

**A History  
of the  
Metropolitan  
Chess Club**

**1890-1990**

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**by J.J. Moore & T.F. Deery**

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## Preface to Part One: 1890-1940

In writing this part of the History of the Metropolitan Chess Club I have to acknowledge the help I obtained from the valuable source information of the *British Chess Magazine* and the *Chess Amateur* as well as those chess columns I could trace at the British Library at Colindale. I also have to thank Mr. Tony Raven (for many years Hon. Secretary of the Club) for his very helpful and pertinent suggestions on reading my script, Mark Levitt for typesetting and, finally, Mr. John Kitchen and Jimmy Adams for their energetic encouragement and practical help in getting the whole thing off the ground.

When this part of the work had all but been completed I came upon an extract from a small obscure 1896 publication entitled *Everybody's Guide to Chess and Draughts*. Its references to the beginnings of the Metropolitan Club are so valuable in confirming my own account, that I thought it best, all in all, to quote it verbatim rather than rewrite my own part, thus avoiding duplication in the doing.

**J. J. MOORE**

# Extract from *Everybody's Guide to Chess and Draughts* by H. Peachey

"The Metropolitan is the youngest amongst the great London clubs, and in its short existence has had a truly remarkable career. Its origin arose in the fusion of two small clubs—the Monument and the Three Pawns—and founded, as it was, about seven years ago, when troubles were beginning to show themselves in the City of London Chess Club, a bold and spirited policy by its executive soon pushed it to the front. Resignations in goodly numbers from the City itself, a popular programme, (which attracted players from all parts of London and even unearthed many yet unknown to fame), and patrons who spared neither trouble nor expense, all combined to this result. The Metropolitan was a fighting club from the first. Whilst the City was at that period content to rest on its oars and adopt an exclusive policy, the Metropolitan fought matches, and came into touch with everything and everybody they met, and there can be no doubt that a fighting policy is essential to the prosperity of most clubs.

When only in the second year of its existence this club entered for the Senior League Competition, for which all London clubs are eligible and which is divided into three classes, according to strength. By eventually defeating the Athenaeum, the crack local team of that year, the Metropolitan secured first place, a feat it has repeated each year down to the present time, against all comers. The City of London Club was induced to enter for this competition, but has gone down three years in succession before their great rivals. In fact, the Metropolitan have shown wonderful judgement and experienced also great good fortune in having been able to secure for their matches so many of the best players of the day. Until the present year they have proved invincible, but have suffered defeat this season on

two occasions. The Athenaeum defeated them in a League match and then the City in the second of two side matches, played during the season, inflicted on them a somewhat heavy defeat—the first and only success the City can at present record in the struggles between the two clubs.

What the future of the Metropolitan will be it is difficult to say. The great boom achieved by the City last year (1895?) has no doubt tried its resources not a little. But with the ever increasing popularity of chess there is plenty of room for both, and there is no reason why the two should not continue and expand together. There is no doubt that the Metropolitan has conferred an enormous boon on London chess. It has stirred it up. At the time the club was formed there was general lethargy amongst London clubs. Today all is life and go and this metamorphosis is due in large part to Metropolitan, of this there is no doubt. Its subscription of 5 shillings only, appeals to many pockets, and in Mr. R.J. Marsden, they possess one of the hardest working and best secretaries in London. The club meets in spacious quarters at Mullen's Hotel, Ironmonger Lane, every Monday and Thursday evening and on Saturday afternoons."

This modest work by H. Peachey even has a small paragraph devoted to ladies chess saying ... "Chess for ladies in London has languished for a long time past. It's only two years ago that any effort was made to meet the demand for a club. But that such a demand existed has been abundantly proved by the phenomenal success achieved by the club. Founded in 1894, this club is the brain child of Mrs. Rhoda Bowles, the wife of Mr. H.L. Bowles, a prominent member of the Metropolitan Chess Club".\*

*\* This last sentence added by J.J.M.*

# CHAPTER ONE

The Metropolitan Chess Club was founded in 1890 by the amalgamation of two small and quite obscure clubs, the Monument and the Three Pawns. Both these clubs had themselves come into being a year earlier, 1889, and there is a strong and valid theory that they consisted of secessionists from the great City of London Club. This, at any rate, was the belief of Hoffer as quoted in P.W. Sergeant's *Century of British Chess*. Hoffer, of course, was a well known journalist and a prominent member of the City. The Monument Club, at least, was not particularly strong, its first match being a win against the 2nd team of London Banks by only 5-3.

The Special General Meeting which created the merger was held on the 17th April 1890, at the venue of the Three Pawns Club, 18 Abchurch Lane, in the City of London. A Mr. Thomas Keliher was in the chair and he has left us with a short account of the meeting. There were 22 members present, whose names were:

Messrs. Blackburne, Blackham, Bromley, Butler, Dingle, Keliher, Manners, Oliver, Morton-Smith, Vass, Searle, Stebbing, Jarratt, Atkins, Marsden (R.I.), Lewis, Anderson, Vallance, Longstaff, Beyfas, Englefield, and Sparkes.

Mr. Wallace proposed that the new club should be "The East Central Chess Club" but Mr Manners, Seconded by Mr Dingle moved an amendment that the name should be "The Metropolitan Chess Club" and this was carried. The BCM reported in May 1890 that the newly founded Metropolitan was meeting at the same venue, 18 Abchurch Lane, but by 1893, it had moved to the Chesterfield Cafe, 96 Great Tower Street.

The new club began life under the Joint Secretaryship of A. Morton-Smith and R.I. Marsden who had been Secretary of the Monument Club. This and, of course, many other things we know for certain but the unfortunate loss of the relevant Club Minutes for the period up to 1915, has made it impossible to keep abreast of all the officials to that date. More importantly, perhaps we would have liked to know what went on in the minds of those two secretaries in view of the dynamic impact the organisation they had created had on the somnolent chess scene of the time.

Contemporary accounts (the BCM, the *Chess Amateur* etc) tell of a setting in which chess was concentrated in the hands of a very small, not to say exclusive, elite (we are talking of the City of London), the City of London Club itself, the British Chess Club and the St. George's. Of the St. George's, the saying was that it had no ambition at all to establish itself as a premier chess organisation, desiring only to spend its afternoons in peace. This could hardly be said, of course, of the City Club which had a monster tournament, though nothing else. This, by the way, may well have been the root cause of the secession which brought Metropolitan into being, many members having become disgruntled with having such limited scope for whatever talent they may have had.

Naturally there were other excellent clubs around such as the Athenaeum and the Ludgate Circus but their rationale, their motivation, by and large, lay in the huge friendlies of 50 and 100 boards, whilst what passed for serious play was to be found in the handful of clubs competing in the Metropolitan Clubs Senior Competition which, formed as recently as 1887, was in fact the precursor of the London Chess League. Interestingly, the change of name in 1893, was made to avoid confusion with that of the Metropolitan Club itself which, by that time, was its most prominent member!

That scenario was pretty rigid for it existed within the confines of a cosy system of cross membership which could be said to have been the only means by which they could

enlarge their playing experience. But it does beg the question: granted that Metropolitan owed its existence to the desire of ex-City members for better playing opportunities, did the duo of Morton-Smith and R.I. Marsden feel in their bones that a vacuum existed in the City of London for a populist club with low subscriptions and something better than the usual cramped and gloomy surroundings that were the lot of chess players everywhere? If so, were they momentarily prescient or just plain lucky in their timing? We shall never know. What can be said for certain is that once the die was cast, the energy, the enterprise, the organisational skill were not found wanting. The effect on the London chess scene must have been mind boggling, for within ten years it had been turned upside down. That amazing gate crasher, the Metropolitan, had won the London League 8 times, had once reached the colossal membership of 303 and held annual meetings enlivened by, of all things, smoking concerts! The BCM could only gasp in wonder, referring to the Met as a *Fin de Siècle Club*—"go ahead and very up to date"—praise indeed from that staid body. But then, the BCM had not been slow to recognise the potential of the new arrival, for in May 1890 it expressed the hope that the Metropolitan Club would live up to its name "for if it does it will be heard of in future seasons". It did and it was.

One critic voiced the sour opinion that in naming itself the Metropolitan, the club had lofty aspirations, meaning, no doubt, aspirations above its station. To this, Morton-Smith had replied with jocular aptness "what do you expect but lofty aspirations from anything springing from a Monument?"

There is a photograph of Morton-Smith to be found in the April 1893 issue of the BCM. It shows a serious, professional-looking man in his mid-thirties, moustached, keen eyed behind pince-nez glasses and with sparse hair above a broad forehead. Of his colleague, R.I. Marsden, an early reference comes from the pen of R.P. Michell, 'a very strong player of the time and Metropolitan Champion 1897-98 who, writing in the BCM of his arrival at the Metropolitan Club in 1895 "The Metropolitan was booming under the energetic Secretaryship of R.I. Marsden—when I joined a year or two after coming to London. Both these men, Morton-Smith and Marsden, though often playing for the Club do not appear to have been anything but modest players."

This is also true of those other members present at the inaugural meeting of April 1890, who can, in fact, be traced as having played for Metropolitan, and by a curious coincidence, this is on the single instance of the famous 1893 match between Metropolitan and Ludgate Circus, played over 120 boards! (of which, more, much more later). Among the players for the club were A. Manners (board 43), M. Beyfus (49), C. J. Vallance (55), F. Dingle (82), W.D. Butler (83), A. Atkins (106). In addition, W.D. Butler turned out in the Metropolitan team that met Oxford University in 1894, Metropolitan winning 7-3. M. Beyfus is also to be found playing for the South of Thames versus the North in 1896. He was at board 89. As far as this booklet is concerned their day has come and gone for we find no further mention of their names. If Thomas Keliher who chaired the inaugural meeting hasn't been mentioned it is because *his* day had by no means come and gone. He was still a member some fifty years later.

Brief mention has been made of the setting into which Metropolitan was born. We enlarge on this to show what kind of a shake up took place in the wake of that event. To begin with it has to be borne in mind that cross membership between clubs was an integral part of the system as it existed.

There may have been some sort of gentleman's agreement that you didn't tread on each other's toes. This only, would make possible the cosy clubland competition that went on, that is in the shape of friendly matches, great and small, where conviviality was as important as the play. It was also a place where many foreign as well as domestic masters were to be found, amongst these the great Lasker himself, Steinitz, Blackburne, Janowsky, Teichmann and many others, including Isidor Gunsberg who, in the Metropolitan Club's first year was appointed chess instructor to the junior members and often helped in spot adjudications in those days when chess was still being played for fun as well as for blood. It is worth mentioning that he had been strong enough to play a match of 19 games with Steinitz, at the Manhattan Club, New York, commencing in December 1890, Steinitz winning narrowly by 10½ to 8½.

The presence of these masters in London owed much to the needs of the time; international tournaments were few and far between and in the meantime there was a modest living to be had in the capital (as in New York and Paris) through simultaneous play, lectures and small matches at varying stakes. Nor were patrons lacking at the time. A beneficial consequence of all this activity was the space given to it in periodicals such as the BCM, the *Chess Amateur* and other outlets which has been more useful to the purposes of this booklet than the missing minutes could have been—of this there is little doubt. We have only to think of the 8 pages devoted by BCM to the great friendly match between Metropolitan and Ludgate Circus over 120 boards, played on the 18th March 1893 and which it—the BCM—described as the 'big thing' of the London season.

However, there was a preliminary to this match on the 21st March 1892 when hardly two years after its foundation, the Metropolitan Club felt strong enough to take on the long established Ludgate Circus Club in one of those mammoth friendlies so popular in those years. It was the very first match on record between Metropolitan and one of the big City Clubs, the result over 75 boards a narrow win for the Ludgate Circus Club by 38½-36½, a result which couldn't have been too disappointing to the fledgeling club. J.A. Blackburne and I. Gunsberg adjudicated unfinished games.

To return to the 1893 match over 120 boards, Metropolitan had a decisive revenge, winning by 79 to 41. Apart from the excitement this event caused in itself, there surfaced at the dinner, which followed the match, more than a hint of the uneasiness being felt over this brash new organisation called the Metropolitan. It started after the meal with the Reverend A.B. Skipworth, a noted player of the day who occupied the chair, declaring that "he had never felt prouder in all his life as a chess player when he was asked to act as captain of the Metropolitan team that day. He had been struck with the vigour and life that the Metropolitan had shown and he had soon had a desire to join their ranks. The Metropolitan was the most active and strongest organisation in the kingdom: he had seen nothing like it anywhere and he felt it had a right to take up the same position in chess as the Marylebone Club did in cricket". Stirring stuff reflecting the extraordinary impact Metropolitan had had on its contemporaries but, one guesses right away, hardly in tune with the occasion.

When the Reverend Sir resumed his seat the Hon. Secretary of the Ludgate Club contented himself with saying that Mr. Skipworth must have forgotten the existence of other chess organisations. Other feelings simmered below the surface and did not emerge till later when another hundred and fifty guests having high tea in another room joined the main party with both meals over. It is recorded that altogether four hundred gentlemen were present at the smoking concert which followed. Here it inevitably came to the notice of Mr Morton-Smith that many of the Ludgate

Circus men had taken umbrage at some of Mr. Skipworth's remarks and he—Morton-Smith—proceeded to pour oil on troubled waters: "He was sure that there had been no intention of throwing any discredit upon the Ludgate Circus Club ... and their friends at the Circus were worthy of as much praise as they (at Metropolitan) were" and more in the same vein which seemed to have gone down well, for his conciliatory speech was greeted with cheers. Eventually, one of the most successful gatherings of London chess players ended with the singing of the National Anthem. It gets you at the back of the throat, doesn't it ....

As to the match itself, all was sweetness and light. No clocks were used, play as a rule was very fast, indeed a current view had it that the meeting was more in the nature of a carnival than a serious chess match, though serious play was seen on many boards. In the circumstances, players' names might not be worth recording but for the fact that here we have our first sight of those who were the early Metropolitan Club.

1. A.B. Skipworth	½	10. F.F. Gover	0
2. R. Loman	0	11. H.L. Jacobs	½
3. C.R. Hoon	1	12. O.C. Müller	½
4. F.W. Lord	1	13. A. Hirsch	½
5. J.W. Hunt	½	14. M. Hughes-Hughes	1
6. G.A. Guest	1	15. E.D. Jones	1
7. A. Hunter	½	16. C.T. Hoon	1
8. J.T. Heppel	1	17. A.J. Mass	½
9. E.M. Jackson	0		

Also played: H.L. Bowles, board 32 (1), C.W. Bowles board 38 (1), T. Keliher, board 35 (1), and R.P. Michell, board 22 (½). To be noted also, E.M. Jackson, R.P. Michell and O.C. Müller were still active some 30 odd years later, though not for Metropolitan.

If anyone should be rubbing their eyes and wondering whence came such remarkable playing strength in so short a time, the answer has to lie, apart from the sheer attraction of belonging to this stirring organisation, in the way Metropolitan turned to its advantage the practice of cross membership already alluded to. If arm-twisting should sound too strong a term, something like it must have occurred to people used to conducting their affairs in a more, shall we say, gentlemanly way. Be that as it may, it is fairly clear that in their exuberance Metropolitan saw success as their justification then and in the years ahead and it wasn't till around 1904 that other clubs began to breathe more easily. On a later page we shall see some interesting comments attributed to the City of London Club in the *Chess Amateur* of that year, which bring out the relief being felt when Metropolitan was no longer quite the force it once was.

Praise there was, nonetheless. The BCM, having in mind that Metropolitan had won the Metropolitan Clubs Senior Competition two years running starting from scratch—in 1891-2 with a clean score beating Ludgate Circus, Brixton, North London City News Room and Athenaeum, and in 1892-3, again with a clean score of 4 wins—had this to say: "Mr Marsden, the Hon. Secretary of the Metropolitan must have yielded a magic wand to have gathered such heroes (*sic*) under his flag. Metropolitan is altogether too heavy metal for the other competitors". Other comments from the BCM of this time were: "Practically, indeed, the Metropolitan is in a fair way of becoming the general rendezvous for all the chess players of the Metropolis. The sub was low and there was always something going on".

All these comments, added to those we've heard from the Rev. Skipworth at the Metropolitan v Ludgate Circus match, reflect an extraordinary situation which, a hundred years on, is not easy to grasp without, indeed, a lot of imagination!

## CHAPTER TWO

The first recorded annual meeting of the Metropolitan Club took place on the 25th May 1893, at its headquarters, the Chesterfield Cafe, Great Tower Street. The record showed that the membership was 303, whilst of the 12 matches played (friendlies included) 10 had been won and 2 lost. The large membership, however, must have been causing problems for soon after, on the 30th September 1893, the club moved to more commodious premises at the Mecca, 60 Watling Street. Evidence of Metropolitan's surging renown is seen in the fact that the Lord Mayor was present. I. Gunsberg gave a simultaneous exhibition, scoring + 16 = 2 - 2.

On the 16th November 1893, Metropolitan scored a notable first in beating Bohemians 12½-7½, in the restyled 'A Division' of the London Chess League. Seven clubs competed over 20 boards. (This board number was to last till the Second World War) The enhanced status of the 'A' Division of the League, now threw into sharp focus the problem of slow play, when it was not uncommon to find more games being adjudicated on the spot than were concluded. Inevitably this began to lead to a greater call for clocks or sand glasses. Let us not imagine that this dealt altogether with the problem—oh, no! In another of those great events of the time, the one between the North and South of England at Birmingham in January 1893, the latter winning by the narrowest of margins, 53½-52½, clocks were used, at least on the top boards. However, since the match was effectively decided by O.C. Müller (Metropolitan and South) claiming a win over his opponent who had exceeded the time limit, quite a few eyebrows were raised over this claim "when all had met in such friendly circumstances".

The following game was played on board 4, between two Metropolitan Players, on opposite sides. Notes by J. Mason.

**R. Loman (South) White**  
**Rev. A.B. Skipworth (North) Black**  
*Ruy Lopez*

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 d6 4.d4 ♙d7 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.0-0 exd4 7.♘xd4 ♘xd4 8.♙xd7+ ♚xd7 9.♙xd4 ♙e7 10.♙e3 0-0 (a) 11.♙ad1 ♙e6 12.f3 ♙fe8 13.♙fe1 a5 (b) 14.♘e2 ♙ad8 15.♙d3 (c) 15...♙d7 16.♙d2 b6 17.♘f1 ♙c8 18.♙c3 ♘d7 19.♘d4 ♘c5 20.♙c4 ♙f6 (d) 21.♘c6 ♙xc3 22.♘xd8 ♙xe1 White mates in two

(a) If 10 ... ♘g4 then perhaps 11 ♙d2 so as to play c3 in answer to ♙f6.

(b) 13 ... a6 only was correct. Black is obliged to support it later with time pressing (*Ed. Not to mention the hole thereby created at c6*).

(c) Not to defend the pawn but to give the bishop action at c3.

(d) Black must have hallucinated here as 21 ... ♙c3 leads to self mate!!

All the City clubs had supplied their quota of players save the City of London Club with its well known bias against supporting any competition but its own famous club championship. There was in this attitude, no doubt, an element of wishing to remain above the fray derived from its unofficial role as overseer and arbiter of the way chess was run in the City<sup>1</sup>. From this attitude there even stemmed a long running opposition to the setting up of a national body which was not resolved till some years later when the British Chess Federation came into being.

But a more pressing problem was confronting the City Club now. It may at first have viewed with some equanimity the defection of a number of its members. They wouldn't have been amongst its stronger players which would otherwise have jeopardised its championship tournament. What City couldn't have foreseen was that from this bare nucleus of members would arise that phenomenon, the Metropolitan Club, which was already beginning to threaten its very authority and, with it, its hold on the loyalty of its members. We can only speculate on the amount of heart searching that went on in that august body wedded as it was to standing aloof from the fray. The upshot was, however, that it decided to meet the problem head on by joining the London Chess League and disposing of the upstart once and for all.

There was a curious little episode attached to the ceremony at the annual meeting of the London League secretaries in 1893, when the next season's entries were received. This episode has to be looked at in the light of the amount of needle already existing between the two clubs arising from Metropolitan's origins. It appeared that there was some little hesitation on the part of the City and Metropolitan entering their clubs, neither side wishing to be the first to do so, this coyness being settled by the Chairman suggesting a way out of the difficulty by inviting them to enter simultaneously<sup>2</sup>. A decision almost worthy of Solomon himself!

In the end, the following clubs entered:

Athenaeum, Bohemians, City of London, City News Room, Ludgate Circus, Metropolitan and North London, leaving Athenaeum and Metropolitan, a hundred years on, as sole survivors.

That all this overt and covert rivalry should lead to a dramatic climax to that initial season of 1893-4, should come as no surprise. City and Metropolitan stood at 5 points each, Ludgate Circus having completed its programme with 3 and a half points, losing to both leaders. The last and deciding match took place at Metropolitan headquarters on the 15th March 1894, this being incidentally the first time the two clubs had met over the board. From what has been said of players having cross-membership, this encounter could be described as having been as much a test of loyalty as of playing strength. The BCM chose to be more circumspect and wrote that "the Metropolitan sent round the 'Fiery Cross'<sup>3</sup> acknowledging perhaps that Metropolitan was better at it than the opposition.

The rooms were overcrowded, for Metropolitan was playing the United Universities on the same evening. The interest taken in the match was so great that nearly every leading London player was present. It is said that play was very slow on many boards as clocks were not in general use. Play starting at 7.30, by 10 o'clock only 3 games were finished, all draws. At 11 o'clock, still only 5 games finished, again all draws. This left no less than 15 games unfinished, none obviously won or lost. (One wonders how many of the spectators lasted the course!) The captains decided that adjudicating such a large number of games would be most undesirable and in the event the committees settled that there should be a replay but this time with a time limit imposed and clocks used on every board.

The tie match took place at the Guildhall Tavern on the 25th April 1894, Metropolitan winning decisively by 12-8, thus securing the 'A' Division championship of the London League for 1893-4 and at the same time inflicting what must

<sup>1</sup> Minute of London League Council 1905, states that City Chess Club can no longer adjudicate.

<sup>2</sup> Put in plain terms, City wanted to make sure that Metropolitan was entering its name, while Metropolitan was refusing to play ball.

<sup>3</sup> A charred cross dipped in blood, formerly carried round in the Highlands, as a call to arms.



have been a very nasty blow to City's self esteem—and reputation.

Unfortunately, the score list as given by the BCM is in alphabetical order (from the Metropolitan side) thus losing much of its value as a record of the event. Nonetheless, and since the BCM had used a term which wouldn't have seemed extravagant at that time, let us record the following 'heroes': J.H. Blake, E.M. Jackson, F.W. Lord, A.B. Skipworth, R. Loman (ex-City Champion), C.R. Hoon, A. Hunter, E. Hughes-Hughes, T. Keliher and H.L. Bowles.

Incidentally, the Universities match was won by Metropolitan by 11-9, the following strong players having been spared from the City match: A.J. Mass (also was to be very first winner of the Club Championship), J.T. Heppell, J.A. Huckvale as well as Morton-Smith.

A few months later, on the 20th October 1894 at the Metropolitan's new venue, Mullen's Hotel, Ironmonger Lane, Cheapside, Metropolitan and City met again in a 'friendly' over 50 boards, Met winning narrowly, seven unfinished games being adjudicated by I. Gunsberg and L. Hoffer. Play had lasted from 3 to 8 o'clock. Again the official list was arranged alphabetically and is not given at all this time by the BCM.

We have a few interesting details of the venue at Mullen's Hotel. The club rooms offered "spacious accommodation" and—a notable feature at the time—were lit by electricity! The club met on Monday and Thursday evenings (a long standing tradition, it seems) and Saturday afternoons.

Metropolitan's Annual Dinner was held on the 31st October 1894 at its new headquarters, with Mr A. Hunter in the chair. Emanuel Lasker had been invited as a guest of the evening but, in his absence through illness, his brother B. Lasker took his place. Mr. L. Cowen proposed 'the Metropolitan Club' which was answered by Mr. R. Marsden (Secretary). Vocal and instrumental performances concluded the evening.

## 1895

If there was a year which demonstrated quite clearly the status Metropolitan had gained so rapidly in London chess circles, that year was surely 1895. It was announced in early January that the office of President rendered vacant by the lamented death of Mr. Deputy F.S. Gover\* had been accepted by Sir Joseph Renals, Lord Mayor of London.

Soon after that event, on the 17th January 1895 the Club reinforced its position as the strongest metropolitan club by crushing its old rival Ludgate Circus in a friendly over 50 boards, by 36-16 (*sic*). Apart from old stalwarts like R. Loman, A.J. Mass and R.P. Michell, the event was notable for the first appearance of a certain James Mortimer, playing on top board. Who, alas, remembers James Mortimer today, yet it is not too much to claim that he was undoubtedly one of the outstanding personalities in all our Club's history. This is reflected in the very full account of his background to be found in the pages of the BCM—together with a photograph of him ten years later in the issue of May 1905, showing, however, a much younger man than he undoubtedly was by the time he joined Metropolitan.

A full account of his versatility would almost fill a booklet in itself. Journalist, diplomat, editor, playwright and master chess player, he was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1833, being therefore 62 when he joined Metropolitan. He came to London in 1870 where he founded the London *Figaro* which under his guidance enjoyed a first class reputation. This is hardly surprising for it was said that he had 'a rare knowledge of men, manners and things, a ready pen and excellent wit'. He

wrote over 30 plays, produced at such theatres as Drury Lane, the Aldwych, the Haymarket and others.

Previously he had been attached to the American Legation in Paris where he was introduced to chess in 1858. He met Morphy and saw him play Harrwitz and Andersen. Although he became a very strong player in his own right, it is recorded that his proficiency at the game was never more than a fascinating pastime for him with a style resembling the fanciful one of H.E. Bird. For instance he has given his name to the well known Fraser-Mortimer attack in the Evans Gambit. Nonetheless he played in the London Tournament of 1883, winning games from Zukertort, M. Tchigorin and the Rev. A.B. Skipworth (the Reverend Sir was evidently no mean player) and drawing with Steinitz, Bird and Mason. In later competitions he met such as Lasker, Maroczy, Pillsbury, Schlechter, Alapin and Gunsberg.

It is a source of wonder that learning chess at such a late age as 25 he should have made such rapid progress in the very best company. It is an old cliché to say 'we shall not see his like again'. As far as the annals of Metropolitan chess are concerned this applies very truly to the memory of James Mortimer, journalist, diplomat, editor, playwright and master chess player.

P.S. Leonhardt was an International Master who came to London in 1903 to live. He joined Metropolitan for a short time, won the City of London Championship in 1905, whilst at Carlsbad 1907 he finished third out of 21, in front of Nimzowitsch, Schlechter, Vidmar and Duras. This game was played at Simpson's June 27 1904.

### P.S. Leonhardt *White* James Mortimer *Black* *Ruy Lopez*

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♙e7 5.d4 exd4 6.e5 ♘e4 7.♗e1 ♘c5 8.c3 dxc3 9.♘xc3 a6 10.♙c4 b5 11.♙d5 ♗b8 12.♘d4 ♘xd4 13.♗xd4 0-0 14.a3 d6 15.exd6 ♙xd6 16.b4 ♘b3 17.♗e4 ♘xa1 (a) 8.♙b2 ♗g5 19.♙xa1 ♙d7 20.♗d4 ♗be8 21.♘e4 ♗h6 22.g3 ♙e5 23.♗c5 ♙xa1 24.♗a1 c6 **White resigned.**

(a) If 17 ♗a7 ♘xa1 18 ♗xb8 c6 wins the bishop.

That James Mortimer should have chosen to join the Metropolitan Club, rather than say the illustrious City of London, says much for the lustre already attached to the name of Metropolitan. It was an inheritance that was to stand the Club in very good stead, long after its fortunes began to falter in the inevitable wake of greater, more intensive competition from other clubs.

On the 26th January, a short friendly versus the St George's Club was won by Metropolitan by 5½-4½. This encounter was worth mentioning if only for the presence on top board of James Mortimer playing, as it happened, an erstwhile Metropolitan member, E.M. Jackson.

Soon after, on the 14th February, Metropolitan (on the crest of a wave now) overwhelmed the City Club in 'A' division of the London League by 14½-5½, before going on to win the division with 6 clear wins (season 1894/5).

In between, on the 2nd February, as a sort of light relief and in the presence of the newly elected President, Sir Joseph Renals, R. Loman gave an exhibition of blindfold chess over six boards with instruction in French on two boards, German on two and English on the other two, winning four, drawing one and losing one. The BCM (Jan 1893) records a similar feat by the City champion C. Moriau on 5th December 1892, though Moriau lost 2, winning 4. Was R. Loman after showing what a City champion could do, he could do better?

\* It is not clear from contemporary accounts whether the term *Ch Deputy* referred to a post to the Lord Mayor, nor incidentally whether there had been a previous President to F.S. Gover at the Metropolitan. In this instance, at least, the lost club minutes would have helped.

On the same occasion as R. Loman's exhibition, R. Teichmann, the international master also gave a simultaneous performance against 36 opponents, with a score of +27 = 5-4, the Lord Mayor being 'much interested in the play'.

A momentous year for the Metropolitan Club continued on the 5th September when H.N. Pillsbury, the young American master, fresh from his triumph at Hastings against a field which included Lasker, Steinitz, Tarrasch and Tchigorin, was entertained to dinner by the Club, when "a numerous company including Steinitz and Tchigorin sat down, under the presidency of R.I. Marsden" (presiding meaning in this context, chairmanship).

Almost as a surfeit of excellence, we should not fail to give the details (since it is available) from yet another Metropolitan v City clash, won by Metropolitan by the narrow margin of 10½-9½ in their opening match of the 1895/6 London League Season. This encounter took place at Metropolitan's headquarters, Mullens Hotel—'a large number of spectators being attracted'. Assessed against the level of play of the 1890's, Metropolitan could arguably be said to have fielded one of the best sides of its hundred years history and, what's more, were up against a very tough lot indeed in the City, gauged by the same standard.

METROPOLITAN		CITY OF LONDON	
1. R. Loman (Dutch champion)	0	Dr. Smith	1
2. James Mortimer	0	T. Physick	1
3. J.H. Blake	1	E.O. Jones	0
4. A.B. Skipworth	1	H.H. Jacobs	0
5. W.H. Gunston	1	Dr Ballard	0
6. F.W. Lord	1	S.T. Stevens	0
7. J.T. Heppell	1	C.J. Hoon	0
8. O.C. Müller	1	J.H. Taylor	0
9. A. Guest	1	A. Mocatta	0
10. A.T. Stow	0	G. Bellingham	1
11. T.E. Webb	½	E. Hamburger	½
12. R.P. Michell	1	H. Jones	0
13. A.J. Mass	0	W.J. Ingoldsby	1
14. H.F. Lowe	½	F. Anger	½
15. J.A. Huckvale	0	E. Eckenstein	1
16. W.B. Woodgate	0	T.E. Gibbons	1
17. W.H. Mundell	0	Dr. Coupland	1
18. M. Hughes-Hughes	0	C.H. Gibbs	1
19. M. Watt	1	H.W. Peachey	0
20. P. Hart-Dyke	½	W.E. Vyse	½
	10½		9½

Notable is Metropolitan's score on the top 14 boards, 9-5, and the fact that A.J. Mass and R.P. Michell, respectfully Club champions in 1896 and 1897, are rated no higher than boards 13 and 12.<sup>1</sup> A mention should also be made of O.C. Müller, board 8, so good a player that he was still playing top board for Kent thirty odd years later. The strength of these two sides can further be gauged by the fact that in the great cable matches Great Britain v America, held between 1896 and 1911, several of these players took a prominent part: J.H. Blake 4 times, R.P.

Michell 8 times, W.H. Gunston once, H. Jacobs 7 times and G. Bellingham also 7 times. Another Metropolitan player involved in these cable matches was W. Ward 7 times.

Reverting to the foregoing match Met v City even P. Hart-Dyke, who played board 20, has his own claim to fame. A Lord Chief Justice or a Lord Mayor might with justification expect to be offered the highest office of the Club, but it is obvious that such discrimination did not extend to the play on the board, for P. Hart-Dyke was no less than the son of Sir William Hart-Dyke, a government whip and friend of Disraeli. For all that, he must have been no mean player to be selected for this occasion for, in fact, he won the Kent Championship in 1899. He has also been called the inventor of modern tennis, the first game probably having been played on the court of his own castle grounds.

To end the year on a suitably high note, the Metropolitan Club held its annual dinner on the 26 October 1895 with 'a numerous gathering'. The toast 'success to the Metropolitan' was proposed by Mr Cowen and responded to by Mr Bowles. W. Steinitz gave 'The Game of Chess' and Emanuel Lasker responded to the toast 'The Visitors'. During the course of the proceedings R.I. Marsden was presented with a cheque for £40<sup>2</sup> as a token of recognition of his services as Hon. Secretary to the Club. It was also announced there was to be a special Challenge Cup Tournament (now called the Metropolitan Club Championship) for which a large Silver Challenge Cup, valued £20, had been provided. A very excellent programme of vocal and instrumental music concluded the proceedings. One wonders how famous, how successful Metropolitan would need to be today to attract a world champion and an ex-world champion to its proceedings?

Another thought may have come to the reader: whence came the munificence that made so many of these famous proceedings possible, the dinners, the smoking concerts attended as they were by most of the great and good of the period? There is no certainty that if we had the missing Club minutes we'd be any the wiser. True, Metropolitan had the sort of Presidents then, a Lord Mayor and a Lord Chief Justice of England, who may have dipped deeply into their pockets, but their periods of office were quite short and those costly functions were taking place before their arrival. The figure that suggested itself very strongly at this stage was Mr H.L. Bowles. Though he was not at the inaugural meeting of the Club, there is a strong possibility that since he was a member of City of London at the time, he would also have been among the secessionists who helped form Metropolitan in 1890.

From that, one can hazard a reasonable guess that he knew either R.I. Marsden or Morton-Smith (depending on whether either or both had also been City members), that he was familiar with their ambitious ideas for the new Club and had pledged his support. However, this is where a doubt creeps in, for from what we know not only of H.L. Bowles but also of his wife Rhoda, it may well have been she who was the real source of that open-handedness. This will become quite clear in the next chapter.

<sup>1</sup> However, this may have been for tactical purposes. It was not until 1897 that the London League adopted a rule that all players be placed in their recognised order of strength as far as possible.

<sup>2</sup> In today's terms anything from one thousand pounds upwards at a modest estimate.

# CHAPTER THREE

1896

After the stirring events of the previous five years and, in particular 1895, the year 1896 was a very low key one indeed for Metropolitan, although the Club did once more carry off the "A" division championship of the London League (for the season 1895-6) with 8 wins and 1 loss. It had a tightly run race with North London, the latter suffering a vital loss to Met in spite of clear wins on the top boards against the Rev. W. Wayte, R. Loman, J. Mortimer and O.C. Müller. We do not know of any earlier instance when Metropolitan had such a mauling of their top ranking names.

The year was still enlivened by an event which, though it did not directly involve Metropolitan, found its players turning out in strength. We refer to the great North versus South of Thames 100 boards match of May 10, 1896. The Cannon Street Hotel where the encounter took place must have been bursting at the seams for as many as 250 spectators are reported to have been present, including Lasker, Blackburne, Gunsberg, Hoffer, Mason, Tinsley and Van Vliet. As to the Metropolitan players, the following are recorded: J. Mortimer, R.P. Michell, J.T. Heppell, A.J. Maas, J.A. Huckvale, A.B. Baxter, A. Morton-Smith, R. Loman, T. Keliher and M. Beyfus. Playing for the South we have picked out F.V. Louis on board 92, not impossibly the same F.V. Louis who was Hon. Secretary to the Club in the 1920's and early 1930's when he retired through ill health. As to the match result, North of Thames won by 57½-42½.

In a booklet devoted to the doings of the Metropolitan Club over its first hundred years, it may seem inappropriate to use its pages to unfold the tale of a ladies chess club.

Indeed, remembering the Victorian age we are dealing with at this stage, readers might be surprised to learn that not only was there such a club active in London but that it was actually playing in the 'C' division of the London League. To paraphrase Doctor Samuel Johnson, the astonishing thing was not that the ladies team was doing so well—and that against male opposition—but that there was a ladies team active at all!

However, mention of this ladies team in these pages is due to a far more compelling reason, for its Secretary, Treasurer and Match Captain was none other than Mrs Rhoda Bowles, wife, as we have mentioned of H.L. Bowles. It is therefore of more than passing interest to deal at this stage, and at some length, with this most generous couple in the cause of chess. We know first of all that Mr Bowles was taught chess by his father as a boy, that he was an early member of the Swansea C.C. and that he had a keen association with the game in Wales and the West Country. A photograph of husband and wife in a 1903 number of the BCM has this interesting caption: 'Mr and Mrs Bowles have spared neither time nor money in supporting the royal game in the West Country'. We also know that in 1881 (probably aged around 25) he moved to London where he joined the City of London Club and also that his wife had a protracted illness when, to save her from boredom, he taught her chess. We may assume from the above that this was before they left for London, thus accounting for her own early involvement in the game.

We can now return to the interesting speculation that it was Mrs Bowles that we should think of principally as 'sparing neither time nor money' in support of chess. H.L. Bowles was employed by the Great Western Railway of which he was the London Goods Manager (the reason for his removal to London). The post, though no doubt well remunerated, does not in itself suggest a man of means.

Another thing, support for the cause of chess, where attributed to the Bowles, is always found to be in their joint names, not H.L. alone. One instance has already been quoted. Another can be found in reference to an Exhibition of Living Chess in 1902 between H.L. Bowles and H.N. Pillsbury (Rhoda Bowles being the White Queen and Mrs Pillsbury the Black one; see description of this event later on) when a press mention was to the effect that 'Mr and Mrs Bowles were generous patrons of the game they had supported for many years'. If we want to find evidence that Mrs Bowles was a most active partner in her own right in this support of the game, we need look no further than her brain child, the Ladies Chess Club, her equally supportive connection with the cable matches of the early 1900's between the English and American Universities for which Cambridge University sent her a handsome set of ivory chessmen in a rosewood box<sup>1</sup> for 'her enthusiastic exertions on behalf of international chess', and her success in persuading the great American master H.N. Pillsbury to involve himself and his wife in that Exhibition of Living Chess and, on a previous occasion, into giving a simultaneous display against her ladies team.

She wrote of that occasion in the *Chess Amateur* of how, on a walk with H.N. Pillsbury (the winner of the Hastings Tournament of 1895), he promised to give an exhibition at the Ladies Chess Club, which Mr Marsden, the Hon. Secretary of the Metropolitan Club agreed to hold on the Metropolitan Club premises<sup>2</sup>. She added that the evening of the séance saw the Metropolitan Club crowded with the most brilliant assemblage to witness the champion's display against 14 ladies, among those present being M. Tchigorin and W. Steinitz. The Ladies scored 2½ points having been given the odds of a knight.

As to the display of Living Chess, this did not take place till 7 years later on the 29th November 1902, at the Borough Road Polytechnic, between, as we have said, H.N. Pillsbury and H.L. Bowles as President of the BPCC (the British Problem Society of the time). The Black Queen was represented by Mrs Pillsbury in crimson and gold velvet and the White Queen by Mrs Rhoda Bowles in silver and gold. The game (unfortunately too lengthy for reproduction) was won, predictably, by the American master on the 65th move. The proceedings concluded with the setting up of a two move problem especially composed by Pillsbury, a pocket chess set being awarded to the first member of the large audience to solve it within ten minutes. Interestingly, a young son of I. Gunsberg was the winner.

If we stay a while longer with Rhoda Bowles it is not to plug any further her claims as a kind of Lady Bountiful to Chess, but to complete an overall picture of her as a woman of charm and obvious ability in managing things and people. It must have been no mean feat to organise a band of Victorian ladies with no more, we may guess, than a basic knowledge of the game into a side good enough within four short years not only to compete in the 'C' division of the London League but win it at that! All right, the male opposition may have been pretty bleak—what they clearly lacked however was the motivation of a Rhoda Bowles.

Don't imagine that she was in any way fussy or domineering—she had built up a personal rapport with her lady members that had earned her the name of 'little mother'. Such was that rapport, that they presented her with a 'beautiful writing table' as a slight token of their regard and it is more than probable this is the very same writing table we see her seated at in the photograph of her to be found in an issue of the 1900 BCM. It shows a pleasant,

<sup>1</sup> We wonder if this ivory set is lying unattributed in someone's cabinet of chess memorabilia.

<sup>2</sup> Though Mr Marsden was presented with a cheque of £40 in 1905 for his services as Hon. Secretary, he did not vacate that post immediately.

vivacious looking young woman in a flouncy dress of the period and, by the way, those lady members had also presented the gold medal won by Emanuel Lasker as a brilliancy prize at the 1899 London International.

Mrs Bowles had described the event when her lady members had played Pillsbury as their entry into the chess world. Some months later they appeared to have felt ready for the Metropolitan Club itself for on the 14th May 1896 they descended in strength on Metropolitan's headquarters, numbering 50 all told. Play took place without odds on the first 30 boards, whilst on the remaining 20 boards, the ladies accepted odds varying from ♘ to ♚, eventually winning by 25½-24½. There is no breakdown of the match, but it would be surprising indeed if the Metropolitan big names would have been rash enough to put their reputations at risk by playing without conceding odds! Whether such contests took place any longer over the following years is doubtful. All we know for certain is that the Ladies' Club was still active until the Great War when it was closed down; war work would have been more important than chess. However, the Club finished on a high note winning the 'C' division in the 1913/14 season.

There are two more happenings worth mentioning in the year of 1896, the fact that A.J. Maas became the first holder of the new Challenge Cup Trophy and that City of London and Metropolitan clashed in another spot of psychological warfare. The occasion was once more the annual gathering of club secretaries to arrange the coming seasons (1896-7) fixtures. A problem had arisen through some suburban clubs insisting that the City Clubs should draw by lots as to venue

equally with the others. Metropolitan in the first place was willing enough but the City of London objected, claiming that its rules did not allow it to play outside the City boundaries and therefore it would withdraw from the competition. Did Metropolitan greet this decision with gratification—muted as it might have been—for, after all, City's defection would have ensured its continued domination of the League? No siree! This is hard to believe, but it claimed that it had only intended to give City a chance to win the 'A' division championship held by itself and therefore it—Metropolitan—would also withdraw from the 'A' division and compete instead in the 'B' division. A very early example of oneupmanship? It would be quite nice to think so but much more likely the gesture disguised the sudden realisation of how great an advantage it would be foregoing by playing half its fixtures away from home.

In the event Metropolitan did not play in either the 'A' or the 'B' divisions, whilst the suburban clubs after a season's reflection changed their collective minds on the original venue's dispute, allowing Metropolitan to re-enter the 'A' division for the 1887-8 season. As for the City Club, there is no record in the minutes of the London League, of it doing likewise and though it allowed the League Club Secretaries to use its premises for their yearly and half yearly meeting at no cost, it—the City—seemed to have been glad of this heaven sent opportunity to stay out of the fray, which, after all, was doing nothing at all for its reputation, let alone achieving its original objective of cutting Metropolitan down to size.

# CHAPTER FOUR

1897

To this day, what fate befell the early minutes of the Club remains a mystery. It is our good fortune that their loss has probably not frustrated in any relevant way our knowledge of Metropolitan's beginnings though, obviously, it would have been more satisfactory to have them than not. It has to be said that, judging from the quality of the Club minutes available from 1915 onwards, the Hon. Secretaries of the time do not appear to have seen their task other than one of a strictly limited character: the date of the meeting being held, who were present and what was the business of the day. The give and take of this debate is seldom enlarged upon, controversy invariably toned down. This perception may do them (the Hon. Secretaries) scant justice, especially if one thinks of devoted servants of the Club such as J.W. Wright who was writing the Club minutes long before we have any record of them. Perhaps, too, brevity was looked upon with much favour by Committee members: after all, is there a more felicitous phrase than the Chairman's parting words of: 'I now declare this meeting closed'?

There is a significant point to this digression for, about this time, the chess media was beginning to lose interest in the parochial happenings of the London chess scene in general and Metropolitan in particular. National and international events were becoming more frequent as were matches between international masters. Possibly, too, foreign readership was increasing, demanding a broader outlook from chess editors. However, this shift in media interest was not abrupt, of course, and it remained generous compared to what was to happen after 1945, but it came at a time when, so far as Metropolitan was concerned, Club minutes which should have been a ready fallback either didn't exist or were, by any definition, quite inadequate.

Curiously this year of 1897 has little to show for those great days, at least nothing that is recorded, no concerts, no annual dinner and of course no 'A' division championship to celebrate for Metropolitan, as we know, had not entered.

The Challenge Cup of the Championship had been won by A. O'Neil with R.P. Michell second and R. Loman had again become Dutch champion against opponents of the calibre of Dr. Olland and J.W. de Kolsté. Finally R.C. Griffith (of Griffith and White fame, some years later) had become a member and won the Gambit Tournament.

1898

Were Marsden and Morton-Smith burned out? A crude way, perhaps, of expressing the suspicion that these two early pioneers had found their titanic exertions too much for them, but nonetheless a suspicion given credence by a list of the main officers of the Club published for the first time in the pages of the BCM of this year, from which their names are missing.

President:	Lord Russell of Killowen, <i>Lord Chief Justice of England</i>
Secretary:	J.W. Wright
Treasurer:	A. Baxter
Match Captains:	Messrs Preston and Potter
Tournament Secretary:	J. Charlesworth

Lord Russell of Killowen. It has to be said that the noble Lord did not bestow on the Club the great honour of his name to the Presidency from the mere attraction of the Club's repute. He was, in fact, really devoted to chess and, as still Mr Charles Russell, had been a generous patron to

W. Steinitz whenever the latter was in this country. He had brought about and paid for the Championship match between Steinitz and Andersen. His tenure as President was too short (he died suddenly at the age of 67, having been said to be in good health at the last annual dinner at which he presided), to know whether he played for the Club or in any of its tournaments or indeed whether his patronage extended to the Club.

This year is no better than the last for hard news of Metropolitan. We know the Club was now meeting at Kohler's Restaurant, 20/31 Coleman Street, the reason for moving as obscure as ever. Was it the need for more commodious or more modest quarters, the allure perhaps of the new fangled light by electricity or did Kohler's serve better fare than Mullen's Hotel or were those smoking concerts, if they still took place, a bit too much of a good thing? Who knows. No one has thought the knowledge worth the retelling.

Metropolitan, now back in the 'A' division, have to settle for second place though sharing first with Brixton at 8/10, Brixton having the bonus of a point as promoted club.

The Challenge Cup has been won by R.P. Michell.

1899

The decade was to end on a somewhat low note as if the Metropolitan Club, breathless from the speed of its growth, felt the need of a respite to see where it was going. Perhaps an apt moment, therefore, to quote a passage from an article in the *Chess Amateur*, as giving an intriguing if provocative insight into how others viewed that astonishing growth and—yes—some of the methods by which it had been obtained:

"A more serious competitor (reference had been made to another City Club) was the Metropolitan, a remarkably vigorous society, which for some time was a thorn in the side of the City of London Club and which is credited more than any other organisation with having put the 'older' Club on its mettle and stirred it to energetic action. For some years it looked as if the City was dangerously threatened by this aggressively industrious body, but time has shown that the Metropolitan pace was too hot to last and though it is still among the most successful of London Clubs, it is no longer to be regarded as a menace to that Club. The Metropolitan, however, has had a very invigorating influence on London chess but the keenness of its rivalry has left its mark and perhaps the feeling engendered thereby has not entirely subsided."

On the 25th March, the Club beat the combined Universities, Oxford and Cambridge by 10½-7½, Metropolitan fielding a very strong side which included 1. J. Mortimer, 2. O.C. Müller, 3. R.P. Michell, 4. C.W. Bowles (we do not know if he was any relation to H.L.), 5. T. Keliher, 6. A.J. Maas with J.W. Wright at board 15.

The Universities side included a player, C.E.C. Tattersall, who went on to join Metropolitan two years later.

O.C. Müller wins the Club Championship (the first of 3 successive wins) with 2 H. Jacobs and 3 R.P. Michell and A. O'Neil.

Sadly, the end of the decade (and of the century) sees the Club registering its worst result to date in the 'A' division, finishing 5th with 6/9, and losing to Brixton, Ludgate and North London, those Clubs taking the first 3 places.

A proposal to start the clock of an absent player at the end of the period of grace was defeated at a meeting of the London League Council!

<sup>1</sup> No case illustrated this better than the events of the early 1920's.

<sup>2</sup> The tenor of this article causes one to wonder whether there was another side to Messrs Morton-Smith and R.I. Marsden's decision to step down when they did.

## 1900-1901

Not wishing to start a new chapter in the twentieth century with a spate of bare figures, the writer called to mind an assessment he'd once come across while researching for this booklet of what happens to league clubs—any league club—with the passing years. The assessment was that clubs fell into one of three categories, the club which has held it own, the old club in decay and the young club which is building itself up. Where did the Metropolitan of 1900 fit into this? The answer is, of course, that it didn't; it was not old in any sense of the word but rather a young club which had already built itself up. However, the object of the exercise was really to get a pointer as to what constituted decay in a league club with a simple reason given: the Club was losing more strong players than it was gaining<sup>1</sup>. On this criterion, the Metropolitan of 1900 went into the future, still refusing to be categorised since it is abundantly clear that year after year well into this century, it went on to attract some of the best talent around.

All right, yes, the credits so far have not gone to that talent but in large measure to those who did their bit, their large bit, to steer the Club to its eminent position in London chess. To Morton-Smith, R.I. Marsden, H.L. and Rhoda Bowles (among others) there is yet another name that should not be forgotten, before the coming years began to redress the balance. Every Metropolitan Club member knows, or should know, that there is a Club trophy called the Naumann Cup, after its donor, F.C. Naumann, which has, in theory at least, to be won to gain entry into the Championship itself. There is reason to believe, too, that it was none other than Mr. Naumann himself who gave the £20 to purchase the magnificent solid silver Challenge Cup held by the Club champion each year.

It was said of him, F.C. Naumann, that in the 15 years from 1888 to 1903, there was not in the South of England a chess event of any interest which he didn't help forward materially. He was a Vice-President of the Council of the London League in 1897, a member of the British Chess Club and of the City of London Club of which he was a Vice-President until his resignation in 1903 to take up the Presidency of the newly formed British Chess Federation. As far as can be traced his connection with Metropolitan ran from 1894 or '95 to 1903 when he would have resigned for the same reason that he left the City. A portrait of him can be found in the October 1904 issue of the BCM, showing a portly man with the typical appearance of a Victorian business man, well rounded features and a sharp eye. Patronage had its great figures in those days when it was in the gift of individuals rather than the faceless corporations and other bodies of today (welcome, indeed crucial as they are, of course).

Metropolitan was to record its 6th win (and one joint win) in the 'A' division, for the season 1899/1900 with a score of 9/10, its sole loss being to Ludgate Circus, which was now to amalgamate with the Eagle Club, thus forming the Lud Eagle Club. This Club did not survive the Second World War, when it had its headquarters at the St. Bride Institute<sup>2</sup> and neither did the City of London Club. What a wealth of chess history down the drain! Nonetheless, the newly styled Lud Eagle started life by winning the 1900-01 'A' division with 9/10, Metropolitan being joint second with Athenaeum at 8/10.

On the 25 March 1901, United Universities (past and present) beat the Metropolitan Club by the narrow margin

of 11-10. On the top board C.E.C. Tattersall (UU) beat J. Mortimer. Other boards on the Metropolitan side were filled by 2. O.C. Müller (1), 3. H.G. Cole (½), 6. T. Keliher (1), 7. H.L. Bowles (0), 12. W.T. Dickinson (1).

We need to say more of O.C. Müller and W.T. Dickinson respectively. O.C. Müller came to England in the early 1880's. For ten years he made a living as a professional but finding it unremunerative, took up clerical work and interpreting. One of his best efforts was in a tournament in 1889, when he scored 5½, bracketed with James Mason and F.J. Lee, behind H. Bird and I. Gunsberg. He joined Metropolitan around 1894 and started playing for Kent in 1900. For 34 years he played either board one or two for the county, a staggering record. Since he died aged 84 in 1935, we suddenly realise he was still playing for Kent aged 83! When he left Metropolitan is not recorded, but it was most probably before 1910 by which time he had joined the City of London.

The name of W.T. Dickinson crops up regularly in the Metropolitan team lists. Born in 1863, he was a seaman in his youth, then worked for the Inland Revenue till he retired in 1929. He joined Metropolitan in 1894 and generally played at boards 12-14 in the London League (matches, of course were over 20 boards). He was Club captain from 1900 to 1903, giving up the post from pressure of work. He played for Surrey at boards ranging from 12 to 19. In 1929, after 34 years membership of the Metropolitan Club, he joined Lud Eagle. The cause of this decision is unknown, the uncertainties surrounding the Club in the 1920's, might however, have had something to do with it. Whatever the cause, ill health caused him to retire from chess in 1931 and he died in 1936.

The annual dinner of the Club was held at Kohler's Restaurant on the 25th April 1901. Sir Wyke Baylis, who had succeeded Lord Russell as President, was in the chair. Among the large company was a certain Lord Westmeath (for the first and only time), Mr and Mrs Bowles and Mr and Mrs Wright.

## 1902

A team of 14 players from the Hastings Club met the Metropolitan at the Wool Exchange, Coleman Street, on the 8th February 1902. This must have been the Club's HQ at Kohler's which itself seems to have been in the building known as the Wool Exchange (BCM, Nov 1901). As a matter of interest the Club met there every Monday and Thursday from October to June, from 5.30 to 11 (BCM same issue).

Metropolitan, though not at full strength, won comfortably by 9½-4½. There were no names in the Hastings side that would ring a bell today, so we are content to record the Metropolitan line up only.

### Metropolitan C C (v Hastings CC)

1. H.G. Cole	1	8. H. Greenwell	1
2. A.J. Mass	0	9. H. Tripp	1
3. C.E.C. Tattersall	½	10. W.T. Dickinson	½
4. T. Keliher	1	11. J.W. Wright	½
5. C.W. Bowles	1	12. A. Baxter	0
6. W.H. Pullinger	1	13. F. Bailey	½
7. J. Eastwood	½	14. C.A. Thorogood	1

In March, Metropolitan concluded its League programme, winning the 'A' division for the seventh time. The team certainly had an outstanding season, one of its best

<sup>1</sup> Much would depend, some will say, on what kind of a Club persists into the future and whether it has managed to accept its circumstances as fate decrees, rather than dream of a past that is beyond recreating.

<sup>2</sup> Metropolitan, as we shall see, were to take over their Club room after the war (in conjunction with the London League) when all that remained of the Lud Eagle Club was an old wooden box tucked away in a corner of the room, nor did the box contain anything of historic interest when it was opened many years later. Something else did survive, the Lud Eagle notice board which the Met. now uses).

ever, playing 26 matches although during the season, with a games record of 250 wins, 84 draws and only 82 losses. Some of the matches are worth the space, including as they did many new names of interest:

Versus Lud Eagle (London League) won by 14-6, early in the year.

1. J.H. Blake, 2. O.C. Müller, 3. H.G. Cole, 4. G. Shories, 5. C.E.C. Tattersall, 7. A.J. Maas, 8. H.L. Bowles, 9. T. Keliher, 12. C.W. Bowles, 18. W.T. Dickinson.

Versus United Universities (past and present) won by 11-6, on the 17th March.

1. O.C. Muller, 2. W. Napier, 3. H.G. Cole, 4. H.L. Bowles, 15. W.T. Dickinson, 16. A. Baxter.

Versus North London (London League) won 10½-9½.

1. J. Mortimer, 2. O.C. Muller, 3. E.G. Sergeant, 14. B. Harley.

Though W.E. Napier doesn't appear to have been a Metropolitan player for any length of time, he was one of many outstanding players who made their home at Metropolitan when they were for a time resident in London. Only 21 when he joined the Club, W.E. Napier, English by birth but long resident in the States is chiefly remembered for the famous game he had with Emanuel Lasker at

Cambridge Springs 1904, a game sometimes described as the best played ever, when his own brilliant performance forced the world champion into an outstanding display which gained him the brilliancy prize. At the age of 15 he won the Brooklyn Club Championship defeating among others F.J. Marshall and competed at Monte Carlo in 1901 and Hanover in 1902. In 1904 he played in the City of London Championship, winning the first prize of £60 (this tournament, often stronger than the British Championship and certainly more strenuous—up to 20 players competing—was a 'must' for every strong player in the Metropolis). As many other Metropolitan players were also competing, the list and placings should be recorded (at the time, it was quite usual for players not to be credited with first name or initials, but addressed simply as Mr, unless a titled person).

1. W.E. Napier (12), 2. Teichmann (12), 3. Blackburne (11), 4. Gunsberg (11), 5. Shoesmith (11), 6. Van Vliet (9½), 7. Lee (9), 8. Leonhardt (8), 9. Tattersall (8), 10. Müller (7½), 11. MacKenzie (6½), 12. Brown (5½), 13. Loman (5), 14. Curnock (5), 15. Gunston (5), 16. Mason (5), 17. Mortimer (4).

Finally he tied with H.E. Atkins in the British Championship of 1904, with 8½, R.P. Michell being 5th with and C.E.C. Tattersall 8th with 4½.



# CHAPTER FIVE

1903

A touch of personal interest. The writer of this section of the Metropolitan Club history joined the Club in 1932 and it has been a somewhat evocative exercise for him to spot those earlier references to the members he knew in the 1930's nearly 60 years ago.

First and foremost comes, of course, Thomas Keliher, a founder member in 1890, President in 1934 and still active when he died aged 84, in 1940. The Louis brothers A. and F.V. were respectively Match Captain and Secretary in the early 1930's and though A. Louis didn't join Metropolitan till 1915 (the minutes were available by then) and F.V. till 1922, there is a very early reference to them both as playing on low boards for Kent versus Surrey in the year of 1903. Of special interest is the name of D. Miller, 8 times Club champion (not counting the tie with R. Spitz in 1940), one more than Sir George Thomas's previous record tally of 7 wins, for he is to be found as early as 27th February 1904 in the Metropolitan team list playing City of London, and for the last time in 1958 when he left to join Hampstead, that is 54 years later.

It is probable that J.W. Wright who had been in succession Secretary and President to the Club since 1899, was still alive in 1932, though the minutes are certainly vague about this and the writer doesn't carry any recollection of him at all, which isn't surprising as he may have been very ill at the time.

But to return to Metropolitan itself. This was the year when a heavy defeat at the hands of its old rivals Lud Eagle by 14½ to 5½ in the 1902-03 'A' division, must have sounded a grim warning, in spite of the fact that this was its only loss, and after all the Club did finish in second place with 10 wins. Looking at the team list, one has the feeling that all the best players were not available—after T.E. Haydon at board 6, there is no one of note save the usual band of faithful tailenders.

1. J.H. Blake (½), 2. C.E.C. Tattersall (0), 3. J. Mortimer (½), 4. H.C. Cole (0), 5. E.G. Sergeant (½), 6. T.E. Haydon and .... 14. C.W. Bowles (0), 15. T. Keliher (1), 19. W.T. Dickinson (1), 20. J.W. Wright (0).

For the first time Metropolitan has ceased to be a City Club, having removed to the Criterion Restaurant, Piccadilly, the scene of the last international universities match, England versus the U.S.A. This move must have given rise to a certain amount of debate within its ranks and on the surface does appear to have been an attempt to put the Club back on an expansionary course, although its stated aim was that by its more central position the Club would be of special advantage to its many country members. The Club was to be open daily (Sundays excepted) from '3 to 11.30' this being amended a year later to 'from 4 to midnight'.

The following game played between two Metropolitan Club members on the 13th January 1905 is of some historic interest. In the first place, here is the authentic way the game was played by the ordinary, common or garden, chess players of the time. In the second place the score sheet which was forwarded by Mr Reilly of the BCM to Mr S G Hill, in the 1960's (this account appeared in a Bulletin Mr Hill used to produce for the Club. The actual score sheet remained in his hands.) gives us in itself a mental image of a Metropolitan Club used to somewhat more opulent ways than today. It was printed: 'Game played at the Metropolitan Chess Club, Criterion Restaurant, Piccadilly, SW1'. It bore a diagram, space for time at adjournment, sealed move and space for recording 50 moves. Its size was a magnificent 8" x 13" which must have needed adequate room to have such a sheet by one's board.

H Phillips *White* V M Gibbins *Black*  
*Salvio Gambit*  
 (Notes by S.G.Hill)

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 g5 4.♙c4 g4 5.♘e5 ♘h6 (a) 6.d4 d6 7.♘f3 (b) 7...gxf3 8.♙xf3 ♙h4+ 9.g3 fxe3 10.hxg3 ♙e7 (c) 11.♙xh6 ♙xh6 12.♙xh6 ♘d7 13.♘c3 c6 14.0-0 (d) 14...♙g5+ 15.♙f4 ♙xf4+ 16.gxf4 b5 17.♙d3 b4 18.♘e2 f6 19.e5 dxe5 20.fxe5 fxe5 21.♙xh7 ♙xh7 22.♙xh7 exd4 23.♘d4 c5 24.♘b5 ♘d8 25.♙e4 (g) 25...♙b8 26.♘a7 ♘c7 27.♘c6 (h) 27...♙b6 28.♘a5 (i) ♙a6 And the game was drawn.

(a) 5...♙h4+ 6.♘f1 f3, the Cochrane Gambit, good for Black.

(b) 7.♘d3 ♙h4+ 8.♘f1 f3!

(c) 10...♙g4

(d) 14 ♘d2! If the queens are exchanged, White's king will be one vital square nearer the centre.

(e) It is better to abandon the h-pawn to achieve a game with pawns on only one side of the board.

(f) The h pawn will not run away. 21.♙xc6 with Black's pawns scattered or weak.

(g) Much better is 25.♘d6 aiming at c4 and cross firing on the ♙c8 with ♙f5 threatened.

(h) 27.♘xc8 ♙xc8 28.♙f5

(i) 28 ♘e7 is better.

On a final note for the year, a short match arranged informally between F.J. Marshall, the American Master, then at the height of his powers, and James Mortimer, resulted in the former winning all four games played.

1904

Echoes during the year of the long felt irritation at the way Metropolitan was able to round up strong players with dual memberships were to be heard again; but this time with reference to country members. There was certainly a view, shared by the BCM, that these people were not genuine Metropolitan London players at all and 'though their use did not transgress any rule of the competition, it made an anomaly of the title 'the London Chess League', when members came from Southampton, Southsea, Hastings and Plymouth'. What brought on this sharp note of disapproval was the 'A' division championship match between Metropolitan and Lud Eagle which, having an important bearing on the final result, was won by Metropolitan by 11½-8½ after Metropolitan had turned out several country members (we can see another point to the move to Piccadilly, Metropolitan wishing to ensure the continuing appearance of its country members, especially after the debacle against the Lud Eagle the previous season). The BCM had gone on to write: 'If there is a tie between Metropolitan and Hampstead, as seems likely, their country members will probably give the former a fairly easy victory'. However, in the event, Hampstead lost a vital final match to the weak Lee Club, thus finishing second to Metropolitan who, with 9 points from 10, thereby secured the 'A' championships for the 9th time in 12 years.

One imagines that by now there must have been a mood around akin to that of Henry II when he cried out in exasperation: 'who will rid me of this turbulent priest?'. One has only to substitute organisation for priest to see the point. Well, the City of London Club had another stab at it but this time not before it felt it had a greater pull of players than the Metropolitan Club itself. So, we find that in a match over



50 boards, played at the Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street on February 27th, 1904, City had managed to attract a fair number of Metropolitan names into its ranks, enabling it to beat its old rivals by the substantial margin of 33 games to 17. Not that the Metropolitan side lacked strength on the top boards—it was that, in today's parlance, the respective ratings were obviously against them.

Metropolitan	V	City of London	
1. W.H. Gunston	0	J.F. Lawrence	1
2. J.H. Blake	0	W. Ward	1
3. C.E.C. Tattersall	0	P.S. Leonhardt	1
4. O.C. Müller	1	S.F. Smith	0
5. J. Mortimer	½	R.P. Michell	½
6. J. Mahood	0	R. Loman	1
7. A.J. MacKenzie	½	H.W. Trenchard	½
8. E.G. Sergeant	0	S. Passmore	1
9. A. Howell	1	G.E. Wainwright	0
10. H. Greenwell	0	A. Curnock	1
	3		7

(First 10 boards)

Among other Metropolitan members on lower boards were: H.L. Bowles 0, H. Storr-Best 0, T. Keliher 1, J.W. Wright 0, C.W. Bowles 0, W.T. Dickinson 1 and D. Miller 0.

The strength of the City Club can be judged from the fact that the previous year, 1903, T.F. Lawrence (on top board), had drawn with H.N. Pillsbury. H.W. Trenchard, R.P. Michell and W. Ward played for Great Britain v America and, of course, R. Loman had been Dutch champion. W.H. Gunston, Metropolitan's top board, was also in that 1903 Great Britain side, beating C.S. Howell. E.G. Sergeant should also be mentioned for, in the same cable matches, he appeared in 1908 and 1909 for Great Britain and, by the way, H.G. Cole who played at board 4 for Metropolitan v Lud Eagle on that direful occasion in 1903, also made an appearance for Great Britain in 1911, losing to L.B. Meyer (his American opponent). J.H. Blake should not be forgotten for he, too, played in those cable matches a number of times.

E.G. Sergeant, who was born in 1881, twice won the City of London Championship and beat Dr. S. Tartakower at the Hastings Christmas Tournament of January 1925. The score might have been worth giving save that the notes in the BCM make it plain that Dr Tartakower played below par. Still, even a below par master has to be beaten!

The BCM of 1904 has been particularly helpful in providing the following information about officials of the Metropolitan Chess Club. Mr Morton-Smith had succeeded Sir Wyke Bayliss, President, and the Club secretaries from 1890 onwards had been as follows:

Morton-Smith	1890 to 1893
R.I. Marsden	1894 to 1896
R.P. Michell	1898
J.W. Wright	1899—(a tenure that was to last till 1923)

It seems plain from the above that the joint Secretaryship of Morton-Smith and R.I. Marsden in 1890 was not to last, which is no surprise since the pace of change at the young Metropolitan would have required a swift, decisive hand—not that R.I. Marsden was anything but a good and energetic organiser as is made plain by the contemporary accounts, after he took over in 1894 and the Club was settling down.

## 1905

This year of 1905 must have given a grain of comfort to the critics of Metropolitan and made them feel that, maybe,

'that ebullient, aggressive' organisation might be slipping at last. At this distance of time, the move to Piccadilly in 1903 in order to be "of special advantage to the Club's many country members" can now be seen as a gamble that failed. The premium rental that would have been required of the Criterion venue was evidently not matched by the expected influx of members. However, the removal that took place in late 1905 to the Inns Court Hotel, Holborn (a first thought was that Metropolitan had returned to the City, but does Holborn really count as the City?) does suggest that Metropolitan still had big ideas, for the BCM of October 1906 reported that the Club was meeting daily from 4pm, much as it had done at the Criterion.

A little later, in November, it met the City Club in another 'friendly' over 50 boards—the result another and just as emphatic a win for City as before. Metropolitan was not at full strength it would appear—nevertheless there was no explaining the near disaster that befell the top boards except that, again as before, the ratings were heavily against them.

Metropolitan	V	City of London	
1. J.H. Blake	0	Amos Burn	1
2. C.E.C. Tattersall	0	T.F. Lawrence	1
3. A.J. MacKenzie	0	W. Ward	1
4. E.O. Jones	½	H. Jacobs	½
5. E.G. Sergeant	0	S.F. Smith	1
6. J. Mortimer	0	F.E. Hamond	1
7. M. Gattie	0	W.H. Trenchard	1
8. H. Greenwell	½	H.W. Trenchard	1
9. W.P. Macbean	½	R.P. Michell	½
10. C.F. Cornwall	½	C.S. Howell	½
	2		8

(First 10 boards)

T. Keliher won on board 15 for Met, D. Miller on board 17, H.L. Bowles on 19 but W.T. Dickinson lost on board 25. The overall result in City's favour of 34 points to 16, clearly showed that there was a world of difference now between the strength of the City Club and that of the Metropolitan (one that could no longer, in itself, be explained away by the one Club having a greater pull on members than another), tailored as it was to winning the 'A' division of the London League. This, as a yardstick, bore no comparison to the City's great Championship competition. The *Chess Amateur*, in fact, had something rather derogatory to say about the strength of some of the 'A' division Clubs, as we shall see on another page. Almost as a confirmation of these views, Metropolitan romped away with the 'A' division for 1904-05 with a clear score of 12 points, after winning in 1903-04 with another clean sweep of 10 points, Athenaeum being white-washed on that occasion. This brought Metropolitan's tally to 10 wins (one joint) in 13 years, a colossal achievement, no matter the brickbats received on the way, and one never likely to be repeated.

The international master P.S. Leonhardt, already a City member, joined Metropolitan during this period. How long he remained so is uncertain nor have we found an actual occasion where he was listed as a playing member though we imagine there must have been a few.

We cannot leave this rather eventful year without rectifying an omission in our pen pictures of prominent Metropolitan members. The name of C.E.C. Tattersall has no doubt caught the reader's eye already. It is an unusual name and, in some ways he was an unusual individual as well. We are lucky in that we have a good deal of material about him in the BCM of the time, including a portrait on page 186 of the 1904 volume. There are, also, references to his death in 1957, in *The Times* of 19th October and 1st November of the same year.

C.E.C. or to give him his full name Creassey Edward Cecil Tattersall was born in London in 1877. He was

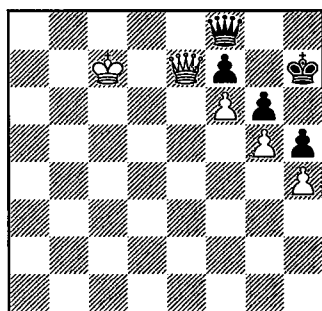
educated at the higher form of the City of London School in 1893 and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and at the time he found an unusually strong chess club, three of whose members afterwards played in Cambridge. He won its championship three years running before he left for Cambridge. He joined the University Chess Club and within a short time was not only its Hon. Secretary but also its President. He won all his four games played against Oxford University, whilst in the Anglo-American Universities cable matches he drew twice on top board. He also won the Cambridge University Championship three years in succession, without losing a game.

After leaving Cambridge he played very little chess for some time. We don't know this for certain, but it is possible that he was starting his career at the Department of Textiles within the Victoria and Albert Museum of which he was to be come a keeper. He became known as an authority on carpets.

He joined Metropolitan at the turn of the century, won its Championship two years running in 1902-03 and 1903-04, on the last occasion without losing a game. He also won in 1905-06 after which a certain G.A. Thomas, was to dominate not only the Metropolitan but also the London chess scene for the next couple of decades. However, Tattersall met and defeated a string of very strong players the reader will have found in these pages: J.H. Blake, W.H. Gunston, E.O. Jones, R. P. Michell, J. Mortimer, O.C. Müller, C. E. Wainwright, W. Ward, H.W. Trenchard and in off-hand games H.E. Bird and F.J. Marshall. He had also defeated Lasker in 1900 when the world champion played simultaneously at the City of London Club.

But Tattersall's greatest love was the end game, on which he was for many years the foremost authority. His book *A Thousand End-Games*, published in 1910-11 was for a long time regarded as the most invaluable work in English. He was also the only English solver who thoroughly mastered the famous 'Dolan End-game' published in 1903. The main line runs to 22 moves, Black repeatedly threatening stalemate by sacrificing his queen.

### J.J. Dolan (1903)



White to play and win

1 d7 g8 2 d6! f8 3 d5! h8 4 e5! g8 5 e7! h7 6 d6! a8 7 e7 b8 8 c6! a8 9 c7 b8 10 d6! b3 11 d7! c4 12 f8! h8 13 xf7 c5+ 14 e7 c8+ 15 e8 d7 16 e5! c7 17 e6! d8+ 18 f7! h7 19 e4! d7+ 20 e7! c8 21 a7! a8 22 d7 wins.

The following game was played in the Championship of the Metropolitan Club in May 1903 between C.E.C. Tattersall and O.C. Müller. The latter had already won the Championship three years running between 1898-99 and 1900-01 (and was to win it again in 1904-05) and was one of those true experts at the game who make you wonder why they never reached master class.

### C.E.C. Tattersall White O.C. Müller Black

Ruy Lopez

(Notes based on those by C.E.C. Tattersall)

1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 b5 f6 4 0-0 e7 5 c3 d4 6 xd4 exd4 7 e5 dxc3 8 exf6 xf6 9 e1+ e7 10 e2! c6 (a) 11 d3 d5 (b) 12 e5 (c) 12 ... e6 13 dxc3 0-0 14 h5 (d) 14 ... g6 15 e2 f6 16 h6 e8 17 d2 b6 18 f4 h8 19 ab1 c5 20 e3 (e) 20 ... c4 21 e2 d4 22 cxd4 xd4 23 e4 h8 24 xc4 xc4 25 xc4 xb2 26 b4 xc2 27 xb7 xa2 28 g3 a5 29 1b3 a1+ 30 g2 f6 31 c7 e6 32 f3 f6 33 f4 e7 (f) 34 b6! d5 35 b5 e6 36 e5 a2 37 xe7 xe7 38 f6 resigns.

(a) If 10 ... cxd2 11 xd2 c6 12 a5 b6 13 b4 c5 14 c3 g8 15 f3 wins.

(b) Still the pawn can't safely be taken but 11...d6 was essential to prevent what follows.

(c) 12.f4 followed by e5 was almost unanswerable.

(d) 14 f4 was better as g6 for Black would no doubt be played anyway.

(e) Strong was 20 h4. After the text move, Black almost saves the game.

(f) For now 33... e7 probably enables Black to escape.

Tattersall also composed a dozen problems or so. It was a great misfortune for the Metropolitan Club that following a famous dispute between A. Louis and C.E.C. Tattersall after 1915, the latter felt obliged to resign his membership. The word famous is used not because it was to echo down the years but because it was the very first matter that caught the attention when the Club minutes became available (at last!) in 1915. (See that particular year further on).

### 1906-07

Interest in club chess was not strong in the BCM or *Chess Amateur* during this period. Nonetheless there were items of interest which merit attention, including one or two from the London League minutes.

In the 1905/6 season Metropolitan finished 3rd, but in the following season 1906/7 registered the 11th win of its career with 13 points out of 13 in the London League's 'A' division. Perhaps we should not fail to mention that the ladies' team having won the 'C' division were competing in the 'A' division\*. Alas, the competition proved overwhelming, the ladies losing all their 14 matches. To put the matter in perspective, the Insurance Club lost 12 of its 14 games and we have already noted a whitewash for Athenaeum in the 1905/06 season.

Though the first recorded appearance of G.A. Thomas (later Sir George) playing for Metropolitan is not till 1910, he won the Club Championship for the first time in the season 1906-07 so we may accept that he was a member by 1906 if not earlier. It would have been nice to have one of his games that is not too well known or one played before he had left the Club. It is almost superfluous to say that he was the strongest player Metropolitan ever had.

Two other notable (relatively speaking, of course) players joining Metropolitan in the period were C.S. Howell, already a City member and G.W. Richmond. Both played in the famous cable matches of 1896-1911, Howell five times for America and Richmond twice for Britain. Of Richmond, the BCM said this: "Mr Richmond has earned quite a high reputation in Metropolitan (i.e. London) chess circles". His name appears on top board of the Metropolitan team which played Cambridge in February 1907, Metropolitan winning 10-6, the rest of the team having a much more modest look, with H.L. Bowles at board 2, Mrs R. Bowles at 8 and C.W. Bowles at 4. It is on the cards that

\* It was not unusual for teams to jump from 'C' to 'A', in some seasons owing to the absence of a 'B' division.

the latter was an original member, but neither this nor his relationship to H.L. has been established beyond doubt. Of special interest is the appearance on board 12 of Mr H Rodney who a few years later became President of the Club. The exact date is not on record. All that is known is that when we consult the minutes of 1915 (before that, of course, all the Club minutes were lost) H. Rodney was already President. Interestingly, this gives rise to the thought that we don't really know who was (if anyone) the first President of the Club, before Mr Deputy F.S. Goven, a thought that we voiced earlier on by a footnote in these pages.

We have traced a bare mention, with no details, of a win by Metropolitan over the Combined Universities by 13½ to 12½. Another item worth noting is that in the minutes of the London League dated 23/3/1906 there is a complaint by Brixton that Metropolitan had put men in their team knowing that certain of them were not intending to play. Though the complaint was not upheld, the relevant rule was subsequently amended to read 'Lists exchanged immediately before commencement of the match should not include the names of any players who have expressed their inability to play in the match.'

# CHAPTER SIX

1908

For the second known time in the Club's history a Lord Mayor, Sir John Bell, has become President. The post had become vacant through the incumbent President, H.L. Bowles, having to leave London from his work with the Great Western Railway. Also, H. Rodney becomes match captain. It is not often this post finds a mention in the chess press nor, for that matter, any other official post, save, of course, that of Hon. Secretary or President. It is in that sort of connection that the missing minutes leave a sore gap.

An important match was played this year against the very strong North Manchester team at Ye Mecca Cafe, Cannon Street, the date October 16th. Metropolitan winning narrowly by 6½-5½.

Metropolitan		North Manchester	
1. J.H. Blake	1	W. Butler	0
2. J. Mortimer	1	W.C. Palmer	0
3. D. Miller	1	C. Lobel	0
4. L.P. Rees	½	H.B. Lund	½
5. W.P. MacBean	1	A. Wolstencroft	0
6. T.E. Hayden	0	T.A. Farrow	1
7. A.A. Percival	0	T.H. Lambert	1
8. P. Gibbs	½	H. Fansworth	½
9. J.W. Wright	0	I.M. Brown	1
10. E. Paice	0	J. Martin Shaw	1
11. C.W. Bowles	1	A.L. Moore	0
12. P.S. Dunckelsbuhler	½	M. Sutcliffe	½
	6½		5½

Some of the great stalwarts of the past are now beginning to slip out of our sight: O.C. Müller, A.J. Maas, R. Loman, R.P. Michell, to name but a few. On the other hand, D. Miller was starting to make his presence felt. The man on the bottom board, P.S. Dunckelsbuhler, was involved in an unfortunate controversy some ten years later at the end of the Great War. He was of German origin, and a motion had been approved by the Club AGM of 1918 that no player of enemy alien birth should be a member of the Club. Even taking into account the very strong anti-German feeling engendered by the war, it does seem today more than a trifle unfair thus to penalize a loyal, long serving member of the Club at the very last stage of the war. The motion, incidentally, was rescinded the following year. P.S.D. does not appear to have rejoined the Club and who could blame him. As a matter of history, the very first mention we have of him is appearing for Metropolitan versus Oxford and Cambridge in 1908, playing non other than the young J.M. Bee, then at Cambridge University, to whom he lost and before we lose sight of him, justice demands that we record the fact that he won the Naumann Cup in that very same year of 1908.

1909

Very little in the way of news, apart from the fact that Metropolitan has a new President in the person of Sir John O.S. Thursby-Bart and that, as noted in the match versus the North Manchester Club the previous year, the Met has a new venue at 'Ye Mecca Cafe', Cannon Street, the 7th move in 18 years. However, when reliance has to be made on outside sources, it may be wiser to say 'at least 7 moves' in this context, such was the frequency that Metropolitan felt impelled to move its headquarters.

The Club's performance in the 'A' division this season took on a very ominous look: finishing 6th, it was admitted that this result was due in the main to the departure or

defection of several strong players. The BCM made the somewhat caustic if obvious comment 'these losses are not easily made good, nor can matches still be won with a game or two thrown away by default'.

The Ladies team, still in the 'A' division, does get a win—one in fourteen—beating South London, which in its turn is whitewashed.

1910

Something of a comeback for Metropolitan this season. The side was involved in a triple tie for the 'A' division, with Lud Eagle and Hampstead. Lud Eagle, however, being penalised one point for success the previous season, there was a play off between the other two teams, Hampstead beating Metropolitan by 11½-8½.

The Metropolitan side was as follows:

1. J.H. Blake	1	11. E.J. Gibbs	0
2. G.A. Thomas	0	12. R.V. Brown	0
3. C.E.C. Tattersall	½	13. W.T. Dickinson	0
4. D. Miller	½	14. P. Dunckelsbuhler	0
5. W.J. Ingolsby	1	15. H.A. Stead	0
6. T.F. Haydon	0	16. J.G. Rennie	½
7. A.A. Percival	0	17. S.D. Fresco	½
8. T.E. Webb	1	18. A. Tooke	1
9. A. Louis	½	19. J. Fienstein	1
10. E. Paice	0	20. J. W. Wright	1

The damage being done on boards 10 to 15, 6 losses! This was the year when A. Louis (after the Great War, match captain) and G.A. Thomas, as already mentioned, made their first recorded appearance for Metropolitan.

The *Chess Amateur* of the period cast a rather jaundiced eye on the doings of the 'A' division of the London League: "Metropolitan, Hampstead and Lud Eagle were beating their rivals with the greatest of ease, suggesting quality was not evenly spread. The presence of some clubs in the 'A' division was justified by faith only (the ladies' team?). The accession or defection of strong players could send a Club with a bounce from one end of the league table to the other. However, the casting down of the mighty (a veiled reference to Metropolitan?) was a joyful sight if the mighty had shown themselves scornful towards inferior mortals". So there!

1911

James Mortimer, arguably, the Club's most accomplished and versatile member through its long history, died this year.

We are glad to have had this opportunity in these pages to write in his memory.

The 'A' division championship this season was a disappointing one for the Club, the result being 1. Hampstead 12/13, 2. Lud Eagle 11, 3. Metropolitan (with losses to the two leaders and a draw with Lee) at 9½.

Incidentally, prizes for the Metropolitan Championship this year were £10-£5-£3-£2, the first prize of £10 being in the nature of at least 4 weeks wage for a great number of people!

1912/13

Sir John Thursby-Bart is still President. In 1912, the young Capablanca gave a simultaneous display at the Club, with the very interesting result of 18 wins—3 draws—8 losses. We have no full account of this event.

The balance of power in London chess is shifting. There is now clear evidence that Hampstead is more than holding

its own with Metropolitan. In the season 1911/12 Hampstead was first again with 11½/12 and Metropolitan third with 9½ (losses to Lee and South London—Lee one of the weaker sides—and a draw with Hampstead).

In the following season 1912/13, Hampstead and South London were equal first with 10/12, Metropolitan sixth with 7½. Hampstead crushed Metropolitan 15-5, the following Metropolitan board results being the only item of interest to us:

1. G.A. Thomas ½, 2. J.H. Blake 0, 3. D Miller, 6. A. Louis 0, and 11. H. Ford ½, the latter owing this mention, his first, to the fact that he was still appearing in the Club's team in the 1930's.

The Metropolitan championship (1913) was won by D. Miller in front of G.A. Thomas (who had won the previous three seasons) and R.J. Loman. G.A. Thomas had won that year's City of London championship with R.J. Loman also competing. It would appear that R.J. Loman retained his Metropolitan membership in order to play in the Club Championship, for we find no trace of his name in any of the contemporary Metropolitan teams, save for an isolated appearance the following season.

Edward Lasker, the famous American master, had joined Metropolitan and a short match was arranged by Mr H. Rodney between him and J. Davidson, Lasker winning 4-0. The rationale for the choice of opponent is not clear, since there were better players in the Club. However, both Lasker and Davidson had competed in the City of London championship of that year (1913), Lasker scoring a brilliant win over Davidson. If the match had any relevance to that game, any reservations Davidson may have nurtured over its outcome were thus emphatically dispelled.

In another match aborted after two games, Edward Lasker and I. Gunsberg scored one win each.

Metropolitan travelled to Manchester to play North Manchester, the contest ending in a 8½-8½ draw. R.H.V. Scott, who for a few short years, attained international status, appeared in the Club side for the first time.

In a combined Sussex and Kent Congress at Hastings, the First Class Tournament—Section A—was won by F.D. Yates with 10½/12 with D. Miller and L.C.G. Dewing (another future Metropolitan player) equal second with 7½.

Section B was won by G.A. Thomas with 8/12, A. Louis finishing equal 3rd with 5½.

## 1914

After the very disappointing results in the 'A' division of the London League since 1910, Metropolitan stages a sensational return to form this season, winning all 13 of its games under what the BCM described as the energetic management of J.W. Wright and the valuable support of H. Rodney. As a sequel to the uncomplimentary remarks of the *Chess Amateur* in 1910 with respect to the 'A' division, it appears that difficulties over teams in the lower half of the table turning out a full complement of players (20 boards)

had arisen, leading to a call for the 'B' division to be revived after a gap of many seasons.

H. Rodney had arranged (sponsored?) another match, this time between R.H.V. Scott and D. Miller, both of whom had competed in the previous year's British Championship. The result was a drawn match, with two wins each and one draw. Two of the games were given in the BCM, rather lengthy ones and both lost by Miller. It must have been a sore point with him that whenever a game of his was published in the BCM, it was inevitably a lost one!

A return match, Metropolitan v North Manchester, was played at Ye Mecca Cafe, 54 Gresham Street, on January 31, Metropolitan winning by 9-7. There was an interesting new name in the home team, Herbert Jacobs who often played for the City of London and had also appeared in the famous cable matches of 1896-1911 playing for Great Britain and scoring an average of 71.00%. This was the occasion R. Loman reappeared after an apparently seeming long absence, possibly busy in continental chess, for we have found a reference to Rudolph Loman playing in the Scheveningen Master Congress of 1905.

1. D. Miller	0 (losing to F.D. Yates)
2. J. Blake	½
3. C.E.C. Tattersall	1
4. R.H.V. Scott	½
5. Herbert Jacobs	1
6. T.E. Haydon	½
7. W.P. MacBean	½
8. R. Loman	0
9. H. Ford	½
10. W.T. Dickinson	1

After the match the players and officials were entertained to dinner by Mr H. Rodney, Vice-President of the Metropolitan Club. Among the visitors were Mr. and Mrs. H.L. Bowles, for a long time identified with the management of the Club.

There was a brief reference in the *Chess Amateur*, to Metropolitan beating the Birmingham Club by 8-4. The same magazine also printed an article bemoaning the scarcity of players of master calibre in England to which H.G. Cole (a strong Metropolitan player, though, of course, not of master class) commented in reply: 'you missed the main cause—the scarcity of strong practice' meaning, obviously, practice of master calibre.

Metropolitan met for its annual dinner at the Holborn Restaurant. According to the BCM of June 1890, it was the venue for the first annual dinner of the Metropolitan Chess Clubs (plural). W. Naumann (not to be confused with F.C.) presided and others present were: Mr. and Mrs. Bowles, H. Rodney, W. Waterhouse, J.H. Moore (Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the London League) and J.W. Wright.

A deciding match between G.A. Thomas and C.E.C. Tattersall went in favour of the former, after a tie for the 1914 Metropolitan Championship.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

1915

Up to now, the Metropolitan story had consisted of a stunning sequence of events starting from very humble beginnings, followed by a decline made of a variety of hiccups as rivals stung to bewildered activity slowly overhauled it. What the Club's future might have been but for the Great War is caught up in the countless "might have beens" of that terrible conflict. Certainly, the chess clubs in London that managed to survive its long duration, did so only by an act of great good faith. The first casualty for most of them was their membership. We can adduce this because the London League had soon found 20 board matches to be impracticable, tried 12 boards and as the war dragged on had finally to settle for a kind of friendly competition for which no more than 6 clubs, including Metropolitan, took part.

Nor did the end of the war, at least where Metropolitan was concerned, see any quick relief. In fact, the Club was to enter an era of severe difficulties of one kind or another and the vexations part is that, although from 1915 onwards, we now have the Club minutes to draw on for our information, much valuable editorial time has been consumed trying to fill in those parts the secretaries of the time have chosen to leave out. No better example of this can be chosen the minutes than of the year 1915 itself, which in any event deserve to be recorded since they give a not untypical view of how committees of the Club addressed their business at the time.

## Committee, April 20th 1915

The following members were present: H. Rodney (in chair), J.H. Blake, G.A. Thomas, A. Louis, D. Miller, J. Davidson, H. Ford, J.R. Hanning, R.P. MacBean, C.E.C. Tattersall, E. Paice, E.A. Mitchell, —Archibald, —Mabbott, J. Macalister and J.W. Wright, 16 members of what, surely, must have been the most weighty Metropolitan committee ever and on the face of it, for what was little more than routine business! But was it? There appears no doubt at all that part of that business was a resolution of such an important nature that it led to the eventual resignation of C.E.C. Tattersall. Why then has it found no place in the minutes of this particular meeting? They were signed (at an unspecified date) by H. Rodney, the Chairman, as being correct. It is not at all hard to guess that the matter was of such a delicate nature that the author of the minutes felt unable to deal with it and so left it out. (That there was more to it than that, we shall see later).

Let us look at what the minutes actually say: there was a report that the Club had won the 'A' division of the London League (with 8½ from 10) for the second year running W.T. Dickinson having the best average. Mr Paice reported on the Championship Tournament (which eventually ended as follows: 1. R.H.V. Scott 10½, 2. J. Davidson and 3. J. Hanning and R.P. MacBean). There was a discussion as to whether a Mr Poincarantz, having retired from the Championship should be called upon to play his games with Scott and Tattersall. A vote was taken confirming his resignation. Another vote negated a motion that he should nonetheless play the two games.

The Treasurer stated that the Club's accounts would just about balance. It would seem that the Club usually closed its doors for the Summer for it was resolved that the last meeting should be by May 21st. A vote of thanks to the chair closed the meeting, and so on to the next meeting.

## Committee Meeting on May 11th, 1915

The meeting considered a disputed game in the Championship between C.E.C. Tattersall and A. Louis. Letters were read from both players. The meeting was adjourned, having decided to refer the matter to the President. Unfortunately, what the letters contained was not revealed and we are still left guessing the nature of the dispute.

Be patient and read on.

## Committee, May 14th

E. Paice, the Tournament Secretary, reported the President as saying that he could not see how he could do anything, but was in favour of a resolution submitted to him by the Tournament Secretary (presumably that Mr. Louis and Mr. Tattersall be permitted to play their game as reported further on). However, the Tournament Secretary then read a letter from Mr. Tattersall resigning his membership, and went on to move that the true meaning of the resolution passed by the Committee on the 20th April 1915, that Mr. Louis and Mr. Tattersall be permitted to play the game, if willing. The Secretary (E. Wright) expressed his strong disapproval and having himself moved that resolution, said that was not the true meaning (alas, the true meaning is never spelt out). Mr. Paice's motion was carried, also a further motion—*notwithstanding the Secretary's objection*—that Mr Louis having given notice of his intent to refuse to play the said game, the score as shown on the score board should stand. It was moved later in the meeting that the Committee regretted that the resolution of April 20 was so worded as to be susceptible of more than one interpretation.

Referring back to that meeting of April 20th which has been faithfully recorded from the minutes of that date, we have shown that there is no mention at all of any such resolution, whether capable or not of more than one interpretation. Naturally, since the Secretary, Mr Wright, probably wrote those minutes himself he would have been in a difficult position in doing so, being personally involved in the matter. No doubt, at the time, he may have thought to have acted wisely in keeping silent. Anyway, the committee commendably decided to place on record that they had every confidence in the Secretary—but, regrettably C.E.C. had been lost to the Club.

Can we make an educated guess (that's all it can be) at what the trouble was about? The game between Louis and Tattersall had evidently been scored to the former, before being played, because of some dispute we know nothing about, but which the letters before the Committee of May 14th, would have revealed had the minutes been more candid. E. Paice, the Tournament Secretary, obviously, was in favour of the game being played, A. Louis wasn't. The resolution of April 20th by E. Wright, the Secretary, may have given him backing but was so worded that E. Paice could show that what it really meant was that the game should be played.

One can think of several reasons for the dispute; did Tattersall keep his opponent waiting or not turn up at all with an excuse Louis wouldn't accept or was it a simple unwillingness on Louis' part to accede to a later postponement of the game? What ever it was, personalities may have been involved to complicate matters and since Tattersall pre-empted the issue by resigning he obviously felt that Louis wouldn't back down and so did the gentlemanly thing for the sake of the Club. As theories go, this is as reasonable as the information available makes possible (in spite of the fact that Mr Paice's second motion that the score should stand, apparently contradicts the first

motion that the game should be played. One could go on and on).

The brief reference in the *Chess Amateur* to the Metropolitan Club beating Birmingham is given more generous coverage in the BCM and is worth recording as being the first time Mr J.M. Bee, who dominated Metropolitan Chess in the fifties and most of the sixties, is seen playing for the Club. Of additional interest is to find him seated beside J.W. Wright for the two men were to become Presidents of the Club, one on either side of the 1939-45 War. Dr. J. Schumer, who is also seen for the first time, was a qualified medical practitioner and Chess Editor of the *Westminster Gazette* as well as problemist of note. He was also a good enough player to appear in that year's British Championship. After 1924, he went to India and was lost to chess.

#### Metropolitan (v Birmingham) 8-4

1. J.H. Blake	0	7. A.H. Prinovitz	1
2. C.E.C. Tattersall	½	8. A. Finistein	½
3. R.H.V. Scott	1	9. W.T. Dickinson	1
4. A. Louis	½	10. V Rush	½
5. Dr. J. Schumer	1	11. J.M. Bee	½
6. J. Macalister	1	12. J.W. Wright	½

The British Championship of that year which, in the opinion of many was not of great quality, as far as the tail enders were concerned, included several Metropolitan players.

1. J.H. Blackburne	8½	7. W.S. Viner	5
2. F.D. Yates	8½	8. R. Leab	3½
3. I. Gunsberg	6½	9. W.H. Sparkes	3
4. A. Louis	6	10. J.E. Parry	2
5. R.H.V. Scott	5½	11. G. Wilkes	1
6. Dr. J. Schumer			

Some games of A. Louis were published by the BCM, but have not seemed of sufficient interest to be duplicated in these pages.

On a final note, Mr H. Rodney had offered a prize for a match between G.A. Thomas and R.H.V. Scott, Thomas winning by 3-1 with 2 draws. Nor must we forget that G.A. Thomas was gazetted Second Lieutenant of the 26th Hampshire Regiment, that year.

#### 1916-17-18

It becomes increasingly clear that, though the Metropolitan succeeded in staying open for the duration of the war, it did so under severe constraints both in terms of membership and of finance. As to the game itself the only competition by now was the friendly one arranged by the London League. For this purpose and for that season only the 'B' division was resurrected (1915-16 season). The Club finished second with 7/8, losing only to Hampstead. The next season (1916-17), held this time as a "wartime competition", Metropolitan finished first with a clean score of 5 out of 5.

At a meeting of the London League Council and the Club secretaries at the Gambit\*, Budge Row, on October 27 1917 the question of whether any competition could be carried on that following winter was debated since only 4 clubs were able and willing to continue a competition similar to the previous year's. These 4, as a matter of interest, were Battersea, Hampstead, Islington and Metropolitan.

\* It is probably true to say that few of our present Club members will remember the famous Gambit Restaurant. It was situated in a small side street called Budge Row, a stone's throw away from the Mansion House. The whole site has now disappeared under a modern block of offices but someone has had the imagination to stick a plaque onto the building commemorating the very spot where Budge Row—if not the Gambit itself—once stood.

The Gambit was well known as one of the few places in London where you could eat and play chess at the same time, whilst it was also the chosen venue for official functions and competitions.

Subsequently, Bohemians entered as well. This truncated competition took place over 8 boards only (season 1917-18) and in the event with Hampstead won the play off.

Though jumping the gun a little we append a record of that event, principally because we have no other list of who the players were doing duty for Metropolitan during the First World War. Here is the first (drawn) game:

Metropolitan	v	Hampstead	
1. J.H. Blake	0	R.C. Griffith	1
2. W.P. MacBean	0	W. Winter	1
3. D. Miller	1	J.H. White	0
4. G. Jover	0	J. Dunmore	1
5. H.G. Cole	½	W.E. Bonwick	½
6. E. Duncelsbuhler	1	E.M. Jellie	0
7. W.T. Dickinson	1	J. Glass	0
8. T.E. Webb	½	R. Taylor	½
	4		4

The Hampstead team has more than passing interest for the inclusion of R.C. Griffith and J.H. White, the co-authors of *Modern Chess Openings* (Griffith and White as it was often referred to). W. Winter had only just joined Metropolitan—it was obviously necessary for first class players to seek suitable competition where they might find it. J.Du Mont was known as writer on chess and both W.E. Bonwick and E.M. Jellie were first class players. The play-off match went as follows:

Metropolitan	v	Hampstead	
1. J.H. Blake	½	R.C. Griffith	½
2. W.P. MacBean	½	W. Winter	½
3. D. Miller	0	E. Morgan	1
4. H.G. Cole	1	J.Du Mont	0
5. R. LeFanu	0	W.E. Bonwick	1
6. J.M. Bee	0	J.H. White	1
7. W.T. Dickinson	0	R. Taylor	1
8. J.W. Wright	0	E. M Jellie	1
	2		6

Unfortunately, Metropolitan were without Jover and Duncelsbuhler who turned up too late to be included. Nonetheless, Hampstead were too strong altogether.

The Club President Sir John Thursby-Bart has resigned through inability to attend Club meetings and Mr H. Rodney elected as the new President, with the famous English master Amos Burn as a Vice-President.

#### Committee of October 19, 1915

J.M. Bee has been elected to the committee. The minutes of October 19 say that difficulties had arisen because attendants at the Club premises had declined to stay after 10 at night. The Secretary, therefore, had worked out an arrangement by which the Club would open on Saturday afternoons at 2.30 for the purpose of the tournaments, but would open on evenings only when matches were being held. All the members were invited to the next committee meeting. (Actually this was intended to mean a General Meeting, of which there were several during the War).

#### General Meeting September 16, 1916

The Secretary said he had called the meeting to receive the general and financial reports and to find out what support the Club was likely to get during the coming season. There is no specific mention as to the members reaction to this



request, but since the same arrangements as agreed at the meeting of October 19, 1915 were endorsed, it would appear that support was forthcoming.

W. Winter was elected a member of the Club. Sir John Thursby-Bart, late President of the Club was elected President of the British Chess Federation.

There was concern at the beginning of 1917 with the lighting restrictions and lack of attendants at the Club's headquarters and a move was made to 56 Ludgate Hill, in the shadow of St Paul's Cathedral, for the coming season (at 7 shillings a night). However, it seems the Club was no happier here for the Secretary was authorized to try other venues at 50-57 Fore Street, the 'Cabins' in Ironmonger Lane, Anderton Hotel and the Holborn Restaurant to find what they could offer.

Eventually the Club moved to Fore Street and that is where we find the members gathered at a General Meeting on November 3, 1917. This meeting has an unusual interest in that the Secretary, after reading his report, moved a resolution that the minutes should enter it in full, with a final clause added by the meeting. In one respect this resolution confirms the suspicion that the Club minutes have been, by and large, somewhat less than the true and fair reflection they ought to be, yet at the same time supporting the view that was how things were done and no one saw anything improper at all in keeping minutes as brief as possible.

In our turn, however, we have resisted the temptation to enter the very full report in its entirety, contenting ourselves with quoting certain parts of it as reflecting the war time mood of the Club.

"Considering the unfavourable conditions on account of the War .... the Club was able during the past season to keep the flag flying. We entered the friendly competition promoted by the London League and played 5 matches on 10 boards each, against Hampstead, West London, Bohemians, Islington and Battersea. We won them all, having full teams except the in last match against Islington when 4 men failed to turn up whilst Islington had a full team. However, we managed to get home winning five and drawing one of the games played.

W. Winter, a new member, finished equal first with W.P. MacBean in the Championship, winning the play-off, the best of 5 games.

The financial position of the Club shows a balance of £2.17.4 for which the Club has largely to thank the President.

With regard to the present season, we have moved our quarters into the present premises (50-57 Fore Street) ... as we were not comfortable at Ludgate Hill ... I think the Manageress will do her best to make us comfortable.

There is a friendly competition as last year promoted by the London League, on 8 boards instead of 10. So far Hampstead, Battersea, Islington and Metropolitan have entered with promises from West London and Bohemians. I beg to suggest in conclusion that you elect all the present officers from the President downwards to carry on until we meet under more congenial circumstances after this awful war is over. I am sure our hearts go out in admiration and gratitude to all our members who are so nobly and with such self sacrifice upholding the honor of our country and fighting for justice and the right. May they be spared to come back to us. One word more, I cannot tell you how much we owe to our President for all he has done and is doing for the Club. I do not think we could have carried on if it had not been for him".

Clause added by Meeting:

'The members finally wish to record their sense of the very valuable work done by the Secretary and of his continued and ardent interest in the Club'.

The report was unanimously adopted by all the officers elected as suggested by the Secretary. A hearty vote of thanks to the Chair closed the meeting.

The signature was that of Mr H. Rodney. As an addendum, it should be recorded that G.A. Thomas, E. Paice and R.H.V. Scott, among those others we do not know about, were by then in the Forces.

There was another General Meeting of the Club members the following year on October 5th, 1918 at 50-56 Fore Street with Mr Rodney in the chair. The mood had changed since the previous meeting, there was hope in the air but the minutes still reflect a cautious feeling that the untoward consequences of the war should not be under-rated by those members who had loyally supported the Club through the dark days and might expect a rapid return to normality. It is an interesting speculation to put a figure to that 'band of brothers'. Since the heady days when the Club had anything up to 303 members it has not been possible to hazard even a guess—in any given year—as to what the membership might have been. However, such a guess was possible in the previous year—1917—when it was stated in the report that only the championship with an entry of ten was possible. Add a figure for the officials and a spill over of members not strong enough for the championship and we have a figure of about twenty, maybe a little more but, in all likelihood, the lowest point in the Club's history.

Not that the figure would have been any better in the current year of 1918, since it was resolved at the General Meeting of October 5th which we are considering, that the championship should be held if there were 7 entries or more, a figure smaller than the previous year. But to return to the Secretary's report from which we quote:

"I think we may confidently say that we meet today under more hopeful conditions than we have done for four years and I hope that as another season comes round, if not sooner, this horrible war will have come to an end and then we shall be able to look for more favourable conditions for carrying on the Club. I am afraid that had it not been for the splendid support of our President we should not have been able to keep the flag flying for these five years when many of the clubs have ceased to exist and I am sure we all tender him our heartiest thanks.

In regard to the finances, the receipts, with a balance of £2.17.4 from the previous season, being £25.15.10 and the expenditure for rent, match expenses, postages and sundries being £21.5.6, leaving a balance in hand of £4.10.4 which I think is very satisfactory considering that our rent, as well as everything else had been increased to such a large extent.

Our present meeting place is a great improvement on anything we have had before ... We anticipate holding the Championship and if the London League do not have a competition, I shall endeavor to arrange some friendly matches with other clubs.

I would suggest that we adopt the same course as last year and elect all the officers from the President downwards to carry on the Club till the brighter day arrives. Now is conclusion I would like to add one word about all those of our members who have joined the Forces, many of whom have been fighting for us and to whom our hearts go out with deep gratitude. I do not know whether any of them have been killed or wounded although I have tried to keep in touch with them but it will be a great joy to welcome them back again".

It was at this meeting that it was proposed by Mr Le Fanu and seconded by Mr Dickinson that no one of enemy alien birth shall be a member of the Club, a motion that was carried after 'some discussion'. We have already commented on this decision and in the mood of optimism and of war fast approaching its end, it seems even more

\* This figure reinforces the view expressed above that the membership may have been as low as twenty or so.



unfortunate that such a motion should have been passed affecting as it did one member only and one of very long standing: E. Duncelsbuhler. The fact that this motion was rescinded the very next year is proof that it must have aroused deep misgivings within the membership, and rightly so.

These minutes of October 1918 were read and signed a year later on the 17th October 1919 by G.A. Thomas soon to be Sir George Thomas and President of the Club.

Shall we shed a small tear for the Ladies' Club which at one time had no less than 84 members and now had ceased to exist owing to war difficulties.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

1919

A Committee was held on January 28 1919 at 60 Chancery Lane with H. Rodney in the Chair. Present were Messrs Blake, Miller, MacBean, Scott and Wright.

The meeting had been called to consider the best means of arousing interest in the Club. A general discussion followed but (as so often in the past) no details were given of the outcome. Sir G.A. Thomas was elected Vice-President. Also agreed to lend boards, men and clocks to the BCF for its meeting at Hastings in August 1920. No other business mentioned. Incidentally a vote of thanks was passed to the Chairman for arranging the meeting in his Chambers. Can we conclude that H. Rodney was a barrister?

Another Meeting was held at Ye Mecca Cafe on May 1 1919 with J.H. Blake in the Chair. Reported that Scott and Coles tied for first place in the Championship. Also correspondence from Ye Mecca giving notice that their premises would no longer be available for the use of the Club. Mr. Mabbott agreed to collect and look after the equipment of the Club while new premises were being sought. Mr. Rodney had also written to place £100 at the disposal of the Club to be used for rent. A suggestion that the Club should seek another President was rejected unanimously.

At the Hastings Victory Masters Tournament of August 1919, won by Capablanca with the remarkable score of 10½ from 11, G.A. Thomas was third, R.H.V. Scott eighth and W. Winter eleventh. D. Miller finished third in the Victory Minor Tournament. We have also found mention of J.M. Bee drawing with Capablanca in a simultaneous display at the City of London Club.

A match over six games between W. Winter, the new Club Champion and R.H.V. Scott arranged by Mr Rodney, was won by Winter 4-2. This was the 5th game of the match:

**R.H.V. Scott White W. Winter Black**  
*Ruy Lopez*

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 d6 4 d3 ♘f6 5 c4 (a) 5 ... g6 6 ♘c3 ♙g7 7 ♙g5 h6 8 ♙e3 0-0-9 ♙d2 (b) 9 ... ♘g4 10 ♙xc6 (c) 10 ... bxc6 11 0-0-0 ♘xe3 12 fxe3 ♙e6 (d) 13 ♙df1 d5 14 exd5 cxd5 15 ♙e2 ♙b8 (e) 16 ♘d2 ♙d6 17 cxd5 ♙xd5 18 ♘c4 ♙xc4 19 dxc4 e4! (f) 20 ♙c2 ♙c5 21 ♘d1 ♙fd8 22 ♙xc4 ♙xb2+ 23 ♘xb2 ♙xb2 24 ♙d1 (g) 24 ... ♙db8 25 ♙d2 ♙b4 Resigns.

(a) The Duras Variation, a favourite of Scott's.

(b) 9.h3 to preserve the bishop would be better. Obviously White though to gain some pressure by opening the f file.

(c) This exchange strengthens Black's centre and opens the b file for his queen's rook, but if White plays differently, Black would continue by ♘e7, c6 and d5.

(d) With the two bishops and the open b file bearing down on White's king, Black has a clear advantage.

(e) Threatening dxc4 and e4.

(f) If White replies 20.♘xe4 ♙b2 21.♘d6 ♙e6 with a won ending.

(g) There is no defence. If 22.♙xb2 ♙g4+ 25.♙c1 ♙d2+ 26.♙b1 ♙b8+ and mate in 2. On 24.♙f4 ♙b6 25.♙xf7+ ♙h8 and mate after ♙a3 cannot be avoided.

W. Winter was born in 1898, won the Championship of Cambridge University in 1915, that of Metropolitan in 1917 and the British Championship in 1934.

A further Meeting was held on September 9 1919 with J.H. Blake in the Chair. The Club had evidently moved to 2/3 Furnival Street (where this writer found it in 1932) for

the Secretary had been unable to find any other accommodation except where they were; on Tuesdays 6.30 to 9.30 and Saturdays 2.00 to 6.30. 8/6 (8 shillings and six pence) for 3 hours and 2/6 for each hour afterwards.

A final Committee Meeting took place on October 10 1919 at Furnival Street. Resolved that the Championship and a Minor Tournament be held if enough entries were received.

The Club held its 1919 AGM at 2/3 Furnival Street on Saturday 18th October. As a welcome change, the minutes give a full list of officers.

President:	H. Rodney
Vice-President:	Sir George Thomas, H.L. Bowles, Mrs Rhoda Bowles, J.H. Blake, T. Keliher, A. Guest, F. Brown and one other
Secretary:	J.W. Wright
Match Captain:	J.W. Wright
Assistant:	A. Louis
Tournament Secretary:	D. Miller
Press Representative:	W.P. MacBean

W.P. MacBean seems to have been a very active member of the Club. Unfortunately, bar the fact that he was a good player, we know nothing about him.

This was the meeting at which A. Louis moved that the resolution passed on October 5, 1918 that no one of enemy alien birth shall be a member of the Club, should be rescinded. (This was carried unanimously)

Mention was made that 10 matches had been played (presumably in a revived League) with 7 wins, 2 losses and 1 draw, that the play-off for the Championship between Mr. Coles and Mr. Scott had not yet resulted in a clear result for either player. It was stated that the Club's receipts for the year amounted to £33.3.10, leaving a balance after expenditure of £4.19.4.

Immediately after the AGM, a Meeting of the Committee was held on October 28 1919 to consider the resolutions (if any of the AGM) but otherwise with little that seemed to warrant such busy-bees' activities. Evening meetings on Tuesdays to be changed to Thursdays and it was resolved that a team be sent to play the Hastings Chess Club and, on November 22, 1919, Metropolitan travelled down to the Sussex coast for this friendly match.

One suspects here the hand of H. Rodney, President of both Clubs, which ensured a very powerful Metropolitan side made the journey. It also went on to win by the comfortable margin of 8-3. Their line up was as follows:

1. R.H.V.Scott	1	7. J. Macalister	0
2. J.H. Blake	1	8. J.M. Bee	0
3. E.E. Colman	0	9. W.T. Dickinson	1
4. D. Miller	1	10. V. Rush	1
5. W.P. MacBean	1	11. J.W. Wright	1
6. A. Louis	1		

E.E. Colman had played on board one for the British versus the American Universities in the Cable match of 1901, beating his Harvard opponent, C.R. Perry, the match being drawn 3-3.

## 1920

Committee on April 29 1920 with J.H. Blake in the Chair. Meeting was called to consider a letter from Mr. Moore of the Brixton Club who seemed to be complaining that two of the Metropolitan players were not eligible. Replied that the subscriptions of both players had been paid. End of story.

Committee on September 8 1920 with J.H. Blake in chair.

A strange thing happened at the Furnival Street venue of the Club—its playing room had been partitioned to let as an office. However, a larger room on the first floor had been rented (where this writer found it).

The Secretary reported that Mr. Rodney had written pressing to be relieved of the Presidency and under the circumstances had written to Sir George Thomas who had promised to consider the position, if elected.

AGM October 9 1920. J.H. Blake in the Chair. Reported that receipts were substantially higher at £124.9.10, leaving a balance after expenses of £53.14.6 (It is not clear if the rent was paid out of Mr. Rodney's £100, but probably so).

Sir George Thomas elected as President. A. Louis moved that the subscription be increased to £1.1.0. Motion negated. Sir George wins Championship. It was at this meeting that Mrs R. Bowles offered to give a trophy in memory of her late husband. Offer gratefully accepted except that it should be in the form of a Shield. This, by the way, was the first indication in the Minutes that Mr. H.L. Bowles had died.

### MR H L BOWLES

It is very difficult to understand why no mention of the death of that great pioneer of Metropolitan Chess, H.L. Bowles, sometime in 1920, is to be found in the Club minutes of the period, especially since both he and his wife Rhoda Bowles were Vice-Presidents of the Club, and indeed H.L. Bowles himself had been President in 1904. In fact, we only know of this sad event because his widow had offered, in a letter read at the AGM of October 9, 1920, to donate a shield to his memory. It is some small consolation that this offer was gratefully accepted and that the shield, when the Club moved to the St. Bride Institute after the 1940-45 War, was hung in a prominent position over the fireplace. It was especially conspicuous because it included a photographic inset of Mr. Bowles himself, as well as the names on small silver plaques of each successful player to achieve the highest aggregate score in the 'A' division of the London League, year by year. Unfortunately, no place has been found for the shield at the Bishopsgate Institute, but already it had lapsed into disuse, probably in the sixties, because of the botheration caused in having to get it taken down every year to have a new name added. In its stead, a cup Mr S.G. Hill had originally presented for a brilliancy prize was henceforth awarded for the best score in the first team.

There was some cheer in 1920, however, since R.H.V. Scott had won the British Championship. There is a portrait of him in the October issue of the BCM.

This year also gave Metropolitan a new and very distinguished President in Sir George Thomas, the Club having acceded at last to Mr. Rodney's request to be relieved of his Presidency. Harley Rodney (who died in 1930) was born in Wales, his father being a descendant of Admiral Lord Rodney. As well as being very liberal in his support of chess he was also known as a keen spectator at tournaments. He now retired, as was his wish, to Hastings and the Hastings Club.

Many, too many, of the excellent players who helped make the name of the Metropolitan have remained unsung because of a simple lack of data. They had the sort of repute that a graded player well into the 200's might have today, more so perhaps because there were fewer of them. Now

and then, however, a name does leap to the eye for the simple reason that the BCM—for instance—has taken a more than passing interest in its owner. Such a player was B.E. Siegheim, though in his case, the pen picture we have comes from a booklet called *Cable Chess Match Souvenir*, published in 1926.

He was a German national, born in 1895, and had gone to America at an early age, where he had once finished second in the championship of the famous Manhattan Club. Then followed a long stay in South Africa where he held the title of South African champion from 1906 to 1919 with just one year's break in 1911. He had come to Britain to live and joined the Metropolitan Club as so many prominent players had done before him. As a pointer to his strength, he was to win the Club championship in 1921 and finish equal second with Reti, behind Rubinstein, at the Hastings Christmas Congress of 1922. He was also selected to play for the London Chess League in the first Inter City cable match between London and Chicago in November 1926. (Result not known).

Another newcomer, younger and still to make his mark, was L.C.G. Dewing. He won the Club championship in 1935/6 and finished second in 1937/38. By 1930, both he and B.E. Siegheim had become Vice-Presidents, though the latter seems to have left the Club a year later for his name no longer appears in the list of Vice-Presidents after that date.

To end these eventful years of 1919-1920, there was a match arranged between R.H.V. Scott and M. Marchand, (Dutch champion) which finished as a draw. It attracted such attention that the BCM gave 3 of its games (BCM 1920, pages 193 & 194). The Dutch champion had evidently joined Metropolitan for, apart from the above mentioned match, he appears on board 3 for Metropolitan in a London League match v Brixton.

## 1921

If the reader has been doing his sums properly, that is putting two and two together to determine what was going wrong leading up to that crucial year of 1926, he will have concluded as we have that, to begin with, a drastic fall in membership due to the war had led to a financial crisis which was not reflected in the accounts only because of the generosity of the President Mr. H. Rodney who had met the rent. In fact, this fall in membership is highlighted in another way, by what happened at the AGM of October 18, 1919 when the Secretary J.W. Wright had assumed the duties of Treasurer and match captain as well as that of Secretary. Did he do so through lack of interest in the Club affairs, or was it, as seems more likely, that the Club membership no longer warranted a full complement of officers?

But let us press on. If the reader has kept in mind that to soften the blow to the Club of his removal to Hastings, Mr. Rodney had donated £100, with the rent well in mind in that gift, what does he make of the announcement by the Secretary at a committee of January 27, 1921 that Farrow's Bank (by a strange coincidence the grandfather of the Club's present Secretary, Mr. T.F. Deery, lost his own life savings in that bank's failure) where the Club held an amount of £51.1.6. had been suspended? Would it not be safe to assume that this sum was what remained of that £100 and its loss a grievous financial blow that must have had a lasting impact? True, an immediate fund was opened asking for donations from the Club members to raise £50 though the response does not seem to have been an enthusiastic one, for the last reference to this fund was at a committee meeting held on March 23, 1922, when the matter of raising the value of the fund to £25, was left in the Secretary's hands.

Yet, in the midst of its financial troubles, the Club still attracted the highest class of player and its first team gave

every indication of carrying on where it had left off in the season 1914/15—finishing second in the ‘A’ division for the season 1919/20 and first in that of 1920/21. However, we know that these were to be watershed years—the difficulties facing the Club had, as we shall see, begun to affect morale. Competition from other clubs noticeably stiffened and it was to be no less than another 40 years before Metropolitan under the great J.M. Bee, again won the ‘A’ division of the London League. Incidentally, that success in season 1920/21 was the Club’s 13th, not counting one win in its first year of life, in the original Metropolitan Senior Club Competition, later, of course, the London Chess League.

At the AGM of October 18, 1921, Mr. Guest presented the shield given by Mrs. Bowles in memory of her husband, and in a ‘sympathetic speech’ gave some account of Mr. Bowles’ connection with the Club. A pity the minutes do not enlarge on that account. The first names to be inscribed on the shield were those of Messrs. Blake, Siegheim and Hewlett. There is provision for separating co-winners, but evidently this provision was not used, the occasion being regarded, we suppose, as an exceptional one.

There is reason to think that, about this time, Sir George Thomas’ links with Metropolitan were weakening. He had been a member since about 1905, won the Club championship 7 times, but now the calls on his time were beginning to be a factor he, no doubt, could no longer ignore. He was excellent at tennis, played international badminton and finding himself invited to international chess congresses, not only because he had become (with F.D. Yates and W. Winter) one of the strongest English masters of the period, but also because he was an amateur (a not inconsiderable attraction to tournament organisers with tight budgets) and, of course, he remained a member of the City of London Club, dominating its championship till the Second World War. We append the following team list of a match in the ‘A’ division versus Brixton, for it is the last occasion we can find of his playing for Metropolitan.

1. Sir George Thomas 2. B.E. Siegheim 3. J.H. Blake 4. A. Louis 5. L. Savage 6. B. Heastie 7. J.G. Rennie 8. A. Percival. The other 12 boards throw up an abundance of new names with as yet untested loyalty—a factor that could have contributed, the reader might conclude, to the loss of morale that was suddenly to beset the Club.

Incidentally, Sir George Thomas being a gentleman of the old school, would probably have taken his decision to quit irrespective of Metropolitan’s current troubles and for the reasons already given, but those troubles might possibly have hastened that decision.

During the course of the year, there took place one of those jumbo matches the Victorian generation of chess players delighted in, a 400-a-side match between the North and the South of the Thames, in which D. Miller, W.P. MacBean and L.C.G. Dewing turned out for the North and A. Louis and L. Savage for the South.

## 1922-1923

As if holding its breath for the troubled times ahead, 1922 yielded little of interest. The minutes give us the bare

knowledge that F.V. Louis—a brother of A. Louis—was elected a member, that the presidency was still in the hands of Sir George Thomas and that J.W. Wright still retained the offices of Treasurer and match captain, though he had expressed a strong desire to resign as Secretary, a post he had held since 1899, an outstanding period of 23 years! Which brings us back to F.V. Louis. Ten years later when the author of these notes had become a member himself, F.V. had by then been Secretary since the AGM of October 6, 1927.

Searching for some items of news to give bones to this year of 1922, we take these excerpts from the minutes of the London League: London League matches were to be played at the Gambit Chess Rooms with the Hungarian Master Maroczy as adjudicator, though just a year later arrangements for the League to use a room at St. Bride’s Institute were proposed, sharing both accommodation and equipment with the Lud Eagle Club (as it was to do with Metropolitan following the Second World War). A less happy decision, on the face of it, was the one that defeated a proposal to allow promotion and relegation between the ‘A’ and the ‘B’ divisions, when this procedure had not been at all unusual between the ‘A’ and ‘C’ divisions before 1914, witness the ladies team for one!

1923 can be seen as ending the whole era when Presidents owed more to their eminence in life than to their actual services to the Club. At the AGM of October 11, 1923, Mr. Wright reported the resignation of Sir George Thomas as President and his own as Secretary and match captain. Mr. Blake then moved that Mr. Wright be elected President to which the latter stated that he felt considerable hesitation in accepting the office as he did not think he was fitted for it, but he would try it for a year and see how it would work out. This may seem undue modesty in view of his great services to the Metropolitan Club, but one can imagine his feelings, succeeding such august people as Lord Russell of Killowen, Sir Joseph Renal, Sir John Bell, Sir Wyke Baylis and the rest. Mr. Mabbott was then elected to the vacant post of Secretary and the reshuffle produced the following:

President and Treasurer: J.W. Wright  
Vice-Presidents: Sir G.A. Thomas, Mrs. R. Bowles,  
Messrs Blake, Keliher, Rodney, Siegheim and  
Guest.  
Secretary: Mr. Mabbott  
Match Captain: A. Louis  
Tournament Secretary: D. Miller\*

As late as the last AGM before the war i.e. 1939, Sir George Thomas and J.H. Blake were still listed as Vice-Presidents, though they had long since ceased to be active members. Of a couple of surmises, that the distinction of their names looked good on paper or that they remained paid-up members to the end, there is little to choose and come to think of it, does it really matter either way?

Metropolitan finished joint 7th and 8th with Bohemians in the ‘A’ division, indicating how quickly others were catching up. Moreover, an ominous note was struck by the report that Metropolitan had suffered 28 defaults!

\* These last two posts were to be held by A. Louis and D. Miller, respectively, till 1940 when the Club closed its doors for the duration of the war.

# CHAPTER NINE

1924-25

With Metropolitan no longer grabbing the headlines, shall we take a look at what the Club minutes had to say regarding the two years above, coming as they did before that pregnant year of 1926? The writer has spoken of putting two and two together, but it is difficult to appreciate fully, inflation being what it has been in the years since that time, what the bare figure of a deficit of £6.15.1 (the worst for 10 years) for the year 1924 and another for the year 1925, meant in real terms for the Club. In both cases we would today be speaking in terms of hundreds of pounds.

Nor did the announcement at the AGM of October 16, 1924 that 18 games had been lost by default, following the calamitous 28 games already announced the previous season, ring any particular bell other than one of dismay, for the tenor of the meetings in 1924/25, seemed perfectly normal in all other respects. It was that very normality which, at a committee meeting in 1926, gave the simple announcement "Position of Club" such a baffling kind of look. There was a discussion as to whether we should carry on.

Whatever might have been the morale of some of the Club members, others were reported as being involved in outside tournaments as well as Club competitions.

R. Loman plays at an international congress at Scheveningen.

The 'A' tournament at a London chess congress held at St. Bride's is won by L. Savage.

At another congress (began December 24, 1924) J. Birnberg is first and L. Savage fourth.

1925 L.C.G. Dewing is last (losing all his games) at the Hastings Christmas Congress (Section D) won by G. Maroczy with F.D. Yates second.

A. Louis finishes 3rd at a Bromley Chess Tournament won by International Master F. Apschenek with 6 from 7.

At Scarborough 1925, A. Louis turns up again finishing 3rd (tied) behind A.G. Conde and Mr. Romich (later, a member).

He—Max Romich—tied with A. Louis for second and third places in the 1930 Metropolitan championship.

At a committee meeting of September 21, 1925 it was announced that a letter had been sent to Mrs. Savage by Mr. Wright expressing sympathy with her at the loss of her son. Since L. Savage was present at the AGM of October 15, 1925, the writer at first assumed the reference was probably to M. Savage who had won that season's Naumann Cup. However, this same M. Savage was not only elected onto the committee a month later, October 1925, but resigned his membership nearly a year later in September 1926. L. Savage, by the way, was one of the stronger members of the Club in the early years of the twenties. He won the Club championship in the three consecutive seasons, 1922/3-1923/4 and 1924/5 and was a member of the committee during those same years.

Another very strong member was J. Birnberg, recently elected. In the 1924/5 season he finished second to L. Savage with D. Miller, third, and later went on to win the Club championship in the seasons 1927/28 and 1929/30. After the 1939/45 war he was a member of the Athenaeum Club and the present writer played him in a league match in 1955 at the Gambit, of which he has retained the score sheet headed The Gambit, London Premier Chess Rooms and Cafe, Budge Row, EC4. The game seems to have been adjourned at move 38 and is not concluded on that same score sheet, but Birnberg had the preferable position. I had no idea at the time of his connections with Metropolitan or

of his noteworthy reputation and would not have remembered him but for that score sheet.

What must have been particularly sad news for the Club, A.A. Percival was reported to have died suddenly. He was another one of those members who staunchly supported the Club team but of whom we know nothing more. He was not a committee member, nor have we traced his name as attending AGM's, though sometimes the list of those present is supplemented with the words "and others".

1926

So here we are in the year 1926. There took place but two meetings of the Club members, a committee on the 17th September at 32 Cornhill under the chairmanship of J.W. Wright and the Annual General Meeting held on October 4 at the Club premises, 2-3 Furnival Street, Holborn, also with J.W. Wright in the chair.

At the committee meeting, under the heading 'Position of the Club' the following is recorded in the minutes:

"There was a discussion as to whether we should carry on, after which it was proposed by Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr W.S. Bell that we should carry on this season and enter the 'A' division of the London Chess League and that the President and Secretary be requested to sound the officials of some of the other clubs with a view to possible amalgamation."

Enough has been said to make it clear that the financial position of the Club was a bleak one, due without the least doubt to a level of Club membership that had never recovered from the Great War when Mr H. Rodney, the President had footed the rent bill, thus keeping the Club afloat. But what must have been especially discouraging for President, Secretary, Team Captain, Treasurer, and committee members alike was the very low degree of commitment to the Club's London League team. In brief, these were the default tallies given at the respective AGM's of 1923 (23) 1924 (18) and 1926 (13). Additionally, 1927, not to be outdone, produced the record total of no less than 42 defaults, 6 on two separate occasions. Horrendous figures, no matter the circumstances and never approached again in all the ups and downs of the rest of the Club's history.

It so happened that the Council of the London League considered the matter of defaults at a meeting at St Bride's in 1923. It was pointed out that Metropolitan, with 28 defaults, were the worst offenders. Other clubs had between 0 and 20. It was then resolved at that meeting that, in future, one point be deducted for the first 10 defaults and half a point for every 5 defaults thereafter. However, no reference is made to that ruling in the minutes of the AGM of October, 6 1927, announcing (additionally to the fact that there had been 42 defaults) that the Club had finished 8th in the 'A' division, with 7 wins, 4 losses and 1 draw. (D. Miller scoring 10 ½ points and T. Keliher 10 points). It is interesting to note that those 42 defaults should have cost Metropolitan 2½ points and maybe a couple of places in the League table!

It might have been thought, in view of the atmosphere of crisis hanging over the Club, that the mood of the AGM of October 4, 1926, (J.W. Wright in the chair) would have been a sombre one. Not a bit of it, if the minutes of that meeting are to be taken as judge. It was very much business as usual, the current uncertainties not appearing to disturb the tenor of the proceedings. Most of the time was taken up, as usual, by the election of officers, everybody having to be proposed and seconded to his office to unanimous acclaim. All the various reports were presented and approved. Then, at the end of the meeting came the following brief statement

“Position of the Club”. After some discussion the committee were instructed not to proceed with the suggested scheme of amalgamation with another club without first calling a special general meeting.

J.H. Morrison was nominated to represent the Club in the Budget Cup. It seems that it was only in the previous season that Metropolitan had first considered entering someone for this event. It was a knockout competition open to all clubs in the London League, its intent being by each club entering its strongest player, to find at least nominally, the London League individual champion. It was an event respected enough in its day to attract a very strong entry, but was dropped subsequently when it no longer did so.

## 1927

A committee Meeting was held at 32 Cornhill on August 15th, with Mr. Blake in the chair, when the position of the Club was discussed at length. On the question of amalgamation, A. Louis and F. V. Louis opposed the idea with support from Messrs Morrison and Wilcox. Mr. Blake and Mr. Mabbott strongly supported amalgamation, with Mr. Bell on the sideline wishing to carry on for another year. Eventually it was agreed to hold informal discussions with three representatives of the Athenaeum Chess Club with a view to drawing up possible terms of amalgamation, Messrs Blake, A. Louis and Mabbott being the three Metropolitan representatives.

The Club was still hedging its bets for an opinion was expressed that, in spite of the discussion with Athenaeum, “that it was advisable to advertise in one or more of the chess magazines”. It was seeing an advertisement in the BCM, that this writer joined Metropolitan in 1932 and by the next committee which met again at 32 Cornhill on September 14, with Mr. Blake in the Chair, the mood had hardened against amalgamation to the point that the Secretary, reporting on the meeting with Athenaeum, stated “that the informal conversation held at the St Bride Institute ... does not offer any basis of further negotiations with a view to amalgamation of the two Clubs and that the proceedings be reported to the Annual General Meeting.”

It might have been expected that further light would be shed on this pregnant question of amalgamation at this AGM of October 6, 1927, (J.W. Wright, President, being in the chair) if so, such an expectation came to nothing, the minutes disposing of the matter in the following manner:

(a) ‘The correspondence relating to the proposed amalgamation scheme and other matters, was read and passed’ and

(b) ‘Mr. Mabbott reported the discussion which took place between the delegates of the Metropolitan and Athenaeum Clubs’.

We may suppose that no doubt the members attending the meeting were put quite fully in the picture, but there does seem to be, in nearly all these minutes of the early Metropolitan, an almost perverse ignorance or indifference to the possibility that someone someday might wish to glean something from their dry bones!

For instance, we still don’t know exactly why a crisis that had blown up to the point that it threatened the Club’s very identity just blew itself away, as it were, overnight. An onrush of new members? Well, there may be something in that surmise. There was a report the following year that 16 new members had been elected between the above AGM of October 6, 1927, and a date six months later, April 30, 1928, among them, the very strong A. West.

As to the remainder of what we may call the “amalgamation AGM that wasn’t” and apart from the 42 defaults already mentioned—Mr. Wright had wished to

resign as President (after all, he was 79 at the time, quite an age then) but, with “Mr. Blake and all those present objecting”, had reconsidered and was duly re-elected as President. However, resignation was in the air for next Mr E.H. Mabbott had said he was giving up his post as Secretary, (F.V. Louis being elected in his place). Mr. Mabbott (by the way it is seldom we find his name prefixed with initials) declined to accept nomination as a Vice-President. There is a nagging thought, that all this had something to do with the amalgamation issue and the meeting did not press the matter.

## 1928-1929

With a new Secretary, F.V. Louis, in charge, one detects a change not only in the handwriting to be found in the minutes, as one would expect, but also a distinct change in style and content. We have mentioned in regard to Mr. Mabbott that his name was seldom shown complete with initials. In fact, this custom was followed generally by all previous secretaries or whoever’s pen had been at work. These omissions have been rectified in these pages whenever it was thought useful and the initials were known. Mr. F.V. Louis changed all that. Surnames now appeared with their full complement of initials. Additionally, a particular innovation—not followed up, however—in writing up the minutes to this first AGM of October 17, 1928 he appends the agenda then goes on to give a very clear account of the proceedings.

This change for the better was particularly noteworthy in the Report of the committee of October 1929, which dealt with a dispute between two participants in the 1928-29 Championship. It will be recalled how a very similar situation had been handled at a 1915 committee when letters were read from the players in contention—C.E.C. Tattersall and A. Louis—and suggestions made to resolve the problem, without anything emerging in the minutes to throw a light on what the dispute was about or what the contents of the letters might have been.

How different F.V. Louis, who describes thus how that committee of 1929 handled the matter: “This tournament remained unfinished in consequence of an unplayed game between Messrs B. Heastie and S.J. Okker. The circumstances were that the date fixed for this game was the 2nd of March 1929, on which date Mr. Okker arrived early and waited throughout the afternoon. This would have been a Saturday afternoon, but Mr. Heastie did not arrive. Mr. F. V. Louis contended that Mr. Heastie had forfeited his game and that if any indulgence was extended to him in the matter, the onus nevertheless rested upon him to secure a meeting with his adversary; and that consequently, should he fail to do so, the effect of the original default stood and the game must be scored to Mr. Okker. Mr. Birnberg urged that further time might be allowed so that the game might be played. Some discussion followed. It was finally resolved that the players concerned should be allowed until Friday 1st November, 1929 so that the result might be reported to the AGM on Saturday 2nd November: the game if unfinished to be adjudicated, if unplayed to be scored to Mr. Okker, the consequence of the original default in that case determining the issue.”

Quite a mouthful, but at least we do know exactly what the dispute was about and what the committee thought should be done. However, the issue does not seem to have been raised at the AGM of November 2 which Mr. S.J. Okker attended with over 36 others; it was simply reported that Mr. B. Heastie had won the Championship, the assumption being that the game had been played and no more needed to be said on the matter. Mr. Louis’ firmness with Mr. Heastie was probably due to the fact that the latter

had also been involved in an unfinished game (with J.H. Morrison) holding up the previous season's Championship as well.

But to return to the rest of the October 1928 AGM which was apparently held in a far more optimistic mood than for years. It was reported that whereas in 1926-7 there had been 30 meetings of the Club and in 1927-8, 40, for the present 1928-9 season the Clubroom had been booked for 50 fixed dates. Mr. A. Louis reported that no less than 31 members had taken part in the League Matches, there being 4 defaults altogether in the first two matches but no more after that, there being, on the contrary, players to spare for every match.

Mr. E.H. Mabbott, in the course of some interesting reminiscent observations, referred to the long period of years during which Mr J.W. Wright had been associated with the Club in several capacities, the time and energy he had devoted to its affairs during that period and the affectionate esteem in which he was held by members whose connection with the Club was of long standing.

During the course of 1928, Metropolitan beat Birmingham 9-8, with both J.H. Blake and B.E. Siegheim still in the side. On the 31st March, Metropolitan held the last of the season's meetings, with a lightning tournament, Mrs. Rhoda A. Bowles presenting 3 special prizes, the first of which a handsome silver cigarette box, being won by D. Miller. A 'centipede' match was also held, no prize for guessing what on earth this could have been!

J.H. Morrison secured first prize in the Budget Cup for Metropolitan and finished 9th in City of London Championship (won by Sir George Thomas) in 1929.

There was a reversal of fortune in 1929 when Birmingham beat the Metropolitan Club by 11½ to 3½. Among the Metropolitan players were J.H. Blake, A. West, A. Louis, F.V. Louis, L.C.G. Dewing, H. Ford and T. Keliher. Also in 1929, there was a short account of the history of the Club on page 469 of the BCM where it was noted that A. West was Middlesex Champion and that the Secretary would be glad to hear from any players who were members in the nineties. We are coming to this particular aspect, since the Club was approaching its 40th anniversary. It is also appropriate to record the fact that Mr. M. Shanson became a member of the Club in 1929, still with us 61 years on as I write.\*

The AGM of November 2, 1929, apart from its omission of the dispute between Messrs Okker and A. Louis was, like its committee predecessor of October 1929, noteworthy for its generous coverage in the minutes. There were 36 named members present (and some others) including Mrs. Rhoda A. Bowles but sadly lacking E.H. Mabbott who had died during the year, the minutes recording that his name would always be held in honourable remembrance. During the Meeting, the President J.W. Wright resigned the post of Treasurer which he had held for many years, after which Mr. F.V. Louis was elected to the joint offices of Secretary and Treasurer.

It was at this meeting that Mr. Thomas Keliher (who was then 74) recalled the circumstances of the Club's foundation at which he had been present and gave the names of the 22 members present. It occurred to the writer that this ready recall of the names of the 22 members present might suggest the missing minutes still existed then, but Mr. Tony Raven has made the valid point that if this were so, Mr. Keliher wouldn't have gone to the trouble of recording them all over again. More likely, perhaps, that he had kept a personal note

at the time of the inaugural meeting. He also raised the query, whether it would not be possible to mark the fortieth anniversary in some appropriate way as, for example, through the institution of some special prizes. Some discussion followed and various suggestions made but nothing was decided at the time (*or thereafter, Ed.*). It seems unlikely, one might think, that Mr. Keliher made the most of the Club's history to stir the imagination of the meeting; those grandiose smoking concerts, the lavish Annual Dinners, the heroic fights of the fledgeling Club against the famous giants of the day, the City of London and the Ludgate Circus Clubs in particular, the winning of the London League championship almost year after year and what of those illustrious holders of the Club's presidency, Lord Russell of Killowen, Sir Joseph Renals, Sir Wyke Baylis, Sir John Bell, Sir John Thursby, Sir George Thomas?

Of course, to have told all that and more would have needed a special general meeting of its own, whilst the greater part of the membership was, by all reckoning, of fairly recent origin and still at the stage, like the St. George Club of old, when all it wanted to do was play chess! Moreover, let's face it, did it not take another fifty years or so before words and good intentions were translated into some sort of action?

As a matter of interest, the writer has taken a quick glance through the minutes from 1915 to 1930 to get an idea of whose hands were signing those early records.

Heading the list is J.H. Blake, 25 times (1919-1930) then J.W. Wright, 17 times (from 1920 to his death in 1931). H. Rodney 9 times (1915 to 1918) Sir George Thomas twice (in 1921—his, a small modest scribble!) and E.H. Mabbott twice (in 1920). In addition, there were at least five occasions when the minutes were left unsigned!

So, as the travel commercial would say, goodbye to 1929, the Club once more in good shape, with a sizeable increase in numbers, after a stressful decade when nothing went right (well, it did have a team success in 1921) and it almost lost its identity. It is about to enter a new one, this time well known at first hand to the compiler of these early reminiscences who, therefore, thinks it an appropriate moment to shed the third for the first person singular!

However, before we wave that goodbye, just as appropriate is to tell the reader who were the officers in place at the end of that decade to 1929:

President:	J.W. Wright
Vice-Presidents:	Sir George Thomas, Mrs. Rhoda A. Bowles, J.H. Blake, L.C.G. Dewing, B. Heastie, T. Keliher, J.H. Morrison, H. Rodney, J. Sargent, B.E. Siegheim, T. E. Webb, A. West.
Secretary and Treasurer:	F.V. Louis
Match Captain	A. Louis (Assistant, G.A. Wilcox)
Tournament Secretary	D. Miller
Auditor:	A. Thorpe

The Club met on Thursdays (6.30p.m. to 10p.m.) and Saturdays (2p.m. to 6.30p.m.).

\* M. Shanson attended the club centenary dinner in 1990 (reported later) but died shortly afterwards.



## CHAPTER TEN: 1930 to 1940 and the Start of the Second World War

To begin with, I can do no better than explain why my name, like everybody else's for that matter applying for membership in 1932, does not appear anywhere in the minutes, as was the invariable custom at the time. This is particularly relevant for this omission belongs to a curious period of three lost years (no minutes at all being recorded) due to the sudden death of the President J. W. Wright and the long drawn out indisposition of the Secretary and Treasurer F.V. Louis. This left a confused situation which, certainly, no one at the time thought of clarifying for posterity! It is fair to say, however, that the Club officials probably did not see it that way; at least they seemed to have achieved a kind of *modus operandi* that suited the circumstances and worked to their satisfaction. And certainly neither I, nor anyone else of the rest of the membership I dare say, were conscious that things were not quite normal.

So, how did the officials cope in the absence of committee meetings and what do the minutes tell us before they, the minutes, went into purdah? Well, 1929 ended with a committee meeting on November 9, chaired by J.H. Blake, whose sole task was to consider a revision of the tournament rules of the Club. The next committee meeting did not take place till a year later, November 1, 1930, chaired once again by J.H. Blake. Proceedings were said to be largely formal and restricted to consideration of the accounts and reports to be put before the AGM on the following Saturday, November 8, 1930. This AGM was held at 3 Furnival Street, Holborn, with the President J.W. Wright in the chair. J.H. Blake is not listed among those present, but Mrs Rhoda Bowles is and so is F.V. Louis. The proceedings are fairly well detailed in the minutes, following the good example set by F.V. Louis since he had become Secretary. It is recorded that there had been 53 meetings of the Club and that there were 57 members of whom 11 were new names, though a few had been lost. In particular the Club had to lament the death of Mr. Harley Rodney, one time President, whose place "was assured in the memory of all who had known him and who had been one of the most generous supporters of the Metropolitan Chess Club".

The list of Club officers remained the same, F.V. Louis still holding the dual roles of Secretary and Treasurer. The prizes were distributed by Mrs. Bowles, "whose long connection with the Club and active and generous participation in its affairs, have made her vivacious and charming presence familiar to all its members". No further meetings of the committee are recorded before the AGM of 1931 which met with J.W. Wright (President) again in the chair when (and I quote) "the usual reports were read and passed and the officers for the forthcoming period were elected. The proceedings were of a formal character" (end of quote).

The minutes had arrived at the bottom of a page (number 126) with the note 'see further page'. The expectation was, not unreasonably, that page 127 contained a fuller account of that AGM. Not at all. Starting with the quite unexpected news that Mr. J.W. Wright had died came the further startling announcement that all general meetings and committee meetings were omitted throughout the seasons 1932-4, why? Well, I can do no better than give the account of these developments as set out on page 127. (apparently in a different hand).

*Memorandum (page 127, probably written in 1934)*

The Club suffered a heavy loss owing to the death of Mr. J.W. Wright, whose name so often occurs in these pages

over so long a series of years and as holder, at different times of practically every important office connected with the Club, in the latter years of his life as President. He signed the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 8th November 1931. The handwriting is quite firm. This was in the first half of the season 1931-32. Then, in consequence of his long illness and final unexpected death (for, notwithstanding that he was 84 years of age, the strength of his constitution was such that his recovery was confidently looked for) and also in consequence of several other circumstances, the usual committee meetings and Annual General Meetings were omitted throughout the two seasons 1932-33 and 1933-34, though necessary matters were settled by informal discussion.

The Club, in fact, afforded a perfect example of smooth and harmonious co-operation among all its members. There was a slight increase in the membership, there were over fifty meetings in each season, a great number of matches were played (sometimes two in one evening) all the usual tournaments were held and there was a small balance of cash at the end of each season.

The Memorandum went on to summarise the competitions in which the Club had taken part, the "A" and "C" divisions of the London League, the Eastman Cup and the Budget Cup. Finally, the officers of the Club elected at the AGM of November 7, 1931 are given in full, though the list was possibly written in 1934 (see heading). This fact adduced in part because Mr. Wright is referred to as the late Mr. J.W. Wright and in part because the names of several of the Vice-Presidents had been crossed out i.e. J. Sargent, B. Heastie (A small mystery here. He was still a member, since he played in the 1938-39 Championship, so why the erasure?) T. Keliher (by 1934, he was President) and Mrs. Rhoda A. Bowles (her name not only crossed out but someone has additionally written 'since deceased'). We do not know the actual date of her death as no records were kept of the informal meetings that held the Club together. Perhaps too, to be fair to the Club, by the time normal business was restarted at the committee meeting of October 6, 1934, her death and her services to the Club had dimmed somewhat in everyone's memory, especially with the exigencies of having to see to things minus President, Secretary and Treasurer. Nonetheless, it really did the Club little credit to allow a state of affairs when someone of whom it had been said "(her) long connection with the Club and active and generous participation in its affairs, have made her vivacious and charming presence familiar to all" was allowed to fade into obscurity with no more than the cold, bare words 'since deceased' as her epitaph.

I, personally, do not remember her and her name does not appear on a list of the Club members dated 1932-33, which I came across in a cupboard at the St. Bride Institute many years later. The list, for some unknown reason, had actually been framed, hence its survival! The membership numbered 54, though two of that number, Sir George Thomas and J.H. Blake, were certainly taking no further active part in Club affairs. The first team was probably composed as follows (the first 10 of a 20 board side in the 'A' division) 1. D. Miller 2. A. West 3. A. Louis 4. J. M. Bee 5. B. Heastie 6. S. P. Scholtz 7. S. Van Mindeno 8. J. Macalister 9. H. Ford 10. M. Shanson. The Bernfield brothers A.J and A.N were on the list, having joined about the same time as myself. One of the brothers subsequently left the Club, the remaining one (the stronger of the two) being undoubtedly A.J. (see his game v M. Shanson). However, reference to him in later years was usually and simply to A. Bernfield. There were



also three lady members, Miss L. Eveling (later a Vice-President), Miss McCombie and Mrs. Fitzgerald. T. Keliher, J.W. Wright and F.V. Louis were also listed giving rise to the speculation that Mr. Wright did not die till at least 1932. Also listed are myself and Mr H.S. Shelton who was appointed auditor at the October 6, 1934 committee meeting and who signed (no doubt at that meeting) the minutes of the 1931 AGM.

It may be thought of some slight interest that I give my first impressions of the Metropolitan Club since I did keep a diary at the time. I had been playing for a small club in Lewisham called the Lee and St. Marks Chess Club, the twin rumps of a dozen players or so (all that remained of the once famous Lee Chess Club of pre-1914 days) who met in a member's first floor flat on a grace and favour basis. Feeling more ambitious, I might well have joined the Lewisham Club itself (which, of course, played in the London League) but for the fact that I had found work in North London and I came across an advertisement of the Metropolitan in a copy of the BCM which had been lent me by that strong Kent County player J.P. Goodfellow (through a brother of mine who knew him). Thus, I joined Metropolitan rather than Lewisham. Soon after the war, I persuaded Goodfellow to follow suit and he was to become, over many years, one of Club's most respected members both as player and committee member, these services being recognised when he became Vice-President some time before his untimely death (he died of cancer after a prolonged illness).

The building which housed the Food Reform Restaurant at 2-3 Furnival Street, Holborn, home of the Metropolitan Club, has long since been replaced by a modern block of shops and offices. At the time, the restaurant made the corner of Furnival Street and Holborn and Metropolitan had the use of the whole of the first floor, with an entrance up a flight of stairs leading from a door in Furnival Street. The playing room itself was ideal, warm in winter and cool and airy in summer with good sized windows affording excellent light, for, of course, the Club met on Saturday afternoons as well as on a weekday evening. The role of stewards, then, was no sinecure. A method of clamping wooden boards over the small dining tables had been devised to provide surfaces with ample room for boards and elbows and those large wooden boards had to be removed and stowed away again after each session. When the war came and the Club closed its doors at some unspecified date following the non-committal committee meeting of May 25, 1940, the Club property was stored, at times to his great inconvenience, by the then Secretary A.F. Stammwitz at his Middlesex home, so a (typewritten) committee report attached to the minutes of the AGM held after the war, on October 17, 1946, tells us. The wooden boards, however, never surfaced again, which was no great loss as they would not have been needed at St. Bride's.

I arrived at the Club one Saturday afternoon in late August or early September 1932. The room seemed quite busy though there was no match and I was greeted by the great Mr. A. Louis himself. He was a tall man in his early fifties, with a large presence and curious way of walking which I remember describing to myself as rather crab-like! However, he was most pleasant, asked me if I had played much chess and getting the reply that I had been playing in Kentish competitions, found me an opponent who, he warned me, 'would make me give a good account of myself'. I don't recall his name but getting a win in one game and a draw in another, you could say my fortune was made—in a manner of speaking—for the next thing I knew was that I had been picked for the first team and was never to leave it for well over 40 years!

Since I didn't become a committee member till 1936, I wasn't aware of the hiatus in the Club affairs caused by the death of J.W. Wright and the prolonged indispositions of

the Secretary and Treasurer, Mr F.V. Louis. The latter, unlike his brother, was a slight man who never looked well but I recall being quite shocked when the news reached the Club that he was very ill and would never return to the fold. He was given as a Vice-President at the AGM of October 9, 1947 (with his brother A. Louis as President) so he was still alive then. As the minutes show, the Club remained loyal to him and it wasn't till he officially resigned in 1934 that a new Secretary was appointed.

What, it may be asked, was Metropolitan like at the time? Well, the Club had a Lt. Colonel Jackson, D.S.O., MC, Ret., a Captain E.A. Beamish, a couple of white thatches and professional looking people (among whom hid a bailiff) which gave it—the Club—an impressive though more formal ambience than we are used to today. Yet, remembering the Club's palmy days, surely some relic, some collective memory of those days still existed? One has to be careful. A goodly part of the membership was fairly recent. For instance there were 16 new members in the season 1927-28 and an additional 11 in the following season, people who liked the St. George Club of old, who only wished to be left in peace to play their chess and who would hardly have known anything of the past unless they had been present at the AGM of 1929 and listened with intent to Mr. Keliher. But, yes, I dare say there was something about the Club that was different, for a few years later I wrote in my diary "There was a great feeling of tradition which I couldn't define". Today, I believe that this feeling must have been mainly in the workings of the committee, where I certainly noticed it in the way it viewed all changes and proposals coming from outside, with such suspicion and reluctance. The instance that took the cake, I suppose, was an appeal from the Middlesex County Chess Association asking for support to the testimony of W. Borwick who had given long service to Middlesex Chess, which elicited this response from the Metropolitan "Proposed and seconded that no notice be taken by the Metropolitan Club".

After the war, Metropolitan was at one with a proposal from the London League that division "A" teams be cut from 20 to 12 boards, and games played to a finish instead of adjudicated at adjournment as hitherto.

Mr. M. Shanson is, in this centenary year of the Club, the oldest surviving member in terms of membership, having joined in 1929, all of 62 years ago. His chess activities for the Club, unfortunately, were largely confined to a period ending with the fifties, but in those earlier years (the thirties) he was quite one of the Club's strongest players. He notes how he was playing regularly at boards 2 to 5, with an overall score of 15 wins, 18 draws and 11 losses. He took part in the two simultaneous displays given by Reuben Fine and Samuel Reshevsky in the thirties, drawing a tense struggle against Fine and losing against Reshevsky in circumstances which he described as follows:

"I was left as last player. I had, in my opinion, a drawn rook and pawns ending. As I understood it, the player had to be ready with his move as soon as the Master came to his board and in lawyer like fashion treated this quite literally. I was playing lightning chess against a contender for the world championship! Well, that one got away!"

Here is the game versus Fine, the Grandmaster, of course, having White:

**Reuben Fine White M.Shanson Black**  
*Queen's Gambit Declined*

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♙g5 ♘bd7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.e3 ♙e7 7.♙d3 0-0 8.♘ge2 ♖e8 9.♖c2 b6 10.0-0-0 ♙b7 11.♘b1 c5 12.♘g3 c4 13.♙e2 a6 14.♘f5 b5 15.♙f3 b4 16.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 17.♘xd5 ♙xd5 18.♙xd5 ♖ac8 19.♙f3 ♖e6 20.♖he1 b3 21.axb3 cxb3 22.♖d3 ♘d5 23.♖c1 ♘b4 24.d5 ♖e5 25.♖xb3 a5 26.♙h4 ♘c5 27.♖c3 ♘bd3

28. ♖xe5 ♗xe5 29. ♕g3 ♗ee8 30. ♕g4 ♗a8 31. ♗c3 ♜xe1  
32. ♗xc5 ♜d3 33. ♗c3 ♜e5 34. ♕e2 f6 35. f4 ♜f7 agreed  
drawn.

This other game which shows the same sort of incisive style is versus A.J. Bernfield, an extremely fine player himself, played in the 1939 Metropolitan championship.

**M. Shanson White A.J. Bernfield Black**  
*Caro-Kann Defence*

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 ♕f5 4. ♕d3 ♗xd3 5. ♗xd3 e6 6. f4  
c5 7. ♜f3 ♗b6 8. 0-0 ♜c6 9. c3 ♗c8 10. f5 cxd4 11. fxe6  
dxc3+ 12. ♕e3 ♕c5 13. exf7+ ♗e7 14. fxg8 ♜+ ♗hxg8  
15. ♜xc3 ♕xe3+ 16. ♜h1 ♜b4 17. ♜xd5+ ♜xd5 18. ♗xd5  
♗gd8 19. ♗c4 ♕h6 20. ♜h4 g6 21. ♗f6 ♗xb2 22. ♗afl ♗f8  
23. ♗d5 ♗c6 24. ♗f7+ Black resigns.

During the decade which led to the Second World War, the Metropolitan Club always maintained a strong competitive presence in the London League, but the opposition overall was strengthening all the time due, no doubt, to the movement of population to the outskirts of London, to the benefit of local clubs such as Hampstead, Streatham, Richmond, Ilford and so on, at the expense of the more central clubs. It was no accident that the great City Clubs of Lud Eagle and the City of London Club itself did not survive the war and that Metropolitan only made it through the notable efforts of that great figure of Metropolitan Chess, Mr. John Matthias Bee, M.A. (Cantab).

These efforts—and his work as match captain, culminating in that famous double win of the ‘A’ division of the London League in the early sixties—were unfortunately forgotten when things went awry through clashes of personality involving him (as we shall see in the second part of this book). It is only too true that those in life who should have earned our deepest respect sometimes lose out through a single twist in character. Such a twist did, unfortunately, lurk in Mr. Bee’s make up, in so far as he could be unpleasantly brusque when things or people didn’t accommodate him. You could say, in fact, that my first meeting with him over the board, didn’t accommodate him at all!

The occasion was the 1937 Metropolitan Championship and my only real justification for sitting opposite the great man—and I’d lost my first 3 games to prove it—was that I’d won the Naumann Cup the previous year. Without condescending me a word of greeting, he put his pipe and tobacco pouch by his elbow and then made—he being White—an immediate e2 to e4. He was a quick, decisive player; I inclined to be slow and careful, a source of further irritation to him, from his darting looks at me over his half moon glasses and the way he would pick up his pipe and put it down again (which I think I correctly interpreted!) Anyway, the game was adjourned in an even position and, when resumed, the second session saw no deterioration in my position till the 58th move, when I blundered and resigned soon after. He picked up his belongings and stalked out without a word, leaving me doubly deflated—not only had I lost a drawn game but he’d given me the feeling that all I’d done was waste his time! Incidentally, the very next year, I took him to a 108 move draw. I cannot, this time, remember his reaction, if any!

I do think, however, that these two games (and a draw I had with him in 1946 in a ‘training’ encounter in front of the London League season) gained me some favour in his eyes, for the whole of our future relations were on a level of some moderate cordiality which I chose (subconsciously) should not be affected by his mannerisms. Others, however, were not to be so patiently inclined.

He never forgot his Cambridge roots. Apart from the many games he arranged in pre-war years between Metropolitan and the combined Oxford and Cambridge sides, he was largely instrumental in the fifties in ensuring that Metropolitan was one of the strong League sides chosen to play the traditional practice matches versus the Combined Universities in the week prior to the Annual Oxford and Cambridge match.

Even on his eventual retirement to a Home outside Croydon, having no family and now blind, and in conversation with chess friends who occasionally visited him (pre-eminent among those being J.A. Moore, no relation to myself) he invariably veered to his old Cambridge chess days of which he had many pithy stories. Arguably, in my mind, he had in his many roles within the Club as positive an influence on Metropolitan affairs as anyone since the First World War. In the second part will be found the story of the sad climax which his difficulties with some members made almost inevitable.

### 1933

With no Club minutes and little enough in the BCM to fill the gap, this year of 1933 would be a non-event save for the obituary of A.J. Maas, that great player of Metropolitan’s halcyon days and its first champion in 1896 (Apparently it was he who first suggested ‘tinning’ milk) and various mentions of J.M. Bee, L.C.G. Dewing, S.Van Mindeno and—in particular—A J. Duke, who may be remembered by members with memories stretching back to the St. Bride’s days. He was an avid participant at congresses in the thirties, with no little success. I am one of those who still recall him, playing for the Club in the fifties.

### 1934

This year was noteworthy for the election of Thomas Keliher as President of the Club. He had been a member for 44 years and as the only surviving member of that band of hopefuls in 1890, the honour could be said to have been somewhat overdue—since he was 78!

With a gap of almost 3 years, Mr. G.A. Wilcox was elected to fill the vacancies of Secretary and Treasurer that had occurred through the retirement of F.V. Louis.

At the AGM of 1934, there was some question of replacing the older chess clocks, but since there was only an effective membership of 33, a rather surprising—and unexplained—drop from the number in 1932-33 of 54, the cost could not be supported. Thereupon, H. Ford offered to present the Club with a new clock, this example being followed by immediate promises from 8 other members!

A.S. Shelton, the auditor, at the same meeting, told the members that he had not received the accounts, so there was no balance sheet to present or report to make (of course, this was hardly surprising in view of F.V. Louis’ long illness). Mr. Wilcox then added that he had received a provisional account showing a balance in hand of £5. Such a balance, in his opinion, only existed through the generosity of Mr Louis (Presumably A. Louis, who had been acting in an unofficial capacity as Secretary and Treasurer, filling in for his brother F.V.).

### 1935

It is rather unexpected to find, especially after the aborted discussions with the Athenaeum Club in 1926-27 with a view to amalgamation, that another discussion on the same lines took place at a committee meeting of September 19, 1935 this time with regard to the Empire Social Chess Club. This Club had seen the light of day in October 1930 and was an avowed attempt to offer the ‘hundred thousand chess

players in England a central meeting place'. The headquarters were at Whiteley's Stores in Bayswater and their support had made a nominal subscription possible. However, it would seem that the suggested amalgamation with Metropolitan showed that the particular idea of a central meeting place, be it at a nominal fee, had not taken root. In fact, this idea was flying in the face of what was actually taking place, a movement of players to the suburban clubs, as we have already noted, and Metropolitan for its part and despite financial difficulties of its own, saw no virtue in such a marriage of convenience.

This year saw a rather formidable (I can't think of a better description!) new recruit in Mrs A.M. Shannon of 92 Rivermead Court, SW6, the widow, we soon learned, of a wealthy shipowner. She made an immediate impact by offering to provide a display by Sir George Thomas as her 'Club-warming' Party. We shall return to her.

At the AGM of October 12, 1935 with T. Keliher, in the chair, the weak financial position of the Club was stressed by the auditor, seeing income from subscriptions was only just over £30 whilst rent alone was £34. Donations, besides the special ones made for the clocks, had amounted to £25. The Secretary G. Wilcox, then went on to emphasise that reliance could not be placed on the generosity of a 'few kind friends' and he appealed to members to introduce newcomers to the Club. He had himself brought in three new members. Within another two years, the minutes spoke of 'a number of his friends' which tribute, unfortunately, merely softened the disclosure of a major inconvenience as will be seen later in these pages, upon his death.

### 1936

I remember the year 1936 with some pleasure, for not only did I finish first in the Naumann Cup but I found myself elected on to the committee. Not that my contributions to that body amounted to much at the time: it was still an age when discussions were bound by strict formalities which you had to learn as you went along. The one occasion I questioned authority I came badly unstuck. There were three of us, A. Bernfield, G. Vidler and myself occupying adjoining boards at League matches, doing consistently well but remaining stuck where we were. So, after some mutterings among ourselves, I said I'd have a word with Mr. Louis, the match captain. He loomed over me in silence till I'd finished, then replied: "Mr. Moore, if you are doing well at those boards (meaning the 3 of us) it shows that is where you are best suited" or words to that effect. As if to stress the point, he chose the occasion of that same AGM of October 17, 1936 when I was voted on to the Committee, to add in the words of the minutes:

"It was the duty of the match captain to arrange winning teams and certainly his last effort has been very successful (Metropolitan finished 3rd in the "A" Division). Mr. Louis said that while he remained match captain, he would arrange the teams in accordance with his considered judgement. He would, however, always be willing to discuss his reasons with any member who thought himself unfairly treated".

Of course, there was no question that I was going to pursue the matter further or else I might have reasonably replied that that was what I'd tried to do and got short shrift for my pains.

It was at this same meeting that the auditor reported that for the first time he had a book in which the accounts could be entered permanently and carried on from year to year. The Club was still dependent on donations and a considerable increase in membership was needed. For the first time, too, the Club's property had been valued for insurance and, as a matter of record, the valuation of the trophies was as follows:

Championship Cup £30, Naumann Cup £30, Silver King £10, Silver Queen £2, Bowles Shield £15.

The meeting also acknowledged by a hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Shannon the very enjoyable entertainment afforded by Sir George Thomas' display, the generous hospitality to all on that occasion and the equally generous prizes being given; all provided at her own expense and her own initiative. I recall her as a tall, rather ungainly woman, somewhere in her forties and always seen wearing a 'trilby' type hat pulled well down over her head. At the time of writing, it is not possible to say whether a photograph of another display, the one given by Reuben Fine at the Club, will be included in this book, the interest being that not only do we have an excellent picture of the American grandmaster, but also of Mrs. Shannon's hat (no levity intended—that is all we can see of her), of M. Shanson, H. Ford, A.J. Duke and myself among many others taking part. The club President, Mr. Thomas Keliher is there as well, watching the proceedings.

This outstanding event, also financed by Mrs. Shannon, was a real triumph for Reuben Fine for taking on 35 opponents, the very strength of the Club. He won no less than 31 games and drew only 4, these draws being against D. Miller, M. Shanson, A. E. Beamish and N. M. Harden. Among the losers, were J.J. Moore, J. Gilchrist, L.C.G. Dewing, A.J. Duke and perhaps I should particularly mention Colonel Jackson for he was as already pointed out, the distinguished holder of the Military Cross and the DSO, as well as being a first class chess player.

### 1937

The BCM of this year (page 205) reported the death of F.W. Lord. From 1875 to 1900 he was one of London's leading lights as player, organiser and problemist. He worked hard for the success of the Metropolitan Club in its young days. The Club minutes report as well the death of another of its members, A. West, remembered as Middlesex Champion and beating F.D. Yates in the British Championship of 1911.

This year, too, Metropolitan reached the final of the Eastman Cup, losing narrowly to Lud Eagle by 5 ½-6 ½.

Metropolitan		Lud Eagle	
1 L.C.G Dewing	0	Rupert Cross	1
2 D.Miller	0	T.A.Tylor	1
3 A.Louis	½	L.Alexander	½
4 J.M.Bee	0	H.H.Cole	1
5 A.Bernfield	½	E.Shaw	½
6 H.Storr Best	1	A.Fletcher	0
7 E.A.Beamish	0.	M.Sutherland	1
8 M.Shanson	½	F.R.Leicester	½
9 A.J.Duke	½	H.J.Snowden	½
10 C.R.Reid	1	G.Whitbread	0
11 H.Ford	½	M.Cohen	½
12. J.J.Moore	1	T.Whitthurst	0

The Lud Eagle Club was an extremely strong one which made its demise, as a result of the war, all the sadder. The appearance of H. Storr-Best at board 6, which seemed at first sight an inexactitude for R.H.Storr-Best, gives us a ready excuse to write about the Storr-Best family which took such an influential part in Metropolitan Club affairs towards the Second World War.

For instance, let us look at this same year of 1937. R.H. Storr-Best played in the Naumann Cup (third prize, winner the following season), Mrs Storr-Best in the Silver King (second prize), Miss Storr-Best in the Silver Knight (share second prize) and Mrs. Storr-Best (again) in the Silver Queen (first prize) and additionally, the head of the family, Dr. Lloyd Storr-Best, became the club President, in succession to Thomas Keliher in 1938.

The minutes tell us that R.H. was a junior member (oh, by the way it turns out that he preferred to be known as Hugh, hence the H, in the Lud Eagle match). Not so, thinks Hugh S.B. himself, his strength not warranting such a high board, adding that more likely, the misprint was for Uncle Lloyd. "You pays your money ..." and accepting to myself that the prefix Miss indicated equally a junior member, though of the opposite sex, it was easy thus to fall into the error of identifying Dr. Lloyd and Mrs Storr-Best as parents to the other two. This error might well have gone undetected but for the Club's Centenary Tournament of those 50-odd years later. Among the many entries was one with a most intriguing flavour, coming as it did from a Mr R.H.Storr-Best. Was this just a coincidence or could this really be the same R.H.Storr-Best of those years so long ago?

Well, the 18 year old—as he was in 1937—dispelled all doubts when, travelling from Petersfield in Hampshire to take part in the tournament, he introduced himself as the very same R.H.Storr-Best, though grown somewhat older like the rest of us who still retain some memory of those long gone Metropolitan times.

He has kindly provided for this booklet some interesting recollections of J.M. Bee and A. Louis and this brief outline of what was, after all, a unique family in the Club's history.

Lloyd (Dr S-B) 1863-1956! retired from Sheffield to Central London.

Lucy (Mrs S-B) 1874-1949: Lloyd's wife.

Mary (Miss S-B) 1868-1969! Lloyd's sister.

Harold (Mr H. S-B) 1870-1938: Lloyd's brother, came from the north to live in Beckenham in 1892. Undoubtedly, the H.Storr-Best, mentioned in the those pages as playing for Metropolitan versus the City of London in 1904!

John (S-B) 1877-1945: Lloyd's other brother. Several times champion of Brighton. Most unlikely to have any connection with Metropolitan.

Robert Hugh (R.H.S-B) 1918—John's son and nephew of the others. Member of the Club from 1936-39 and from 1946-48. Then gave up chess till joining the Insurance Club in 1957.

Hugh (since that is how he likes to be known) played in both the Fine and Reshevsky displays. He sent me the scores of two games we played in the Club's championship (1939 and 1947) which was generous of him, since he lost both games, though one was particularly double-edged.

What he has to say of Messrs Louis and J.M. Bee mirrors remarkably my own recollections: "A. Louis was match captain when I joined the Club at 18 and he gave me an early lesson in how to behave. At the end of a club match my game was unfinished and the captains came round. Games were not played to a finish at the time but sent for adjudication where the match captains could not agree a result.

"Now, Storr-Best, let's have a look at the position"—"It's all right, Mr. Louis, my opponent and I agreed a draw". At which Mr. Louis got very angry and told me, once time had been called, I had no right to agree anything, it was entirely in the hands of the match captains and was not my business at all!"

His recall of Mr. Bee is just as clear cut: "By good luck (it must have been, as he was obviously a much stronger player than I), I managed to win a game against him. At the end, by way of conversation, I said 'A very interesting game, wasn't it Mr.Bee?'—or something like that—to which he replied that it wasn't at all interesting and stormed out of the room. In fairness, the next time I met Mr.Bee, he was quite friendly saying something on the lines of 'Don't take any notice of me, I always get cross when I lose a game'. This was a side of him which, unfortunately, seldom got across. It was possible—who knows—that he could unbend with

younger members where he found it impossible with people nearer his own generation". Certainly, 15 years younger—I got on moderately well with him, though I have ascribed this factor to some other reason in these pages.

## CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS 1937-1938

The Club champions ranging from 1896 to 1990 are tabulated elsewhere in this book. They also appear, of course, on the base of the Championship Cup as well as in the minutes, but we know little of the cut and thrust of the competition, apart from the odd dispute which the available minutes have felt obliged to enlarge upon. If I go one better it is due more to the simple fact that early enthusiasm saw to it that I kept a record of sorts than to a ready memory of the times.

1937 was J.M. Bee's championship year. His record, for a man of his ability, was a patchy one. He had a very quick sight of the board, but one had only to notice how little time he consumed on his clock as compared to most of his opponents, to judge he didn't analyse even difficult positions too deeply. To him, the 'feel' of a position was sufficient. In 1937, this proved to be so in a most emphatic manner. In speaking of my first encounter with him over the board, I said my start was a dismal one. However, I was able to make up some leeway afterwards.

- |                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. J.M.Bee 9 ½     | 7. M.Shannon 4 ½            |
| 2. D.Miller 8 ½    | 8. J.S.Hodgson 4 ½          |
| 3. E.A.Beamish 8   | 9. A.Louis 4 ½              |
| 4. L.C.G Dewing 6  | 10. J.J.Moore 4 ½           |
| 5. A.Bernfield 5 ½ | 11. H.Ford 3                |
| 6. A.J.Duke 5 ½    | 12. Mrs.Shannon 1 (2 draws) |

Mrs. Shannon, a very moderate player, was in the championship, of course, because of her generous support of Club activities, especially her financing of those simultaneous displays. In similar circumstances, today, I doubt whether there would be any quibbles either. But that wasn't my state of mind when ruefully contemplating the score board after my bad start, she happened to be there and patting me on the head—so to speak—said something like this "Don't be discouraged Mr. Moore, I'm sure you'll do better in time". Well meant, no doubt, but guess whose scalp I made quite sure I secured!

There was another small item of interest to do with that championship. In 1924, the famous grandmaster Akiba Rubinstein described the King's Fianchetto defence to 1.d4, as not being logically or scientifically grounded and its days to be already numbered. When Mr. Louis saw that I was playing the English with my king's bishop fianchettoed, he quoted Rubinstein's words to me, adding that I was handicapping myself with the holes at f3 and h3 in my position. When I came to play him, I was sufficiently impressed to vary with 1.e4 as White and eventually won, when who knows what would have happened if I'd stuck to 1.c4 (and my fianchettoed bishop), asking to be shown what Rubinstein meant!

By the way, the Annual Report for 1936-7 was by far the most comprehensive any Secretary of the Club had ever produced, being typewritten on separate A4 size paper and stuck over two facing pages of the minutes book. It is almost as if someone has had an inkling, at last, that there was an obligation to posterity to give a fuller, therefore truer, picture of the Club and its activities. But for this change of policy, we might not have known that Mrs. Shannon had gifted a silver knight as trophy for the "second half season competition, presumably to enable newcomers late in the season to have something to play for, a silver bowl as a perpetual trophy and a set of chess to the member making the best second team score. Also, that the second team

played in the North London League. This last item sent me chasing back in the minutes for an explanation, for I remembered the second team playing in the 'C' division of the London League. In fact, a change had only been decided the previous season, the London League having made an alteration to its rules, whereby a second team player disqualified himself by playing 5 times for the first team. Since the first team comprised 20 boards, it was felt that the membership was not large enough, under those conditions, to keep the second team in the 'C' division. Incidentally, the second team finished first in the North London League.

Another interesting fact emerged from this Annual Report: the Club's old St. George sets had been presented to certain schools in Middlesex and Surrey.

Financially, expenses had been covered, but the Club was not yet independent of patronage.

### 1938

The worst of news this year, the Food Reform Restaurant was up for sale with vacant possession and Metropolitan left to find new headquarters with some urgency. The committee, charged with the task, came up with a new venue with commendable speed and as one who had known meeting places in a church crypt and someone's back room with my two previous clubs, the sound of Keen's Restaurant in Portugal Street was a most reassuring one, especially as I hadn't been able to attend the AGM of October 1, 1938, which was held there.

This reassurance, as we shall see, was to be short-lived. Somewhat unexpectedly, it was announced at the same AGM that Thomas Keliher, Esq., was resigning as President giving as his reason that he could no longer give the time necessary to such a position. The choice of Dr. Lloyd Storr-Best must have appeared a surprising one for he had only been a member just 4 years, but if length of service to the Club was not to be the criterion, than the head of this very pleasant and active family within the Club was no doubt a careful and reasoned choice by those whose opinions counted most.

Following on her sponsorship of the Reuben Fine display, Mrs. Shannon secured the services of Samuel Reshevsky, who gave a simultaneous exhibiton over 36 boards, Mrs.S providing, as before, the prizes to those who scored wins and the entertainment of all the competitors. Metropolitan fared only marginally better than against Fine: D. Miller and L.C.G.Dewing securing wins and A.E.Beamish the one draw, the remaining 33 games being lost, including mine.

The championship, which had 12 entries, resulted in a win for D. Miller with L.C.G. Dewing in second place, B.Heastie in third and M.Shanson in fourth and myself about seventh. Unfortunately, the full table which I once had has been lost, though I know some of my losses were close run affairs.

Though the first team did no better than 5th place in the London League, the second team won the North London League for the second year running. The membership had shown a healthy increase and now stood at 53, which total, together with the extra accommodation available at Keen's Restaurant made it possible to run a 'C' team. Although when I joined Metropolitan in 1932, the Club used to meet on Saturdays during the Summer, as well as an evening during the week, the tight financial situation had not allowed the Saturday opening for some time. However, with better days in terms of membership, the Club had decided to remain open on Thursday evenings during the Summer, instead of closing down as was usual, from sometime in April or May to September. However, the support for this experiment had been disappointing through lack of a suitable competition. Traditionally, all the Club competitions were held from the Autumn to the Spring,

instead of exclusively during Spring and Summer as is done today, with the exception of the Winter Tournament. Glancing through the tournament entries for this season, in addition to Mrs.Storr-Best and R.H.Storr-Best, I was intrigued to find a Mlle Amez-Droz, a F.Jacquier and a I.E. Clairembourg. I would like to say that any of these names struck a chord but, sadly, none did.

The following match which Metropolitan won against University of London by 7½ to 4½ was given unusual coverage by the BCM of that year.

Metropolitan		London University	
1. J.M.Bee	1	B.Fairhurst	0
2. D.Miller	½	L.W.Massey	½
3. A.Louis	1	M.Livingstein	0
4. M.Shanson	1	H.R.Claff	0
5. E.A.Beamish	1	G.H.Govas	0
6 J.J.Moore	1	I.Tessell	0
7 H.Griffith	½	P.G.Gray	½
8. T.E.Regan	0	R A.Guest	1
9. Mrs.A.Shannon	0	S.Atkins	1
10 A.F.Stammwitz	1	A.Denham	0
11 R.H.Storr-Best	1	R.Anher	0
12 C.R.Phillips	½	H.Fitz	½
7½		4½	

In 1939, A.F.Stammwitz was elected Secretary and Treasurer.

My one experience of a chess congress was the one organised by the BCF at Brighton in the lovely Summer of 1938. The venue was the Pavilion whose opulent ambience and very thick carpets I remember to this day! I played in a first class tournament, tying for second place with 6 points, the winner scoring 7 points. Unfortunately, I left a rook *en prise* after leading in the first week. This reminds me of a different kind of excuse attributed to Tartakower who said that he had never won a game against a fit opponent!

But to return to the matter of Keen's Restaurant. In seeking a new venue, the committee faced two difficulties—the urgency of a notice to quit and the constraint posed by high rentals for suitable premises.

That Keen's Restaurant in Portugal Street, Kingsway solved these difficulties at a fairly early stage of the committee's search, must have seemed providential indeed, the minutes observing that in some respects this should prove a decided improvement. "Much more room is available. Separate rooms will be provided for 'silence' and 'analysis'. Fifty boards could be played without overcrowding." What the minutes did not enlarge on, however, was that the accommodation was in a large cellar beneath the restaurant and—here was the rub—the sanitation turned out to be not only totally inadequate—two W.C's—but the ventilation, such as it was, depended to a large extent on open doors (as I remember it all).

Criticism was not long in<sup>6</sup>forthcoming. The Annual Report for 1938-39 admitted that "in view of the criticism received from inside and outside the Club, the committee felt that no effort should be spared in an effort to obtain more suitable premises." Unfortunately, only two alternatives which were at all suitable were found and as both of these entailed extra expenditure in the case of rent, it was felt impossible to accept either of them.

Of the members, Capt. E.A.Beamish seemed to have been the most vocal. At a committee meeting of the time, he emphasised most emphatically (as the minutes put it) "that he had no intention of playing in matches in what was little better than a cellar, after the current season. It was badly ventilated and the sanitary arrangements also bad. At matches it was unbearably overcrowded". When the near

impossibility was pointed out of obtaining more suitable premises, Mr.C.G.Phillip asked what was the objection to going to the New Chess Centre (see a later reference to this Centre). After some discussion, the feeling of the meeting was that such a move would risk the Club ceasing to have a separate identity. This fear was almost a prophetic one, since the advent of the war led to the closure of the Club a year or so later, with what could have been no idea as to its future circumstances.

The last formal meeting of the committee in 1938 was held at Portugal Street on October 15, 1938—a Saturday—when it was reported that the Secretary Mr. G. Wilcox had explained that his health had given way and he was forbidden to do any physical work. I quote the end of this passage as it is a rather curious one: “This came hard on Mr. Louis and the Secretary pressed for volunteers to help on Tuesdays (presumably to act as stewards). He was instructed to write to the London League and ask for assistance from there”. I was at this meeting but I don’t suppose I realised for one moment the import of this suggestion. It may be that the minutes had drifted back into a certain lack of clarity, but *ask* the London League for help in one of its member’s difficulties? One can imagine the answer without trouble if for no better reason than that body would scarcely wish to set such a precedent. Another thing: Metropolitan’s prideful attitude, at times, to others over the years, should have made the Club chary, to say the least, of seeking assistance for such an unconvincing cause. Whether the London League ever sent a reply is not recorded.

#### 1939-1940

The year opened on a sad note as it was revealed that the late Secretary, Mr G.A. Wilcox had died. Tributes were paid to him at the committee meeting of March 18, 1939, for his unstinting work and his generous donations over a long period of years. It has been mentioned in these pages that upon his death arose a major inconvenience; perhaps a more precise word would have been one in the plural, for there were two such problems, one regarding the friends he so admirably enrolled as Club members and the other arising from the fact that the Club funds were not held in a bank (since the crash of Farrows Bank in 1921) but by the Treasurer himself.

These friends of Mr. Wilcox, as the minutes make clear, never made use of the Club but had been enrolled as subscribing members simply to boost the Club funds. On his death, it was soon apparent that Metropolitan was going to lose their financial support; the minutes adding somewhat dispiritedly “... and secondly we shall have to expect competition hitherto inexperienced by the opening of the National Chess Centre in Cavendish Square and whilst we hope that our members will support this new effort to popularise chess in London, we trust that they will continue their membership of the Metropolitan and play in our matches and tournaments, although I have already received several resignations which are attributable to this cause?”

On the matter of the Club funds, Mr. A.F.Stammwitz who had taken over as auditor, said he had found Mr. Wilcox’s books correct in every respect and also that the person in charge of Mr. Wilcox’s affairs had co-operated fully in obtaining for the Club a full settlement of £23.1.6. He recommended most strongly, however, that the Club’s funds be deposited in a Post Office Savings Account and this was agreed (Later in the year Barclays Bank were to be the chosen vehicle for the Club’s funds). The meeting went on to elect Mr. A.F. Stammwitz as Secretary and Treasurer. That same meeting, incidentally, saw the election of that influential figure of post war Metropolitan, Mr S.G.Hill, as a member.

Throughout this year of 1939, the stringency of the Club’s financial position was stressed again and again—indeed,

since the First World War, this had been a recurring theme of the Club Treasurers, deploring as they did the necessity for donations though recognising them as absolutely vital. And, of course, there had arisen the threat posed by the new National Chess Centre. Not that this idea was anything new in the way of centralised chess activity. There had long been the City of London Club itself from whose bowels of exclusivity had sprung the fledgeling Metropolitan, and in more recent times, the Empire Chess Club at Whiteley’s Stores in Bayswater and, through the efforts of its proprietor, Mr. Spedan Lewis, the availability of the Lewis Stores in Oxford Street, in particular for county matches. Sadly, the Lewis Stores were razed to the ground during the Blitz.

A largely unpublished effort was that of a number of strong London League players to form a group of their own, using a room at the St. Bride’s Institute. The name it chose, a rather fancy one I know, I don’t even remember however, although I was amongst the players who joined. You could say that my membership was a sign that the idea hadn’t really caught on; even at the time I could have named many other players who might have had a better claim than I! One afternoon, the famous English grandmaster, C.H.O’D Alexander poked his head round the club-room door, evidently on a mission to assess the overall strength of the gathering. We never saw him again. Anyway, if the new Club had ever thought itself as a serious competitor to the exclusivity of the City of London, it could not have chosen a worse moment. With the City of London, it vanished in the mist of time on the arrival of the Second World War, a fate that almost befell Metropolitan itself.

In the ‘A’ division of the League, Metropolitan had finished in third spot, behind Battersea and Hampstead. The second team won the championship of the North London League for the third year running, with a record to date of Played 21, Won 18, Drawn 2 and Lost 1! Because of the extra facilities at Portugal Street, a third team had been entered in the ‘C’ division of the London League, despite previous reservations on account of the eligibility rule. However, as feared, this rule which prevented the Club playing any of the thirty strongest players in this 3rd team, led to a large number of games being lost by default.

The championship of the Club (for 1938-9) had been won for the second year running by D.Miller. This was his eighth success and beat the previous record held jointly by himself and Sir George Thomas. He had scored his first success in the Season 1912-13, seven years before Sir George won the trophy for the last time. The entry, which totalled 18, was a record for the Club.

D. Miller’s feat is worth more than a passing mention since both the minutes (in an expansive frame of mind) and myself kept a record of the event. Quite fortunate it was for me, therefore, that not only did I accomplish, relatively speaking, my best championship performance to date, but turning out for the first team 15 times (out of 16) during the season, winning 7, drawing 7 and losing 1, found myself in third spot for a place on the Bowles Shield.

Owing to the size of the entry, the Championship was divided in two sections of nine players.

Section ‘A’		Section ‘B’	
1. A.Louis	)	1. E.C.Hughes	6½ pts.
2. J.J.Moore	)5 pts	2. D.Miller	6 pts.
3. M.Shanson	)	3. L.C.G.Dewing	5½ pts.
4. E.A.Beamish	)	<i>and 6 others.</i>	
5. B.Heatie	)4 pts		
6. M.Phillips	)		
7. J.H.Parr	3½ pts.		
8. Mrs. A.Shannon	3 pts.		
9. J.S.Hodgson	2½ pts.		



The final play off being between the first 3 in each section. The result, a clear win for D. Miller with L.C.G. Dewing in second and myself, alas, trailing in last place. Some of D.Miller's games were published in the BCM over the years, mostly of his few losses which must have been most galling for him. It was thought that on his death his son sent a package of his chess papers, including some games, to the Club, but if this was so, nothing unfortunately has come to hand. After he left Metropolitan in the late fifties because, so it was rumoured, he objected to being demoted from the top boards, he joined Hampstead where he played for many years for their second team, generally on board one. With failing powers it was nothing if not human that he should seek his chess elsewhere than at the old Club where he had been for so long its leading player. Incidentally, in appearance, he was very much like the description of Mr.Morton Smith to be found earlier on in this book.

The Club championship for 1939-40 is surrounded by a degree of uncertainty since the Club minutes tell us no more than the closing date was October 21 (committee, August 31, 1939) that there were 14 entries and prizes of 1st £4.10.0, 2nd £3.0.0., 3rd £2.0.0., 4th £1.0.0. (committee Feb 3, 1940) and that there were changes in the allocation of prizes (May 25, 1940, the final meeting in front of the Summer recess, which of course, turned out to be for the duration). We have Mr. R.H. Storr-Best's recollection to thank, for the further information that he played J.J.Moore, A.F.Stammwitz, J.M.Bee and D.Miller by the end of 1939 and no games afterwards. I have only one game score of the event, one against R.Spitz (and who was R. Spitz?) In spite of the October 21 dateline, when he joined the Club in February 1940, he was admitted to the championship and in fact went on to finish co-winner with D. Miller. The plinth of the championship cup is our sole source of information regarding that outcome.

The logical conclusion of all this, is that after the end of December, the competition was in some disarray (nothing unusual in this some might say, and anyway there was a war on) and that it was by no means concluded by the committee meeting of May 25, 1940. What probably happened is that D.Miller (who was Tournament Secretary) and A.F.Stammwitz got together at some later date and with D.Miller and R. Spitz, in undisputed lead, decided those two players should share the Championship.

This sad lapse of the minutes over the war-time championship was not the only one at the time, it is depressing to say. The London League had ceased activities on the advent of the war as it had done in the First World War. Instead a short *ad hoc* tournament had been arranged between seven of the 'A' division clubs, these being Battersea, Bohemians, Finchley, Hampstead, Leyton, Metropolitan and West London. The BCM for 1940 mentioned the event and in fact followed its progress to the decisive climax, Metropolitan v Hampstead, those old rivals from way back. Yet this 'Clock Tournament', obviously so named from the special clock (This clock was distinguished by a small silver plaque on its top, inscribed 'Clock Tournament, 1940'—the matches took place at the Woolpack, Moorgate) gifted by the London League, warranted no mention whatever in the minutes of the Club. I all but rubbed my eyes in disbelief, especially as Metropolitan had finished up winners, when I came to this period of the Club's story and found this bit of history totally ignored. It is not surprising therefore that when, many years after the war, enquiring of the 'clock' and its whereabouts I discovered that no one knew of its existence, let alone where it was among the Club's property. But then, in 1994, it was finally found!

But to return to the tournament itself, though not favourites, Metropolitan made a clean sweep of the event, as follows: 1 Metropolitan 6 pts, 2/3 Hampstead and

Finchley 4 pts, 4 Battersea 3 pts, 5 Bohemians 2 pts, 6/7 Leyton and West London 1 pt.

The encounter between Metropolitan and Hampstead was critical:

Metropolitan	v	Hampstead	
1 D.Miller	1	J.D.Solomon	0
2 B.Heastie	1	C.A.S.Damant	0
3 A.Louis	0	L.Schachter	1
4 J.M.Bee	1	R.C.Griffith	0
5 C.A.Perry	½	A.C.Lynch	½
6 J.J.Moore	1	J.A.Stewart	0
7 H.Griffith	1	E.Kraus	0
8 S.G.Hill	½	P.Kolner	½
9 A.F.Stammwitz	½	E.Bentley	½
10 Default	-	Default	-
	6½		2½

B. Heastie, besides being an excellent player, also played host to the occasional get together of chess friends. I was present at one such social gathering at his home near Hyde Park, but don't remember much about it, other than being served sherry and tucking into sandwiches and fancy cakes. I mention this because this type of hospitality died with the era it represented, as did so many other things in the chess world.

But this era was not quite done with yet, so we return to 1939 and a committee meeting at Keen's Restaurant on the very eve of the war, August 31, 1939, attended by 9 members with D. Miller in the chair. How did the Club view its immediate future? Well, it was agreed that the Secretary might make any alterations to his report to the coming AGM that he thought necessary to meet the international situation. Otherwise, it was business as usual. The Club would run its usual competitions, a closing date was fixed for the tournaments and it was agreed to renew the same advertisements for 1939-40, as in the previous season! If anyone hazarded a cautious view regarding the future, it is not reported.

When the AGM of Saturday October 8, 1939 took place a few weeks later, war, of course, had been declared. Unusually, no mention is made in the minutes of who the members present were. I only know that I was among them from the fact that I proposed during the meeting that the report of the Tournament Secretary (D. Miller) be accepted. Nothing that was said, however, would have given members undue concern as to the outlook for the Club remaining open. It is true that L.C.G.Dewing, who was in the chair, proposed that the Club should remain open on Saturday afternoons only with no further meetings on Thursday evenings while the present black-out conditions were in force, and that the match captain, A. Louis reported that all London League activities had been suspended; otherwise, the meeting did not allow itself to be thrown out of its stride by these bothersome happenings but proceeded to elect its officers and present the prizes as in the normal course of events. It should be remembered that the so called 'Phoney War' phase was still with us.

The approach of the Club's Jubilee year in 1940, which had never seemed to elicit much interest within the committee, did provide a knee-jerk reaction from that body when under the heading 'Correspondence', a letter was read from a Mr. J.C. Olsen suggesting the production of a Jubilee handbook. The Secretary was requested to obtain the approximate cost of such a publication from the Battersea Club who had produced a similar memento. The word memento does not suggest a very ambitious production was in mind and, anyway, with the war situation as it was, no more was heard of the idea.

The list of Club officers elected at this AGM is appended as of not a little historical interest, being the final list in front of the Metropolitan Club's final closure at some indeterminate date in 1940.

President: Dr. Lloyd Storr-Best.  
Vice-Presidents: Sir G.A.Thomas, J.H.Blake, T. Keliher, A.Louis, D.Miller, Mrs.A.M.S. Shannon (FRGS), J.Stuart-Hodgson, H.Ford, E.A. Beamish, T.E.Webb, L.C.G. Dewing and J.M.Bee.  
Committee: J.M.Bee, H.Ford, H.Griffiths, S.Lathey, J.J.Moore, M.Shanson, R H Storr-Best, F.J.Tippett.  
Secretary and Treasurer: A.F.Stammwitz  
Match Captain: A.Louis  
Tournament Secretary: D.Miller  
Hon Auditor: F.J.Tippett

Note: As already noted in these pages, Sir G.A.Thomas and J.H.Blake had long since stopped being active members but may, of course, have remained subscribing members.

These minutes were signed by A.Louis for the first and only time.

There were two further meetings of the committee before hostilities erupted in earnest. I see from the minutes that I attended both meetings but I retain little recollection of either. The first, on February 3, 1940 was in the main about the Club finances and how it would not be able to keep open beyond the last Saturday in May. There was some discussion over a proposal to keep the Club open following that date, providing that those favouring such an action be asked to bear its cost. Not surprisingly, this found no favour. What was quite surprising was the fact that five new members were elected, including a Mr R.Spitz who it will be recalled, at his first attempt, shared the Club Championship with D.Miller (season 1939-40).

The other meeting took place on May 25, 1940, chaired by J.M.Bee and attended by four other members i.e. A.Louis, J.J.Moore, A.F.Stammwitz and F.J.Tippett, all officers except myself! It was agreed to close down during the months of June to August inclusive and to call a meeting on the first Saturday of September. The Secretary gave a statement of the financial position (not written in the minutes), and—well, there was a war on—he left blank the space where the amount of further expenses to be sanctioned should have been set down. Two more members were elected; and what was the last message left for posterity?

"The Secretary reported that he felt impossible in the circumstances prevailing and serious war situation to recommend any change being made in the Club's headquarters."

Signed as being correctly entered by J.M.Bee, very likely at the inaugural meeting after the war, held on the 23rd October 1945, also signed as correct by J.M.Bee, the pen used appearing to be the same.

To all intents and purposes May 25, 1940 turned out to be the final close down date of the war period, as there is no evidence that the September meeting was ever called.

### THOMAS KELIHER

It is a curious fact that the deaths of two of the Club's most devoted servants, J.W.Wright and Thomas Keliher are recorded in the form of a memorandum in

the minutes book, giving details of their long services to the Club but omitting the actual date of their respective deaths. Moreover, in M.Keliher's case the text, typewritten on a separate sheet of paper and affixed to the back of page 270, appears faded to an extent that hasn't occurred to anything else, hand or typewritten in that same minutes book. This, of course, has nothing to do with Mr. Keliher's death, which probably occurred shortly after the May 25, 1940 committee meeting, given the fact that the aforementioned page 270 contains the concluding paragraphs of that meeting, whilst the very last sentence in the memorandum is, significantly, in the present tense.

As we know, Thomas Keliher was a founder member of the Metropolitan Club, when he would have been 34, a good average age for a chess player of the time. He had witnessed the rise of the Club and its steady descent from a height that couldn't be maintained. He had rubbed shoulders at Club dinners with the likes of Emanuel Lasker, W.Steinitz, H.N. Pillsbury and those other giants who had enjoyed the Metropolitan hospitality. He had seen one Lord Chief Justice and two Lord Mayors gracing the post of President. He was a contemporary member with R.I.Marsden, A.Morton Smith, H.L. Bowles and his wife Rhoda Bowles, the Rev. A.B.Skipworth, R.Loman, O.C.Miller, A.J.Maas, R.P.Michell, James Mortimer, J.H.Blake, C.E.C.Tattersall, R.H.V.Scott, W.Winter, Sir George Thomas and every other single member who had ever joined the Club in those first 50 years of its life. In the memorandum to his memory the minutes have the following to say, in addition to a potted history of the Club's beginnings.

"It seems astonishing that throughout the fifty years of the Club's history, Mr. Keliher had been a regular member of the London League team which had always been one of the strongest in London chess and that during the season before the war he had been a regular No. 11 and that his match record compared more than favourably with players sometimes less than a quarter of his age. It can well be understood therefore that his sudden death at the age of 84 has proved a severe loss both to the Club and its members".

By a strange coincidence both Mr. Keliher and Mr. Wright were 84 at the time of their deaths.

### POSTSCRIPT

I spent five years with the Hampstead Chess Club, while the Metropolitan Club was dormant. Hampstead had the twin advantages of having stayed open and, from my point of view, meeting on Saturdays—readers will remember that Metropolitan members hadn't been willing to meet the extra cost of doing so. In addition, besides having an illustrious history of its own, Hampstead had gained considerably from the influx of strong players that had belonged to now defunct clubs, especially the City of London and the Lud Eagle (whose players for one reason or another, often age, hadn't been called up). The immediate result was a championship competition that almost compared with the former City of London one, save that it hadn't the same depth of talent. Whilst there I met such as W. Winter, C.H.O'D Alexander, Dr P.M.List, D.B.Scott, V.Solovier, J.D.Solomon and L.C.G.Dewing, I won the championship in 1946 without the loss of a game (BCM 1946). Modestly, I must admit that none of the above were playing, save for J.D.Solomon, nonetheless it was, in my mind, the strongest competition I've ever played in. This was my best game of the period, published in the chess column of the *Evening News* (the precise date gone from my memory—except the year is 1946).



**J.J.Moore White D.B.Pritchard Black**  
*English Opening*

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.e4 d5 4.e5 d4 5.exf6 dxc3 6.bxc3  
♜xf6 7.d4 c5 8.♘f3 h6 9.♙e2 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♙b4+ 11.♙f1  
0-0 12.♚b1 ♙d6 13.♙b2 ♜e7 14.h4 b6 15.g4 ♘d7 16.♜c2  
♙b7 17.♚h3 f5 18.g5 h5 19.♙d3 g6 20.♚e1 ♜f7 21.d5  
exd5 22.♜c3 ♙h7 23.♙xf5 ♙b4 24.♙xg6+ ♜xg6  
25.♜xb4 dxc4 26.♚e7+ ♚f7 27.♚xf7+ ♜xf7 28.g6+ ♙xg6  
29.♚g3+ ♙f5 30.♜d6 Black resigns.

White's 11th move was made on the spur of the moment, the 'book' move being ♙d2. I had the opportunity of a repeat performance in a League game after the war, with the same dramatic result, but, alas, the opportunity never occurred again.

**HON. SECRETARIES OF  
THE METROPOLITAN CLUB 1890 TO 1940.**

1890 to 1893	Morton Smith (after starting as joint Secretary with Marsden)
1894 to 1897	R.I.Marsden
1898	R.P.Michell
1899 to 1923	J.W.Wright (24 years!)
1923 to 1927	E.H.Mabbott
1927 to 1934	F.V.Louis
1934 to 1939	G.A.Wilcox
1939 to 1940	A.F.Stammwitz

**LIST OF CHAMPIONS OF  
THE METROPOLITAN CLUB**

**FROM 1895/6 TO 1939/40**

1895-6	A.J.Maas	1918-19 (Tie: Scott & Cole)
1896-7	A.O'Neill	1919-20 Sir G.A. Thomas
1897-8	R.P.Michell	1920-21 D. Miller
1898-9	O.C.Muller	1921-22 B.E. Sieghelm

1899-1900	O.C.Muller	1922-23	L. Savage
1900-01	O.C.Muller	1923-24	L. Savage
1901-02	None	1924-25	L. Savage
1902-03	C.E.C.Tattersall	1925-26	J.H. Morrison
1903-04	C.E.C.Tattersall	1926-27	B. Heastie
1904-05	O.C.Muller	1927-28	J. Birnberg
1905-06	C.E.C.Tattersall	1928-29	B. Heastie
1906-07	G.A.Thomas	1929-30	J. Birnberg
1907-08	G.A.Thomas	1930-31	A. Louis
1908-09	J.H.Blake	1931-32	D. Miller
1909-10	G.A.Thomas	1932-33	D. Miller
1910-11	G.A.Thomas	1933-34	A. Louis
1911-12	G.A.Thomas	1934-35	D. Miller
1912-13	D.Miller	1935-36	L.C.G. Dewing
1913-14	G.A.Thomas	1936-37	J.M. Bee
1914-15	R.H.V.Scott	1937-38	D. Miller
1915-16	D.Miller	1938-39	D. Miller
1916-17	W.Winter	1939-40	(Tie: D. Miller & R. Spitz)

**LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF THE METROPOLITAN  
CLUB FROM 1894 TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

1894	Deputy F.S.Gover
1895	Sir Joseph Renal (Lord Mayor)
1898	Lord Russell of Killowen (Lord Chief Justice of England)
1900	Sir Wyke Baylis
1903	Morton Smith
1904	H.L.Bowles
1906	Sir John Bell (Lord Mayor)
1908	Sir John O.S.Thursby

1915 (or earlier)

	H.Rodney (Records unclear as to precise date)
1921	Sir George Thomas
1923-31	J.W.Wright (after being Secretary since 1899)
1932-3	None
1934	T.Keliher
1938-40	Dr Lloyd Storr-Best

## Preface to Part Two: The Club from 1945

Many attempts have been made in past years to produce a written record of the Club's history, and I trust that this account of postwar activities will not prove a disappointment to those who had the desire but not the time to produce it.

The substance of the text gives no indication of the amount of research involved, since the need to ensure accuracy of detail was paramount, and help in this and in

other ways from Messrs. J.B. Adams, J.A. Moore, J.J. Moore, J.J. Glover, A.A. Raven and J. Kitchen is very much appreciated.

The intention was to do more than present a list of chronological happenings. Rather, I sought to depict the Club as a living entity and can only hope that my efforts in this connection will appear satisfactory.

**T.F. Deery.**

# CHAPTER ONE: Postwar Revival

The Club's activities were understandably suspended during most of the 1939-45 War. As told in the first part of this book, the last recorded committee meeting before the break took place on Saturday 25th May 1940 at the Club's headquarters in Keene's Restaurant, Portugal Street, W.C.1. It was decided at this meeting that the Club would close for the summer and the committee would reconvene on the first Saturday in the following September.

That September meeting, however, never took place—a fact which is hardly surprising, since this was the year of the 'Battle of Britain' (July 10th to October 31st). On 7th September Hitler unwisely ordered the Luftwaffe to commence the bombardment of London, and Metropolitan members therefore had more pressing things than chess on their minds. Many, of course, were in the armed forces serving overseas with chess sets stuffed into kit bags to be pulled out whenever a break in hostilities permitted. But the few indifferent games they were able to play under these circumstances simply increased their craving for genuine club competition.

Back in London after the war, there was some informal chess in places like Miss Price's 'Gambit Tea Rooms' in Budge Row while clubs were recovering and dusting themselves down with a mild sense of outrage that Hitler should have had the effrontery to interrupt the London League programme.

Metropolitan's rejuvenation is best described in an extract from a report made by the committee to the 1946 AGM which reads as follows:

"The Club was closed for nearly the whole of the war during which time the Club's property was stored, at times to his great inconvenience, by the former Secretary, Mr. A.F. Stammwitz at his home. His services in this respect are deeply appreciated, and we tender our warmest thanks on behalf of the Club.

"A General meeting which was poorly attended was held in September 1945 to consider reviving the Club's activity. The Secretary reported that circumstances left him no option but to resign, but despite the poor prospects the few members present decided to go ahead. Old members who could be traced were communicated with and the Club re-opened with a nucleus of 17, two more joining later. During the year 23 new members joined, bringing the total up to 42, but unfortunately some have since dropped out. Against this, one or two of the Club's former members have signified their intention to rejoin".

The next recorded committee meeting took place at the St. Bride Foundation Institute, popularly known as 'St. Bride's', Ludgate Circus on 22nd October 1945 at which 14 members were elected. On the same day the Club held its first postwar Annual General Meeting. At this meeting, Mr. A.L. Gordon mentioned having acted as Secretary since the September meeting. In this capacity he had also attended a meeting of the London Chess League on 18th September 1945 and had applied to enter a team for the ensuing season. He also reported that the Club had secured the use of Room 18 at St. Bride's by arrangement with the London Chess League. The latter paid the Foundation £100 per annum for the use of the room on six days in each week, and the Club

was to sub-let from them at a rental of £33.6s.8d. per annum for its use on Mondays and Thursdays throughout the year.

However, the L.C.L. required the use of Metropolitan's equipment for Club matches on other days for which they were prepared to pay a mutually agreed sum. This was eventually fixed at £5 per annum plus two thirds of the cost of repairs and replacements.

The principal officers at the revival were: President, Mr. B. Heastie; Secretary & Treasurer, Mr. F.J. Tippet; match captain, Mr. J.M. Bee; Tournament Secretary, Mr. S. Lathey.

There was no mention of Mr. Stammwitz, and it is reasonable to suppose that when he resigned as Secretary he also left the Club, because his name appears later in connection with a matter concerning the Ealing Chess Club. The minutes contain a reference to him as Ealing's match captain in 1948. What is known is that he gave good service to the British Chess Federation as its General Secretary for many years. He died in 1975.

Invitations were distributed for entry into the Club tournaments, and a sub-committee was appointed to consider the possibility of entering a second team in London League events.

The following is a quotation from the recollection of Mr. J.A. Moore (not to be confused with Mr. J.J. Moore, the Club's current President).

"A very important point in the survival of the Met. during and after the Second World War (when Central London chess clubs were already on the wane—lack of premises predominantly, but also movement out of London by the middle class, etc.) was that we gained the sub-tenancy of St. Bride's, having the large room twice weekly throughout the year at a very cheap rent. This was, I believe, entirely due to the efforts of Mr. Bee who through his close friendship with J.H. van Meurs (L.L. Sec. 'par excellence'!) learned that the League could not use or afford the famed Room 18 throughout the year on a day-to-day basis and stepped in quickly to set up the Metropolitan for many crucial years to come. Without that tenancy our survival would have been, in my opinion, problematical".

The annual subscription at this time was the pre-war amount of one guinea per member, and at a committee meeting on 5th November 1945 it was revealed that the bank balance stood at £1.12s.4d.

Grave concern was expressed over the financial prospects, but at no time have the Club's finances generated optimism. Indeed, there can be no doubt it would not have survived without the occasional generosity of members.

So once again Metropolitan was fully primed to continue imposing its influence on London chess, but the re-birth would not have been possible without the enthusiasm of the original few and a considerable debt is owed to the foresight and efforts of Messrs. Gordon and Bee.

Mr. Gordon continued as assistant match captain until 1948 when he left the Club for what he described as 'professional and personal circumstances'. Mr. Bee, however, remained a guiding and commanding influence for many years.

## CHAPTER TWO: The Teams

The Club's first postwar match season was not impressive. Playing in the London League's 'A' Division, the team scored 7½ points out of a possible 14. Mr. S. Lathey was top scorer. It also lost an away match against Cambridge and another against Oxford.

In 1946 the London Chess League proposed that the rate of moves in matches should be thirty in an hour and a half and that unfinished games should be adjourned and subsequently played to a conclusion. Metropolitan counter proposed that the rate should be thirty-six moves in an hour and a half with adjudications for unfinished games, but at their AGM the L.C.L.'s proposal was carried by 8 votes to 7.

In this year the Club also joined the Middlesex County Chess Association at a cost of five shillings per annum and one shilling and sixpence per member. The Club's matches in the Middlesex Chess League were at first arranged for the benefit of members who were not able to secure places in the London League teams, but keen interest in later years eventually ensured that they were equally as vigorously contested.

An outstanding feature of the early days was the friendly matches against teams from the Oxford, Cambridge and London Universities. The first of these was in 1894, as stated in the first part of this book. They continued after the 1939-45 War under the captaincy of Mr. J.M. Bee and later under Mr. J.A. Moore until discontinued for unstated reasons at the end of the 1960's.

The matches were played as 'home' and 'away' fixtures. When played at home, they were part of what the Universities referred to as their 'London Week'—a chess and social visit made by a combined Oxford and Cambridge team which played teams from various London clubs including the Metropolitan.

The Club still holds the 'Combined Universities' trophy which was awarded annually to the successful side when Metropolitan were playing at home.

The following is the last available record of results in these encounters. It refers to matches played in 1968:

Metropolitan (away)	4½	Oxford	2½
Metropolitan (away)	3½	Cambridge	4½
Metropolitan (home)	10	London University	7

The minutes of a committee meeting in May of 1969 contain the words, 'it was agreed not to discontinue these fixtures'. But clearly they *were* discontinued, because there was no further mention of them.

The most successful results were achieved in the 1960/61 season, when the Club took first place in the London Chess League's 'A' Division for the first time since 1921, won the Eastman Cup for the first time and won the Middlesex Chess League Championship.

A letter was written to Sir George A. Thomas, who played in the 1921 team to inform him of the success in the London League, and, to mark this triple victory, a celebratory dinner was held on 15th September 1961 at the 'Albion' in New Bridge Street.

The following year the Club again won the London League 'A' Division but only by a narrow margin. Special mention was made of two members for their fine scores: Mr. F.E. Tinworth (who won the Milner-Barry prize) and Mr. F.C. May.

The Milner-Barry prize (later known as the 'President's Prize') was an annual award made to the player achieving the highest score in the London League's 'A' Division (or First Division, as it was subsequently known). Later winners were Mr. S.C. Cranmer and Mr. J. A. Moore.

The teams were never again quite as successful, although the Middlesex League trophy and the Winters trophy were

won in 1966. Since then they have moved sporadically between the first three divisions of the London League, and their results in the Middlesex League have been reasonable, though not spectacular. Indeed, for eight years (from 1970 to 1978) the Club fielded no Middlesex League teams at all.

Nevertheless, since its formation, the Club has won the London League championship sixteen times, as follows:

1891-92	1895-96	1904-05	1916-17
1892-93	1899-1900	1906-07	1920-21
1893-94	1901-02	1913-14	1960-61
1894-95	1903-04	1914-15	1961-62

The Eastman Cup competition, a knock-out event for London teams, has also been one of the Club's major interests, and it has competed for many years with varying degrees of success.

It has also competed in the following events:

### **Winters Trophy. (Middlesex C.C.A.).**

A knock-out competition for teams of four.

The club won this in 1966—the year it started—together with the Middlesex League trophy. Mr. J.J. Glover, who ran both teams, speaks of difficulties involved in fielding strong players to ensure this success, because of Mr. Bee's desire to retain them for play in the London League. Club files contain a photograph of these trophies that was presented by Mr. Glover.

The Club has competed regularly since then except for 1981 when it proved impossible to field a team.

### **The National Club competition.**

A knock-out competition for teams of six.

The Club has competed annually from 1980 and won the Minor Plate (a parallel event for first round losers) in 1985.

There is reference in the minutes to an earlier National Club competition run by the B.C.F. The Club entered a team in 1949 and was drawn to play Welling Chess Club at Bexleyheath. Since the journey to Bexleyheath was considered too far for members on a weekday evening, Lewisham offered the use of its premises as a half-way point. But Metropolitan was unable to gain the Welling Club's approval and so retired from the event. It was mentioned in committee that travel problems would in any case have been experienced at a later stage in the competition.

### **D.J. Groen Memorial Tournament**

A lightning team tournament held at the Richmond Chess Club.

Metropolitan competed in 1973, 1974, 1979 and 1982.

### **Friendly matches**

The Insurance Chess Club have the use of the Board Room at the Bishopsgate Institute also, but their club night is on Wednesday of each week. Their teams are quite strong, and Metropolitan has enjoyed many hard fought 'friendlies' with them. Latterly these encounters have become annual events.

There are records of earlier friendly matches with the Maurice, Ibis and Unats chess clubs.

Metropolitan's strong desire to win matches has never adversely affected its equally strong desire to be on good terms with its opponents and with the various organisations responsible for arranging match programmes. Major disputes have been few, and minor ones have usually concerned conflicting opinions over arrangements for

adjourned games. One unusual problem arose when the flag on a Metropolitan player's faulty clock fell before he had completed the required number of moves. Despite this, the minute hand had still not reached the full hour, so he claimed he had not lost.

One can but sympathise with those whose job it is to settle such problems, but the only occasion in recent years when the Club felt it had substantial reasons for grievance was when an appeal against the behaviour of two procrastinating opponents was rejected.

On cessation of play at the match in question, it was mutually agreed that two unfinished games would continue in three weeks from that day. After the three weeks, Metropolitan's team captain telephoned the Chairman of the organising league, because he had not heard from the other side and was unable to make contact. The result was a surprising extension of the period to five weeks, but after five weeks still nothing was heard from the other team, so Metropolitan's captain claimed the games by default. A week later the Secretary of the league telephoned Metropolitan's captain rejecting the claims and stating that a further twenty-eight days extension had been granted.

Metropolitan, perplexed by what appeared to be undue leniency towards the other side, appealed to the committee of the league, but the default claims were once more rejected.

It transpired that the two opposing players had to travel overseas after the first session of play to take part in an international event, and the league had regarded their need sympathetically. However, it seems probable that the two opponents competed in the match knowing that they would be unable to make arrangements for further sessions of play within a reasonable period.

Metropolitan eventually lost both games—one through play over the board and the other because its player refused to make a final re-arranged date on principle.

But far worse than this was the occasion in the late 1970's when a member had a heart attack while in a match. Mr. J.J. Glover the team captain, called an ambulance and accompanied him to hospital, but on the way the member died.

He was Dr. M. Marcus (himself a medical practitioner) who had come from Rumania at the age of three and later practised in Whitechapel for fifty-three years. He was well known in his profession and there were quotes by Dr. David Owen and John Gross in the London Evening Standard of 8th October 1976 in praise of his work.

Another sad and disturbing incident occurred when a member had an epileptic fit while a match was in progress. At first it was simply noticed that he was acting strangely, but when the 'demon' in him suddenly took charge, everyone jumped up in alarm. It must be confessed that no one knew what to do. Those nearest pulled chairs and tables away as the poor man threshed around helplessly on the floor. The only person to show initiative was Mr. S.G. Hill who telephoned for an ambulance. When the ambulance men arrived, however, he had largely recovered. He left with them and regrettably was never seen in the Club again. The match continued with some adjustment to the clocks.

But most matches, of course, proceed without drama, and it is, perhaps, in match play that the basic purpose of the Club's existence is revealed. The desire to do well for the sake of the Club—in other words, for the sake of one's friends, imparts to the play a quality that is missing from tournament and congress games. The occasional 'get-together' after the match in the pub or the cafe—or anywhere else—at which the 'post-mortems' are performed

on finished games and team matters are light-heartedly (and sometimes seriously) discussed is in essence what club membership is all about.

It would, indeed, be a great pity if it were to pass away.

Below are the results of a few matches played in recent years:

#### L.C.L. 'A' Div. 1958/59

Metropolitan		Richmond & Twickenham	
1.J.L. Levin	½	Aird Thomson	½
2.J.J. Moore	½	R. Pinner	½
3.J.A. Moore	½	D.J. Green	½
4.B.E. Glaze	0	A.R. Blagrove	1
5.A. Bernfield	1	J.A. Fuller	0
6.J. Gilchrist	1	M. Colquhoun	0
7.T. Breen	½	F.G. Griffiths	½
8.J.M. Bee	0	L. Lindheimer	1
9.S.C. Cranmer	1	A.C. Lewis	0
10.M.J. McBain	½	E. Fairbrother	½
11.J.R. Gilbert	1	G.R. Hogg	0
12.M.W. Wills	1	J.W. Ede	0
7½		4½	

#### L.C.L. 'A' Div., 1962/63

Ilford		Metropolitan	
1.P.B. Cook	½	F.C. May	½
2.J.M. Soesan	½	J.B. Howson	½
3.Dr. P. Sturgeon	½	F.E. Tinworth	½
4.P.W. Haddock	½	J.A. Moore	½
5.H. Woolverton	1	J.H.B. Bennett	0
6.J.B. Hawson	1	B.E. Glaze	0
7.M.R. Porter	1	J.J. Moore	0
8.K.M. Oliff	½	S.G. Hill	½
9.I.B.N. Smith	1	J.M. Bee	0
10.A.J. Morrell	½	S.C. Cranmer	½
11.J.T. Pascoe	0	G.W. Rutland	1
12.R.H.W. Polley	0	R.C. Pentecost	1
7		5	

#### L.C.L. 'A' Div. 1965/66

Metropolitan		Hampstead	
1.J.B. Howson	0	Dr. J. Penrose	1
2.S.C. Cranmer	½	A.W. Bowen	½
3.G.A. Dickson	0	M. Blaine	1
4.M.J. McBain	½	J.W. Cornforth	½
5.F.E. Tinworth	½	N. Worthing	½
6.S.G. Hill	½	T.I. Casswell	½
7.J.A. Moore	½	Miss E. Tranmer	½
8.J.J. Moore	1	H.R. Holmes	0
9.Dr. P.D. Ralph	1	P.J. Wheeler	0
10. G.W. Rutland	0	V. Bulbulian	1
11.C.S. Lee	0	D.L. Hodgson	1
12.R.E. Spurgeon	½	Mrs. M. Penrose	½
5		7	

**L.C.L. 1983/84**

This was the final match of the season, when Metropolitan was promoted to Division 2.

Metropolitan		Hampstead II	
1.R.G. Bellinger	1	S. Farrier	0
2.P.C. Doye	½	M. Francois	½
3.Dr.N.M.Stewart	0	N.E. Foster	1
4.J.A. Moore	1	W.D.B.Rotherham	0
5.R.S. Sefton	½	C. Lake	½
6.J.J. Moore	1	A. Colman	0
7.B.E. Glaze	1	J.G. Andrews	0
8.P.R. Hatton	0	F. Nardini	1
9.S.T.K.Wilkinson	1	B. Scharf	0
10.T. Greenwood	½	J.R. MacDonald	½
<b>6½</b>		<b>3½</b>	

**L.C.L. 1985/86**

Of our strongest players, only G. Szaszvari (Board 2 or 3) was missing from our line-up.

Metropolitan		Charlton II	
1.J.B. Adams	½	J.D. Wager	½
2.J.van Schaik	1	M.R.Ruston	0
3.P.C. Doye	1	E.J. Whipp	0
4.J.A. Moore	1	S.A. Crouch	0
5.Dr. N.M.Stewart	1	A.J. Sherriff	0
5.P.R. Hatton	½	M.A. Setton	½
7.T.N. Burrell	½	B.O'Gorman	½
8.J.J. Moore	0	A.J. Blackburn	1
9.H. Chan	0	R. Hyde	1
10.B.E. Glaze	1	R.J. Hale	0
<b>6½</b>		<b>3½</b>	

**L.C.L. 1986/87**

Metropolitan		Cavendish	
1.G.Szaszvari	0	F.Kwiatkowski	1
2.P.C. Doye	1	D. Wright	0
3.J.A. Moore	1	T.Dyer (reserve)	0
4.S.T.K.Wilkinson	½	B.Green	½
5.Dr.N.M.Stewart	0	S. Kalinsky	1
6. P.R. Hatton	½	G. Hollis	½
7.P.L.Szabo	½	D. Malcolm	½
(reserve)			
8.J.J. Moore	0	B. Harmer	1
9.J. Kitchen	1	G. Witt	0
10.B. Glaze	1	B. Fraser	0
<b>5½</b>		<b>4½</b>	

**L.C.L. 1986/87**

Metropolitan		Drunken Knights	
1.J.B. Adams	0	G. Moore	1
2.J.A. Moore	0	D. Bennett	1
3.P.C. Doye	½	S. Goodman	½
4.Dr.N.M. Stewart	1	P. MacCabe	0
(reserve)			
5.S.T.K.Wilkinson	1	Default	0
6.P.R. Hatton	1	M. Phillips	0
7.H. Chan	1	C. Haynes	0
8.J. Kitchen	½	K. Morris	½
9.J.J. Moore	½	H. Lanning	½
10.T.F. Deery	0	A. Freeman	1
<b>5½</b>		<b>4½</b>	

**L.C.L. 1988/89**

Metropolitan		Islington	
1.J.B. Adams	½	S. Reuben	½
2.J.A. Moore	1	W. Stanton	0
3.D.J.E. Harris	½	A. Gaffney	½
4.P.C. Doye	1	M. Pretlove	0
5.M.Buxton	0	M. Houghton	1
6.D.I. Calvert	0	H. Bhatia	1
7.Dr. N.M.Stewart	1	D. Bower	0
8.J.Kitchen	0	S.F.Rahman	1
9.H. Chan	½	J. Lawrence	½
10.B.E. Glaze	1	G. Kimisahima	0
<b>5½</b>		<b>4½</b>	

**L.C.L. 1989/90**

Metropolitan		Stock Exchange II	
1.J.B. Adams	1	M.D. Moore	0
2.P.C. Doye	1	W.T. Franklin	0
3.J.A. Moore	1	Default	0
4.R.S. Sefton	1	C.S.B. Howe	0
5.D. Harrison	1	P.A. May	0
6.D.J.E. Harris	1	J.W. Chester	0
7.J. Kitchen	1	P.B. Cogliatti	0
8.M. Buxton	1	N.T.E. Brown	0
9.D.I. Calvert	1	A.A. Jones	0
10.B.E. Glaze	1	M.F. Newman	0
<b>10</b>		<b>0</b>	

## CHAPTER THREE: Trophies, Tournaments, Events

The Club's principal trophies—the Championship Challenge Cup and the Naumann Cup were acquired very early in the Club's history. The Silver King dates from 1930. The Silver Queen was first mentioned in 1933 when it was awarded as the prize for the 'Continuous Handicap' tournament which began in 1930. It continued to be associated with this tournament until Mr. Lathey's win in 1940. It then lapsed until 1959, and from 1962 its function changed.

A yearly inscription on the Bowles Shield honoured the name of the member with the highest score in the first team, while the Shannon Bowl was an annual award to the member with the highest second team score.

In the first season after the war, the Championship and Naumann Cup tournaments were well patronised, but there were few contestants in the Silver King competition, so it had to be organised as a double round event.

The first postwar champion was Mr. J.M. Bee with the fine score of nine points out of ten. In subsequent years the Championship and the Naumann Cup competitions have flourished without a break, whereas the Silver King and the Silver Queen have occasionally languished through lack of support and, since even the two top tournaments have not always been enthusiastically supported, the earlier practice of allocating team places on the basis of tournament performance has had to be discontinued. At the time of writing, however, there has been a welcome increase of interest in all Club tournaments.

The Silver Queen, apart from its use as described above, was for a limited period awarded to the winner of the 'Gambit Tournament'—a novel idea by Mr. S. G. Hill, tournament controller of the day, in which competitors were obliged to play on from the opening moves of obscure gambits selected at random from sealed envelopes.

In 1976 it was proposed in committee that the Championship and Naumann Cup competitions should be amalgamated for one year only and run as a Swiss tournament with members from other clubs also being invited to compete. The proposal was passed at the AGM of that year.

A committee meeting held on 6th January 1977 appointed Mr. R. C. Cousens controller of the event with Mr. J.J. Glover and Mr. M.P. Moreton as deputy controllers. Mr. A. A. Raven was appointed Tournament Secretary to take charge of the Silver King and Silver Queen competitions.

London clubs were circularised with the details, but the response was inadequate. The minimum requirement had been fixed at 30 entries, but by May 1977 only 18 had been received—13 of these being Metropolitan members—so the idea was abandoned. The tournaments resumed their traditional form and took place as usual.

The Club once owned a Silver Knight trophy, but this unfortunately did not survive the war.

Since the war, other trophies have been presented.

A cup donated by Mr. S. G. Hill was initially intended to be used as a brilliancy award, but the volume of entries never justified its presentation, so from 1966 the 'Hill Cup', as it became known, was presented annually to the highest scorer in the first team in the London League, thereby replacing the Bowles Shield previously used in this connection.

In 1977 Mr. J.J. Glover kindly donated a cup which is still in use as the trophy for the Winter tournament.

In 1982 a much respected member, one time team captain and Treasurer, Mr. J. E. Spencer, died, and his widow donated his chess book collection comprising 40 titles to the Club. At first it was intended to use these as the nucleus for

a Club library, but eventually it was decided to sell them to the members. Mr. R. C. Cousens kindly undertook the task of valuing them and organising the sale. When sold, part of the proceeds was used to purchase a cup that was to become known as the 'Jim Spencer Cup' and presented annually to the member achieving the highest score in the London League third team. The balance of the money from the sale was applied to the Centenary Fund.

Mr. A. Bernfield, who had been a devoted member since pre-war days, also died in 1982 having bequeathed the sum of one hundred pounds to the Club in his will. It was decided to purchase a trophy bearing his name for use as an annual award for the member achieving the highest score in the Middlesex League first team.

To heighten interest the Club has arranged simultaneous displays from time to time. Mr. J. B. Adams has kindly donated his services in this capacity many times. There are records of similar displays given by Messrs. G. A. Dickson and R. E. Spurgeon.

The writer recalls that around the year 1948, Mr. A. H. Trott, acting on his own initiative, arranged for the German master, Lothar Schmid to give a display, but the event was not officially sanctioned and does not feature in Club records.

In 1964 the Secretary at the time, Mr. J. J. Glover, arranged for H. Golombek to give a display and then another in 1965. In the first of these, he won 10 from 20 games, drawing with Messrs. Anthony, Harman, Hawley, Hill, Kani and Rowland. He lost to Messrs. Shanson, Kelly, Rutland and Glover.

On the second occasion he played 20 games once more, this time winning fourteen and losing only one—to Mr. L.G.A. Pople. Unfortunately, there is no mention in the minutes of the names of the five who drew.

It is generally agreed that chess is not a particularly sociable pursuit and in 1985 it was suggested in committee that some kind of social event at which members (and possibly their families) might become better acquainted should be arranged. Mr. J. J. Glover was asked to investigate various possibilities and having done so, eventually recommended a Club dinner, but when the membership were circularised, the response was so poor that it was abandoned.

Those outside the game might deduce something psychologically significant from this, but when the Club felt it had something to celebrate, it did so gladly.

Reference has already been made to the dinner held in the autumn of 1961 to celebrate the Club's best postwar performance. There is a record of the event in the minutes to the following AGM together with a suggestion that a Club dinner might be arranged annually, as in the early days of the Club's existence, but this matter was never pursued.

Another dinner was held at the Charles Dickens Restaurant in the Strand on 18th April 1980 to celebrate the Club's 90th anniversary. The occasion was also used to present an engraved pewter tankard to the retiring President, Mr. W.H. Greenwood, in appreciation of his valuable services. Mr. C. E. Williams, the London Chess League Secretary, was also present as an honoured guest. Members were charged five pounds per head for what was generally agreed to be a satisfactory meal.

Further to this celebration, a match against Middlesex C.C.A. was played in Room 18 at St. Bride's on Saturday afternoon 17th May, 1980 which the Club lost by 14 games to 5. Individual results were as follows:

Middlesex			Metropolitan					
1.W.N. Watson	1		J.B. Adams	0		11.B.A. Smith	0	D.M. Keeling 1
2.R.J. Pearce	½		G.A. Dickson	½		12.J. Redon	½	H. Fraser ½
3.T. Parkes	½		R.A. Batchelor	½		13.P.J. Edwards	1	M. Smithson 0
4.D.P. Lynch	1		Dr. P.D. Ralph	0		14.L.J. Vrondisis	1	K. Konior 0
5.N.A. Perkins	1		J.J. Moore	0		15.M. Crewdson	1	J. Burke 0
6.M.J. Rose	½		T.N. Burrell	½		16.D.G. Wayte	1	J.S. Young 0
7.R. Parker	½		P.L. Szabo	½		17.D.Foley-Comer	1	I. Dawson 0
8.M.J. Cresswell	1		J.C. Vallente	0		18.Mrs.O.C.Chataway	0	R.Jennings (guest) 1
9.G.S. Kitchin	½		A.A. Raven	½		19.T.V. Parrott	1	V.S.J. Litvin 0
10.P., Lunais	1		J.E. Spencer	0		(guest)		
							14	5



## CHAPTER FOUR: Premises

The Club for most of its existence has been part of the cultural life of the City of London.

Reference has already been made to the problems involved in establishing its headquarters after the war and to the good fortune of being offered the tenancy of Room 18 at St. Bride's. It was not long, however, before members began to express dissatisfaction. Complaints were frequently made about poor lighting and inadequate heating, and although some improvements were eventually made, the prospect of acquiring alternative premises was frequently discussed.

The possibility of losing one of the two weekly Club nights prompted some action in 1950. Messrs. J. Cabourn and W.H. Greenwood scoured the City for other accommodation but found nothing suitable at a rent the Club could afford. A room above the Lucas Arms in Grays Inn Road, although within the Club's means, was unacceptable, as the committee did not favour its location or the prospect of meeting on licensed premises. A sub-committee was formed to make further enquiries, but there is no record of its activity.

In 1955 a British Chess Federation's proposal to re-house the London Chess League and the Metropolitan Club was greeted with alarm and rejected by the committee, since it would have involved compulsorily merging with the National Chess Club which was then reported to be losing money at the rate of £150 per annum.

Whatever may have been the disadvantages of St. Bride's accommodation, it was relatively cheap. The rent of £50 per annum was increased to £60 in 1962, but in 1975 the governors of the Institute were informed by the Charity Commissioners that certain organisations must be charged commercial rents. The London League therefore was required to pay the increased amount of £900 per annum of which Metropolitan was to pay £300. This prompted an immediate increase in members' subscriptions from £2.10s. to £6. Thereafter the rent was increased to £375 in 1978 and £400 in 1981. Corresponding increases in subscription rates brought them to £12 in 1980.

Then, at the January committee meeting in 1983 the Secretary, Mr. A. A. Raven, reported that the London Chess League (and, by implication, the Metropolitan Chess Club as its sub-tenant) had been given notice to quit the St. Bride's building by the summer of that year, as a programme of rebuilding was in prospect. Mr. Raven undertook the daunting task of finding alternative premises, and much is owed to his persistence in eventually locating and recommending the Board Room at the Bishopsgate Institute. He also organised the removal of equipment from St. Bride's, so the Club was able to continue its activities without interruption. The first Club night at Bishopsgate was 8th September, 1983, and at the AGM one week later the President proposed a vote of thanks to him which was carried by acclamation.

Although the London Chess League also took up residence in the Bishopsgate Institute, it occupied a different part of the building, and Metropolitan's long association with the League as its tenant ceased. The rent for the Board Room at £650 per annum, however, was higher than any the Club had previously paid, and there was an inevitable and immediate increase in the membership subscription from £12 to £21. But despite this increase, there was a period of considerable financial difficulty alleviated to a large extent by the generosity of certain members.

The twice weekly meetings available at St. Bride's were no longer possible, and the Club met on Thursdays only. But by 1986 there was some financial improvement, and it was decided to experiment with an extra night during the winter

season. So the Club met on Tuesdays and Thursdays from October to March inclusive. The experiment proved successful, and this arrangement has been allowed to continue, although Mr. J.K. Stoneman, the Treasurer, has occasionally expressed doubts about it.

It was generally agreed that the Institute's Board Room was more comfortable and in many ways more pleasing than Room 18 at St. Bride's, although a little smaller than could have been wished. But an opportunity arose in 1987 to move to more commodious premises at the Barbican Centre. The possibility aroused much controversy, some of it emotional, between those with strongly opposed views. Those who favoured the move pointed to the spaciousness, the prestige value of being sited at so famous a location which could well result in higher membership figures, the easier facilities for refreshments and the more relaxed attitude by staff at closing time. Those opposed felt that the steep increase in rent from £650 per annum to £1,500 was too much for our financial resources and also feared losses from among the existing membership.

This view was countered by a very kind offer from Mr. B. Sammes "to guarantee for the first two years the difference between £850 and the new rent against 50% of additional membership fees paid to the Club up to such difference". Those who favoured the move felt that during these two years the Club membership would increase to the point where all outgoings would be covered.

But, although Mr. Sammes's generous offer was appreciated by all members, there were many who doubted the possibility of so substantial an increase in membership figures and feared the chances of yet further rent increases. There were also fears that there would be no further prospect of building up a financial reserve.

The Club was indebted to Mr. Sammes and to Mr. J.B. Farrell for their researches in connection with the proposed move.

The membership was informed in letters from the Secretary and Mr. Farrell of the advantages and disadvantages involved, and a Special General Meeting was called to finalise the matter on 16th July, 1987. After lengthy discussions eloquently initiated by Mr. J.B. Farrell (who supported the move) and Mr. P.L. Szabo (who opposed it), a vote was taken, and the motion to move was defeated by 16 votes to 14. The count included some postal votes.

Some members were disturbed to feel that a matter of such importance should have been decided by so small a majority. A motion was therefore put to the 1987 AGM which, after amendment, aimed to ensure that all subsequent voluntary removals would require the consent of two thirds of the voting membership. This motion was passed by 15 votes to one, but the committee was instructed to decide the necessary size of the quorum, and the result was a ruling that a vote in favour of a voluntary move should represent no less than one third of the total membership.

At the time of writing, there seems little prospect of such a voluntary move. Most members are reasonably satisfied with existing conditions. There are no more complaints about lighting or heating, and those older members capable of remembering the days at St. Bride's cannot help making comparisons.

The shabby decor, the peeling paintwork, the general atmosphere of decline at the top of the St. Bride's building together with the ever banging Club room door were not conducive to the production of good chess. One grimly recalls the occasions when the temperature was so low that many felt compelled to play in overcoats. The installation of a large, noisy overhead heater did nothing at first to improve the situation, since it only blew out cold air! It was

many months before this monster was persuaded to perform the job for which it was designed, but even then it remained as noisy as ever.

The only advantage of the tenancy lay in the fact that sets and boards were always laid out ready for use, as the room was used exclusively for chess, whereas at Bishopsgate a steward is required to set equipment out every club night and to pack it away at the conclusion of play—often in great haste if matches are slow to finish.

It is a pity that accommodation like the old Room 18 is not unusual among chess clubs at this time and may be part of the explanation for dwindling club membership lists. Ideally chess rooms should be pleasingly furnished and decorated and an extra room made available so that serious and less serious chess may occur simultaneously with nearby facilities for the provision of light refreshments. But how many unsponsored clubs could lay claim to such advantages at this time?

Indeed, how well would the world's greatest players perform if, instead of being able to insist on certain standards, they were forced to play under average club conditions? How much better might club players perform, if they, too, were able to insist on similar standards? The cash requirement to provide and maintain these ideal conditions within city centres is beyond the reach of most clubs. Metropolitan, therefore, counts itself fortunate in having achieved playing conditions which, although not entirely conforming to this ideal, are comparatively good.

The oak panelled Board Room reflects a character in keeping with its traditions. And playing under the portrait of the Institute's founder, the Reverend William Rogers, M.A. whose benevolent gaze appears to signify approval of the Club and its activities, is as near to the ideal as might reasonably be expected. Long may these happy circumstances continue!

## CHAPTER FIVE: Mr. J.M. Bee

It might be considered unfair to those who have done much to advance the Club's interests during the postwar years to single out certain individuals for special mention. Nevertheless this account would be inadequate without reference to some whose special efforts and personalities have dramatically influenced the Club's fortunes.

The most outstanding personality among these, undoubtedly, was Mr. John M. Bee whose beginnings with the Club extend an awesome length of time. The following obituary written by Mr. A.A. Raven appeared in the Annual Report for 1979 and says much about him:

"We record with deep regret the death on 3rd January 1979 of Mr. John M. Bee, for many years match captain and later President of the Club. He was in his 91st year.

"John M. Bee was educated at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, and played chess for the University from 1907 to 1910, captaining the victorious team against Oxford in the latter year. He played for the Combined Universities of Oxford and Cambridge on several occasions, notably in cable matches against American universities in 1909 and 1910, and he continued to play for Cambridge University and Cambridge Past until the 1930's.

"Mr. Bee joined the Metropolitan Chess Club before the First World War, his earliest known appearance for the Club being in a match against Birmingham on 7th March 1917, when he drew on Board 11. He won the Club championship in 1936-37 with 9 ½ points from 11 games, and won it again in 1945-46, 1947-48 and 1954-55. He played a leading part in the re-opening of the Club after the war, in October 1945, and was elected match captain, a post he held until 1963. He led the Club to the Championship of the London Chess League in 1960-61 (our first championship since 1920-21) and again the following season.

"Elected a Vice-President of the Club in 1934, Mr. Bee was elected President in 1957 and regularly took the chair at committee meetings until his retirement in 1968 at the age of 80.

"Mr. Bee was also a member of the City of London Club for many years. He drew with Capablanca in a simultaneous display in 1919, and won tournament games against Sir George Thomas and other leading players".

Further reference to him was made by the editor of *Time and Tide*. As a staff member of that publication, he shared the chess column on alternate weeks with D.J. Morgan, supplying interesting game positions. The editor wrote:

"In the Mocatta Cup at the former City of London Chess Club, he established an all time record by winning 9 out of 9. Other winners, until the trophy was destroyed in the last war, had always dropped points".

He had an exceptional ability for quick evaluation of a position. The writer recalls an occasion when this was perfectly demonstrated. A member of the second team had an unfinished game that had gone for adjudication. Since the result affected the outcome of the match in which it was played, the member had analysed the adjourned position at great depth over many days and had come to the certain conclusion that the result would be decided in his favour. On this occasion he was demonstrating this certainty to fellow team members who made a number of abortive attempts to refute his analysis. Obviously pleased with himself, he caught sight of Mr. Bee a few yards away and eagerly called him over. He explained the situation regarding the match and invited him to study the position.

Mr. Bee stood with hands in pockets and cigarette drooping for a brief moment. Then without a word he made a move. Confidently the member made his reply. Mr. Bee moved again. This time the member's reply was less assured. The third move was a bombshell and the fourth left

his position in complete ruins and the member utterly devastated.

Mr. Bee's curt, uncharitable summing-up was typical:

"I don't think the adjudicator will waste much time on that!" he announced and casually strolled away.

A further tribute to his mental agility is contained in another quotation from Mr. J.A. Moore:

"Mr. Bee was helped very much in his captaincy by his natural style of chess-play, which was in essence quick—plus his sharp, sometimes abrasive personality. He thrived on conflict, could argue points during a match particularly as he was a stickler for strict adherence to rules and fair play, be interrupted any number of times yet still keep his concentration on his own game. I've seen him, for example, at over 70 play as captain on one of the lower boards against Oxford or Cambridge and draw against a keen 20 year old, with ½ hour on his clock whilst the youngster had just scraped in his moves in 1 ½ (I must admit, being a slow player myself and unable to concentrate with any interference, that I have a special admiration for that kind of play!). Strangely in a way, for he was a very small, slight man, his strongest point as match captain was that players were quite literally *afraid* to have to inform him that they had lost (even *drawn* sometimes) so sharp and serious (even ferocious?) was his manner..."

So much of his character was the result of the fact that he was perhaps the last of the old order. As the social climate changed elsewhere, chess clubs had to change with it. The writer is indebted once again to Mr. J.A. Moore for his observation on this point and to his implied conclusion that at any time, the Club *is* what its members *are*, and the Metropolitan Chess Club today is a very different entity from that which existed at the turn of the century, when its members were largely men of wealth or of high academic status.

So if indeed it be true that Mr. Bee found it difficult to accept changing attitudes willingly, no one should be surprised. But problems inevitably arose as a result of conflict between his severe, paternalistic manner and the aspirations of newcomers who regarded the Club simply as a means of satisfying their chess appetites and felt no reason to stand in awe of its illustrious past. These problems and the fact of Mr. Bee's failing health eventually caused difficulties for those engaged in the day to day running of the Club. The culmination was the very sad affair of his deposition from the presidency in 1965.

It was said that, despite his earlier achievements in recruiting members from the universities, his acerbic manner impeded recruitment from among the talent of the day.

But it could not be said of those who found it impossible to work with him and others who found his style unbearable that they were unmindful of all he had done for the Club's earlier survival. Their actions in seeking his removal from high office were prompted rather by a desire to ensure its survival in a changing chess world. And it was noticeable that among the 12 who signed the requisition, none held office at the time, although some had previously done so, and all were responsible members of long standing.

It was customary in those days for the same person to hold the positions of President and Chairman and at the 1965 AGM it was planned to retain Mr. Bee as President while electing another Chairman. In this way Mr. Bee could retain his revered status but cease to preside at meetings of the committee. Mr. W.H. Greenwood was asked before the meeting if he would accept nomination as Chairman and did so almost certainly without realising there was any

possibility of a dispute. And it is equally certain that Mr. Bee did not know of what was afoot.

But these intentions were thwarted at the meeting.

The following is quoted from a letter written by Mr. S.G. Hill afterwards:

"The agenda carefully showed President and Chairman as two separate items. Unfortunately someone proposed Mr. Bee for both offices simultaneously—this made it impossible for the AGM to retain him as President, and elect a new Chairman".

The minutes do not record Mr. Bee having been proposed, although he stood for re-election, but clearly someone must have done so. However, there was an objection from the floor that the rules did not provide for the election of a separate Chairman and a rule change would have to precede such an election. But the Secretary, Mr. J.J. Glover and some other members, interpreting the rules differently, considered a rule change unnecessary. During subsequent proceedings various things were said about Mr. Bee and his fitness for office that were later described as unnecessarily hurtful and offensive.

When voting began, Mr. S.G. Hill was proposed and seconded as President, but he immediately refused to stand and proposed Mr. W.H. Greenwood instead.

Dr. N.P. Richard seconded this proposal which was then passed by 13 votes to 7. Mr. Greenwood was then proposed as Chairman, and as there were no other nominations, he was declared elected.

The effect on Mr. Bee may well be imagined. Chess had been his life and the Club his special pride. He had cherished his Club and worked for it for longer than most people present had been alive. Then suddenly, without warning, it had rejected him.

He rose from his position at the head table, carefully put on his hat and coat, took his stick and sadly made for the door. Someone called after him—"But, Mr. Bee, you will remain an honorary member". His reply was an unenthusiastic, "Thank you very much".

Certain members were outraged not only by his rejection and the hurtful, personal comments made at the meeting but by the fact that the bulk of the membership was apparently unaware that such a momentous change was in prospect. Accordingly, a letter signed by 12 of these members was sent to the Secretary, Mr. J.J. Glover on 24th September 1965 demanding a Special General Meeting to raise the matter again and to attempt to reverse the AGM decision, and on 29th September the group circularised the membership explaining their reasons for this action and requesting support.

Mr. Glover did as requested and booked accommodation for 6th October at Lyons Teahouse in Bridge Street, Westminster for the meeting. There were two motions on the agenda. The first, proposed by Mr. A.A. Raven and seconded by Mr. J.A. Moore 'deplored the way the election had been conducted at the AGM and proposed that it should be declared null and void'. (A later amendment substituted the word 'regretted' for

'deplored'). The second, proposed by Mr. J.J. Moore and seconded by Mr. J.P. Goodfellow, was to elect Mr. J.M. Bee as President.

Mr. W.H. Greenwood who had been appalled at the turn of events, initially took the chair but immediately resigned as President and Chairman and handed over conduct of the meeting to Mr. T.F. Deery, feeling that his presence might cause embarrassment. He then left the premises.

There was much lively discussion in the following one and three-quarter hours, and when votes were taken, the first motion was carried by 13 votes to 12 and the second by 14 votes to 12.

The result, as could be expected, was satisfaction for Mr. Bee, jubilation for his supporters but dismay for those who considered there had been nothing irregular about the AGM decision and therefore no valid reason to challenge it. Mr. Bee seemed unconcerned that the vote in his favour had been so close, but some of those opposed to him were disturbed to observe that Mr. Hill, although prime mover in the plan to replace him, had not voted at all. Indeed, having made an initial statement of his position at the meeting, he appeared to take no further interest in the proceedings. Mr. Glover had done an immense amount of good work as Secretary, and a vote of confidence in him proposed by Mr. Raven and seconded by Mr. Hill, was carried unanimously. Nevertheless, despite pleas for him to remain in office, he felt that the changed circumstances left him no alternative but to resign. He promised, however, to continue running the Middlesex League team.

Mr. Hill had been the tournament controller at the time, and his efficiency in this capacity is still remembered, but he also did an immense amount of work with new members and with those of limited chess ability—introducing them to the Club, annotating games, organising 'newcomers tournaments' and generally encouraging them, but Mr. Bee's reinstatement and particularly the circumstances that had brought it about decided him against continuing these extra activities. Indeed, a letter from him dated 26th September indicated that he had made this decision even before the S.G.M. was called.

After Mr. Glover's resignation, it was clear that a competent successor, able and willing to work with Mr. Bee and equally able to cope with the unpleasant aftermath of the affair, was going to be difficult to find.

But the Club was eventually very fortunate in securing the services of Mr. A.A. Raven, without whose valuable contribution progress would have been difficult at the very least. No other member felt able to offer what was needed.

This affair is mentioned in detail because of the profound effect it had on the Club's outlook at the time. For a while there was talk of a possible split, as 'pro-Bee' and 'anti-Bee' factions opposed each other, and it is perhaps a tribute to those directly involved that they resisted the temptation to take matters too far.

Mr. Bee resigned as President and Chairman in 1968. Tributes were paid to him, and he was accorded an honorary life membership.

## CHAPTER SIX: Other Personalities

More should be said of Mr. S.G. Hill who joined the Club in March 1939. He served in the Royal Corps of Signals during the war and in peacetime was a Ministry of Labour official. His preferences were for music and chess. He was undoubtedly a powerful chess player and played regularly in the first team, but, as previously mentioned, he had a great talent for instructing and encouraging newcomers to the game. This was a welcome contribution, since many clubs of the time tended to neglect burgeoning talent.

He was not a man to conceal his feelings, and his forthright manner made a clash with Mr. Bee almost inevitable. He was not very patient with indecisive committee type arguments and frequently acted on his own initiative. On one occasion he confided that such action was condoned if it was reasonably obvious that the Club would benefit. He believed strongly that Club officials should be trusted and made to account for results rather than methods, but the extent to which he applied this principle was not appreciated by everyone, particularly during the period prior to Mr. Bee's removal from office.

It was this viewpoint that led him eventually to resign as tournament controller. A decision of his regarding the destination of one of the prizes was not respected by the 1969 AGM and he promptly resigned and left the Club. Later correspondence indicated that he gave up chess entirely to concentrate on music, but as proof that he bore the Club no ill will, he donated his chess clock some years later, and it is still in use.

An extract from one of his newsletters gives a fair indication of his style. It was headed, 'Message to the New or Recently Elected Member'.

"This Club, any club, is only as good as members make it. There are enough team matches for all to get a share. If you have not been invited to play in a team contact Mr. Glover (Secretary). If you accept to play in a team game, and default without warning or subsequent apology, do not be surprised if it is some time before you get another invitation...

...We regret the need for the rule of 'Silence while any serious game is in progress', but it is essential. If you ever play in one of the more sociable clubs, you will soon see why. We hope you will do your share in quietening the yappers. This needs a combined effort—not just action by officials.

No one's place in any team is sacrosanct. A player is generally as good as his last three games. This is hard—but fair—and gives new members a chance. We may not have internationals, but we do have fighters..."

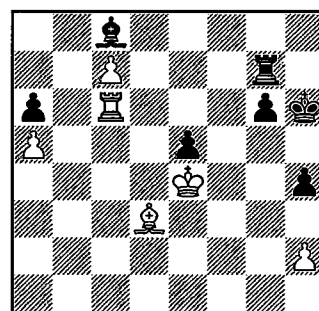
Appropriate though the above sentiments may yet be, it is doubtful whether any executive member would be quite as blunt to-day!

A further extract gives details of a game he played against S. Gligoric in a simultaneous display. The play lacks sparkle (although at times he could be brilliant) but it gives a fair indication of his style.

"I arrived anticipating a relaxing hour spent watching twenty suckers trying to play a grandmaster, incautiously accepted an unclaimed board, and became one of the suckers. At call of time I simply said, 'Naturally I will accept whatever you declare the position to be'. Gligoric promptly replied, 'It's a draw'. Later one Middlesex official surprisingly remarked, 'You could see he did not think it was a draw'.

End game analysts may like to judge for themselves.

*Final position*



*Black to play*

**S.Gligoric White S.G.Hill Black**  
*Sicilian Defence*

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e6 5.♘c3 a6 6.g3 ♗c7 7.♗g2 ♘f6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.b3 (a) 9...0-0 10.♗b2 d6 11.♗d2 ♗d7 12.♘ce2 ♗ad8 (b) 13.c4 ♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♗c8 (c) 15.♗ac1 ♗d7 (d) 16.♗e2 ♗fe8 (e) 17.♗fd1 ♗c7 18.f4 e5! (f) 19.♘f3 ♗c5+ 20.♗h1 ♘g4 21.♗f1 exf4 (g) 22.gxf4 ♗f6 23.♗xf6 ♘xf6 24.e5 ♘g4 25.♗ce1 dxe5 26.fxe5 f6 27.♗b2 ♘xe5 28.♘xe5 (h) 28...♗xe5 29.♗xe5 ♗xe5 30.♗xe5 fxe5 31.♗d5+! ♗h8 32.♗f7 h6 33.♗g2 b5 34.♗f3 ♗h7 35.♗e4 bxc4 36.bxc4 ♗e8 37.c5 ♗g6 38.♗f2 ♗e7 39.♗g2+ ♗f6 40.♗f2+ ♗g6 41.c6 ♗g5 42.♗f8 ♗h3 43.Ke3 g6 44.♗b8 ♗f1 45.♗b7 ♗f6 46.c7 ♗h3 47.♗b6+ ♗g5 48.♗c6 ♗c8 49.♗e4 ♗g7 50.a4 h5 51.a5 h4 52.♗d3 ♗g4 53.♗e4 ♗h3 54.♗c2 ♗e7 55.♗f1+ ♗g4 56.♗c3 ♗b7+ 57.♗e3 ♗c8 58.♗c4+ ♗g5 59.♗d3 ♗g7 60.♗e4 ♗f5+ 61.♗e3 ♗c8 62.♗c6 ♗h6 63.♗e4 Draw agreed.

(a) Not 9.f4? ♘xd4.

(b) White's next move is obvious, but the preventive 12...b5 allows a weakness on c6 which is probably fatal.

(c) ...d5 is now threatened.

(d) Try again.

(e) If 16...d5 17.cxd5 exd5 18.exd5 ♘xd5 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.♗xe7 ♗h3 21.f3 ♗xf1 22.♗xf1 ♗fe8 23.♗h4+

(f) The equaliser.

(g) Not 21...♘e3 22.b4 ♗a7 (22...♗xb4 23.♗xe3 ♗xb2 24.♗f2) 23.♗f2 wins.

(h) Forced exchanges. White cannot allow Black to dominate e4.

(i) From now on Black can lose, but not win. The final 12-14 moves were played after all other games had ended.

Somewhat unnerving.

(The text does not indicate the position of note (i) in the game)

The following two games played by him in the Club championship are not without interest.

**K.B. Harman White S.G. Hill Black**  
*Queen's Gambit Declined*

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.e3 0-0 7.♗d3 ♘bd7 8.♘f3 c6 9.♗c2 h6 10.♗f4 a6 11.0-0-0! c5! 12.g4 c4 13.♗f5 ♘b6 14.♗dg1 ♗h8 15.♘e5 (a) 15...♗b4 16.♗xc8 ♗xc8 17.h4 ♗xc3 18.bxc3 ♘e4 19.f3 ♘d6 20.g5 (b) 20...h5 21.g6 (c) 21...f6 22.♘g4! ♘b5! 23.♘h6 ♗e6 24.♘f7+ ♗g8 25.a4 ♘xa4!? 26.♗xa4 ♘xc3 27.♗c2 ♘b5 28.♗g5!? (d) 28...fxg5 29.hxg5 ♗xf7! 30.gxf7+ ♗xf7 31.♗xh5 ♗g6 32.♗h2 ♗c8?? (e) 33.♗e5 ♗xg5 (f) 34.♗b2 ♗g6 (g) 35.♗xg6+ ♗xg6 36.♗g2+ ♗f5 37.♗xg7 c3+ 38.♗c1 ♘a3 39.♗xb7 draw agreed.

The assorted exclamation and question marks were evidently jotted down by Jim Howson before he gave up trying to annotate this and are produced without comment, except that the following notes are a joint effort by the two players.

(a) 15.g5 seems stronger. Neither 15...♙xf5 16.♚xf5 g6 17.♚h3 ♘h5, nor 15...♙xf5 16.♚xf5 ♚d7 17.♚xd7 etc. is satisfactory for Black.

(b) Better 20.h5 threatening 21.g5!! The move played allows Black to block the attack.

(c) Not 21.♘g6+ fxg6 22.♙xd6 ♙xf3 23.♚xg6 ♚e8! etc.

(d) White considered his position lost (attack out). Hence this is desperate.

(e) Lee claims Black missed a win by 32...♚xc2+ 33.♙xc2 ♙g6. Agreed.

(f) Tempted by a mating attack. 33...♚xc2+ still wins.

(g) If 34...♚xe3 35.♚f5+ ♙e7 36.♙f6+!! ♙d6 (not 36...gxg6 37 ♙h7+ and mates) 37.♙e5+ and draws by perpetual check.

**S.G. Hill White M.W. Wills Black**  
*Pirc-Robatsch Defence*

1.♘f3 d6 2.d4 g6 3.e4 ♙g7 4.♙c4 c5 5.c3 cxd4 6.♚b3 e6 7.0-0 ♘e7 8.♙g5 0-0 9.♘xd4 ♘bc6 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♘a3? h6 12.♙e3 d5 13.♙d3 ♚a5 14.♙ad1 ♙a6 15.♙xa6 ♚xa6 16.♙d4 ♙ab8 17.♚c2 dxe4 18.♙xg7 ♙xg7 19.♙d4 f5 20.♙fd1 ♘d5 21.c4 e5 22.♙d2 ♘b4 23.♙d7+ ♙f7 24.♚c3 (a) 24...♚c8 25.♚xe5+ ♙g8 26.♚e6 ♚f8 27.♚xg6+ (b) 27...♚g7 28.♚xg7+ ♙xg7 29.♙xf7+ ♙xf7 30.♙d6 (c) 30...♘xa2 31.♙xc6 ♙xb2 32.g3 ♘c3 33.♙c7+ ♙e6 34.♙xa7 ♘d1! (d) Draw agreed after overnight consideration.

(a) Hoping for 24...♘d3 25.♙1xd3 and 26.♚xe5+ winning.

(b) Having forced open a file by a pawn sacrifice, White now fumbles the win. 28.♙1d6 considered and dismissed now seems unanswerable by 28...♚g7. Mike Wills suggests 28 ♙xa7 wins, and is doubtless right.

(c) Hindsight suggests 30.♙d7+ ♙e6 31.♙xa7 ♙d8 32.g3 is better.

(d) Black's threat of ...e3 after ...♘xf2 is so ominous that White must continue checking.

Mr. B. Heastie, a respected member of long standing, was President in 1945 and was succeeded a year before his death by Mr. A.W.E. Louis in 1946. Mr. Louis was also highly esteemed, having been match captain from 1923 until 1945, and it was a sad loss to the Club when he died in December 1949. A minute's silence in remembrance of him was observed at the following committee meeting. The Presidency then passed to Mr. D. Miller whose valuable service also extended over a long period of time.

Another member whose extensive services to the Club must be mentioned was Mr. J. Cabourn—a genial, likeable man with a mild, endearing air of eccentricity. Since 1946 and before Mr. Hill's influence was exercised, he had done great work as an assistant to the major posts of Secretary, Treasurer, tournament controller and team captain. He subsequently ran some of the lower teams. He, too, had a special interest in welcoming new members. Indeed, it was he whom the writer met on his first visit to the Club. Unfortunately, this visit coincided with the AGM, but the warmth of the greeting was such that it was almost a pleasure to be asked to leave. To the promise of a warm welcome the following week was added, 'We will be very pleased to have you'. These words are still remembered and repeated in similar circumstances when a prospective member makes a diffident appearance in the Club's doorway.

It is difficult to avoid contrasting the warmth of this approach with the reception accorded to Mr. Raven and to Mr. Glover by Mr. Bee on their first appearance (as recorded elsewhere in this work).

He was a man who was strong on principle, and his resignation from the Club came shortly after a disagreement at the 1957 AGM over matters concerning team captaincy.

His proposition to the meeting was that team captains should not play in teams with which they were involved, because preoccupation with their own games rendered them less able to exercise overall control. But Mr. Bee, who regularly played in the first team while running it expertly—as Mr. J.A. Moore described earlier in this work—considered the proposal a vote of censure on himself. There were a few heated exchanges after which the meeting voted against the motion unanimously.

Mr. Cabourn was never heard of again, which was very sad, since he had been close to the heart of the Club for so long.

Mention should also be made of Mr. S. Lathey whose impassive exterior concealed an internal warmth. He joined the Club in 1936 and was a strong first team player who also won many Club awards. He was also a Vice-President and an enthusiastic committee member and controlled the tournaments efficiently from 1945 until 1952. He died in July, 1979.

The Club also owes a great deal to Mr. W.H. Greenwood. It has been impossible to determine the exact date of his joining, although it would appear to have been soon after the end of the 1939-45 War. He died in the early part of 1989. He held an important position with Thomson Newspapers for many years, and the Club benefited through his influence in many ways. He was Secretary from 1949 until 1952 and also frequently captained the lower teams. He became President, as indicated previously in 1968 and remained in this office until succeeded by Mr. J.J. Moore in 1979.

It was impossible not to like Mr. 'Willy' Greenwood, as he was sometimes known. It has to be admitted that he was no great player, but he could teach many of the best a great deal about the art of losing gracefully. Indeed, he was as cheerful in defeat as in victory and when vanquished would grasp his opponents hand and shake it with genuine warmth. One got the impression that he could have been a better player but had decided he was as good as he wanted to be.

It was not generally known that he had considerable artistic talent and in his later years devoted much time to painting.

Clubs need more members like him.

Other names from the recent past spring to mind. Lt. Col. R.D. Jackson is one of these. He was a tall man and in many ways conformed to the popular image of a military man of his generation, but his was a reserved nature, and although a strong first team player, he seemed to get most satisfaction from watching games in progress.

There is no record of the date he joined, but he was a Vice-President in 1936. Strangely there is no record either of his departure, although this must have occurred at some time in the 1950's. It must be assumed, therefore, that like many an old soldier, he simply faded away...

Mr. A. Bernfield is another member who is recalled with affection. Unassuming and of very even temperament, he was a strong first team player. His generosity to the Club was mentioned in an earlier chapter, but heavy smoking did not help him physically, and he was clearly quite ill on his final visits to the Club. The following is an extract from an obituary written by Mr. A.A. Raven in the Annual Report for 1983:

"Mr. Bernfield joined the Club in the early thirties—the exact date has not been recorded—and had been a Vice-President since 1953. He served on the committee for

many years and was a regular 1st team player, playing on a high board when we won the Championship of the London League in 1960-61 and 1961-1962. Mr. Bernfield won the Club Championship in 1946-7 (jointly with Mr. J. Gilchrist) and in 1956-7. He died in hospital in December" (1982).

It seems likely that Mr. J.P. Goodfellow was a victim of the smoking habit also, but he practised it differently. He confided that he never smoked during a game until he was reasonably certain of a favourable outcome. This meant that his friends could assess his chances without needing to examine his position, simply by awaiting his 'smoke signal' from the other side of the room.

He, too, was a very amiable man and a strong player. He played in first and second team matches and became a Vice-President in 1970. He also played on a high board for the county of Kent. He died some time in 1983 or 1984.

Of today's membership, undoubtedly Mr. M. Shanson has been with the Club longest. He joined during the 1929/30 season and has been a Vice-President for many years. He was of great assistance in the early part of the postwar period in bringing the rules up to date and remains a loyal and generous member. (*See earlier footnote: Mr. Shanson died in 1991*)

Mr. J. J. Moore is certainly the oldest active member at the time of writing. He attends the Club regularly, participates in matches and tournaments and chaired the meetings expertly until very recently. He joined in 1932, then after a short break during the War, rejoined in October, 1946. He played regularly in the first team for many years and was its captain for ten years from 1966. He was club champion in 1978 and still plays a very powerful game. For ten years he was both President and Chairman, but in the Centenary year he asked to be relieved of some of the pressure, and Mr. J. Kitchen took over the duties of Chairman.

He has provided the following, in his own words: 'purely as a matter of interest'.

"A very strong County player was reputed to have joined Metropolitan with the intention of winning the Club championship, and a close run thing it was, for he needed just a draw from his last game which was against myself, to clinch matters. Mr. Bee approached me before the game and said something like this in his best Cambridge tone of bygone days: 'My dear fellow you know you simply have to win don't you?' This was wasn't really of much help to me as I sat down to play. However, my luck was in. It was soon clear my opponent was aiming only for a draw, following which I had the opportunity (one I seldom pass by) of exchanging bishop for knight where pawns are doubled or isolated thereby and this—which was almost too good to be true—not on one but on both sides of the board. Add to that a mate developing out of the blue and who could have gone wrong? Not a gem of a game but it served its purpose.

To be fair, my opponent did go on to play first board on occasion, which was more than I'd ever done till then." The game is reproduced below:

**County player White J.J. Moore Black**  
Metropolitan Chess Club Championship 1964  
*Sicilian Defence*

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.c3 d5 5.exd5 ♖xd5  
6.cxd4 e5 7.♘c3 ♙b4 8.dxe5 ♗xd1+ 9.♙xd1 ♙g4 10.♙f4  
♙xc3 11.bxc3 ♘ge7 12.♙b5 0-0 13.♙xc6 ♘xc6 14.♙c2  
♚ac8 15.♙b2 ♙xf3 16.gxf3 ♚fe8 17.♚he1 ♘a5 18.♚ad1  
♘c4+ 19.♙b3 ♚e6 20.♙c2 ♚a6 21.♙b1 ♘a3+ 22.♙b2  
♘c4+ 23.♙a1 Na3 24.♚e2 h6 25.♚d3 ♚ac6 26.♙d2??  
♚b6 Resigns.

The Club is also indebted to its present top board player, Mr. J.B. (Jimmy) Adams for many interesting lectures and

simultaneous displays. He joined in 1978, and his record in matches against powerful opposition is superb. His writings about chess are widely acclaimed, and his recent book on the games of Boleslavsky was accorded the title of 'Book of the Year' by the British Chess Federation.

Having decided to join a chess club, the reasons behind an individual's choice of club are numerous, and club officers concerned with recruitment might do well to study them. High on the list of priorities, no doubt, would be accessibility. Another equally important consideration would be 'atmosphere'. Other considerations might be a club's reputation and the cost of membership.

Of these, membership cost is probably less important than is generally imagined, yet club officials frequently blame this factor for low membership figures.

Frequently people join particular clubs because their friends are there or because the 'atmosphere' is right and they feel certain of being accepted. For this reason Metropolitan firmly believes in the importance of making the newcomer welcome on his first visit. This preamble is intended to introduce an account given by Mr. J.J. Glover on the subject of his reasons for joining and also to speculate on why he and others like him, having arrived to a rather frosty reception, decided to stay.

"Mr. J.J. Glover and Mr. R.S. Sefton spent most of their time while stationed in the NATO headquarters at Munchengladbach in Germany (Mr. Glover in the Army and Mr. Sefton in the R.A.F.) playing chess—unlike their fellow servicemen in the NAAFI bar! After they were demobilised they were at a loose end and wandered into a chess shop off Buckingham Palace Road and enquired of a suitable chess club to join—not knowing that they were only a stone's throw away from Athenaeum. The proprietor promptly advised 'Metropolitan' with no hesitation. The pair were later to appear in Room 18 St. Bride Institute and were confronted by Mr. Bee who enquired, 'What do you want?' Mr. Sefton proudly replied, 'We are prospective members'."

Mr. Bee appeared to be taken aback by this announcement and simply replied, 'Oh!'.

Mr. Sefton is a strong member of the first team today and dutifully commutes from his home in Meopham, Kent for matches.

John Glover has given excellent administrative service for many years. He is the present tournament controller and still does useful work by producing match cards and membership lists, although other commitments make it impossible for him to participate in Club activities.

He was a good Club Secretary until the unfortunate problem over the Presidency in 1965, referred to earlier, which resulted in his resignation. Shortly after there was an external approach aimed at securing his services as London Chess League Secretary to which he felt unable to respond.

As mentioned earlier, Mr. A.A. Raven followed Mr. Glover as Club Secretary. He was elected at a committee meeting on 16th November, 1965 and did not relinquish the post until business commitments forced him to do so in 1983. He has therefore been the longest serving Secretary of the postwar period. His idea of providing typed annual reports to replace verbal reports previously given at annual general meetings facilitated a continuous and more permanent record of the Club's activities.

An article written by him and dealing with his introduction to the Club is included in these pages. It throws valuable light on the Club's circumstances at that time.

Today's members come from all walks of life, and mutual interest in a pursuit that provides little opportunity for any kind of social exchange restricts their knowledge of each other to little more than information concerning grading figures. But occasionally private details are unwittingly revealed.



There was, for example, a Mr. E. Kotarski whose dialect suggested that his origins were rooted in some East European country. He was small and very amiable and would gleefully recount what were probably witty anecdotes associated with his chess experiences. Unfortunately, few people understood a word he said, but something about him suggested that he would eventually have problems with the Treasurer, and when these occurred, they were solved by a warm-hearted, generous senior Club member.

He had a passion for 'blitz' type chess which he frequently demonstrated in typical continental coffee-house manner, banging the pieces on the board in a fervour of excitement to the consternation of serious chess addicts in his vicinity, but more disturbing perhaps, was his *breathing*, and when his game was reaching its climax, his lungs would go into 'overdrive' and produce gusts that could be heard on the other side of the room.

Of course, the 'Silence' rule in most chess clubs is normally interpreted as a restriction on the use of the voice.

No one expects to be asked to breathe quietly, and asking Mr. Kotarski to do so would undoubtedly have been a waste of time.

So members suffered him with resigned gestures, feeling that his considerable talent excused such eccentricity. And his talent was undeniable. He could rapidly evaluate a position, then produce a winning sacrifice apparently from nowhere. Then suddenly he stopped coming.

Some time after, the Secretary received a telephone call from the police, stating that he had died and apparently had no relatives. Since he appeared to have no friends either, the Club was asked if any member might have a claim on his effects. These were apparently of little value and were entirely contained in a small cardboard box. The Secretary had to confirm that no member had any knowledge of his private affairs, so presumably his meagre possessions were disposed of by the State.

It is to be hoped that in his journey from nowhere to nowhere, the Club provided this little man with a few hours enjoyment.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: Officers and Members

It is possible that some recently joined members will find much of the foregoing uninspiring. The names, achievements and contributions of people long since departed and even of those present might seem irrelevant to the purpose for which they joined.

Nevertheless, this work would betray its purpose, if it did not focus attention on what is owed to those past and present who have given so much of their time and money to establish and maintain the benefits of membership.

The writer recalls an occasion when he was collecting among the membership for a gift for a retiring London Chess League Secretary. One member refused to contribute 'because', he said, 'I never knew the man'. The writer now regrets not having pointed out that although the member 'never knew the man', he nevertheless benefitted from the man's efforts whenever he played a London Chess League game. And it is obvious that although everything is subordinate to the purpose for which any club is formed, the enjoyment of such purpose depends upon the efforts of willing workers.

Indeed it is true that we admire the works of great artists, composers and others while ignoring the debt we owe to those who did their laundry and darned their socks. Had the great been required to minister to themselves, they might never have found time for artistic endeavour.

Recognition is therefore due to those who have served the Club. And those who continue to serve, although they might not anticipate gratitude, nevertheless feel entitled to co-operation—a desire which colours their views when, for example, members default from tournaments or matches without good reason or explanation.

But problems of this kind afflict all clubs, and Metropolitan members have on the whole a very good record for co-operation. Many have assisted anonymously, and appeals for donations in times of urgent need have always been answered generously.

Some of the work involved in the day to day running of the Club is, of course, very time consuming. And it is fortunate that whenever external pressures have forced the resignations of officers, others have been found to replace them, although not always without difficulty.

At the beginning of the postwar period there were many assistants to the main posts, but in the more recent past circumstances have frequently forced officers to undertake additional work, as other officers resigned.

It was to relieve pressure on the President and Chairman, Mr. W.H. Greenwood that it was proposed at the 1977 AGM that the two posts should be separated. The meeting adopted the proposal, and Mr. Greenwood was re-elected President while Dr. P.D. Ralph was elected Chairman. Their separate functions were not officially defined, but it became the custom for the President to chair the annual general meetings and for the Chairman to preside at meetings of the committee.

Mr. Greenwood resigned the Presidency in 1979 for health reasons and was succeeded by Mr. J.J. Moore. Dr. Ralph resigned as Chairman in 1980, because his removal from London obliged him to leave the Club. The office of Chairman was not filled until, as stated earlier, Mr. J. Kitchen filled it in 1990.

The names of others to whom the Club owes so much appear in the appendices. Other members have assisted variously according to their professional ability.

The Club, for example owes much to Mr. M. Shanson and Mr. S.T.K. Wilkinson for their legal advice. It was also grateful when, through the good offices of Mr. T.A.

Holliday, it was able to replace its old wooden storage cupboard with one of more modern design. Since some of the equipment stored in it was no longer used, extra space and funds for up-dating were acquired by selling some of it to members. All the very oldest clocks were disposed of in this way. Some of them, indeed, although possessing antique value, were of little practical use, since they had no 'flags' to mark the time control—a fact that provides a fair indication of the leisurely attitude that prevailed in those far off days when *strict* time control was considered unnecessary (and sometimes 'ungentlemanly').

The Club also benefitted from other kinds of generosity. Mr. T. Greenwood, auditor for many years, donated ten sets and ten boards in 1984—a truly magnificent gesture which was warmly appreciated. No less appreciated was the anonymous donation of ten chess clocks in the same year.

From the earliest times it has been the Club's proud boast that it takes chess seriously and warmly welcomes each new member who wishes to do likewise, whatever his standard of play. There are records of many facilities on offer for those who have wished to improve. Mr. R.C. Cousens assisted by Mr. D.J. Banks gave lectures in the early 1970's, and later Mr. J.B. Adams did likewise and gave simultaneous displays. Similar displays were given by Messrs. G.A. Dickson and R.E. Spurgeon. Dr. P.D. Ralph and Mr. S.G. Hill annotated the games of many lower team members, and instruction was given by Mr. J.J. Moore. It was the Club's misfortune that it was nevertheless unsuccessful in recruiting many young players whose enthusiasm had been kindled by an increasing chess interest in schools. This was despite the laudable efforts of two members both professionally involved in children's education—Mr. M.P. Moreton and Mr. P. Burgoyne. There are references in the minutes to matches played with Dog Kennel Hill School, Dulwich. And in the 1960's Mr. J.J. Glover introduced two very promising young players, one aged ten and the other aged thirteen, who nevertheless disappeared from the chess scene as a result, it is reasonable to suppose, of external influences.

No doubt pressure of school work was largely responsible for the dearth of young talent, but it is equally possible that travel difficulties associated with the Club's location were also to blame.

It is a pity, also, that the Club has not attracted more lady members. Mrs. Shannon, a notable member before the war is remembered through the existence of the second team trophy known as the 'Shannon Bowl', but there have been few since. Records reveal the names of Miss M. Dering, Miss C.H. Lewin, Miss Anne Sunnucks, Miss Toft, Mrs. L. Ribbons and Mrs. I. Morris. Of these, the last two named remained longest. To-day there are just two: Mrs. S. Rowles and Miss L. Blay. Mrs. Rowles has been a member for longer than any other lady in the postwar period, and the Club very much hopes that she will remain a member for many years to come.

Membership was, and still is, open to all, but, as in most clubs, a vetting system has always existed. The writer recalls only one instance when an application was declined. A senior member disapproved of an applicant for reasons based on personal experience. But despite the fact that the committee had no other reason to reject him, it felt obliged to do so, because the senior member was highly respected, and his judgement was trusted when he stated that the applicant was likely to have a disturbing influence.

The Secretary was clearly uneasy at having to inform the applicant of the committee's decision. And as might

be expected, there was further correspondence with the outraged applicant with which the Secretary, Mr. Glover, dealt diplomatically.

Later, very much to the Club's discomfiture, the rejected individual was appointed to a senior executive position with one of the chess organisations with which it was associated!

Referring once again to Mr. J.A. Moore's remark that a club is what its members are at any point in time and to the conclusion that circumstances have changed it probably beyond the recognition of any ghosts from its past, there nevertheless remains a continuous thread which unites the old with the new. This thread is manifested in the degree of commitment demonstrated by the bulk of the membership to advancing the Club's best interests by performance over the board or by attention to its administrative requirements, and as long as this sense of commitment—or 'club spirit' as it might be called—persists, the chances of the Club's survival are good.

In return, the Club endeavours to ensure that the needs of each member, whether he be strong or weak, are adequately satisfied.

But as in all things, current trends must be observed and the Club must adapt to such trends if the prospect of permanent change becomes apparent. And the current trend appears to be a rejection of Club membership in favour of the financial and other attractions of congress play.

The accelerated rates of play in these short span tournaments are not to everyone's taste. There are many, indeed, who feel that there is no substitute for the steadier pace of club chess if they wish to improve the quality of their performance. Furthermore, club premises provide a focal point for chess-minded friends, and there is much satisfaction to be gained from playing in matches alongside friends towards a common objective.

These considerations provide a basis for faith in the prospect of the survival and continuous development of club chess in the foreseeable future.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: Centenary Celebrations

On 13th January 1981 Mr. J.J. Moore suggested in committee that a fund be set up to defray the expenses of celebrating the Club's Centenary in 1990 and publishing a book on its history.

The idea met with general approval, but there were different opinions as to how it should be established. The auditor, Mr. T. Greenwood, was asked to advise on the best way to ensure that the value of the fund was maintained. There was a suggestion that a levy should be charged on the annual subscription and on the tournaments, but this was rejected in favour of the following resolution that was presented to the AGM of 1982:-

"The Treasurer is hereby instructed to open a Centenary Fund to help defray the expenses of the Club's Centenary celebrations in 1990, to which Fund members shall be invited to contribute; that such contributions shall for the time being be on a voluntary basis; and that no part of the Fund shall be directed to any other purpose (unless in the event of the Club being wound up), except that any part of the Fund remaining after the expenses of the Centenary have been met shall be transferred to the general funds of the Club".

The resolution was approved and the fund built up slowly, but there were always doubts about whether it would be adequate. Indeed, at a Special General Meeting in November 1988 it only amounted to £161.

Nevertheless, a list of celebratory proposals was drawn up at that meeting. They were as follows:-

1. The book on the Club's history to be written by Mr. J.J. Moore (first part) and Mr. T.F. Deery (second part).
2. A weekend tournament to which other clubs would be invited to send a limited number of players.
3. A celebratory dinner.
4. An internal 'Old versus Young' match.
5. A simultaneous display by a prominent chess master.
6. An evening of light-hearted chess.
7. The purchase of specially designed chess neck-ties.

The membership was circulated with details of these proposals together with a request for assistance.

It was eventually decided not to proceed with the provision of neck-ties, but action was taken on all the other items with successful results.

The Club Treasurer, Mr. J.K. Stoneman, worked hard in his efforts to obtain sponsorship and was eventually successful in obtaining a £1,000 grant from the City of London's Coal, Corn and Rates Finance committee, and Mr. I.A. Fenyvesi was instrumental in securing a donation of £25 from Minet, Lloyds International Brokers which was much appreciated. These sums were largely expended on the main event which was the weekend tournament. Mr. J.J. Moore kindly contributed £50 to the prize fund in addition to his other generous contributions.

The Club also appreciated the gesture of the Bishopsgate Institute's management over the rent for the Large Hall which at £500 for the two days was less than the normal charge.

The first event was a simultaneous display by Mr. J.B. Adams, the Club's top board player, on 3rd April 1990 in the Club room. It had initially been arranged to raise money for the Centenary fund, so each participant was charged three pounds, but later it was decided to regard it as part of the Centenary programme.

Mr. T. Elek photographed the occasion, and the Club had reason to feel grateful to him for submitting one of the photographs and a report to the *British Chess Magazine* which printed them.

There were seventeen participants, and Jimmy triumphed over eleven of these, drew with three and lost to three.

The following won their games: D.J. Harrison, J.J. Moore and D.J. Cannon (a visitor) The following drew: B. Okrejeka, R.L. Brown and P.L. Szabo.

The Club was very grateful to Jimmy for volunteering his services and for donating copies of his book on the games of Boleslavsky as prizes.

It was, indeed, a very successful and enjoyable occasion.

The next event was a match between the older and the younger members on 17th May. It was organised by Mr. R.H. Budden and Mr. P.L. Szabo.

Thirty members took part, and it was a tribute to the skill of the organisers that the pairings were satisfactory, despite initial fears that the numbers of old to young would be disproportionate. The younger side won by a mere point. The result was as follows:-

Old		Young	
1. P.C.Doye	½	J.B.Adams	½
2. S.T.K.Wilkinson	1	D.Harrison	0
3. B.E.Glaze	0	D.J.E.Harris	1
4. J.J.Moore	0	J. Kitchen	1
5. T.Pruchnicki	1	J.K.Stoneman	0
6. T.F.Deery	½	D.I.Calvert	½
7. I.A.Fenyvesi	0	Dr.N.M.Stewart	1
8. W.G.V.McLaughlin	0	H. Chan	1
9. V.Mathias	½	P.Burgoyne	½
10. A.A. Raven	0	G. Faulkener	1
11. T.Elek	0	P.A.Wiseman	1
12. J.Paddock	1	R. Hamilton	0
13. J.S.Young	1	R.L. Brown	0
14. A.Dalglish	½	R.H. Budden	½
15. M. Holder	1	M.Fitzgerald	0
	7		8

The Centenary dinner was held in the Carvery at the Tower Hotel near Tower Bridge on 9th June.

The success of this auspicious occasion was due to the organising skills of Mr. John Kitchen who chose the venue and made all the arrangements.

The Club was very pleased that the President of the London Chess League, Mr. A.C. Martin and the President of the Middlesex Chess League, Mr. R. Brown were able to attend as honoured guests.

The members initially assembled in the Thames Bar on the first floor and it was a particular pleasure for active members to greet those who for various reasons had been unable to participate in Club activities for some time.

Of these, perhaps Mr. R.C. Cousens had travelled furthest, having arrived from his home in Gwent earlier in the day. Two previous Club secretaries were especially welcome—Mr. A.A. Raven and Mr. C.W. van Veen, and it was a happy experience for his old friends to meet Mr. M. Shanson, the holder of the Club's longest membership.

A group photograph was taken before everyone retired to the carvery. The meal was of a very high standard, but the most delectable item was the celebratory cake made and artistically decorated by Jimmy Adams' wife, Sharon. The decoration comprised a chess position taken from a famous brilliant game played between Rottlewi and Rubinstein.

Later in the evening Mr. Kitchen proposed a toast to the Club. He then referred to the cake and proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Adams for her excellent endeavours. This was unanimously and enthusiastically acclaimed.

After the toast, the President, Mr. J.J. Moore made a short speech of welcome and mentioned the 500 or more members who had sustained the Club since its inauguration and who should also be remembered. The presence of the honoured guests reminded him of similar occasions in the past, when, for example, Mr. J.H. Moore, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the London Chess League, was guest at an annual Metropolitan Club dinner in 1914, and also of when Mr. C.E. Williams, a later London Chess League Secretary, was a guest at the dinner given to celebrate the Club's ninetieth birthday in April, 1980.

The evening ended happily at a reasonable hour.

Those present were as follows:

R. Brown (guest)	A.C. Martin (guest)
J.B. Adams	R.L. Brown
D.I. Calvert	H. Chan
R.C. Cousens	I. Dawson
T.F. Deery	P. Doye
I.A. Fenyvesi	J. Kitchen
W.G.V. McLaughlin	J.A. Moore
J.J. Moore	A.A. Raven
R.S. Sefton	M. Shanson
Dr. N.M. Stewart	P.L. Szabo
C.W. van Veen	J.S. Young

The next event was the Centenary Tournament which took place over the weekend 21st and 22nd July.

It was uncomfortably hot—88° F (31° C)—on the first day. A few members arrived early in the Bishopsgate Institute's Large Hall to see Mr. George Goodwin's helpers setting out the boards and pieces. Eureka Electronics, the chess computer company, were there asking where they might display their products. Space was eventually found for them just outside the door of the hall. They had kindly contributed £200 to club funds in exchange for the space and for the participation of two of their computers in the Major and Intermediate sections of the tournament. Building work had blocked the front entrance, so access was only possible through a side door.

Competitors were at first slow to arrive, and some unease was felt at the thought that many might have decided it was too hot for chess and had taken themselves off to coast or country. There was, of course, nothing to induce them to keep their promise to compete, since no entry fees had been paid. The Club had decided against such charges, since the tournament was a celebratory event, and the intention was to invite the Club's many friends from the London chess scene to share in it. To counter the problems that might ensue from too large a response, the invitations had been limited to three per club, but in the course of time this restriction was relaxed.

Competitors were to be entered in any of three sections according to their grading figures: Major 160 and over, Intermediate 125 to 159 and Minor 124 and below. (Competitors were at liberty to play in a higher section than the one applicable to their grade)

Concern over inducements was to some extent alleviated by the reflection that the prizes, though not high by some standards, were nevertheless worth sweating for—in every sense.

There were three in each section as follows:-

Major:	£75, £40, £30.
Intermediate:	£55, £30, £20.
Minor:	£35, £20, £10

Suddenly the hall started to fill up, and the organisers began to breathe more freely, as the prospect of a humiliating non-event receded. In all, 88 players competed from the 92 who had accepted invitations.

Mr. J.J. Moore, the Club President, opened the proceedings with a short speech in which he welcomed the participants and thanked the sponsors. Mr. T. Elek took photographs at this point and later during the course of the event and at the prizegiving. His efforts resulted in a highly valued record of the occasion for which the Club was very grateful.

The competitors crowded round the display board to discover the names of their first round opponents, and at 10 a.m. the first moves were made.

Five rounds had been arranged—three on the Saturday and two on the Sunday. The rate of play was 45 moves in 1 ½ hours, with the clocks turned back fifteen minutes after Black's 45th move and each game concluded before the next fall of the clock flag, but a late decision by the authorities of the Institute to close the building by 9 p.m. on the Saturday resulted in a modification to this rate in the second and third rounds and a re-arrangement of the times.

George Goodwin's experience of chess tournament organising extended back twenty-seven years, so it was hardly surprising that the event ran smoothly. Adequate refreshments were available, since he had taken over the basement restaurant for the weekend. Every possibility had been anticipated. Indeed, when a heated argument broke out between two competitors at the start of the second round, one of George's helpers was quickly on the scene to suggest a solution which involved him rapidly escorting both through the door. This 'diplomatic' approach was instantly effective—to the disappointment of the writer who had anticipated having something truly dramatic to record!

Since there was no other activity in any part of the building, it was a pleasure to be able to wander through the corridors at will. The basement restaurant became a meeting place for those who wished to chat between rounds, analyse recently completed games or play informal chess.

There were many junior players, and all of them performed extremely well. Of special mention were the Haslinger children, Gareth aged 17, Mandy aged 9 and Stuart aged 8 who had all won national awards for junior chess. Young Karl Mah aged 9 also played very well, scoring 3 out of 5 in the Minor section. Another impressive junior was Thomas Hinks-Edwards aged 13 who reached the prize list in the Minor with 4 points out of 5.

Only one of the Club's members achieved the prize list—Mr. D.I. Calvert, who shared second prize in the Intermediate section with the final score of 4 points out of 5.

Each of the two chess computers scored 2 points out of 5. To avoid distraction, both machines were set up together in a far corner of the hall. They were operated by Mr. P. Cohen of Eureka Electronics Ltd., and there were demonstrations of similar machines on the company's stand at the door.

A similar sign of the times was the occasional reminder from the stage that bags and cases should not be left unattended because of local bomb scare reports.

It was Mr. J.J. Moore's keen eye that spied the name 'Storr-Best' among the list of competitors. Since the name features prominently in the Club's early records, Mr. Moore sought its owner and discovered to his delight—and that of the writer—that the gentleman who bore it was a nephew of Dr. Lloyd Storr-Best who was Metropolitan Chess Club President for many years before the war. (*See first part of the book*).

He—R.H. Storr-Best—was himself a member from 1936 until 1947. His aunts, Mrs. L. Storr-Best and Miss L. Storr-Best preceded him as members. After leaving the Club, he joined the Insurance Chess Club in the 1950's. But he was pleased on this occasion to undertake the long journey from his home in Petersfield, Hampshire to participate in his old club's Centenary event.

He was a very amiable man whose healthy appearance belied his age, and the account of his experiences as a club member in those early days was intensely interesting.

The next day's weather was still hot but not quite as oppressive. And with more time available for the remaining two rounds, the pace was more leisurely.

There were, unfortunately, rather a large number of tied positions. But an extra round would have been difficult to arrange, because of the limited amount of time available.

The President closed the event at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday with a short speech in which he thanked the participants and organisers. He also referred jocularly to the possible influence of the Metropolitan Chess Club on the longevity of some of its senior members. He then presented the prizes as follows:

#### Major section

1st	R.J. McMichael <i>Kings Head</i>	4½ points
2nd	J. Manley <i>Iford</i>	4
3rd	C. Bracken <i>Hackney</i>	3½
	T. Gavriel <i>Muswell Hill</i>	3½
	A.C. Keehner <i>Wanstead</i>	3½
	D.R. Sedgwick <i>Insurance</i>	3½
	W. Stanton <i>Islington</i>	3½

#### Intermediate section

1st	A. Galenda <i>Polish YMCA</i>	4½ points
2/3	D.I. Calvert <i>Metropolitan</i>	4
2/3	P. Dawes <i>Wood Green</i>	4
2/3	J. Simons <i>Hackney</i>	4

#### Minor section

1st	V. Bioletti <i>Charlton</i>	5 points
2nd	K., Claudius <i>Rich. &amp; Twick.</i>	4½
3rd	L.F. Levbuomwan <i>Wimbledon</i>	4
3rd	T. Hinks-Edwards <i>Richmond</i>	4

Congratulations were due to Mr. Bioletti for his perfect score.

A few problems arose during the tournament. The timing of rounds was one of these, but the principal misgivings proved unfounded and it was with a sigh of relief that the Club's organisers left the building. A large amount of effort had gone into the preparatory stages which might for so many reasons have come to nothing, but the satisfaction expressed by many participants induced a feeling that the Club's founders and all who have carried the torch throughout the years might have approved.

The mark of the true professional is the manner in which he makes things look easy. This is as certain of chess as of all else.

On Tuesday the 18th September, Grandmaster Dr. John Nunn perfectly demonstrated the truth of the above observation by defeating 17 Metropolitan members in a simultaneous display in very little time at all. Moving quickly from board to board, he made his moves without appearing to study any of the positions in much depth.

The last game to finish and the one that came nearest to achieving a different result was that of Mr. H. Chan who was deserving of praise for his gallant effort.

The Club was again indebted to Mr. J. Kitchen who arranged the event. The original intention was for Jonathan Speelman to give the display, but other commitments forced him to withdraw.

Each member paid a board fee of ten pounds but was well satisfied with the evening. Their names were as follows:

D.I. Calvert, H. Chan, D. Cuckson, T.F. Deery, P. Doye, I.A. Fenyvesi, M. Fitzgerald, P. Hatton, J. Kitchen, V. Mathias, J.J. Moore, T. Pruchnicki, Dr. N.M. Stewart, J.K. Stoneman, P.L. Szabo, C.W. van Veen and J.S. Young.

The final event was to be a 'chess fun evening'.

Various ideas were considered—games with modified rules, 'kriegspiel', etc., but these presented organisational problems. The Club therefore opted for something more familiar, and a 'five-minute' tournament was agreed upon.

Once again the Club was much indebted to Mr. J. Kitchen for sending out the invitations and then controlling the event. But in addition he donated fifty pounds for prizes. These comprised three amounts in cash and two books for grading awards. There were no entry fees.

The tournament took place in the Club room on 27th November, 1990, and—as with everything with which John Kitchen was associated—there were no hitches.

Opening the proceedings, Mr. J.J. Moore, as President, addressed the participants and thanked John on behalf of the Club for his generosity and efforts.

There were 11 rounds, each of which, as expected, concluded very quickly. And in keeping with the spirit of the occasion, there was more fun than good chess.

The following eleven members and one visitor competed:-

C. Bennett, R.H. Budden, T.F. Deery, B.E. Glaze, D.J.E. Harris, D. Harrison, J.J. Moore, T. Pruchnicki, A.A. Raven, C.H. Scherer (visitor), J.K. Stoneman and P.L. Szabo.

The first and second prizes were shared between D.E.J. Harris and D. Harrison. The third prize was shared between B.E. Glaze and A.A. Raven. The grading awards were won by T. Pruchnicki and J.K. Stoneman.

Many of the competitors expressed a desire for more such informal evenings, if the match programme would allow it.

## CHAPTER NINE: The Future

It could be said that life is like a journey over rough ground. You need to watch where you place your feet or you may stumble and fall, but occasionally you must stop and look around to assess your progress.

The Club has arrived in its Centenary year at the point where such assessment is desirable. There have been many occasions when it might have stumbled and fallen, but fortunately there have always been dedicated people to sustain it at such times—people who have sunk personal differences in their desire to support, work and play for the Club and who in so doing have helped to maintain the thread referred to earlier that links the old with the new.

In this it is to be hoped that those responsible for the Club's inauguration on that 17th day of April 1890 would feel that the present membership has not let them down. But it is scarcely likely that they would be content with the Club's lesser influence on London chess to-day. They would certainly deplore the fact that Metropolitan has not

captured much of the existing talent and marvel that so many comparatively new clubs have gained such prominence without the benefit of history or tradition.

And what of the future? Will the Club survive to celebrate its bicentenary? And what will be its status at that time? Will the Club champion be a computer? Indeed, will chess computers change our attitude to the game completely? What will future members feel about to-day's membership? Will they still have the same regard for the Club's traditions?

Like Messrs. Marsden and Morton-Smith and their friends in 1890, the Club is more concerned with immediate pressing matters. But should it survive another hundred years or a mere fraction of that time, its story had to be told.

It is to be hoped that the telling will assist any future research and also enable existing members—and particularly those who have but recently decided to make the Metropolitan Chess Club their chess 'home'—to feel and to become part of the Club tradition which has survived and achieved so much.

# Club Officers

Year	President	Secretary	Treasurer	Tournament Controller	Membership
1945	B.Heastie	F.J.Tippett	F.J.Tippett	S.Lathey	17
1946	A.Louis	F.J.Tippett	F.J.Tippett	S.Lathey	43
1947	A.Louis	F.J.Tippett	F.J.Tippett	S.Lathey	46
1948	A.Louis	G.W.Rutland	F.J.Tippett	S.Lathey	48
1949	A.Louis	W.H.Greenwood	F.J.Tippett	S.Lathey <sup>5</sup>	
1950	D.Miller	W.H.Greenwood	F.J.Tippett	S.Lathey <sup>5</sup>	
1951	D.Miller	W.H.Greenwood	F.J.Tippett	A.H.Trott <sup>1</sup>	
1952	D.Miller	W.H.Greenwood	F.J.Tippett	Lt.Col.R.D.Jackson <sup>1</sup>	
1953	D.Miller	L.F.Lane	F.J.Tippett	Lt.Col.R.D.Jackson <sup>1</sup>	
1954	D.Miller	L.F.Lane	F.J.Tippett	J.Cabourn <sup>1</sup>	
1955	D.Miller	L.F.Lane	F.J.Tippett	J.Cabourn <sup>1</sup>	
1956	D.Miller	J.A.Moore	S.C.Cranmer	J.Cabourn <sup>1</sup>	
1957	D.Miller	J.A.Moore	S.C.Cranmer	J.L.Levin	
1958	J.M.Bee	J.A.Moore	A.A.Raven	J.A.Moore	
1959	J.M.Bee	J.A.Moore	A.A.Raven	S.C.Cranmer	
1960	J.M.Bee	J.A.Moore	A.A.Raven	J.R.Gilbert	
1961	J.M.Bee	J.A.Moore	A.A.Raven	J.R.Gilbert	
1962	J.M.Bee	R.C.Cousens	T.F.Deery	J.R.Gilbert <sup>1</sup>	56
1963	J.M.Bee	J.J.Glover	T.F.Deery	S.G.Hill <sup>1</sup>	
1964	J.M.Bee <sup>2</sup>	J.J.Glover	T.F.Deery	S.G.Hill	67
1965	J.M.Bee <sup>2</sup>	J.J.Glover	T.F.Deery	S.G.Hill	67
1966	J.M.Bee	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	S.G.Hill	78
1967	J.M.Bee	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	S.G.Hill	75
1968	W.H.Greenwood	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	S.G.Hill	69
1969	W.H.Greenwood	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	S.G.Hill	62
1970	W.H.Greenwood	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	None	63
1971	W.H.Greenwood	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	S.Korman	62
1972	W.H.Greenwood	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	S.Korman	75
1973	W.H.Greenwood	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	S.Korman	81
1974	W.H.Greenwood	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	B.Cohen	87
1975	W.H.Greenwood	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	B.Cohen	73
1976	W.H.Greenwood	A.A.Raven	S.C.Zaiker	A.A.Raven <sup>1</sup>	68
1977	W.H.Greenwood <sup>3</sup>	A.A.Raven	J.E.Spencer	T.F.Deery	62
1978	W.H.Greenwood <sup>3</sup>	A.A.Raven	J.E.Spencer	T.F.Deery	67
1979	J.J.Moore <sup>3</sup>	A.A.Raven	J.E.Spencer	J.J.Glover	80
1980	J.J.Moore <sup>3</sup>	A.A.Raven	J.E.Spencer	J.J.Glover	78
1981	J.J.Moore	A.A.Raven	B.Sammes	J.J.Glover	73
1982	J.J.Moore	A.A.Raven	B.Sammes	J.J.Glover	73
1983	J.J.Moore	A.A.Raven	T.F.Deery	J.J.Glover	
1984	J.J.Moore	C.W.vanVeen	T.F.Deery	J.J.Glover	60
1985	J.J.Moore	C.W.vanVeen	T.F.Deery	J.J.Glover	50
1986	J.J.Moore	C.W.vanVeen	T.F.Deery	J.J.Glover	56
1987	J.J.Moore	T.F.Deery	J.K.Stoneman	J.J.Glover <sup>1</sup>	63
1988	J.J.Moore	T.F.Deery	J.K.Stoneman	J.J.Glover <sup>1</sup>	65
1989	J.J.Moore	T.F.Deery	J.K.Stoneman	J.J.Glover <sup>1</sup>	65
1990	J.J.Moore <sup>4</sup>	T.F.Deery	J.K.Stoneman	J.J.Glover <sup>1</sup>	51

Note 1: These are AGM dates. Some officers may have served for a few months prior to election.

Note 2: In 1965 W.H.Greenwood served for a short period.

Note 3: In 1977-78-79-80 Dr.P.D.Ralph served as Chairman.

Note 4: In 1990 Mr. J. Kitchen became Chairman.

Note 5: In 1950 S.Lathey and A.H. Trott were joint tournament secretaries

Assistant tournament secretaries were as follows:

1951-52-53 E.C.Terrill. 1954-55-56 Lt. Col. R.D. Jackson

1963 J.M. Bee, G.W. Rutland and R.S. Sefton 1988-90

J.K. Stoneman. In 1976 Mr. A.A. Raven was appointed Tournament Secretary by the committee.

## LONDON LEAGUE MATCH CAPTAINS

Year	1st Team	2nd Team	3rd Team	4th Team	5th Team
1945	J.M.Bee				
1946	J.M.Bee				
1947	J.M.Bee				
1948	J.M.Bee				
1949	J.M.Bee				
1950	J.M.Bee	S.G.Hill	W.H.Greenwood		
1951	J.M.Bee	S.G.Hill	W.H.Greenwood		
1952	J.M.Bee	S.G.Hill	W.H.Greenwood		
1953	J.M.Bee	S.G.Hill	W.H.Greenwood		
1954	J.M.Bee	S.G.Hill	W.H.Greenwood		
1955	J.M.Bee				
1956	J.M.Bee				
1957	J.M.Bee				
1958	J.M.Bee				
1959	J.M.Bee				
1960	J.M.Bee				
1961	J.M.Bee				
1962	J.M.Bee				
1963	J.M.Bee				
1964	Dr.P.R.Ralph	B.L.McCague	G.Adcock		
1965	Dr.P.R.Ralph	G.Adcock	P.Action	D.Walters	
1966	J.J.Moore	G.Adcock	J.J.Glover		
1967	J.J.Moore	S.C.Zaiker	K.M.Kani	M.R.Harman	
1968	J.J.Moore	S.C.Zaiker	K.M.Kani	M.R.Harman	
1969	J.J.Moore	R.C.Cousens	K.M.Kani		
1970	J.J.Moore	R.C.Cousens	K.M.Kani	B.Cohen	
1971	J.J.Moore	R.C.Cousens	K.M.Kani	B.Cohen	
1972	J.J.Moore	R.C.Cousens	K.M.Kani	B.Cohen	
1973	J.J.Moore	R.C.Cousens	K.M.Kani	B.Cohen	J.W.Welch
1974	J.J.Moore	R.C.Cousens	J.E.Spencer	J.J.Glover	P.Gerard
1975	J.J.Moore	R.C.Cousens	J.E.Spencer	J.J.Glover	R.H.Budden
1976	J.J.Moore	R.C.Cousens	T.McCurragh	J.J.Glover	R.H.Budden
1977	G.A.Dickson	T.McCurragh	P.Flint	J.J.Glover	R.H.Budden
1978	G.A.Dickson	T.McCurragh	M.Smithson	J.J.Glover	R.H.Budden
1979	G.A.Dickson	R.C.Cousens	M.Smithson	J.J.Glover	R.H.Budden
1980	G.A.Dickson	R.C.Cousens	C.W.van Veen	J.J.Glover	R.H.Budden
1981	R.C.Cousens	P.L.Szabo	C.W.van Veen	J.J.Glover	R.H.Budden
1982	R.C.Cousens	P.L.Szabo	J.W.Shales	J.J.Glover	R.H.Budden
1983	P.L.Szabo	R.C.Cousens	R.H.Budden	H.Fraser	J.B.Farrell
1984	P.L.Szabo	R.C.Cousens	R.H.Budden	H.Fraser	R.C.Burroughs
1985	P.L.Szabo	R.C.Cousens	R.H.Budden	J.Paddock	
1986	P.L.Szabo	R.C.Cousens	T.A.Holliday	J.Paddock	
1987	P.L.Szabo	R.H.Budden	T.A.Holliday	J.Paddock	
1988	P.L.Szabo	R.H.Budden	J.Paddock	D.A.Phillips	
1989	P.L.Szabo	R.H.Budden	J.Paddock	R.Hamilton	
1990	P.L.Szabo	R.H.Budden	J.Paddock	M.Fitzgerald	

Blank spaces indicate that no information is available.

In certain of the earlier years some of the teams were run by a number of 'assistant match captains', and it has been impossible to establish to which teams they were allocated but they were as follows:

A.L. Gordon, M. Shanson, J. Appleby, J. Cabourn, W.H. Greenwood, D. Miller, J.R. Gilbert, W.D. Lowe, B.E. Glaze, J. Levin, A.A. Raven, A. Boxall, S.C. Cranmer, J.A. Moore, J. Elphick, S.C.Zaiker, R.C.Pentecost and J. Nottingham. Mr. J.A. Moore, Mr. R.E. Spurgeon and Mr. J.J. Moore served for many years as vice captains.

## MIDDLESEX LEAGUE MATCH CAPTAINS

Year	1st Team	2nd Team	3rd Team
1960	S.C.Cranmer		
1961	S.C.Cranmer		
1962	S.C.Cranmer		
1963	J.J.Glover		
1964	J.J.Glover		
1965	J.J.Glover		



1966	J.J.Glover		
1967	J.J.Glover		
1968	J.J.Glover		
1969	P. Morrey		
1970	A.A.Raven		
1978	B.Sammes		
1979	B.Sammes	R.H.Budden	
1980	B.Sammes	R.H.Budden	
1981	M.P.R.Johnson	R.H.Budden	
1982	R.H.Budden	J.W.Shales	
1983	R.H.Budden	J.B.Farrell	
1984	P.L.Szabo	R.H.Budden	J.B.Farrell
1985	P.L.Szabo	R.H.Budden	J.B.Farrell
1986	P.L.Szabo	R.H.Budden	J.B.Farrell
1987	J.Kitchen	R.H.Budden	T. Elek
1988	J.Kitchen	R.H.Budden	R. Hamilton
1989	J.Kitchen	R.H.Budden	V. Mathias
1990	J.Kitchen	R.H.Budden	V. Mathias

The Club did not compete during the years 1971 to 1978.

### HIGHEST TEAM SCORERS—LONDON LEAGUE MATCHES

Year	1st Team	2nd Team	3rd Team	4th Team	5th Team
1947	R.P.F.Rickard	A.H.Trott			
1948	A.H.Trott	H.G.Rogers			
1949	A.H.Trott	J.F.Tait			
1950	J.M.Bee )	T.Breen			
	J.Nottingham )				
1951	H.F.Blandford )	S.G.Hill			
	J.Nottingham )				
1952	J.Bennett )	Miss			
	Dr.J.Dean )	A.Sunnucks			
1953	T.Breen	S.Bloom			
1954	J.P.Goodfellow	W.G.Sedgmore			
1955	T.Breen	R.Keen			
1956	J.A.Moore	S.C.Cranmer )			
		W.H.Greenwood )			
1957	S.C.Cranmer	W.H.Greenwood )			
		J.Naish			
1958	S.C.Cranmer	A.A.Raven			
1959	A.Bernfield	G.W.Rutland )			
		A.A.Raven )			
1960	M.W.Wills	S.G.Hill			
1961	S.C.Cranmer )	S.G.Hill			
	J.A.Moore )				
1962	F.E.Tinworth	J.Elphick			
1963	G.W.Rutland	R.C.Cousens			
1964	R.C.Pentecost	S.C.Zaiker	J.J.White		
1965	M.W.Wills	P.Williams			
1966	J.A.Moore	G.Adcock			
1967	J.A.Moore	T.F.Deery			
1968	E.Szucs	T.F.Deery			
1969	E.Szucs	S.Korman			
1970	E.Szucs	G.Adock			
1971	T.B.Bennett	G.Graham			
1972	G.A.Dickson	N.King			
1973	J.A.Moore )	A.Hayward			
	Dr.P.D.Ralph )				
1974	G.A.Dickson	D.J.Banks			
1975	A.Amin )	R.C.Cousens )	T.N.Burrell	J.Paddock	R.J.Budden )
	G.A.Dickson )	K.M.Kani )			P.Gaffney )
1976	G.A.Dickson )	R.Cousens )	B.Cohen	B.Doran	R.W.Argent
	J.Rout )	P.L.Szabo )			
1977	G.A.Dickson )	G.D.Pyrich	T.McCurragh	T.McCurragh	J.S.Young
1978	Dr.P.D.Ralph	P.L.Szabo	N.G.Long	J.E.H.Shaw	J.S.Young
1979	G.A.Dickson )	P.L.Szabo	M.P.Johnson	P.Southwell	M.P.Moreton
	J.A.Moore )				
1980	J.A.Moore )	P.L.Szabo	T.F.Deery )	T.Greenwood	J.W.Shales
	P.Doye )		D.M. Keeling )		
1981	R.G.Bellinger )	J.E.H.Shaw	A.A.Raven )	M.P.Johnson )	G.Nottage
	R.S.Sefton )		J.E.Spencer )	E.Kotarski )	
1982	H.L.Tebbs	A.H.Donkin	C.W.van Veen		P.A.Wiseman
1983	R.G.Bellinger	S.T.Wilkinson	J.F.Burke )	M.P.Johnson	R.L.Brown
			T.F.Deery )		
			M.Smithson )		
1984	J.J.Moore	T.F.Deery	K.Moss	J.B.Farrell	P.P.Pearson

1985	P.R.Hatton	T.F.Deery	B.Sammes	P.A.Wiseman	R.Burroughs
1986	B.E.Glaze	T.Pruchnicki	G.C.Jordan	J.Paddock	
1987	P.C.Doye	P.A.Burgoyne	Mrs.S.Rowles	J.K.Stoneman	
1988	J.A.Moore ) Dr.N.M.Stewart )	M.Coughlan	R.C.Cousens	D.Cuckson	
1989	J.Kitchen	T.F.Deery	B.Okrzeja	D.Cuckson	
1990	D.Harris	P.L.Szabo	J.B.Farrell	R.L.Brown	

# TOURNAMENT WINNERS

Year	Championship	Naumann Cup	Silver King	Silver Queen
1946	J.M.Bee	A.H.Trott	W.H.Lowe	A.H.Trott
1947	J.Gilchrist ) A.Bernfield )	J.P.Goodfellow	D.Livingstone	S.Lathey
1948	J.M.Bee	J.R.GilbertT.	S.Newton	S.Lathey
1949	A.H.Trott	J.H.Springall		
1950	A.H.Trott	S.G.Hill		
1951	A.H.Trott	J.Nottingham	A.Boxall	
1952	D.Miller ) J.Levin )	T.Breen ) Dr.J.Triefeldt )		
1953	D.Miller ) J.Levin ) W.D.Lowe )	A.Hills	R.D.Cartner	
1954	J.Levin ) D.Miller )	J.Cabourn		
1955	J.M.Bee	J.A.Moore		
1956	J.Levin	S.C.Cranmer		
1957	A.Bernfield	W.G.Sedgemore		
1958	F.W.Allen	A.A.Raven		
1959	M.W.Wills ) G.W.Rutland )	M.J.McBain ) A.A.Raven )		J.Elphick
1960	F.E.Tinworth	H.C.Ellis		
1961	J.B.Howson	S.C.Zaiker		J.Elphick
1962	F.C.May	J.Elphick		T.F.Deery*
1963	J.B.Howson	R.C.Pentecost		R.S.Sefton*
1964	J.B.Howson	P.Williams	G.J.Volsik*	Dr.P.D.Ralph
1965	K.B.Harman	P.J.Camminis	C.Freeman	H.G.F.Bartlett
1966	P.Williams	R.E.Spurgeon	P.Acton	J.W.Smith
1967	R.E.Spurgeon	R.C.Cousens	A.McDonnell	H.F.Fisher
1968	K.B.Harman	A.D.Burgess	I.Morris	S.Korman
1969	I.Friedlander	K.Goodey	M.R.Harman ) S.Korman )	S.Evans
1970	C.D.Carr	S.Korman	P.Goldsmith	Mrs.I.Morris
1971	S.Korman	R.C.Cousens ) J.P.Goodfellow )	K.M.Kani	
1972	G.A.Dickson	N.King	B.E.Thomas	M.P.Moreton
1973	Dr.P.D.Ralph	I.Pountney	B.Cohen	J.W.Boreland
1974	G.A.Dickson	B.E.Thomas	P.Gerard	J.J.Glover ) J.Paddock )
1975	G.A.Dickson	K.A.Gregory	T.McCurragh	M.P.Moreton
1976	R.E.Spurgeon	R.C.Cousens	A.D.Jones	M.P.F.Johnson
1977	G.A.Dickson	T.N.Burrell	M.P.Johnson	J.D.Llewelyn
1978	J.J.Moore	N.G.Long	A.A.Raven	A.Dalgleish
1979	J.B.Adams	A.A.Raven	T.Greenwood	M.Chantler
1980	R.G.Bellinger	T.Greenwood	M.P.Johnson	R.L.Brown
1981	R.G.Bellinger	T.N.Burrell ) N.Redmond )	J.Shales	P.A.Wiseman
1982	R.G.Bellinger	P.M.B.Rowland	H.Fraser	
1983	R.G.Bellinger	M.P.Johnson	H.Fraser	
1984	S.T.K.Wilkinson	P.M.B.Rowland	R.L.Brown ) R.C.Burroughs ) P.A.Wiseman )	
1985	S.T.K.Wilkinson	R.H.Budden		
1986	S.T.K.Wilkinson	J.Paddock	P.Burgoyne	
1987	G.Szaszvari	T.F.Deery	R.L.Brown	
1988	G.Szaszvari	T.N.Burrell	H.C.Jennings	Mrs.S.Rowles
1989	G.Szaszvari	D.Harrison	T.F.Deery	T.P.Elek
1990	P.Doye	P.L.Szabo		

\* Silver King 1964: G.Adcock and L.Fenton shared first place in Silver King Reserves

\* Silver Queen: Awarded to winners of the Gambit Tournament in 1962, 1963 and 1964.

This reflects the fact that in 1962 - 1964 the Silver Queen trophy was commanded for the new "Gambit" Tournament.

There were no competitors for what had been the Silver Queen Tournament in '62 and '63. But in '64 there were. So it had to be called the "Silver King Reserves", and Messrs. Adcock and Fenton won it. (Hence the asterisk after G.Volsik's name).

## New Member in the Fifties by A.A. Raven

In the 1950's, as a very young man, I took a small flat in central London and set out to find a chess club. In the centre of town there were the Athenaeum which met once a week, and the Metropolitan which met twice a week, so the Metropolitan seemed the obvious choice. Besides, I liked the name, with its suggestion of size and importance.

Making my way down Fleet Street one fine spring evening, I turned down Bride Lane to the St. Bride Institute—a notable Victorian building. Its architect had fitted a great many halls and rooms into quite a small site, and inevitably there were a lot of stairs. As I climbed them, I had time to observe how the brightly polished brass handrails of the lower floors gave way to painted handrails higher up. The general decorative state of the building also suggested that loving care had been confined to the more accessible floors.

Room 18, which the Metropolitan shared with the London Chess League, was right at the top.

In those days, I should add, the Institute was not as dilapidated as it later became. The lift had only recently ceased to function, or so I understood.

The restaurant was still in use, and would provide refreshments for friendly matches on Saturday afternoons. I helped to organise one of those matches later, and was rash enough to try to discuss the nature of the refreshments to be supplied. The steward, an elderly gentleman with a rather severe manner, looked at me in some surprise. 'I always give the chess ham', he said, and ham sandwiches we duly received. What he gave other organisations, I never discovered.

Climbing the last of the seventy-odd stairs on that first evening, the sunlight showing up the grimy state of the windows, I reached the top floor, and Room 18.

The room had been an attic originally, I imagine. It had a high, sloping ceiling that followed the line of the roof. There were two rows of small windows high up, operated by long cords that were often broken. After many years of chess-playing, with the inevitable smoking, the ceiling and the upper part of the walls, which must once have been white or cream, were a rich golden brown. Even that seemed light in comparison with the black paint that covered the lower part of the walls. To enter this room on a foggy November evening, to see the dark walls the black wooden cupboards, the old wooden bookcases (property of the British Chess Problem Society), the old oak tables and dark wooden chairs, the old wooden sets and boards, and the old clocks in their dark wooden cases—some too old to have flags—seemed like an encounter with a bygone age. I sometimes fancied that if I looked over my shoulder I might catch a glimpse of Steinitz or Blackburne slipping out of the room.

On that first evening I was early, but the door was open. There was no one there but a little old bald-headed chap with a white moustache and bright blue eyes behind half-moon glasses, seated at a table facing the door. He glared at me. I asked whether this was the Metropolitan Chess Club, and he curtly informed me that it was.

When I expressed a wish to join, he invited me to play an offhand game, which he won with ease. Then we played another, and he won that too, but I was allowed to apply for membership. I had met the legendary Mr. Bee, President and match captain of the Metropolitan Chess Club.

'Match captain and President' might be a better way of putting it. Mr. Bee was pleased to be President, no doubt—I suspect that he regarded the office as no more than his due—but the match captaincy was what really mattered to him. He carried out the duties of that office with single-minded determination.

There have, of course, been other enthusiasts among Club officers in the last thirty years. One thinks of S.G. Hill as

tournament controller in the sixties (he was the first to insist on being 'controller' rather than 'Secretary'), of Brian Cohen as 4th Team Captain, of Jim Spencer as 3rd Team Captain, and of one or two others. But in this distinguished gallery Mr. Bee was outstanding. For one thing, he was *always* there, or so it seemed. Every Monday and Thursday, early arrivals would find the door open and Mr. Bee in occupation. Very occasionally, some would arrive before him and have to wait in the corridor until he or another key-holder came long, but usually he was the first. Five-foot-nothing in his shoes, and old enough to be dozing in the chimney-corner of an evening (or so it seemed to me, though in fact he must have been only in his late sixties when I joined the Club), he dominated match nights as he dominated ordinary meetings, but with a heightened sense of occasion.

On top board in my first season with the Club was J.L. Levin, a little dark man with a pugnacious expression (but very likeable away from the board), a pipe always clenched between his teeth. He must have won the Club Championship in the summer of that year, as there was then an unwritten rule that the champion was entitled to play on board 1. Occasionally this gave rise to some difficulty, if the result of the Championship was unexpected—I remember one year when a 2nd team player won it, to Mr. Bee's horror—but the rule was sacrosanct. There was a story current in those days that Sir George Thomas had resigned from the Club in the 1920's when he was asked to play on board 2 after winning the British Championship. It was a story that I had no difficulty in believing.

On board 2 was A. Bernfield, whose large cranium, spectacles and grave demeanour suggested great mental powers. A yellowing shred of cigarette-end hung perpetually from his lower lip. One felt that he must have put it there a very long time ago, before he started thinking, and then forgotten all about it.

Mr. Bee himself played on board 3 at that time, though later he demoted himself to board 7 or 8, I forget which. It was a move that may have had less to do with his assessment of his own playing strength than with the disposition of the tables in Room 18. There were nine or ten tables, arranged end-to-end in three rows that ran from side to side of the room. (The door was near the right-hand side of the room. On the right-hand wall by the door stood the Club cupboard, then there was a fireplace, then a row of coat hooks and a small table. The three rows of tables stretched away to the left). Most of the tables were long and narrow, each taking three boards close together. There was very little elbow-room, and not enough room for a score sheet between the edge of the board and the edge of the table. Fortunately, the irregularities of the old boards and tables usually allowed a score sheet to be slid between them.

Board 1 was always at the far end of the middle row of tables, to the left as seen from the door, and board 7 or 8, whichever it was, was at the far end of the nearer row. Not only was that board well away from the door, where comings and goings could be distracting, but the table in that corner was shorter and wider than most of the others. It took only one board, but with plenty of elbow-room, and there was also plenty of room for a score sheet and a team list. Mr. Bee played many lively games in that corner.

B.E. Glaze, a comparative youngster then, was on board 4, and somewhere near the middle of the team was J. Gilchrist. With his stoop, his lined, weather-beaten face, and the shapeless old raincoat that he never took off, he seemed a strange, perhaps tragic, figure. However that may have been, he played a useful game.

The two Moores were in the team, and on board 10, I think, was S. Cranmer, who was then the Club Treasurer.

His face could assume a very hurt, disappointed expression, and this would sometimes extract a subscription from a member who had not been properly influenced by Cranmer's usual happy smile.

We had two teams in the London League, but the 2nd team, for which I played, seemed to me a very ramshackle affair. (I was young and critical in those days). After winning my first game, I found myself on a lower board for the next match, much to my surprise. I lost that game, but for the third match I was on a higher board again. After that, I decided that the grown-up world really was incomprehensible and I had better stop worrying about it.

For all his eminence, Mr. Bee was never too grand to play offhand games with new members, whenever he had nothing more important to see to, and I was very lucky to have the opportunity of playing several games against a player of his strength. Most of them he won, needless to say. One or two were drawn, and once, when my best form happened to coincide with one of his rare mistakes, he lost. He was very civil about it, but I could see that he was not best pleased. Mr. Bee did not like losing—a useful quality in a match captain.

I never played regularly for the 1st team, but over the years I had several games as a reserve—not the kind who is selected beforehand, but the kind who turns up on the night and is shoved into a vacant place just before the time for defaults. I enjoyed those games particularly, partly because one was expected to lose, so that it didn't matter if one did. I once won a game very quickly, after a blunder by my opponent, and for a while had the satisfaction of knowing that the Club's 1st team was leading 1-0, thanks to me.

The rules of play in the London League, though endlessly discussed and constantly amended in small ways, have really altered very little. The experience of playing in a match, and the bizarre nature of the disputes that arise from time to time, changed hardly at all during the nearly thirty years when I was an active player—except in one small way. When I first joined the Club, a ballroom dancing class was held regularly in the Large Hall, below Room 18, and matches would be played to the accompaniment of pre-war dance music. One could easily relax into a very cavalier style of play, and an extra effort of concentration was called for. It is one aspect of the 'good old days' whose passing I do not regret at all.

Some other things have changed quite a lot over the years, among them the summer tournaments. These came to be much more tightly organised in the sixties, under the iron rod of S.G. Hill, and more recently we have seen the introduction of fixed dates for play. Much as I admire the new system, I preferred the old, when members arranged, or tried to arrange, their own fixtures. In the fifties, getting someone to actually play you seemed to be part of the competition. It was difficult to get a win by default, as plausible excuses tended to be accepted by the Tournament Secretary, and in any case there was a feeling in some quarters that to claim a win by default against a fellow member was not quite the thing. Mr. Hill changed all that with his introduction of the 'provisional default' rule, which made it possible to claim a win without offending a member who was genuinely willing to play on a later date. That rule dealt with some of the awkward cases.

An aspect of Club life that has changed out of all recognition is the subscription. In 1949 it had been increased from a guinea (£1.05), which was what it had been since the 1920's, to twenty-five shillings (£1.25), and a good deal of heart-searching seems to have accompanied that increase. When I joined, the subscription stood at thirty shillings (£1.50), which seemed rather expensive. We were still living in a world that has passed away.

The Club was smaller in the fifties, with about thirty or forty members. Chess was still an obscure activity, seldom

mentioned in the national press. On Club nights, a few offhand games would be played in a room that was larger than we needed. If there was a match, another ten or twelve members would be taking part, but there were always vacant boards, even though some boards would be in use for adjourned games.

These games would be those of our own members or those of players from other clubs, who were allowed to play adjourned London League games on our Club nights on payment of a small board fee.

A certain lack of privacy was one of the disadvantages of sharing the room with the League, what with the adjourned games and with other clubs using our equipment for matches on the three nights when we were not in the room, and it led to one of Mr. Bee's more eccentric ideas. He would never exhibit the results of the 1st team's matches on the Club notice-board, but pinned them up inside the Club cupboard. Captains from other clubs using the room on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, were thus prevented from studying our results, and hatching villainous plots against us, before we could study theirs. This quirk of Mr. Bee's seemed faintly paranoid, but there was something to be said for it, and I like to think of it as an illustration of his tenacity and sense of purpose.

He had his reward in 1960-1, when the Club won the League Championship for the first time for several decades. I still have a photograph of the Club dinner that was held at the Albion in New Bridge Street to celebrate, the diminutive figure of Mr. Bee unmistakably in the chair. To prove that it was not a fluke, he (or we) repeated the performance in the following season. Then there came a falling-off, and I am sure that that was partly due to the failing health and strength of Mr. Bee.

He had had his critics, of course, as autocrats always do. Some were members who found themselves on the upper boards of the 2nd team instead of the lower boards of the 1st. Some thought that he should pay less attention to the 1st team and more to the lower echelons. Soon after I joined the Club there was an attempt to oust him at the Annual General Meeting, but the rebellion was beaten off easily enough, the chief rebel left the Club, and things continued as before.

In 1965 a more determined revolt was mounted by a group of members at the AGM, and a new President was elected. (Mr. Bee had given up the match captaincy a year or two earlier). A group of counter-revolutionaries promptly called a special general meeting and had him reinstated, by a very small majority—a single vote, I believe it was.

As one of the counter-revolutionaries, I was convinced that the right was on our side. With hindsight, I suspect that the pros and cons may have been more evenly balanced than I thought at the time—it may be, as evenly balanced as the vote at the special general meeting. The abrupt dismissal of Mr. Bee was clumsy and unkind (some of us put it more strongly) but it is a good question whether kindness and politeness should be allowed to decide such matters. I am still inclined to think that in a Club such as ours, they should.

At all events, Mr. Bee resumed the chair, the opposing factions managed to stay on speaking terms, and there were very few resignations, that of the Secretary being probably the most noticeable. For my sins, I took his place.

With growing deafness and the onset of blindness, Mr. Bee soon became little more than a figurehead at committee meetings, and when he relinquished the presidency in 1968, to be succeeded by the genial Bill Greenwood, there were some sad hearts but no objectors.

Mr. Bee ended his days in a retirement home in South London, where he would find his way from floor to floor by counting the buttons in the lift with his fingers. Indomitable to the end, or just plain cussed, he would not use a white stick.

He was a remarkable man, and he looms very large in my memories of those early years at the Metropolitan.