birth of chess in the 6th century AD. He, like I, was proved wrong by radio carbon dating of the pieces in August 1994. The dating, carried out in Naples and Sydney proved the pieces were from the era 885AD to 1017AD with 68% probability. His most famous book ‘Dizionario Enciclopedico Degli Scacchi’ 1971 with Georgio Porreca is a chess classic and contains a brief extract on Italian chess libraries:- “*..the library of Brera contained the small collection of E.Crespi and in 1965 the bequest of Dr Lanza was added with 500 books, 280 pamphlets and 30 periodicals. The Italian Chess Federation Library dedicated to Giovanni Tonetti published a catalogue in 1929. There are no private Italian collectors who possess a comparable collection to the great foreign collectors. In the last century the family of Count Salimbeni of Modena had a very fine chess library, the booksellers Vincenze and Nipoti, also of Modena published a catalogue in 1888. The collection was sold to Vansittart and after his death it was dispersed....”*

Cyril Bexley Vansittart (1852-1887) born in London, established a bank in Rome called Vansittart and Co. He had a promising chess library by the early 1880’s of 300 volumes and in 1883 purchased for 3,700 francs the late Count Salimbeni’s library of 400 volumes. It had complete runs of The Chess Players Chronicle, Le Palamede and Deutsch Schachzeitung and some marvellous early books. It was considered the finest chess library in Italy. The entire collection was sold to the bookdealer A. Cohn of Berlin. Hoffer’s Chess Monthly of 1887 p.196 states that Vansittart died of heart disease aged but 35 with which he had suffered for some time. Chicco in Dizionario p.554 says that there was a triple suicide that shocked Rome. It was caused by a crime of great depth and brought disgrace to those who died.

Lanza is an interesting person. This collector could just be one and the same man written up in BCM p.338 of 1919:-“ Signor Anton Mario Lanza (Casella Postale

1124, Milan, Italy) is bringing out an 'Encyclopaedia of Chess' dealing with the history and bibliography of the game, players' biographies, news of associations, leagues, clubs etc and would be glad to have from "all the notable chessists" particulars about themselves and their careers, scores of games played, published problems, and any other information of interest. Portraits would also be welcomed, as the book is to be illustrated". A nice idea but one of the many nice ideas that remained just that.

I feel sure Adriano Chicco had a fair library. Perhaps it went to his colleague Alessandro Sanvito who proved the theory of the Venafran chess pieces which Chicco had promoted to be awry. Chicco's bookplate "In Spicis Inspicior" is featured in the book "Gli Scacchi di Venafro" 1994 by L'Italia Scacchistica.

Another problemist with a fair 19th century library was **William Henry Russ** (ca 1833-1866). He was called William Russ Henry and is one of the remarkable trio who published 'American Chess Nuts' the 1868 American tome on problems that typifies the wonderful enthusiasm of the problem lovers. Here is what Eugene B Cook wrote about his late co-editor WRH or as he really was WHR:- "*Notwithstanding the failure to obtain the requisite subscriptions, Mr Henry proceeded with having diagram electrotyped as far as problem No. 960. At that time the problems had swollen to about fifteen hundred..... In experimenting with chess type, in Chess type, in electrotyping, in portraits & c., Mr Henry expended over seven hundred dollars. At this juncture, the daily setting up of sixteen diagrams and 'riding up and down in custody of two forms of Chess type', in addition to his labours as chief clerk in a leading broker's office, began to affect his health; so that June, 1861, found Mr Henry rustivating in Massachusetts, devoting himself to horticulture. Here he remained until September 1863. During this interval, Veit & Co., Publishers of the 'Handbuch' and 'Schachzeitung', were applied to without success. Mr.H., then, for the further increase of his strength, started for Madeira via England. In England he saw a number of the Chess celebrities, and added many problems to his manuscript collection. From England he was diverted to Brazil, where he remained only a fortnight, returning to the valley of the Connecticut in May, 1864. In the following December he made an excursion to Jamaica, chiefly in quest of rare seeds. At the beginning of the succeeding September, he was again established in the neighbourhood of Wall Street, New York. All the while the writer was in receipt of sparkling letters, most of which had a corner devoted to chess. My last letter from him was dated October, 1865. At the close of December one of the saddest of calamities befell him, and in January he was no more. Mr Henry was of very peculiar mind and temperament. He was possessed of one of the keenest intellects, which was highly and variously cultivated, and was very earnest and thorough in everything he undertook. He was unsurpassed as a letter writer. For a short time he edited the chess departments of the Saturday Press and Spirit of the Times, and wrote occasionally for other chess organs. Mr Henry, for a time was affected with bibliomania, seeking to obtain every edition of every chess work. Later, he*

selected the works of practical value, and the remainder, after being offered en bloc to the highest bidder, went into the hands of a collector in England.”

There were 350 items for sale in the catalogue published in 1865 with the highest bid to be received no later than 15th January 1866. And perhaps as Dr Niemeijer writes on p.41 of *Schaakbibliotheken* the earlier sale was that in 1855 via van Mercier in London. Niemeijer asks what became of these books in his final rhetorical question on p.42. I suspect Rimington Wilson got them.

Arthur Napoleao dos Santos (1843-1925) The great Brazilian chess problemist had a rather fine collection for the era. In 1898 it stood at 500 items including full runs of Westminster Papers, the International Chess Magazine, La Strategie (from 1876). He was a brilliant pianist and musical composer. In 1859 he played two games with Paul Morphy receiving Rook odds and lost in 34 moves in one. The other is not recorded.. He was 16 at the time. The game is, as Sergeant described it, “Of rather unusual character”. What happened to his library is unknown. His ‘English’ name was Arthur Napoleon.

5. Historian-Author Collectors

Daniel Willard Fiske (1831-1904) Famous author, editor and philanthropist. His work in 1857 brought about the First American Chess Congress and the advent of Paul Morphy as well as the American Chess Monthly. This very fine magazine lasted for nearly 4.5 years and its end was hastened by the civil war. Fiske had extracts on collecting and libraries scattered in its pages. Here is one from February 1857:- *“The Formation of a Chess Library- We confess ourselves to be among the number of book-loving chessmen.....we venture to say that the first necessity of an American or English chess player – his board and men of course excepted – is Staunton’s “Chess-Player’s Handbook”. In the clearness, and method of its arrangements it is unequalled in the literature of chess. In addition to the openings of the earlier masters it contains all the varied wealth of analyses heaped up by the later writers of Russia, Germany, France and England. The “Chess Player’s Companion”, by the same author, is valuable for its masterly specimens of play and its treatise on Odds. The best collection of games is Walker’s “Chess Studies” which comprises over one thousand games played by Philidor and his contemporaries, by McDonnell and Labourdonnais, by Staunton and Cochrane, by Lewis and Deschappelles and by many others. The finest collection of problems is the masterly work compiled by Alexandre and entitled “The Beauties of Chess”. The little book by Kling and Horwitz styled “Chess Studies or Endings of Games”, the translation of Jaenisch by Walker, and the volumes of the various chess magazines that have been published in England and this country will all prove useful to the man desirous to become an accomplished chess player. The collection of chess anecdotes and extracted by Twiss and published in the last century is an amusing and pleasant work. He who suffers the gentle disease of bibliomania will of course go beyond these and gather from the farthest book-marts the rare treatises of Ruy Lopez, Salvio, Cosio,*

Ponziani and the rest of the honoured dead. But those whose titles we have given above will suffice the generality of chess lovers.”

In the September 1857 issue he wrote an article called “Bibliothecal Chess” and as well as giving information on the great chess libraries of the world, had this to say on his own :-“...*The Editor of the Chess Monthly has succeeded in bringing together, during the last eighteen months, a collection of chess books which in point of numbers and value is only excelled by one other in the country. He recalls, with a warm gratitude, the assistance which he has received from the only source, upon this side of the Atlantic, which could have rendered it so largely and so liberally.*” The larger American library he wrote about was Professor George Allen’s which stood at 400 volumes. This had been gathered in less than four years. This article “Bibliothecal Chess” really needs to be read by anyone interested in the great chess libraries of the 19th century. It seems clear that Bledow’s library of between 700 and 800 volumes was the best and as Fiske wrote “...*this library is now part of the vast and growing collection of the King’s Library in Berlin.*”

In 1861 Fiske was appointed as an Attache to the American Embassy in Vienna, one wonders whether he met der Lasa, and had a trip to Berlin whilst here. In 1864 he returned to America and in 1868 became a Professor of Northern European languages and University Librarian at Cornell. Later he married Jennie McGraw and there was a sensational lawsuit after her death in which Fiske reversed her will which left all her estate to Cornell.

Or did he reverse her will? Ken Whyld in OCC writes:-“*Fiske’s wife Jennie McGraw, died two years after the wedding leaving, as one of her bequests, \$2 million to Cornell University, whose charter made the gift unacceptable. A legal wrangle ensued. Fiske resigned his professorship (1883) and moved to Villa Landor in Florence....*”

H.J.R.Murray writing in BCM 1904 p.428:-“...*in 1868 he became Professor of Northern European languages and University Librarian at Cornell University, Ithaca N.Y. With the romance of his marriage with Miss McGraw, the heiress to the fortune of John McGraw a millionaire lumberman, and with the sensational lawsuit after his wife’s death by which he succeeded in overthrowing her will leaving the whole of her fortune to Cornell, we have nothing to do here, except to say that the lawsuit left no permanent bitterness between him and Cornell. Indeed in later years he was a generous benefactor of the University, and it is believed that he has left the whole of his fortune to it. After the lawsuit he took up his residence at Florence...*”

Alain White in “Our Folder’ Vol XI No. 6 p.126/7 :_” *The central epoch in his life was between the years 1868 and 1883; during which he was librarian at Cornell University; the first date being also that of the establishment of that great institution of learning. During these fifteen years he was absorbed in his work, not*

taking a vacation of more than two weeks in the first ten of these years. Cornell was not then in a position to give him the support he needed. He had no skilled assistants, no corps of cataloguers, no money for printing finding-lists or the like. In spite of this Fiske, who was incidentally also professor of northern languages, kept the library at the front among those of the rapidly developing American Universities by his unwearied effort, contributing of his salary as well as of his every spare moment to the task.

I indicate this central epoch of his life, which from our standpoint of chess is of minor interest, principally to show how it focussed all that had gone before and all that was to come after. All his young manhood, though he did not know it, was moulding him to occupy the position; and all the period of retirement, which followed was to react, in a sense from it. For this noble period of self-sacrificing labor ended in tragedy and disappointment. In 1878, or before, his devotion to the Library drew him into close personal association with Miss Jennie McGraw, who was I believe a relative of the founder of the University. The Professor and Librarian, poor and nearing the half-century mark, unwearied in his devotion to the cause of the Library, buoyantly believing in its future, won the support, the enthusiasm and the love of the great heiress, and together they planned the realisation of Fiske's dream. The combination of technical skill and great wealth catches the attention as much as the romance of the courtship. They were married in 1880. The next year Mrs Fiske died, leaving a noble endowment to forward the Library, which was her dream as it had been Fiske's. But a technicality in the charter of the University deprived the library of this splendid gift. Fiske fought for his wife's dream, but he fought in vain, and when the law finally handed down its decree in favour of others, he withdrew from the University altogether and retired to Italy..... When Fiske died, he left half-a-million dollars to the Library of Cornell, to help in replacing the value of the endowment which his wife had intended. Meanwhile Dean Sage had provided the adequate new building which Mrs Fiske had dreamt and had added to its very generous endowment. With Fiske's own gift of the half-million, and with his varied collections, the Dante, the Icelandic and the rest, Cornell was by way of realising the wish of Mrs Fiske to the full, though not through her own personal gifts as she had hoped. But here the Trustees stepped in, reducing the general income of the Library from regular funds, after Fiske's own bequest was received, and so discontinuing the usefulness of the bequest altogether, at least until the former appropriations may at some future date be restored...."

A curious business and I can't work out what White means by "in favour of others". Did Fiske benefit or did he not? He must have to make the bequest in his will. An interesting item for research.

He went to live in Florence Italy and established a private printing press from which one famous book "Chess in Iceland" amongst many others appeared. He had a fascination with Iceland and his library was bequeathed to the National Library of Reykjavik. There were 1200 volumes. His biographer H.S.White

produced a 3 volume "Life and Correspondence" in 1920-1922 and there was also "Chess Tales and Miscellanies" 1912 by White.

Fiske was the 19th century Twiss.

Harold James Ruthven Murray (1868-1955) one of the world's greatest chess historians, his greatest work "A History of Chess" 1913 required scholarly research over a period of thirteen years prior to publication. His knowledge of languages, his friendship with the great collectors especially J.G.White and his writing skills produced a book of over 900 pages that is still considered today the authoritative work on the history of chess in the English language.

It would be unusual if Murray had not gathered a library around himself if for no other reason than Dale Brandreth gives:- "*...that it is essential because of the lack of good public libraries near one's home*".

In 1990 I visited the Bodleian Library and after paying the two pound entry fee and having my photo taken, was admitted into the hallowed library for one reason and that was to determine the number of chess books in the collection. I appeared before the chief librarian who was sitting in a raised pew with lectern overseeing the readers and he quickly solved the problem. Under the cataloguing system and number 38472 there were 243 books in section b; 193 in d; 991 in e; and 80 in f. These alphabetical listings b, d, e and f were to do with book sizes. Clearly e related to standard book size. This totalled 1509 chess books. There were 62 draughts books in category 38471. There was a special collection of Murray's books and MS in the new Bodleian and the family bequeathed 240 items of 16th to 20th century vintage plus newspaper cuttings, book catalogues and prospectuses. That said, there are in fact 392 printed books with some fairly choice items:- Bertin, Cessolis (1829), Greco (1714), Hyde (1767), Lambe (1764), Lopez (Paris 1636) from the Preti sale, Lopez (1584), all Van Der Linde's works, Lolli, all Morgan's shilling library excluding Book 9, Philidor (1750), Salvio (1634), Selenus (1616), Stamma (1745), Twiss and Miscellanies, and quite a lot of problem works including most of the White Christmas Series.

There were real treasures in the Catalogue of his papers and the Manuscripts are broken up into 4 sections:-1-129 Material related to chess; 130-141 to draughts;142-157 to board games; 158-168 Correspondence.

The first section was further broken up into seven sub-sections:-1-53 Transcripts of MSS and printed books; 54-71 Collections of problems and games; 72-84 Original works and compilations by Murray; 85-97 Papers on chess by other modern writers collected by Murray; 98-100 Chess bibliography; 101-126 works by Murray on the knights tour; 127-129 Miscellaneous.

The correspondents were impressive and I give them as it may help fellow researchers. This is a direct copy of the MSS H.J.Murray File:-

“158-Miscellaneous correspondence relating to chess, bound into a note book. The correspondents are: W.G.Aston 1910 (fol.83); Rev.L.Clayton, Bishop of Leicester 1912 (fol.38); E.Colston 1910 (fol.56); J.Cresswell 1900 (fol.28); G.N.Davey, ed. BCM., 1901 (fol.40); R.K.Douglas to (E.M.)Thompson, 1902 (fol.37); G.Freckerville (3) ,1900-1905 (fol.30); John Keeble (14) 1920 (fol.58); J.A. Leon (15) 1902-1914 (fol.89); D.S.Margoliouth, 1912 (fol.26); A. van Millingen (4), 1902/3 (fol.42); Sir James Murray (18) 1900-1913 (fol.1); J.T.Platts (2), 1901-3 (fol.33); W.H.Thompson (4), 1902-8 (fol.51); A.R.Waller (Camb. Univ. Press re Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911 (fol.82). 143 leaves.

159 Letters from various correspondents, relating to specific subjects:

- a. (fol.1) Ten letters, 1888-1951, mainly arising from the History of Chess. The correspondents are: C.Brett (4) 1919; F.E.Chetwynd, 1951; L.H.Gergely, Cleveland Ohio 1947; H.H.Gibbs, 1888; Rev.F.M.Hodgess Roper (2), 1939; W.W.Skeat 1906.
- b. (fol.26) Correspondence relating to board games, arranged alphabetically. The writers are : H.Braunholtz, (4), 1948-1952; C.A.Burland 1952; H.F.Cheshire 1911; Mrs M.Danielli (2), 1947, to Miss K.M.Murray (Malagasi Games); I.E. Edwards (2) (for C.J.Gadd), 1951; W.Fagg (3) 1953; C.J.Gadd (4), 1950-1952 (Assyrian games); L.Grebe Nurnberg (2), (1954); Sir R. de Z. Hall (5), 1952-3 (African Games); Miss B.J.Kirkpatrick (2), 1951; F.R.Lewis (9), 1942-6 (Welsh games); H.Lockey, 1907 (merels); R.A.Macalister, 1947; E.Macwhite (6), 1953, with pages from Christian News from Israel, vol.IV, 1953, relating to mosaics; V.E.Nash-Williams, 1953, enclosing notes on Roman burial rites; H.T.H.Piaggio (5), 1939/40 (containing information on Arabic board games obtained from students); N.Teulon Porter (7), 1941-54, and notes by Sir R.de Z.Hall on mancala boards in the Pitt-Rivers Museum; J.M.Ross, 1952; A.G.Shirriff (6), 1950-2; A.F.Sieveking (4), 1926-7 (backgammon); J.E.Sturgess, 1952; W.A. Thorpe (7), 1953, with photostats of game boards in the Victoria and Albert Museum; H.Tompa (3), 1952-3.
- c. (fol.201) Eight letters, 1922-35, regarding chess columns in newspapers. The writers are : B.Hayden, chess columnist, West Sussex Gazette (2), 1930, with one from the editor W.S.G.; A.J.Mackenzie, 1922; J.C.W. Osborn, Georgetown, British Guiana (4), 1935.
- d. (fol.211) Fifteen letters, 1901-25, regarding books in the Rimington Wilson Library, Broomhead Hall, nr. Sheffield, with one letter from Murray.
- e. (fol.242) Thirty-three letters from editors of the British Chess Magazine, 1925-52.
- f. (fol.276) Seven letters on chessmen and boards, 1913-49. The writers are: Miss D.Campbell, 1913; R.F.Jones, 1932; Col.W.N.Lushington (2), 1937; F.Stevens (2), 1932; Lt. Col. T.Sutton, 1949.

- g. (fol.289) Six letters relating to the lives of famous chess players. The writers are : A.Cox (2), 1916, concerning W.J.Wisker and W.R.Thomas (4), 1927, concerning Capt. Evans.

296 leaves.

Principal correspondents in alphabetical order

160 J.Alexander (117), 1915-28, with 16 letters from Murray, 2 from Alexander to W.S.Branch, 2 from Branch to Murray and 2 from Alexander to the editor of the Yorkshire Weekly Post (the last six all 1915)

300 leaves

161 E.Bergholt (14), 1917-20 (fol.1); Dr. A.Bernstein of Rochlitz (8), 1935-49 (fol.20) and 2 from John Keeble, 1936, about the use of the Rook in armorial bearings, with a list compiled by Dr. Bernstein from Ritestap, Armorial General of families with the rook included in their arms; B.

Goulding Brown (31), 1913-44 (fol.47); J.M.Brown, Bradford (13), 1900-1919 (fol.104); Dr. A Buschke, New York (10), 1939-50, including a list of chess columns in European newspapers (fol.132).

174 leaves

162. W.S.Branch, Cheltenham (78), 1901-1932, with letters to Branch from Rev. W.Chinn (2), 1905; W.Gardner, 1915; A.Guest, 1915; G.Hume, 1929; J.F.Magee, 1911; H.E.McFarland (3), 1931; H.J.R.Murray (2), one dated 1919; E.W.Michelson, 1927.

320leaves

163. A. Chicco, Genoa (9), 1949-53 (fol.1), and one reply from Murray; A.Langdon Coburn (11, on Japanese and Chinese chess), 1917 (fol.16); T.R.Dawson, ed. Fairy Chess Review (12), 1929-47 (fol.41), with obituary notice, 16th Dec. 1951; G.L.Gortmans (31), 1924-1953 (fol.74); forty-two letters (1924-34) from J.Alexander to G.L.Gortmans (fol.133), and 10 letters, 1933-53, from Murray to Gortmans, with one from Gortmans to Murray, 1953. Given by A.Krueswijk, 1958; Alexander Hammond (24), 1935-51 (fol.249).

277 leaves.

164. J.Keeble, Norwich (155), 1906-38.

313 leaves.

165. J.Kohtz, Dresden (48), 1908-14, with 13 from W.Benary, Munich, 1908-13. For Murray's typescript copy of these see MS. 97. 198 leaves .

166. A.C.Klahre, Brooklyn (33), 1932-4 (fol.1), with 2 from W.C.Green, curator of the J.G.White coll., Cleveland Publ. Lib., 1936, regarding Murray's list of chess columns in Klahre's possession; G.Norman Knight (9), 1947-51 (fol.57); C.J.S.Purdy, ed. Chess World, Sydney (8), 1945-51 (fol.69), and one reply from Murray; H.Rauneforth (10), 1910-13 (fol.81); L.P.Rees, secretary British Chess Federation (7), 1916-20 (fol.97); Dr.

P.Seyferth (14), 1935-6 (fol.104) with photocopies of Murray's replies (9), 1935-6 (fol.218); A.C.White (14), 1906-21 (fol.175), with circular regarding presentation to A.C.White, and letter (1914) to J.Keeble; letters from R.Addam Williams to Murray (8) and W.S.Branch (3), 1903-4 on the history of draughts (fol.197). Enclosed are extracts from the Tesoro de la lengua Castellana, Madrid 1611. 257 leaves

167/1,2 J.G.White (214) 1900-27 396 and 344 leaves

168. Lesser correspondents arranged in alphabetical order:- Dr.B. Bassi, Upsala (5), 1948; H.D. O'Bernard (1), 1944; Prof. P. Bidev (2), 1953, with Murray's replies; E,G,R, Cordingley (5), 1939-49; W.H.Cozens (3), 1941; F. Downey, bookseller (3), 1910, with priced list of chess books; J. Ernst (1), 1913; Prof. W. Fiske (3), 1902-12, with 2 letters concerning Fiske from W.P. Garrison and one from H.S. White, 1905; E. Gardiner (3), 1927; W.C. Green, curator White chess coll., Cleveland Public Library (5), 1930-4; F.J. Hamel (2), 1934; C.G. Higginson (1), 1922; India Office Library (1), 1902; H.O. Johnston (1), 1926; E. Lasker (4), 1950/1; A. Lassally (1), 1939; D.M. Liddell, New York (2), 1937; F. Madan (1), 1924; H.E. McFarland (1), 1931; G.L. Moore (5), 1918-23; Dr.M. Niemeijer, Wassenaar (5), 1946-8; Prof. C.T. Onions (5), 1940-7; F.M. Pareja (3), 1953; Ross Pinsent (1), 1914; Bernard Quaritch (2),1902; Prof. J. Robson (5), 1952-3; Mrs B.C.Skeat (1), 1912, with a MS. Booklet, 'Rules of the London Chess Club', written by W.W. Skeat while at Highgate School; A.J. Souweine (5), 1932; W.R. Thomas (1), 1927; E.N. Treleaven (1), 1913; Dr. E. Voellmy, Basel (1), 1948; F.J.Wallis, Sydney, 1917, letter to J.M. Brown, Leeds; W.H.Watts (3), 1936, and one to John Keeble. 167 leaves.

And so we must leave this great research source. Would that I had spent some time examining the letters. Those with J.G.White, John Keeble, Johannes Kohtz are particularly interesting but Kohtz may have written in German.

Jose Paluzie y Lucena (1860-1938) The great Spanish problem composer, author and chess historian. With seven books to his credit of which the most famous is "Manual de ajedrez" of over 1000 pages published in various mixes of two or three volumes. The first book called 'Preliminares' is a manual of chess, and includes a second book called 'Estrategia' totalling 423 pages. The third book named 'Apertures' and the fourth 'Finales' is 285 pages. The fifth, 'Problemas' and the sixth and last 'Miscelanea' over 347 pages. Each book appears to have been published separately. The final book is very unusual and contains chess anecdotes, a bibliography of Spanish chess, a bibliography of chess, chess in history, chess in literature, chess from a changed original position, the greatest number of moves in chess and other chapters such as chess and Esperanto. A truly varied fare.

His library was donated by his wife to the Central Library of Barcelona. 476 volumes very rich in Spanish works including an incomplete Lucena. A very generous gesture.

A catalogue was issued in 1943 by the Barcelona Library with a dedication to his wife Mercedes Borrell and it contains a photo of Paluzie late in life. There is a misprint under the photo giving his death year as 1935-Gaige gives 22 January 1938. A surprise not to see the 1561 Alcala Lopez but the 1584 Tarsia is there as item 45 next to the 114 page incomplete 1497 Lucena (item 46). The collection is very strong on problem books with 152 items and item 169 is quite interesting:- LOYD SAMUEL – Chess Strategy. A treatise upon the Art of Problem Composition, by.... Elizabeth (N.J.) 1878-“*Manuscrito. 172 folios s.n., los dos ultimos en blanco. En el fol. 3v., retrato del autor, dibujado a la pluma. Ex libris J Paluzie y Lucena.*

Item 170 is “Loyd. S: Chess Strategy. A treatise upon the art of Problem Composition “ by.... Elizabeth N.J.(sin imprenta), 1878-269 pages.

Hard to determine what Item 169 is-perhaps Paluzie copied some of the pages? The catalogue has a few errors:- eg “The Middle Game in Chess” (item 250) is in the problem section. But the catalogue is clear and easy to read. The periodicals section is weak but has a good cross-section of countries represented.

6. Historian-Author Collectors

Herman Helms (1870-1963) The Dean of American chess so named in 1943 by the USCF was a chess journalist and editor with Hartwig Cassel of the American Chess Bulletin from its inception in 1904 until 1963.

David Lawson wrote a beautiful biography of Helms in the 60th volume of the Bulletin in 1963 and he was obviously a good friend of Helms and very sad at his passing. Lawson, never one to praise in excess wrote of the “illustrations, portraits, historical material and fine coverage of chess news, especially during the first 40 years of (The Bulletin)” and it truly was an eye-opener for me to read it for the first time in 1994 at the State Library of Victoria. Helms was a giant and as well as The Bulletin, he edited the Brooklyn Eagle chess column for 61 years and had other columns in the New York World, New York Post, New York Sun and the New York World Telegram and Sun. He also contributed chess news to the New York Times for over 50 years as well as cricket, soccer and minor sports.

He was a very strong player but after his marriage in 1898 he seldom entered serious competition and became a tourney organiser especially involved in promoting the tours of Alekhine, Capablanca, Lasker, Maroczy, Marshall and Reshevsky whilst in America. The Capablanca exhibition in New York in 1913 where Capa faced 200 opponents at 50 boards was arranged and directed by Helms before an audience of 2000.

He was a keen cricketer and in 1892 headed the bowling averages and was second in the batting. His best skill was fielding. He was captain of the Brooklyn team.

His associate Miss Catherine E Sullivan gave him boundless and untiring devotion with all his chess tasks as did the chess master Anthony Santasiere.

Who could forget that beautiful letter in which he invited Mrs Regina Fischer to bring the 7 year old Bobby to the Brooklyn Public Library in January 1951 for chess? As Frank Brady wrote in "Profile of a Prodigy" the letter "*not only documents the interest in Bobby's incipient career, but because it reveals so much of Helms's personality: the catholicity and sweetness of his old-world courtesy, the unflinching attentiveness to any matter or expression of chess interest from any quarter at any time*". What a tribute and Helms was 81 at the time. This was a beautiful man in every sense of the word, who dedicated his life to chess administration.

It has been difficult to obtain information on his chess library. Clearly he had one though much historical information was probably in his head. Niemeijer mentions Helms in the description of the New York Public Library on page 65 of "Schaakbibliotheken" and it appears that Helms collection went there. This needs to be checked but it rings true of the man.

George Walker (1803-1879) Stockbroker, author and strong chessplayer, he was always trying to increase the popularity of chess. His chess column in Bell's Life in London from (1834-1873), his articles in Fraser's and other magazines and his organisation in chess clubs, together with his many books on chess, created as Murray wrote "*A wider enthusiasm for chess*". His father was an author and bookseller and later father and son became music publishers. On his father's death, George, then aged 44 became a stockbroker. By 1850 though he had helped form the Westminster Chess Club and the St George's Chess Club, his last chess work "Chess and Chess Players" (1850) saw him withdraw from active chess play.

All the time he had been acquiring a chess library; one fine purchase in 1833 being George Atwood's (1745-1807) Manuscript, which Walker, unselfishly as always, published in 1835 as "Selection of Games at Chess actually played by Philidor and his Contemporaries". His most important book was "Chess Studies" 1780-1844 as it presented many of the games played in that era in one handy volume.

His library of 314 books with many MSS of his own compilation, was sold by Sotheby's on 14th May 1874 and the majority were purchased by Rimington Wilson. A description of the sale and that of the American collector C.W. Whitman from the Westminster Papers 1st June 1874 p.20 follows:-

“Amongst the events of the month we must mention the sales of Mr. George Walker’s, and Mr Whitman’s Chess Works. What pangs these gentlemen suffered at parting with the works they loved so well, those only who are, or have been, book collectors can realise. The manuscripts of Mr. Walker were, in some instances, original and those sold freely. Other manuscripts, consisting of collections of problems corrected by Mr. Walker, were, we hope, bought as mementoes of one who had done so much for our pleasure; but the books sold for little or nothing. The collection was divided into 314 lots, and embraced copies of the works of most of the great masters, notably Ruy Lopez, Damiano, Salvio, Gianutio, Greco, Selenus, Severino, Lolli, Ponziani, Philidor, Lasa, Lewis, and many others, dating from 1534.

On the 15th, Mr. Whitman’s sale, consisting of 473 lots, was carried on with much greater animation, and much better prices were realised throughout. As is usual at sales of this kind, several lots were sold for a small fraction of their worth, while others fetched far above their nominal value. Amongst the latter may be mentioned Taylor’s “Chess Brilliants”, which sold for 7s 6d, the price new being only 4s 6d; “Selkirk on Chess”, worth about 3s, sold for 8s, Zukertort’s “Handbook”, old edition, fetched 17s, the price of the new edition is 12s; another book of Zukertort’s collection of problems, for sale anywhere at 2s 6d, sold for 4s 6d; two copies of Lolli, both alike, one was sold for 5 pounds, the other for 10s; whilst Cozio, lot 109, very scarce, and worth about 40 pounds, sold for 5 pounds. We can only suggest to collectors in future to make known what they have for sale, and ask for an offer for the seller. The 4 volumes of the “American Chess Monthly” must be looked upon as a bargain at 5 and a half guineas, because of the great scarcity of complete sets. We are very sorry to see these collections dispersed, and we cannot but regret that no club was sufficiently rich or sufficiently enterprising to buy the principal works. We are sorry, also, that Mr Walker’s sale should have been so ill attended. The next day Herr Lowenthal was so delighted at what he thought high prices, that he has determined to retire, and do nothing else but write chess for the rest of his life. The present generation need be under no immediate apprehension, as the works will be preserved for the benefit of posterity. Posterity gets all the good things.”

Lowenthal, a kind and gracious man died in July 1876 and his collection was sold on 8th November 1876. Did he fare any better or rather did his estate? Here is what the Westminster Papers wrote in its 1st December 1876 issue p.137:-

“The sale of the late Herr Lowenthal’s library appears to have attracted very little attention in either of the two worlds of chess or books. The attendance of purchasers was small, and many really valuable lots were knocked down at ridiculously low prices. For instance, seventeen volumes of the “Chess Player’s Chronicle”, from 1841 to the last number of the last series in 1859, bound in cloth and leather, sold for 1 pound 18s., or very little over two shillings a volume, and eleven copies of the “Berliner Schachzeitung”, from 1860 to 1871, fell under the hammer for fourteen shillings. Copies of four editions of the German

“Handbuch” produced together, half-a guinea, and cheapest of all, six scrapbooks containing the chess columns of “The Era”, “Illustrated News of the World”, “Family Friend” and “Family Herald”, sold for five guineas. Altogether, the collection, comprising nearly two hundred volumes, besides numerous odd pamphlets upon chess, produced only 52 pounds and sixpence. Such a poor result could hardly have been expected in these days when the very highest retail prices are cheerfully paid for chess-books that are either out of print or have become obsolete, and it must be ascribed to the absence of all competition for the moment. The collection included all the most valuable periodical literature of chess, extending over the last thirty years, besides two scarce old masters Carrera (1617) and Greco (1766), so that Amateurs desirous of forming a chess library have missed a rare opportunity of gratifying their wish, in failing to put in an appearance at the sale”.

Sad reading and even in 1995 it continued. The Falk sale in Paris being a good one for buyers.

Keeble (Note by John Beasley) Cleveland holds a notebook (Cleveland reference W 789.02M R1k) listing all the chess books printed in Great Britain that were in Keeble’s library on 28 January 1911. Cleveland has supplied the BCPS Library with a copy of this, and with Cleveland’s permission I produced an annotated version to go with my 1997 British chess problem bibliography. I suspect that some of Keeble’s library may now also be in Cleveland. (This addendum sent to me by John 16 March 2001-see page 27 for main article on Keeble)

Murray concluded his article on Walker (BCM 1906 p.194) with this final paragraph:-

“One of the pleasantest features about Walker-and his character seems to have been a very pleasant one throughout-was his kindness to other players less fortunately placed than himself. He did all he could for Labourdonnais in the last years of his life, and buried him at his own expense. Again and again we find appeals for subscriptions for the assistance of other players or their widows, and Walker’s name generally heads the list of subscribers. He was always ready to “Send the hat around for others”. (This was in contrast to an earlier statement of Walkers:- “I fancy I might have reached the steps to the throne by giving away my business, and sending the hat round once a year”) “Two likenesses of him are accessible – a poor woodcut in Edge’s “Paul Morphy”, and a second in the Westminster Papers (December 1876) – an issue which contains an excellent life, of which I have made considerable use-which shows a particularly charming old gentlemen, the picture of good humour and geniality”.

Beautifully written by Murray. Walker’s definition of a chess club is worth repeating:-“The temple of the thirty two”. To walk in Kensal Green, the

cemetery where La Bourdonnais and McDonnell are buried was a privilege for me. I imagined Walker at the services for his friends but especially at the great Frenchman's, as he was in terrible circumstances at the end. Walker was a man.

William Lewis (1787-1870) Again we are indebted to H.J.R.Murray for 'digging out' a reasonable 'life' of the great English chess player and author. He was helped in that task by Von der Lasa in DSZ Feb. 1873.

Lewis worked in a merchant's office in London during his mid twenties and played chess at The London Chess Club room in Tom's Coffee House in Cornhill. Here he became a pupil of Sarratt. He produced his first chess book in 1817 called "Oriental Chess" a reproduction of Shastri's 1814 Bombay work. Further books followed in 1818, 1819 (Greco translation) and in 1819 he worked as the player in Maelzel's Automaton Chess Player because of his great skill and small bulk. He published fifty of the games in an 1820 volume. When Sarratt died in 1819, Lewis was the best player in England. He defeated Cochrane in various matches at odds up to 1826 when Cochrane left for India. In 1821 he republished Sarratt's New Treatise on Chess' and like Von der Lasa did for Bilguer, gave the credit to the deceased partner. In 1821 Lewis and Cochrane went to Paris and played Deschappelles and La Bourdonnais with Lewis given Pawn and move odds defeating the champion Deschappelles. In 1822 the Carrera translation was published by Lewis with 'Elements on the Game of Chess'.

Lewis opened a chess club in St Martin's Lane in 1823/4 and the great Alexander McDonnell joined as did George Walker. Lewis was McDonnell's teacher. He also had an interest in pianoforte design. Both were unsuccessful and he lost most of his money. Friends secured for him the secretaryship of the Family Endowment Society at 12, Chatham Place, Blackfriars, London where he remained for many years and from which he retired on a comfortable pension. In 1827 he published a book on Rev. H. Bolton's problems. In 1830 he withdrew from regular club practice but was still considered in 1836 after McDonnell's tragic death, strong enough to challenge Deschappelles. This match was not played. During the 1830's he published his most famous series of books called 'Progressive Lessons on Chess' and he also produced a fifty game book on the 1834 match between La Bourdonnais and McDonnell; these books assisted Bilguer and company to work out analysis for themselves and eventually led to the Handbuch.

There was some rivalry between Lewis and Walker as to how cheaply a chess book could be produced:- Lewis brought out 'Chess for Beginners' at 5/-, Walker followed with 'Chess Made Easy' in 1837 for 3/6 and Lewis came back with 'Chess Board Companion' at 2/6. Walker gave in at this point, for, "it was clear", he said, "that if I carried on the war with 'Chess for the Masses', at a single shilling, my competitor would rejoin with 'Chess for the Millions at sixpence". All these books were popular and helped chess.

By 1853 he had given up playing though he still retained his library as the 1844 'Treatise on the Game of Chess' appeared. He loved billiards, walking and the study of the New Testament in Greek. Murray writes:- "*He was very socially disposed, and of an equable disposition, and it is recorded of him that nothing that happened in a game ever made the slightest difference to the charmingness of his manners*". He was stakeholder for the 1858 Morphy/Lowenthal Match and again met the American player at a banquet and chess exhibition at the St George's Chess Club.

George Walker in Bell's Life 2nd August 1863 gave a description of the sale of Lewis' library:- "*An extraordinary opportunity just now presents itself of forming chess libraries at a cheap rate. The largest collection of works on chess ever presented at one time for sale can now be seen at Simpsons, 10, King William St. Strand. The collection consists of several hundred volumes (250) including the chess library of Mr. W. Lewis, the eminent writer on the game and numerous books which belonged to his predecessor Sarratt. Copies of authors known only by name to thousands, as Gustavus Selenus, Ruy Lopez, Damiano & c in their original shapes may now be proved to be existing realities. We had the pleasure of inspecting this copious store of chess writings last week, and recommend our friends to pay Mr. Simpson an early visit.*"

Sadly by January 1864 he again wrote of "*the very moderate prices*" and the "*gratis catalogue*". In his 22nd October 1864 column they were still "*on sale*". An interesting period and perhaps the American Civil War was affecting the British economy. One would have suspected James Wilson Rimington Wilson (1822-1877) of missing a wonderful opportunity here. Perhaps he didn't.

John Frederick Keeble (1855-1939) A solver, composer, player, tourney judge, author and chess historian. Also a life-long bachelor and non-smoker. A railway clerk, he completed 53 years service retiring in 1921.

His early life was oriented towards chess problems and he composed 140 problems, mostly two movers and self mates with a delight for the unusual problem. He won four first prizes for composition in England and America and was a tremendous solver. His chess play was of a high level and he was the 1884 champion of Norfolk when there were 52 contestants. His first victory in that tourney being 1877, but that was for shooting not chess!

Both problems and play led him to a love of the history of both sides of the art and after he retired from work, he became heavily involved in many research areas especially related to locating old graves of famous players (Philidor's being one, which resulted in a vote of thanks from the French Chess Federation). He ensured that Lowenthal's headstone was restored in the Hastings cemetery called Ore. Later he found the problemist H.J.C. Andrews' grave in Ladywell Cemetery, Lewisham not far from J.H. Blackburne's grave. Andrews grave number is 1894 plot D. Philidor's grave is in St James Church graveyard Piccadilly. Another

challenge that he partially solved was the location of Morphy's chess set and board which were tracked down to the Count Gasquet in France. Today they are still lost. The magazines of the 1920's and 30's are sprinkled with Keeble's quests and he solved most of them. BCM 1926 p.434 is a typical Keeble quest and his write-up of the event dealing with the Philidor find is rather good.

He published two books:-"The Caduceus" and "An English Bohemian" (1933). The first published in 1910 contains a series of self-mate problems from the Norwich Mercury Tournament of 1908/10. The second is a famous Christmas Series volume of problem great B.G.Laws. In the Foreword Alain White pays tribute to Keeble and calls him "...almost the youngest of my correspondents" Because of his activity and alertness. Keeble was 78 at the time. White also calls "Roi Accule aux Angles" 1905, the first volume of the Christmas Series. I'm not sure where that leaves "Chess Lyrics" which in "Antiform" is listed as the first.

Keeble's skill as a writer is praised in the obituary article in BCM 1939 p.153:-
" He was a good writer, and a splendid and reliable correspondent, as many can testify. His letters were delightful in matter and expressed his kindly personality. His friends were legion all over the world. On his eightieth birthday he received a letter of greetings from America signed by many of the famous chess players of that country. With his splendid head, beetling eyebrows and keen glance, he looked a chess player. Perhaps the secret of his success was his good fortune in possessing good health, an unusually good memory, and his perseverance and meticulous attention to detail."

He contributed various chess papers to the Hastings Observer and the Falkirk Herald and chess columns in the Eastern Daily Press in 1884 and the Norwich Mercury from 1902 – 1912. In the latter paper he published a list of chess columns for the world commencing in the 15th May 1907 column to April 4th 1908. The obituary article writes of him as a "collector of chess books" and I have not been able to discover the number or quality. I would suspect the books are with the Norwich Chess Club or local library (But see pps.25 & 62 this book). Keeble wrote some excellent articles in the Falkirk Herald on the pre and post Rimington Wilson sale as copied in the Chess Amateur 1928 pages 171, 207 and 240.

"OLD BOOKS :- *The chief chess event this month is the sale, by Sotheby's (London) on the 27th and 28th, of the Rimington Wilson Chess library. This famous library was formed by the late Mr J.W. Rimington Wilson (1822-1877) and has not been added to since his death in 1877. It has always been considered the best in Europe, but as far as is known, Mr.H.J.R.Murray is the only person who has had access to it. The library is rich in manuscripts, the plum of the collection being an autographed chess poem by Oliver Goldsmith – a translation of Vida's "De Ludo Scaccorum", which good judges think is worth £200. The*

books and manuscripts together number over 2,300. First editions of all the early chess books are included in it, and generally in more than one copy.

An item of interest to your readers is the first book connected with the name of a Scottish printer. It is described:- "Jordanus Nemorarius. Arithmetica, etc. In hoc opere contents. Arithmetica decem libris demonstrata. Musica libris demonstrata quottuor (by J.Fabrus Stapulensis). First edition, Gothic letter, 72 leaves, wooden diagram, including a chequered board set for Rythmomachy, folio. Printed by W.Hopyl and David Lauxius, Edinburgh, 22 July 1496."

Rythmachy was commonly called in England the Philosopher's Game, or battle of numbers, was played on a double chess board with 24 men a side, 8 circles, 8 triangles and 8 squares, the eighth square representing a king.

Another Scottish item is "The Buke of ye Chess" Frondes Caducae series. Auchinleck Press, 1818." (And this may be why Keeble called his first book 'The Caduceus')

p.207:- "A great surprise at the Rimington Wilson chess library sale was the high price paid for Oliver Goldsmith's MS of his translation of Vida's chess poem. After spirited bidding from three parties it was knocked down to Messrs Maggs for £5,600. This price breaks all records for a chess item, either as a book or manuscript. The poem consists of 34 pages, 6in x 7in., and has in all 679 lines. It commences:- "Armies of box that sportively engage,

And mimick real battels in their rage."

It was formerly in the possession of Bolton Corney, a well-known literary critic of the last century. Corney died in 1870, and the MS passed into the hands of F.S. Ellis, the New Bond Street bookseller, who sold it to the late Mr Rimington Wilson for 50 guineas, and for more that 50 years it has virtually been considered a lost manuscript. The poem was published in its entirety in Peter Cunningham's edition of Goldsmith's "Works" in 1855.

Another surprise was the price paid for Lucena's book of chess problems published at Salamanca in 1497. The copy sold had 162 woodcuts of problems (should be 164). Only about 10 copies of this work are known to exist. It has usually sold somewhere in the neighbourhood of £100, but this copy, as did the Goldsmith MS., fell to Messrs Maggs for £500. Three German MSS of Cessolis sold in all for £64, but the first French edition of Cessolis, published at Toulouse in 1489, made £130, and a beautiful Italian edition, dated Florence 1493, fetched £200. There were several editions of F. de Columna, including a very fine copy of the Aldine edition, Venice 1499, which was secured by Quaritch for £430, which also got another dated 1546, for £70, and a third 1561 fetched £60.

On the whole the foreign books sold well, but the English ones made much less than was expected. Two copies of James Rowbothum's chess book of 1562, entitled "The pleasaunt and wittie playe of the Cheasts renewed", were sold for

£56 and £31 respectively, and a first edition of Arthur Saul, of which only two other copies are known (one in the British Museum and one in Bodleian) went for £115, and two other valuable works were bound up with it. This edition is dated 1614. Strange to say a copy of the second edition of this book, edited by Jo Barbier in 1640, made as much as £260 two years ago, and now two copies of this went for £9. There were other tragedies of low prices of which I will speak later on. By the way £32 was paid for the “Jordanus Nemorarius” – the first book associated with the name of a Scottish printer. The total amount realised by the sale of the chess books and manuscripts was £8,072.

Again Keeble’s knowledge of rare chess books is of interest. Quaritch bought a lot and perhaps his mark up on some items in the later catalogue can be noted from the prices quoted.

p.240:-*“I promised to say something of the low prices for which lots were sold at the Rimington Wilson sale. The founder of the library took great pains, when opportunity offered, to secure the MSS and books collected by famous players and composers of his time. For instance, he bought George Walker’s library, which included not only rare books, but valuable manuscripts by the Rev. George Atwood and Sir. F. Madden. He also obtained the whole of Bone’s collection and some by Horatio Bolton. He got everything that belonged to the English player and writer, William Lewis, and the famous professional, Lowenthal. Further, he himself made a folio MS of the chess openings.*

All the parties I have mentioned fared very badly at the sale, and their literary efforts in the cause of chess were sold for what looks like waste paper prices. English chess owes more to the Rev. George Atwood than it does to any other person. Mr. Murray’s “History of Chess” mentions that George Atwood (1746-1807) joined the London Chess Club in 1787. He was not a strong player, but he made up for this by the industry with which he took down the games played at the club from 1787-1800, including most of Philidor’s games, and almost everything we know of Philidor’s play we owe to him. He recorded the results in three handsome manuscript volumes, and these were knocked down at the sale for ten shillings. A transcript of the Fountaine MS and four others by Sir. F. Madden also fetched only ten shillings.

Bone was an industrious man and an indefatigable collector and recorder of chess problems. In all, the library had 144 MS volumes which he compiled! These were sold in three lots for £13. Horatio Bolton fared a little better. His three volumes fetched £2.

W. Lewis’s autograph MSS filled 33 volumes, and went for 14 shillings. Lowenthal did more than Lewis. He compiled 48 volumes, which were handsomely bound in half Russia, and only ten shillings was bid for the lot.

Perhaps the most pathetic case was an autograph MS of the chess openings arranged by Rimington Wilson himself. Seventeen large folio volumes of substantial thickness, bound in morocco, £1 the lot! It is to be hoped that some of these will eventually find a home in some permanent library in this country.

As a rule, chess magazines sold much better. "The Palamede" made £10, and a collection of the German "Schachzeitung" 10 guineas, but many modern books fetched poor prices."

Bernard Quaritch the book dealers bought 1657 of the 2300+ items and sold them in 1929 at far better prices. Good articles by Keeble on the end of Britains greatest collection. Very sad for British chess.

Baruch Harold Wood (1909-1989) learned chess at school and continued through University where he got 1st Class Honours in Chemistry at Bangor and an MSc at Birmingham. His love of chess took him away from chemistry and he launched 'CHESS' the magazine in 1935. He kept the magazine going until 1987 when he sold out to Pergamon. 52 years is a great effort and few have equalled it. During the war he held a directorate of a chemical research laboratory in Lichfield but still continued to produce the magazine.

He was also chess correspondent of the Daily Telegraph and the Illustrated London News and published 'Easy Guide to Chess' 1942 through many revisions; Semmering-Baden 1937; London and Nottingham 1946; The 1937 Euwe/Alekhine match; The 1953 Candidates Tournament; The English version of Jerzy Gizycki's "A History of Chess" 1972, revised 1977; and a fairly average chess problem book which I've still refused to buy a copy of ca 1970's?

Like Helms and Purdy, he gave his life to chess and apart from other 'behind the scenes' activities he was a Life member of FIDE, an International Arbiter, organiser of 21 annual chess festivals at seaside venues, promoter of University chess, and founder of the Postal Chess Club and for many years President of the Postal Chess Federation. He was awarded the OBE in 1984.

He wrote an article in ILN which reveals somewhat of his library. This article was republished in CHESS January 1950 p.73:- *"More has been written about cricket, I believe, than about any other outdoor game. But more books have certainly been written about chess than about every other game put together. Caxton's "Game and Playe of the Chesse" (about 1483) was one of the first books ever printed in English, and the stream has been in flood ever since. It is an aspect of chess which the layman can find almost frightening.*

About ten years ago, I started to build up a chess library for reference purposes. From the first I rejected more books than I chose; for instance, though chess problems fascinated me in my youth, and I composed several, I felt I must draw the line somewhere; I possess a bare half-dozen books on problem Chess or

Fairy Chess at most. Then, the motive of my collection was utility; as chess has progressed steadily, decade by decade, the weaknesses in old methods and openings being revealed and new resources evolved, the countless chess books dated earlier than 1900 were rejected almost en bloc, though not always without a wistful backward glance.

Language was not a great bar, as I can read French, German, Spanish, Dutch and Russian adequately well; but here again I shied away from Hebrew, Arabic and Chinese - it is such a blow to the dignity, on turning a page, to find from a picture or diagram that one has been perusing the wretched book upside down.

I do subscribe to the Istanbul 'Turkiye Satrang'. But understand mighty little.

CHESS IN WORLD FICTION – An Oklahoma Professor of English is busy collecting fiction in which chess has a place in the plot. Starting from "Through the Looking Glass", the library list takes in some scores of detective novels and, wandering through the whole range of world literature, such classics as Shakespeare's "Tempest". I left my Oklahoma friend alone in his task.

Another field which might interest a psychologist is the collection of books written by world-famous chess players on subjects outside chess, such as Philidor's works on music, Staunton's three-volume commentary on Shakespeare, or, in modern times, Gerald Abraham's novels and political pamphlets on war guilt, etc. Sanity again decreed only one course – rejection.

Thus I set drastic limitations – yet within them my library has rapidly expanded to some 1,600 volumes, and continues to grow by at least 150 more yearly.

250 BOOKS TO CHOOSE FROM! On the French Defence alone, the opening 1. P-K4, P-K3, I can consult no fewer than five specialist works; by Mieses (Liepzig), Le Lionnais (Paris), Maroczy (Budapest), Czerniak (Buenos Aires) and Stadia (Milan), apart from detailed surveys in each of the 130-odd books on the chess openings as a whole, and more or less useful references in scores of general text-books.

Every month, well over a hundred different chess magazines are issued in various parts of the world; eight in England, about as many in Germany, five in the USA...one in New Zealand. Each goes into my library, bound, at the end of the year.

Of tournament books, I have some 400, though there are still many gaps to fill. These are books published after important tournaments, giving the scores of all the games played, usually with comments on the play and often with photographs of the contestants. Since the day hardly ever dawns when no such tournament is in progress somewhere, there is a constant flow of new additions to this section. It is the one I find myself most often consulting; the games, averaging perhaps eighty

per book, provide a bottomless reservoir of study of every type of stratagem in opening, middle-game or ending.

Frightening? Or exhilarating? Make your choice!”

In the obituary in BCM 1989 p.210 is the following anecdote:- “ *One of his last long tours was in 1967 when he drove Botvinnik around the UK. The world champion was duly impressed by the work load and wrote a very favourable account of the trip, revealing incidentally that Barry was still paying off the mortgage on his large house in Rectory Road, Sutton Coldfield where the car was parked on the forecourt as the garage was the reserve storage for a large library of chess books! His ability to quote chemical formula from memory also impressed Botvinnik”.*

And there is a very fine photograph of Wood in his library (ca 1950's I think) in the obituary article in Chess May 1989 p.15. His library was impressive and if we assume he had 1600 chess books in 1950 and that his library continued to grow at 150/year, it must have been well over 5000 volumes at the end.

He was a kind man to me and I bought my first rare book overseas in one of his CHESS auctions. Another time I remember sending him \$100+ Australian for a set of Hoffers ‘Chess Monthly’. I later wrote wondering if he had meant US dollars which he had and I got a credit on further purchases. My set of the ‘Chess Amateur’ came from him.

6 Specialist Area Collectors

Whilst it is appreciated that every collector has preferred collecting areas, some collectors concentrate on one specialist area.

Philip Hamilton Williams (1873 -1922) English chess problemist and chess author. He conducted the Problem column in the Chess Amateur from the inception of the magazine in October 1906 until his death in September 1922. A marvellous editor, full of fun and witty writings, readers were treated to his trips around Britain on motorbike auditing various company accounts and meeting up with problem lovers. A fine musician he played on various great cathedral organs around the country. Ely, for one, was a delight for him. His book “Chess, Chatter and Chaff” 1909 from the publishing office of the Chess Amateur has some very professional photos of Ely and other scenes that he had taken in his travels. It is a beautiful little book. He was a very pleasant man, gregarious and a first class problemist with a dash of kriegspiel which he loved. If he was as half as nice as his writings he was a special man. And I think he might have been special.

His library was only 100 volumes but was completely problem oriented. Williams classed Mauvillon’s work as a problem book though I note it is in the endings category in The Hague catalogue. A month before he died Alain White

sent him his original working copy of Loyd's "Chess Strategy". Williams could hardly have read it.

Robert Forbes Combe (1912 –1952) British Chess champion 1946. His childhood was spent in China where his father was Consul General at Tsinan in Shantung. On a holiday in London when he was 16, he bought a little book called "The Chess Openings" by I.Gunsberg, from which with the aid of a sixpenny book of chess laws, he taught himself the game. He played in the third class tournament at Margate the next year finishing fourth without knowing the e.p. rule for the whole tourney.

He completed his education at Aberdeen Grammar School and Aberdeen University where he qualified in law with a distinguished record. He was a brilliant pleader at the bar of the Sheriff's Court and had a fine legal brain.

In W.A.Fairhurst's opinion, Combe had the greatest chess brain of any British player between 1932 – 1952. He had a very quick sight of the board and was rarely in time trouble.

He never won the Scottish chess championship but as he had developed rheumatic fever at the age of 18 this may have affected his play. Certainly he never thought so and in Chess October 1946 p.2 stated that "*I developed a sort of instinctive languidness and now I don't think I could hurry or worry if I wanted to.*"

In that famous game he lost to Hasenfuss in 4 moves it is worth stating that he had just played a 12 hour game prior to it. And prior to the 1946 British Championship he had NO CHESS PRACTICE AT ALL FOR THE PREVIOUS SIX YEARS.

He lived in Elgin in Scotland (east of Inverness) and was an "*inveterate collector Of tournament books, has probably as complete a collection as anybody in the country and habitually spends evenings in quiet deep study of the masters' methods. He looks on Richter's "Combinationem" as a fine book for pre-tournament study.*"(Chess 1946)

Remarkable chess player, draughts player and collector too it would seem. Further knowledge on his tournament book collection is needed but this appears to be his special area.

Lubomir Kavalek (1943) International grandmaster, chess journalist and coach. His most famous coaching role was with Nigel Short in 1990 when the British grandmaster teamed up with him prior to the Manila Interzonal. The book "The Inner Game" by Dominic Lawson details his relationship with Nigel Short during the World Title match in 1993, with Garry Kasparov. On page 83, Lawson describes Kavalek's library :- "*Three rooms seemed to be full of nothing but chess*

books, in English, German, Czech (of course) and Russian. Bound volumes of Soviet chess magazines going back to the early 1950's lined one entire wall. I counted 103 books on one chess opening alone; it was the Sicilian Defence, Garri Kasparov's life-long favourite. I asked Kavalek whether he knew of a bigger collection of chess books. "Oh, yes," he replied. "Not far from here, actually. The Library of Congress." Lawson went on to describe 'The Beast', Kavalek's computer chess database which as he wrote: "...had become famed and feared throughout the world of grandmasterdom."

Hazarding a guess at the number of volumes in Kavalek's library is dangerous but assuming 20 books per foot of shelf and five shelves; with a wall 12 feet long there would be 1000 books per wall. Say 3 walls each room, must make the collection in the range of 9000 books – a most imposing library.

Clearly the collection contains openings and master games mainly if not solely. One then begins to wonder just how many collections there are in the world held by theorists and grandmasters.

Albert S Pinkus (1903 – 1984) American master, big-game hunter, stockbroker and collector. Arnold Denker and Larry Parr wrote brilliantly about him in "The Bobby Fischer I Knew". In a Foreword in that book Grandmaster Larry Evans wrote of Pinkus and his hobby of collecting chess books and on page 30 the authors wrote: - *"Al's great joy and gentleman's obsession was to remove the bindings from rare tournament books and rebind them with the most beautiful gilt covers to be found outside a medieval monastery. Trips to his home were a treat because we always got around to examining the books and opening them to play over some classic games. The last time I visited him, he had already bound hundreds of books which formed one of the finest libraries in the world. In today's market this collection would be priceless, and I often wondered what happened to it."*

Dr. Niemeijer in "Schaakbibliotheken" 1948 when writing of the Harald Falk collection places A.S.Pinkus' name in brackets behind Falk's inferring that he got all of it. However this may not be completely correct. On the 8th June 1995 a chess book sale took place in Paris and it was billed as the "Bibliotheque de Monsieur X". This was in fact Harald Falk. The collection sold contained few if any tournament books and consisted principally of antiquarian chess books. The general view is that Pinkus got the chess play books only.

H.J.M.(Bert) Corneth (1956) One of the new boys on the block. An Information Planner with Shell; his skills are in computing and mathematics. He started collecting in 1988 and has already passed 1000 items.

We met in Peter Parr's chess shop in Sydney in December 1995 when the Corneth family were doing a tour of Australia's capital cities.

Very systematic and has produced a catalogue of his collection with the following sub headings :- History and Bibliography; General Teaching Works; Openings; Middlegame; Game Positions and Combinations; Endgame and Endgame Studies; Problem Compositions; Biographies and Games of One Master; Collections of Biographies and Games; Matches; Tournaments; Periodical Publications; Societies and Jubilees; Psychology, Philosophy and Blindfold Chess; Essays, articles and Stories; Various Subjects. There is also an index of authors. The Catalogue has 18 pages and is easily updated off computer.

Bert (2/10/1999):- “*..My antiquarian collection runs until 1960. One reason for that is because around that time the paperback era began. Books appeared at ever higher frequency, and little care was given to their solidity and appearance, reflected partially by a limp cover, in order to reduce cost. (The second reason is that 1960 is the start of my conscious life- I was born in 1956, so it is also psychological)*”.

7. General Collectors

Jean Mennerat – A very great French chess book collector. His collection is well over 10,000 items today. He has been to most of the great post war sales and has been collecting since WW2. The second hand bookstalls along the Seine were a favourite haunt and the Staunton 1851 Tourney book and all the Philidor's (French editions) came his way from these sources. 1938 was a very good year. After the war when he was demobilised from FFL of de Gaulle he continued to buy chess books up until 1949 when his family and medical practice took priority. He took it up again in 1984/5 in retirement and now lives with his wife in the French Alps. Many rooms of their home are filled with chess books and he writes that his wife is “*wonderfully tolerant*”.

Harald Ballo – A very great German collector and good friend of Jean Mennerat. His collection must be well into the thousands today. The author of Schachzettel in DSZ and a doctor by profession. He has a very promising chess playing son and his two youngest sons are also quite good. He has been collecting since about 1980 and has dealt with most of the dealers and attended some of the great auctions in past years. He advised the following in a recent letter:- “*In Germany, I think, my collection can, after the death of Gerd Meyer and the transfer of his collection to the public library of Kiel, as far as the pre 1850 Chess books are concerned at least compete with others in Germany. There is in the first instance Herr Meissenburg, he is strong in new books and goes for completeness even though there is an enormous amount of book production. Other collectors in Germany include in Berlin – Herr Fresen, Herr Bochum and Herr Petzold. In*

Lubeck is Herr Gromsch and in Hamburg Herr Mittelbach. In Tübingen is Herr Ellinger and Herr Hess in Frankfurt. In Regensburg there is Herr Wellenhofer. In Sweden there was Rolk Littorin and in South America Herr Caputto and Herr Soria. In England Michael Mark and in the USA Mr de Lucia.” (Letter 10/9/1995)

Another outstanding dealer/collector has to be **Kurt Rattman** (1906). An article called “The Bookman from Hamburg” by Dirkjan Ten Geuzendam ca 1988 from ‘Interview’. The article states that “...*his second-hand chess bookshop is unmatched in the world.*” Following is an extract by Herr Rattman on the second hand books and how he started in that area:-

“..This second-hand book business more or less marked the beginning of my chess book career and it is quite funny how it came about. Shortly after the war, when we still had the worthless Deutsche mark, a correspondent chess friend of mine asked me if I was willing to buy his chess library for a price of say, fifteen or twenty thousand Reichsmark, in other words the useless money. He must have been a wealthy man, but he had no money to pay his daily expenses. He showed me a long list, I think about ten pages, of wonderful books and said he intended to keep this library as long as he lived, but that after his death his son would send it to me. I said:- “All right, I trust you, here is the money”” and I got the list. At home I looked through this list and found no Bilguer, no Berger, nothing of Euwe’s openings, no Znosko-Borovsky, and I wrote to him, “Dear friend, I am greatly astonished. You have all the volumes of the Deutsche Schachzeitung, of the Weiner Schachzeitung, of Kagan’s Neuste Schachnachrichten, of Deutsche Schachblätter, but nothing of Bilguer, Berger and so on.” And he replied, “Mr Rattman, from these books I cannot part even in thoughts, I want to keep them as my property.” Then I told him, “Well, they are your property as long as you live, but I want them too. What do you want for them in addition?” And he wanted another three thousand marks, which in those days was hardly enough to buy two or three pounds of butter. In 1949 I got the news of his death from his son and he asked me where to send the books. I gave him the address and the unpacking was delightful. Wonderful things. Some time later I happened to meet Dahne, the President of the German Chess Federation and I told him that I had a complete collection of the Deutsch Schachzeitung. He immediately bought it for five thousand marks. This was after the currency reform and this deal alone had earned me more money than the complete library had cost.

Now I had a large stock of second-hand books. In my first days as a chess book dealer there were hardly any new books, so I mainly depended on second-hand books. One of my best clients was Heinrich Wagner. He collected tournament books and when he died I got them all back. I had to sell them for his wife. It was a huge collection, almost every tournament book beginning from London 1851 to the very last dates. Even the very rare tournament book of the 1939 Olympiad in Buenos Aires was among Wagner’s books. I had sold it to him. In my entire forty-year-long business career I have sold this book only four times. The first one I got

I sold to Wagner, one hundred marks. The second copy I sold to Dahne, two hundred marks. The third one I sold to an American customer, three hundred marks and the fourth one, which was the one I got back from Wagner, I sold to Enevoldsen for four hundred marks. He protested greatly as he thought the price too high, but after a few weeks he bought it anyway. Now a very fine reprint has been made and everyone can buy it. As far as I know the original edition had a run of only 139 copies. Only for the players and the captains. So, it really was a rarity when I got it for the first time, and if I hadn't needed the money I would not have sold it. But in the beginning of my business I had books in order to sell them, not to keep them. A few years ago Robert Hubner visited me and bought quite a lot from the regular stock of second-hand books, and then a friend of his, Mr Jacoby said to me, "Rattman, you still have other books in your home. Why are you keeping them there, you're an old man, you don't need them anymore". I thought this over and said to myself, "Well, Robert Hubner is one of my friends, he shall get whatever he likes." I had a complete collection of Kagan. Still defended. Now it's gone. Robert took most of it. And in those days I still had a complete collection of Weiner Schachzeitung. Robert took the first volumes out of this collection and the rest has been sold. When I started collecting for myself I hoped that when I became older I would have time to enjoy those books, but as far as I can see now I will never have the time. Now my son is doing the work together with his staff, but I am still supervising the chess activities. I proof read, select the manuscripts, and together with Ludek Pachman I edit the 'Schacharchiv'. On top of that I must visit tournaments and meet my friends around the world. I will never have time to play over games from Vienna 1898 or such like tournaments".

The full article contains reminiscences on the BHB Chess Clock which Rattman made popular, as well as anecdotes from tournaments he visited and the publishing business that he set up but we continue with 'Meeting the Masters':-

"Flohr once visited my bookshop and called me the world champion of chessbook dealers. Hort, Keres, many grandmasters have visited me and everybody was stunned by the number of books I had. When I was in hospital in 1954, Golombek visited me and told me, "I badly need a certain chess book and I know I will find it in your shop". He found it and said, "If I need an English book I have to come to Hamburg and buy it from a German". I know practically all the leading chess players. I personally met and know Botvinnik, Smyslov, Tal, Spassky. I can really say Spassky and I are friends. Fischer I met for the first time in Portoroz. In Fischer's younger days an American called Southart, the publisher of the 'Leaves of Chess', quite a crazy magazine, was his sponsor and manager. He ordered Russian books from me and wrote me that they were intended for a young American chess player who, although very young, played very strongly. Then I read the first reports on Fischer and I knew who got the Russian books from me, although Southart never mentioned his name. In Portoroz I saw Fischer and said, "Hello, regards from Mr Southart". "Mr Southart? How do you know him?" "I sent him Russian books." "Oh, then you are the bookman from

Hamburg”, and we shook hands and talked. In 1962, when he had just won the interzonal in Stockholm, Fisher visited me in Hamburg on my birthday, the thirteenth of March. For some reason or other I had not been in Stockholm. Fischer’s birthday is on the ninth of March. He phoned me and said that he wanted to see my bookshop. I went to fetch him at the hotel where he was staying, and drove to my shop. There were my guests and there were cakes on the table. We didn’t intend to work that day. And he asked me, “What’s wrong here?” I said, “It’s my birthday”. “Oh, then you are a Pisces, congratulations”. I said, “You are a Pisces too, Bobby, congratulations, I know you had your birthday four days ago”. “Oh, you knew?” “Sure, sure, everybody knows that”. And then he said, “Do you believe in astrology?” and when I said no, he continued, “Nor do I, but there must be something in it. Let’s talk about astrology”. Then I said, “No, Bobby, let’s talk about chess. You know more about chess than I do, of course, but about astrology neither of us know anything”” And we talked about chess. He stayed with me the whole day and even bought some books. The last deal I made with him was in 1970 in Palma de Mallorca, when he told me, “I want the books by Riemann and by Gottschall on Anderssen. (Cf. Biyiasas’ story some eight years ago that Fischer visited him and only wanted to analyse Anderssen games) I told him that he could get Gottschall’s book. “I have it in Hamburg, I’ll send it to you, just give me your address”. But he wanted it there and then and I phoned my office and had it sent. In Hamburg the price was eighty marks, so when the book arrived and Fischer asked what it cost I said “One hundred marks”. “Far too expensive”, he retorted, whereupon I simply took back the book. But that wasn’t his intention, and he asked me how I wanted the money. When I replied that he could pay in dollars, marks or pesetas, he started emptying his pockets and put a heap of pesetas on the table saying, “Take one hundred marks”. Then he said, “What about the Riemann book?” I said, “I don’t have it, but Bobby, if I ever get the Riemann book, you’ll have it”. That night my wife and I made the acquaintance of a young lady who introduced herself as the librarian of the Manhattan Chess Club. She told us that Bobby was delighted to have the Gottschall book and assured us that he would have paid twice or three times the amount to get it.

In 1975 or 1976 by a strange coincidence I got two Riemanns on the same day. I had no address of Bobby’s, so I wrote a letter to World Champion Bobby Fischer c/o American Chess Federation. He got the letter and I received a letter back, I think with a hotel address on it. “Dear Mr Rattman, Mr Fischer wants to thank you for the offer of the Riemann Anderssen book. However, he thinks that your price is too high. He thinks that seventy dollars would be a reasonable price. Sincerely yours, no name, but just two initials, secretary”. I checked with my son what price we had asked and he replied, “Our price was twenty marks lower”. Evidently Fischer had mixed up marks with dollars. So I sent him another letter saying that we thought seventy dollars was a reasonable price, too. We got a cheque of seventy dollars, signed by this secretary, who wanted immediate dispatch by airmail. And now I wanted something from Bobby. I wrote again and told him that airmail would cost six dollars extra, but if he sent me a personal

cheque he would get the book immediately. He didn't send a personal cheque. A personal cheque for six dollars I could have sold for a hundred. I knew this, but he evidently knew it too. So he simply sent an anonymous bank draft. He got the book and that was the last I heard of him".

BACK TO BUSINESS

I couldn't tell you how many books we have in stock. In Billestedt my cellar is full of tournament bulletins. There are fifty of this one, two of this one, and so on. In Bergedorf the cellar is full of second-hand books and in the shop we cannot place the books in regular order, because of lack of space.

Ten years ago O'Connell visited me, when he began his career as a chess book editor, buying fifteen thousand marks' worth of chess books. I had to make 53 parcels of five kilos each. A fortnight later Levy phoned and said "Mr Rattman, I suppose that Mr O'Connell has bought just about all your stuff?" "No", I said, "Why do you think that? You can come and order the same amount". Well, he came and found books for about five thousand marks, and still you couldn't see there was anything missing. You may know the name of Labate, the American chess book dealer. He now seems to be the most important and biggest man in the United States. My son has been in touch with him for quite a while already. He bought new books and second-hand books for fifty thousand marks. Now I have a few empty spaces on my shelves, but I can fill them at once.

Lothar Schmid, with his huge library, visits me now and then and each time he finds a small box of things that he didn't have yet. If Lothar Schmid's library were to be sold, I don't think anyone would be able to afford it. You know my age. If I were twenty years younger I would gladly buy a library like Schmid's or Meyer's or Meissenburg's, but now I would hesitate, even if I had the money for them. My son has no interest at all in the second-hand books. He is only interested in the regular business as editor and dealer. I've told my friend Madler "Whenever you hear that something has happened to me, take your chequebook and a big car and rush to Hamburg and make Horst an offer for all the things he would otherwise sell as waste paper. When he sees that customers like O'Connell buy fifteen thousand marks' worth of books, he realises that it is quite something. But he doesn't think it worth his while to keep these books.

As Geuzendam, the author of this excellent article wrote:- *“Kurt Rattman has seen the dream of many a chess addict come true. Over the last few decades he has managed to make his passion pay...”* And even in his senior years he still expresses a wish to own a great chess library. I’m not sure whether he would sell it. I think not because dealing has been successful for him and a great personal library would be a final triumph. A delightful, witty man. The article appeared in ‘New in Chess’

Dr Bruno Bassi (1901 – 1957) Born in Venice and lived for some years at Upsala, being at the time a teacher of Italian language and literature at the University of Stockholm.

He was a great historian of chess, and possessed what was probably the greatest private chess library in the world, a library especially rich in the magazines of all languages. As the BCM 1957 p.63 continued:- *“But more than this; by his own system of indexing, cross indexing, and filing, he could immediately refer to any item of information in the pages of this vast literature. We have more than once been grateful to him for his prompt and courteous replies to our queries. In his last letter to the writer of this note, sent just before his return to Italy towards the end of 1956, he said, “I am now selling my library, probably to the USA or USSR”. We are left wondering where it went to. It is a treasure-house that demands safe keeping”*.

Dr Niemeijer mentions him along with many others as being collectors but gives no details of his collection, in Schaakbibliotheken (1948). As a matter of interest he also gives the names of O. Nedeljkovi in Yugoslavia; G. Balbo, Gaston Legrain, F.Le Lionnais, Louis Mandy and Dr Jean Mennerat in France; H.Loeffler and H.Wagner in Germany; W.A. Foldeak and Ernst Bokor in Hungary ; Arturo Carra and Dr Adriano Chicco in Italy; Dr Bruno Bassi, Dr Hj. Mandal and B Borjesson in Sweden; E.G. Cordingley and Marshall W Paris in England; T. Edward Knorr and Robert Sinnott in America; Dr Jose M Christia in Argentina; S. Samarian in Rumania and Dr Tasso Motta in Brazil. In Holland, Dr P. Feenstra Kuiper in Hilversum; J.Selman in Scheveningen, Max H Bingen and L.G.Eggink.

Another reference to Bassi appeared in Chess, October 1949 p.14:- *“Dr Bruno Bassi, one of the world’s most famous chess bibliophiles, is seeking details of the death of “El Greco” the famous chess writer who flourished about 1620 and gave his name to the Greco Counter Gambit. He is supposed to have spent his last years somewhere in the Spanish Main (now West Indies) under the patronage of a Spanish nobleman. Can any reader help Dr. Bassi, c/o the University, Uppsala Swede, with details?”*.

Jeremy Gaige still gives the accepted dates for Greco’s birth and death (1600 – 1634) so it would appear Bassi failed in this attempt. “El Greco” above is the great painter (1541 – 1614) His real name was Domenikos Theotokopoulos and he died in Toledo.If, as J.A.Lyon writes in BCM March 1895 p.109 that

Gioachino Greco left his chess fortune to the Jesuits in the West Indies, then perhaps their records may reveal more. (See BCM 1966 p.173 on Bassi and Chess in the Americas in the 1500's) .

On Australian Collectors a phone call from **Ian Rogers** on 10 May 1996 revealed that the Grandmaster had donated quite a few of his books (especially Tourney Bulletins) to the M.V.Anderson collection. A lot of Informators have gone there. Ian's collection is about 1000 volumes with some of sentimental value. He recalls one buying spree that he didn't follow through when Berkelouws the famous Australian book dealers had the first 15 volumes of BCM for sale for \$150. He told his friend **Michael Courtenay** of it and he quickly snapped them up. Michael has a huge chess collection in Sydney. He is a Bridge player and wrote a book on bridge as seen through a chess player's eyes.

Robert Jameison sold his duplicates about 10 years ago but still holds a great collection. I believe it is the largest in Australia in private hands. The number is around 3000. **Jim Jones** of Canberra catalogued his collection in 1985 and issued it to local collectors. There were 1972 items. In 1994 this had grown to 2200. Jim's collection is broken up into 11 categories titled as follows:- 1. Specific Openings – 99; 2. Openings General – 115; 3. Endings/Problems/Fairy Chess – 277; 4. Olympiads – 29; 5. Tournaments and Matches – 219; 6. Single Players – 208; 7. Chessmen, Laws, History and Reference – 41; 8. Computer and Correspondence Chess – 27; 9. Yearbooks and Magazines – 396; 10. The Rest – 539; Books on Order – 22. Making a total of 1972 items.

Peter Parr of Chess Discount Sales has a large stock of books for sale in his basement shop at 72 Campbell Street Sydney (near Central). There is also a large second-hand collection of hundreds of books. Peter had a good collection of Australian chess magazines at one time. He still holds a good run of the Australasian Chess Review and Chess World.

Neville Ledger of Burnie Tasmania is Australia's busiest postal chess book dealer and held a very fine antiquarian collection purchased some years ago. This has now been sold and belonged to a Mr Spedding. Neville has a good private library but like Peter Parr, his livelihood is in selling chess products. (See TCM July 1989 p.72 for more on John Spedding)

Macolm Broun, the Sydney barrister and strong NSW chess player of the 1950's and 60's sold his collection recently and some went to the M.V.Anderson collection. **Kevin Harrison** strong NSW player and coach holds a fine collection in the high hundreds. Likewise **Richard Torning**, policeman and coach of junior chess players. His was in the high hundreds when last I had contact.

My own collection stands at 1100 bound books, 141 bound magazine volumes and 75 unbound magazine volumes. **John van Manen's** collection is kept separate and there are 90 items in it. I bought about 75% of his collection

excluding Australasian Chess Review, Chess World, Chess in Australia, NSW Chess Bulletin, Tasmanian Chess Magazine, Australian Womens Chess League Bulletin and other minor magazines. A copy of my catalogue up to 1981 appeared in "A Chess Miscellany". I still buy at a rate of around 30 p.a.

Andy Lusic in his useful book "Chess – An annotated bibliography 1969 –1988" lists some other collections as follows:- Haupte-Katalog der Central-Stelle für Schach-Bedarf, begründet von **Adolf Roegner**; Robert Jameison and my collection are also given with Robert's at around 500 volumes as at 1976 and mine at 570 items in 1977. Robert has gone a long way ahead since then. The Edwin Gardiner Chess Collection now housed at Boston Spa west of York has 891 'monographs'. These cover the years 1804 – 1960.

Albrecht Buschke (1904 – 1986) was another European collector who fled Germany in 1938. He issued his first catalogue in the USA in January 1940 and they continued at least until the 1970's. I recall indirectly some contact other dealers had with him in the 1970's when I bought in earnest. Dale Brandreth and Fred Wilson in particular. Buschke had his shop in New York and was a very prominent dealer. In March 1980 he wrote to the Australian "Chess Player's Quarterly" that he had been collecting and later dealing in chess books for 'more than 60 years'. In 1938 he issued a catalogue of his chess library which went to 178 pages. It must have been a very fine one. A reprint of the catalogue was issued by Dale Brandreth in the 1980's.

Reginald George Hennessy. An edition of his library catalogue was issued in Los Angeles in 1980. The edition was limited to 200 copies and 2,272 items were described.

Leonard Raymond Reitstein (1928) a South African born in Capetown had a collection of over 2100 items. His catalogue was published in 1982.

Douglas A Betts in "Chess – An Annotated Bibliography of Works Published in the English Language 1850 –1968" lists other collections:-

Sir Frederick Madden (1801-1873) – the great English chess historian before H.J.R.Murray. Famous for his article "Historical Remarks on the introduction of Chess into Europe, and on the ancient Chess-men discovered on the Isle of Lewis", in *Archaeologia* vol.24, 1832 pp.203-291. This article was reprinted in 'The Chess Player's Chronicle' Volume 1 1841 commencing page 124 and finishing on page 320 of the same volume. I can imagine the excitement of the chess historians of those days when the Lewis pieces were found. Madden describes them wonderfully well and builds a good argument for their age which was supported by Michael Taylor of the British Museum in his booklet 'The Lewis Chessmen' 1978 and also by Neil Stratford in his 1998 work. Madden even mentions the colour of some of the pieces 'Dark red or beetroot' but that the action of salt water has removed most of the colour. In 1990 my wife and I visited the site and ended a quest of many years. I resisted the urge to start digging in the 'church bull's paddock'. As many would know, one version of the finding of the Lewis pieces was of a cow rubbing against a sand bank and exposing the pieces. We can recommend a visit to Stornoway, bed and breakfast

and a hire car will take one to Uig quite quickly and a view of the site near the cemetery. It is a bleak land but there are many attractions:-the Callanish Stones, the Carloway Broch, Dalbeg beach, the peat and the crofters cottages where peat is still burned today for heat.

It would be very interesting to see these pieces radio carbon dated. Murray had some reservations of their age and Alex Hammond wrote on p.86 of 'The Book of Chessmen' "...and my friend Murray considers that they were made between 1600 and 1650 and mentions that Lord Crawford concurred in this opinion". Madden's library was sold by Sotheby in 1873 and contained "numerous very rare and curious works on chess..." There were 100 titles listed approximately.

Channing Wood Whitman (1846 –1890) was born in Lancaster Ohio USA and educated at Harvard. He came to England ca 1870 and settled in Yorkshire where he played chess for the County team. In the 20 May 1871 match against Lancashire he defeated Mr Dufresne of Manchester. I don't think this was Jean Dufresne and possibly it was a cousin of the great German master. He was considered a strong player. His chess library of 473 titles was sold at Sotheby's on 15 May 1874. After which he gave up serious chess and became an exceedingly skilful lawn tennis player. On returning to the USA to settle his father's estate, he contracted typhoid on the voyage home to England and died aged 44.

George Brunton Fraser (ca 1831 – 1905) was at one time Scottish chess champion and for many years lived at Dundee. As early as 1875 he issued a catalogue of his library which contained approximately 500 chess titles. He was very fond of correspondence chess and published a book in 1896 called "A selection of 200 games of chess, played by correspondence; with notes and critical remarks". In 1895 the bookseller, James H Brown of Edinburgh offered 100 items supposedly from Fraser's collection for sale. Fraser was a strong analyst and the 'Fraser-Mortimer' attack in the "Evans" was partly of his invention. At the finish he had been out of active chess for some years.

The Westminster Papers 1 March 1877 p.203 wrote:-"*Amateurs desirous of forming a collection of Chess Works, on easy terms, should attend the sale of a library which contains a large and judiciously selected collection of Chess works, ancient and modern, and we hope to see them fall into good hands*".

Unfortunately the collector's name is not given nor is it in Betts. The Westminster Papers also gave the wrong date for the sale which was 1 March. There were 170 chess titles covering 10 pages of a 67 page catalogue of chess and other works for sale.

Henry Waite (ca 1820 – 1876). In 1855 Waite was treasurer of the London Chess Club in its new quarters in Finch Lane Cornhill. This was the famous club "Purssell's". In 1866 Waite was on the Committee of Management of the British Chess Association with Lowenthal as Manager. Another was the famous

J.W.Rimington Wilson and no doubt there was much talk about chess books. Waite's death at Bibbah-on-the-Nile in Egypt on 31 December led to the sale of his library on 26 April and again the Westminster Papers reported ;_”*The sale of the late Mr Henry Waite's books, which took place on the 26th ultimo, can hardly be considered an event of the Chess World, seeing that it attracted the attention of no Chess players. The library included a very fine collection of modern works upon the game of Chess, most of which were sold at ridiculously low prices*”.

Professor George Allen (1808 – 1876) was the son of Heman Allen, a lawyer and member of the American Congress during the Presidencies of Jackson and van Buren. He matriculated from the University of Vermont at age 15, studied law under Judge Turner and was admitted to the Bar in Franklin County in March 1831. Happily married to Mary Wirthington, he took up theology and in 1834 entered the ministry of the Protestant-Episcopal Church, was chosen as a rector of the Parish of St Albans. In 1837 he resigned and took up a professorship at Delaware College Newark. In 1845 he was elected Professor of languages in the University of Pennsylvania which later concentrated on the Greek language and as Gilberg wrote in “The Fifth American Chess Congress” p.37:-“ *a chair which he filled with extraordinary ability and success during the remaining thirty-one years of his life*”. His chess interests came about through illness in the family and whilst he played little, his chief passion was in gathering, as Gilberg put it:-“ *into his vast storehouse of books, a chess library that for a long period stood unsurpassed among the collections of the world in the number and exceeding rarity of its volumes*”. He contributed many articles to the American Chess Monthly, Fiske's Book on the First Chess Congress and most importantly of all a major biography of Philidor.

The latter is a marvellous book and whilst the First American edition was published in 1863 and is rare, Da Capo Press of New York reprinted it in 1971 in a blue hardback edition. There is a supplementary essay by von der Lasa on Philidor as a chess author and chess player and this was written by der Lasa in the winter of 1858/59 in Rio de Janeiro at around the time Morphy was coming to the fore. There must have been a great rapport between Allen and der Lasa as Allen writes most warmly about der Lasa's grasp of the English language and of the “*force and propriety*” with which the great German expressed himself in English. What letters must have gone back and forth when der Lasa discovered the Lucena in Rio and about chess books in general. Allen's great chess library of 1000 printed volumes, 250 letters and 50 engravings and photographs was catalogued by Allen's executors Jackson and Keen in 1878 on 89 pages. The collection was broken up into 374 books in English; 290 in German; 195 in French; 74 in Latin; 54 in Italian; 54 in Dutch; and 27 in other languages. Totalling 1068.

In the “Complete Book of Chess” by Horowitz and Rothenburg (1963) in an article called ‘The Deluge of Chess Literature’ it is suggested that the J.G.White collection which stood at 14,500 titles was five to six hundred titles short of

‘everything’ written on chess. It broke the collection up into English 35%; German 20%; French 15%; Russian 10% and others 20%. It is remarkable how close Allen’s collection mirrors this. His percentages are English 35%; German 27%; French 18%; Latin 7%; Italian 5%; Dutch 5% and others 2.5%.

If the Allen collection was stated in percentages it would be English 35%; German 27%; French 18% and others at 19.5% and this is close indeed to the J.G. White excluding the Russian books.

From the 35% English chess books and bearing in mind the two catalogues of Betts and Lusic some sort of ‘guesstimate’ can be made at the total number of chess books in existence. There are 2760 items in Betts and Lusic contains 3231. There are some variations as to what constitutes a ‘chess’ book but an attempt will be made to define that. Lusic for example, left out, fiction with a chess theme or fiction containing chess passages and games derived from chess. Section 44 and 55 in Betts deal with these areas and there are 189 items. These are deducted from the 2760 leaving 2571 items. If we assume from 1850 – 1968 there were 2571 items published this gives a rate of 22 items per year with clearly the rate being lower in the 19th century to a higher rate in the 20th century. This covers a period of 118 years. Lusic only covers 20 years with a rate of 162 items per year. The latter book is far more complete than Betts because chess historians have given him greater detail on the local bibliography of chess. John van Manen catalogued all the chess books for Australia and New Zealand in his book “The Chess Literature of Australia and New Zealand” 1978 with supplements in 1983 and 1989. Lusic had access to all the editions. It could be said that the Australian figure is very close to all that has been published in chess in this country and possibly New Zealand. There were 254 Australian items and 61 New Zealand items as at the end of 1988.

Bibliographies for America, Canada and England?? They don’t exist. Of the 69 items to the end of 1968 in van Manen’s 1978 Bibliography, Betts got 23. For New Zealand Betts got 10 out of 22 items. He mostly missed programs and tourney bulletins.

If one assumes Lusic got all the Australian and New Zealand items there would be 164 Australian items out of the 254 published post 1968 –1988 and 39 for New Zealand. The percentage of Australian and New Zealand items as a guide in Lusic is 6% or all the other English language chess books in England, America, Canada and other English speaking countries total 94% for which no bibliography has appeared.

If we assume that both Betts and Lusic missed 50% of the books published in the case of Australia and New Zealand, then the total number of chess items is considerably larger than published.

The total number of chess books printed pre 1850 is under 100. It was 67 up to 1842 (See Walker's 1841 Bibliography). The total number of items on chess in the English language is 100 (pre 1850) + 2571 (Betts 1850-1968) + 3231 (Lusis 1969-1988) giving 5802. To which we add the percentage factor of 50% (very conservative) yielding 11,600 chess items which is 35% of the grand total.

This gives a total number of chess items to about 34,000 to end 1988. It is probably higher but the figure assumes that the British Chess Magazine from 1881 to 1988 is ONE item.

Mr Egbert Meissenburg is not so sure. In a letter written to me November 11 1979 he wrote:- *"...Mr Otto Dietze from the German Federal Republik says in 1973 that there are about 30,000 books on chess. I doubt in this number as no one has ever counted the total number. First of all: an item is any different edition; the three Philidors of 1749 are three different chess books. Any new translation, any new edition, a reprint, any version with changed publisher or date of publishing is one item. This is the kind of numbering. Papers in non-chess periodicals or books with chess parts are chess items. I should say in German "Schachschrift" (Chess writing), Titel; there are about 4000 Schachschriften from the beginning of printing up to 1900. To estimate the numbers of chess items from 1901 to 1979 is impossible. The output of chess literature after 1960 and moreover in the 1970's is enormous. I would say up to 1950 about 5000 items and from 1950-1979 8000—10000 items including many tournament bulletins and the programs (95% of the programs have no value). This would mean about 20,000 items on chess. Any chess periodical is 1 item notwithstanding the number of volumes (the 128 volumes of Deutsche Schachzeitung are 1 item). The number of 20,000 increases if you count all chess typescripts and the chess manuscripts (especially the mediaeval chess mss..)"*

We will come back to this subject!

Fiske writes in the Chess Monthly 1857 p 261 :_ *"By far the largest and most valuable Chess Library which has ever existed, outside Europe, is that collected and owned by Mr George Allen, Professor of the Ancient languages, in the University of Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia. In less than four years Professor Allen, aided by an extensive and constantly increasing knowledge of caissan literature, has been enabled to fill his shelves with more than four hundred volumes devoted to the history, theory and practice of our game. In books published during the last half-century the collection is nearly complete. In periodicals it contains everything except the second and third numbers of Marache's 'Palladium'...."* Fiske then describes the library over the next two pages.

The library was offered for sale for \$3000 and eventually purchased by the Ridgway Branch of the Philadelphia Public Library for \$2500 in 1884. Alain White wrote in 'The Chess Amateur' October 1907 p.38 that:- *"the splendid*

collection of the late Professor Allen is buried in the Philadelphia Public Library, and is becoming rapidly out of date, for lack of an endowment to support it”.

William Henry Lyons (1849 –1932) was one of the first American chess book dealers and published catalogues of books for sale and at least ten of them over a period from the 1880’s to 1909. He was also a problemist of skill and published an early book on problems called “Chess–Nut Burrs” (1886) which contained 19 of his problems, mostly 3-ers. There was one Australian problem by William Johnston McArthur, a 3-er. Lyons suggested that there are five key points to problem composition:- Originality, Difficulty of Solution, Beauty of Idea, Economy of Force and Neatness of Construction. This system was also used in Australia by E.L. Bailey of Williamstown Victoria and J.J.Glynn of New South Wales. It would be interesting to know who was the originator of this system. He was also considered a fair chess player but his specialty was in collecting and distributing chess books of which he had a fine collection which was sold ca 1927 to Herman Helms. An amusing letter of his sent to the BCM sent in 1925 and reprinted in BCM 1932 p.489 follows:- “ *I am always in the market....Chess business is “jumpy”. An abominable week and then several days of big orders. The average is satisfactory. The queer thing is how many people want something you are just out of. You lay in a stock, and they no longer want it, but something else. I bought 15 copies of an out-of-print book once, sold two or three copies, then none for 10 years. All at once something started, and I sold all but one copy....The chess public can only digest a certain amount, and the rest are like pork to a dyspeptic..*” Lyons served two terms in the Kentucky legislature and various public posts. He died after an influenza attack suffered earlier in 1932. An interesting man.

Edwin Dodds A catalogue of his books on chess, chiefly in the English language, was issued in 1896. Dodds who lived at Home House, Low Fell, Gateshead was treasurer of the Newcastle Chess Club that year. There were 500 volumes approximately.

Charles James Lambert A lawyer in Exeter England in the 1890’s. His chess book collection “*most of which have been recently bound in half morocco*” was offered for sale by James G Commin of 230 High Street Exeter in 1902. 112 items. He was a strong player and played Board 1 for the Exeter Club in 1902.

Frank Hollings A London bookseller. His 28th catalogue of works on chess, draughts and whist came out in 1899. His business continued until after the Second World War, but according to Ken Whyld, Hollings was not in charge of the shop after the 1930’s. Ken continued:- “ *From my own memories I feel sure that Hollings had nothing to do with the shop after the Second World War. The manager of the shop was a chess enthusiast. He retired and at about the same time the business removed from off Kingsway to near St. Barts hospital. The new owner or manager did not know chess and they stopped specialising. My guess is that Hollings was still in charge in the 1920’s when they published chess books”.*

The “Chess Book Salon” closed in April 1965 (See BCM)

Baruch Wood had some interesting reminiscences on the store:- “ *It was no longer Frank Hollings as early as 1935. I went down to chat in my first few weeks with CHESS to find a fellow named, I think, Redman or Redway in charge. I was an even more innocent businessman then than now. Re-emerging after half an hour I suddenly realised I had not learnt a thing but had been pumped dry of information about my own ventures*”.

The December 1940 BCM pp 393-394 had more:- “ *The sympathy of all chess players will go out to Mr Redway, of Frank Hollings, the famous bookshop in Great Turnstile where lovers of chess used to congregate. As announced in our last issue, the premises were destroyed by enemy action. An H.E. bomb fell in the night, causing a fire, and a good half of the valuable stock was destroyed. On the same day, Mr Redway’s private residence in Richmond was damaged in another air raid. It took a month to repair it and to make it habitable again, when it was bombed a second time. Mr Redway then went to Bath to recuperate, when his house had a third and final visitation, a remarkable and typical example of thoroughness in the attack on really important military objectives. We wish Mr Redway a speedy recovery and express our appreciation of his dogged pertinacity in continuing business at 69a Great Queen Street, W.C.2 (off Kingsway) where his stock of books has been replenished in a remarkable manner*”.

All this is from “Chess Notes” the 1980’s magazine by Edward Winter. Biographical detail on Hollings is thin as is information on his library.

Numa Preti (1841 –1908) and **Jean Preti**, his father (1798 – 1881) had a great library. Jean founded *La Strategie* in 1867 and after his death Numa carried on the magazine. There is a lot of detail in Niemeijer’s “*Schaakbibliotheken*” and there is also a wonderful obituary by Alphonse Delannoy in *La Strategie* 1881 p.3. Jean published quite a few chess books of which three were in collaboration with L’abbe Durand. He was also friendly with Morphy and was a fine musician. Delannoy writes of him as simple, affable and modest and noted that he was an honorary member of the Cercle des Echecs in Paris. Numa’s passing ended a wonderful family affair of over 40 years of editorship of the great magazine.

The 362 item library was sold by Sotheby’s on 1 February 1909 and the *Chess Amateur* of March 1909 copied an article from the *Cheltenham Chronicle* on the sale):- “*The sale of the Chess Library of the late M.Preti, at Sotheby’s, was a financial disappointment to the vendors, as the whole fetched but £355. Many lots were sold at absurdly low prices compared with those charged by book dealers to private purchasers of the same works singly or in small quantities. Perhaps the sale was not well advertised, or early enough. The most modern half of the collection was not likely in any case to fetch much, but the rarer books realised much less than we should have expected – those especially of before 1740, and again those of the early seventeenth century and sixteenth. The fact that there were*

in the sale six copies of the rare book by “Gustavus Selenus” probably reduced the value of each; the best sold for £3.12s. The oldest book in the collection – the “Ringhieri” of 1551 – only £2.2s. Some much more modern works, with coloured diagrams, fetched better prices – one of them £13.5s and several modern problem books fetched 10s. and 6s. each”.

And who was waiting in the wings to snap up the majority of the collection to sell at a better time? Bernard Quaritch, who bought 224 items from the Sotheby’s sale and resold them just before Christmas doubtless getting good mark-ups.

Peter G. Toepfer (1857 – 1915) Dr. Niemeijer has a description of this collection in his book. Toepfer began collecting ca 1900 and by 1910 had issued a catalogue from his home town of Milwaukee USA which listed 450 titles approximately. By the time of his death this had grown to around 1000 titles. The Chess Amateur June 1919 p.266 has this article:- *“GIGANTIC CHESSMEN – A daily paper notes this: “Gigantic chessmen, designed for tournament use, a library of about 1000 books on the game of chess, and a number of rare scientific books, the property of the late Peter G T(P)oepler of Milwaukee, have been presented to the library of the University of Wisconsin. The ‘life-size’ chessmen, which range from 2ft. to 3ft. six inches in height, are made of aluminium, collapsible, and packed in a special trunk. Mr T(P)oepler designed them for use in public contests, on large indoor or outdoor chess-boards, with a view to increasing popular interest in the game”. There was apparently a patent on the pieces”.*

Harding S Horton-Chess Books and magazines: library of the late Harding S Horton, New York. Published in 1914-146 titles. This is from Betts 1-31 but I can add no more to friend Horton.

Eugene Beauharnais Cook has been mentioned earlier. His chess library was catalogued and contained some 1600 titles. It is in the Princeton University classed list Volume 6 – 1920 pp 3585-3608. It was later bound as a separate work. Betts 1-32

Charles Willing (1872 -1950) Had his chess library catalogue published in 1916 and it contained 250 titles on 25 pages. Betts 1-33. Is this one and the same person as F.H.Willing of 2132 Pine Street Philadelphia? Charles had his catalogue published in Philadelphia and he died there. The latter Willing had a great library of 1209 volumes of 752 titles. It even included the Lost MS of the Rev. Lewis Rou of Florence Italy 1902. It was bound with 5 other pamphlets. What a collection. It may well be true to say that Willing is not in the ‘big league’ but he was not far from it. 37 pages of choice items and when offered for sale in 1920 lacked very little. You name it, Willing had it. For example, Bertin, Beale, Careera,

Hyde, Lolli, Cozio, Lopez, Philidors by the score, Gianutio, Salvio, Selenus with a collection of magazines in similar class.

John Henry Ellis-his catalogue was published in 1928 and contained 112 works on chess as well as many “rare and valuable books, comprising old English literature”. This could be the Rev. John Henry Ellis (1840 – 1912) who lived at 29 Collingham Gardens London and who was the author of the 1895 work “Chess Sparks”. The Chess Amateur wrote of him as a “lover of the game, a thoughtful combinative player, and a most pleasant opponent”.

H. Macdonald – the catalogue of his library was produced for private circulation in 1876. There were 300 titles listed. Henry Macdonald had one jewel in his library and that was a manuscript of 27 leaves that contained “Rules at the Game of Chess” and “Observations on the Ends of Parties” both signed by Philidor. According to Quaritch this MS is ‘probably’ in Philidor’s handwriting. Rimington Wilson got it at Macdonald’s sale. It had been bound in half vellum and had a newspaper dated 9 May 1783 included in which games between Philidor and Count Bruhl and Bowdler were given.

Arthur Jacob Souweine (1872 –1951)-born and died in New York USA. He issued a 187 item chess catalogue in 1928 published in that city.

Edgar George R Cordingley (ca 1905 – 1962) – Ken Whyld wrote a fine obituary of his friend in BCM 1963 p 46/47:- A skilful end-game player, whilst he started play in 1927/28 (Serious play), he qualified for the Surrey Championship two years later and in 1935 won the Ludlow Congress ahead of Wood, Watts, Coles and Keeble and the Surrey Championships in 1947 ahead of Hooper and Golombek.

His greatest love was chess literature and he published a very famous 18 book series of limited editions from Hastings 1932/33 to Budapest 1950. Most people would know “The Next Move Is” which I spent many of my early chess years struggling with, “Chess by Easy Stages” and “122 Chess Problems”. There was a Manuscript sequel to “The Next Move Is” and “Facts, Fancies, and Fictions of Chess”. A great pity the latter was not published.

Several chess writers, e.g. du Mont, were glad to use Cordingley’s fine library. It was started in 1924 with the purchase of “The Year Book of Chess”, 1913. He had thirty books by 1928, 252 by 1931, and 1,013 by 1939. Invalided from the Air Force in 1943 he continued to add to his collection until 1954 when painful arthritis led to his early retirement from business and chess. He then started a magazine for growers of alpine plants, using his second name George, although he was known as Edgar to his intimates. Deteriorating health soon stopped the new venture, and he was left with reading, and his second great love, listening to chamber music. His taste in reading was cricket, and more often, and more surprisingly, great murder trials. Although naturally charming and kind, he could

be a vigorous and cutting critic of those who failed his own ideals. A man of culture and high intelligence, he cared little for success in the commercial sense and said that Lin Yutang well summarised his own attitude:-

Who half too much has, adds anxiety'
But half too little, adds possession's zest.
Since life's of sweet and bitter compounded'
Who tastes but half is wise and cleverest.

Cordingley issued two catalogues, the first in 1934 of 9 pages listed 177 tournament books from the first in 1852 to 1934. Betts 1 –41 states that the information given includes “*author, title, date of tournament, number of pages, place and date of publication. Some entries are annotated with contents, notes and comments. Foreign works are included*”.

His second catalogue issued over 8 sub-catalogues numbered 1-8A over the years January 1935 to September 1939 and contained a list of the books for sale, a brief description and prices. So Cordingley became a dealer of sorts. His collection must have been around 2000 at the finish.

Eccles Public Libraries- on behalf of the Public Libraries of Altrincham, Eccles, Sale, Salford, Swinton and Pendlebury, the Eccles Public Library issued three catalogues compiled by A Jones in 1956, 1962 and 1967. A list of 262 titles were listed in the final edition.

There was some interesting correspondence in BCM 1963/4 on a National Chess Library for Great Britain and Wilfrid Pratten in BCM 1963 p 237 made a plea to the BCF to set up the library. He was writing a history of chess from 1894 to 1937 and was struggling with sources. Partridge in the same issue advised that the Glasgow High School had a chess library of 100 books and issued a Bulletin. Henry Golding followed on p 272 with a suggestion that “*a few of the leading British private collections of chess works*” could be the nucleus of a reference library “*second to none*”. He suggested ten thousand players subscribe a guinea a year and J.F.Bryon of the Eccles Central Library at Manchester advised that H Golombek had written a review to the 1956 catalogue above. Bryon also advised that “*Your readers presumably know already that they may ask for any book on chess at their public library, and that if it is not in stock, an attempt will be made to borrow it from other public libraries in the Region, or, if not available there, from elsewhere in the country? We have for instance, borrowed books on chess from Holland and Germany before now*”. Pratten, a FIDE International Judge continued in the BCM 1964 p 19 suggesting that a central library in London would be ideal and that the BCF might catalogue it and publish the catalogue. He felt that the BCF could not be asked to do everything. Perhaps it was Harry Golombek's review of the Eccles catalogue that put in his mind the wish to donate his library for the common good of a national chess library.

David James Morgan (1894 – 1978) – the “Quotes and Queries” editor of BCM from 1954 to 1978 was a schoolteacher by profession. He retired in 1944 and in July 1957 he joined the Board of Directors of BCM for 3 years after which he

retired to his beloved Wales. He was a solver problemist and knew all the problem greats through his membership of the Problemist of which he was President and his column in BCM. His obituary written by William Cozens and Alfred Maurice Reilly states that Morgan was “one of the kindest, gentlest and most helpful persons one could wish to meet”. And the genial photograph of him below the obituary suggests that.

He must have had a very good library to traverse the subjects discussed in ‘Q&Q’ and his wit was infectious. One could not help liking him. Here is a sample:- *“There is nothing of real value in the list of books which you were ‘coaxed’ into buying. You say “I am a keen collector and have money to burn”. You just met your match of course”*. (214)

“With Chess books, one is apt to become a hoarder rather than a collector. The latter demands the expert knowledge of the specialist”.(261)

“From whom can I borrow some chess books? From a pessimist: he’ll never expect them back”.(1504)

“How would Philidor be regarded today? As our oldest Grandmaster”. (2243)

“The man who does not read a good chess book has no advantage over the man who can’t read at all”. (3386)

“A chap writes that he can never read a chess book right through”. “It’s a disability shared by many reviewers”. (3505)

There’s a flood of chess books on the market. You can but make the effort to wade through them”. (3632)

“As for chess books and their worth, we recall the old saying: “Chess books should be used as we use spectacles – to assist the sight; some players make use of them to confer sight”. (3726)

“How much reading books is good for one? Like much eating – wholly useless without digestion”. (3802)

I feel sure he attended the Rimington Wilson sale in 1928 and purchased there George Allen’s ‘Life of Philidor’ which was Allen’s presentation copy to Lowenthal and later purchased by Rimington Wilson. This copy is not in Quaritch’s 1929 catalogue. (179) In (1032) & (2204) he wrote of that sale and that it was all over in 3 hours, 2000 books were sold for £10,000. He called Dr Niemeijer, a bibliophile, bibliognost and bibliopole!

He had a fine collection of chess cuttings and his friendship with Mieses after that great player had to leave Germany in 1938 was written about. Mieses had died in 1954 and in 1976 Morgan was :”. *turning out a big old drawer that had not been opened for a good many years. It was packed with letters, cuttings, game-scores, problems and much else – all the usual documentation of a long devotion to the game”*. They had met in 1923 and went shopping together. A correspondence followed and then the 1938 meeting. Mieses was then 73. It was a happy reunion for both. Mieses later became a British subject. (3744)

The great Australian player Cecil Purdy and wife Anne visited the Morgans after the Nice Olympiad in 1974. There was a keen correspondence between them. As for his library it is difficult to come up with a number. There may also have been a collection of chess sets but of the Christmas Series he was missing only Robert Braune (2274) and in (1471) Morgan gave a list of 19th century magazines the first numbers of which appeared on January 1. I am uncertain how this detail could be known unless one held all the magazines.

The Problemist obituary by G W Chandler in the September 1978 issue advises that Morgan was the society librarian for 6 years until his retirement to Wales. Chandler finished with: "*D.J.M. will be best remembered as the editor of the Quotes and Queries feature in the British Chess Magazine, which he conducted for 25 years, showing an extraordinary encyclopaedic knowledge of everything pertaining to the game*".

The British Chess Problem Society Library was formed probably from the first meeting in August 1918. When the Problemist started in 1926 the 4th issue of October commented on the 'usefulness' of the library and that it was a 'splendid collection'. By the July 1929 issue a lecture by W.E. Lester on the library gave details on the 100 MS books of composers works. They were 6.5" x 3.75" memo books, about 100-120 pages, with 75 diagrams hand-stamped one to a page and room for solutions and comments at the end. By 1937 the books had been valued at £36/12/6 and were insured. There were continuing magnificent donations of books including one that year by Dr F Bonner Feast of 'upwards of a hundred volumes'. By 1942 with war raging the Problemist continued the good work and F U Wilhelmy advised that there were now 'about 150' of the problem manuscript books. By 1942 the library still retained its 1937 value and again in 1943, 1944, 1945 and 1946 saw the addition of 12 books from Mr Nield's wife on her husband's passing. The late Professor J W Allan's library was also bequeathed to the BCPS and Dr Niemeijer donated a copy of J Hartong's book. The value was increased to £40/14/3. In July 1947 the Rev. J. Young of Oban donated 30 volumes to the library. It included 22 volumes of BCM. Part of the late George Hume's library also came to the BCPS in 1948. In 1949 Dr Niemeijer donated a copy of his wonderful book "Schaakbibliotheken" to the library. Duncan Pirnie was doing a great job as librarian. At the AGM Nov. 1952 D J Morgan was elected librarian. He immediately started asking for 'loaned' books to be returned but there were still many marked "long overdue". Morgan was quite friendly in this tricky area. A large parcel of duplicate Christmas Series volumes was offered for sale in the July 1954 Problemist as prices varying from varying from 2/6 to 10/6 but most were 5/-. In the July 1955 issue he included a list of 19th century problem books and advised that he had a four page description of all the Christmas Series volumes. There were 35 titles in his 19th century English problem book list.

The book stock was considerably increased in September 1955 and Morgan advised that the bookcases and their contents had been insured for £120. (Two

bookcases) Vincent Eaton of the USA suggested a further 8 volumes be added to DJM's 19th century list of British Problem works. Some of these were second editions. One very interesting item was "Curious Chess Problems" London 1840 by J H Huttman.

By September 1957 DJM advised that the Rev. N Bonavia-Hunt had given some "very desirable books" to the library. A "new and comprehensive Library Catalogue, with brief descriptions of the books" had also been printed. DJM's work clearly. I do not have a copy of this. It was 10 pages and sixpence. Copies of "Chess Problems" by C M Baxter of Dundee 1883 and "Chess-Nut Burrs" by Will H Lyons of Newport Kentucky, 1886 were new additions to the library. There were further additions by January 1958 of the 1907-1914 "Year Books of Chess" and "1001 Problemas" by Arnoldo Ellerman, Buenos Aires, 1945 and "Adventures of my Chessmen" by G F Anderson, published by Chess Amateur in Stroud, 1924. What a lovely title that is for Anderson's book. My copy of this came from the BCPS in 1981 and its provenance included Arthur Mosely, Chess Editor of the Brisbane Courier. He sent it to William Ellis Keysor (1891-1939) of Kirkwood, Missouri USA for winning the 51st Solving Tourney in the Queensland newspaper. Now the book must have been purchased by Mosely originally which meant it came from England to Australia, then it went to America and after Keysor's death in 1939 was sold and eventually found its way back to the BCPS in England and now it's back in Australia! I paid \$30.00 for it from the friendly book dealer of the BCPS Robert McWilliam. DJM resigned at the AGM held 11 October 1958 as the family were retiring to Wales. His parting word was to remind members with overdue books to return them to the new librarian Barry Barnes as soon as possible. He thanked the members for their interest over the 6 years he had been librarian.

The Russian composer E I Umnov donated 3 copies of his books to the Library as did F W Owen donate a valuable run of Problemists in May 1959. There was now an emphasis on foreign problem books and Barry Barnes was successful in getting donations of many items. Mr H G Thomas was the benefactor of some of these works. The Dutch Problem Society and Dr A M Koldijk also contributed some very fine Dutch books published during the 40's and 50's. There was by the early 1960's a very good second-hand book offering from the Secretary of the Society Guy Chandler. Around the mid 60's I started buying from him and came to look forward to his prompt letters whenever a good book was on offer. Chandler (1889-1980) was a stalwart of the Society and in the November 1956 Problemist a biography revealed some facets of his character that are not well known. He was a keen philatelist but also collected pictures and English landscapes. There were always children at his home learning about stamps and chess or playing kriegspeil. I am sure many collectors wrote to 46 Worcester Road Sutton Surrey as did I.

In the July issue was an amazing list of rare problem books for sale including "A Sketchbook of American Chess Problematists" for 20/-.

And in the March 1962 issue Ken Whyld received a pat on the back for the fair treatment given to a Society member who had brought books from him. The Society suggested everyone contact Ken at 39, Charnwood Avenue New Sawley, Long Eaton, Nottingham. John Joseph Warton took over library duties in October 1962. He was one half of the great composing brothers T & J Warton,. His brother had died in 1955. The late Duncan Pirnie (former librarian) donated his collection to the library and the Society benefited with a very large array of magazines, the duplicates of which were given to members for postage.

By the 1963 Balance Sheet the books and bookcases had been valued at £51.4.3 for the books and £16 for the bookcases. A large reduction from the 1955 valuation. The death of Cyril Kipping in 1964 caused major change for the magazine as he had been the editor since July 1931. He had taken over from T R Dawson and the demise of the great magazine the "Chess Amateur" left him free to come over as editor. He also made many cash donations to the Society funds For the promotion of problems. A bachelor, he had driving ambition for both the school students at Wednesbury High where he was a teacher and later Headmaster and for chess problems. After Kipping came John Francis Ling.

In September 1964 another fine collection was gifted to the Society-Colonel Thuillier's. There were 600 bound books, scrap books and unbound magazines. Eight tea chests in all. There were a lot of duplicates and many were sold off in the column 'Books for Sale' in the Problemist.

In November 1964 Lu Citeroni became librarian and stayed in the role for 28 years. In March 1965 Lu made a plea to members on the location of 29 books. In the September 1966 issue a large list of second-hand books were offered for sale and sold in 4 days. The secretary Guy Chandler considered this 'extraordinary'. And he would know as in the Chandler tribute July 1967 issue, it was advised that he had posted off 1200 books during the past 6 years and that the Society was the main supply source for problem books in Great Britain. Also that year Lu Citeroni compiled a 15 page library list which showed it contained 375 books and periodicals giving author, title, date and language if other than English. The works were housed at St Bride's Institute London in the Society Library. The list was 2/- to purchase and was very favourably received at the AGM held in November. I do not have a copy.

The September 1969 issue saw another large list of second-hand books for sale belonging to the late J R Whalley. It included a full run of chess magazines such as 'Chess' and 'Chess Amateur' and the cuttings from 'The Observer' column from 1926-67. Brian Harley had been editor for the first 29 years. The Library also obtained the final Manuscript books belonging to T R Dawson kindly donated by R J Darvall. Dr E E Zepler also gave a large library to the Society for sale and in 1972 A S M Dickins kindly gave some of his fairy chess books. The balance sheet for that year showed the library valued at £51.21p and the book

cases still at £16. Printing lists of books during the 70's was done by way of a page supplement rather than a magazine article.

In 1977 John Beasley commenced an occasional column in the magazine called 'Library Browse'. This was an attempt to turn up "some of the many good things" in the library and was appreciated by overseas members. I very much enjoyed it. It was pleasing to note that in 1976 the library had been revalued at £351.21p. A second supplement was issued to complement the first supplement to the 1967 library list in the May/June 1977 issue. The first supplement had been issued with the January 1972 Problemist issue.

And making a tally after January 1972 we can say that the number of volumes in the library had grown to 472. After May/June 1977 it had grown to 556 with the value at £551.21 in the 1978 accounts.

In March 1980 the Society appeared to take a new path actually purchasing the fine library of the late H W Grant. This library was quickly on sold to members. And in May Guy Chandler died. He was nearly 91 and had been Secretary of the BCPS since 1951. How many books he had packaged and sent off to new owners over nearly 30 years must have been in the thousands. He knew that old chess problem books had a good market and could be resold with profit to the Society. And he was always prompt with his replies to my wants. You could almost set your clock on the arrival of the familiar blue aerogram within a fortnight of posting. The tributes flowed in and many were published in the magazine. I wrote to the family rather late in September as in those days I got the Problemist by sea mail. The late Gordon Stuart-Green had told me of his death. As Comins Mansfield said "*Nothing has been too much trouble for him in fostering and spreading the love of chess problems, and his efforts have been largely responsible in helping to build up the renown, and consequently the circulation, of 'The Problemist' to its present figure of around 600*".

In November 1981 the familiar book sales lists that came to us up until recently from Robert McWilliam were quite new and novel. There were usually a treasure or two in these lists. A rather large number of duplicates came Robert's way late that year and so the routine set up by Guy Chandler continued. His efforts over two years to mid 1982 saw well over £1000 go into the Society funds to help keep down subscription costs.

The move of the library from Room 18 at St Bride's Institute to University College London, Watson Library, Malet Place was carried out 3 June 1983. An era had ended and "*Under the watchful gaze of the Librarian and the Secretary, the Society books were packed into boxes and they and the two bookcases were carried down all those stairs and loaded into a removal van. At the other end the President and the Editor (joined for a time by the Vice-President) were waiting to receive them, having just taken delivery of a new bookcase (in pine, dating from the 1870's) purchased for the Society from a furniture dealer in Crewkerne*

(Somerset). The wait was a long one, as the removal team was somewhat tardy in its arrival. But eventually the three bookcases were set up in their new home in the Watson Library, right next to a pleasant book-lined room which the Society will hire for its meetings. Cans of beer were drunk to celebrate the event, marking the beginning of the Society's association with University College, which we hope will be a long, happy and mutually beneficial one. Particular thanks are due to the College Librarian, Mr F J Friend and his deputy Mrs Czigeny, and to Colin Russ, Colin Vaughan, Lu Citeroni and Colin Sydenham for their efforts on behalf of the BCPS!"

A pity I hadn't studied this article from the July 1983 Problemist as I could have visited in 1990 when we were in London. One amusing talk given by John Rice in the new rooms was "Read any good problem books lately?" I would have liked to have heard that. The September issue of "Library Browse" by John Beasley was on the Good Companions "Our Folders". This magazine is a treasure house of chess history, problems and the doings of the Good Companions Chess Problem Club. It closed through a lack of subscribers in 1924.

In July 1986 George Jellis was appointed Society Archivist. A new post which related to the supervision and storage of non-printed material relating to problem composition-manuscripts, correspondence, ephemera and collections of problems. The Society hoped that George would be able to stem the loss of valuable material and take the burden off librarian Lu Citeroni. The papers and problem collections of deceased composers were especially desired. There was a description of the Archives in the May 1987 issue and it was an imposing list. The White-Hume collection of problems and their whereabouts; The T R Dawson Manuscripts; C E Kemp Ms; The Sussex Chess Problem Fraternity (forerunner to the BCPS) 37 Black Books" which should have been 130 books; Ms of Lectures given at the BCPS but incomplete; C S Kipping's problems; N Bonavia-Hunt's problems; T C D Rickett's Papers; H A Melvin's Papers; W H Cozens' problems; F F L Alexander on Knights Tours; Cuttings from newspapers 1910- 1939 by R E Ryan; Brighton Society cuttings book 1902-3; Correspondence Chess problem section – loose 1957-64; Natal Mercury galley proofs 1914-16; Hampshire Telegraph and Post 1911-1916, 1919-21.

The January 1988 Problemist had a photo of long standing librarian Lu Citeroni. He had been librarian for 24 years and was much in demand as a tourney judge and a collector of two-movers. This issue also contained an obituary of Dr Meindert Niemeijer-87 years of age and founder of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague which stood at 28,000 items. Anthony Dickins (1914-87) was also gone. His library had been presented to Cambridge University Library in 1972.

George Jellis advised in the July 1988 issue of further additions to the Archives:- E Stevenson's work on "Double Pin Mate after Black King Move"; 30 more "Black Books" making 67 in total; a book of cuttings from F K Markwick and other Essex problemists; an ancient cuttings book from H H Davis of Bristol; 350

problems of H W Butler dated 1880. John Beasley and Robert McWilliam also held various items relating to Mrs W J Baird and E J Winter-Wood along with Brian Harley's cuttings and Schiffman theme problems- 240 of them. Jellis also held 3 notebooks called "Seventy-Five Retros" "Multiple Echos from Fairyland (1933) and "Seventy-Seven Helpmates" by C M Fox (1935). The Archives were building. The issue also contained a fine article by Paul Valois on the Founding of the BCPS. The November issue wrote of the lack of use of the library by members though it was accessible 5.5 days per week as long as a library ticket was held.

In the January 1989 issue George Jellis gave very good further information and a photo of H W Butler and his work with the Sussex Chess Journal from which the BCPS was given birth. And in the September issue Jellis had a great photo of the puzzle king Henry Dudeney (1857-1930). I had always wondered what he looked like and there he was with a hint of a smile looking at me and probably thinking that that chap Meadley couldn't solve a problem if the solution was in front of him. He was right at times too; a good article on an interesting man. I was astounded to see Dudeney in the chair at the founding meeting of the BCPS in 1918. George Jellis is a research tiger and is just one of the wonderful people who got involved in the Society. Anyone reading the July 1990 issue p 259 on the change to computer production can see how dedicated they are.

The May 1991 Problemist saw further additions to the Archives. These included the Society Minute Book 1918-77, manuscript collections of J Nield and H F W Lane, a notebook of 50 of J J Burbach's problems 1943-60 prepared by C E Kemp and finally correspondence between S N Collings and T R Dawson on geometry of all things. The July 1991 issue contained the 1915 libel case and judgement between Isidor (Arthur) Gunsberg and Associated Newspapers and others.

In the January/March 1992 issue is a photo of Robert McWilliam wrapping up a book to go to Indian member Abraham Moozhoor. We had been close to that room where Robert is shown working as Norma and I visited Lil and Bob on the Isle of Wight. Nice people with a very nice corgi dog named Sarah. The May issue gave another one of those reminders for members with missing library books. The reason?, another library move was under way. This issue also contained the first problemist supplement. In September the library moved to John Beasley's home at 7 St James Rd Harpenden Herts AL5 4NX. It is still there today.

The Society was very grateful to Sue and John for taking the library under their roof and in reliable hands. John was a great choice as his articles on the library showed his love of problem books and he intended to open the library at least yearly for a gathering of problemists where formal talks, light competition and a buffet tea were the highlights. The first was held 24 July 1993. John had succeeded Lu Citeroni as librarian but Lu's effort of almost 28 years would take

some beating. John completed a catalogue of the library on computer and anyone sending a formatted disc could have the catalogue copied onto it. A new column in the Problemist called 'In the Library' was now possible and started in the May issue. Naturally John was author and it was a good idea to let readers know what was in the collection and encourage its use. The first book described was "Chess Chatter and Chaff" by P H Williams (1906). This is a very funny book and the library copy had been donated by PHW's wife along with his collection. Immediately the advantage of the column was apparent. William's collection is described earlier and at last it was known where it had gone to. The July column discussed an unpublished manuscript by T R Dawson of "Fairy and other chess problems by J A Lewis". Lewis (1889-1944) was one of the leading members of TRD's fairy ring and the Ms contained all his surviving work.

The Library meeting attracted 11 members to hear talks by John, Tony Lewis and John Rice. John spoke on the manuscript material:- 61 folders of Kipping's problems; a 20 volume scrapbook of Mrs W J Baird; Rickett's collection of model mates and more. It was also nice to read B D Stephenson, Editor of the Problemist supplement describing a recent acquisition to his library in the 6th supplement. The book "Sonatas in Chess" was a collection of C A L Bull's problems by Donald McIntyre. A difficult book to buy and like BDS I never saw it for sale often. My copy was Frank Ravenscroft's and it came accompanied by a letter from McIntyre to Frank dated 27 July 1960 only a month after the book was published. A nice introduction by Alain White written in 1947 showed the delay in publication with the book appearing 13 years later. The September column described "Ceske ulohy sachove" by J Pospisil (1887) another scarce volume. By the November issue the Library contained all volumes of BCM except 6, had regained a lost "Adventures of my chessmen" (1924) by G F Anderson – a manuscript copy and had gained Tomlinson's "Amusements in Chess" (1845) and Murray's 1913 History and Michael McDowell's column in the Newtownards Chronicle and extracts from Lasker's Chess Magazine.

The November 'In the Library' column described three choice volumes of 'The Chess Player's Chronicle' 1842/1846/1849. John concentrated on problem content. The Library gained all of the books and periodicals left by the late Dennison Nixon (1912-1993). He had been a great fan and supporter of TRD and helped with the Fairy Chess Review after TRD's death in 1951. Another unique treasure was the personal scrapbook donated by the late R E Ryan's wife. Brian Harley and he had three joint compositions. The scrapbook dated from 1923/36.

In the March 1994 column John wrote about the copy of "Amusements in Chess" the copy that had come to the Society only recently. The book is in three parts (I) History and Curiosities, (ii) easy lessons and (iii) problems. As John said the book significantly enriched the library but its purchase using members money could not be justified. I paid about £20 for my copy twenty years ago. John's second Library Day on 2nd July included a talk on "Some Unpublished Manuscripts by TRD" and a small exhibition of chess sets. In his column was a

description of another small unpublished manuscript, this time J.G.Slater's work. This was one of the "Black Books" of which "some 40 remain". I can't quite reconcile that with the 67 in existence in 1988 but perhaps I made a mistake. Unfortunately someone had torn pages out of Slater's Ms that may have contained his best work. Another fine unpublished Ms was that of G C Alvey's problems. TRD had put it together in 1929 on Alvey's death aged but 39. TRD wrote of him as "*always cheerful, humorous, a genial friend ever full of good fellowship – solving problems from diagrams or mentally – setting up choice things with a circle round him*". This group led by TRD really did scale the problem heights and much of their early days is given in the Chess Amateur. Pleasingly I now have a full set of that after twenty years of collecting. The last few months during World War 1 were impossible to get and are in photocopy and that is an interesting story. I was photocopying away in the University of Sydney copying room when a young woman came up to me and asked me if I was a graduate of the University. I told her I wasn't and at my age I was sure she wasn't trying to pick me up and so I asked her if she was a graduate. "*No*" she replied "*I'm a photocopy freak*". I was stunned – what exactly is that? She drifted away and all sorts of thoughts ran through my mind. Was she copying rare editions? Was she just hooked on the beauty of unattainable volumes? What was it? I'll never know.

Norman Macleod's books came to the library late in 1994. Another wonderful gift from the late Norman's wife Daphne. In the November issue John described the lovely book on the Era Problem Tourney published in London 1857 with a preface by Lowenthal. A difficult book to buy and I don't have it. That issue also contained in the Supplement No.15 an unusual biographical Christmas problem solving tourney. There were 9 problems and 9 biographies provided by John on the composers. But where did John get the bios? Well, from TRD of course and out of a solving tourney in the London Evening News Feb/March 1933. TRD wrote of himself that as he had been raised by his uncle, the late James Rayner, a famous chess player and problemist, he often used chess pawns as teething rings. The bios are of C D Locock, A W Daniel, C M Fox, C Mansfield, N Easter, TRD, E J Eddy, P G L Fothergill and H A Russell.

By 1995 John had become Librarian and Archivist and one presumes all George Jelliss' material had now come to the library. The January 1995 issue had a description of "Zadachy I etudy (Problems and Studies)" 1927-29. The library holds four of the eight copies issued. What a wonderful talk John was preparing for the 1995 Library Open Day on 8 July. "The older books in the library" On reading that I wished I did live closer than 12,000 miles but oh well... There was also to be some delving amongst the shelving. Tim Sparrow described a priceless tome which was handsomely bound in red morocco, exquisite copperplate and compiled during 1808 to 1819. What a treasure and another of the unique holdings in this great library. The compiler was someone whose initials were H S. He was a pupil of Sarratt and his family crest was a squirrel embossed on the cover. A description of the famous book "The Chess Problem" by Andrews,

Frankenstein, Laws and Planck (ca 1887) by John was another interesting item. My copy from Frank Ravenscroft's library has a bookplate possibly belonging to the Australian great F J Young (Hobart) and a strong player. Franks always culled the title page or an end paper off his books if it contained his name. But that aside I was glad to have the book.

Norman Macleod's books resulted in a near duplicate set of the Christmas Series for loan to members. That was a coup having two sets. John wanted to make the catalogue available over the Internet. It was 330Kb but would soon be 500Kb. Another interesting book reviewed in the May 1995 issue was "Brighton Chess: a history of chess in Brighton 1841-1993" by Brian Denman. It gave further information on the links between H W Butler and the BCPS. "In the Library" for May 1995 described Saochovy Bulletin 4-a collection of Bohemian two-movers edited by Frantisek Tesak, Chess Club of the Central Army Institute, Praha, 1968. John had found it in a second hand bookshop in Moravia. Tesak was 81 when the book appeared and John thought it deserved a place on the library shelves. The Kipping Archives were described in the July column. There are 60 chronological files and 14 thematic notebooks. John wrote: *I am sure there is gold here, but I doubt whether anyone will ever go to the trouble of digging it out. This is a pity, because Kipping's best work deserves a better fate. If you are thinking of leaving your papers to us, please winnow them down to one or two files. It is sheer vanity to suppose that future generations will want to study every last problem that you have composed; they will be far too busy producing rubbish of their own*". And he's right, it is difficult to know what to throw out. What though does the word "papers" mean? If it is just problem workings, fair enough it should be culled. But if it is historical, I'm not so sure.

The BCPS Library Catalogue was put on the Internet by the Department of Computer Science, University of Strathclyde. And to quote: *"It can be reached by anonymous ftp from machine [ftp.cs.strath.ac.uk](ftp://ftp.cs.strath.ac.uk) in directory contrib/bcps as file libcat.220 (login as "anonymous" and give your email address as password); or on the World Wide Web at <ftp://ftp.cs.strath.ac.uk/contrib/bcps/index.html>. Thanks were given to Ian Gent for arranging this (email ipg@cs.strath.ac.uk)."*

John's September column was on "Chess idylls: a collection of problems by Godfrey Heathcote" Christmas Series 1918. John lamented the lack of appreciation of today's composers with the old and yet in 1970 the American Kenneth Howard had named Heathcote as "unquestionably England's greatest composer". John felt he could not do justice to this collection from Heathcote's early days. The oldest Manuscript in the BCPS library was that 1806 gem described earlier by Tim Sparrow. The oldest book was "Stratagems of Chess" 1817 and then Alexander's 1846 collection. There were 12 members present at the 1995 Library day and the outdoor talk on the old books must have been enjoyed.

The November issue gave information on Ken Whyld's gifts to the library including:- Lucena 1995; 100 Problems from Lolli; 50 problems from "Livre des

Amateurs” of 1786; the problems from Sarrat’s translations of Salvio and Gianutio; and a scrapbook compiled around 1915 by the Rev T Hamilton (Hamilton born 1865, graduated Oxford 1889 and was living at Witchford Vicarage, Ely Cambs.in 1915 and he contributed one of the “Black Books” (now lost)). A financial donation of £40 from A Spuris was to be used by John to buy an item of interest for the library. David Hooper donated a lot of books to the library including a bound set of EG Vols 1-6. The Library Acquisition policy was explained in that everything relevant to chess problems and endgame studies published in Britain was to be obtained and a representative selection of other overseas works. Members were asked to advise John on purchases in the latter category. At Auctions the Library would not knowingly bid against a member for a desirable item and members should let the Librarian know.

The lovely photo of John Montgomerie (1911-1995) looking at one on page 151 of the November issue with his books in the background, captures everything about chess. This delightful man was a success in his chosen career at the law. He was chairman of the Arts Council working party on the obscenity laws, stood for Parliament and lost, married with 3 daughters and loved chess in all its forms. His book “The Quiet Game” 1972 is a pleasant bag of reminiscences, games and problems. Below the photo is John’s column on the Lucena transcripts by Ken Whyld. The 500 years after revisit. Quite an impressive half-page.

In the January 1996 Problemist John advised of the debt owed to past members and their families by their bequests and donations and that many duplicates had resulted in the members collecting problem books as sold through Robert McWilliam. The Library was also improved by manuscript material for the archives and notebooks, scrapbooks, cuttings books and correspondence relating to chess matters but containing nothing of a sensitive nature were also very welcome. In his column John discussed “Chess Lyrics” the first Christmas Series book by Alain White (1905) and the early work of Arthur Ford Mackenzie (1861-1905) although it follows on from “Chess, Its Poetry and Prose” (1887) by Mackenzie himself. In 1896 Mackenzie became blind and his work suffered briefly but later he won many prizes. He was an amazing man.

The January issue discussed the sale of Pieter ten Cates Library of over 1200 volumes. The complete bound Good Companion “Our Folder” magazine was for sale at £400 and other volumes such as Robert Braune at £1500 were rather dear especially since a reprint of that work has appeared. But I understand that over half of the collection was sold at very high prices by March of 1996.

The Library day for the year was on 27 July and John’s topic was “Some of the off-beat items in the Library”. One of the books bought with the £40 donation from A Spuris was “Chess Problems” by C W of Sunbury (1886) and John discussed it and the Glasgow Weekly Citizen cuttings of 27 April-25 May 1895 chess columns featuring a very famous position of a Black Rook fighting a White Pawn ready to promote. Dr K W Stewart had sent it to John:-

8/2P5/1K5k/3r4/32-White to win after Black played first and
(b) move BK to al. Good and the cuttings showed the evolution of the study.

As for C W or Charles White's book, my copy has White's rank of Surgeon Major Army Medical Staff (Late Royal Artillery) crossed out and written above it in ink "Brigadier Surgeon Lieut Colonel- C White". In 1895 the book had been owned by W Winckworth Esq. And the first 5 problems had been dated and solved on 11, 12, 18, 19, and 25 November after which there was nothing. This copy belonged to Judge Southerland of Delaware.

John could then supply a catalogue of the Golombek Library to anyone who sent a formatted disc. An exchange with Ladislav Salai resulted in "Mat-Pat" being completed and Kubbell's "250 Chess Studies" (1938) used up all of A Spuris' donation. Barry Barnes gave a lecture on Comins Mansfield that showed the Problemist going from strength to strength as the library.

The July issue contained useful information on "The Chess Problem" edited by R McClure 46 Empire Street Whitburn, West Lothian during 1942-8. John wanted to get photocopies of missing issues and as I have a few I dug them out and smiled at issue 81 which has two bootmarks firmly imprinted on the cover. As I bought them from the late George Campbell they were probably his boots. It is a good magazine with occasional hand stamped diagrams. But what about the library; it now held The Oxford Companion to Chess, the French "Le Guide des Echecs" (1993), the Czech "Mala encycyklopedie sachu" (1989) and the Russian encyclopaedia "Shakhmaty" (1990). Anyone with queries about various problemists would also receive a response and that was a good idea to mutually share knowledge. Barry Barnes was guest editor for John's column and wrote about the Overbrook "The Two-Move Chess Problem in the Soviet Union" (1942). It was published as Barry explained: - "...at a rare moment in history following the defences of Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad". There were 3000 problemists in the Soviet Union in 1933. A mighty number.

The Library day was a success with 12 BCPS members and David Sedgwick BCF International Director in attendance. There was a nice photo of David Friedgood, Chris Feather and James Quah on the cover. John Beasley showed some postcards of the BCPS sent to Guy Chandler and TRD. There was one from Dr Felix Seidemann – very sad – dated 1938 stating that his family had to leave their home in Teplitz-Schonau and could he receive a salary for his problems?

A curious addition to the library was a set of ten beer mats each side of which contained a four man 2-er with the 11th mat giving the solutions. The set were called "Drink Problems" (First Series) selected by Marjan Kovacevic (Caissa Commerce).

The November "In The Library" column was by R C O Matthews and he described the contents of the Christmas Series book "A memorial to D J

Densmore” Loyd’s son in law. It was interesting how the book came about as a result of the death of the Pittsburg Gazette-Times and in which the memorial tourney to Densmore had appeared. The January 1997 issue reminded members that the library policy was to hold “ *everything relevant to problems and endgame studies that is published in Britain and a representative selection of what is published abroad...* ” John reminded members who wanted to write a column for "In the Library""to do so without being asked. The Library policy for bidding at auctions was reaffirmed in that bidding members would not be bid against if the Librarian knew of them.

John described the famous “English Chess Problems” book by J and W Pierce (1876) and as I had Frank Ravenscroft’s copy this was of especial interest. Frank had bought it in 1910 and gave it to me in 1967. He had probably bought it in the J G Witton sale after Witton’s death that year. Frank wrote the date 26 October 1910 above J W Abbott’s problem which was the first in the book. A nice book but much more history on the individual composers would have been nice.

The March issue wrote of the death of the “bookman” Robert McWilliam. I was sad for Lill and their lovely corgi dog Ben who Robert mentioned in his many letters to me. This issue of “In The Library” by John wrote on John Keeble’s library which is worth repeating:- “ *John Keeble’s was one of the major chess problem libraries which did not find its way down to us, and this photocopy (of notebook dated 28 January 1911), recently supplied to us by Cleveland, shows what we have missed. (Another library which we did not obtain was Dawson’s, and this now seems even more unfortunate; we have since received a copy of the bookseller’s list which included most of it; and its purchase would appear to have been well within our resources at the time) To be sure, some of the items seem to have had little problem content and we might not have wished to retain them, but there were others of clear relevance whose acquisition now would be quite beyond our reach. To list just a few R A Brown’s book of 1844, for which I have twice searched in the British Library without success; the collections of 1855,1860 and 1878 by J A Miles (the British Library has only the last of these); the problem solving sheets from the BCF tourneys of 1904 to 1910 inclusive, now surely gone beyond recall. Oh dear. The notebook contains no problems-what to do for our usual four diagrams? There is an extensive bibliographical note on Keeble’s book “The Caduceus” of 1910 (the report of the Norwich Mercury selfmate tourney)*..... ”

ITL for May 1997 considered “Pierce Gambit, chess papers and problems” by J and W Pierce 1888 and John wrote:-“*This recently appeared in a bookseller’s catalogue and I snapped it up. (It is one of the books which I had to read in the British Library, when compiling my pre-1950 British problem bibliography). It is one of the most interesting of the 19th century books. It is in three parts (a) analysis of the gambit, an S- sacrifice line in the Vienna opening, by W T Pierce; (b) seventeen miscellaneous chess papers by J Pierce; (c) 134 problems, each author contributing. The problems are typical work of the time, competent but not*

outstanding, and the book's special interest resides in the papers...” One of the papers is described by John and finishes with this delightful sentence for 1888:-
“*And now I am sure you have had enough of the ‘modern problem’ and the pupil concurs:- ‘Let us stroll down to the club, and have a turn at billiards’.*”

The Library day was held July 12 with 13 present on a sunny day. The library photos were shown including some in TRD's possession. It was clear from the results of the editor's chess composition quiz that Michael McDowell had a mighty grasp of biographical and other information on problemists. John Rice changed ITL to 'In My Library' and gave a lovely description of the C D Locock books:- “120 Chess Problems” (1912); “70 More Chess Problems” (1926) and “Imagination in Chess” (1930's) with a reprint of “72 Black Checkers” (1918 by BCM). By one of those lucky chance stops, call it prescience if you like, John Rice picked up a copy of “120 Chess Problems” in a local second hand shop a few months earlier and in it were some cuttings from an unidentified newspaper that gave biographical information on Locock. Wonderful stuff and good of John to share it with readers. Locock was one of the best and his chess puzzles with “*..humourous and whimsical notes..*” as John wrote, were what I liked about him. The British Loyd?

There was a nice photo of Barry Barnes and Colin Vaughan at the Library day on the cover of the September Problemist. Visitors were welcome to bring their own computers to use at the library. And Barry was calling it a day after 33 years of editing the original 2-ers. A mighty effort and like all the editors, done with no financial reward. The BCPS 'staff' are an inspiring lot. John's ITL column discussed “The Gentleman's Journal” 1869-72 which chess cuttings had been donated by Colin Vaughan. John collated it against the British Museum Library copy and filled in a few omissions. H F L Meyer was a later chess editor of that Journal.

The November issue advised that Harold Lommer's papers had been deposited at the library on indefinite loan and Ken Whyld passed on the news that Mrs Alice Loranth of the Cleveland Library was retiring due to ill health. The BCPS Library owed her a lot for her kindness and attention. So also did I with my sporadic letters which she answered so promptly. A very great lady. ITL for the month was written by Michael McDowell about that most famous problemists biography “The Chess Bouquet” by Frederick Richard Gittins. It is one of the most important British Chess problem books of the Victoria era and the biographical material is Gittins lasting memorial. There is some good information on “Chess Bouquet 2” which did not appear. A pity really as Australian problemists had sent information.

1998 arrived with a tremendous article by Lu Citeroni on the “Our Folder” magazine by the Good Companions (1913-24) and without doubt one of the most scholarly magazines ever to appear. It concentrated on problems but occasionally there would be a major article on Philidor, Morphy etc which truly

places the magazine in a class of its own. It is difficult to accept declining financial returns as the reason why the magazine folded in 1924, which was a boom year all over the world but the facts speak for themselves. The magazines appeal fell on deaf ears and so the end came. Lu also gave a description of “The Good Companion Two-Mover” one of the Christmas Series volumes.

March 1998 ITL saw John Beasley back in the chair with an item on “Mr Blackburne’s games at chess”(problem pages 1899) It was good of Michael McDowell to provide the pages for the BCPS library.

In the May issue was news of the BCF’s executive Stewart Reuben and David Sedgwick, Chairman and International Director respectively, presence at the AGM of the BCPS. They advised of the Hastings International Chess Centre at 37-40 Marina Hastings. Stewart expressed the hope that the BCPS would use the premises and place the library at the Centre. The proposed new library based on the Golombek collection, supplemented by other donations plus the BCPS library would be very impressive and with a permanent staffing even more so. A decision from the BCPS is due in 1999. This will be a very important decision as the BCPS library – in fact the BCPS totally – is one of those efforts certain groups of which problemists are one, appear capable of – a voluntary Society. Good Companions in style but far more successful and over 80 years old.

The gesture by Harry Golombek in bequeathing his library to the BCF was a generous one and perhaps there is room to move here that will enable the BCPS to get assistance in publishing the Problemist for the transfer of the library to Hastings. The thought of the two libraries together increases the possibility of more converts to problems.

ITL by John concentrated on those fabled “Black Books” which resulted in a series of 100 Manuscript books each containing up to 75 compositions of contemporary and deceased English problem composers. Half are still lost but George Jellis helped index the remainder and a couple more have come to light since George was the Archivist. John discussed Black Book No 41 of 1917 on H W Butler of the Sussex Chess Problem Fraternity.

The July issue announced “*A complete unbound run of The Problemist from issue 1 in 1926 to the end of 1996 in good condition*” and that it was to be sold by auction after November 1. The highest bid over £500 securing the set. The Library day held at John and Sue’s home saw 12 in attendance and John described some new accessions, in particular, Bob McWilliam’s copies of Mile’s “Chess Gems” (1878) and Keidanz’s “The chess compositions of E B Cook” (1927). Michael McDowell had obtained photocopies of “A Century of Two Movers” and also the Gamage Overbrook. Bob McWilliam’s collection of Schiffman Theme problems was also now in the library.

John's writing style is attractive and ITL for July reminded us of the late D G McIntyre of South Africa and his book "Some Problems for My Friends" (1957). The dedication by McIntyre to his father who taught him chess and of his mother who he thought, disapproved of the teaching is quite funny. McIntyre should have written more and not about problems. The quote under the title of "Some Problems..." from R L Stevenson (a chessplayer by the way) is lovely:-

*"Go, little book and wish to all
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns enclosing it,
A living river by the door,
A nightingale in the sycamore! (Underwoods)*

And this quote gives some idea of the pleasantness of McIntyre. His other book "Sonatas in Chess" is nice also. But in "Some Problems..." Alain White's article "On Problem Collections" written in 1914 appeared 37 years later and though only a page, puts so beautifully what is so wonderful about chess problems:-
"..An evening spent by the fireside with Mr McIntyre in an examination of these problems will be a pleasant one surely. It will take us to the farthest point geographically from which an individual collection of chess problems has ever spoken to us, and its message of friendly greeting is all the more welcome because of its assurance that our well loved game flourishes so bravely in distant lands".
 There is an "Alain White Collection" in the South African Library in Cape Town. It was handed over in 1945 and McIntyre played a part with White and Niemeijer. 250 books went to the Collection. How typical of the latter two men. And in the back of the book is a small Appendix of South African Chess Rhymes. Charles Murray, a well-known Cape educationist was very good and it would have been great to see more than the three pages McIntyre published. Here is a sample:-

*"Life is a recurring three-mover;
Only sure – the unexpected.
And your plans must be made over,
For the pawn which you neglected."*

Dr C Louis Leipoldt the South African poet, journalist, historian wrote this during the Parliamentary turmoil over the "Native Question":-

Chess in South Africa

*The much-belauded fool looked wise
And pondered what he saw.
"I think," he said, "That, if he tries,
White can still make a draw".*

The Master smiled and shook his head

*“You’ve left it all too late.
“There is no doubt of it,” he said,
“It’s Black to move and mate!”*

Leipoldt’s verse (undated) was quite topical in 1957 when McIntyre’s book appeared and rather prophetic today with Nelson Mandela handing the reins over to Mbecki.

It was a happy sight to see the photo of Barry Barnes and Yury Suchkov hugging one another at the 41st World Congress of Chess Composition held at St Petersburg on the cover of the September issue of the Problemist. Who knows what flow-ons there are from this and many other “*super thematic combinations*” as was the photo caption? I recall Kissinger, Bryzinski and Dobrinin often sat down for a drink and a game of chess. That probably did more for the cold war than most diplomatic forays.

ITL for September was a resume of Keidanz’s book on ‘The chess compositions of E B Cook’ (1927). This copy was from Robert McWilliam’s library which was “*much greater than most of us realised*”.

The November issue came with a very fine catalogue of Books and Magazines prepared by the new ‘bookman’ Peter Fayers. It included the Bob McWilliam legacy and Peter amusingly defines a vintage book as anything earlier than 1948 which was his birth year! Bob’s collection was certainly fine and distributed far and wide under the policy of a maximum of four books per member. A very fair way of doing it. I was fortunate enough to get the Abbott book and a lovely copy of Locock’s “70 Chess Problems” with Robert’s pressed bookplate included.

ITL included a revisit to “The Chess Bouquet” and its descendant “The Chess Bouquet and Small Heath Boulevard” (1912). As John wrote it surely was a curious item and appeared to be a chess pamphlet and local newspaper. Michael McDowell got some of it during visits to the Hague library. Extracts found contained problems by William Finlayson, E J Winter-Wood and W.J.Wood.

It has been very enjoyable reading through old Problemist magazines noting the growth of the library which must be well over 1000 items now and in the good hands of John and Sue Beasley. The catalogue is on the Internet.

Richard John Ford The Chess Library of Dick Ford was sold by Phillips in London on 3 October 1985 and was very successful. The State Library of Victoria bid for item 88:- “The pleasaunt and wittie Playe of the Cheasts renewed...” Rowbothum 1562 the Damiano translation....the estimate was £850 and the library missed it.

Neville Ledger went to England in late 1982 and called to see Dick Ford. In a letter (17 May 1983) to me he wrote:- “*Dick had an average sized room with all*

four walls from floor to ceiling covered in books. I was surprised to find so much modern stuff similar to what I have for sale. He delighted in showing me his treasures but I am not well read in that field and you would have found a lot more to enjoy. Really I would have loved to spend say two days looking at his books but I had less than two hours. Dick is terribly practical, he does not mince words. My train arrived a little early and everyone had gone while I looked for him. A very elderly figure appeared at the top of the stairs. "LEDGER?", he shouted. I waved and then he was the most perfect host until we left late in the afternoon."

BCM May 1974 p.171/2 discusses the May 1874 chess book sales described in these pages earlier and also gives information on Dick Ford's collection and his desire to expand the pre 1600 section of his chess library. The 'jewel' of his library was the Rowbothum which fetched \$1.60 or 16/- at the 1874 sale. Dick gave a good description of this book in BCM but did not disclose what he paid for it.

In 1976 I wrote to Dick at the address given in the BCM article ('Three Chimneys' Linton near Maidstone Kent) but the letter was returned. I got Dick's address in 1981 from Michael MacDonald-Ross and included the old letter with my 1981 letter. He replied very quickly with the comment about my old letter that it was "better late than ever". He had a fabulous collection then and described some of his rarities briefly. His lists contained past selling prices such as 1584 Lopez copy sold in 1980 for \$1250; Salvios in 1980 for \$850 and Actius 1980 for \$450. A 1694 Hyde in 1980 for \$1250 with a page missing but copy supplied. A Lamb in 1977 for £60 (note currency change), a Stamma in 1978 for £50. He had been a great friend of the late Alfred Sharpe and they had not had a quarrel. "Neither of us tried to 'do' the other", he said. His list of wants sent with his initial letter was mostly Australian rarities some of which I still don't have. His collection was indeed fabulous to most collectors, and certainly to me.

He had bought the 1656 "Royal Game of Chesse Playe" in 1931 for £2. Lucky Dick. He was a Chartered Accountant and able "to indulge himself". At the end he had over 2000 volumes including a complete set of BCM. The sale estimate was £33,000 and the sales were in that area. Ken Whyld had a one page resume of the sale in BCM Dec.1985 p.536. The 1562 Rowbothum made £2500 which was the highest price paid topping the £2000 for the BCM set.

The Tasmanian Chess Magazine had the opportunity to publish five short articles by Dick Ford on antiquarian chess books and these appeared from April 1983 to April 1984. The articles follow:-

When your editor visited me in England recently he was very interested in my chess books which included a number of old and rare books. He thought the readers of 'Tasmanian Chess magazine' might well be interested to read about them. I have been a collector for many years and it is fair to say the longer you collect the more interesting it becomes.

Let us, as an example, deal with GRECO. He lived from c 1580 to 1634 and was the leading Italian master. He travelled extensively particularly to the Courts of France and Spain. He came to England in 1622. All his money was stolen by brigands when he was enroute to London. Here he played members of the aristocracy. He sold manuscripts of his writings on chess. He spent his last years at the Court of Philip IV at Madrid.

In 1656 was printed "The Royal Game of Chess Play" in London. It was based on Greco and was an immediate success. Various issues were printed over the years and as late as 1900 Professor Hoffman published "Games of Greco". I have a copy of the first French Edition published in Paris in 1669. As an example of the pleasure to be found in old chess books is the following from Greco:- 1.P-K4..P-QN3;2.P-Q4..B-N2;3.B-Q3..P-KB4;4.PxP..BxP;5.Q-R5+..P-N3;6.PxP..N-KB3;7.PxP..NxQ;8.B-N6++

Some copies of the books (they are not numerous) have a picture of King Charles I as a frontispiece. When Oliver Cromwell appeared the Government then insisted that all booksellers should remove the picture. It is fair to say that careful purchases can be a useful anti-inflation hedge over the years. A copy of this book could have been purchased in 1933 for say £10. Recent sales have been 1976 Holland 2000 guilders, 1977 England £350, 1980 USA \$800, 1981 USA \$1050. Greco left his estate to the Jesuits".

I wrote to Neville about Dick's views on chess books as an anti-inflation hedge. If one buys a rare book very cheaply Dick is right. The £2 he paid for the 1656 Greco being a sure winner. But say one had bought that book in 1976 for 2000 guilders or \$700 Australian and then sold it in 1981 for \$1050 US or about \$1000 Australian (The Aussie dollar was very strong then – it's now worth 65 cents for \$1 US but back then was \$1.13 for each \$1 US). This was a high inflationary period and if the original \$700 had been invested at compound interest of say 10% then a sum better than that paid in 1981 would have been achieved than by the sale of the book. Also there is the mark-up on sale price.

Dick obviously did well with his sale but I think most of his valuable books were bought pre WW2.

July 1983 TCM:- "Ruy Lopez – Ruy Lopez was a Spanish priest who was born in Estremadura. He was the leading Spanish player of his age whose skill at chess made him a favourite of Phillip II of Spain who awarded him with a rich benefice. When in Rome on ecclesiastical business in 1560 he defeated with no difficulty the strongest Italian players. He became internationally famous.

He obtained a copy of Damiano's book which, till then, was the leading authority. He considered he could improve on this and on his return to Spain in 1561 he published "Libro de la invencion liberal y arte del juego del Axedrez".

The book contains general advice and a selection of suggested openings. The Ruy Lopez opening was first stated by Lucena in 1496 but it was analysed at length by Lopez in his book. The first moves are of course 1.P-K4..P-K4;2.N-KB3..N-

QB3;3.B-N5 and this opening is popular even to this day. It can surely be said to be the most analysed opening in the history of chess. For example there is 1. the Berlin Defence, 2. Birds Defence, 3. Steinitz Defence, 4. Fianchetto Defence, 5. Classical Defence, 6. Cozio's Defence, 7. Jaenisch Counter Gambit, 8. Alapin's Defence.

I have in front of me the second edition of this edition. It is in Italian being the first and then only translation of the book. It was published in Venice in 1584. There is a woodcut on the title page, an illustration of a chessboard, and six woodcuts of individual currency to the word "Gambit".

The first book gives the origin of the game and contains advice to place your opponent with the sun in his eyes in daytime and candle on his right at night. The second book lists some openings. The third book is largely a criticism of Damiano's analysis and the fourth book continues these criticisms particularly as to the Game at Odds.

It was translated by D G Tarsia and dedicated to Giacomo Buoncompagno, the Duke of Sora. This book is rare. Recent sales in the USA have been \$600 and \$900 and 3500 Swedish Kroner at Gutenberg". It seems clear that Dick kept lists for all the rare chess books. A wise decision.

October 1983 TCM:- *"Gustavus Selenus. This was the pseudonym of Augustus, Duke of Braunschweig-Lunsbert 1579-1666. He was a learned young man and at the age of 15 was the rector of the University of Rostock and subsequently of Turbingen. He travelled extensively in France, England and Italy where he stayed a year at Padua University. Probably here he came across Tarsia's translation of Lopez which he translated into German and which forms a major part of his own book. He made large additions of an historical character which make the book of particular value. But his additions to the analysis are usually weak. He introduced some attempts to improve the game none of which proved popular. The title starts "Das Schachoder Konig Spiel von Gustavo Seleno" and continues with 37 other words concluding with "Caesareo Ad Sexennium Lipsae-(Leipzig 1616)" The book gives a valuable account of the Courier game to which we owe all we know of the method of play. The special pieces for this game are Curierer, Schleich, Wean, and others and there are woodcuts of these. The Curierer is a man on a galloping horse, the Wean is a bearded sage and Schleich is a fool with caps and bells. The book is a large 4to and consists of 500 pages. The title page has four engravings the first of which shows a camp with games being played in tents. There are two engravings of pastoral scenes and at the foot are seven gentlemen seated at table, two of whom are playing chess.*

After 22 pages of introduction the book proper starts with another fine engraving. There is a list in alphabetical order of chess players and writers. Each chapter finishes with a fine engraving. Between pages 216 and 217 is an engraving of two people playing chess which has been many times reproduced. There are other fine engravings on pages 253, 375, 443 and elsewhere.

The book was relatively unknown in Britain until Sarratt published some of the games and gambits in London in 1817. George Walker stated in 1838 that "the

book is very rare". It is a most beautiful book. The last copy sold in London was by Sotheby's in April 1978 for £935".

The State Library of Victoria bid for a Selenus that year and bailed out at £830. This is probably the one. Fred Wilson, the New York dealer considered this, the pick of the antiquarian books. Cecil Purdy wrote once that the famous Morphy game in the Paris Opera House against the Count Isouard and the Duke of Brunswick reminded him that the Duke was a descendant of the famous Duke who wrote the chessbook above.

The Olms reprint is sometimes available in second-hand book sales (it might even be still available from Olms)

January 1984 TCM:- *" Phillippe Stamma. Stamma was a native of Aleppo, a town in Syria, and he is described as a belated representative of the Arabic School of Chess. His date of birth is not known, nor of his death. In Paris in 1739 he published his "Essai sur le jeu des echecs" consisting of one hundred endings which, in the ancient Muslim style, were a blend of problem and actual game. From the dedication it was clear he was very poor at the time. He left Paris for London, which was becoming the world centre of chess, and in 1745 he published a revised edition of his French book called "the Noble Game of Chess". As might be expected, he was the introducer of algebraic notation. The 1745 book I have in front of me is entitled "The Noble Game of Chess or a new and curious account of its antiquity, derivation of its terms etc. by Philippe Stamma, Native of Aleppo in Syria and interpreter of languages to his Majesty the King of Great Britain, London, printed J Brindley Bookseller to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, in Bond Street 1745". There is a preface of XXIV pages followed by 73 openings including the Knights Close Game, the Bishops Close Game, the Pawns Close Game, the Knights Gambit, the Bishops Gambit. The second part of the book is a "Hundred games in various particular situations with the manner of playing them". Pages 109-115 consist of "Advice to Young Players". The final paragraph of the book states "N.B. The author thinks it proper to inform the publick that no copies of this book are genuine but such as are signed by him". This is followed by his signature. The book is scarce. A copy was sold by Sotheby's in 1980 for £130".*

Interesting that Stamma should sign the final page of his book. As though someone might plagiarise his work. His signature if PHILIP STAMMA was witnessed by a 'J Hayes'. The title page spells his name PHILLIP STAMMA so that is a curious mistake, or it may not be. Dick's copy as quoted above appears to have PHILIPPE in the title but he may have just missed that as "Bond Street" is actually "New Bond Street" in my copy.

April 1984 TCM:-*J H Sarratt was a London schoolmaster who learnt his chess from Verdoni and established himself as "Professor of Chess". He was the leading English chess master from the late 18th century to the early 19th century.*

He was a frequenter of the London Chess Club which met at Tom's Coffee House in Cornhill. His fee was a guinea a lesson. Under his influence stalemate was accepted as a draw. He was the first great English author on chess. His reputation was high and a revelation to English players. His works were of a pioneering character as to chess and the English language. His first excellent books were "A treatise on the Game of Chess" Vol 1 and Vol 2 1808. There is a prefix listing books on chess from Damiano onwards and some friendly criticism of Philidor. Vol 1 contains "Different Methods of Opening the Games" then follows 75 Critical Variations. Vol 2 is "Teaching the Player who does not have the move how to frustrate his adversary's attack". Then there are instructions how to checkmate and a section on endings with pawns only. A copy of this work was sold in London for £75. His next book introduced in translation the works of Damiano, Lopez and Salvio. Published in London in 1813 it deals with those "old" authors extensively. A copy was sold in London in 1982 for £105. His next book was Vol 1 Gianutio, Vol 2 Selenus with a preface giving some details of the authors. A copy of this work was sold in 1977 for £55. In 1821 was published "A New Treatise on the Game of Chess". It is a more exhaustive work than the 1808 publication. He was assisted in this work by his pupil W Lewis. Sarratt died in 1821. His widow then went to Paris and taught chess. In 1844 following an article in Le Palamede, describing her as aged 85 and destitute an appeal was launched which enabled her to live in comfort for the rest of her life".

An interesting series by an eminent collector. On birth and death dates, even today Stamma still has question marks. Gaige in his "Chess Personalia" suggest c 1715 and d 1770? (1808??). Sarratt c 1772 – died 6/11/1819.

Phillips sold another very fine British collection on 21 January 1988. BCM had a very large advertisement in its January issue which indicated that the collection was over 2000 volumes plus a complete run of BCM from 1881 to 1981. There was a write-up in the April issue page 135 and it seemed that the auction became a sort of wake as old friends remembered **James Pattle** or Jim in a kindly way. Apparently he had many copies of Blackburne's Best Games but was not keen to part with a single one. As BCM wrote:- "Ah, a true collector! We may not see his like again". There were 50 people present and Caissa Books bought most of them. The BCM run made £1500 which BCM thought "What we would regard as (well below) a realistic price". The BCM editor was heard to mutter "A bargain" occasionally. The Catalogue indicated the large number of books per lot. For example the Blackburne book went with 33 other books, some not described apart from referring to the fact that they were "mostly best games and Biographies". Without doubt a very good way to acquire a collection cheaply. It was all over in 80 minutes and £18,500.

I did not know Jim Pattle but knew of him through Michael MacDonald Ross. BCM stated that Jim was a Surrey stalwart who had died of cancer in autumn 1987. He was known within a limited circle as a keen collector of chess books, though like many of his brethren, was not always keen to show them off. He was

a fair player and someone recalled at the auction of him winning a miniature with Bxf7+ at Paignton about 1972.

Michael wrote in a 1980 letter that he'd seen Jim's collection :-*“and that it contained three Lolli's, eight Blackburne's, (So we know how many he had-BM), four copies of Horae Divanianae...it's more of a treasure trove than a collection. Most of the books have been picked up from London booksellers during the last twenty years, also from lists, auctions, book fairs...He never sells anything, and almost never swaps, so it can be a bit frustrating for other collectors, who would give anything for one of these duplicates. He has two or three 19th C Indian chess works which are extremely rare; in fact there was so much stuff that I just staggered out in a daze. He's not a wealthy man, just very single-minded! (I once had a meal out with him; I spent £4.50 he spent £1.50...) a very interesting and pleasant person”*.

In another letter Michael described Jim as one of the nicest men one could ever hope to meet. Completely trustworthy, quiet and never boasted.

Michael MacDonald-Ross sold his collection of chess sets and books on 26 March 1987 at Phillips. It was advertised in February BCM as containing 3000 volumes and a description of the sale was published in BCM May p.201/2. It was a fabulous success and netted £58,000. There were 525 lots and Lothar Schmid came over to add to his collection. Caissa Books was a major bidder and the Royal Dutch Library had a bidder. Again the lots had multi books. The chess sets, prints and engravings fetched £13,000 so clearly Michael's collection was larger than Dick Ford's. The outstanding book sale was Lot 410 the Gianutio 1597 for £2000. It is exciting to receive a catalogue pre-sale and I bid for Lot 406 a 1750 Greco and got it at £33. One can imagine how fortunate attendees are at these auctions where they can view the books and price accordingly.

It must have been pleasing for Michael to have it all behind him. He was a great correspondent and a very fair dealer and I knew him from 1979 until after the sale of his collection when he went out of chess book dealing. We discussed many things and his knowledge of chess literature and the early books were common bonds. I learned a lot from him.

The Sale of Lot 403-the Greco “The Royall Game of Chesse-Play” with the portrait of Charles and the ownership of Bulstrode Whitelocke was fascinating. The book went for £400 but that inscription was a name that had come down through the centuries. The Narromine News editor was Clifford Bulstrode Whitelocke and with a name like that he had to be related to the 17th century or later owner. On talking to Cliff about it, he told me of the book he had called “An Improbable Puritan-a Life of Bulstrode Whitelocke” by Ruth Spalding. Whitelocke had lived from 1605-1675 and the book certainly looked like his copy. Ruth's amazing find of Bulstrode Whitelocke's diary in Dublin is a story of determination and success. Cliff was a descendant and told me of chess in

Changi POW camp during WW2 where he spent some years:- “ *Officers were segregated from ordinary soldiers. The other ranks were controlled by Warrant Officers. The Officers didn’t go out on working parties and had more time for social life (1 Batman to 4 Officers). There was a lower death rate to the other ranks. Bill Bryant from Western Australia (Commercial Artist) and gunner played a few games with halves of cotton reels and lead cut-outs and board. Journalist friends from Melbourne played a few games. Other ranks could get a pass and visit officers inside the Japanese perimeter. I went with a concert party (semi symphony) to the officers and hospital. After building the Burma Line we took possession of Changi Jail beginning 1944*”. Cliff died in 1994 aged 84. As for Bulstrode Whitelocke, he saw off Charles 1, Oliver Cromwell and Charles 11.

Many of Michael’s books contained signatures of the great chess personages and premiums were paid to buy those particular books. For example Hastings 1895 with Lasker’s signature went for £150, an unsigned copy went for £65.

I only found out about the “**Bibliotheque D’Un Amateur**” from Harald Ballo well after the auction on 6 June 1991 in Paris. We started corresponding in mid 1992 and as Harald is a busy doctor, I could only expect letters irregularly. When they arrived was a red letter day as always there was some snippet of collecting lore which was much appreciated. Being keen on Morphy history I was sad to read that the great German collector (4000 chess books) Werner Nicolay had died in 1991 and so any exchange was lost.

Harald writes great letters and here is a sample from his April 1993 letter:-*For me these auctions represent a feeling full of suspense. It is exciting. Heart rate and blood pressure rise in the same manner as it happens during the critical phase of a Chess game. Additionally people seem to tax each other how high they will be able to go. The air is full of competitive smell. And I think it is this competition which implies the danger to forget the real value of a book which leads to far too high prices. People forget themselves in the competition by simply bidding against each other and it is by no means the books which play the crucial role in this ‘bidding-game’*”.

The “Amateur” above, was Andre Muffang (1897-1990?) an industrialist who won the French Chess Championship in 1931 and had an equal second at Margate in 1923 to Alekhine. Many great collectors were present including Ralf Hess of Frankfurt, Lothar Schmid of Bamberg, Jean Mennerat of Coulans sur Lison, Manfred Mittelbach of Hamburg and Harald Ballo. BCM August 1991 p 337 mentions that Boris Spassky was there with three other GM’s and that he secured a number of items. The overall sale netted £80,000 of which the Lucena 1540 parchment manuscript (item 142) went for £30,000 to a Paris library. The catalogue had a very fine problem collection including a full set of the Christmas Series (6000f-\$1200) and a Loyd “Chess Strategy” (1200f) plus a very fine array of early books which included two Damianos (85,000f and 23,000f), an Actius, Bertin, 1689 Greco, 1767 Hyde, 1584 Lopez, a good run of Philidors, 1634

Selenus, Twiss, a Windisch 1783 (13,000f) and a very good array of French chess magazines. The Hotel Drouot must have been buzzing with all the choice items.

Harald Ballo wrote about the Damiano in Schach Zettell 147 (DSZ Jan 1997 p.56) and John van Manen translated it as below :- "*Damiano, Editio princeps 1512-The Chess book of the chemist Damiano from Odemira in Portugal (Questo libro e Daim Parare Giocarea Scachi et de le Partite, Rome 1512) belongs to the oldest chess books of the new, modern chess, which have reached us. In total eight different edition in the 16th century are known (1st edition = 1512; 2nd edition = 1518; 3rd edition = 1524; 4th edition = 1st undated; 5th edition = 2nd undated; 6th edition = 3rd undated; 7th edition = 4th undated; 8th edition = 1564) where the first edition was dated for the year 1512 following the thorough and careful work by Ross Pinsent, which he published in BCM June 1906(p 229-239). Just like the ca 1497 date printed booklet by Lucena, each edition of Damiano is keenly sought by the chess book collector for rarity.*

Adriano Chicco of Italy gave, as part of an essay with the title "Le edixione italiane del Libro di Damiano" in the magazine for bibliophiles "L'Esopo, Rivista Trimestrale di Bibliofilia" in June 1984 ((p.46-58) a list of all known copies of the 1512 'Editio Princeps' in the world. In total Chicco mentions seven places, in which he found copies. To be precise in the Library of the British Museum in London, the National Library in Vienna, the University Library of Salamanca, the Municipal Library of Barcelona, the Royal Library in The Hague and the Cleveland Public Library. The seventh copy Chicco saw in Bamberg in the library of Lothar Schmid.

At that time he could not know, and Schmid obviously did not tell him, that that copy was a loan of the multiple winner of the chess championship of France and collector of chess books, Andre Muffang. Muffang collected during his long, more than ninety years life, a considerable chess book collection. As Muffang's son told us at the time (in 1990). Andre Muffang kept up very good connections with Meindert Niemeijer of Wassenaar too, who had left him quite a lot of rare chess books, including his duplicate copy of the "Editio Princeps" of Damiano. Muffang's collection came after his death in June 1991 at an auction in the Auction House Drouot in Paris and was scattered around the world. This included the 1512 Damiano, which was knocked down to the American De Lucia for 85,000f, i.e. DM 26,000, plus 6.151% premium, that is DM 27,000. It was for a long time the only (and in total the eighth known copy) copy still in private possession.

Therefore we were really astonished, when in the catalogue of an auction of the Auction House of Christie in London, which would take place on 27 November 1996, we discovered a first edition Damiano (which would be the ninth copy). The estimated price was set at 8,000 to 12,000 English pounds. We could not resist the temptation to travel to London in order to hold this rare book in the hand and to bid for it. Unfortunately as underbidders we had to look on (the auctioneer

increased the bids in jumps of 1000 pounds and our budget melted away in seconds), how a bidder by telephone, whom we did not know, obtained the book for £20,000, i.e. DM 51,000 plus 15% premium, which is about DM 58,650. This corresponds to a doubling of the Paris purchase price. We left the auction room thoughtful. We will not again meet a Damiano in this life. We were lucky that we found in a small dusty second hand bookshop in an old part of London a rare edition of Robert Burton's famous "Anatomy of Melancholy", in which also a sentence appears, which offered us some consolation:- "Chess-play is also a good and witty exercise of the mind for some kind of men, and fit for such melancholy, Rhasis holds, as are ideal, and have extravagant impertinent thoughts, or troubled with cares, nothing better to distract their mind, and alter their meditations..." But one question remains for the ambitious collector:- "Who was the secret bidder at the telephone?"

One query here. If Chicco saw the Muffang copy at Bamberg in Lothar Schmid's home then it is not an extra copy. As for the secret bidder, that was Lothar Schmid.

In Hamburg on 31 May 1997 a substantial part of German collector **Ralf Hess** of Frankfurt's library was sold. The estimates seemed reasonable and the dearest was the 1561 Alcala Lopez at DM 6000; 1617 Carrera at DM 4000; 1604 Salvio at DM 4000; Kagan's Neueste Schachnachrichten Vols 1 –12 DM 2500 and The London Chess Fortnightly by Lasker 1892/3-19 issues at DM 2500.

One interesting item was No.2431 Zweig 'Schachnovelle' Buenos Aires 1942 DM 2000. The 1769 Ponzianai made DM 3000 and Studies of Chess 1803 DM 2000.

This was kindly sent to me by Harald plus the 1997 Auction held in Paris by Rodolphe Chamonal of Games, Sports and Diversions. Harald got a first edition 1749 Philidor here. There were 40 chess items in the 438 item catalogue. Beautifully produced with many colour plates.

The Dr **Robert Blass** Collection of Early Chess Books was sold by Christies in London on 8 May 1992 and an advertisement was placed in BCM April. There was a simultaneous chess display by Raymond Keene and Murray Chandler at the showing on 6 May with £100 credits for the best games against the GM's towards purchases at the later auction

And Murray Chandler BCM editor suggested in the May editorial that 'Collectors of chess literature will shortly be in antiquarian heaven'. He was referring to the Blass sale at which he thought item 9-the 1483 "De Ludo Schachorum" may well fetch £30,000. It actually made £18,000. (or £19,800 including the 10% premium)

A brilliantly produced catalogue with 48 illustrations, it was offered in Chess April issue to anyone writing to Christies. Gareth Williams stated that it was probably the finest chess book and manuscript auction since the Rimington

Wilson sale of 1928. There were over 1000 items and Chess July 1992 p 9 reported on the sale. Blass, a Swiss lawyer and keen chess player built up the library during the 1930's and 40's and it included part of the Rimington Wilson collection. Every seat at the South Kensington sale room was taken leaving only standing room for many enthusiasts. In view of Blass's death in 1975 aged 88, it would appear the collection was stored for many years. It netted over £132,000 excluding the 10% premium and attracted all the collecting greats. Harald Ballo bid through Chjristies Frankfurt, the State Library of Victoria was in the thick of it and bid for a Damiano, Carrera, Gianutio and Cozio and got them excluding the Carrera. Ken Fraser was asked to spend about \$10-12,000. The books arrived after the auction with the library using a London agent. Other books acquired were a Pratt 1799 and Sarratt 1817 on Gianutio and Selenus and finally a Villot 1825 on Astronomy, the Game of Chess and Egypt.

A number of collectors had travelled from the USA, France, Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium and Germany and as well there was a row of white phones manned by Christies staff for those unable to attend. It started at 11.05am and finished 1.35pm. The manuscripts and books sold first brought handsome prices above the estimates in the Catalogue and those collectors who missed out with the first section pushed prices up above estimates again. Michael Mark got the 1561 Alcala Lopez for £1400 plus the 10% premium. Lothar Schmid bought several interesting lots. Victor Keats added to his collection. Michael Sheehan bought the complete run of DSZ for £2300 plus premium and Dale Brandreth of Delaware and Peter Halfmann of Duisburg bought many lots. The 200 lots some containing many books were all gone, the collection dispersed and everyone satisfied. There was an unpublished Morphy letter dated May 22 1859 to Thomas Frere from the St Nicholas Hotel New York. It's estimate was £2-3000. I don't know whether it was sold. (From Dale Brandreth)

Most of the treasures of Blass's library made it to the auction as "Schaakbibliotheken" by Dr N p 18/19 described the great library as it was in 1938. The Trevangadacharya Shastree 1814, the 1624 Middleton from von der Lasa's library, the Ibrahim ibn Ezra 1838 appeared to be missing and possibly were traded by Blass in subsequent years. He only had 549 books in 1938.

The "**Bibliothèque de Mr X**" (**Harald Falk**) was briefly mentioned earlier when Albert Pinkus' collection was discussed. Two collecting friends Dr Jean Mennerat and Dr Harald Ballo were aware of the upcoming "Mr X" sale at the Drouot Montaigne on the 8 June 1995. The Catalogue which Harald sent me after the sale was another lovely item to have with front and back cover sketches of 'The Turk' from the Racknitz book No 166 in the auction. All other photos in the catalogue were superimposed on 'The Turk' background. Jean got a Gianutio 1597, Ponziani 1769 and a 1604 Salvio. Harald got a 1561 Alcala Lopez in a real coup for 3500f. This was about \$900 Australian and was considerably less than that paid for the copy at the Blass sale. Curiously the 1584 Lopez Tarsia went for 8000f (\$2000) which was the Catalogue estimate. The 1561 Alcala was

estimated at 4000f. The reverse would have been closer to the mark. A buyers premium of 10% was payable also on these prices. Whilst the Racknitz 1789 brought top price of 13,000f with the 1554 Boissiere "Rythmoachie" (Lot 19), a bundle of 21 volumes from the 19th and 20th centuries brought 14,500f. the very top price was as usual a Damiano 1540 at 20,000f. There was a truly wonderful range of Philidor's from the three 1749 editions to the next 14 editions finishing in 1850. Lot 146, the 1777 edition was actually signed by the great man and made 10,000f. It was a very reasonable sale for buyers and with Lothar Schmid present there should have been satisfaction amongst all the bidders. The bidding was dominated by an Englishman, two Belgians, Lothar Schmid and Harald Ballo. They were very lucky not to have much opposition.

Falk was an interesting man and Harald Ballo wrote about him in Schach Zettell's 64, 80,119 and 124 in DSZ 1996. A very useful series of articles on Falk who lived in Hamburg and left Germany in 1933 for Paris with his beloved chess library. Being Jewish he must have watched the ensuing years with horror and decided to sell his library to the Paris dealer Leo Bayer. One can imagine how he felt when the invasion of France took place and the occupation of Paris. Where would a Jewish German go in WW2? Poor devil. He was arrested in March 1944 and ended his days at Auschwitz a month later aged but 38. He was born in Hamburg 27 July 1905. There is a photo of Falk alongside a chess set and table outside his home? (DSZ 119) (See also BCM 1933 p.312-a Falk letter)

I can't help wondering about the split-up of his library and the sale of the tourney books to Pinkus and then the 1995 sale above of his antiquarian library of 50+ years past Falk's death. Niemeijer gives some hint in Schaakbibliotheken and Ballo adds more but the picture is blurred.

Tony Mantia of Bellbrook Ohio USA has a very fine collection which in 1986 was over 3000 volumes and 15,000 magazines and he called it 'eclectic' or non discriminatory. His likes are biographical games collections, history and bibliographic items as well as problem books and in fact any type of chess book.

One of his nicest items was Ranneforth's Schach Kalendars with extensive annotations by Alekhine, including two unknown games from an exhibition in Holland as well as his listing of the games that he was collecting for his second volume of best games. He also holds several books signed by Frank Marshall and a limited first edition of his games collection with a signed presentation to A1 and Edna Horowitz. He holds Sam Loyd's "Chess Strategy" and A F Mackenzie's "Chess It's Poetry and It's Prose" and "Chess Lyrics". Tony likes "The Chess Bouquet" by Gittins and I too like that book very much. His copy was owned by H F L Meyer who had tipped many interesting items into the volume such as a photo of himself, a dozen or so of his problems, a letter from George Hume and extensive marginalia on other composers he was familiar with. Tony holds a complete run a Baruch Wood "Chess" and many club and state organisational publications from the USA.

At one stage he ran a research service for the USCF answering such questions as where Pillsbury was buried? What is Bobby Fischer doing now? Etc.

He has visited the Cleveland Library several times and found the curator Mrs Loranth very kind and the staff helpful. Mrs Loranth's recent retirement is a great loss.

His chess room has 4.5 shelves of History and Bibliography, 5 shelves of Chess Manuals and 2 of Biographical Games Collections and 2.5 shelves of Opening Books. Another section has 3.5 shelves of Openings Books, Half a shelf of Middle Games, Two shelves of Endings and Half a shelf on humour and General (computers etc). Another case has 1 Shelf of Humour and General Books, 2.5 shelves of Problem Books and 3.5 shelves of Tournaments and Matches. Another case holds Games Collections, Informants, Basic Instruction Books and New in Chess. His magazines are held in a closet in which he built shelves. (This is a good idea as closets are quite cheap to buy).

He has filing cabinets, pictures and a cartoon by the famous US Cartoonist Virgil Partch of a chess player saying "*I won't play with a camera whirring in my face*".(Inspired by Bobby Fischer). Tony's daughter made a sign 'Chess Room' when she was quite young and that was in pride of place. A very impressive working room. It has been some years since I heard from Tony and I trust he is well.

Various catalogues of collections have come my way from Dale Brandreth and Fred Wilson:-

Duclos Collection – 1918. This catalogue of 16 pages commences with a letter from J G White to A J Souweine of New York City dated 23 December 1918 in which White describes the collection and in which he placed stars alongside the books in his collection. There are very few unstarred places!

Some very fine series finishing in 1915 were complete runs of La Strategie, BCM, Chess Amateur-the rare book on Prince Andre Dadian by Schiffers, all the early volumes of Chess Player's Chronicle, The Chess Monthly (London) and a rather good list of other magazines. The curious "*Bibliographie anecdotique de jeu des echecs*" by J.Gay, Paris 1864 looks interesting; a 1735 Bertin; a full run of the Christmas Series to 1914 including Braune; and a very good selection of problem and tournament books and a Tarsia and Salvio. A very good collection of 950+ items.

M K Brans Collection – December 1974 This catalogue of 25 pages contains 403 items. A Sotheby Catalogue of B H Pinsent's collection of 14 pages dated 1974 was one item. Another was the Barcelona Library chess collection of 1943, Amsterdam University chess collection of Alexander Rueb, A. de Beruijn's

collection of 81 pages dated 1974, a good batch of Philidors, a 1617 Selenus, Lolli, 1741 Stamma, a splendid array of tournament books, a 1696 Greco. Surprisingly no magazines but a choice collection.

F H Willing's Collection A 1920 Catalogue of 37 pages – over 1200 volumes. Charles Willings library description earlier contained F H Willings. This is a great collection. Page 37 gives the Rou Ms of 1902 bound with Bilow, BCA Report Manchester 1857, Schallop's Steinitz/Zukertort match 1886, Heyde 1891, Schwartz 1888. Amazing pamphlets. The collection contains 15 scrap books of newspaper clippings and 12 autograph letters of Medley, Lowenthal, Lord Cremorne, Watkinson, Sir John Blunden, G B Fraser, Pavitt, Deacon. 13 signatures including Staunton's, Wisker, James Robey, Thorold, Geo McArthur, Hampton, Blunden, Lord John Hay, R B Brien, Lord Dudley, Lord Stanley, W C Green, W S Pavitt. This is one of the best.

Peter G Toepfer's collection A 1910 Catalogue of 33 pages including a sketch of those gigantic chessmen was described just before Willing earlier. The preface is great:- *“The following alphabetically arranged collection of books on the Game of Chess has been started by me in the year 1900. At that time being informed by a chess friend that a lady in a city in the northern part of our state, had for years been trying to sell her late husband's chess library. When I went up to see her she had two large washbaskets of chess books placed before me for my inspection, which I at once bought. Since that time in our States, Mexico, Europe etc, I looked up the second-hand bookstalls for the purposes of increasing my collection. No doubt prior collectors are ahead of me in amount of old books, but with latest issues in the English and German language we are on the level. Books or works on the game of Chess not mentioned in the following list I am willing to exchange for my duplicates or to buy at a reasonable price to enlarge my collection. This is the sole object of this print”*.

The preface is then repeated in German, French and Polish. One catalogue he has was of Curt Ronninger, successor of Hans Hedwig, Leipzig 1910 and 1912/13, or was Ronninger a dealer? A good collection of magazines, all DSZ for example, but his giant chessmen, used by Lasker twice for lectures were the highlight.

C B Vansittart Collection –Catalogue by Albert Cohn of Berlin 1886 65 pages. 974 items. This catalogue has all the prices asked and in those days 1 mark = 4 shillings UK. A 1512 Guarinus was £100 whereas the 1495 Lucena was £50! A 14th century Cessolis Ms was on offer for £60. The first 13 volumes of CPC were £50, another 1493 Cessolis £90, Gianutio £5, Hyde £2, 1472 Ingold £120, 1561 Lopez £45, 1628 Middleton £20, a music score by Philidor's father dated 1700 for £35, Rowbotham £25, A Saul £12, Stamma 1745 £2/8/-, 1584 Tarsia £2, Twiss 1787/9 £1/10/-, Walker's 1844 Chess Studies £7! (Very rare!).

It must be a lovely catalogue to have in original. I have a faded photocopy.

Heinz Loeffler (1907-1981)

Dale Brandreth wrote:- *“It is with a heavy heart that I write these lines, for my friend and fellow chess book dealer died suddenly only two weeks after I had last received a letter from him. I had the honour and pleasure of doing business with Heinz Loeffler for over thirty years, and it will be difficult to get used to the idea of no longer being able to visit him in the beautiful small West German town of Bad Nauheim, and of receiving his packages of chess books.*

Herr Loeffler was a delightful man with a nice sense of humor and a keen interest in chess, its literature, and the people of the chess world. I visited him for the first time in the spring of 1976 in Bad Nauheim and we spent hours walking in the streets of that old Hessian town which served as Supreme Allied Headquarters toward the end of World War II. How well I remember sitting with him on the veranda of the old café on top of the Johannisberg overlooking the town, swapping stories of other collectors and dealers and drinking the good German beer! It was one of those idyllic times in one’s life - too few and too fleeting.

Although Heinz Loeffler had suffered the terrors of two world wars, it was not apparent to see him and to talk to him. He was a tall and fit man who liked walking and swimming right to the end. As a dealer he was rigidly honest, accurate, and always had a fine stock of antiquarian literature in chess. He read many of these books for enjoyment over the years. Having lived in England and France for some years before World War ii, he spoke fluent French and English in addition to German and Spanish.

I know I speak for his many friends and customers when I say that his passing leaves an emptiness and sorrow not soon assuaged. I shall always cherish his memory. Rest in peace, dear friend...”

Christian M Bijl Mr Bijl worked at the Royal Library at The Hague but collected chess books in his own right. He published a catalogue in February 1976 of 99 pages and 858 items and it has most assuredly grown since then. He commenced the catalogue by stating that there were 75 collectors that he knew of with 38 of them holding good collections. These are included:-

1. C M Bijl, Haarlem, Nederland
2. J W Bijl – Sartorius, Haarlem, Nederland
3. C Bijl, Amersfoort, Nederland
4. K Bijl – Piek, Amersfoort, Nederland
5. M J K Bijl, Utrecht, Nederland
6. W Sartorius - ter Hoeven, Utrecht, Nederland
7. Prof. A Becker, Carapachay, Argentina
8. Mr R E Booy, Groningen, Nederland
9. Mr M K Brans, Delft, Nederland
10. A de Bruijn, Bussum, Nederland
11. Chess Department Harvard College Library, Harvard USA
12. Chess Library M V Anderson Victorian State Library, Melbourne, Australia

13. Cleveland Public Library, John G White Department, Cleveland USA
14. Prof Dr M Euwe, Amsterdamm Nederland
15. H Folkers, Nieuw Vennepe, Nederland
16. J Gaige Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
17. J ten Have, Amsterdam, Nederland
18. P Jaarsma, nederhorst den Berg, Nederland
19. B B Jensen Bronshoj, Denemarken
20. Mr A K P Jongsma, Heemstede, Nederland
21. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Bibliotheca Van der Linde-Niemeijeriana, Den Haag, Nederland
22. K W Kruijswijk, Bilthoven, Nederland
23. M A Lachaga, Martinez, Argentina
24. C G Langeweg, Nederhorst den Berg, Nederland
25. H Loeffler, Bad Nauheim, West-Duitsland
26. E Meissenburg, Winsen/Luhe, West-Duitsland
27. O Mix, Arnhem, Nederland
28. Dr M Niemeijer, Wassenar, Nederland
29. C Orbann, Amsterdam, Nederland
30. Prof Dr C van Parreren, Amsterdam, Nederland
31. K Rattmann, Hamburg, West-Duitsland
32. Alexander Rueb Stichting, Amsterdam, Nederland
33. L Schmid, Nbamberg, West-Duitsland
34. S J Schurer, Harrlem, Nederland
35. H J Slavekooorde, Den Haag, Nederland
36. C L Stafleu, leiden, Nederland
37. A C van der Tak, Harrlem, Nederland
38. K Whyld, Wollaton, Nottingham, Engeland.

Nice to see so many Dutch collectors

He had a splendidly varied collection of which the following caught my eye:-

No 212 is a catalogue of A Kok's collection 1039 items

No 238 Bassi's "History of Correspondence Chess up to 1839"

No.264 Bachmann's 1920 work on the Café de la Regence, Deschappelles vs Lewis, Schachautomaton, Napoleon I as a Chess Player.

No 289 Heinz Loeffler's book on Chess Humour "100 Schachanekdoten".

There were 40 pages of Tournament books and these are superb and 9 pages of Match books.

Ritaukaskra – Landsbokasafnsins 1900 & 1901 Reykjavik (Fiske?)

These two photocopied booklets appear to be a compilation of Professor Fiske's library. Whether it is complete I am unsure but his obituary stated 1200 volumes.

1900 consists of 5 pages of chess books and 110 items. Very choice with Lasa's 'Geschichte' 1897, Twiss, Severino, Lopez 1584, Gianutio 1597, Greco 1669 (Paris)

1901 consists of 20 pages and 775 items. There are some draughts books included and other subjects also:- Ringhieri, Damiano, Lolli, Carrera, Aben Esra 1743, Actius, Twiss Miscellanies, Cobarvbias 1561, Cozio 1766, Greco 1656-a very impressive collection of which this is a glimpse.

Assuming this completes Fiske's library it consists of 885 items.

This section concludes with a lot of references which I will not expand upon:-

27. Godefroy Gumpel-large chess collection- See Brentanos Vol 1 No 6 page 267.
28. The Morphy Chess Rooms Library-Brentanos page 323.
29. Chess Tales & Miscellanies p.386 speaks generally about libraries.
30. Chess Monthly 1857 p.223-von der Lasa says Franz has the "*richest collection of chess works extant*".
31. Profile of a Prodigy 1973 by Brady p.11-Fischer's library. See also My Seven Chess Prodigies by John Collins 1974 p 22 – his library of 600 volumes.
32. Chess Amateur Vol 19 p 162-Library of Dr Lerch; Vol 17 p 367 Wallis's library; Vol 16 p 266 P H William's library; Vol 16 p 298 John Keeble's library; Vol 13 p 266 (T)Poepfer's collection to Wisconsin University 1000 books ;Vol 3 p 102 Books on Chess History; Vol 3 p 164 Monsieur Preti's sale-a disaster; Vol 3 p 252 Otto Harrosowitz-chess book dealer.
33. BCM 1957 June p 163 Bruno Bassi-greatest private chess collection in the world.
34. Problemist 1938 July p142 Niemeijer says his library the largest in Europe-4000 books
35. Problemist Vol 3 p 176 –M W Paris fine library-BCPS library;p 224 Professor Allen's 35 books 26Ms to BCPS; p.274 BCPS gets 30 books; p.357 Niemeijer's Schaakbibliotheken.
36. BCM 1900 p 298 Francis Douce-Antiquarian bequeaths library to Bodleian; 1906 p.240
37. BCM 1958 p 175 Eccles Librarian
38. BCM 1908 p 417 John Keeble got J A Miles library
39. BCM 1910 p 283+ F Downey's collection; p 335 Crespi leaves money for chess in Italy.
40. Chess Player's Magazine 1866/7 p 128 English gentleman purchases American Amateur's library in 1865/6 (Henry's??)
41. City of London Chess Magazine p 83 & p 109 Details on Walker's sale p 210 Lowenthal stays with Rimington-Wilson.
42. Chess in Australia 1971 p 3 Karlis Lidums has extensive chess library.
43. BCM 1924 p 243,267,323,442; 1925 p 225 Second Hand book prices.
44. BCM 1926 p 133,167,252,265,338,419,456,727 “ “ “

45. BCM p 228 C G Bennett leaves fine library to his old club at Harrowgate.
46. BCM p 433 J McKee collection of books – Scots champion.
47. BCM p.279 100 copies of von der Lasa’s library catalogue.
48. Problemist Vol 6 p 4 Chess book prices;p 131,198, 243 old books; p 225 J F Toff and Thuiller collections.
49. New York Clipper 23.5.1874 George Walker’s manuscripts described.
10.10.1874 Gilberg gives Miron – Alphonsine Ms; 23.11.1878 Allen’s library for sale \$3000.
50. Illustrated London News 26.9.1846 – Bledow’s fine library for sale for £100, 550 volumes-Staunton and London Chess Club won’t buy.
- 25 Problemist July 1996 p 235 Massmann collection including Gerd Meyers 1100 titles.
26. The Field 5.2.1887 – Gumpel to sell his chess library of 160 volumes.
27. The Tablet 10.3.1928 – Some Rimington Wilson sale prices; 31.3.1928 First 8 lines of the Goldsmith Translation.
28. BCM 1932 p 395 – James Borthwick dies – library to Glasgow Chess Club.
29. BCM 1930 p 167 – J G White collection.
30. Chess 1948 p 14 Bruno Bassi looks for Greco’s death-enquiries to Uppsala University Sweden.
31. Chess 1950 p 73 Baruch Wood Chess collection; p.224 Early chess in Central and South America – Bruno Bassi..
32. Chess 1952 p 93 - Photo of war damaged National Chess Centre Sept. 1940.
33. ILN 16.8.1845 – Bledow of Berlin – great collection; 3.10.1846 – Bibliopole did he buy Bledow’s library?
34. Chess 1937 Vol 2 p 394+ Dr Niemeijer’s library. Very fine article.
35. Chess Oct. 1946 Vol 2 p.2 Robert Forbes Combe-good tournament book library.
36. BCM 1952 p. 106 Combe’s obituary-T R Dawson’s obituary.
37. Arnold Denker’s book “The Bobby Fischer I knew” 1995 p 1 Albert Pinkus collector. Also p 30. Page 10 James Longstreet Confederate General plays chess; p 11 Chess Libraries of Chess Life and Manhattan Chess Club;p 268 Kurt Rattman’s collection in Hamburgh.
38. Chess Monthly 1857 p 257-264 Bibliothecal Chess-superb article by Willard Fiske.
39. Problemist May 1969 p 344 P ten Cate problemist.
40. Chess Amateur October 1916 Vol 11 p.2 W S Branch writing in the Cheltenham Chronicle notes that *“he believes the number of separate chess works in all departments, and excluding magazines or pamphlets, that have been published since the invention of printing, to be now over 5,000. This does not include later editions unless much enlarged or altered. The oldest chess books, from their age and variety, are of great cash value. But this does not apply to many books, now old, but printed since the 17th century; though three or four are rare, and consequently worth a good deal more than what they were published at. Captain Bertin’s book of 1735 is one. Later books, but out of print long ago, generally sell at from a fourth or half what they were published at”*.

Adriano Chicco and Giorgio Porreca's book "Dizionario Enciclopedico Degli Scacchi" 1971 is a remarkable book with much biographical and historical material – one translation managed was :-"p48..*In Italy, the library of Brera owned the small collection of E Crespi, another bequest in 1965 was the library of Dr Lanza (500 books, 280 pamphlets and 30 periodicals). Meanwhile the Italian Chess Federation Library dedicated to Giovanni Tonetti published a catalogue of the collection in 1929. No private collector possesses a comparable collection to some of the great foreign collections. In the last century the family of the Count Salimbeni of Modena possessed a very fine chess library, of which the bookdealers Vicenze and Nipoti of Modena published a catalogue in 1888. The collection was sold to Vansittart when after his death it was dispersed.*

(I apologise for any mistranslation - the Dizionario is a beautiful book)

DEALERS I HAVE MET OVER THE YEARS

The great excitement for me as a teenager was getting an afternoon off in the late **1950's** to give blood at the Sydney Blood Bank. It was usually a Friday and I hitch-hiked to Lidcombe railway station and then to town. All the railway apprentices did it and we went to the York Street Blood Bank. The afternoon was ours and I usually went to coin or bookshops where Alekhine and Znosko-Borovsky were the authors of choice with Fred Reinfeld. I was 17.

I discovered Chess World a little later and bought many a book from Cecil Purdy. In **1963** I bought Murray's "History of Chess" and "Chesslets" by Schumer was one of the older items bought from Cecil. I think it was at Chess World that I bought a few old copies of CHESS by Baruch Wood and noted the rare Chess Book Auctions that he was always conducting. I subscribed to the Problemist in **1966** and noted "American Chess Nuts" in the January **1967** issue of Chess No 521/522. Mr Wood reserved it for me for two weeks on 9 May at £7/10/-. The book arrived early August and Frank Ravenscroft was surprised to hear of another copy in Australia. Slipped into page 286 was a newspaper cutting of Dr Samuel Calthrop dated October 10 1915. He had played in the first tourney in America in 1857. Was this his copy? Later it became the property of the Glasgow Chess Club and eventually got to Mr Wood. I still own it though it is not in good condition.

Guy Chandler the honorary Secretary of the British Chess Problem Society was also a keen seller of the problem books of deceased estates willed to the BCPS and I was a keen buyer. Virtually all of my early problem books came from him. He was a most gracious kindly man who I was in contact with for over 13 years.

In June 1967 Baruch Wood offered me a large number of volumes of the Chess Amateur which I quickly bought at various prices from \$9.75 US a volume down to \$5.25. I managed to get every volume except 12 and 22. What a coup that was.

In February **1968** Frank Ravenscroft died and left me his chess books which today are still a source of wonder. I'd not appreciated what some of the old books were like and to have some of the Australians chessists of yesteryear as prior owners made them more enjoyable. To name a few:- Hugh Baron Bignold, Joseph George Witton, Francis Joseph Young (Hobart). The most astounding book of all was "The Twentieth Century Retractor and Chess Novelties" by Mrs W J Baird and printed and bound in lush gold edged leaf in 1910 by H Sotheran and Co. I bought its companion volume "Seven Hundred Chess Problems" from the BCPS in 1969 for 32/-.

In **1969** Mr Chandler sent me out the BCPS copy of "Retrograde Analysis" and my wife and I hand stamped the diagrams and wrote out the text to complete a unique copy of this very rare book. He also sent out the Problemists Fairy Chess

Supplement which I had photocopied and bound by D S Murray of the Gowings Building in Sydney. It is still quite good – a little faded but 30 years old now.

In **1970** I responded to Alex Sharpe's letter in CHESS of some duplicates that he had for sale. I missed them but he did disclose some of the books in his library such as the 1735 Bertin, Lambe's History 1764, Twiss 1787/9 & 1805, Verney's Eccentricities 1883 and Walker's Chess and Chess Players 1850. Some of his problem books included Baxter, Pearson, Thursby, Taylor, Pierce, Miles, White, Rayner, Kotre and Traxler.

I wrote to Luigi Ceriani but he had passed on and I got a nice reply from his wife Alba Ceriani in Italian. Yes, she would send her late husband's two epic problem books "32 Personaggi..." and "Genesi...". In the middle of the year came news from Baruch Wood that a full set of Hoffer's "Chess Monthly" were mine for \$85 and a little later I got 27 out of 28 bids in one of his problem auctions. I missed "The Dux" 1914 which is an Australian problem book. Later in 1970 Alex Sharpe sent me another nice letter to say there was a "*dearth of old books in this country now and I think they go to Holland and America*". He kindly gave me Dale Brandreth's address of PO Box 6144 Stanton Delaware 19804 USA but it took me another 4 years to write to Dale.

In mid **1971** I sent Baruch Wood a list of wants but he could not fill many. This was a sparse period for buying and in late **1974** Alex Sharpe wrote me another lovely letter about my wants list:- "*I recently paid £50 on behalf of another collector for Hyde's "Mandragorias" 1694 so I am afraid the works of Richard Twiss..... would be rather high. Prices have doubled in the last 3 years, so your American Chess Nuts would now be quite reasonable at £7.50... Sorry I have nothing to offer at the moment, but having retired now have more leisure to travel round our antiquarian bookshops and live in hopes of coming across some treasures*".

On September 12 1974 I wrote to Dale Brandreth for the first time as a result of Alex's letter of 1970. What good fortune it was for me that I did write. Call it fate but a month earlier Dale had bought an extremely fine collection of the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware, Clarence Southerland and it consisted principally of problem books! Dale had been in the business 5 years and freely admitted that he normally did not have much problem material because over the board chess was his preference. I was lucky.

Through **1975** I purchased many hundreds of dollars of books from Dale. He wrote pleasant letters with good book information in them. His 'Blue Moon' catalogue of EXEN contained treasures that I had never seen. A Gianutio for \$500 signed by George Walker, a 1564 Damiano for \$850, the 1634 double Salvio set for \$400 (I bought them), a 1584 Tarsia for \$280, a 1745 Stamma (both of which I bought). I listed EXEN fully in "A Chess Miscellany" and to my then new eyes it surely was a 'one-off'. I also sent it to various collectors in Australia

for their interest. Dale often sent photocopies of the great collectors letters and one from J G White to Eugene B Cook dated April 30 1898 has some nice snippets in it as extracted below:- *“ I very much fear that Gilberg’s family will be unable to dispose of his Chess collection to a college library. You will remember what difficulty there was about Prof. Allen’s collection, and how they ultimately had to appeal to chess players at large to secure the requisite funds to keep the collection intact. I should think, however, that, by holding forth to some of your large New York Libraries, and more especially to one of the Chicago Libraries, the prospect of, by the acquisition of his library surpassing the Grenoble Library with Alliey’s collection; the Imperial Library of Berlin, with Bledow’s Collection; the Royal Library at The Hague with Van der Linde’s collection; the Philadelphia Library, with Prof. Allen’s collection; to, in short, of having the largest and best collection of chess books contained in any public library, would appeal to the pride of the managers of some of these libraries, and induce them to pay what should be paid....”*

And in mid 1975 I wrote to Fred Wilson and bought from him “The Philidorian” by George Walker for \$100 with Miron Hazeltine’s signature inside, a copy of Philidor 1809 for \$35 which was James Magee’s copy, and a 1694 Hyde missing one plate for \$300. It was the start of a bonanza from Fred.

My correspondence with the Cleveland Library started in September 1975 and Alice Loranth was kind enough to send me gratis a photocopy of the missing Hyde plate. I have always been fascinated by J G White’s death and the Rimington Wilson sale that year. We know White bought at the George Walkers sale in 1874 and had George Walker’s handwritten bibliography of chess. We also know that Rimington Wilson bought the majority of George Walker’s library and so the bidding war between the two was such that they got most if not all of Walker’s library at very good buying prices. Was it fate that the Rimington Wilson sale and the poor Sotheby catalogue resulted in Quaritch buying the majority and listing them on August 3rd 1928 for White’s attention and his death on the 28th of August? Was he in Jackson Hole Wyoming when the list arrived? White had sent his wants list to Quaritch in July 1928. All interesting to me.

In December 1975 my correspondence with Dr Meindert Niemeijer of Backershagenlaan 54 Wassenaar Holland commenced. And my first books came from him in early **1976**. And on 29 December 1975 came the great news from Guy Chandler that an 1846 Alexandre “The Beauties of Chess” was mine for £11. The most beautiful book in my library and bound by Kaufmann.

Correspondence with the State Library of Victoria started with Ken Fraser the curator and continues to this day though Ken has retired. The State Library and I have exchanged books, photos and chess facts for about 25 years and it has been most pleasant like my correspondence with John van Manen.

Another interesting young man I had correspondence with at this time was Douglas Finnie of the Glasgow Chess Club. I was involved in an auction of BCM's the club owned but missed them. Douglas helped with information on the great Australian chess player of the 1850/60 era, Alexander George McCombe. Douglas discovered McCombe working as a writer for Marshall, Hill and Hills of 41 West George Street Glasgow, a firm that was agent for the Family Endowment Society. He lived at 47 St Vincent Crescent. In Australia, McCombe was involved in 'The Great Chess Frauds' later in his career.

Dale very kindly sold me the double volume Twiss in mid 1976 for \$165 and dear Guy Chandler continued to supply problem books. Fred Wilson replied to JvM's translated article from Scaecvaria on chess book prices and also his "Bibliography of Australian Chess Literature". He made some interesting comments on Dr N's article: "*..and also for sending the xeroxes and translations of Dr Niemeijer's piece on chess literature prices he was aware of up to 1961 (it is a very interesting piece though I would disagree with him about the relative scarcity of certain items today (1976), and of course, his evaluations have now "gone completely by the boards" It is interesting that he thought the 1930's was the right time to collect chess literature, and that then, in 1960, things were expensive---though we know now that almost anything bought at 1960 prices has at least doubled in value so perhaps the chief assets of a chess collector should be both courage and foresight)*".

I wonder what Fred thinks now about books as an investment with CD's, e-mail and electronic information storage? Could the fund-stretched libraries scan all their rare books onto disc and perhaps start selling them?

In August 1976 I bid for the first time for "A Sketchbook of American Problematists" and it was to be 22 more years before those two volumes came into my library.

In September I attended my one and only Christies auction in Sydney. The book I wanted was a non-chess book but a treasure called "Old Books. Old Friends, Old Sydney" by James Tyrrell. I did my homework going around to a lot of rare book shops in the area and examined the copy on auction which was in top order with a nice cover wrapper and autographed. The reserve was \$55/65. The auction was in the Hilton Hotel and conducted by the chap who had recently sold Governor Bligh's Journal in England to Maggs Bros who acted for the Australian Government. That price was \$73,000. The Hilton room was impressive, the auctioneer was on a rostrum and he wore a very flowery striped shirt and suit. In front of him at a circular table sat all the major dealers of the Australian book world with we poorer types in comfortable chairs behind them. The bidding started and I soon realised that this was to be a very successful auction for Sue Hewitt the Australian agent for Christies. The prices were at their top and one chap bid \$350 for an incomplete set of "Art in Australia" and wanted them so badly that he overtopped his own bid with \$500!! The crowd were stunned as

they knew he already had the bid. To his credit the auctioneer said to him “*You already have the bid sir at \$350*”. There was a titter through the room. Was the bidder being subtle in frightening off everyone interested? The chap sitting next to me said that the books were up a couple of hundred dollars on the last time they were sold. He later got up and left as the ridiculous bidding continued. Item 242 was “Old Books...” and as I had deliberately limited myself by carrying only \$60 I knew I couldn’t get carried away. I got one bid in at \$55 and it finally went for \$90. An interesting day for me. Later in discussion with Tim McCormick's books I bought one from his wife Anne for \$66- a little dear but I’d saved a few dollars. Auctions can be a good place to sell books and sometimes not a good place to buy them.

Fred Wilson made all my dreams come true by offering me some First Series Chess Players Chronicles for \$250 and I couldn’t believe my good fortune. The fabled Staunton volumes were coming to Australia. Later he offered me some of the New Series and also “Chess Life-Pictures” for \$30. I took them all. He also included an article by Dr Albert Buschke on Chess Libraries from the American Chess Bulletin May/June 1939. This was a useful article as Buschke spent ‘several weeks’ at Cleveland, in Princeton (E B Cook chess collection), in Philadelphia (George Allen collection in the Ridgeway Branch of the Library Company of Philadelphia and Richard Lloyd Willing collection in the Free Library), and in Cambridge Massachusetts (Silas W Howland collection in the Harvard University Library).

He examined the Cook letters – hundreds of them – over his long life – that covered the problem art, the history of chess and its bibliography. Cook’s correspondence with J G White covered nearly 45 years- can one imagine this? – what tremendous time these men put into building their libraries. They are in “nicely bound volumes, every letter pasted in”.

One letter discussed the tastes of collectors – Hoverbeck gathered variations of chess, Fraser- mediaeval chess, Linde-the history of the game, Prof. Allen the belles-lettres of chess. Cook replied stating that his first object had been repositieries of problems, then works relating to practical play, third-books of literary interest, fourth the old masters and fifth,American issues. Buschke liked to read of the evolution and tastes of other collectors.

Cook was an inveterate letter-writer and Charles Gilberg was also. Their letters with White are in Cleveland and Princeton.

Von der Lasa saw Cook and Gilberg’s collections in 1886 and in writing to White said that Gilberg concentrated on bindings and that Cook had neat extracts copied from books in which chess was occasionally mentioned.

Now comes the interesting part – Gilberg died in 1898 and his heirs held it together for over 30 years selling it about 1930 to a New York dealer who then

sold it to Silas W Howland who enlarged it by acquisitions from the Rimington Wilson sale. In 1938 Howland died and the collection was bequested to Harvard. It had 2800 volumes. The Cleveland Library was then 12,000 volumes.

Buschke concluded his article by stating that “it was very worth while” to collect tournament books, or problem books, or bibliographical books –special fields.

A very good article. Dale Brandreth examined the Princeton collection in the 70’s and sadly reported that the bulk of the letters had been thrown out. As Dale said: “..the real secrets of US chess history, collecting, personalities, etc. all of which is now gone forever... ”.

Dr Niemeijer closed 1976 for me with the grand news that a photocopy of his Schaakbibliotheken 1948 was on its way.

1977 – I had a letter from Lothar Schmid in early January requesting a wants list and a catalogue of my library. I replied sending the list. The news of Bill Whyatt’s death alone and unloved had upset me about this time.

In February Fred sent me an offer of Bignold’s “Australian Chess Annual” 1896- the only Australian annual of the 19th century. So typical that it should be in the USA and naturally I brought it home. It was a presentation copy from the author and \$60 bought it. It was later bound by D S Murray.

I wrote to George Campbell of Aberdeen Scotland because he was a prominent dealer. But Fred Wilson kept on turning up amazing books. A complete set of the “Our Folder” magazine came my way for \$200 plus the von der Lasa “Geschichte” and the Schoumoff for \$100 each. I also made the decision to write a book on Bill Whyatt about June 1977.

In August Dr Niemeijer sent me a 1541 Vida for \$115 and George Campbell sent 11 volumes of BCM. In September Jim Jones of Canberra emerged from anonymity with an 800 volume chess book collection, then the largest known in Australia. A letter from James E Gates with his beautiful bookplate arrived with Jim’s reequest for rare Australian material. He was to be disappointed. Fred Wilson sent me the 1955 Hague Catalogue for \$30. George Campbell sent another 10 volumes of BCM. Research help on Whyatt was coming from Ken Fraser at the State Library of Victoria. And in late 1977 Fred came up with 3 more volumes of CPC – 1859, 1864 & 1878 at \$20 each. He was trying to fill the gaps. As usual they arrived in a meticulously packed parcel. His amusing paragraph about wives and chess elaborated on serious married collectors whose wives resented the time and money spent by their husbands on their interest (obsession?) and other clients who never wanted a post card sent in case their wives found out they were buying chess books. Was it emotional jealousy? We never did solve that one.

In late December George Campbell's old issues of "the Chess Bookman" arrived. He put out a choice catalogue.

Good Dr N. wrote on my query about Vicent 1495 that the whole of Catalonia had been searched for this book but "*alas...as yet not been traced*". George Campbell had the Vi(n)cent 1495 on his wants list in Catalogue No.7 p 10 and also a 1560 version of what appears to be a reprint of the earlier book.

And just before Christmas, Fred decided to give up the 'evil weed' for the 10th time 'yesterday' as he put it.

1978 – Mrs Alice Loranth of Cleveland Library advised that at least 54 items from the Rimington-Wilson library had been acquired after J G White's passing and were purchased January 8 1930. White had done the selecting not long before his death. A result that would have satisfied White.

I had asked her why the collection did not hold a Caxton and the reply was:-"*..I guess I can see why he never acquired it. You see, he had reproductions of the original edition and he often said that what he really wanted was an outstanding collection of chess research material. He was happy to have photographs and facsimiles of source materials and, being of thrifty New England stock, I am sure he would not have wanted to spend huge sums on a Caxton just to have a copy. He was not a bibliophile in the truest sense of the word as he did not collect for the sake of collecting. Even if you disregard the fact that Mr White's financial resources could not be compared with those at the disposal of Mr Morgan, the two men's collecting instincts were totally different. Morgan collected objects of all kinds, including books, for the sake of "acquisition" and "esthetics". White collected written expressions of human knowledge restricted to those areas which interested him*".

In February we decided to buy the old home we rented from the Council and this meant a large downturn in chess book buying. I'd done very well over the past 4 years and it was sad writing to Dale and Fred that the end was near. Fred very kindly suggested that "*The prices for desirable chess literature seems to be going up everywhere and, though I do think they should stabilise soon, some silly things are occurring. Even Dr Niemeijer is asking true market value for many items on his list 118, and occasionally even higher prices than me for the same item!...*" Fred considered German collectors as being strong then with the "mark" at almost 2 to the US dollar. Four years ago it was almost 5 to the dollar. Dale too was sorry that I was opting out but that I was wise to invest in a house.

Dr Niemeijer sold me quite a few BCM's around this time and also a Ringheiri for \$135. This was a beautiful book recently rebound in vellum.

And I had decided to compile a chess problem book on Bill Whyatt; this took many nights of what was left of the year. An interesting task – once!

George Campbell found some loose months of the missing Volume 12 of the Chess Amateur and sent them to me.

The 1583 Actius in the State Library of Victoria had been looked at by me when we holidayed there in January staying at St Kilda with the family. It was a truly lovely book. Ken Fraser responded mid year with some terrific research proving the provenance of the book to be part of the Franciscan House at Montemaggio "Convento San Antonio" founded 1543. He also did some great work on CPC proving that the first issue appeared in May 1841. His full research will be published.

In July I wrote to Dr Adriano Chicco for the first time about the Venafro Chess pieces and received back a lovely reply in English supporting his view that chess was much older than Murray or Pavle Bidev thought due to Venafro. Today we know through radio-carbon dating that the Venafro pieces are not as old as thought and that Murray's views still hold. Dr Chicco was a beautiful man and my wish to have known him personally grew with the years to follow. How mellow and kind he was in answering my fairly blunt questioning of his views.

Fred send me gratis a copy of one of Max Weiss's 1915 "Favorit Schachaufgaben" and it was great to see the Australian Arthur Charlick's problems in this German work. An interesting series by 'Otto Robert'. The 12 books would be quite valuable today though the paper is acid and brittle. I have No. 8 and No 10 the latter coming from Fred.

Egbert Meissenburg also wrote later that year and gave brief details of his own collection (over 8000 items). His main interests being chess bibliography and history). I sent him a copy of my article on the Anderson Collection with photos.

It was nice of Dale to want to reprint the Anderson article to let others know of the great library on chess in Australia of which we are all so proud. That a country of such small population has such a great chess library says volumes about the passion of one man Magnus Victor Anderson (1884-1966) and the commitment since then of the State Library of Victoria to keep the collection modern.

In October at Chess World in Sydney the proprietor Mrs Rosemary Shiel had the first batch of Chess Challengers in and had sold 11 of them at \$400 each. I went under twice on level 3 and admitted to fascination both with the computer AND the price. I didn't buy - some sixth sense told me that computer prices might come down but I did buy some books from this lovely lady as I had in years past when Cecil Purdy owned the store and up until the closure of her store in 1984. I owe my full set of ACR to her alone and that's another story for later.

I had also called to see John and Inge van Manen on one of my rare visits to Sydney. They lived at Mona Vale then and Inge gave me a large slice of Dutch chocolate cake and made me a friend for life. John's "Bibliography" had just been published and it was a happy time for him.

In October Mrs Loranth responded to my gift of the Anderson article and told me of the microfilm at \$10.50 per reel of old chess columns. I was very taken with this and ordered 7 reels:-Bell's Life, The New York Clipper, The Era, ILN and The Field. A constant source of pleasure today twenty years later.

And late that year Guy Chandler sent me "To Alain White" and Kipping's 300 Chess Problems. I let him know the Wyatt book was 'virtually complete' and that it was on sale to him for \$3.00. He was pleased to do the review and wrote:-
"..the Wyatt book, which I hope to sell as long as I am spared to do it".

1979 – Jeremy Gaige wrote me in January asking for birth/death details of Australian chess personalities and I sent him a few but this was John van Manen's field which of course Jeremy knew.

My correspondence with Ken Whyld also started around this time with the 'Captain Cook' chess set. I have certainly learned a lot from Ken's letters. See BCM Oct. 1978 Quotes and Queries No.3939.

And the Mitchell Library Sydney very kindly sent 37 photographic prints of the Ms "Australian Chess Club" to Cleveland. It was great to see some contact between these great libraries.

It was nice to get a brief note from Dr N sharing our love of the book together. I have always admired passion in any field and I told him of an American chap who wrote to Council where I worked wanting a set of dog registration tags. He was collecting them from all over the world. Not my cup of tea but one has to admire such enthusiasm. He wrote back to Council enclosing some American stamps. The other aspect is contact with people across all age groups. Chess, like many other subjects overrides vast age gaps.

George Campbell sent me a copy of that difficult book to buy "Chess Whimsicalities" by 'Expertus' (James Crake) and very kindly included part of my article on the M V Anderson chess collection in his catalogue. That certainly made the collection better known in the world. It was sad to read in a letter from him that Scots chess players took little interest in Scots chess history. I do hope that situation has changed today.

I had completed "A Chess Miscellany" and ran off 50 copies on the old stencil machine and got the local printers to do a flash cover. It was a surprisingly popular little book of 85 pages and included articles on various book collections and the Anderson library article plus a catalogue of my library and an article

trying to prove Sir Joseph Banks was a chess player and Matthew Flinders who was, and various minor articles. It was pleasing to see it go all around the world.

And mid-year I sent off a near complete Whyatt for review by Guy Chandler as well as becoming a regular subscriber to BCM. I heard from Mr Chandler not long after in early July in which he advised that the BCPS would do its best to sell the Whyatt book and that he was happy with it. I was very pleased to read that. For any collector/player/chess enthusiast it is simple enough today to have run off a small number of chess books that doesn't cost the earth and yet preserves for all time the research carried out. In 1994 I got 60 copies of Australian Chess Lore 6 done by Kwik Copy in Burwood Sydney for a cost of \$200 which included stapling. The master had to be set out page for page as for photocopying and given to them. If it's a success send the masters back for another print run. My thanks to Peter Wong for suggesting this.

Dale wrote me a response to my query about reprints of rare books reducing the price of originals. It is worth repeating:- *"...But frankly, on something like a Selenus, the reprint makes very little difference because it is a simple fact that most collectors cannot really read the text of the early rare books they buy. How many people can actually read ancient Italian or German, in the use of the Selenus? Few English speaking people can even read old English from say the 1500's without special study. But most collectors of early books really don't buy the books for contents except in a rather casual way. After all, if the book has nice woodcuts, it is nice to look through it and admire them, but what else? In the case of tournament books, however, the situation is quite different because there are many-maybe most-people who actually use the books to play over the games. So in that case there is a difference, but it is often not disastrous. Other factors are involved, particularly if the reprint is complete (the BCM did a reprint of London 1883 which was not complete.... and I can still get \$100 for a good copy of the original. There are still many collectors who want the original As issued.)*

"You would need not only condition but other information as well in addition to a broader data base to make any real case on Selenus at auction. There is a lot of chance involved depending on who is at the auction. A few years ago I attended an auction in Philadelphia at which there were four good early chess books. Because there were two chess book dealers present----- myself and one other, and between us we bid a 1656 Greco up to \$650. Had I not been there it would have gone at no more than \$200 if that. Well, it is an interesting subject anyway....."

I was sad when George Campbell decided not to produce any more of "The Chess Bookman". It was a lovely job but he was subsidising it and chess dealing was his sole income.

And I sent a copy of John van Manen's Italian translation of the Pietro Carrera article by Adriano Chicco to various friends. John spent quite a lot of time on that.

In October Michael Macdonald Ross sent me his catalogue which was a surprise as I thought George Cambell was the only British dealer. He had some good items for sale including a 1773 Philidor for £45 and a 1790 for £40.

The death of Cecil Purdy on 6 November brought to an end my dealings with him over nearly 20 years. I had bought books from most of his shops and a few sets and even a board that I fitted legs to and made a table from. The great man was gone.

The response from Michael Macdonald Ross was sad. Alex Sharpe had died and George Campbell was winding down his business. Michael was the only UK dealer putting out lists regularly. I missed those Philidors.

Another translated article on the Venafro chessmen by Dr Chicco came from Moya Gallagher, the late Cecil Purdy's friend. This was sent around also.

In September of 1979 I met Jim Jones, a collecting rival, in Mrs Shiel's Chess Centre in Sydney. She was having a clean-out and we were invited into the inner sanctum where no buyers are allowed. What a show! The problem was Jim was there and try as I might I couldn't steer him away from all the choice items. He was too damn smart. Mrs Shiel got a fit of the giggles as we tried to outmanoeuvre one another from the good buys. Jim bought \$300 worth and killed me off good and proper. We cruised around the room at least three times trying to decoy, feint and bluff but neither fell for the other's ploys. Good one Jim-you done me.

1980 – Correspondence with Dale reminded me of a silly grudge I had against BCM until 1977 and I would not collect it. Now as I think back I can't really recall why. It could have been something to do with rivalry with "The Chess Amateur" but it looks pretty stupid now.

Michael MR sent me a pro forma list of books in early 1980 and I sent him my list of wants.

Jim Gates sent me a nice letter in response to a copy of the Miscellany I sent him which follows:-*"I was very interested to see that your friend (George Venz) had translated my article in ROCHADE. To bring it up to date, I now have approximately 14,500 volumes broken down as follows: Theory –3200 vols; Games Collections/Biography-1400; Tournaments/Matches –4000; Problems/Misc –3100; Magazines –2800. The translation was very good.... I particularly enjoyed Dr Niemeijer's comments on book prices. They are very much out of date. Prices have skyrocketed in the last few years. I have been told that a copy of Ruy Lopez 1561 is now worth between \$5000-\$10,000!. I was fortunate in purchasing the only copy I have ever seen offered. From a collector in Argentina who sent it wrapped in one thickness of thin brown paper tied with a*

single strand of thinnest string imaginable. I almost fainted when it arrived in excellent condition. It was not even insured! I paid over \$1000 plus about \$100 in books for it in 1974. The Tarsia Lopez recently sold over \$1000 in Sweden at auction last December. It regularly appears. The 1561 last appeared at a sale in Germany in 1975 at a price of \$3500. I did not learn of this copy until recently....”

Jim made an accurate count of his collection a few weeks after the above and came up with 13,341 with a value of \$204,769 US. He was deciding to slow down.

Fred Wilson offered me the 1887 Adelaide Jubilee Congress book for \$200 and I bought it and had it bound by D S Murray of Sydney. It is one of the nicest items in my library.

Mid year Ken Fraser of Melbourne confirmed the dating of the British Miscellany and Chess Player’s Chronicle. It was originally a weekly commencing 1 May 1841.

And in July from Dr N came a remarkable copy of Duncan Forbes “History of Chess” 1860. It had been owned by the Melbourne Chess Club and was presented by a person whose name is scratched out of the book but the date of presentation was May 23 1870. The book is in poor condition but how did it get to Europe? Obviously someone in Victoria considered it a duplicate.

Michael MR flew to New York prior to September and bought £1000 of material from Fred Wilson’s massive catalogue. Michael felt that Fred charged more for rarity than significance. Fred would not disclose whose collection was being sold at the time. Fred took me to task about my views of the signed Stamma being the only originals and that unsigned ones were fakes. This is what he had to say:-

“..Stamma 1745 has only one printed edition (i.e. signed & unsigned are same typographically). I have been able to compare as a grubby signed copy with plate clumsily folded went to auction in NYC last week for \$264 – plus 10% buyer’s premium) I have seen different physical sizes depending how closely the copy in question is TRIMMED (I saw a near pristine very tall copy in full orig. calf at a colleague’s last month which he bought in England for 10% off \$450 – (it was a full inch taller than most copies). Really do you think the publisher made Stamma sign every copy? And how many copies did the publisher/printer run off for himself?? Couldn’t Stamma have had a cold or a hangover or something the week some copies had to be delivered somewhere?...”

We also raised another matter about the Christie book of 1801 “An inquiry into the ancient Greek game, supposed to have been invented by Palamedes antecedent to the siege of Troy, with reasons for believing the same to have been known from remote antiquity in China, and progressively improved into the Chinese, Indian,

Persian and European chess...” George Walker states that this James Christie was the auctioneer and presumably the ancestor of the present auction firm! The book was in Lowndes’ Catalogue of Scarce English Books. We never resolved if Christie the author was the auctioneer.

Michael Macdonald Ross gave his views on British collections with James Pattle, Dick Ford, and R G Wade respectively 1, 2 and 3. B H Wood and H Golombek following. The British Museum still had the best collection in public hands and of some books they have the only copy in the UK (eg Lucena)

I only found out about Guy Chandler’s passing in September. The grand old man had gone 28 May at the wonderful age of 90. It was sad to write to his family as the end had come to 13 years of correspondence. It was fitting that The Problemist had a memorial issue to this hard worker for chess problems.

Michael MR in his 22 November letter wrote:- *“I can’t resist mentioning that I’ve just bought another copy of the 1656 Greco complete with portrait of King Charles. I can’t say where or how much, but I can say it’s another previously unknown copy. So much for the myth of “only 4 known complete copies”!! (if that were true, I’ve had _ of the world’s stock through my hands in one year) (my idea of a really rare chess book is Col. Teversham’s “The Second Player in the Chess Openings”, which to my delight I found in a Hastings bookshop for £1!)*

In December I received my first list from Mike Sheehan and have bought a few books from him over the years. And Ken Fraser proved up ‘The Great Chess Frauds’ and sent me a copy. A great piece of research.

1981- Michael MR had purchased D Murray Davey’s collection and as it had a strong emphasis towards problems I was rather interested. His copy of Twiss’s Miscellanies containing only the chess and draughts section I bought for £75.

Dale Brandreth bought Walter Korn’s collection of endgame and openings material and then Fred rolled in with List No 15 which was as good if not better than Dale’s EXEN list of 1975. It stunned me when it arrived in early February. No. 1 was the 1617 Carrera, a book which I had been in love with for years. The price \$1750US. It wasn’t the dearest. That honour went to No 4 Ercol Del Rio 1750 at \$2000US.

And correspondence with Dick Ford started in March and my first contact with Robert McWilliam the new book seller and dealer for The Problemist.

About mid-March came the letter from Fred offering me the Carrera over time payment of around \$200/month which was all I could handle. That was great and I went for it. The book was from the James E Gates collection which Fred was selling on consignment and had been for 10 months. There were about 12,000 books to sell. Fred estimated 2/3 years to sell the lot. The old books made him

“much money”, the modern material he lost on. In Catalogue 14, the Hyde, Actius, Greco, Salvio and Christmas Series went. It also turned out that the 1887 Adelaide Congress book came from Jim’s collection. A lot of the collection was sold privately.

Jim’s decision to sell was explained by Fred :- “ *What happened was that Jim got tired of buying everything, and it became a burden to him.....Jim was seeking a fair deal, I needed stock(!); he trusts me, and so this arrangement came about. He worked like a dog on his collection for about exactly 10 years, and wanted a rest! I think he was also tired of the responsibility of caring for it (& storing it), but certainly didn’t want to institutionalise it (smart man!). He is a good player (Class A, over here,) and now can find time to actually play chess! Jim, incidentally, does not need the money as he owns a big construction company. So, the slow liquidation of his collection, over 2, 3, 4 years is good for him tax-wise also. Jim is a very fair and honest man who doesn’t believe in doing things by halves. He built a great collection and now wishes to dispose of it, after having catalogued it.”All or nothing” for him. We sometimes kid about the fact that since he is a collector ‘type’, he may start collecting again, when this is over. But he promises himself, if that happens, this time only rare, important items in fine copies, plus things he personally enjoys – then it will be much smaller, and much easier to liquidate if he ever chooses to do so!”*

I did find it difficult to follow the reasoning for selling the old books if he wanted to rid himself of the responsibility of buying everything. If he had just sold the modern and not so old books he would have made a loss and that could have been beneficial tax-wise. Perhaps he felt the old book market was peaking and that with the coming of the computer etc that the value of old books would fall. Every collector thinks about that and he may have been before his time.

On insurance of collections Michael MR had this to say :-“ You raised again the question of insurance. Well, suppose your whole library was burnt or stolen. Then you would have to replace it at present day prices, irrespective of the price you originally paid for the books. Hence insuring for replacement is necessarily more expensive, but may be worthwhile (I do!). Of course if you sold the collection you wouldn’t realise as much! – but that’s irrelevant for the purposes of insurance”.

I wrote to Egbert Meissenburg trying to determine the number of copies of the 1617 Carrera there were in the world. I came to the conclusion that there were about 50.

And mid-year I decided to make an offer for “The Tablet” column of the author D Murray Davies from Michael MR. I could only afford a lay by system for the £123 due and Michael was happy with that.

Robert McWilliam the BCPS bookdealer offered me “Adventures of my Chessmen” by G F Anderson from the H R Bigelow collection in New York. He ran the chess column in the New York Post for many years. The price was £15 and the provenance of the book was of especial interest. Robert continued:- *“The book seems to have travelled a great deal since on the flyleaf is inscribed:- “The Brisbane Courier 51st Quarterly Solving Tourney. Won by E Keysor Kirkwood No. USA –Arthur Mosely Chess Editor. So from Gloucestershire England to Brisbane, Australia, to Kirkwood USA, to New York, to London, England and now perhaps, to New South Wales!”*”. Robert offered it to me in front of others because of its provenance. I bought it.

Mike Sheehan weighed in with a 1916 BCM and Bird’s “Chess History”. I bought them.

Dr Niemeijer wrote that the Carrera was *“a very rare book and during 55 years I have only seen 2 copies. I don’t know how many copies of this book exist today. It is difficult to say whether \$1750 is too high a price or not, as I did not see the book offered since a long time...”*

Robert McWilliam told me of Walter Jacobs offer of Christmas Series and Overbrook problem books (including some still boxed!) which *“he has no further use for”!*

Fred Wilson sent me a gratis copy of “A Picture History of Chess” in July and it was a pleasure to receive it. The Breslau Tournament photo on p. 64 shows an unknown shot of the very young Alekhine standing two behind the seated Tarrasch. He did not play but that is him for sure. A great book.

A letter from Vernon Burk of Dayton Ohio suggesting that a chess book collectors periodical be published on an occasional basis. It was a grand idea but withered on the vine for some reason.

Dr Chicco wrote congratulating me on purchasing the Carrera and advising that he had it plus the very scarce “Risposta” of 1635. He must have had a great library.

A nice letter from Dale in August on the value of problem and endings study for the top players is quoted from :- *“..I honestly believe that there are very real limits to how far a player can go as a practical player unless he has some comprehension of the fantastic subtlety and range of ideas present in chess. Much of this is too far hidden and too seldom seen in the ordinary game, but if you notice Korchnoi’s games, he like Lasker, finds ways to complicate positions and to take opponents out of the territory they know to that where they have to fight on uncertain ground. In such positions the Korchnois, the Laskers, and the Fischers make mincemeat of the lesser lights. Problems and studies show new ideas and open new vistas for the players who are capable of absorbing such new vitality into their games...”*

Dr Chicco came back on the Carrera in September:- *“I don’t know how many copies of this book are in the Italian Public Libraries. A copy is in the Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele in Rome. I bought my copy about forty years ago from Rappaport’s library in Rome, so that I did not need to look for the book in public libraries. I know that a copy was in Conte Sacconi’s private library, dispersed after his death (1968). Probably you are right about 50 extant copies. As I perhaps told you already, Il Giuoco degli Scacchi by Carrera is wanted because it is the most old book printed in Militello. The paper used for the print resulted very thin, what caused an easy waste of the book: no few copies had been destroyed. It is mentioned among rare books by G. Burgada ” Libri rari” Milano 1937 p.55”.*

The good Dr continued:-*“Carrera talks about his book at p 31 of Risposta (Catania 1635) in the following terms:-For his shame (that is for Salvio) I wish it to be known that Carrera’s chess work in France is greatly esteemed. Of that a bookseller in Palermo (who is alive today) bears witness; He was twelve years ago dealt through that kingdom and having some chess books of him (Carrera) sold them one ‘doppia’ each”.*

In a letter to Michael MR I told him of one of those pleasing moments in life:- I bought a copy of “Among These Mates” the 1939 Purdy chess book from Dr N in Holland. It was pretty cheap as it was battered, \$3 in fact. I managed to repair it fairly satisfactorily and when In Sydney rang Mrs Shiel the owner of Purdy’s ‘Chess World’ bookshop in Pitt Street and asked her if she had managed to buy one since my last talk with her 9 months ago. No, she hadn’t and I told her that I had one as a gift for her. She was thrilled and that gave me a kick too. On arriving in there on the Saturday morning Mrs Shiel had a large cardboard box for me to ramble through. Turned out there were quite a few rare Aussie chess items and these were given to me as a gift in return. I protested – but not too loudly. I bought another \$60 worth of new chess books so we both parted satisfied. It was great to be able to help her as Cecil and Mrs Shiel were the best of friends. And I missed some of the long discussions we had on chess in that room and other rooms in other buildings”.

This will indicate to readers of these pages just how hard it is to buy rare Australian chessiana. It was printed in small numbers on poor paper and just did not survive in numbers sufficient to trade.

Clive Farmer wrote in October 1981. He had an interest in exchanges but also disclosed his love of the methods and styles of chess notation and nomenclature in the English Language.

On 13 November I sent off the final payment for Carrera. The Tablet arrived just before Christmas from Michael MR. There were 7 parcels in all and I spent four

nights reading it all with an especial love for the letters of famous composers to The Tablet editors.

The Carrera also arrived from Fred Wilson and so the lay bys were complete and all was well in the world. The Carrera had a chess club stamp internally-Berliner Schachgesellschaft 1827 on the title page. Lothar Schmid had sold it to Jim Gates and it came on to me. It was to be my last valuable chess book purchase.

1982 – Mike Sheehan filled a long want with a copy of Verney’s “Chess Eccentricities”.

And in a trip to New Zealand with the family I tried to track down The New Zealand Chess Chronicle 1887/8 only to find the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington had No 1 of Vol 1 only. That library had the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili and a Bignold. The library very kindly sent me a xerox of No 1 and that sent me on a chase to find out where in the world a full set was.

Michael MR was a great correspondent and wrote purely on chess without including book lists at times. His letter of 3 Feb is a sample of what can occur between collector and dealer:- *“I can’t resist writing to tell you of my latest acquisition: a good set of the biography of Thomas Henry Buckle. It’s a typical 2 volume Victorian affair, with a frontispiece portrait to each volume, dark red-brown cloth with gilt lettering on the spine and black decorations on the boards. This is exactly the kind of book I most enjoy finding; it’s almost never in chess collections, & can only be got through the general book trade & only then with the greatest luck, for it’s very scarce. In fact I’ve never seen a set offered for sale before this one.*

A fortnight ago I wandered into the University library with the idea of beefing up their purchases of out-of-print books, & in discussion with the Liaison librarians came to an understanding that they would save all catalogues for me, & I’d collect them from time to time & make suggestions as to what to purchase. Anyway the first catalogue they got was a History list from Howe’s bookshop. I went through it with a toothcombe and found the Buckle listed. No way was that going to end up in a University library! I scurried back to my room, picked up the phone & to my delight it was still available. It was pretty cheap at £23. I would have paid twice as much and still walked on air. Now it’s arrived.

After all this, the chess content of the book is, I must admit, a bit disappointing, being confined to the first chapter, & even then with no account of the 1849 tournament. The reason for this is an unfortunate gap in Buckle’s diaries and letters between 1840 & 1850 (but not 20 & 30). This gap biases the whole work, so that virtually the whole book is on the decade 1850-1860, including the “History of Civilisation in England”; volume two is almost entirely 1861 (when B died) plus appendices and index. There is a listing of chess sources on Buckle at the end; but so sad that the author didn’t talk to Buckle’s chess-playing

acquaintances. Of course, a perusal of the DNB biogs of Staunton & Buckle shows the usual Victorian bias towards respectability & good public works. Staunton's chess rates just a short paragraph, whilst his mediocre Shakespeare scholarship gets effusive treatment. Well, Buckle's "History" is a better work than anything Staunton did on Shakespeare, but nevertheless it is nowadays almost forgotten. Too many sweeping generalisations! (rather like that other self-educated man, Spencer)

Still, the letters show what a decent & intelligent man Buckle was. They shine with that straightforward urge to help without being patronising; next to Darwin (whose "Life & Letters" should be read by everyone). I can't think of anyone else of that age who shows so well his character in his letters. Today, the standard for letter-writing & biography is all too often the awful Bloomsbury set – a bunch of dreadful snobs & neurotics – well, no more on that subject.

I can't remember whether I've mentioned it before, but my interest in Buckle stems from us both being born in the same parish: Lee, then in Kent, now in London. (O C Muller played for Lee for nearly fifty years, but of course he wasn't born there). The parish is the natural social group in English life, being taxed on the area one man could reasonably cover. You can walk to any part of Lee and back with no trouble. Now Lee is part of the giant Metropolitan Borough of Lewisham- million people, an unweildy mass who lack the sense of belonging and place that the old parish system gave them....."

What excellent stuff. And easy to agree with everything Michael has to say about Buckle especially if one has read G A MacDonnell's "Chess Life-Pictures" p 81/86. Buckle's famous sayings were:-*The slowness of genius is hard to bear, but the slowness of mediocrity is intolerable*" or *"He is no player. Chess begins where he leaves off"* or *"He looks on a knight stronger than he can play"*.

In late February Mrs Loranth replied with advice that Cleveland held the New Zealand Chess Chronicle in full and a photocopy cost of \$33.25. I had again been lucky thanks to the great collecting zeal of J G White.

In April Ken Whyld sent me information that the Royal Library in Stockholm had acquired Professor Bruno Bassi's library and that of author Frans G Bengtsson but that it was all printed material, mostly serials. Bassi's manuscripts were not accounted for and the remainder could well be the remnants of his library after other items had been sold. Jeremy Gaige sent this information to Ken. The Cleveland Library had received a letter from the Royal Library at Stockholm about it.

Michael MR discovered Charles Darwin was not a chess player but a backgammon player and had played thousands of games, and, kept a record of the total scores. Erasmus Darwin, his grandfather played chess as did his son Erasmus Darwin Jr. There is a silhouette portrait of them playing.

In May 1982, I read an article by Roger Rosenblatt in Time (5 April 1982) called “*Would you mind if I borrowed this book?*” and it struck a remorseful chord in me. I wrote to Fred Wilson telling him that I’d just returned a book to its owner, a school mate named Kevin Barry who is 60 this year. I’d had the book 21 years! (I attended Kevin’s 60th on 1 May and have since struck up a correspondence with him-the book was mentioned) And so for all people reading this , I have warned you. That book was a collection of Ernest Hemingway’s short stories. The article by Rosenblatt brough forth some responses and the best was by Yeoh Ooon Chuan of Washington DC who wrote:- “*While it is true that my heart momentarily stops beating whenever a visitor expresses an interest in one of my beloved books, I still continue to lend and share with others. Sometimes books do come back to you, even if it happens by pure accident. Once, I lent a book to a friend who lent it to someone else. Two years later, I chanced upon it in the house of another friend who thoughtfully asked me if I would like to borrow it. I told her yes and I brought it home*”.

The Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington received the photocopy of the NZCC and a copy went to the MVA at Melbourne. At last the Chronicle was safe.

In May Fred Wilson wrote me that the 1763 Lolli was mine for \$300. A lovely book. He also told me that the Library Company of Philadelphia housed the Allen Collection and that they acquired it a few years after it was originally offered for sale for \$3000 for \$600. If so that was one good buy. There were some bookplates of James Magee and Alain White on various books and it is one of the finest early chess book collections in the world but was not being added to or upgraded as far as Fred knew. There was also no published catalogue.

Robert McWilliam and wife Lil moved to the Isle of Wight in 1982 and I had a nice letter from Bob offering me some loose issues of “Our Folder” which I took up.

In July Dale wrote me an excellent letter on his views about the number of chess items in existence:- “*..I think the number should be considerably higher than 20,000 but with a number of qualifications and questions. For example, what is a chess title? Is it only a book on chess published by a recognised publisher? If so, then one eliminates thousands of tournament bulletins which contain otherwise unpublished games by the greatest of players (I have over 4000 tournament books and bulletins myself, and many of these are not in the White collection. Some do not even give the name of the publisher/producer). The BCM, which now has over 1200 issues to its credit is counted as one item by the scheme Vella suggests, whereas 10 small pamphlets with nondescript material would count as 10 items! Most people would agree that such a scheme makes no sense. I suggest that the only sensible scheme is to count every issue of every magazine as one item. A bound volume of BCM with 12 issues becomes then 12 items bound in one. I also*

suggest that every article on chess or largely on chess or some aspect of chess (chess players, chess intelligence, etc) be counted as one item, though if 12 such articles are published together in a book they be counted as one item collectively, but that if published separately either originally or otherwise, they be counted individually. Newspaper columns would not count at all unless bound in a book with some continuity to the columns (a complete year, etc) Of course, even there some fuzziness occurs, but that is at least only a second order effect in that case. Well, you see what an argument one can get into. On my basis, I think there are upwards of 400,000 items. On Vella's basis which I consider artificial and misleading, I think he is still or was far short because the White Collection has been quite unsuccessful in obtaining many of the ephemeral items and poorly distributed tournament bulletins appearing now on a worldwide scale. Still, on his basis, I would say that he is not off by more than 5000 items. Betts only covered titles of books in English and lacked thousands of ephemeral items such as policy manuals for local clubs, books of rules and regulations for various chess organisations, etc. By today I am willing to guarantee that on Vella's basis one could find easily more than 40,000 chess titles. Proving it is another matter!"

An excellent opinion on the vexing question of the total number of chess books which has been considered earlier in this compilation. (See Professor George Allen's collection) The comments on Walter Vella's views above refer to his contributions in "The Deluge of Chess Literature" chapter in "The Complete Book of Chess" 1963 by Horowitz and Rothenburg.

Fred returned to this subject in his July letter:- "*..nor do I yet have a 'good' defence of my estimate of there being 40,000 chess books...I am still convinced I am right. I will point out that Sacharov admitted in some issue of Shakmaty v USSR that he didn't include such things as Latvian bulletins of championships (local, national, club, etc) even in Russian characters as he didn't feel such items published in numbers of 100 or less copies should be counted!! (my friend B Zuckerman, told me this). Also, I cannot explain to you unless you actually saw the Gates collection just how MANY ZILLIONS OF TOURNAMENT BULLETINS EXIST AND ARE BEING ISSUED EVERY DAY!! You really have no idea...and if my 40,000 is a little over today I guarantee you it will be correct in a very few (3/4) years. Also what is not listed in Betts (post 1968 US stuff would fill another book) Do you know there are well over 100 publications worldwide on the Fischer - Spassky match alone?...."*

Michael MR wrote a great letter on subscribers to books:- "*I bought a copy of the March 1923 issue of "Our Folder" just to see what it was like & discovered it had a detailed discussion on the subscribers to Philidor's 1777 edition. So I thought I'd look & see whether I had any subscriber's copies (incidentally Magee makes a mistake in assuming that the list of subscribers covers the whole print run of those editions; certainly extra copies would be run off, though not so many as would be the case with post – 1830 books.) Well, here goes: 1749 (1st issue) bears the bookplate of Montagu Earl of Sandwich, who took 10 copies. He was a*

*soldier who became three times the First Lord of the Admiralty (b 1718 d 1792)
This book also bears a bookseller's mark in Chinese?! Makes one wonder where
it got to... 1777 (French ed) bears the bookplate of Baron Northwich who wasn't
a subscriber, but who was by far the biggest landowner in Harrow, Middlesex!!
The book has travelled across the Atlantic at least once since then. One of the
1777 subscribers was Edward Gibbon of "Decline & Fall" fame. 1790 (English
ed) bears the library ticket of John Rutherford of Edgerston, who was not a
subscriber, & who is not in the DNB. Well, this seems to bear out the general
impression that the social standing of chess came down at the end of the 18 C".*

In August 1982 I got my first chess catalogue from Barrie Ellen. It was to be and still is a long relationship.

Michael MR:- *"I have a number of ladies' chess bookplates for the period 1750-1830, suggesting that chess was more widely played amongst upper-class ladies then... On numbers & bibliography, Meissenburg is correctly reflecting the usual librarians and bibliographer's view: serials count as one item. But I have long felt that chess was an exception, since so often single volumes are bought and sold rather than complete runs. I cannot believe anyone would list individual issues in any catalogue or bibliography; but if they did the numbers of items would climb dramatically.*

BCM = 1 item (traditional bibliography and library practice)

= 100 items (you & I)

= 1200 items (Dale & Fred).

Likewise the Illustrated London News series could be one item or (at the other extreme)..it could be 6,000!!

Unless there is agreement on what an item is, then there will never be agreement on what the total is. Meanwhile, I shall take a pretty conservative view. We will reach more agreement if we stick to printed books, since the concept of 'item' is not so fluid. Still, I would want to know whether each issue counts as an 'item'. The notions of 'edition', 'issue' and 'state' are gone over in the standard works on bibliography, but there is no general agreement as to how they relate to item number. In the absence of any other guide, I would list each edition separately, with issues and/or states noted but not numbered or given alphabetical postscripts, as 1223a,b,c & d. Well, to sum up, we need discussion of the methodology or framework for chess bibliography before we start making any serious estimates".

During all these years correspondence and purchase of various microfilm or photocopy from the State Library of Victoria through Ken Fraser continued. I doubt that one could call the State Library a "dealer" but the library is a "collector el supremo" and sometimes discussion about rare book prices and bidding at auctions was the topic with promotion of the library as the chief aim.

Michael MR responded with information on his 1745 Stamma. It was signed "Philip Stamma" but unwitnessed. Michael though the spelling "Phillip" came

from the French language editions which gave the name as “Phillipe”. But as he said:-“In any event, spelling in the 18th C. was not so completely standardised as now”.

Michael is quite passionate about chess typography and has given seminars on the subject. He was able (by late 1982) to be able to illustrate all stages in the evolution of printed chess literature from his own library with the exception of some rare early works and of those he had photocopies from Cleveland. He also advised that whilst Stamma’s book was a landmark, algebraic notation had appeared in manuscripts some centuries before with a carry-over from Ms to print. At this time the Purdy book by Hammond had appeared. Michael:-“*The Purdy book is full of interest, especially for readers like myself who come to the articles fresh. Purdy’s obsession with small scale tactics is really interesting; a lot more could be said about the ‘Lasker-Steinitz Law’ – I am very interested in such things- but so rarely do we see anything so intelligent in modern magazines*”.

At the end of 1982 I wished Dr Niemeijer all the best for his 80th and got a letter away to Walter Counts of the Library of Congress on chess book exchanges.

1983 – Fred wrote that I had bought the Handbuch der Schaufgaben” by Lange for \$65 and that he’d taken up running 4/5 miles a day. He was feeling great physically but that his typing (he said) was getting worse. It was always great to get a letter from Fred. I also got the 1860 Miles “Chess Gems” for \$60.

Robert McWilliam sent me Tomlinson’s 1856 Chess Annual. He was proving to be a very good dealer for the BCPS and wrote nice letters.

Dale wrote in March that the Gates collection was “almost entirely dissipated”. And this was the first of a new phenomenon where youngish collectors sold entire collections and departed the scene.

In April I sent off to Dale, Michael, Dr N, Dr Chicco, Barrie Ellen and Fred my article and photo of me in ‘Collectors Corner’. Michael responded very quickly even though he had just changed houses and offered me a 1944 BCM which I’d wanted for many years for £20. I bought it. Michael had been stimulated by the Purdy book to want all the ACR’s and Chess World. I gave him Mrs Shiel’s address. It was also nice to win a discount in Barrie Ellen’s catalogue by solving the cover problems.

By this time my views on buying had hardened to those on my wants list. It was the end of my major buying with Fred and Dale. My overseas letters were moving more towards research and it was nice to get a letter from Ken Whyld in which he wrote:-“ *...I was at the new home of Michael MR looking at your photograph with running commentary about the layout of your den. I almost felt that I was there*”.

In August I wrote to Hacker Art Books of New York to buy Murray's "History of Board Games other than Chess" for \$34.50 postage inc.

I ordered some very minor bits and pieces from Dale in September. He was as busy as ever with a 'wealth of material' to list. And I wrote to Dr N in October on his views on how many chess 'items' there were in the world today. He had sent me two lovely booklets on the great collection and his win of 'the silver carnation'

The real excitement was the receipt of Jeremy Gaige's "The Chess Historian" an occasional publication but which included Edward Winter's address for "Chess Notes". I was a year behind the rest of the world but soon subscribed. Mr Winter made the comment "*I am not quite sure of the extent to which readers of CN share your interest in early chess history; curiously, very little has come up about it so far from correspondents*".

The book buying coup of the year was the purchase of the first three volumes of "Westminster Papers" from Barrie Ellen for \$200. My final bid for 1983 was \$350 for Dr N's 1766 Cozio. It was not successful.

1984 –An early letter from Michael MR revealed that he had purchased the 1597 Gianutio. He described it as "a beautiful and truly rare book". Fred had offered one to me some years earlier but we went on holidays instead. I had noted a copy for sale in 1975 for \$500 (Dale's EXEN) but that 6 years later it was for sale in List 17 of Fred's for \$1250 and sold on 18/2/1982. Fred was selling new books a fair bit of the time now and he included a mini photo of himself finishing a 6.2 mile cross country race in what he thought was the mediocre time of 51 minutes!

Chess Notes stated that Ken Smith of Dallas had the biggest chess library in the world at 20,000 chess books. And Dale thought there were 1200 serious collectors in the world. Both interesting facts.

Ken Fraser advised that the library had got one copy of Brian Tomson's "Fifty Chess Problems" issued in December 1983 by Brian as a gift. There were only 7 copies. Brian distributed them as follows:-one for himself, Rurik Bergmann, Bob Shearer, Aram Sendjirdjian, Ken Fraser of Melbourne Library, BCPS and myself. As at 1999 I still have my copy and I'm sure Bob, Aram, the MVA and BCPS would have theirs. I saw Brian's copy in the Rare Books section of Newcastle University in August 1997 but Rurik's copy was destroyed. His library was taken to a garbage dump. I have sent xerox copies to JvM and Nigel Nettheim so there are 8 copies around.

I bid for xerox copies of old chess columns in various newspapers from Dale. This is a useful way for amateur chess historians to get good material cheaply. Dale also advised that his own collection by March 1984 was up 30% on the

1977 figures quoted earlier in these pages. He also wrote:- “..Actually, I don’t think chess book prices are rising these days. The Hyde I had is much better than any I have seen offered for at least five years (often they are not complete). Buyers of the heavy items are few and far between in the US and the dollar’s strength makes it tough for everyone else. However, I have always found that these things go in cycles, and since the number of really fine early items only diminishes things work out alright if one is not caught in a bind where he needs money...”

He was right about the strength of the dollar. Today (1999) the Australian dollar is worth 64 US cents or 0.64. It is worth 39 English P. Back in 1984 it was worth 63P. I told Robert McWilliam of BCPS that my big buying days were over but that the disease was terminal with remissive periods. These periods of remission are getting longer for me as at 1999.

About mid year Barrie Ellen sold me two more volumes of Westminster Papers for £54. I was now only missing issue No 130 of Volume 11.

And a brief note from Dale advised that he had visited Lothar Schmid’s library and enjoyed the visit due to Lothar Schmid’s real passion and knowledge. He considered it the most fabulous private collection of chess books and ephemera anywhere. In many ways more interesting than the Royal Dutch Library or the White Collection in Cleveland. His room of duplicates would be the envy of every collector anywhere. He had four Gianutios!

That was astounding. Dr N responded that Lothar Schmid’s collection was:- “ *the biggest private collection in the world, but I’m wondering what is the use of having four copies of the Gianutio book?*”.

I certainly wondered about it – but not for long – after all I’d made the right decision not to buy the Gianutio a year or so back at \$1250. It was clear that Lothar Schmid was ‘cornering’ the market for future resale in a few years time. Good luck to him. Dale didn’t agree with my view and thought the \$1250 a “good buy”. He thought the duplicates would be used for exchange and perhaps he is right. Dale was very impressed with the qualities of the rare books that were in the Schmid collection. Other libraries have ‘copies’. He made the point proved sound some years later that :- “*For the time being the Royal Dutch Library has two knowledgeable fellows doing the work, but that could always change on short notice*”. A prophetic comment.

John Rather sent me Catalogue 1984 – 1 after sending me 1983 – 1 to which I did not respond. This one contained some early BCM years and I was lucky. As for the Catalogue, I considered it the most remarkable I had ever seen including the famous EXEN of 1975. I’d never seen such rare works for sale. Here was one:- No.4 G Ducchi “*Il Giuoco De Gli Scacchi; ridotto in poema erico*”. 1607 \$150. And I noticed that the Twiss I’d bought in the mid 70’s for \$185 was now \$225. Yes, Mr Rather priced fairly. It was a pity I was now out of the market but No

15 interested me as it was the 1561 Alcala Lopez for \$6000. I took a punt and wrote Mr Rather that I suspected this was the Gates copy and he replied that it was and that it would probably end up in Australia!. That could only be the State Library of Victoria. So Fred didn't get the \$10,000 wanted. I told John Rather that my buying of past years was gone forever and that was a pity as my friendship was just starting.

1985 – One of the highlights of this year was the arrival of “Caxton to Computers” the booklet put out to celebrate the birth year of Magnus Victor Anderson (1884). It was interesting to read of MVA's view that private collectors should ultimately hand over their collection for public use. He was Australia's first chess philanthropist. It was satisfying to me to note that yet another average chess player had gathered such a collection. J G White was a strongish player. Dr N was probably likewise but all were not top rank players. They loved collecting for the mental enjoyment.

Dr N responded with the comment that \$6000 for the Ruy Lopez was not a bargain!:- “ *I'm glad I bought the rarities of my chess library 50 years ago...* ” He added:- “*Although nearing 83 years of age I'm still collecting and added to the L/N (last year) about 300 new acquisitions. But it is no longer possible to buy all outcoming chess literature – one must make choice*”. I replied asking him to update his 1948 work and Scaecvaria 1963 and to give the world more of his chess book experiences over the years. He replied :- “*There are far too few lovers of chess literature to make it an attractive matter for me to write a new book on Schaakbibliotheken, issued in 1948. It would be a costly affair, as an edition of say 200 copies would cost a lot of money. I have no idea how many new books on chess appear each year, the L/N picks up a great deal of them, as the library does not rely on the ± 300 items I'm giving each year, but has also its own budget. Perhaps you will be surprised to hear that its amount of works on chess and draughts/checkers has passed 26,000 items. When I am well informed Cleveland P L possesses 24,000 items*”.

Robert Hughes, the Australian art historian had a series of articles called “Money & Art” in a Sydney paper in which he tried to come to grips with art as an investment. He analysed the value of money in the 18th and 19th centuries and worked out a multiplying factor to check prices today. He selected 100 as that factor after noting a British art historian thought 40/60 was an equivalent multiplier factor for 18th century work to the present day. Hughes quoted many art works selling at many more times that 100 multiplier factor and he put it down to two facts:-

1. The greater liquidity of capital today. More cash in circulation.
2. The Times/Sotheby Art indexes which started in 1966.

Chess book collectors could conclude that dealers catalogues are the equivalent of those Sotheby indexes.

So Peter Wilson of Sotheby's started the indexes and graphed them and showed (proved?) that art goes up 25-200% each year! No wonder this boosted the prices. The same can be said about certain chess book dealers catalogues. The 1561 Lopez being a case in point. Create the market, create the indexes and collecting becomes respectable for wealthy people. Hughes concluded that the confidence in art as an investment rested on two matters:-Real or induced scarcity and pure irrational desire. Hughes had another article to come "What happens when the bubble bursts?" I didn't read that but any analysis of the stock market index will show an increase over many years when a graph is produced. That is inflation of the reduced value of money. So if art works or chess books are keeping pace with inflation then the collector is safe. The big rule is "Provided one doesn't pay too much in the first place". And I guess "Don't sell when the market is down".

Barrie Ellen expressed interest in my views above and concentrated on second hand books only being of the view that new books were far too dear. "In my opinion" he wrote, "and from experience and records, I think that as far as this country is concerned (Britain) second hand books have merely kept pace with inflation over the past few years...."

In May the Melbourne Chess Club Jumble Sale was on and thanks to Ian Rogers who passed my name onto the Club President, a catalogue came my way and I purchased "The Return of Alekhine" and "The Dux" for \$25 each. Both very rare Australian chess books which had been on my wants list for years. I missed "How Euwe Won" which went for \$35.

Robert McWilliam wrote me that he still hadn't received the 10 copies of Whyatt that I'd sent 19 March. So I replied on 12 June that BCM had sent me some chess books from St Leonards on Sea on 15 March and so a race was on. As it turned out my books won getting to Robert on 14 June – over 3 months on sea.

Mrs Loranth responded to my less than punctual correspondence with details of the appraisal of the White collection by Thomas Holmes on October 22 1928. There were 284 Manuscripts valued at \$79,675; 137 copies of Manuscripts - \$22,265; 27 Incunabula \$2,700; 19 x 16th century \$1425; 200 later volumes \$10,000; 1000 volumes of Periodicals \$4,000; 1 album of photos of chess personalities \$50; 1 album of 230 photographs with chess problems and greetings to Alain White \$1,000; 658 volumes of clippings \$5,240; 958 volumes of chess unclassified \$47,999; 2827 volumes of stories and novels and 1265 classed books \$4,092. Excluding the latter category there were 11,502 volumes plus 421 Manuscripts for a total value of \$178,437 (Chess & Checkers Collection).

There is a misprint on p 46 of the article on the White Collection - The Deluge of Chess Literature - in Horowitz and Rothenburg's "The Complete Book of Chess" 1963 where it states "five thousand chess items" was the total when White died. From the above it is clear the figure is considerably higher and very

much alters the rate of growth from 1928 to 1963 but Mrs Loranth thought that until the issue was computerised and the White and Hague databases plus White's notes and other bibliographic sources, an "irrefutable conclusion" "on the total number of chess items was not possible.

The library also got Lasker's scrapbooks and his surviving correspondence, the latter was damp and mildewed but eventually separated and a field day for a future Lasker biographer.

After the Dick Ford sale in London the State Library of Victoria advised me that they had offered up to £1500 for the Rowbotham. The Library asked me to give them my opinion on future rare book purchases which was very nice of them. The problem was that whilst I was happy to assist, I wasn't buying much anymore because of the weak Australian dollar AND my knowledge of the rare books was not all that skilled. I did say that between all of us that we could ensure a fair bid was made though.

In November Michael MR sent me a wants list! That was amusing. His big want was the Australasian Chess Review 1919 –1939. I gave him Peter Parr's address. My big want was to hear about the Dick Ford sale.

1986 - In February Dr Niemeijer sent me his new address Laan 20, 1151 AA Broek in Waterland. Sad for me – no more letters to 54 Backershagenlaan. My luck in his lists and also Barrie Ellens were on the poor side but that had to be expected with minimal purchases.

Edward Winter wrote some pertinent comments about collectors and his own attitude was much more functional with a simple photocopy of a rare book giving as much pleasure as an original. He only liked rare books if they offered the prospect of exciting unknown information, but rarity values in terms of price leaves him "totally cold".

Are collectors eccentric? There was a great collector who had a rare book rebound by a famous binder. The collector took the book back as it wouldn't close properly. The binder uttered the classic remark:-

"Heavens sir, You've been reading it!".

And whilst one hopes that all collectors do read their books and make some useful comment on them, there are some who collect for collecting's sake only. Most collectors cannot read the ancient languages in some of the rare books they buy. I am one of those and I hear everyone saying – do something about it! I did write to Mr Winter that rare book photocopies are damaging to the rare book unless photographic reprints.

It was also nice to get a booklet from Alessandro Sanvito on the history of chess in Lombardy.

Edward Winter is a great correspondent and was interested in my comments about the eccentricity of collectors, myself included. I have often been accused of it in a hush hush way when asked by acquaintances what I do in my free time.

This was his reply:- *“..My own observation does not suggest that people in chess (i.e. not necessarily players) have more problems than anyone else. You would be amazed at the convoluted personal dramas that simmer (mostly) beneath the surface in one or two of Geneva’s football clubs....*

The argument about people hiding behind chess and forgetting about living is heard quite often – and has been used about Alekhine. Yet if anyone lived, it was surely him. It is not altogether clear to me what “living” is. A trip to the supermarket, two shorts in the bar and home to watch television all evening? A typical routine, but hardly living. I would be more tempted towards the argument that chess is a wonderful hobby because of its different aspects (history, mathematics, computers, etc-not forgetting chess play!) – variety is not lacking. Not that I am suggesting it is enough on its own, but it is more than enough for a hobby. To think that some people collect bottle labels!...”.

Dale wrote me an anxious note in September worried that I was no longer a collector. I wrote back telling Dale that he was right. A daughter going to College next year was one thing. The Australian dollar being worth 60 cents US was another.

It was interesting to see usage figures for the MVA at Melbourne for 1986. About 1000 people per month average January – August.

Of course my wants were still important and I bid for two Overbrooks in Barrie Ellen’s latest lists:-A Sketchbook at £85 and Silhouette at £60. I missed both.

Arthur Willmott the great Australian solver and problem friend had a coup in late October 1986 which he can best explain:- *“ I had a stroke of luck yesterday, whenever I go to Adelaide which is only about every 3 months although I hours drive only, I call into a second hand bookshop and browse through the few chess books and have never seen anything worthwhile, but yesterday found 10 problem books, 7 of them Xmas series and got the lot for \$30. The oldest one was “Les Tours de Force” 1906, there were 2 dated 1911-“More White Rooks” and “Running the Gauntlet” and thought it strange for 2 Xmas Series in the same year. The others were 1914, 1925, 1933 & 1934. One of the other books was “Chess Problem Science” by Kipping and inside the front cover was written “With the author’s compliments to F T Hawes. C S Kipping June 1938. Another of the books had the following “Awarded to P O Pedler Esq. Of Blyth SA 1st Prize Schor Theme Tourney Australasian Chess Review 1935. Naturally I was thrilled by my find...”* And so he should be! At \$3 a book that was a great coup. I guess the dealer must have sold the original seller about \$20 or \$2/copy. A tragedy for the original seller who did little research. I think they were part of P O Pedler’s collection. He was a South Australian and Fred Hawes would have sent him those

books as Pedler was solving pre WW2 in ACR. Pedler was one of the best and a good friend of the late Frank Ravenscroft. He was an Australian problem giant.

Clive Farmer sent a letter from England in late October telling me that he would be in Australia with his wife in late November staying in Sydney and would like to call. Unfortunately we live 300 miles due west of Sydney. Clive rang from Sydney on 21 November and we had a great talk. He had about 1000 books, a full run of BCM, Chess Amateur and Chess Monthly (Eng) and is a keen book binder, making money from the work.

Robert McWilliam was suitably stunned with Arthur's coup and suggested that it would have been fair enough \$30 for each book!! I had passed onto Robert the news of Brian Tomson's death and that his collection was headed to the University of Newcastle. I bought a few problem books from Robert during the year but little else overseas.

1987 – Tony Mantia replied to my letter of late last year and sent photos of his library. He had a wonderful collection and that has been written up in earlier pages.

It was nice to hear from Ken Fraser that Clive Farmer had a morning with him at the MVA and saw the collection and the conservation and bookbinding departments.

And John Rather sent his 1987 catalogue which allowed me to bid for an early BCM and "A Sketchbook" which had bobbed up again. No luck.

In March Ken Fraser stayed a night with us and it was great to show him my library, give a few duplicates to the MVA and show my photo collection. He was going through to Armidale to collect the chess papers of the late Gaius McIntosh who had been a very fine correspondence chess player in the past. His widow had donated the papers to the library. Just before Ken arrived he responded to my earlier letter on collecting:- *"..I was interested in your enclosures about collectors... the trouble is that they come in all shapes and sizes and they have so many different approaches. Take for example your comments on The Philidorian. For practical purposes you need the text of the magazine. Well, you can have that for a few dollars by getting hold of (which I am trying to do) a recent reprint of it published by the Chess Player Nottingham. At the same time I think that a collection like ours should have the original and so when it appeared in Rather's catalogue (which he sent to us airmail) we rang the States to try and get it. It had already been sold to, of all places, The Hague collection. They already had it but the reason they went for Rather's copy was that it had practically all the original covers. For that they paid \$400 whilst Rather sold us a set, without the original wrappers, for \$250 I think it was. It arrived last week and I think you are right. It's a piddling little thing, but for the sake of the collection we had to have it. The first English chess magazine and all that. At least in a library we can put it out in*

a display case showing the earliest chess magazines from all over the world and slowly we might get our \$250 worth out of it.
I don't know that I've said anything valuable about collectors and collecting but I do know that I find myself going in two directions about it all. I appreciate the value of a rounded and well-balanced collection or of a collection which concentrates on just one particular strand of a subject; but I find myself uncomfortable with the intensity which so often creeps into collecting or with the approach which finds it difficult to throw out the rubbish that accumulates or even to see that it is rubbish. For example, we have one book which is in the collection ONLY because the cover has a picture of some chessmen. It's some science fiction novel of some sort in German which we bought from Lothar Schmid. Useless it is. But then, some people collect advertisements which have chess pictures in them. It's what turns you on I suppose... ”.

Ken raises the perennial problem of chess book buying by mail. He bought the Walker magazine “The Philidorian” on spec just like I did. Mine has the signature of Miron Hazeltine in it and is dated “1856 N.Y.City” Pre Morphy. And, I am also a George Walker fan. I doubt if I could part with it.

The book “On Collecting” by Lord Eccles 1968 has a good chapter on book collecting. I wish I'd read it before I purchased it in 1984 when my buying run was over. On p 101 he writes:- “..Collecting ought to be fun and it cannot be if you choose a subject outside your means. Much better to aim modestly and make a really good group than pine for the rarities that are beyond your reach....” And this is where “mail order” buying comes unstuck. Yes, sure, you can send them back to most dealers and probably soon get a reputation as a pest not worth sending books to. And then some of us, and I'm in that category, have a wish to learn other languages and READ those superb book in german just like the great Dr O'Keefe did in the 1930's. But I doubt if I ever will. What is the relevance in this? My wife laughs at those non English language books and I have curbed my buying in that area a lot. But what can one do when a dealer sends a list and there is a foreign book that has a five star rating by critics? Buy it!

I also got a letter from the great French chess book collector Dr Jean Mennerat requesting a copy of “A Chess Miscellany”. It started a good correspondence. And when Ken was here he saw Barrie Ellen's catalogues and was interested in them.

In April another catalogue came from Dr N and I bid for a few minor items in it. I suggested to him that if someone would pay \$50 million for a van Gogh that minor art works such as chess books might continue to hike.

I sent a photo of Ken and myself to him as a memento of Ken's only visit . Reading the paragraph by Maurice Rheims in his lovely book “The Glorious Obsession” to Ken was something I enjoyed. Some of us have lucky coups but Rheims knew value when he saw it:-

The scene was the Hotel des Ventes Treasure Island about November 1960:-

“..having a few minutes to spare before auctioning someone’s library, I passed the door of a salesroom where the leavings from a number of personal estates were about to be dispersed in one of those sales executed ‘by order of the court’ and followed assiduously by minor antique dealers and the old-clothes merchants. Poor stuff, if the sombre symphony of brown and rufous shades exhibited by the furniture piled ceiling high was anything to go by.

I entered the adjoining storeroom where they were making heaps of the lots already knocked down. It could have been a set for a play by Gogol; something between a morgue, the office of a suburban law court, and a slaughterhouse.

Perched on his rostrum, a colleague of mine was arranging a few small items on one of the oak trays, covered in rep, which is the standard form of display for lots of this class. As each piece was passed to him by his clerk, the auctioneer announced its particulars.

“A small japanned box, reproduction Napoleon III. Three tin soldiers. And..” he groped for the right word, “a kind of glass block, with ornamental spirals. Cracked in places,” he added.

The porter took the tray and displayed it to the assembly. “Who will bid twenty francs?” asked the crier.

A few hands went up. The first three rows were occupied by regulars who kept up a running fire of comments among themselves and tried to value the items.

“Thirty francs..thirty five...forty francs...come on gentlemen, let’s get on with it”. My colleague was bored.

The tray wobbled like a palanquin being carried over a bumpy road. My neighbour held it up on its way round. At that moment the lump of glass, curiously mottled with patches of milky white, flashed briefly into vivid prismatic colour. But what most people were interested in was the reproduction japanned box. I made a tiny movement. My colleague, smiling, noted my bid: eighty francs.

“For your collection, Maitre?” said a dealer ironically.

The fact that I was pushing up the price made people curious. Were they missing something? They asked to have it shown to them again.

Others pushed the price up too, as if on purpose to annoy me. 300 francs. I went on signalling. At 700 francs the hammer came down. I left the box and toy soldiers where they were, put the lump of glass in my pocket and hurried off to the room where the books were waiting.

And while the expert was pointing out the features of a certain first edition of Aurelian on Japanese vellum, together with four unpublished letters by the poet Louis Aragon, I put my hand in my pocket. My purchase felt heavy and lifeless. For a long time it stood on my desk, keeping the telephone company and increasing the usual congestion; in hot weather I used to take it in my hands.

A few years ago, the great Orientalist Jean-David Weill called on me to discuss what to do with certain persian miniatures.

“Allow me,” he said, picking up the lump of crystal. “How extraordinary. It’s tremendously rare. How on earth did you manage to get hold of this pawn?”

“A pawn? From a set of chessmen?”

“Yes,” he said “And it was carved in the Middle East about the tenth century”.

Today, whenever I look at this relic chipped at neck and base; this survivor from the age of the Caliphs, I wonder what mysterious train of circumstances has brought it into my hands. What first put it into circulation? What had been the lives and fates of its previous owners? Did they know how valuable it was? How did it reach the Hotel des Ventes? Why had it chosen me as its possessor? Someday a child of one of my grandchildren will overlook the value of this pawn. It will set out for some new sale and be forgotten again---it's nothing much to look at, after all. An inhabitant of Quimper or New Jersey will acquire it and put it on his desk; it's heavy enough for a paperweight. And sooner or later some dolt will drop it on a stone floor and it will expire, shattered into a thousand pieces”.

Probably a pawn from the rock crystal pieces shown in Wichmann (Plate 7). A pity the pawn is not pictured. The description page in W. suggests a height of 3.7cm; diam 2.5cm cylindrical object, curving at the top. One piece with palmetto decoration. Not quite “ornamental spirals” nor “a glass block”. On page 21 of Lanier Graham's book are shown the Ager chessmen. These have more circular design but again not really convincing. Would Rheims or his family really sell it as a paperweight once it's value was known??

A letter from Dale mid-year had me bidding for some small problem items. And a small gift from Dr N of an interview he gave to “New in Chess” by ten Geuzendam 1986 but in Dutch! “ *I'm now living in a small village*” he wrote,”*But collecting chess literature is still one of my hobbies...*” It was to be the last catalogue received from this most gracious of men. He was very pleased to get the photo of Ken Fraser and myself in our Narromine backyard.

And then came the English version of that Dr N interview with Geuzendam from NIC No 4 of 1986. It is just simply stupendous and a MUST for all book lovers. “*Your foremost urge should be love of the book*” was the heading and that just about sums it up. The article displayed every quality of the great man. He was helpful, kind, sharing and a philanthropist.

What a noble act to give his collection to the public and then work for it until he died. It was kind of Ken Fraser to send me this interview and the news that the Henry Tate papers as well as MacIntosh's were now in the MVA. Tate's papers had been handed in by Arnold Fraser of Nunawading and a member of the defunct Camberwell Chess Club to which Tate's daughter many years ago gave those papers.

Michael MMR's sale was a shock and later I heard he'd taken up bridge. Sacrilege!

Jean Mennerat sent a nice note on receiving “A Chess Miscellany” and a copy of his superb bookplate. He had a den in his house too and had left Paris two years ago for the country. He had started his chess collection when a medical student in 1937.

And I sent a full wants list to R McW of the BCPS – mostly problem books. He noticed that quite a lot had disappeared from it since the last list I sent to him in 1982. Especially Westminster Papers.

In November 1987 Ken Fraser sent me some heavy analysis on BCM 1969 p 218 where it stated in Vol 1 of CPC that a portrait of Philidor by Gainsborough had been in the possession of a Mr Holford. BCM wanted to check that out then and KF could not help. That great historian James Keeble had noted a J Holford owned a Caxton and that made me think the Gainsborough Philidor might be a possibility. There is no Holford in the 1749 Book List of Subscribers, nor in the 1777 Book List published in “Our Folder” March 1923. Pity.

And there was a big hunt for the 1870 booklet on the telegraphic match games between NSW and Victoria in 1870 and published by Henniquest. To date no-one has found it.

The great man Dr Niemeijer had passed on 5 October 1987 aged 85.

1988 - The tragic news for collectors in late 1987 was the double suicide/mercy killing of the Australian chess duo-the Kellners. John was depressed after a car accident and it appeared Narelle helped him end it all and then a few days later her own life. I knew them both and especially John and found the whole thing upsetting. John had encouraged me back in the early 1960's to keep up my chess interest and I am still glad he did. There was a fire but most of the library was saved excluding the manuscript and letters material. The library went to Bob Theakstone of the NSW Chess Association and later Cathy Chua got some of it.

In April R McW of BCPS sent me some missing back issues on The Problemist gratis.

And in June a book that had been on my wants list for 20 years was missed! The reason? I hadn't sent my wants list to Barrie Ellen. The volume was Volume 12 of the “Chess Amateur”. Ah well – them's the breaks.

In mid 1988 Robert McW sent me the “Confidential Report of the sinking of the St Margaret”. This was the merchant ship my father was killed on in February 1943 on the way to South America. A friend of his worked in Admiralty and it was a thrill to get it 45 years after the event. It even included the U Boat and its Captain's name. Another benefit of friendship with dealers.

We went to Expo in Brisbane in July and I spent some time browsing the book shops of that city. Picked up a couple of cheapies and listened in to a ‘stock-take’ of sorts where the pretty young girl read out the titles of books to a serious young man and chatted him up at the same time. Ah, love blooms everywhere and old book shops should not be immune. There were some lovely chess sets in

the Russian Pavilion at Expo and also Kasparyan's "Domination in 2345 Endgame Studies". I missed Karpov as his flight was delayed.

I sent my wants list to Barrie Ellen – better late than never. Naturally it contained Volume 12 of the "Chess Amateur"! And KF sent me Vol 2 of Steinitz's "Modern Chess Instructor". The Melbourne Library had acquired it on 12 August 1905. A nice companion volume to Vol 1.

Oscar Shapiro sent me a book list in late 1998 but as I wasn't buying much I thanked him for it and made some comments about book prices. The Cozio was \$2500, a set of Le Palamede was the same. A colleague of his had sold two Cozios for \$2000 each a year or so earlier. His 1988 Catalogue copy was uncut! Amazing.

KF sent me a photo of Anatoly Karpov, Gary Wastell and himself in the MVA on 30 Oct. It is a terrific snap of them all and good publicity for the library. And in mid November an old chess friend and his wife George and Merle Andrews visited. It was grand to see them. George and I first played chess almost 30 years earlier.

1989 – I thanked Ken Fraser for sending me the article on Kurt Rattman given earlier in these pages. My sort of article as Ken surmised.

Another list from John Rather had the Fiske Memorial books and a few CPC's but I missed them all.

On Alex Goldstein's passing in September last year a few months went by but a message was got to Ken Fraser and eventually the Goldstein Papers came to the MVA. Another pleasing result and safe now. Alex's books were forwarded onto the BCPS by the MVA as required in his will.

Ken had lunch with Mrs Goldstein in mid April and here's what he wrote:-
"...Boy, what a cook! Superb fish (John Dory) and then, after a palate cleanser of an excellent but very simple pureed apple she topped it off with coffee and TWO magnificent Polish cakes. No wonder Alex had a verse framed in her honour about being able to do without a chessboard but not without a good cook".

The library also had an interesting phone call from Bookseller John Dean who had two leaves from the 1483 Caxton. He had bought them in Brisbane at a book dealers fair a few weeks earlier. \$2,500 was the asking price and as the library had fragments of a Caxton, it was interested. It turned out that the full leaf was advertised in a Melbourne paper "The Age" 6 May 1989. I was not able to find out if the library acquired the two items and naturally the provenance was essential for the library.

The interesting question was how could those two pages have survived so long as to be offered for sale 500+ years later. Yes, they could have been slumbering inside some ancient folio. Or they could have been out of one of the many defective Caxtons in the world. A detective story par excellence.

I sent my wants list to Clive Farmer on receipt of his catalogue and I sent him my meagre order plus a wants list. Clive very graciously sent me the missing No 130 of the Feb. 1879 Westminster Papers in photocopy making my set complete. No charge either. A friendly gesture. The library at Melbourne got a 1762 Philidor.

I bid for a 1714 Greco and two years of CPC – 1851 and 1852 from Barrie Ellen and was lucky enough to get the CPC's. That left only 1848 missing to complete a full run of the first series. I still miss this volume today.

The Tasmanian dealer Neville Ledger pulled off a great coup around this time purchasing some old chess books in Sydney that belonged to a Mr Shaddock. I have had a long association with Neville and he is a good chess friend. Neville decided to keep the books for some years and sold them in 1995.

Boris Spassky visited Melbourne in May 1989 and KF kindly gave me his signature and a list of the simul players at the Hyatt 25 May.

And in late 1989 I bid for Meyer's "A Complete Guide to Chess" £65 with Barrie Ellen and was successful. Very late in 1989 I took up his offer of 17 volumes of La Strategie for £385 by lay by. It was good of Barrie to agree to this.

1990 – John Rather sent a very attractive problem catalogue but I was unable to bid due to La Strategie.

And early this year Jas Duke of Melbourne wrote me for the first time. His knowledge of American Civil War History and 19th century chess history was overpowering. It was to be a very productive two years before his demise at age 52 from an hereditary illness.

In April I wrote to Mrs Loranth after a five year lapse. As usual she responded and I was able to order the very rare 1861 Chess Monthly on microfilm and continue research with Jas Duke and the Civil War.

And Nigel Nettheim and his wife Dawn spent Easter with us. Nigel is a computer expert and programmed our old IBM PC-XT to create chess diagrams. It was great to see them.

About mid-year Ken Fraser wrote to say that a change in the State Library meant he would no longer be looking after the chess collection. He had been in charge for twenty years.

I wrote to Ken thanking him for his custodianship of the collection over that period and that it had grown well because of him. It was sad to read in BCM June p 264 1990 that changes were occurring at The Hague.

My good problem friend Arthur Willmott made another spectacular coup in an Adelaide bookshop – “The Chess Euclid” by Kling.

My wife Norma booked our trip to England. We were leaving 3 August back 27 October. Bookwise and dealerwise the trip was great. We carried out research in the British Library, Edinburgh, Dublin, Oxford and met Bernard Cafferty if briefly and Robert McWilliam of the BCPS and his wife Lil and their corgi dog Sarah. The highlight was going to UIG and standing on the Lewis chess pieces site. A very few minor books were bought at Stornoway, Chester, Cavan in Ireland, Plymouth and the Isle of Wight. I also bought a replica Lewis set at the British Museum. We also saw the Lewis pieces in that great place and also Edinburgh and as well saw chess pieces at Winchester and Norwich. I also tried to find de la Bourdonnais and McDonnell’s graves in Kensal Green cemetery. No luck. A visit with Ken Whyld was really good. His library and knowledge on all things chessic were overpowering. A visit to Bridport (JB of Bridport) was also interesting and Liverpool Library was tremendous for access to wills. I found Howard Staunton’s there. The major regret was not calling to see Barrie Ellen after promising that I would. Two things kept me away:-the London traffic and temptation. All book buyer’s know what I mean.

My one and only dealing with Michael Ehn of Vienna was about this time. I ended up sending him a Whyatt plus a draft for the Sacharov Russian Chess Bibliography. Dr Chicco passed on 30 August 1990. Alessandro Sanvito was sad and so was I.

1991 – I received photos from Dr Jean Mennerat of his library which must rank as one of the finest in the world. I also bid for the Dobbs “A Chess Silhouette” in John Rather’s sale at \$125 but missed again.

In March I received a lovely letter and enclosures from Pam Thomas of Hastings whom I had met in Hastings Public Library last year. This was where the 1895 Hastings Tourney took place and Pam was researching the building.

The Sacharov from Michael Ehn arrived mid-year plus a photo from Robert McWilliam of our visit to their home on the Isle of Wight. Also Montigny’s “Stratagems of Chess” came from Barrie Ellen for £35.

Later Robert McWilliam filled in a few Problem Zagreb wants. This is a difficult magazine to buy. And about this time Ken Fraser sent me some tremendous research on A G McCombe the Scots player cum businessman who came to Australia in 1853 and lost his entire business due to a shipwreck near New Zealand in the 1860’s. A tragic story for “The Great Chess Frauds” person and a

credit to KF in digging it out. The MVA was also interested in Captain's Cook's chess set but would not buy.

I bought Gossip's "Chess Players Manual" in Barrie Ellen's sale for £26.

1992 – About April I got a catalogue from Dale Brandreth which included "A Sketchbook of American Chess Problematists" for \$425 but I missed it. It was a very good catalogue and the residue of several good collections Dale had acquired over the last 10 years.

About this time the State Library of Victoria got a 1694 Hyde and later again did rather well at the Blass sale as mentioned in earlier pages.

In mid-year I wrote to Dr Harald Ballo. The link, as always, was John van Manen and I told Dr Ballo that my book buying 'disease' had died down 'somewhat'.

With Jas Duke's death mid year, the Melbourne library acquired his collection by family donation. A very safe place for the library. It was very hard for me to get over Jas Duke's passing. As a chess historian he was up with the best of them. One of his letters to me was 17 pages long and that in an age when few people write. He never kept copies of his letters and so John van Manen ensured his series of letters went to the MVA where they are now. His library was difficult to assess being a mixture of chess books and history. His collection of Olms reprints was rather good.

My last job for 1992 was to send off some "Chess in Australia" magazines to Jean Mennerat who had been kind sending postcards etc and was having difficulty keeping his copies up to date. Jean had bought a couple of nice items at the Blass sale and also got a few in Dale's massive problem book catalogue. Good for him.

On the 18 December my good friend Ken Fraser retired from the library he had so lovingly served for decades. What a loss he was. John van Manen, Ian Rogers and his wife Cathy were there for the historic occasion. Some people should not be allowed to grow old. His knowledge on chess grew all the time but he probably looked forward to the day. Ken received a copy of a rare print of two people playing chess in Geelong in 1858. His pre 1900 Catalogue of the Library was a fine effort.

1993 – I received from Robert John McCrary a copy of "The Birth of the Chess Tournament" 1982. A most interesting 13 page document with excellent references.

Robert McW sent me the Karpov Encyclopaedia in March. Again a beautiful book. Pity my Russian is nil. In April he sent the FIDE problem albums.

In mid year Ken Fraser advised that Berkelouw's of Sydney put out a fabulous list of chess books. The library got some good material from it. The library also acquired some material from the former Sydney chess player, barrister Malcolm Broun and got a Carrera about this time from overseas. Ken was doing voluntary cataloguing at the library of a Tuesday and Friday.

Harald Ballo and I were discussing "the total number of chess items" and he had a lot of useful things to say:- "*...I do not have any certain knowledge on how many chess books there are today. As far as printed chessmatter is concerned a chess item means for me simply each independent entity of a printed chess theme. There are Journals, counting as one item per year, there are articles in Journals, which need not mainly be devoted to chess, there are books and booklets and Typoscripts.*

I am quite sure that modern books are all registered by the main national libraries in England, France, USA, Australia, Russia, Japan, Spain, Italy and Germany. With upcoming computer aided storage and registration systems and the agreement upon international classification systems (ISBN) for example, there should be no problem to quantify those books which have been printed since that time. It therefore would be convenient to subdivide the whole subject into three categories of Chess books.

- 1. Books edited and printed before 1900.*
- 2. Books printed before the upcoming international book classification systems and after 1900 (the National Library of Germany is the main one here and already at an internationally accepted standard). With rather high probability one can estimate that these have been introduced at least in the late seventies.*
- 3. Books printed after this time.*

Calculating Book numbers under the first category makes one refer to the old authors and bibliographies such as von der Lasa, Walker, Rimington Wilson etc. Niemeijer wrote a nice booklet about "Schaakbibliotheken" where one can find some more information. I am quite sure that there are already estimates of the books printed before the time when Bledow, von der Lasa and Robert Franz started collecting chess books. I think that Petzold gave some estimates in an article concerning the von der Lasa collection. I don't think the number of those books is difficult to calculate.

The second category covers the books printed since 1900 is more difficult but will be easily solved when databases in one of the big libraries in The Hague, Cleveland or Bamberg are available.

The third category should be easily calculated. There is an enormous number of books since 1970.....

More generally said, Bob, I do not think that the crude number of chess books in one's collection is of real importance. So, I have never counted them. As I recently

bought ChessBase I will soon be able to publish my own chessgame-database in printable form. The exact number of my chess 'items' will be known when I have finished creating my database a draft of which is enclosed.....

I find books on my shelves when I am browsing through them at midnight when my family is sleeping and I then play through the old games. Reading Walker or Lewis or Preti or Fiske revives the old times...Returning to the issue of how many English, German and French etc Chessbooks have been published I can't answer this. General considerations suggest that English language books must hold the leading position".

Harald enclosed a 21 page bibliography of his books with 396 entries. There were some marvellous items. It dated to September 1993. It was news to me to see a reprint of Betts 1968 work in 1988 by the Chess Player Nottingham.

In October Barrie Ellen sent List 38 but my wants were minor. Ken Whyld also produced List No 44, his first for many years.

In November John Rather had another "Sketchbook". This time it was \$385 but again I missed out.

Eric Fisher wrote later that month. He now had a full set of BCM and a full set of Hoffer's Chess Monthly. He got that for £269. Very good buy. He also had a full set of Westminster Papers and Brentanos. A pretty good collection. He wrote asking for help in collecting Australasian Chess Review and only needed 34 issues from the years 1930 –36. Eric went to the Blass sale:- *"..He had some wonderful stuff. Dale Brandreth, Lothar Schmid, Jim Hayes, Ken Whyld and other collectors were there. It was all over my head and so fast!....so I didn't bid for anything. One lot that wasn't sold was a scoresheet of Morphy's and a full set of scoresheets from 1927 all signed-beautiful!.."* He finished his letter by writing that:- *"it was one a.m. the coal fire's gone out, my feet are freezing so I'm off to bed with my hot water bottle...at 10.00am (the next day) It"s snowing heavens high!"*

A lovely enthusiastic letter, I replied that it was 40 degrees here with bushfires!

1994 – Tyrrell's famous store at Crows Nest Sydney had been on my agenda for many years and we got there in the New Year. My friend Nigel Nettheim told me that a chess collection had been sold to Tyrrells but on arriving one chess book took my interest though it was rather dear at \$25. It was "Chess" by R F Green 1897 5th edition inscribed:- *"6th N.S.S. Tourney won by F R Smith 15/11/1898 O G Albers(?) Chess Editor"*. I was astounded. How could this book have turned up here as Frank had left me most of his books in his will? Then I remembered – he had given me the odd book when I had visited and he had obviously given this book to some enthusiast as a gift many years ago. I rang his daughter Enid Daghish at St Ives and she was amazed also. It just went to show that rarely do chess books ever get destroyed. They seem to get recycled. A great store with

books all round the walls to about 3 metres height with lower central shelving at waist height. I saw one of John Watkinson's books on chess at Tyrells. I didn't buy it.

A Christmas present I sent out to various friends was "Chess Extracts from Proquest" and in it was a long article on Marcel Duchamp plus others. Jean Mennerat was involved in writing an article in German on the Chapais manuscript. Harald Ballo and he were working together on getting it right for publication. Jean had also had a big reunion with his wartime friends and "chess was stranded" so he said.

I bid in Barrie Ellen's No 39 catalogue but all sold.

And the "Catalogue of the Books and periodicals to 1900 in the M V Anderson Chess Collection" compiled by Ken Fraser was published 15 March. It was the final version of a draft issued in December 93. Anyone wanting a copy should send \$5 to the Library at 328 Swanston Street Melbourne 3000 Victoria Australia – 37 pages and 624 items. Note the periodicals count as 1 item.

A marvellous letter arrived from Harald expanding on his bibliographic views:-
"23 May 1994..The Bibliographical data concerning my Chessbook-Collection comprises right now exactly 1773 entries counting the years of La Strategie and CPC and the doublets separately. In a computer based data base it is much more convenient to make one entry for each year. In this case the program can create itself special bibliographical outputs as there are "all printings before 1900" and so on. Making the entries I began 'bookshelf by bookshelf' and so it came that Lusic's bibliography is not yet entered.

Concerning the Statistics it is important to notice that for example Cleveland lists many different issues of Vida and Cessoles etc. which makes the total number much higher. Additionally, the Cleveland titles have been summed up in a Catalogue whereas Lusic and Betts made a Bibliography. A Catalogue always makes reference to a book which is physically present in the Bibliotheque and refers to it by a Signature number so that a researcher can find it on the shelves. On the other hand a Bibliography tries to sum up all known works which means that for example doublets aren't there....A pragmatic way to solve the problem would be to examine the lists of the Collections of:-

- 1. Robert Franz Katalog der Schach-Bibliothek des verstorbenem Herm Robert Franz, Albert Cohn Berlin 1885; the list comprises 1057 numbers not books; (I did not check if there are doublets etc)*
- 2. Catalogue of Books on the Origin, History, and Practice of the Game of Chess, On Sale by Richard Simpson, London 1863.*
- 3. Erneutes Verzeichnis meiner Schriften uber das Schachspiel, von der Lasa, Wiesbaden 1896. On the very last page of his Catalogue von der Lasa especially points out that due to differences in counting articles, paintings and periodicals it would not be possible to number the entries (not books) exactly. He gives however as an estimate the number of 2263 different entries.*

4. *Verzeichnis der Bibliothek von Dr Max Lange, Leipzig 1900.*
5. *Anton Schmid, Literature des Schachspiels, Wien 1847.*
6. *Catalogue of the famous Chess Library...the property of the late R H Rimington-Wilson, Sotheby and Co., London 1928 and*
7. *A catalogue of rare and valuable works relating to the History and Theory of the Game of Chess...formed by J W Rimington-Wilson, Bernard Quaritch 1929.*

This should give together with other Bibliographies as Hyde and Twiss and not to forget van der Linde a good estimate about the books before 1850 or even 1900. Possibly the best way would be to create a computerised database for each of the referred catalogues or bibliographies and then compare these databases for each of the referred catalogues or bibliographies and then compare these databases with each other to exclude the doublets. For the machine it would be a matter of seconds or minutes to create one new big Chessbook-Database which should reflect the exact amount of all published chess books.

The same procedure can be undertaken with the more modern bibliographies as there are Cleveland, Sacharov, Betts, Lusic, den Haag, Euwe Amsterdam, M V Anderson and other minor ones like Summ or Bachl in Germany or deLucia in the States or Cieraad in Holland etc.

But who will pay for this work?"

Some years ago when working and living in Essen, Harald purchased the chess items of Baldur Honlinger which contained many photos of the 1920's tournaments with signatures on the back. Honlinger obviously was keen on this. Harald sent me a couple of photocopies and they truly are unique. But Harald's knowledge of that era is even more impressive: *"..What has WW2 made of them? Przepiorka died in a Concentration Camp and was never seen again in Tournaments....Seitz (a Jew) managed to escape to Argentina and lived in the sixties again in Germany/Bad Nauheim near Frankfurt. Hans Muller a supporter of Nazi Germany continued to live in Vienna/Austria as if nothing had happened. Honlinger went to prison in Dusseldorf because in France he had contact with Jewish chess players (as his widow told me). After he left prison he stayed in the region and finally settled in Wuppertal. Tartakower a WW1 participant on the German-Austrian-Entente side (see Wiener Schachzeitung of those years) lived after second War in Paris. I have a nice postcard from him written to the late Andre Muffang. Vukovic wrote his book about Kombinations and Kmoch managed to survive as an Integer man.*

The History of all these brave Chessplayers has not yet been written...Due to the cold war this period has not been dealt with...."

Excellent stuff and perhaps Harald will write it up one day. He obviously has a love of history.

About this time John van Manen started sending the archival part of his chess collection to the State Library of Victoria and Jas Duke's correspondence with him was one item. There were 8 boxes from John. It was sad for me to see this material going to the library because it meant my good friend was winding down his chess activities.

In May, Norma and I went to Melbourne and Adelaide in a 5000km round trip back to Narromine via Broken Hill. It was also nice to get a letter from Roger Noble of Hull and see the good progress being made there by that chess club.

As for Melbourne it was great and I put together a report on the progress of the library since my last visit in 1978. I saw all of the rare books if but briefly and noted the vacuum packing around some of the more brittle items. My main research time was spent with Helms' "American Chess Bulletin" which was very pleasant reading. An enjoyable 3 half days. We continued on to Adelaide and met Inge and John van Manen and took a picnic to the "Whispering Wall" of Adelaide's water supply. They stood on one side of the curved dam wall and we on the other a few hundred metres away and we could hear each other clearly! A curious parabolic effect. We also had some time with Arthur Willmott and his wife Isabel at their home and saw his skills at woodwork. On another day we toured the Adelaide bookshops (no luck) and saw Garry Koshnitsky's collection in the State Library. On the final day we packed John's library into the car for the trip home. He had sold most of his library to various overseas collectors including Bert Corneth.

Harald came back again on the subject of Catalogues and Bibliographies:-
"..Concerning the amount of chessbooks I think, that it makes really a big difference to write a bibliography or to create a Catalogue. A Catalogue represents all the books that are physically present in one's collection. Thus I am writing on a Catalogue, "my" Catalogue that represents "my" Books. In the days of large computerised databases it is much more convenient to enter each book or a given periodical separately. As I have already mentioned it is possible to gain with the help of the software completely new statistical insights. In the meantime my database comprises 2102 entries. It is now possible for me to ask the computer how many books in the collection have been edited in Berlin before 1900 of which the author was Max Lange. Or is it possible to search for all periodicals in the German language, or to check for all my doublets. From the practical point of view I am thus able to check for if a given book is already in my possession. This method of constructing a data base implies that there are also some books (Volumes) that comprise more than one bibliographic entity. This is the case if for example two years of the Deutsche Schachzeitung have been bound together in one volume. So my catalogue represents the BOOKS and not the bibliographical entity. That makes it also possible to describe the book in detail (for example mentioning the cover, leatherbinding, stamps, inscriptions of former owners etc).

So the Catalogue represents a certain bibliothek. And as I will point out later on I feel it is a creative work to establish a catalogue of one's library. On the other hand a bibliography which merits the annex "scientific" bibliography always has to accept the international rules. It may be that a learned bibliographer will insist that one periodical with say 150 volumes counts bibliographically as one item. However as you have mentioned it is far more interesting to refer to each year separately so you can provide more information! For example authors or better the editors of the DS Zeitung changed often over the years. So you have to make a special reference to it on the sheet if you give the whole periodical only one entry. What if one year is missing? In my collection of the DSZ the year 1879 is still lacking (I do not know exactly why this year; but it was Gerd Meyer who wrote one day to me that the years 1870 to 1880 seemed to be rarer than other years). So if you have one entry you have to mention on the card or in the datafile that this year is lacking and you have to mention that Editors changed, or even title has changed (from Schachzeitung to Deutsche Schachzeitung in 1871), new subtitles have been introduced etc. I find it much more suitable to make one entry for each book and to make exact reference as to author, date of edition, place of edition etc etc....

I began to quote former bibliographies and catalogues in my last letter to give an estimate of the exact number of chess books....But I did it in this way because I think it is really not so much interesting and without much practical benefit to know the number of modern chess books. In our scientific and technical world it is really of no special interest to know for example the exact number of medical books (there is by the way too much garbage). But it may well be of interest to know the number of all medical (or chess) books before say 1900 because one can theoretically hope to create a complete bibliography. So why not confine to this period where one can maybe obtain completeness? By the way a dream of every real collector. This is also the reason why one should start a collection by buying the really old books first and then the newer ones.

For me there is however another important point to mention. What we need and what makes life enjoyable is the creativity of man and the love we give each other....

I want to create my catalogue of chess books with reference to former owners, inscriptions and ex libris of former owners etc. Some time one can trace the way of the book. There exists as you will know a roman proverb "Libellis fata sua habeunt", I do not know if my Latin is correct but it should mean "Books have their own fate". And it is a reflection of my own personal interest....

Finally I am still convinced that it is not very difficult to obtain a list of maybe not all but most of the chess books edited on the globe. One should try to invest some money to make an official demand at the Library of Congress in Washington and/or other National Libraries. Maybe we should wait a few months or one or two years. As I read recently a project in Germany is under way to connect all libraries by a computer based network. So one will be able to check by simple computer based procedures all the bigger and smaller libraries in Germany from your own PC! Similar projects will certainly be under way in other countries on the globe..."

Another enthusiastic letter from Harald. Notice that his collection went from 396 items in September 1993 to 2102 in June 1994. My heavens what a growth rate!

It was good to get Bruce Hayden's "Cabbage Heads and Chess Kings" from Barrie Ellen. A hard book to buy in Australia.

Roger Noble weighed in with James Crake's death date – 14 November 1929 aged 82. Here is his exciting letter:- *"...it seemed that I was only going to get it if I searched myself for a date. So off I went to the Central Library one day and looked in the Kelly's street directory to see if I could find where Crake lived around the late 1920's/30's. Individuals names are sometimes listed alphabetically in these books and I hoped I might stumble on something when....Yes! I found Crake living at No 440 Beverley Road Hull, registered as a chartered accountant. I then searched further and found his name occurred again up to 1933 but no longer after. This led me to believe he must have died in or around this date (1933). I hastily shuffled down stairs to the St Catherine's index for Births, Deaths, Marriages, hoping there would be a spare place on the readers. I was in luck! My adrenaline was really pumping now, and I hurried to get to the deaths drawer. My first search was to go direct to 1933 but could find no trace of Crake's death. I again searched into 1934/35/36/37/38 etc but still no trace or sign of anything I was looking for? I decided to regress and look prior to 1933. I searched 1932/31/30...nothing. Until suddenly there it was! Crake...James, Sculcoates, aged 82, died 1929, Oct-Dec qtr. Vol 9d/P.218. The only thing was that it didn't give me an exact date to his death? I again hurried back up to the local history library to get onto a Microfilm Reader to see if I could pin him down through the Hull Newspapers of the day. After a long search and waterfilled eyes I finally came across what you now have photocopied as Crake's Obituary from the Hull Chess Club, saying that he died on Thursday 14th November 1929! Another look at the street directories of 1912 showed me that he was also living at No 427 Beverley Road and must have moved house later..."*

James Crake was a very fine problemist and author of the book "Chess Whimsicalities" by "Expertus". He was involved with Hull Chess for many years and a chess editor of some note. He was Cecil Purdy's great uncle. Roger told me of "The Crake Trophy" which up until 1922 was still played for in Hull Chess.

Roger was interested to know if anything had been handed down to Cecil on Crake's death and now with the death date, one could speculate on an anecdote from Chess World Nov 1954 p 257:-*"the editor of Chess World was long ago the possessor of letters written to the Hull Chess Club by...Steinitz, Blackburne and Zukertort, in answer to inquiries as to what they would charge for visiting Hull and giving a six-games blindfold display, Z and B quoted a fee of £8/8/-; the world champion-as I think he was then, though I cannot check the dates, having sold the letters to an American collector, during the depression of 1930-1935 –quoted*

£6/6/- and said "I do not attempt to vie with my friends Mr Z and Mr B, whom I acknowledge much my superiors in this branch of the game".

A lovely anecdote and though Anne Purdy could shed no light on it, would not this be just the thing a great uncle would send to an aspiring young relative keen on chess? Yes, I think Cecil got those letters from Crake or his family.

Well done Roger Noble!

Barrie Ellen had another useful and 'new look' catalogue for September 1994 and I bid for a few problem books. Kipping's "The Chessmen Speak" was one and Mrs Baird's "Three Move Problems and how to solve them".

We also managed to put a plaque on John Wisker's grave in Kew Cemetery Melbourne. Sad to see after 110 years nothing recorded his final resting place. It does now.

Ken Whyld advised in October that Manchester had the library and papers of the Manchester Chess Club but that it was a special collection and one needed to know that. There was also a good library of about 960 titles c 1800-1960 left by an old acquaintance, Edwin Gardiner, to the British Library. Items can be borrowed by the local library of one's town. A catalogue came out in 1977.

Harald Ballo's "Schach Zettell" column started in DSZ and proved very popular. He kindly sent me some issues which were shared with John van Manen who translated articles of interest.

John and I finished the last volume of Australian Chess Lore No 6 and were pleased to have that series behind us. It was an interesting period but with the sale of John's library and their proposed move to Port Macquarie it was the end.

I was very pleased to get a letter from the Hull Chess Club 'securing the bonds' between we Hull-ites and thanking all concerned for the plaque on the great man John Wisker. The curator of Kew Cemetery, John Shannon was very helpful.

The year ended with a letter from Ken Whyld writing on the benefits of the Oxford University Press (OUP) editor Betty Palmer and her help with the "Oxford Companion to Chess" 1984 by David Hooper and Ken. Betty went through every word they had written and, "rigorously questioned everything at all unclear, ambiguous, sloppily written, or seemingly out of keeping with the tone of the book. As a consequence the text was tightened in various places, the book clearly improved, and I believe that my own writing style has been permanently enhanced", wrote Ken.

1995 - The receipt of copies of the Hull Chess Club Magazine was a highlight and Eric Fisher was doing a grand job as editor. There is a photo of him with his library as background in Vol 1 No 2. It looked pretty impressive.

Norma was in Townsville for our first grandchild and whilst waiting she did some ringing around on Mount Alekhine. We got some good contacts but nothing positive.

One of the delights of Harald Ballo were his postcards. The one from Paris signed by Harald, his wife Nadia and Jean Mennerat was a joy. Oh to be with them, cruising around old book shops chatting about books, and listening to the coups. Yes, book-collecting has great joys and they are mostly harmless. Harald called it a 'steeple chase' through the libraries. Lucky them.

But we could have our little 'steeple chases' as well and on the way back home from Sydney after Easter we called into Mount Victoria Antiques and Bookshop. Norma had been there about 10 years earlier and bought me "Chess Its Poetry and Prose" for \$45. Could there be any other rarities sitting around?

"Have you any chess books" I asked the friendly Dorothy Quin, proprietor of the shop. She pointed me upstairs to a secluded corner of the lovely old 19th century terrace home of two stories that had been converted into a bookshop with antiques. And there they were :-Murray's "History of Chess" 1913 for \$75; "To Alain White" \$45; "Thema-Boek" \$12; "Antiform" \$65; "Echo" \$55; "The Two Move Chess Problem in the Soviet Union" \$55 and signed by Fred Hawes!!. These were clearly all his books but he had lived in Lithgow about 30kms away and died in 1963. Thirty two years later some of his chess books were for sale. I only had \$150 on me and handed that over stating that I'd like to buy them all. She said for me to take them all and send her the rest of the money. A kind and generous lady. She had even remembered the sale 10 years earlier.

To own a 1913 Murray's History was just great. I never thought I would. Ken Whyld wrote a booklet in 1994 called "A History of Chess" corrections and additions by Murray. It was useful to note that the 1913 print run was but 2000 copies of which relatively few were bound at the time. The front cover knight was in gilt. On copies bound later the Lewis Knight on the front cover lacked the gilt cover. I now knew my copy was from the second binding. During the recession of the 1930's about 1000 copies were pulped. In 1962 OUP issued a photographic reprint of 1000 copies. A facsimile by the Benjamin Press, Northampton Mass., USA was published in 1968. So there really are very few first edition copies of the great work. I was pleased to be able to encourage Harald Ballo to buy a copy as a result of Ken's research. My copy has a few biro underlinings in it and has been rebound internally and is much taller than the 1962 edition.

It was sad to get a letter dated 13/2/95 from Barrie Ellen with quite a few of my BCM wants listed on 16 May 1995. Naturally they were all nearly gone by my response. The perils of living down under.

Eric Fisher wrote about another Hull-ite, Henry Ralph Francis (1811-1900) and this was interesting! A chess-playing judge. The bloodhounds Ken Fraser and John van Manen were asked if they knew of him?

Harald sent "The Chess Bouquet" to me as a gift from over the ocean. I reciprocated with Tony Wright's "Australian Chess to 1914".

Ken weighed in with some good meat for Henry Ralph Francis' bones but we needed more. And then in the Sydney newspaper "The Herald" I saw an article on Winston Terracini, a legal historian and barrister whose great library had been lost in a mix-up when he changed chambers. An absolute tragedy-all dumped at the garbage depot except one box. He was compensated (\$32,000) and I wondered if he was the man to flesh out Henry Ralph Francis-he was! A great biography came from Mr Terracini and was forwarded onto Eric. We looked after our Hull-ites!

And Harald of course told me of the 1561 Alcala purchase for 3500 francs! He was lucky I wasn't there is all I can say! But he deserved it. He bought a few for Jean Mennerat also.

Later in the year the Townsville Family History Society and its Research Officer Cherie Strickland found information on Mount Alekhine or "Alkaline" as it was written and the man who named it-Patrick Finnerty. This was passed onto Ken Whyld. And he wrote to Cherie on her brilliant slogging research.

And Harald finished off his Australian Chess Lore set by getting Volume 1 from Dale and Vol 5 from me. Good, another complete set in the world. Harald also bought a rare Cessolis Ms of Ischia dated 1419. It was formerly in Robert Franz's library.

One of the exciting events of late 1995 was the opening of Berkelouws bookstore in Oxford Street Paddington. It was a lovely 3 storey building and complemented their huge storage depot at Berrima. There was a pleasant coffee shop on an upper floor where one could sit and read and drink coffee with cake. Pleasant. Many readers were thronging through for gifts for the coming Christmas. I noticed that many of the chess books came from the Los Angeles store.

1996 – Harald continued on with Schach Zettell in DSZ and also wrote me about his "Die fliegenden Schachzettell" which was to be a booklet on the world's chess book collectors. I guess like Chess Collectors International but about books rather than chess sets.

And late last year-very late in fact-29 December I met Bert Corneth at Peter Parr's chess shop and we discussed chess books with Josef Reiff for an hour or so. It was great to meet Bert as he had bought some of JvM's library. He is very tall and looked down on me and I'm 6' 2". We got on well and on New Years Day he rang from Port Macquarie to wish us well. Good of him and I asked him if he wanted the Salzman book at Berkelouw's for \$10. He did of course and I sent it to him with a Reinfeld he was unable to carry from Peter Parr's. I also met Bert's wife Regina and their two children Odilia and Erik. Bert is full of home-spun humour such as:-*"There is no such thing as a chess holiday with your wife"*. The family were returning to Brunei.

Bert studies old openings books so that he can understand the play in old tournaments – very clever. He learned chess at age 8 at his grandmothers. And he is keen on organising tournaments. We met Nigel Nettheim at the State Library briefly and Nigel expressed interest in Bert's wife who sang mezzo soprano as Nigel is a classical pianist. Norma, Bert and I had lunch at the library. A great pleasure to meet him. The family continued on to Brisbane and bought more chess books there. And yet Bert suggested earlier there was no chess holiday with one's wife??

One of his future projects was to be a Dutch language chess bibliography. A very useful goal and one going towards the total number of chess items. Bearing in mind the Dutch percentage of total world chess items at 5%, multiplying the Dutch figure by 20 would be a good check on previous estimates. Assuming 34,000 as the figure at 1988 (a very conservative one) then there are 1,700 Dutch chess items.

I racked up 30 years as a member of the BCPS and when sending my subscription to Tony Lewis the Honorary Treasurer admitted that I was an inactive member. He was pleased to hear from me as he and wife Sally (the great solving double – T/Sal) had spent 14 months in Australia at Melbourne where Tony was an exchange scientist at the Aeronautical Research Laboratories.

I was also lucky in Barrie Ellen's auction getting three unbound years of Chess by Wood.

Jean Mennerat sent a lovely postcard of Philidor released on the 200 year anniversary of his death. He had some comments to make about chess graves:-
"Poor Whyatt had a tragic death and Wisker dead by tuberculosis like De Vere! It's a pity that their graves were in such poor condition. It is the ineluctable doom of all graves and I remember once I saw a photo of the grave of Tartakower which was in a shocking condition. It's the fate of humans, sooner or later, they crumble into dust...I took a photo of the grave of Captain Evans in Ostende some years ago (in poor condition also). It is inscribed on it that he was the author of a chess gambit!!..."

It's sad in some ways that the great players are not recognised by FIDE and some monies put towards the upkeep of their graves. Certainly a category of world champions and historical personages would not be too much of a strain on funds. But perhaps Jean is right. We will all be dust one day. I rather like finding these resting places and have had some pleasant times wandering through various Sydney cemeteries looking for graves of the Australian chess champions. One remembers all their great battles over the chess board and many have no permanent marker where they rest forever. Are their chess games sufficient memorial?

I sent my version of "Die fliegenden Schachzettell" to Harald and got from Bert a very pointed question: *-Bob, have you ever seriously considered learning German?*" How right he was and how slack I've been but I had not. As for sending information on one's collection, quite a few collectors as well as Bert expressed concern at that and so "Die fliegenden..." died on the vine. My reply to Bert was that Dr Niemeijer hadn't crossed too many boundaries with his 1948 book on chess collections but on thinking about it that book was perhaps more about past chess collectors than present day.

Another great feature of contact with Barrie Ellen was his quick action on wants. A book I was keen to buy was Reinfeld's "The Human Side of Chess" and a copy came my way in April at £16.50 including postage.

Ken Whyld made an interesting statement regarding auction sales: *-"Most humans are in an abnormal psychological state when making a major purchase decision, or a sexual conquest, and in my opinion the avid collectors combine both of these instincts at auctions. Afterwards they revert to their old charming selves...!"* Ken was kind enough to say that he didn't think he or I were avid collectors and I was relieved to read that.

But can one be sure? Money always plays its part with me. I simply cannot afford to play with the big boys – otherwise I suspect I would. But that aside, the different personality states he considers occur at auctions with otherwise normal people, is of interest. Certainly that Christies auction I went to back in 1976 was an eye-opener. One particular person at that sale was definitely in conquest mode. And Jim Jones and I were in some sort of conquest mode in 1979 at Mrs Shiel's place. That was all done very sedately but with deadly intent. Jim won. And when Dale's EXEN catalogue came in 1975 I can recall being very excited at the thought of owning some of those great books. In writing to Eric Fisher in 1993 when he was buying right, left and centre I wrote to Eric that he was in his "surge" period. I was in that in 1975. But gradually one realises one just can't do all the books justice. I can't with 1000+. And, I have no idea how Lothar Schmid copes with that question. But he, like Jean Mennerat and Harald Ballo are in a different category. And people like Dr Niemeijer, John Griswold White, Magnus Victor Anderson are different again. These three are philanthropists.

It was nice to hear from Harald that despite concerns fifteen people had communicated their willingness to become “die fliegenden Schachzettels”. It was to be part of a DSZ supplement. DSZ had 5000 subscribers and the “the flying chess notes” would get a wide coverage. Harald suggested a book may be possible later.

I sent some photos to Harald completing my membership of the flying brigade and I couldn't help sending him the news of my purchase for the princely sum of \$1 of ‘Play Chess 2’ by Hartston and James. It had an eviction notice inside to the owner the unfortunate R. Wilson. He was given 5 days to vacate and to leave the keys in the ‘servery box’.

I mentioned to Bert that I liked smelling books and I told him that it was a wish to know of previous owners. Bert showed my views to his wife to convince her that the habit was not as weird as she thought – it failed. Bert's daughter Odelia likes to join him in smelling the books and they joke about the strong flavours of some Russian language books... and then came his news of the move to London. What a move bookwise!

Everyone was on the move. John van Manen and Inge were off to Port Macquarie.

In 1977 I saw the great local history librarian of Newcastle, one Charlie Smith. And in 1989 he and his wife paid a visit to Narromine researching their book on the Smiths. In 1996 the penny dropped when I realised that Charlie's book “Smiths of the Central West and Riverina” were the Smiths that the problemist and school inspector Frank Ravenscroft Smith belonged to! Small world and I put Charlie in contact with Enid, Frank's daughter at Fernbank St Ives. I am sure she was suitably amazed as was I.

John van Manen's translation of Harald Ballos' Schach Zettell Tarrasch article appeared on the Internet in Hanon Russell's website. Hanon and Ken Whyld also helped with the translation. A fine article on a great early player.

A lovely letter from Harald revealed Jean and he in Vienna enjoying the town, and the restaurants and local antiquarian book stores. Jean made a real ‘trouvaille’ by finding a rarity.

It was amazing to hear of the collection of Pieter ten Cate being sold by L'Esprit and an offer of 1500DM being refused for the Braune problem item. Harald wanted me to join the net and have instant access to all chess enthusiasts. It is true that communication is a lot cheaper. I am still thinking about it (mid 1999).

Harald mentioned two books on Bibliomania published in the USA. The books are Nicholas Basbanes “A Gentle Madness, Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the

eternal passion for books” Henry Holt and company, New York 1995 (ISBN 0-8050-3653-9) and Werner Muensterberger:-“Collecting. An Unruly Passion” Princeton University Press, 1994. One anecdote in the Princeton book about Bibliomane Thomas, an Englishman who married a rich woman just so he could collect and buy more books. Harald mentioned that he had a manuscript of Konrad von Ammenhusen once owned by Thomas with his sign in it.

Ah, that word again-Bibliomania. I don't think I'm afflicted with it. Ken Whyld agreed that we both were not! I wonder if that is mutual support against the odds?

Ken Whyld found the reference to Purdy's use of “A chield's amang you takin notes” in Robbie Burns poem “On the late Captain Grose's peregrinations thro' Scotland” Line 5 in fact. So now we knew CJSP's source. Ken also enlarged on William Harris (1813-1881) who had expressed dismay at the condition of Philidor's grave in St James Churchyard Piccadilly. He had named one of his sons William Alfred Philidor Harris.

It was time to do some research and so when we went to Townsville in August 1996 I decided to kill off Mount Alekhine (Alkaline) once and for all. BCM December 1996 Q&Q contains all the details and a photo. It was great to get help from Government Departments and also Cherie Strickland of the Townsville Family History Society. Best of all was talking to residents around Mingela. And when it was all confirmed by the Queensland Department of Minerals and Energy Archives, that was just great. Yes, there was a lease called Mount Alekhine and it was near the mountain photographed which was not on the lease.

But what about the greatest Australian chess detective of them all-Ken Fraser. There he was at a birthday do on a Sunday in August tucking into a “..nice spread of coffee, cakes, scones, jam and cream when I noticed a rather ugly covered silver cup on top of a bookcase. When I lifted it down I was astonished to read the inscription:-

**VICTORIAN CHESS AND DRAUGHTS CLUB
PRESIDENTS HANDICAP CUP 1885**

It turned out to be the cup which William Tullidge won twice in 1887-1888. Because he won it twice he was allowed to keep it and it has been handed down in the family”. Ken gave the present owner Tullidge's great grandson a copy of his article on the Victorian Chess Club and a copy of Tullidge's chess record.

Bert Corneth was in London and he wrote:-“*The most enjoyable activity for myself is of course the unpacking of all my chessbooks. In general they have survived the storage/transport very well. I only have two bookcases yet, but they already look impressive...I calculated I will have to buy at least four more bookcases and even then part of the modern books will have to stay in boxes*”. Good on you Bert – he'd settled in.

Ken Whyld found James Crake's birth year on the St Catherine's indexes-1847, second quarter, at Morpeth (Northumberland). The problemist was almost fully revealed now.

Harald's Schach Zettel column was giving him a "*letter-tower on my table...*". And Harald exchanged books with Laszlo Polgar "*after a hard negotiation at the Bazaar*". He got Carlsbad 1911 and Prague 1943 to name some, Laszlo got CPC 1843-1856.

One of my main acquisitions were the Victor Keats trilogy on chess history. Beautiful books. And whilst in Townsville I found a lovely antiquarian store 'Tonnoirs' where a few chess books fell into my lap.

Correspondence started with Cathy Chua. She wanted to write the History of Australian Chess. More on that later. I started some minor research in the State Library of NSW and re-examined the catalogue of John van Manen's collection sold to the library in 1962. That was embarrassing. I hadn't realised John's collection had been catalogued. But the goal was to build up on that find last year with Bert Corneth and see exactly what was in the catalogue. It was then realised that it was actually a combined catalogue of F L Vaughan's and John's collections and there were indeed some interesting books. No 350 was a beauty:- "Chess Photos etc collected by F L Vaughan" and it had some good ones:- David Przepiorka, Boris Kostich, Rudolf Spielmann at Margate 1938, Sultan Khan, Miss Fatima and Colonel Umar Hyat-Khan, a very young Spassky ca 1955, and the piece de resistance-an excellent photo of Cecil Purdy taken not long after he had won the First World Correspondence Chess Championship in 1953. He looked tired and relieved with the aerogram letter alongside him on the chess table. There were other photos of Frank Crowl and Max Fuller and then came Arthur Mailey's chess cartoons.

I also noticed a very fine display of Matthew Flinders Chess Set in the library showcases in between the State and Mitchell library underground walkway near the restaurant.

It was great to hear from Bert that his collection had made leaps and bounds this year from bookfairs in London and around the region. It was indeed becoming a choice collection.

1997 – proved quite early to be a sad one. Robert McWilliam the great bookdealer for the BCPS passed on. He was well lauded by The Problemist but a close chess friend who had helped find out what happened to my father was gone. He was 77 and his last letter had arrived just after last Christmas. He lamented the fact that our grand border collie dog Bidy had not been replaced but gave the good news that his wife Lil and Ben their 5_ year old Corgi were in robust health.

Research with Cathy Chua took off during this year and John and I were able to help with some of her queries. She didn't ask easy questions and made some original finds herself. One, "Essay and Studies" by W A Osborne 1946 was a find. I sent Ken Whyld a photo of the Flinders chessmen and he replied that an illustrated book about playing sets throughout the ages was needed. "*We have plenty*", he wrote, "*about those decorative sets that were never anything but rich mens' ornaments*". Ken also showed the usefulness of a scanner with OCR (Optical Character Recognition) when he ran copies of his 1956 work on the Christmas and Overbrook Series through the machine and after varying typefaces and styles came out a very modern reprint. A good item for any problemist or collector to have.

Norma and I did a second hand bookshop walk in Sydney in January. Very little chess but a pleasant walk anyway. An interesting book I got for my birthday from my daughter Penny was "The Chess Garden" by Brooks Hansen. She signed it "Happy Birthday White King Love Your Oldest Pawn".

And Neville Ledger continued his research into Tasmanian chess by a visit to the great library in Melbourne. Ken Fraser was there to give support.

And John van Manen turned 75 on 21 February. I sent him "Australia at Yerevan".

A chess video I'd been working on with a few chess tasks such as Mount Alekhine, Flinders Chess Set, Lewis Chessmen site in Uig and Ullapool Harbour and Stornoway, Kensall Green cemetery and the failed McDonnell/ de la Bourdonnais search, Lewis men in London and Edinburgh, Kew Cemetery Melbourne and John Wisker's gravesite, and my library plus glorious Australian scenery went to Ken Whyld and Jim Jones.

Bert wrote enthusiastically about his latest chess doings: - "*Whenever time permits I try to attend book fairs. Apart from buying something, I make many contacts also. Recently the lady who sold me Bairds 700 ch problems contacted me offering Forbes "The History of Chess" (1860) for £50. I bought it, it was a nice copy, previously from a library on Guernsey, one of the Channel Islands. Last month I spotted the only (and lonely) ch book in a second hand shop. I am practicing my skills in spotting books inside a shop. It was an early Staunton's Chess Practice for £10, good condition. Sometimes it is like treasure hunting...*" Bert also sent more photos of his bookshelves.

I was amazed by Caissa Books 1996/7 catalogue that contained many Philidors. There was page upon page of antiquarian chess books. One of the finest catalogues of recent years. Were the Philidor's from the Monsieur X sale ?

Ken Whyld liked the video and sent me a map of Kensall Green so that I could work out where I was in relation to the two graves. Well, I never got close to

McDonnell but I must have been within a chessboard of de la Bourdonnais because that was exactly where some workers were I was talking with. Ken writes:- *"...About 10 years ago David Hooper paid for the two stones to be raised above ground level and cleaned, so they should have been visible. The Staunton Society is trying to have their heroes grave, also in this cemetery, restored, but I believe it is just grass at the moment..."*. Well, that was a body blow-I'd missed Staunton's grave also. I don't think I ever knew the great man was buried with the titans.

On the way back through Mount Victoria we stopped at the bookshop again and found more Christmas Series books there. Six of them and Dorothy Quin said that she had had them 10 years. These were Fred Hawes as well. I could not work out what was going on as in 1995 they were not on the shelves. Dorothy was selling the shop and as none of the books were signed I did not buy them. There were tell-tale signs of Hawes though in them.

Jacob Feenstra sent a further small list from Waitati in New Zealand. It was good to see he was still operating.

Jean Mennerat wrote in April. He had been lucky when lightning hit his home and the computer he was working on. And his humour was Ok:- *"..Yes, you are right: old books are odoriferous, especially in the case of mouldiness and tobacco! Concerning the books there was recently in Amsterdam an auction for the library of the late Justus de Hooge a collector I met sometimes. I didn't buy anything. I have the catalogue of his library on my shelves and I knew that the interesting items have been sold before the auction. To whom? I don't know...."*

Harald was elected President of the Vereinigte Schachgesellschaft 1880 Offenbach/M and then onto the directorial board of the Hessische Schachverband. He was the Schriftfuhrer, a type of secretary and his work was very busy too and he had now taken in a medical practitioner partner.

An interesting letter exchange took place with Neil Stratford of the British Museum about the new Lewis Chessmen book. I was hopeful the Museum might agree to carbon dating of these pieces that H J R Murray thought might be much later than 12th century. But no luck on that front.

And a challenge I offered in The Problemist to solve a help game was taken up with relish by Frank Moralee and C Frankiss who blitzed me. 39 moves was just too good for this Aussie. (See R262 in May 97 Problemist)

Bert weighed in late July with his latest foray into antiques fairs where they saw a 'Statu Quo' Travel Chess Set with tiny ivory pieces for £250 and a genuine Staunton boxwood and ebony set in the box with "signature" £850. Bert did not buy. On his trip to Stirling in Scotland he had talked with a book shop owner about "The Life of Sir Joseph Banks" by Smith and how difficult it was to find

these days. Bert was kindly looking out for my want. He also enclosed a chapter from a book "Solitary Life" by Richard Katz (translated from the German "Einsames Leben" 1958) with a lovely chapter on chess in Locarno. And Neville Ledger passed onto Bert the address of the son of M Blainc who had a fine collection and Bert managed to take over a dozen older works including a 1777 Philidor. It was lovely to read of this mutual cooperation. Bert's progress on the Dutch Chess Bibliography continued.

Another article sent by Cathy Chua was "Flyping an old Victorian". The verb "to flype" means to strip back or reveal. The subject was Alexander George McCombe of Chess Frauds fame but the article concentrates on his non chess business ventures. He was brave no doubt about that. Written by Victorian Justice R Tadgell, it reads very well indeed and was finished in September 1996.

I again raised the Lewis pieces with Ken Whyld in August and suggested that as the pieces were not pristine they were clearly playing pieces. And four sets? Perhaps from a group such as the "old soldiers of Uig" who were veterans of Napoleon's Grand Army. Some were blind and maybe the pieces were whittled or scrimshawed in their distinctive shapes for those of poor eyesight. There was even a battle with Lord Seaforth at Ardroy which is very close indeed to where the chessmen were found. James Shaw Grant had more to say about this struggle in his book "Discovering Lewis and Harris" 1987 and whilst certainly not suggesting the above hypothesis he does affirm the 12th century date and at the same time answer the question often asked:- "*How (did) the chessmen get to the remote Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides?*" and his answer was that it was obvious to anyone "*who does not suffer from London blindness*". The Hebrides were under Scandinavian domination and the chessmen were just a byproduct of the busy trade route between Scandinavia and the Viking city of Dublin. All very reasonable.

Ken responded:- "*... we must look at the hoard as a whole.... The pieces cannot be a merchant's stock because of evidence of use....where did they come from, and where were they going? This last is not a new question of course, but the first. There is evidence that men were carved on the West coast of Scotland at around that time.....Your theory is interesting, and perhaps worth following up. But you have to ask where Napoleon's veterans acquired the pieces...*" In a later letter he wrote:- "*...If the men were carved in the 12th century what were they doing until they were buried in the 17th century? If the legend of them having been buried then is wrong, is it feasible that they could have been buried for 600+ years? From your video evidence it seems to me that the location of the find is too far from the coast for the pieces to have been exposed by the sea....*"

My video evidence MAY clash with the site where the men were found given in Neil Stratford's book. I wrote to the Uig historians to try to clarify this but they did not reply. My source was the grand old lady Mrs Matheison and a farmer at the site who both confirmed the area. They differed on which mound. And, answering Ken's question about where Napoleon's veterans acquired the pieces.

My answer to that is they carved them from walrus ivory on the Island to pass the time away.

I'm not all that enamoured about my theory but if H J R Murray questioned the date of 12th century three times then that's good enough for me. If he thought they were carved later than the 12th century, it should be investigated. Museums are not static places – or they shouldn't be. Research should continue when science offers new ways of dating valuable relics. The Naples Museum did it with the Venafro pieces so should the British Museum.

Ken Fraser had some minor health problems which were resolved and when the stock market got the jitters in October when it was approaching the 10th anniversary of “Black October” he made page 8 of the prominent Melbourne newspaper “The Age” with a photo and small item about his share purchase as the market dropped. Nice photo of him too!

John Beasley, the keeper of the British Chess Problem Society library suggested a scenario for the Fred Hawes Christmas Series turning up 32 years after his death:- *“ I can well believe that a family could have held on to books for over 20 years and then sold them off. The effects of the deceased relative are sorted (and even this takes time) and any apparently valuable items not wanted by family or friends are put to one side, with the intention that they be sold when a suitable purchaser has been contacted. But it doesn't get done straight away, and then it gets forgotten. Eventually, N years later, somebody does something, with results such as you have described. As regards the shelving policies of second-hand bookshops, have you ever tried keeping a stock of 10,000 items in order? It's bad enough trying to keep track of a library of 1000...”* Yes, that's all fair comment.

Jean Mennerat completed the translation of the Anderssen obituary in La Strategie p.101 April/May 1879 by Ernst Falkbeer. An excellent job and forwarded on to Robert Johnson for his proposed book on the great German.

The year finished with a letter to Ken Whyld on the Lewis chessmen about the powerful looking queens. They looked to me like they exuded commands and were post 1475 AD Queens. Of course Murray wrote about very early chess queens in England but with that ‘stare’ those queens had authority or so I thought.

A tragic end to the year for Australian chess with Terrey Shaw's passing at 51 from prostate and the demise of the Australian Chess Magazine and Arthur Willmott's problem magazine .

1998 – And then came John Rather's Catalogue via Nigel Nettheim who sent it to me with his Christmas Card. No 121 was the Overbrook set “A Sketchbook of American Chess Problematists” and I bid for it. I was on tenterhooks. It was a fine problem catalogue.

John Rather wrote in mid January:- *“...the items came from various sources and are the accumulation of more years than I like to remember. As you may judge quite a few belonged to Vincent Eaton who sold them shortly before his death in 1962 to a friend of mine who later sold them to me. The Christmas Series and “A Sketchbook...” were bought at three different auctions in the last couple of years.*

As an aside you may be interested in the fact that I knew Eaton at the Library of Congress where I worked from 1952-54. We played once in a Washington Chess League match but, alas, he beat me. The morning I returned to work again at the Library in January 1962 we met while parking our cars on the same one-block street. He died about two months later....”

This list 97-B went well for John thanks mostly to a Netherlands client. But item 121 was still available and he sent me a pro forma invoice for it. So the quest started so many years ago was over, “A Sketchbook...”! (2 vols) (\$310US) was finally coming down under. That left only “A Chess Silhouette” to get and that is the situation as I retype this on 22 September 1999.

I had always thought that this would be the only copy in Australia but on checking, my late friend Brian Tomson, Professor of English at Newcastle University Australia had bought one decades before. I saw it in the rare books room of the University Library in 1997. That was an interesting visit. I had to properly run a gauntlet to prove I knew Brian before I could see the collection. Whilst I was amused at the time and possibly also a little annoyed I think now that it was fair enough. The Archivist and myself hit a deal that I would provide more biographical information on Brian and a photo and they would provide a catalogue copy. The deal was completed. The Archivist knew more about Brian’s academic qualifications than I did. I took a punt that Brian got his Masters at Brasenose College Oxford and the Archivist told me that I was wrong and that he’d got it at Trinity College Dublin. He took his PhD at Oxford. But the Archivist could see I did know Brian as would be expected after 11 years of correspondence. Even today I look warmly at those letters and the information Brian gave me which enabled me to learn a lot more. Brian died in 1986 aged 44.

Ken Whyld took up my comments about the Lewis men and mentioned the views of Michael Mark, who was very much in the Neil Stratford camp:-
“...carbon dating would only give us an approximate period for the raw material. If it showed likely 15th century date for the tusks, for example, the span of possibility would not perhaps exclude the 12th century, and would not prove when the men were carved...The important paper by D le R Bird in “The Chess Collector” July 1996, about the irregular marks on some of the pieces which he attributes to Murram grass. If Bird is right, that would require a burial of a lengthy period...”

Another Catalogue from Jacob Feenstra showed that all was well in the shaky isles. I bought a Dutch Weenink from him for John van Manen's birthday.

John Rather responded that the cheque had arrived and that "A Sketchbook..." was launched onto the Pacific Ocean on the 9th February. John also advised of the wartime reprint of "A Chess Silhouette" and that he'd had two copies in the last 7 years. He knew nothing of the number of reprints nor the date. There were 150 copies of the original printing and as John surmised:- "*Given the specialised and sophisticated nature of the book...it seems quixotic to have produced additional copies to be passed out blind in a situation that was statistically unlikely to allow many (if any) proper matches..*" Fair enough – the only possible positives of the reprint were that there may well have been problem enthusiasts in the armed services during the war years and a few more converts to the gentle art produced, by having the book.

I was pleased to get from Bert a few copies of Kagan's magazine "neuste Schachnachrichten". A beautiful magazine – but I couldn't read it – and maybe I will do something about that when I retire. But one can still appreciate the choice Jan/March 1926 issue with excellent and rare photographs. There was even some brief Australian news. I sent a copy of Cathy Chua's "Australian Chess at the Top" to Bert. This book filled a yawning gap in the chess history of Australia and its top players.

My son John bought me "Extreme Chess" for my 58th. A vicious CD that has humbled me in front of the family. They have been delighted – and I philosophical . I hate to write this but I still have to record a victory against this aggressive opponent.

From Time Books Melbourne came "15 Games and their Stories" by Mikhail Botvinnik. A humorous book with Botvinnik in witty mode. Worth buying.

On the 15th of June "A Sketchbook..." arrived – well packed and sound. I was quite surprised at the small size but the two volumes (17 x 12cm) were in a nice slip case and the contents were principally historical. My kind of book. One to go.

Ken Whyld wrote about his meeting in Vienna with Ned Munger at the Chess Collectors International gathering. Ned was emeritus professor of humanities at Caltec and Ken found him a most interesting man. Later I was to agree when he rang me twice and talked about his next project which included Australian chess sets. The book Vol. 3 on Asian and the Pacific rim sets will be nice to see. Did chess reflect local culture? Ned has spent his life proving that and his collection must be one of the world's best. The first two volumes are great.

I was saddened to hear that Ken's dear friend David Hooper had died in May and I sent a copy of Cathy's book to him to help him forget.

Another pleasure was to receive Brian Thew's thesis on Australians at Correspondence Chess Play. A nice job and he got a distinction I think in his teaching course.

Barrie Ellen's Catalogue 48 came in and I bid for 3 items but no luck. The local collectors are voracious.

I was pleased to read that Bert had contacted Barrie and that two major history works had come into his collection, the 1913 Murray and the 1874 van der Linde. Very good buying indeed by Bert. He was playing some chess and enjoying it. His game in the semi-final of the Lensbury Club Championship was proof enough. I suggested to Bert that a good way of improving one's collection was by gathering historical chess photographs out of periodicals and columns.

Barrie's Catalogue No 49 arrived in October. Again I missed three items.

1999- Bert wrote of his successful year and charming finds in dusty bookshops off the beaten track. He continued:- "*It is especially these occasions that make collecting so enjoyable. Probably the most lovely little gem from the past year is the..official cardboard folding chessboard from one of the simultaneous performances of Alekhine in 1937, organised by the Dutch broadcasting association AVRO, in the run-up to the return match Euwe vs Alekhine later that year...It contains a real signature of Alekhine ("A Aljechin", as the player of the white pieces), of Mr F Jongkind who had been his opponent at this board, and of the chairman of the AVRO in those days. Each contestant got one of these boards, on which the game was to be recorded as well. This particular one will not go into history as a brilliancy. Mr Jongkind lost a pawn in the opening and his handwriting became more and more messy as he carried on far too long in a hopeless position. (I probably would have done the same to minimise personal embarrassment) The owner of the shop in Maastricht where I found it was apparently not aware of what it was, and I only shouted "Hoera" after I paid him the equivalent of £10 and had stepped outside the door.*

Another little treasure was a very nice specimen of Cheron's famous "La fin de partie" from 1952, which I found in an old bookshop in Gent, Belgium, when my family and I made a walk through the beautiful historic parts of the town. We got lost and suddenly there was this dark bookshop. Regina did not believe this of course, and thought it was a cunningly planned sidetrack, but believe me gentlemen: it was pure coincidence.

Unfortunately these instances become more and more rare. Not only is the value of old chessbooks more and more recognised, but also my work makes it impossible to go "hunting". Prospects for next year are not better..."

Another great letter from the Dutch humourist. Sure, Bert, we knew you got lost in Gent even if Regina didn't.

The new BCPS bookman sent a meaty catalogue of books and an unusual postal auction in which I bid for three items. I wished him a long and happy reign as the "bookman"-Peter Fayers of 2 Beechwood Avenue Coulsdon Surrey CR5 2PA is his address.

Jacob Feenstra's latest arrived in March and I got the Petzold "Schach Eine Kulturgeschichte" 1986 and Schuyer's "Het Schaakspel" 1958 – German and Dutch but great books. His address is 10 Ree Street Wellington 9060 Otago New Zealand. I was pleased to read (as best I can!) Schuyer's tribute to Dr Niemeijer.

And Peter Fayers sent me "70 More Chess Problems" by Locock and Abbott's problems. The first had Robert McWilliam's pressed bookplate and the second was signed by Abbott. Both for £20. Lovely books.

In April Ken Fraser wrote about "Morphy's Match Games" by C M Stanley which was part of C G M Shoppee's collection that came to the library in 1988. The book contained an old Melbourne Bitter beer label with the back inscribed "Mick, all the best for Christmas and New Year" from Eric C Cohen. Ken asked me if I knew who Cohen was but I didn't know. Shoppee had the book at least from 1935. A rare item.

In June Harald Ballo wrote about his excellent research into Auguste d'Orville the 19th century problemist. Hopefully this will be published as there is much that is new. I sent him a copy of Cathy Chua's 1998 "Australian Chess at the Top".

Ken Whyld advised he had Sir Frederick Madden's original 1832 paper on the Lewis Chessmen bound in calf with gilt titles and wrote that it was "Much more pleasant to read than the reprint. Spacious-excellent engravings etc" Yes, the old books are nice.

And a letter from Bert in July telling of his move to Holland with the family. Work has been tough for him since he left Brunei with constant shifts.

And in September Jacob Feenstra sent another Catalogue 99/2 in which the gem was 24 years of New Zealand Chess from Volume 1 1975 – 1998 bound in 4 volumes for the first 15 years-\$400. I did not bid for it.

Bert wrote 2/10/99:- "*.. Just after I came back to the Netherlands, I managed to find a couple of nice specimens from the Christmas Series, among which "Les tours de force sut l'echiquier" and "More white rooks" However a couple of days before I left the UK, there was an auction in Swindon, and one lot (number 586) was about chess: 36 different books from the Christmas series in excellent condition!! I could not attend and given circumstances my distant bid was not so*

high and in the end not high enough. Here in the Netherlands old English language books in general are rather uncommon, and Christmas series books you will hardly ever see here..”.

And one wonders who owned that set of 36.

I sent off “A Letter to Bert” to Peter Fayers in mid October and it is now for sale on disc with John Gallant’s excellent bibliography of chess problem books. Peter wrote in the November Problemist, “ ..*any member is invited to write back with updates - more information, new people, new titles and I will add them to the two works which will hopefully grow to be even more comprehensive.*”

Jacob Feenstra sent me Kipping’s “300 Chess Problems” and Hans Ree’s “In de eerste stoot pat” which I passed onto JvM as a Greek Gift!

Ken Whyld sent ‘Medieval Wager Compositions’ and ‘Chess Texts in the English Language printed earlier than 1850’. There was no stopping him and the latter created especial interest here in our attempts to get an Australian chess book into that catalogue. To date I don’t think we have. Ken also wrote of Michael Mark’s impressive file of photocopied material from HJRM’s Bodleian letters and of his daughter Abigail’s impending work trip to Australia. I mentioned this to Ken Fraser and he decided to help with the pre 1850 Catalogue as it was an area dear to his heart. Myself, also in a smaller way.

In December came Bert’s annual library update -another 56 volumes plus more years of Tijdschrift came his way.

And so the decade ended as did work for me. I retired on 28 January 2000, my 60th birthday. Work was becoming stressful, time to make way for younger brains!

2000 - Ken Whyld’s January letter revealed that others were interested in his pre 1850 Catalogue. Ken Fraser discovered a wonderful addition, “*The game at chesse a metaphoricall discourse shewing the present estate of this kingdome. The kings, the queenes, the bishops, the knights, the rookes, the pawns. The knights signifie the high Court of Parliament; the rookes, the cavaleers*” 1643 attributed to William Cartwright (1611-1643). I was very pleased to get a photocopy from KF. With it he included some early references to chess in Australia in “*The French consul’s wife-memoirs of Celeste de Chabrilion in gold-rush Australia*” pointed out to him by Sue Healey of the State Library of Victoria. Not a candidate for KW’s pre 1850 catalogue as a little later.

Jacob Fenstra wrote me in February for “spare copies of Chess World”. I wasn’t able to help but it was amazing how this magazine had become hard to buy. There were ‘bucketloads’ of Purdy’s famous magazine a decade or so ago. Time has caught up with it as Purdy’s reputation has grown through the ‘Thinkers

Press' series in the USA. I was pleased to get some rare New Zealand items from Jacob's catalogue.

Ned Munger, Emeritus Professor of Caltec, sent me Volume 3 of "Chess, Culture and Art-The Pacific Rim" as a gift from this generous American. I had helped him a little, and he only has Volume 4 to go to complete a unique series.

Bert by now, had settled back in Holland near Leiden and was "*looking forward to seeing my books again after 6 months in a container*". Was this to be the last move for chess knight errant? Time will tell.

In April came some very bad news. JvM was nearly blind. What to do? He was back and forth for tests and operations in Sydney. Best to wait and hope. I prepared an audio tape for him. It did not arrive in time.

KF meanwhile, scored another find with chess in Ireland 1,100 years ago. It is all in BCM of Feb 2001, Quotes and Queries. He was enjoying helping with that pre 1850 Catalogue.

Roger Noble of Hull weighed in with a very fine article on Alfred Crosskill (1829-1904)-industrialist, alderman and Chief Magistrate of Beverley. Roger knew that Crosskill was a chess lover and strong player and that he had written under the pseudonym "Euclid". The book being "The Chess Ending-King and Queen against a King and Rook". Roger had a copy and his article brought Crosskill to the chess public for the first time. Well done Roger.

Norma and I made plans to go to Port Macquarie to see JvM. And then came the terrible news. He was gone and passed away 20 May. We went to the funeral on 23 May and met the family. It was a relief for them as they didn't wish him to suffer. KF was there too, and tributes appeared in the Herald, Australian, Sun-Herald and later the national chess magazine Australian Chess Forum. Inge, his wife, was to remain in their lovely unit in St Agnes Retirement Village overlooking the school playgrounds and as I write this, she is well. The greatest 'chess data collector', as he preferred to be called rather than 'historian' was gone and a large chunk of my chess life also. I catalogued his books for sale with his son Frank and the lists went out to various dealers. It was sad to drive away a week or so later after seeing Inge. There would be no more letters from the active chess mind of my late friend JvM.

We called at Newcastle University Auchmuty Library on the way home to give a copy of KW's latest pre 1850 list to the Archivist John di Gravio who had expressed interest in it. He kindly photocopied Richmann's Chess Bibliography for me and I had another inspection of Brian Tomson's chess library in their Special Collection. Onto Sydney where a few days later I met Clive Lane the new antiquarian chess book dealer. We had a coffee together and a look at his books. I gave him JvM's "A Letter to Bert" which my friend had been unable to comment

on, and he gave me “Spielmann” by Spence, a nice item. Clive, trading as FISCHERBOOKS 1 Hereford Street Glebe NSW 2037 Australia, has a website at <http://web.one.net.au/~clivelane>. His email: clivelane@one.net.au He lives in a nice two storey terrace and his library and workroom are upstairs.

Bert’s study room and library with his seven bookcases most filled with chess was now set up. He has room for an eighth bookcase:-”*In general my interest is shifting to the older works, and so far I found a few sources so far for works in decent condition.....one very nice item that so far I managed to secure in the UK is the famous (at least for me) “Chess Studies or Endings of Games” by Kling and Horwitz 1851. Beautiful in its gilt stamped decorated cloth, only very slightly faded. Never before had I seen a copy or heard of one for sale. I only had the Olms reprint of the 1889 Horwitz and Kling revised by Rev. W. Wayte and in the (1989) introduction it says:-”The Chess Studies” soon became an extremely scarce book. So it was a pleasant surprise when I was offered one, for a very reasonable price....* Good for you Bert.

Has anyone looked at <http://www.findagrave.com/> ?? If you do you can see Morphy’s grave in New Orleans.

The MVA received another donation of chess books from Malcolm Broun, barrister and chess prodigy of the 1950’s.

Research started with KF on a fact finding biography of Frederick Karl Esling (1860-1955), Australia’s first chess champion and his opponent George Hatfeild Dingley Gossip (1840-1907). We were also reassessing the latter. He had a hand in 11 chess books, was a very active player in England, Australia and America. Perhaps his past chess press was far too harsh.

John Beasley sent me “More Flights of Fancy”- a lovely item that made me order “Flights of Fancy” 1989 by him from the BCPS. It arrived post haste thanks to Peter Fayers. Another choice item.

KF completed the recataloguing of the MVA chess collection. It had taken 7.5 years and as he was a volunteer, that has to be one great labour of love to the State Library of Victoria and chess players in Australia. He was playing chess too with his 6 year old honorary grandson in the MVA room.

In September the excellent TV series “The Romans in Britain” appeared and mention was made of gaming boards found on Hadrians Wall. Lindsay Allason-Jones of Newcastle University responded to my letter but there were no new finds. I live in hope of the Romans playing chess! He included an extract from his book “Women in Roman Britain”-the chapter 7 ‘Entertainment and Recreation’ contains this quote from Ovid that all women should include games of chance among their skills of seduction. I sent Lindsay a postcard from the Australian city of Newcastle.

Bert mentioned that:- " *The problem book by Mackenzie is a rare item. Recently a copy was offered for sale in the UK for £250. Edges soiled and rubbed and some other imperfections*" I told him about the Olympics and the success of the two Dutch swimming stars Peter van den Hoogenband and Inge de Bruin and what good ambassadors they were for the Netherlands.

John Beasley sent a disc of Golombek's library and the BCPS holdings. What treasures they both contained! I sent John info on the active chess columns in Australia that I knew about.

A local chess club was underway in the city down the road - Dubbo. Two brave souls, Sandy Aich and Trevor Bemrose were the leading lights. I invited them out for a Dubbo vs Bush bash but two of my team didn't make it. Good to hear the clinking of chess pieces in our kitchen as 6 players moved the men around. Trevor certainly moved his better than I did! But our young star Gareth Manson of Trangie who finished near the top of the State in mathematics won off Sandy and so the honours were even. It's been too long between clinks!

Sydney in October/November saw more research on Esling and a long look at the websites for 1. The Hague, 2. Cleveland, 3. Melbourne chess collections. I took swags of photocopies. The websites follow and are recommended viewing:-

1.<http://webopc.konbib.nl/kb/vak/schaak/intro-en.html>

2.<http://www.cpl.org/010012/chess/index.html>

3.<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/slv/chess/>

The best? Well, I vote for the Hague because of its click-on photos. Doubtful I'll get there and so this gives an opportunity to see it. Cleveland was thicker and more detailed and very enjoyable. Some photos of the library would make it No.1. Melbourne's website started in October and is quite small.

KW's Yuletide greeting was the "Address and Reply to the Automaton Chess Player" after a visit by the Turk to the USA in 1826. He was moving to Kirton Lindsey above Gainsborough not far from his old home in Lincoln. I sent him "A Bit of Gossip about Esling".

And a Christmas present from Jacob Feenstra in NZ were the two Morphy books that had been on my wants list for years. The Maroczy and Cunningham, Morphys.

Fairly priced at \$150 and \$10.

It was nice to get a copy of "Grapevine" the State Library of Victoria bulletin thanking KF for his sterling voluntary work.

2001 - A Christmas card from Bert-all was well there. I told him of the library websites and the Morphy book buys.

“A Letter to Bert” is to go on Brian Stephenson’s website. Hopefully more will see it there and contribute. John Beasley had placed a hard copy in the BCPS library with some type corrections and additions (thanks John). He too expressed the view that the British Museum should carbon date the Lewis chessmen. We live in hope. The amazing problem book “Cyclone” by Peter Gvozdzjak came my way from Peter via the BCPS. Truly very quick receipt. Peter has drawings by his two young daughters as highlights. A very fine modern chess book in hard cover and reasonably priced at £20.

Barrie Ellen sent me the 1891 “Chess Players Manual” by Gossip and Lipschutz (USA edition) and the “Catalogue of the Ernst Boehlen Chess Set Collection” which made £130,000 to item 101 at the Phillip’s auction 9 Nov 1998. Lovely catalogue and one can look if one can’t afford to buy!

Early in March the NSW chess champion John Paul Wallace came to Dubbo for the Dubbo Open (which he won) and he played a 5 game simul in which I took a board. A very friendly young man who let me play another game after a very quick win to him. The second, sadly, was not much longer. I enjoyed talking with him afterwards about Australia’s chess history. He was a coup for Sandy Aich and Tevor Bemrose to bring to Dubbo and I think it is over 34 years since a strong player (Purdy) was in that city. I could be wrong.

And lastly, will I be successful in Jacob’s “30% off” sale? I’ll soon know.

And that’s the current state of play.....Happy reading and may it bring some pleasure to all.

GATHERING IN THE CHRISTMAS SERIES

I started down this road in 1965 when the late Frank Ravenscroft snared me for chess problems. He introduced me to Alain White's great series. He gave me **No.1 "Sam Loyd and his Chess Problems"** It is a waterstained copy and one I've not used much because I have the Dover reprint. This book is the most used book in my library and is falling apart. That has saved Frank's copy. Written on the front end paper is Frank's Dewey decimal numbering system 794.4 and pinned onto page 10 are the dates on which he tackled some of the problems. There is no year but he solved No 5 on September 14 and he finished No 60 on January 22.

The piece of paper on which the dates are written, was a slip from one of the public companies in which Frank held shares. He wasted very little and was a recycler long before it became a modern habit. I have written of him in the Whyatt book and 20 years later I still remember him with affection. Did he know I needed a hobby? I think he did. His daughter Enid Daghish lives in Fernbank Retirement Village at St Ives. I audio taped Mrs Ravenscroft and Enid some years after Frank's death in 1968 and I have all his letters.

He was a good poet and his correspondence with friends was mostly about stamps and chess. I have examined his scrapbooks which date from about 1948 until his death and noted 24 correspondents initials. Clearly WW was Bill Whyatt; OK was Dr O'Keefe; FH was Fred Hawes; PP was Phillip Pedler of South Australia ("One of the best" wrote Frank); RB was Rurik Bergmann, MF was Matt Fox a young friend of Frank's as I recall. He wrote or glued in funny sayings from popular magazines. Some had a chess theme:-
Punch 8.1.1950 :- "He should be drummed out of the Chess Problem World with Kings reversed and boards broken". (I don't know whom this refers to or whether Frank used poetic licence to change the subject to chess)
From Aldous Huxley's "After Many a Year":- "This problem was not called into being by vulgar problem-lore necessity, rather does it represent elements of pure fun and necessity. A platonic problem".
From New Statesman 1957:- "The stalemate is the penalty for mauling without killing".

And a Frank original from 7 August 1967:-

"Fit calm employment for advancing years,
My homely joys, sure antidote to care.
Among my life's less fleeting souvenirs
Are problems. I compose with friends to share.
Across the board, just one tastes victory,
The loser's pride must suffer some distress,
But with our problems, mate in two or three
Composers, solver, each enjoy success."

Ken Whyld has written a booklet on the Christmas Series and I won't repeat here what he has written about each book except to say that a 12 page supplement of Sam Loyd was published in 1914. I don't have it. My copy of Sam Loyd has mauve coloured covers with gold lettering. Frank gave me the book in 1966.

No. 2 “Les Milles et un Mats Inverses”-the double volume also came from Frank. The late John Kellner, then editor of the Sunday Mirror chess column was invited to the Ravenscrofts' home not long after Frank's death in February 1968. Following is an extract from his letter dated 19 July 1968.

“...She (Mrs Ravenscroft) was naturally distressed but was most concerned over Frank's chess gear and relieved when I told her that I would be most honoured to take charge of it.

Apparently Enid, their daughter, had gathered her father's chess books and papers together and wanted to burn them because she had never been happy with the amount of time her father spent on his chess problems.

I was invited up on the following weekend to inspect the books. In spite of her recent tragic loss, Mrs Ravenscroft was in good spirits and happy when I told her that some of the books were perhaps the only copies to be found in Australia and would be treasured by any chess problemist. I had only heard of Mrs Baird's “..Retractors” and never thought that I would ever see a copy, especially one that was so close to being burnt! Because Enid insisted that whatever I didn't take would go on the fire, I naturally received the lot.

You can imagine how Mrs Ravenscroft felt a few days later upon reading the will in which Frank stressed that he wanted you to have his chess books, particularly as I had told her of my intention of distributing the books and magazines, that I had already copies of, at the St George Junior Chess Club.

Fortunately Mrs Ravenscroft rang me the day before and I assured her that I would pass the books on to you immediately, as they were still intact in the cartons, which I delivered that week to O'Connell St where I met your step-father and explained what had happened.

That's when you came into the picture, Bob. I can understand your pleasure on receiving such a treasure.....”.

Dear Mrs R.- thank heavens she had been persistent. Enid and I hit it off after that close call. She often said to me how time wasting chess was and as a busy school teacher herself I can understand. Frank's papers were lost. I'm not sure what happened to them and I did not raise it with John Kellner as I thought he would think me greedy nor did I raise it with Mrs R or Enid at some of our later visits. I believe they were burnt and even if John kept them, his library was mostly lost in a fire in that tragic double suicide around Christmas 1987. I received 25/30 books in Frank's will.

H B Bignold of Wentworth Court Sydney was the previous owner of “Les Milles...” and he was admitted to the Sydney Bar in 1899. A prolific author, his “Australian Chess Annual” was before its time and a priceless historical work. Historians have relied on it to guide them with further research in that 19th

century era. It appeared in October 1896. He was a great chess official of the NSW Chess Association, President twice and Vice President for many years. His legal textbooks were many, a book on epigrams called "Likewise" was another facet and a book on Auction Bridge. He was President of that Association in 1927 as well as being a council member of the Millions Club.

Purdy wrote that Bignold was one of the most genial and popular personalities in the game. He left a wife and son and daughter on his passing on 24 January 1930 aged 59. There are few noted in the solution book so Frank did not use it much. Alongside No.370 is written in Frank's hand "S.H. 13.6.55" Probably the Sun-Herald column. There is a pencilled list of 8 problems on the back end cover. It would be interesting to know when he bought this set as Frank was out of chess from about 1916 until 1946. It was signed by Bignold in a flourishing signature and his legal chambers "Wentworth Court" is below the signature. On receipt of all those books of Frank's, one thing was clear. There were only the two volumes of "Les Mille..." but the Christmas Series whetted my appetite. This was a series worth collecting.

My chief wish in the late 1960's was to get a copy of "Retrograde Analysis" and as this was one of the rare volumes I wrote to Guy Chandler and he kindly agreed to send out the BCPS copy for me to copy. He sent it out on March 24 1969 and it arrived 31 March and that was the day Norma and I started to handwrite each of the pages. We did it about 50/50 and I stamped the diagrams. It took us a fortnight and then it was posted back to the BCPS where it arrived safely having been sent registered mail.

Of course this wasn't really a copy of a Christmas Series book but it was a copy of a copy and I look at it with affection today 30 years later. I suppose it was a cheap enough way (not counting labour) of putting together a copy and I wasn't the first to do this. I have a copy of Arthur Napoleao's "Caissana Brasileira" 1898 copied by Max Weiss in Bamberg in 1904. Now that was a fair effort and he had it properly bound to finish it off.

I had been buying books from Guy Chandler since 1966 and after getting the Christmas Series books from Frank I wrote to him and asked to be included in any further book sales of this series. It didn't take long and the familiar blue air mail letter with that classical handwriting arrived. His 6 September 1969 letter was:- *"..You mention the Alain White Christmas Series, but most of these deal with direct mates, and I don't know which of them you would want. If you would like the offer of any of them, I would send you an air letter if and when I have some, as I do from time to time. They are readily taken, as at least six members want some of them, but I have filled wants freely in the last two or three years, so I sometimes have one or two books that are not on the wants list..."*

I replied on the 10th and he must have replied almost immediately on the 16th stating that he had noted that I would like the offer of any A C White series,

“...except Sam Loyd...” and he wrote again on 26 September offering me:-
No.3 “Problems by My Friends” for 16/-. He continued:-“*Unless you write me otherwise, I propose to send them as they become available, seldom more than two or three at a time unless we are lucky enough to be left the library of some long standing member who had most of them...*”.

There is little to tell about No.3. It is in good condition – some water staining on the cover but very nice contents. There are no indications of previous owners. This book contains some lovely photos of White’s friends namely C S Kipping, F Palatz, Edmond Lancel, L H Jokisch, George Hume and Reginald B Cooke.

No. 4 “A Genius of the Two Mover” On 24 October Mr Chandler wrote again offering me the last of the series published in 1936. Sad that it had come to an end but I had the end before I had the start or most of the middle. A not so good copy with cover rather soiled and few annotations inside, but a very fair second-hand copy-20/- post free. I took it. When it arrived I was rather pleased to see the BCPS Library stamp on the end covers and the No 207 on the front cover. The 207th book in the collection?

No. 5 “Running the Gauntlet” 1911. On 30 March 1970 Mr Chandler sent me this most unusual book with German text on the RHS of the first 63 explanatory pages and English text on the LHS. The problems are annotated in English. Again not a comment or name inside. The red cover was very sun faded but a good copy. 15/-

And then he really got into stride on the 4th May 1970 sending me **No. 6 “Changing Fashions”** 1925 for 12/6; **No 7 “The Chessmen Speak”** 1932 for 16/- and **No 8 “Asymmetry”** 1927 for 10/-. The last book had soiled covers but at last I had a name. The three books were owned by R R Jones of Pwllheli which is on the Lleyn Peninsular in Wales. A market town and resort of the Dwyfor District of Gwynedd, North Wales. It was an administrative centre and there was a large holiday camp near the town. Population about 5000. Jones had been a member of the BCPS for “*fully thirty years*” said the Problemist of March 1970 in commenting on his passing. That took him back to 1940. Perhaps – yes – he was living at 29, Cardiff Road Pwllheli in 1942 as he was in the Members List (Problemist June 1942) He does not appear to have been a composer in the Problemist and was not listed in the Index to 1935. Nor was he a solver in the Chess Amateur in 1930. No 6, 7 and 8 were on the shelves only 36 to go!

It was clearly going to be a long term task to make inroads at these low prices. And so I began reading old issues of CHESS, the British Journal by B H Wood where hundreds of books were for sale at much higher prices in his “Rare Book Auctions” month after month . I would love to remember where I first saw that magazine but suspect it was in Chess World and probably Easter 1970. When I saw the May-June 1970 issue there were 27 Christmas Series volumes for sale!! All on the back cover. To say I was pole-axed was about right. If I was successful

with the bids I would have well over half the series in one bid. I accepted the auction prices as listed and bid for 26 of the Christmas Series plus other books. I received an air mail letter from Baruch Wood dated 26 August 1970. I had got every one of the Christmas Series bid for and he was agreeable to £20 down and £25/10/- a month later. I must have written to Mr Chandler earlier telling him that I was bidding in the CHESS auction and that future offers would best be notified rather than sent. He agreed in a letter dated 5th August.

Who could believe it? 26 volumes in one auction including some duplicates ordered for swapping and some rarities.

No 9 Roi Accule aux angles 1905 – the copy needed rebinding and was done in own case by a Sydney binder L J Cullen of Bankstown. No annotations 55/-

No 10 “Les Tours de Force sur l’Echiquier” 1906 – A Glasgow Chess Club book from the Borthwick Library. James Borthwick (1866-1932) was a Glasgow University Graduate and a stalwart of the Glasgow Chess Club. He joined the Club in 1895 and played in matches for 30 years. He was a specialist on problems and was quoted in BCM as “*..always carried his pocket board in case of a sudden inspiration*”. He was a teacher by profession and his library was acquired by purchasing books for sale in BCM sending money with his order. The library was offered to the Glasgow Chess Club and obviously taken up. There is a good photo of him in BCM 1932 p 395 and the text with it is mostly quoted above. He was Glasgow Club Champion in 1913 and won the Scottish Championship Cup in 1903. It was a very fine library but chess problem books in a chess club are probably not used much and so they were sold. There were no annotations in the book, just the Glasgow Chess Club stamp in red ink. 40/-

No 11 “Knights and Bishops” 1909 –previously owned by R L Halsey of 196 Wake Green Road Moseley Birmingham which address is stamped in the front of the book. On the back end papers is written “*pub’d at \$1.50 out of print 6/6*” 60/-

No 12 ”The White Rooks” 1910 A battered old specimen with scuffs and stains. On page 113 some scribbling by a previous owners child or grandchild covers the solutions. Easy to tell why as the book was open at a Sam Loyd problem and doubtless left on the floor where little hands could copy what pa/grandpa was doing. The scribbling spilled over to page 115 – a pretty von Holzhausen miniature. 35/-

No 13 “More White Rooks” 1911 – a very good copy with some sticky tape markings on the inside covers but pristine internally. Was it ever used? 35/-

No 14 “First Steps in the Classification of Two-Movers” 1911-another good copy 25/-.

No 15 “The Theory of Pawn Promotion” 1912 – another Glasgow Chess Club Borthwick Library book. Sadly the only time it looks like it was opened is on page 45 where the club stamp has been placed. 35/-.

No 16 “White to Play” 1913 - a good copy – no annotations 30/-

No 17 “Tasks & Echoes” 1915 – Amazing the difference in paper to No 16. This is a semi-gloss paper whereas No 16 was absorbent type paper so 35/-.

No 18 “The White King” 1914 – a good copy 40/-

No 19 “Chess Idylls’ 1918 – Some staining but a fairly good copy. 50/-

No 20 “Flights of Fancy in the Chess World” 1919. Alain White had a list in the back of this lovely book of Christmas Series volumes for sale. Even then some were out of print:-Roi Accule; Tours de Force; Les Mille.; Bauernam....; Dame und ein Laufer; Robert Braune. My copy has a faded cover. 40/-

No 21 “A Memorial to D J Densmore” 1920. My copy has a list of members 255 strong and all their names. The list was of members of the Good Companion Chess Problem Club at September 1 1916 and included from Australia:-A J Ansaldo, Dr J J O’Keefe, Arthur Mosely, Frank Robinson, W A Smith, Henry Tate and H J Tucker.

New Zealand had 9:-F A L Kuskop, W H Allen, O Balk, R A Cleland, L P Coombs, J H F Hamel, F Harvey, J Lang, S S Myers. There were members from 20 countries and there was a member from China – Rudolph Sze. The book contains a beautiful biographical sketch on Densmore who was Loyd’s son in law and a terrific photo of the two of them. 35/-

No 22 Alpine Chess 1921. Another lovely biographical book on Swiss problemists. My copy was owned by Frederick Forrest Lawrie Alexander (1879-1965) who for many years held important posts in the BCF, was a strong amateur and a well-known problemist. His stamp is on page 7. Presumably he stamped all his books. He was a member of the BCPS and lived at 8 Longstone Roan London during WW2. He was Vice President and President of the BCPS and being an accountant started a permanent fund that placed the Society in a strong financial position. On his play he defeated Bogoljubov and Golombek at Southsea in 1950, played for Surrey for 40 years and was 7 times champion of the Battersea Chess Club. It is an honour for me to own this book. Clearly a friend of Guy Chandler. 35/-.

No 23 “The Good Companion Two-Mover” 1922 A fine copy from the Borthwick Library of Glasgow Chess Club. A beautiful volume this one with extracts from the “Our Folder” magazine of the Good Companion Chess Problem Club. 60/-

No 24 “Echo” 1927 This amazing book is printed in three languages –Czech, German and English for the first 65 pages. The problems are annotated in Czech but around the diagrams it is easy to work out. One of the much larger volumes in the Series, it has a frontispiece photo of Alain White opposite the title page. Interesting to see White as he ages through the series via different photos. He wore well actually. A comparison with the photo in the Overbrook “To Alain White” shows that mens fashions change too. “Scarce” wrote Wood so 50/-.

No 25 “The Properties of Castling” 1928. I wouldn’t have thought it possible to write a book on castling problems but White and George Hume did it. There are three Chapters with four sub-headings per chapter and the Appendix deals with apparent Castling, Castling Tries and Thematic Keys in castling problems. Still, “Running the Gauntlet” is a book on en passant problems it has 267 pages. The castling books has 129 pages. 35/-.

No 26 “Antiform” 1929 Another large volume in German and English. This book has a complete list of the Christmas Series since the first “Chess Lyrics” in 1905. Publication information is of interest :-21 of the then 37 volumes were published in Stroud at the office of “The Chess Amateur”. In any comparison between BCM and the Amateur of this period, the publication of the Christmas Series by the good old CA needs to be included. Anyway there were 4 books published in Paris, 4 in Leeds, 2 in Potsdam, 2 in New York, 1 in Berne, 1 in Leipzig, 1 in Prague and 1 in Berlin making 37 with the last “The Golden Argosy” Antiform was “Scarce” so 60/-.

No 27 “Valves and Bi-Valves” 1930 The old firm of Alain White and George Hume in operation yet again. What a debt the problem world owes Hume also. As for White it is unpayable. My copy is pristine and looks like it’s never been used. 25/-

No 28 “An English Bohemian B G Laws” 1933 At last a tribute to the great man who carried the editorship of English Problemdom by writing the column in the Chess Monthly and BCM for decades. The tribute by Keeble makes this little volume one of my favourites and it makes me appreciate what a grand band of men the problemists were. There seemed to be a world-wide friendship amongst them all. But Keeble? Well, he was one of the very best. Here is an anecdote from the tribute where he was writing about the 19th century chess problem author John Augustus Miles:- “ ..*Mr Miles passed the greater part of his life at Fakenham. He had a very obliging printer there – a man who considered it somewhat a privilege to even set up a single problem. After Mr Miles’ death the printer told me he was once knocked up at midnight. He looked out from an upper window and saw Mr Miles on his doorstep. “Come down, Miller. It’s a beauty,” said Miles. “I want you to set it up”. What happened I do not know..*”
Yes, well maybe Keeble didn’t wish to publish Miller’s response? 30/-.

No 29 “Suomi” 1934 A very nice historical overview of Finnish chess problemists and Finland in general makes this more than just a collection of problems. A nice book. My copy is pristine – not a mark. 30/-.

No 30 “Conspiracy” 1935 Another very good copy –100 helpmates. 35/-

And so the feast from Baruch Wood came to an end and I had 30 of the Series, or so I thought. Wood had different ideas and next came:-

No 31 “The Chess Problem” 1926. Weenink’s famous book which was a translation from the Dutch by the author with changes suggested by Alain White and J G White providing the photos of the problem masters. This is one of the world’s great chess books and is difficult to buy. Unfortunately I have lost the price I paid for it. My copy is loose and shaken but I would not part with it. The list of problem lovers in the back by Weenink giving birth and death dates where known is a highlight and Keeble, Fr Dedrle, Otto Blathy, J R Neukomm, Martin Anderson, F Palatz, Eugene Kubble and others helped him compile it. A massive work.

I received a letter from Baruch Wood in May 1971:- *“I feel a reasonable price for the 3 books sent is £4. Glad they reached you safely”*. Again my letters are gone but these were the final 3 Christmas Series books I was to receive from him:-

No 32 “The White Knights” 1917 A smallish volume like the earlier ones. Nothing outstanding about it and I would think 20/- was about right.

No 33 “Bohemian Garnets” 1923 Another fine book chock full of echo problems and its finest exponent, Miroslav Havel. 30/- I would think.

No 34 “Simple Two Move Themes” 1924 All the CHESS volumes have Wood’s distinctive sticker inside the front cover. Another fine book 30/-.

There were 10 to go and I wrote to Guy Chandler telling him of my wants. But with a change of job from Brewarrina to Narromine, chess took a back seat briefly. 1973 was quiet, I tried to get the job as Problem Editor with Chess in Australia but Bernie Johnson put on Mike Winslade. He fell ill in 1974 and I asked again, this time I was successful. Lucky too as I was in a bit of a mental trough at the time.

I wrote to the US dealer Dale Brandreth on September 12 1974 and he replied:-

“...It is rather a stroke of extreme good fortune that you should write me at this time because just about a month ago I bought an extremely fine problem collection by a man, Clarence Southerland, who was formerly Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware. I am enclosing lists of what I have been able to list so far. There will be a bit more, but this is the bulk of it..... I am glad Mr Sharp gave my

name to you. I have dealt in chess books and magazines for about five years now, and though I do it as a side interest, I get much satisfaction and pleasure from being in touch with fellow collectors around the globe. Demand is heavy these days, so I cannot guarantee everything will be left on these lists by the time you get them, but I will try to apportion things anyway, rather than to give everything to the first to respond....”

Very fair way of dealing and I was lucky.

No 35 “Chess Lyrics” 1905 with supplement glued inside back cover. A glorious book bound by Stuarts Wilmington Book Bindery, Inc of 615 Shipley Street Wilmington Delaware. Whenever the Judge solved a problem a large pencilled ‘S’ with a circle around it appeared alongside the problem. This one has a few ‘S’s scattered through it. The most unseries like book of the Series being 498 pages thick. There is a cardboard bookmark in the shape of a straight ‘7’. It was cut from an invitation card. The pages of the book are gold leafed on the top. \$17.50US

No 36 “200 Bauernumwandlung Schachaufgaben” 1907 One of the more difficult items to buy but a poor quality paper makes this volume disappointing. The cover is khaki in colour with the 1870 stamp of the publisher A Stein. The Judge has a few more liberally sprinkled ‘S’s in this volume. \$6.50

No 37 “J Juchli’s Schachprobleme” -1908 One of the rare volumes. Green cover and quite unusual for a Christmas Series volume. In German and lovely glossy paper with zebra striped end papers. A nice item. \$22.50

No 38 “Ceske Melodie” 1908 Another of the German/English texts. Pospisil (1861-1916) was considered the greatest of the Bohemian composers. Born in Bestvin and died in Prague he was for some years instructor in Natural History at the people’s School of Ziskov, a suburb of Prague. A most unusual washed pink colour on the covers sets this volume apart from the usual red covered volumes. \$11.50

No 39 “Memories of my Chess-Board” 1901 The first of the Chess Amateur publications from Stroud. A paperback! But the Judge had it bound in a lovely dark blue cloth by Stuart’s Bindery. It was for sale for \$0.75 in 1919. This is the “historical” book of the series. A truly lovely book and it was reviewed in the Chess Amateur of April 1910 p 212:- *“All of Mr White’s chess experiences from the beginning are told, and each of his problematic contemporaries is alluded to in proper order. His remarks upon Loyd’s and Shinkman’s work will reach a warm spot in American hearts; and Mr White has been in a position to refer to his contemporaries interestingly; in as much as he has personally corresponded with all of the modern composers and has met many of them. At times during his “Memories” he intersperses examples of the work of other composers, bearing upon his own, and this idea is followed out at greater length in an Appendix to the*

book. Beneath the solution of his fiftieth example the author touchingly reveals the identity of "M.W.W.", to whom nearly all of his books have been dedicated. It is his sister, who, so Mr White informs us, has been largely responsible for the success of his varied chess undertakings".

Perhaps classing this up with "Sam Loyd and his Chess Problems" is rash but the way White uses his Catlin pocket boards as a catalyst to describe the stories is rather unique. Dark brown paperback cover inside is again unusual. \$35

No 40 "Dame und ein Laufer" 1911 This too was a paperback from Veit at Leipzig. Bound by Stuart. Problems limited to Kings, Queens, Bishops and pawns. 600 of them. Quite good paper and not brittle. Another lovely item. \$17

And so by the start of 1975 there were 40 sheep in the paddock! I bought very heavily during 1975 and a lot of good chess books came into my library. In April a letter came from Bill Whyatt which I gave in the Whyatt book on page 40 and with it came:-

No 41 "The Golden Argosy" 1929 The problems of William Shinkman. Opposite the title page is a list of the Christmas series 25 years on 1905 – 1929. There were now 37 volumes in the series. But what generosity from Bill Whyatt. I got further in his debt every letter. I didn't realise then that he was shedding himself of all assets and that he was not well either financially or mentally. We shared a love of poetry and at the time Chess in Australia had a poetry competition running which was won by another dear friend Bill Morris. The second prizewinner by Len Fisher was rather good:-

*"Would you a problem setter be,
Vindictive, vitriolic?
Then be one in your infancy,
Your nurse will think it's colic".*

The Shinkman book had a long birth. It started in 1911 with a collection by H Staerker of Bournemouth. This was expanded by Malcolm Sim of Toronto who was in contact with Shinkman himself. Eventually 3000 problems emerged of which 600 were included in the book. Otto Wurzburg, Shinkman's nephew, George Hume and Joel Fridlitzius checked the problems and Alain White finished his introduction with :- *"..I wish to express my sincere appreciation and thanks, and I feel sure I can add the gratitude of the readers who, now and in the long future, are to enjoy the book".* How true.

In 1966 the Melbourne Library put out a Christmas Series Wants List in the 'Australian' newspaper chess column of 27 June and it stuck in the back of my mind. I bought three of those wants Roi Accule \$14, Les Tours \$20 and Les Milles \$18.50 and offered them to the library in a letter dated 14/2/1975. It was to be my first contact with Ken Fraser. 24 years later we still write. But the library had filled those wants long ago and my friend George Meldrum bought

them in August from me plus “The Properties of Castling”. Those three books from Clarence Southerland’s sale were a contrast. Roi Accule had belonged to the BCF having been presented to it by C E Biaggini. Les Tours was William Rice, the famous US problemists’s copy and was presented to him by Murray Marble. Les Milles was pristine.

I was still writing to Guy Chandler regularly and sent him my wants list for the Series in January 1976. There were only three and he replied on 15 January:-
“I received yours of the 5th Jany. A few days ago, but postponed mailing the Alexandre because I am expecting a copy of A C White’s Christmas Series “100 Problems by William Meredith”, and I want to send both books in one registered packet. I don’t know exactly what the Meredith will cost, because it comes in a lot we are purchasing, but this series have now become investment items, with more and more people trying to complete the set, and a negligible supply. The result is a staggering rise in prices on the Continent, and no book in the series sells at less than £5 if in reasonable condition. So it does not seem likely that there will be anything left out of the £15 you sent. Your set must be worth quite £300, as it only lacks two books, and one of those – Braune – may be considered unobtainable. In 25 years only one copy has passed through my hands....”.

No 42 “100 Problems by William Meredith” 1916. So it was £5 for the book. It was marked internally at £1 and has the purchaser Harry Golombek’s signature there just below the £1 with an arrow pencilled from the price to his name. Quite amazing that the great British chessplayer should have owned it and I soon appreciated why the book was hard to buy – the book had 39 photos of composers, some quite rare. For example there is one of the NZ composer Kuskop. I’d never seen one before. Another was of Arthur Mosely of Queensland and there was a family tree of photos of the Meredith clan going back to 1799. Naturally the book was edited by ‘100 Members of the Good Companion Chess Problem Club of Philadelphia, USA’. Each member analysed one problem and each of their comments was given with the solution. As usual George Hume saw it through the Chess Amateur at Stroud. The copy is very sun bleached and the great John G White even commented on Problem No 81. A treasured volume.

On 16 February 1984 Alex Goldstein wrote to me about his trip to Bat Yam for the problemists get-together and as well included the problems in the Guy Chandler Memorial Tournament. Chandler (1889-1980) was being honoured and Alex wanted the problem team to check them for him. I was pleased to get the request as I liked Guy Chandler. It is true that we never got to Christian names but he was a very helpful and friendly man who had sold me many problem books and had passed on many snippets of early problem lore. His review of my Whyatt book was more than I could have expected. Jim Jones and Brian Tomson checked the problems, Jim on his Scisys and Brian on his Boris computer and I solved them also. Comments were provided and the eight problems Alex had selected for honours were soon knocked into shape.

I wrote to Alex and mentioned his copies of Robert Braune and Retrograde Analysis that I had seen in 1978 and that I knew he had willed them to the BCPS. I suggested that there was no copy of Braune in Australia but that there was a copy of RA in the Fisher Library in Sydney. (This copy later went “astray” and I often wondered if my article on the library resulted in its disappearance)

Alex responded on 20 June:-“ *...I cannot unfortunately help you with the matter of the 2 books, but I believe that you should approach the Librarian (Mr Citeroni) now and ask for his assistance. All the books willed to the Society are usually sold afterwards so an agreement with you can only save postal fees. But my interference might be considered in bad taste-that’s how I see it..*”.

I replied 12 July:-“ *..Regarding the two books-Braune and Retrograde Analysis I take it that you have no objection to my having first offer of them at the going price to the BCPS? If you would be good enough to state that in a letter I will then send it off to Mr Citeroni. Are you sure he is the one to contact and not R C McWilliam? But I guess he may check the books first to ensure any rare item is left in the BCPS library...*”.

Alex replied 17 July:-“ *..In respect of the 2 books you are interested to retain in Australia I am willing to help in the following way: I consider that all books owned by me are now in my custody and I only have the right to use them. As these two particular books are almost never used by me I quite agree for the Society to sell them to you at a price fixed by them. Once this is completed I send the books to you. And I do not want to know who bought them and how much was paid. I just deliver them now instead of a later date. Of course, I would not part now with 90% of my books as I use them almost constantly for my studies, articles and detection of anticipation. I hope this will make you happy. Legally speaking it will be probably the first case when a dead man sold something while still being alive..*”

I wrote to Robert McWilliam and he responded with a very interesting letter that showed clearly how careful the BCPS with the prices of chess books and how he decided on the prices for this deal:-

“..Thank you for your letter about the A C White books and for sending the copy of Alex Goldstein’s letter to you. Robert Braune is by far the rarest of the series. This is probably because 500 copies are lying somewhere on the bed of the Atlantic Ocean after the ship carrying them was torpedoed and sank in 1914. I am sure dealers such as John Rather, Fred Wilson, Ken Whyld, etc would put it in their catalogues for £60 or more (Rather’s 1983-1 catalogue had “BauernamwandlungsSchachaufgaben” for £52.25 and the two volumes of “Les Milles et un Mats Inverses” for £62.75!!) and “Retrograde Analysis” for £40.45. (Ken Whyld had it for £42, I think, 2 years ago).

MY valuations for sale to the British Chess problem Society membership would be £45 for the Braune and £30 for Retrograde Analysis – provided it is in good condition as the Braune. I sold a f. good copy 2 years ago for £27.50. I hope this letter proves helpful to you and I shall look forward to hearing from you further in the matter... ”.

I was pleased with the valuations –they were a little low but in the ballpark without the normal dealer markup. I replied:-“ *I think your valuations from Braune and Retrograde Analysis were very fair and I am happy to close the deal now. I will save up for the draft and send it to you within the month. £75 in all. Re the Braune I was interested to hear about the torpedoed ship. Didn’t know why it was so rare but that explains it. Alex bought it off Guy Chandler many years ago. (he did tell me but I’ve forgotten. Think it was in the early 60’s and he paid about £10/10/- but am not sure.) It has a green cover and is a large book of similar size to the Sam Loyd edition but quite thin. In fact an unimpressive book but for the fact it will complete my set. I seem to recall that Dick Ford got one not so long ago from Michael Macdonald-Ross. Yes, Michael wrote me in 1981 that he sold George Hume’s copy to Dick for £35 so there is still the odd copy around”.*

Robert sent me a receipt for £75 in September and I had advised Alex all about what was going on in a letter dated 14 August. I gave him the prices, that I was happy with the valuation and would forward a receipt in due course. I also made an undertaking that the Braune would remain in Australia. I forwarded the receipt to Alex on 20 September with postage for the two books to come to me.

And in October they arrived.

No 43 “Robert Braune” 1914 And as I recalled it above was so it looked on arrival. A very nice cover-dark green and gold blocked lettering all in good condition. Inside on the front end paper was Alex Goldstein’s signature plus a name stamp and a number No 109. I guess of his collection. A nice photo of Braune but the paper is acid type, browning, small diagrams and generally verging on brittle. It is in French and was published by “Librairie De ‘La Strategie’ Paris”. Ken Whyld advised that most copies were lost with Lusitania in May 1915.

No 44 “Retrograde Analysis” 1915 No 86 in Alex’s collection. Hard bound in black cloth but very battered and falling apart. Contents very good but not an annotation anywhere just like Braune. What a pity. Originally published as a paperback.

And so it was all over. The quest began in the mid 1960’s had finished in late 1984. About 18 years.

Ken Whyld did a great job with his reprinted booklet “Alain White’s Chess problem Books” – A checklist of the Christmas Series and Overbrook Series, published under his patronage’. This booklet first printed in 1956 was scanned into Ken’s computer and with minor changes came out again in January 1997 and was originally from Ken’s “Chess Reader”. There were 66 copies of the reprint.

It is difficult to get detail on the print runs and Roi Accule has a print run of 200 according to Ken but he is not quite sure. I think that’s about right and it gives a lead on the runs of the early Christmas series. 500 of Braune were far too many as indicated by Robert McWilliam. If we recall that the great “A History of Chess” by Murray in 1913 had a first edition run of 2000 of which 1000 were pulped and then in 1962 a further print run of 1000, there just can’t be too many per volume in the series. I believe it would have gone up in the Good Companions Era and possibly higher again in the late 20’s/30’s. Say something like 200 up until say 1913-300 up until the Good Companions era and then perhaps 350 to the end.

Any ‘real’ print runs would be appreciated. Also as to what proportion of books went as gifts from White to his problem friends. Does anyone know?

There have been some brilliant reviews of the series volumes over the years and that would be an interesting chapter in itself. But some comment needs to be made about Dr J J O’Keefe’s reviews which were published in the Australasian Chess Review. Here is one from 1930 p 21+:- “ *Once again Santa Clause, impersonated by A C White, has brought a precious gift to the home of every well known problemist throughout the world . For so many years have these unquie gifts arrived with unfailing regularity, that it is to be feared some amongst us have almost come to look upon their appearance as a matter of course, and give but too little thought to the tremendous labour, and, above all, to the unparalleled and inexplicable generosity of which they are the outcome. It is not too much to say that the tremendous movement forward made by the problem art in the past twenty-five years has had its incentive, inspiration, and basis, in the magnificent series of Xmas Books donated to us by Alain C White. The thirty –sixth volume of this series, which came to hand this Christmas, is entitled “The Golden Argosy” and is a collection of nearly seven hundred problems by the world-famous American composer William Anthony Shinkman. Shinkman was born in Bohemia, but since the age of seven has lived at Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. He commenced to compose when twenty three years of age, and within a year we find him winning first prize in a tourney conducted by the famous Dubuque Chess Journal for a set of problems, one of which was a 20-mover!*

In those days, tourneys for ‘sets’ made up of problems of varying lengths were the fashion. Although the disadvantages of the system were so obvious that it has long since died out, one sometimes wonders if its occasional revival might do some good. I have in mind the curious fact that both in England and America there are scores of composers of repute who have given undoubted evidence of exceptional constructive ability, but whose names have never been seen above anything but 2-

ers. Would the institution of tourneys for 'sets' entice some of these composers to forsake for a space the barren field of the 2-er, and induce them to exercise their technique in the immeasurably more fertile field of the 3-er at least? Unfortunately, they are so well provided for in the matter of tourneys in their own arid domain, that the answer would probably be in the negative.

Shinkman exploited practically every sphere of activity open to a composer, and excelled in each of them. Some of the world's acknowledged gems in 2-ers, 3-ers, and 4-ers, bear the hallmark of his factory; but in multimovers, endings, retractors, helpmates, and puzzles, his genius was also displayed. He worked at such an amazing rate, that now, at the age of eighty two years, his output exceeds three thousand problems! This is truly an astounding total. Like his great confrere, Loyd, Shinkman was practically a law unto himself, and owed no allegiance to any particular school of problem thought. He had his own ideas as to what constituted a good chess problem, and expressed them so delightfully that he carried the world with him. His work is characterised by sparkle, wit, and elegance, and although his style of composition may even now have passed the heyday of its popularity, to give place to an era of complexity and profundity, his work will live as the magnificent expression of a phase in the evolution of our art.

Shinkman had many affinities with Loyd. Their ideals had much in common, and they differed merely in the scope of their expression. Whilst Loyd painted canvasses, Shinkman executed vignettes, but the work of each is so pervaded with the same keen sense of humour, wit, and quaintness, that together they almost constitute an American 'school'.

The dozen problems here quoted will illustrate the Shinkman style. Nos 50 and 57 have become famous not only for their intrinsic merits, but for their historical associations. G E Carpenter, published about the same time a position practically identical with No 50 and Dobrusky did likewise in the case of No 57. In days when instances of unconscious imitation were still of rarity, sufficient to excite widespread comment, much ink was spilt in 'explanations' anent these two positions. The present volume contains a selection, made by Shinkman himself, of nearly 700 problems from his huge output. There is a most interesting preface written by Otto Wurzburg, who is a nephew of Shinkman's, and himself a world-famous composer, and his name is bracketed with those of White and Hume as co-editor. The book is got up in the fine style of the ACW series, and is issued by the Stroud News Publishing Co of Gloucester, England. Dr J J O'Keefe".

What an excellent review – more historical and topical of the problem world than but the comparison with Loyd seems right to me. I think the relationship between Loyd and Shinkman was put well by White in "Sam Loyd" pages 83/85 and it was nice to re-read that and see Loyd acknowledging Shinkman's skill. Did they write to one another? It does not appear so. One can see from these pages that O'Keefe got his 'imitation' paragraph inspiration here. As for No 50 and 57, I can't diagram these. The numbers in ACR were problems by others. Likewise

No 50 and 57 in the Golden Argosy are 2-ers of another era. The No 50 O'Keefe writes about was published ca 1870's and the No 50 in GA is from the 1890's.

In the February issue of ACR problem page is ANOTHER review by O'Keefe – this time on “Antiform”, but that is for another time. Before leaving the Golden Argosy, Bill Whyatt cooked No 330 Shinkamm's favourite double Indian with 1.Rd4. Or at least he gave the cook which is deadly. (After 1..KxR;2.Kb5 & 3.Bb6 or 1..Pg5;2.Bb6++)

It would be interesting to know what encouraged White to start the series. I have a theory that he copied Ludwig Bachmann (1856-1937), the ‘Chess Herodotus’. Bachmann produced a series of yearbooks from 1891 to 1896 and then 1897 to 1930 with each years events in one or more volumes. The total? 44. I am indebted to Ken Whyld for this information from OCC and have discussed this with him. He once had a full set of Bachmann. I doubt if the yearbooks were given away as were the Christmas Series to problem friends but that both series finished with 44 all is a coincidence that smacks of more. Did White wish to emulate Bachmann? Maybe he gave to the problem world what Bachmann gave to the chess players?

White's obituary in BCM 1951 page 214/215 is just astounding in that one man could achieve so much. He was from a wealthy family and highly educated. I mentioned in White's library article that ‘The White Memorial Foundation’ gave thousands of acres to the State of Connecticut but we are interested here in the man, and chess problems. Here is what Sedgwick wrote in BCM:-

“..In the chess problem, the magnitude of his contribution has not been surpassed by any man, living or dead. It was his father who first awakened that rare genius that grew and spread like a fountain whose showers fell in every land that saw adherents of his hobby. An absolute mastery of his subject, whether in the role of composer, author, theoretician or critic, made him the supreme authority to whom lesser men turned naturally for guidance and understanding. In what can be a controversial subject, White bore his mantle of greatness with a modesty and self effacement that endeared him to all that knew him. He found his collection of problems in 1908 and was rewarded for this immense labour by seeing it become the dispassionate arbiter in all matters pertaining to two-movers. His forty-four books in the “Christmas Series” from 1905 to 1935 remain today a monument to a prodigious and continued act of liberality unequalled in the history of the minor arts. His literary accomplishments were here able to find beautiful expression, and now that the series can be viewed in its totality, we see that constant striving for perfection, whether coming from White himself or manifested in the work of other men under his inspiration. His second great series in the Overbrook Press add further enduring testimony to a magnificent and restless mind...”

No wonder the problem world loved him.

BOB MEADLEY AND A CHESS BOOK COLLECTION

A set of chessmen with hand carved knights and a lovely inlaid board and table owned by the Bryant family sent me down the chessic road which I still travel. I was 14.

Like many young people, collections of toy soldiers, comics and sporting items led to the literature of chess and play. It was fascinating. Here was an elderly man – Mrs Bryant’s father-a Scot, who played chess with us and all of us got fun out of it. What game was this that crossed generations?

My first book was Alexander’s “Chess” 1954 edition I think, with a photo of Mikhail Botvinnik opposite the title page. I lent this book and now it is lost. Botvinnik was world chess champion and an electrical engineer. Could one play chess, have a hobby and a work career? Botvinnik had done it – could I?

In 1955 I became an indentured electrical fitting apprentice in the NSW Railways. We were sent to various workshops around Sydney such as Elcar Chullora, Redfern, Bankstown and various electrical sub-stations and a stint at the ‘Greenhouse’ headquarters of the Railway at Wynyard. Theoretical training was at the old Railway Institute in Castlereagh Street opposite the Mark Foys building. There were snooker tables in the basement but no chess. There was a lot of chess play at Chullora with many European tradesmen in a workshop of over 1000 employees.

Cecil Purdy, the Australian chess champion, had a chess shop in Bond Street which was on the 4th floor after a very rickety lift ride. I recall seeing a very youthful Trevor Hay and Max Fuller there in the early 1960’s. (In January 1996 I saw an older Max Fuller playing in the Australian Championships at the University of Technology.) I played a lot of chess in Hyde Park at the chess tables (now gone) and it was exciting playing against the old men. Sometimes a crowd would gather and there were lots of onlookers remarks. Enough to turn a young man’s head and mine was turned. Occasionally a good player from Koshnitsky’s Chess Academy would come over and I would find out that chess was really about forward planning. These players were usually too good but now and then I would win.

Could one learn from chess books? Alekhine’s 1908 –1923 was a revelation. He was only 16 years old in 1908 and he played like a god. Whilst those fabled cities such as St Petersburg, Vilna, Schevingen, Carlsbad and Mannheim were where I wanted to play, in the back of my mind I knew I never would . I just couldn’t understand the reasons for Alekhine’s moves even when there were long notes. Further visits to Hyde Park convinced me when I saw a penniless Frank Crowl the chess master. On that day ca 1960, in his soiled grey suit with the long pencil cigarette holder and his piercing eyes I realised. Chess mastery was only for the gifted few. The rest led a hand to mouth existence.

Was there anything then in chess problems? Could one become a gifted chess artist? John Kellner's columns in the Sunday Mirror were inspiring. He was always able to encourage the school students and even the older players such as myself to join his ladder competitions. I was 'Top of the Ladder' six times between June 1963 and December 1964. The trophies were gold plated Kings, Queens, Rooks and Knights on a plastic base with one's name inscribed on the base. The ladder solvers would travel through hell to win the ultimate prize of an inlaid board. I was just getting to the top of the heap in 1965 when a common occurrence took place; the competition collapsed as it often did in the money starved chess world. I was stunned – all that brain work and nothing. Oh well. At the same time I realised that the 50 or so electrical apprentices who had become tradesmen in the railways in 1960 had all left by 1965 except for me and another chap. They had gone to greener pastures. I could see my future in the railways by just looking at the older tradesmen –all grey – set in their ways –going through the same routine – on the same miserable salary. I must have seen this quite early as I started studying at night for the Leaving Certificate in 1956 and passed it in 1960. Chess was a terrible partner for study but I got through just in time. I closely examined the electrical engineering degree-the railway offered me some help but NO – it might have been easy for Botvinnik but it looked terribly hard to me. I gave a University education away and continued at Sydney Technical College commencing the Health and Building certificate. It was tough as there was work during the day and tech at nights. I started in 1962 at 3 nights per week and ended 1964 at 5 nights per week.

Daywork started at Elcar Chullora at 7.30am and finished at 4.00pm. It was then a drive to Sydney where tech started at 6.00pm and finished at 9.00pm. I got home about 9.30pm and dear mum had dinner waiting for me. She jollied me through the bad times and I passed scraping through in some subjects. Chess was always there threatening to break out and destroy my career. I passed - lucky.

A job in the country as an assistant health and building inspector took me to Coonabarabran – the Warrumbungle Mountains and cold winter nights. What to do? I soon found the chessplayers. They were kind but not keen. I saw a way out through chess columns. I would solve the problems and win prizes and in doing so I solved one of Frank Ravenscroft's problems finding a slight error in it. I wrote to him and an enduring correspondence started which is described in the book "W A Whyatt's Chess Problems". I had joined the problem world as a solver. Frank tried hard to convert me to composition but it never stuck. Some solving was done in Koshnitsky's Sun-Herald column and Purdy's Telegraph column also. And then Frank sent me some old issues of "Problem" Zagreb – the great Nenad Petrovic was editor. What composers they were in Europe. Except for Frank, Bill Whyatt, Alex Goldstein and Laimons Mangalis, the rest of us were way behind.

Romance blossomed with an engagement to my wife Norma McKenzie. She worked in the Council office as did I and she has never moved a chess piece with excitement. The only time I did try to teach her, she was looking out the window. We moved to Brewarrina, a small country town 500 miles (800kms) NW of Sydney on the Barwon River. Norma had family there and along came our two children Penny (1968) and John Bradford (1971). John was named after my father and brother.

There was an aboriginal draughts player here who was the acknowledged champion – Fellie McHughes. A reformed alcoholic who had got religion and who worked on Council's parks and gardens staff. I approached him one day, "*I believe you play draughts Fellie?*". His eyes glistened. "*I sure do*", he said, "*Can we have a game?*". Arrangements made I went to his home and found him playing the guitar. He was good at that also but he was very good at draughts and though I had many games with him and caught up a little overall he was the better player. In 1967 he told me that his stomach hurt and he went to Dubbo for medical examination – inoperable cancer. They brought him home to die. The hospital matron rang me one day at work and asked if I could come up and play him draughts. We played, though he was drugged so much that he moved the men backwards. We shook hands and he knew the end was near and he died in 1968 aged 47. A terrible loss for his family. Frank Ravenscroft also died that year and I took solace in chess books including those he had left me in his will. What books they were "Mrs Baird's Twentieth century Retractors and other Novelties" being one of many. It really started my collecting hobby in earnest. A subscription to CHESS by Baruch Wood revealed his rare book auctions and "American Chess Nuts" 1868 by Cook, Henry and Gilberg was one of my first buys. It wasn't a good copy but its provenance in the Glasgow Chess Club and the secretary's name in the book – J M Nicol was special. There is even a note :-"*Not to be removed from the Club Room*" in the front. Who originally owned it? I don't know but there is a photo between page 286/7 out of an American newspaper celebrating Dr Samuel R Calthrop's 85th birthday. That photo is dated October 10 1915. The good doctor played in the 1857 American Championship won by Morphy. Was this the Dr's copy?

An almost complete set of "The Chess Amateur" followed from Wood. I was on the way. This magazine was superior to BCM in its early years and on a par later. A friendship developed with the problemist John van Der Klauw from another aborted Sunday Mirror Tourney in 1968. We wrote regularly. Man landed on the moon in July 1969 and I sat out all night with my 100mm reflecting telescope waiting for the flash when Columbia went from the light to the dark and vice versa. I saw nothing.

And then "Sam Loyd and his Chess Problems" Dover edition – the book by Alain White came into my heart. I feel today this is still one of the best ever chess books. I refer to it regularly. Only a week or so ago on 19/9/1999 Ian Rogers had Sam's famous castling 3-er (WK e1, WR f1 and hl, WP g3; BK g2) in

his Sun Herald column. This problem is on page 424 in the book. You can't help but laugh at some of Sam's high jinks. He invented the 14/15 puzzle which many stumbled over including me. Whilst researching in the Town and Country Journal of May 8 1880 I came across the puzzle's first appearance in Australia. I have never seen the date of origin so it must be a little earlier in the USA. The Journal suggested this puzzle had the American households "*by the ears*" just like Rubik's Cube did the world 100 years later.

We moved to Narromine in 1972, still our home today. In 1974 came a marvellous boost to my chess hobby. Bernie Johnson made me chess problem editor of "Chess in Australia" and, I wrote to Dale Brandreth. The column brought me into contact with all those interested in chess problems in Australia and many original problems and a few tournaments appeared in the column during my 10 years as editor. Gradually my interests in collecting deepened and many problem books came from Dale especially from the late Judge Clarence Southerland's collection. And these led to chess history books and Fred Wilson, the genial New York chess book dealer. It was from him that one of my happiest treasures, the first few volumes of the Chess Player's Chronicle came my way. A few really old chess books came from both dealers:- Hyde, Stamma, Salvio, Carrera and Lopez. A friendship developed with the late Dr Meindert Niemeijer, the benefactor and minder of the Royal Chess Collection in The Hague. He too, was generous and dealings with the late George Campbell of Aberdeen, Michael Macdonald-Ross, Mike Sheahan, Barrie Ellen, John Rather and Neville Ledger followed. The periodicals included BCM of which I hold most except some early years, the Chess Monthly USA is complete – the final months in microfilm, Hoffer's Chess Monthly is complete and the Chess Amateur and I have a run of La Strategie in the 1870's/80's. I was also problem editor of the Tasmanian Chess Magazine for 9 years.

A book on the problemist Bill Whyatt followed in 1979 and "A Chess Miscellany"; my correspondence with the great chess historian John van Manen started in 1975 and I helped him with the Australian Chess Lore Series of which six volumes appeared. Another small booklet on Australian problemists of the 19th century was done in 1989. And now this 'medley' in 1999.

To answer the questions asked about my collection:- In September 1999 there are 1173 bound books, 143 bound volumes of magazines and 77 unbound volumes. There are no books before 1500AD; 3 in the 1500's; 4 in the 1600's; 4 in the 1700's and 112 in the 1800's leaving 1050 in the 1900's. I also hold xeroxes and microfilms of many chess columns and pamphlets.

The collections major growth was in the 1970's and over the last 10 years new purchases have averaged about 30/year. I am interested more in using the contents of the collection in research rather than adding to it. It is a working collection but there are many books that do not "work". The periodicals are by far the most useful for research along with the chess columns from newspapers. The microfilm

reels sold by the Cleveland Library which include The Field, Illustrated London News, the Era, Bell's Life in London and the New York Clipper being fine acquisitions. I can commend them to collectors who are interested in research.

My motives for buying the collection are to have a good hobby outside work. Living in a small country town requires a good mental diversion if one is not interested in the 'club' or 'sport' life. My wife and I walk a lot for exercise and we do not go out much socially preferring research into family and local history areas.

The collection will be sold one day. It has been bought chiefly during a period when the Australian dollar was very strong and worth \$1.33 US. Now it is worth \$0.65. As I wrote in "A Chess Miscellany" in 1979 I still believe that collectors can acquire a good collection at a fair price. The Dutch collector Bert Corneth who started his collection in 1988 and has already passed me is a good example. Collectors must not go overboard when offered a rare book at a high price. They should trade with all the dealers, keep a price list as done by Dr Niemeijer in "Scaecvaria" and NOT be in a hurry. They should also correspond with collectors as we are a family. Barrie Ellen's lists point the way. He and Dale are fair dealers.

The finest book in my collection is a beautifully bound copy of Alexandre's "Problemes D'Echecs" 1846 Paris. It came to me from the charming octogenarian bookseller of the British Chess Problem Society, the late Guy Chandler. I have a full set of the Christmas Series and the collection has an emphasis towards problem books. My interests today are principally historical with problems and solving a close second.

Bob Meadley, 41/5th Avenue Narromine 2821 NSW Australia
13 October 1999

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BCPS = British Chess Problem Society

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