

A History of Correspondence Chess in Wales 1835-2015

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Welsh Correspondence Chess Federation
Rydym yn Ffrindiau - Amici Sumus

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The Early Years

Tim Harding, in his authoritative volume *Correspondence Chess in Britain and Ireland 1824-1987* relates some interesting early anecdotes of correspondence chess in Wales, not least the story from 1835 of a Welsh girl playing a correspondence match with a suitor in Calcutta to determine whether he was to sell his commission and return home or she to travel east and marry him; certainly a romantic notion, unfortunately however Harding dismisses this story as being apocryphal!

The earliest record of correspondence chess activities in Wales dates from an 1859-60 match between the Cardiff and Bristol clubs. It is likely that similar matches continued to be held, as the 1914-1915 South Wales Chess Association booklet refers to postal chess as being one of its main activities.

Although there is very little information available about team postal chess events in Wales in the 19th century, individuals appeared to have been quite active. Harding uncovered a lot of information about early Welsh postal chess players. A Mr Wakeford of Cardiff played a Mr Thomas Long of Dublin in the 1860s and the game was published in *the Chess Players' Magazine*. Even earlier, an R James of Llanelli was playing in 1854 when one of his games was published in the *Birmingham Mercury*. Henry J Hope was another keen postal chess player with Welsh connections, he was in Cardiff in

1857 and moved to Glasgow via England. Hope beat a young Wisker in 1863.

There was a postcard match between the United Kingdom and the USA between 1877 and 1881, in which H Williams of Wrexham scored a win and three losses against W M Olcott of Hartford, Connecticut.

Around 1880 George Lennox, later secretary of the Cardiff Chess Club, played for Scotland (although he had been born in Kent) in a triangular postal chess match between Scotland, England and Ireland (6 players each). Originally he was selected for England but was moved to the Scottish team.

Locke Holt of Wrexham, one of the strongest players in North Wales in 1889, won the first Dublin Evening Mail correspondence chess tournament.

Herr W Heitzman of Pontypridd and James Glass represented the West of England in a correspondence match against Ireland 1892 - 1893. Glass was chess editor of *the Cambrian* and later moved to Ireland where he worked for the *Dublin Evening Mail*, Heitzman had a chess column in the *Evening Express*. The match result was reported as Ireland versus England (West) and South Wales, and ten players from Wales took part on one side or another. Ireland won 50½ - 43½. Heitzman himself won against Marcus Woollett. Glass' opponent John Clyne Christian died at the age of 25 during the match and the game was sometimes reported as a win for Glass and sometimes as abandoned without result.

Among the other Welsh players were W Hogg of Pontypridd who beat J Thompson; J G Churchill of Aberdare who drew with H Jenkins; and W G Howell of the Rhondda who drew with William Holland.

One of the strongest postal chess players to come from Wales was the Rev Evan Griffiths who was extremely active before the First World War. He was born at Llwynfilwa farm near Llangendeirne, Carms, in 1875. He learnt chess whilst studying for a mathematics degree at Lampeter. Later he joined Llanelli Chess Club and then won the Swansea Handicap Tournament of 1906-7 with 10/11.

The British Chess Magazine ran a strong postal chess tournament from 1910-1912. Qualified for the final were the likes of W H Gunston and F D Yates (although the latter did not play). Griffiths was one of the 16 finalists and had only just taken up duties in Lewes, Sussex. His success was absolute, scoring 13.5/15, unbeaten and finishing a point ahead of Hon V A Parnell.

White: W H Gunston

Black: Rev E Griffiths

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 Na5 9. Bc2 c5 10. d4 Qc7 11. Nbd2 Nc6 12. h3 0-0 13. Nf1 cxd4 14. cxd4 Nxd4 15. Nxd4 exd4 16. Bg5 (16. Ng3 was played in the third Lasker-Tarrasch game) Qc5! 17. Bh4 Be6 18. Rc1 Qb4! 19. b3 d5?! 20. Bxf6 Bxf6 21. exd5 Bd7 22. Ng3 Rac8 23. Nh5!

Bg5! 24. f4 Bd8 25. Rf1 g6! 26. Ng3 Qd6 27. Qf3 f5 28. Bb1 Re8 29. Rce1 Rc5! 30. Rxe8+ Bxe8 31. Rd1 Qxd5 32. Qf2 Bb6 33. Kh2 Rc8 34. Ne2 Rd8 35. g4? fxc4 36. hxg4 Bc6 37. Bd3 Re8 38. Rg1 Re3 39. Nc1 Rf3 40. Qd2 Bc7 41. Resigns.

Gunston commented, *“I can’t help feeling that I have fallen a victim to the error of the experts who approved Lasker’s variation against Tarrasch... It shows that one should take nothing on trust even on the very best authority.”* Later he added, *“The fact that the play was applauded by practically every commentator is my only excuse for having fallen so blindly into the trap.”*

Tim Harding gives more details of Evan Griffiths’ life:

“He was the mainstay of the BCCA, editing several issues of its magazine until he gave up postal chess after the war – probably being too busy after he became headmaster of Lewes Grammar School (1917-1932)”.

He won the championship of the British Correspondence Chess Association in 1908, 1910, 1912 and 1913. (The early list of champions is in dispute but these dates were the ones that Tim Harding deduced to be correct.) He could certainly have been regarded the country’s best postal chess player before the war.

Evan Griffiths died in 1956 aged 80.

From 1923 a South Wales team was entered for the County and District Correspondence Chess Competition (C&DCCC). This competition was started in 1922, and every year since then county teams from all over the country have competed for the Ward-Higgs Trophy.

The Jamboree system which ruled the tournament pairings, does not possess any ability to supply equal strength opposition to every team competing. Hence, the South Wales players could perform miracles against a very strong combined team only to finish a couple of places off bottom, and next year could do badly against a weak team and finish in the middle order. Such are the vagaries of the jamboree system, and it is rarely possible to distinguish a strong team from a weak team except at the extremities of the final league table.

The South Wales teams were not strong enough to compete on equal terms with their English counterparts. Usually it was a struggle to stave off the ignominy of bottom place, and the departure of the Monmouthshire players had little effect on this - the team stayed at the bottom!

Play was normally over 30 boards, but was reduced to 20 boards during the war years. South Wales competed regularly, including throughout the war, and the credit for this must go to some very able organisers who often had to struggle to raise the necessary number of boards. The South Wales team controllers were:

1923 - 1930 G. E. Chappell (Bridgend)
1930 - 1952 N. L. Tomlinson (Port Talbot)
1952 - 1954 P. R. Morrish (Penarth)

Initially the South Wales organiser treated the competition as an over-the-board match, and picked his team accordingly. Messrs W Penberthy (Tredegar), A R Marshall (Cardiff), a former South Wales champion, and J Lewis (Blaina), all rated among the strongest players of the day, led the early teams.

It did not take long for the controller to realise that a different technique was required for this kind of chess, and sometimes comparatively weak players can excel with the extra time available. After 1926 the top 10 boards regularly scored 40% or more. The team was invariably led by either A Harper or A M Harper, and the latter proved remarkably consistent. Of his known results over this period he scored 7.5 out of 13, all on very high boards. In 1950 A M Harper was runner-up in the Boyd Best Game Competition:

White: A M Harper

Black: C R Gurnhill (Yorkshire)

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. d4 Bg4 10. d5 Na5 11. Bc2 c5 12. Nbd2 Ne8 13. h3 Bh5 14. g4 Bg6 15. Nf1 h5 16. Ng3 hxg4 17. hxg4 Nf6 18. Nh4 Nh7 19. Nh5 Bg5 20. Kg2 Bf4 21. Rh1 Rb8 22. b3 b4 23. c4 Nb7 24. Bxf4 exf4

25. Nh5 Bxh5 26. Rxh5 g6 27. Rxh7 gxf5 28. exf5 Qf6 29. Qh1 Rfe8 30. Qh5 f3+ 31. Kxf3 Nd8 32. g5 Resigns.

The winner of the competition, Mr F A Evers of Worcester, later moved to Caer Fegla in Merioneth and played several times for South Wales in the Counties and Districts Correspondence Chess Championship.

The three years which stand out in the South Wales record are 1926, 1950 and 1954. The 1926 team was led by Marshall who, by a strange coincidence, beat the same C R Gurnhill of Yorkshire; but despite this success the team scored only 3 points on the top 10 boards.

1954 was an outstanding year. The team registered only one defeat on the top 15 boards, and only a dismal tail-end performance of 2 points from the bottom 8 boards robbed them of a far higher placing. This also highlighted one of the main reasons for the regular failure of the Welsh postal chess teams. Their players had no postal competition outside this event, and any newcomers were immediately out of their depth.

Year	Score	Teams Competing	Position
1923	12.5	20	16 th
1924	9	18	18 th
1925	11	18	16 th
1926	15.5	20	11 th
1927	12	18	15 th
1928	13	18	14 th
1929	18/36	19	11 th

1930	14.5	20	11 th
1931	9.5	22	21 st
1932	12.5	22	18 th
1933	13	24	16 th
1934	7	24	24 th
1935	13.5	24	15 th
1936	5	26	26 th
1937	10.5	26	23 rd
1938	9.5	26	25 th
1939	9.5	26	25 th
1940	7.5/20	26	22 nd
1941	8/20	20	14 th
1942	8/20	23	18 th
1943	4/20	23	23 rd
1944	7/20	27	23 rd
1945	9.5/20	26	17 th
1946	8.5	29	29 th
1947	11.5	31	27 th
1948	10.5	32	28 th
1949	12.5	31	26 th
1950	15.5	32	11 th
1951	11.5	31	24 th
1952	11	35	28 th
1953	15.5	33	19 th
1954	18	36	9 th

Apart from the C&DCCC, the postal chess activities of South Wales were few and far between. They beat a team from Cornwall 20-17 in 1935-6 and the following year were victorious 38-21 over a combined Devon and Cornwall side.

Matches were also arranged against Durham 1946-7 and Somerset 1949-50, but the results are not known.

The most momentous event in the early history of postal chess in Wales was the match in 1927-8 between Wales and Ireland. The Irish team had already lost matches to England and to Scotland, but with this valuable experience behind them, they had high hopes of beating the relatively inexperienced Welsh team.

The match was meant to be played over a hundred boards but Wales could not raise that number. The Welsh side was raised by advertising through the chess columns of local newspapers and, although some of the leading players were missing, it was a fairly comprehensive team representing most of the chess playing areas of South Wales. This, Wales' first ever international match, turned into a cliff-hanger, with the result always in doubt.

Wales			Ireland		
1	J D Chambers (Penarth)	0	1	J J O'Hanlon	
2	A Harper (Mountain Ash)	0	1	J MacMahon	
3	W C Kendal	0	1	W J Allen	
4	C Hybart (Port Talbot)	½	½	Rev C Armstrong	
5	A M Harper (Mountain Ash)	1	0	R Archer	
6	J Corbett (Caerphilly)	0	1	J Reynolds	
7	O Chapman	0	1	T P Donnegan	
8	Dr Sendak	1	0	W H Brooke	
9	G F Colborne (Newport)	1	0	G Jacobs	
10	E Roberts (Merthyr)	½	½	J Good	

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11	J Thomas (Porth)	0	1	J Brennan
12	A E Grimes (Nantyglo)	0	1	M J Drahan
13	R E Williams (Bargoed)	0	1	B Allen
14	M White (Penarth)	½	½	D Weir
15	Dr F L Brewer (Tonyrefail)	1	0	T E Withers
16	W J Cole (Merthyr)	½	½	A O'Callaghan
17	P Evans (Nantyglo)	1	0	R A J Tipping
18	S M Harper (Mountain Ash)	1	0	J Brett
19	I Richards (Mountain Ash)	1	0	H Hallahan
20	J Price (Blaina)	1	0	M Dalton
21	L Woods	1	0	W O'Brien
22	J Murgatroyd	0	1	M J O'Sullivan
23	J Keating (Merthyr)	1	0	Miss Allen
24	C Foulk (Cwmcarn)	0	1	C Henderson
25	W Yemm (Nantyglo)	1	0	V C Doorley
26	C H Richards	1	0	W J Pilsworth
27	E Evans (Oakdale)	½	½	J McDonnell
28	A E Davies (Swansea)	0	1	S Crawford
29	J W F Greenleaf (Newport)	1	0	J McLaughlin
30	H Jones (Pontypool)	1	0	R E Copeland
31	J Williams (Merthyr)	1	0	J Fanning
32	E Carpenter (Ponhir)	1	0	W Deney
33	C Budgett (Abercarn)	½	½	R Goane
34	L Thomas	½	½	J P Dunne
35	A V Kent	1	0	J C Keane
36	R Williams (Blaina)	0	1	L Hemphill
37	D J Jones (Blaina)	1	0	M Casey
38	E Freed (Mountain Ash)	0	1	J Doyle
39	A Freed (Mountain Ash)	½	½	J Gillen
40	J M Davies	1	0	M Brazil
41	G T Stevens (Bargoed)	½	½	R Donnelly

42	A E Williams (Blaina)	0	1	J L Henry
43	G Kent	0	1	S Robinson
44	N L Tomlinson (Port Talbot)	1	0	J N Mackay
45	A G Llewellyn (Port Talbot)	½	½	M MacCarron
46	F M Williams	0	1	F G Archer
47	A Richards (Port Talbot)	0	1	W R Van der Keste
48	E R Thomas (Port Talbot)	½	½	F R Canty
49	J C Davies (Port Talbot)	½	½	E Brazil
50	W J Lavery	0	1	Mrs M Dwyer
		26	24	

White: J McLaughlin

Black: JWF Greenleaf

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. d4 exd4 5. Nxd4 Bb4 6. Nxc6 bxc6 7. Bd3 d5 8. exd5 cxd5 9. Bd2 c5 10. 0-0 0-0 11. Nb1 Bxd2 12. Nxd2 Rb8 13. b3 Bb7 14. Nf3 Ne4 15. Qc1 f6 16. Qf4 Qd7 17. Rfe1 g5 18. Qe6 d4 19. Qc1 Qf5 20. Re2 Nc3 21. Re7 Be4 22. Qd2 Bxd3 23. cxd3 Rbe8 24. Rae1 Rxe7 25. Rxe7 Rf7 26. Rxf7 Kxf7 27. Ne1 Qe5 28. a4 Qe2 29. Qxe2 Nxe2+ 30. Kf1 Nc8 31. g3 Nxb3 32. Ke2 Ke6 33. Nc2 Na5 34. Na3 a6 35. Nb1 g4 36. Nd2 f5 37. f3 h5 38. f4 Kd5 39. Resigns.

Correspondence Chess After 1954

The Counties and Districts Correspondence Chess Championship

The end of the South Wales Chess Association left a problem for the organisers of postal chess in Wales. In theory each of the constituent units of the new Union should have entered a team for the Counties and District Correspondence Chess Competition (C&DCCC), but in practice none of the units, with the exception of Monmouthshire who carried on as before, was strong enough to stand alone. The result was that the team remained a 'South Wales' entry, including in its ranks, players from East Glamorgan, West Wales and Mid Wales.

The initial success of the over-the-board Zone Championships encouraged West Wales and East Glamorgan to make separate entries in 1956, but the resultant weakening of the teams and the general scarcity of postal chess players, had such a demoralising effect that East Glamorgan dropped out altogether in 1957 and there was no entry at all from South Wales in 1958.

South Wales never had much success in the competition and usually occupied a spot near the foot of the table. After the war the competition grew rapidly in size with some counties entering as many as five teams. The jamboree pairing system came under severe strain and eventually it was decided to split the tournament into two divisions. South Wales could hardly have expected to have retained Division One status

and, as the critical year was 1958-9 when no South Wales team was entered, there could be no complaints about their relegation to Division Two where henceforth they would compete for the 'Sinclair Trophy'.

Mr Morris of Penarth, who had taken control of the South Wales team in 1952, continued in office until 1956 when G Jenkins of Neath took over. Jenkins retired from office in 1964 and, due to the difficulty in finding a successor, there were no South Wales teams entered for the C&DCCC in 1965 or 1966. M G Jones of Llanelli took charge at short notice and captained a side in 1966 which beat the British Correspondence Chess Association (BCCA), but shortly afterwards he too was obliged to resign.

A new Secretary was found in M J Griffiths of Bridgend. Regular matches were commenced with Middlesex, the Social Correspondence Chess Association, BCCA, Lancashire and Monmouthshire, and the reward for this increase in activity and the popularity of the Welsh Postal Championships was that within a couple of years South Wales teams competing in the C&DCCC were at last challenging for promotion. Far from having to scrape a team together, by 1968 there were three teams from South Wales competing in the tournament.

Friendly matches against Monmouthshire served as a prelude to the Welsh Inter-Zone Championships of later years. South Wales won 13 - 11 in 1968-9 and again 11 - 7 in 1970. Most of the other matches were close run affairs and South Wales

managed to record at least one victory over each of their adversaries.

The most successful years in the C&DCCC were 1961, 1969 and 1970. The 1961 side scored 5½/6 on the top boards, with A M Harper on Board 1, S M Harper on Board 2, and A B Harper on Board 3 all winning! The later successes were both led by J D Mills and the points were scored more evenly than in any previous years.

Year	Score	Teams Competing	Position
1955	9	36	35 th
1956 (W. Wales)	11.5	38	31 st
1956 (E. Glam)	10.5	38	34 th
1957 (W. Wales)	11	34	27 th
1959	11.5	20	18 th
1960	15	23	12 th
1961	18	27	5 th
1962	14.5	26	16 th
1963	12	26	24 th
1964	9	26	26 th
1967	12.5	24	21 st
1968	11	22	20 th
1969	18	22	4 th
1970	18	19	4 th

Only one International match was ever attempted and no wonder. The match was arranged by the Welsh Chess Union (WCU) President, H Golding, against the Kazakh Republic in the former USSR. The WCU team was comprised of three

players from each of the five zones, two games being played against each opponent. Games started in early 1964.

Players were paired in alphabetical order! Part of the reasoning behind this was that no-one in Wales had any idea of the relative strengths of their own players at postal chess. The team was captained by JD Mills, the Welsh over-the-board captain, and included one player mainly because he could converse in Russian.

The pre-match circular stated: *“This is a friendly match and no strict time limit rule will be applied. Players should aim at replying within two or three days of receipt of moves, as a mark of mutual courtesy and respect.”*

Respect or not, the players were fortunate if their games moved along at a rate faster than one move per month, and it was not therefore surprising that nearly half of the games drifted into obscurity and were never completed.

The Kazakhs were initially very enthusiastic about the match. Special prizes were offered by the newspaper *Leninskya Smena* and over 100 applications for places were received, including Masters and Candidate Masters. Every one of the Welsh team must have faced a far stronger opponent.

Dr Kraus was one of the few Welsh winners and the reason for this he gave as follows:

“I was drawn against X. Omarov who introduced himself as a player of the first Soviet Category. I

opened 1.e4 and, being new to correspondence chess, was surprised when, a month later, I received 1.e5, with a further optional sequence of eleven moves of a variation of the Ruy Lopez! Catching on I accepted the first seven moves and offered a further variation of six moves, of which he accepted five, as well as seven moves of a Grunfeld, of which he accepted six. As a result we reached move 13 in the first game and move 8 in the other after only two exchanges of letters. This probably explains why both games were actually finished, one after eighteen months in July '65 and the other a year later."

White: Dr EB Kraus

Black: X Omarov

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 0-0 8. d4 d6 9. c3 Bg4 10. d5 Na5 11. Bc2 Ne8 12. Nbd2 c5 13. dxc6 ep Nxc6 14. Nf1 Nf6 15. Ne3 Bd7 16. h3 Qc7 17. Qd3 Rac8 18. Nd5 Qd8 19. Nxf6+ gxf6 20. Bh6 Re8 21. Bb3 Be6 22. Nd4! Bf8 23. Qg3+ Kh8 24. Bxf8 Rxf8 25. Bxe6 fxe6 26. Nxe6 Qe7 27. Nxf8 and black resigned 11 moves later.

The Welsh team, in alphabetical order with their scores where known, was:

1. G V Cadden (Newport) 0

2. A G Cox (Cardiff)
3. N J Davies (Aberystwyth) ½
4. W C Davies (Wrexham)
5. M J K Griffiths (Swansea)
6. A M Harper (Barry)
7. B A Heath (Newport)
8. A E Hugh (Aberystwyth) 0
9. G Jenkins (Neath) 0
10. A O Jones (Swansea) 1
11. Dr E B Kraus (Rhyl) 1½
12. J D Mills (Pontypridd)
13. B S Millward (Wrexham) 0
14. Dr T R Perkins (Monmouth) 0
15. D Williams (Aberystwyth) 0

Most of the results not shown resulted in games being abandoned due to a breakdown in communication.

The 1978 York Agreement

Until 1978, the governing body for Correspondence Chess in the United Kingdom was the British Postal Chess Federation (BPCF) which represented England, Scotland and Wales together internationally. A series of meetings between BPCF, The Scottish Correspondence Chess Association, and the Welsh Correspondence Chess Association finally resulted in the York Agreement.

1. The BPCF, ScCCA and WCCA shall encourage close co-operation between all associations organising

correspondence chess in England, Scotland and Wales.

2. ScCCA and WCCA shall be accepted as national members of BPCF and pay an appropriate contribution towards British events.
3. The BPCF recognises Scotland and Wales as separate countries for the purposes of international correspondence chess, both for team and individual events and supports the direct affiliation to ICCF of Scotland and Wales.
4. The ScCCA and WCCA shall encourage its members to participate in British Championships (individual and team) organised by BPCF.
5. Members of BPCF affiliated organisations resident in Scotland or Wales may enter individual tournaments through BPCF but shall be designated "Scotland"/"Wales".
6. The ScCCA and WCCA membership shall be open to residents or ex-residents of Scotland/Wales and only those resident elsewhere by agreement with the other national body.
7. Representatives of BPCF, ScCCA and WCCA shall arrange to meet annually (preferably in May) to discuss matters of common interest.

Signed York, England, 27th May 1978

Although the York Agreement gave nominal recognition to WCCA and ScCCA as national organisations, this recognition was not formalised by ICCF. Additionally Wales and Scotland

were oddly required to pay a membership fee to BPFC and support the British Championship which remained under the control of BPFC, suggesting that although this was an important first step, the York Agreement fell some way short of full and equal recognition by BPCF of WCCA and ScCCA as having full authority for correspondence chess in Wales and Scotland.

1981 ICCF Congress, London, England

Failure of ICCF to accept Scotland and Wales as full members

Although there were constructive discussions between Hans-Werner von Massow and Henk Mostert from ICCF, and representatives of BPFC and ScCCA, the 1981 Congress in London, ICCF refused to accept England, Scotland and Wales as full national members of ICCF.

1991 ICCF Congress, Järvenpää, Finland

Acceptance of England (BPCF), Scotland and Wales as full members of ICCF

In 1991 Congress finally recognised WCCA and ScCCA as full and independent national members of ICCF and deemed that BPFC now represented only England; nevertheless BPFC retained control of British events and required the

membership of Scottish and Welsh players wishing to enter these events.

Although Scotland and England were very active within ICCF in the 1990s, unfortunately Wales were not. Between 1991 and 2002 there is only one reference to Wales in ICCF Congress minutes, when Tim Harding, the delegate for Ireland held proxy at Bad Neuenahr (1996), unfortunately voting was not recorded in early minutes, so it is now impossible in retrospect to judge the influence held in ICCF by WCCA.

There are no records of a Welsh delegate ever having attended an ICCF Congress before the formation of the Welsh Correspondence Chess Federation in 2012.

2002 ICCF Congress, Seixal, Portugal

Suspension from ICCF

Sadly this lack of involvement continued, and the original Welsh membership of ICCF was not destined to last a decade; despite an appearance in the fifth North Atlantic Team Tournament (2001), the association were effectively inactive by 2002 and suspended with immediate effect for non-payment of fees at that year's Congress in Portugal.

Very little correspondence chess activity is recorded in Wales between 2002 and 2012, although many Welsh players continued to enjoy membership of United Kingdom based

correspondence chess clubs, most notably BCCA, during these years. The national FIDE federation showed little interest in supporting any form of correspondence chess during those years.

An informal arrangement was made in 2010 between Andrew Dearnley (ICCF National Delegate for England) and Eric Ruch (ICCF President) that Welsh players could be represented and supported in ICCF by the British Federation for Correspondence Chess whilst still playing under the Welsh Flag; this allowed Welsh players to be encouraged to enter individual events by an active and supportive national delegate, but it gave Welsh players no voice in ICCF and it did not allow participation in Olympiads or other national team events.

2012 ICCF Congress, Pretoria, South Africa

The formation of the Welsh Correspondence Chess Federation

The Welsh Correspondence Chess Federation was conceived during a discussion between the BCCA General Secretary, Neil Limbert, and the owner of a private correspondence chess server (SchemingMind, also a BFCC member organisation), Austin Lockwood.

The concern was that Welsh correspondence chess players did not share the right to represent their country in ICCF with

their English and Scottish peers and that they had no voice internationally.

A meeting was convened, inviting all known active Welsh correspondence chess players; this meeting was held in Prestatyn, Wales on 18th August 2012, where the Welsh Correspondence Chess Federation was formally constituted.

WCCF was conceived from the start as a federation rather than as an association, there were not to be any individual members, and any correspondence chess organisation having Welsh members could apply for membership in order to benefit those members.

Affiliation to the Welsh Chess Union (WCU the national FIDE affiliate) was not considered to be appropriate, however it was agreed by WCCF that the WCU would be offered honorary membership and a corresponding seat on the WCCF Executive Committee. This offer was later accepted by the WCU and Mark Adams nominated as their first representative.

Following the constitution of WCCF, an application for national affiliation was immediately sent to ICCF. The new federation was unanimously elected as a full ICCF National Federation on 29th October 2012 by ICCF Congress in Pretoria, South Africa.

Lockwood immediately changed his allegiance in ICCF to Wales, and as he was already a member of the ICCF Executive Board, having been successfully nominated as Services

Director by BFCC in 2012, Wales set the record for being elected as a member federation and immediately having a representative on the ICCF Executive Board; a record which is unlikely ever to be matched.

Lockwood remained ICCF National Delegate for Wales and represented the country in Krakow, Poland (2013) and Sydney, Australia (2014), until handing over to Russell Sherwood in late 2014. Sherwood will represent Wales as delegate in Wales' first home Congress in Cardiff, 2015; Lockwood remains ICCF Services Director until 2016.

2015 ICCF Congress, Cardiff, Wales

The Birth of the English Federation for Correspondence Chess

The implication of accepting Wales and Scotland as full national members of ICCF in 1991 was that (in the eyes of ICCF at least), BPFC no longer had jurisdiction outside England.

It was another 24 years before the successor to BPFC, The British Federation for Correspondence Chess (BFCC), finally accepted this.

BFCC formally reconstituted as the English Federation for Correspondence Chess on 1st January 2015, finally conceding that they had no authority outside England, and by implication that the Scottish Correspondence Chess

Association and WCCF had full authority for the game in Scotland and Wales respectively.

Home Congress at Last

An application was made to ICCF to host the 2015 Congress in Cardiff, this application was accepted unanimously at the previous Congress and work is currently underway to organise this Congress.

Although at the time of writing no titles have been nominated by WCCF, a number of players have earned norms and it is hoped that the first WCCF title will be awarded in Cardiff.

Appendix One: National Championships

The most important postal chess advance was the establishment of a Welsh Individual Championship in 1965. It was created and organised by Mr P M S Parkes of Pontypool who was given free reign by the Welsh Chess Union to develop the Championships as he wished. Mr Parkes also ran a Club Championship at postal chess but the number of entries was disappointing and it was discontinued after only one year. Talybont won the only such event in 1967 when four teams competed.

In 1969, M J Griffiths of Bridgend, took charge of the Championships. A trophy for the Championship winner was provided by D W Foster of Talybont.

1965-6

1st M Jones (Brecon) 6½; 2nd P M S Parkes (Pontypool) 5½; 3rd R G Taylor (Newport) 4; =4th D W Foster (Brecon), M J Baker (Swansea), Dr T R Perkins (Monmouth) 3; 7th S Owen (Pontypool) 2; 8th Rev I Davies (Brecon) 1.

Candidates: 1st G Brace (Newport) 6/6.

1966-7

=1st M Jones (Brecon), R J Miles (Newport) 5½; 3rd D W Foster (Brecon) 4½; =4th Rev I Davies (Brecon), P M S Parkes (Pontypool) 3; =6th Dr T R Perkins (Monmouth), E Bridge (Cardiff) 2½; 8th G Brace (Newport) 1½.

Candidates: 1st. B Shields (Penmaenmawr) 6½/7.

1967-8

1st M Jones (Brecon) 7; =2nd B Shields (Penmaenmawr), D W Foster (Brecon) 6½; 4th H Davies (Bangor) 4½; =5th D I Hambrook (Porthcawl), Rev I Davies (Brecon) 4; 7th Dr T R Perkins (Monmouth) 3½; 8th E Bridge (Cardiff) 3; 9th G Brace (Newport) 2½; 10th B Hughes (Welshpool) 1½.

Candidates: 'A' F V Waite (Cardiff) 5½/6; 'B' R J Deakin (Cardiff) and G V Cadden (London) 5/6.

1968-9

1st F V Waite (Cardiff) 6; 2nd M Jones (Brecon) 5½; =3rd Fa S Cunnane (Cardigan), G V Cadden (London), R J Deakin (Cardiff) 4½; 6th D W Foster (Brecon) 4; =7th D I Hambrook (Porthcawl), H Davies (Bangor) 3; 9th Dr T R Perkins (Monmouth) 1.

Candidates: G Berry (Cardiff) 5½/6.

1969-70

1st Fa S Cunnane (Cardigan) 6; 2nd G Berry (Cardiff) 5½; 3rd G V Cadden (London) 5; 4th F V Waite (Cardiff) 4½; =5th F G Hatto (Llanelli), M Jones (Brecon) 4; =7th R J Deakin (Cardiff), T M Lister (Bridgend) 3; 9th M J Griffiths (Bridgend) 1.

Candidates: 'A' J D Mills (Cardiff) 6½/7; 'B' D I Hambrook (Porthcawl) 5½/7; 'C' F M Ashworth (Connah's Quay) 6/7.

1971-90

- **1971** T L I Jones (Cardigan)

- **1972** Fa S Cunnane (Cardigan)
- **1973** J Lang (Cardiff)
- **1974** Fa S Cunnane (Cardigan)
- **1975** D O Vaughan (Cwmbran)
- **1976** T Ll Jones (Cardigan)
- **1977** D O Vaughan (Cwmbran)
- **1978** C M Wills (Llanelli)
- **1979** D O Vaughan (Newport)
- **1980** D O Vaughan (Newport)
- **1981** D O Vaughan (Newport)
- **1982** C F Morris (Pontypool)
- **1983** D O Vaughan (Newport)
- **1984** D C Jones (Rhondda)
- **1985** D C Jones (Rhondda)
- **1986** S J Hutchings (Pontypridd)
- **1987** D O Vaughan (Newport)
- **1988** R Davies
- **1989** J Coleby (Buckley)
- **1990** J Coleby(Buckley)

1992-1999

The following winners were retrieved from the web archive of the former WCCA website.

- **1992** J Garcia
- **1993** A P Baker
- **1994** G Sinnett
- **1995** A P Baker
- **1996** D James

- **1997** D A Phillips
- **1998** D A Phillips
- **1999** N G Evans

There are no subsequent records of national championships taking place in Wales.

Ladies Championship

A Ladies' Championship was started in 1969 and met with such a response as to necessitate two sections. The Reserves tournament was won by Mrs C Johns of Mold.

1st Mrs HP Brunner (Penarth) 4; =2nd Mrs S Mills (Cardiff), Mrs DR Owen (Caerphilly) 3; 4th Mrs M Davies (Penarth) 2½; 5th Mrs D Perkins (Monmouth) 2; 6th Mrs M Bluck (Pontypridd)

- **1970** Mrs H P Brunner (Penarth)
- **1971** Mrs C Johne (Mold)
- **1972** Mrs H P Brunner (Penarth) & Mrs M Davies (Penarth)
- **1973** Mrs M Davies (Penarth)
- **1974** Mrs M Davies (Penarth)
- **1975** Mrs M Davies (Penarth)

Appendix Two: International Team Events

Olympiads

No record of Olympiads held before the 11th edition can be found on the ICCF Webserver; in the early editions England, Scotland and Wales competed as a combined Great Britain team.

Olympiad XI Preliminaries Section 3 (1987)

- Board 1: P A Lamford (IM) 5.5/9
- Board 2: S J Hutchings 3/9
- Board 3: T M Whiteside 4.5/9
- Board 4: Dr R Davies 3/9
- Board 5: T Gutteridge 3.5/9
- Board 6: Dr A J Lewis 2/9

Olympiad XII Preliminaries Section 2 (1992)

- Board 1: M Thomas 2.5/11
- Board 2: T M Whiteside 6/11
- Board 3: C F Morris 5.5/11
- Board 4: P A Richmond 5/11
- Board 5: G Sinnett 5/11
- Board 6: M J Griffiths 3.5/11

Olympiad XIII Preliminaries Section 1 (1998)

- Board 1: C F Morris 4/11
- Board 2: P A Richmond 1/11
- Board 3: D James 0.5/11
- Board 4: D A Phillips 6.5/11

- Board 5: M Thomas 0/11
- Board 6: G H Phillips 4.5/11

By the time of Olympiad XIV in 2000, the old WCCA were effectively inactive and Wales did not participate in any further Olympiads until the formation of WCCF in 2012

Olympiad XX Preliminaries Section 5 (2012)

- Board 1: A Lockwood 5.5/9 (SIM Norm)
- Board 2: A Balshaw 4.5/9 (IM Norm)
- Board 3: P Varley 3.5/9
- Board 4: M Adams 4.5/9
- Board 5: D O Vaughan 0.5/9
- Board 6: J L Williams 6/9

Ladies Olympiads

Wales has made one appearance in Ladies Olympiads

Ladies Olympiad IV Semi Final 2 (1986)

- Board 1: Mrs D M Cooper-Evans 4.5/6
- Board 2: Mrs H Brunner 2/6
- Board 3: Mrs B Hughes 2/6
- Board 4: Mrs M E E E Clarke 0/6

European Team Championships

No records exist on the ICCF webserver for EU/TC3 or previous events; Wales participated in EU/TC4 and 5.

European Team Championship IV, Section 1

- Board 1: A H Williams 3/7

- Board 2: C Wills 0/7
- Board 3: C F Morris 5/7
- Board 4: S J Hutchings 2/7
- Board 5: C I Price 2/7
- Board 6: M Adams 0.5/7
- Board 7: W R J Hewitt 0/7
- Board 8: Dr R Davies 1/7
- Board 9: J Tiplady 0.5/7
- Board 10: K O Jones 1/7
- Board 11: A Sheehan 1/7
- Board 12: M Thomas 1/7

European Team Championship V, Section 3 (1994)

- Board 1: C F Morris 3.5/9
- Board 2: S Dishman 2/9
- Board 3: J MacDonald-Ross 0.5/9
- Board 4: M Adams 1.5/9
- Board 5: G H Phillips 2.5/9
- Board 6: G Sinnett 2.5/9
- Board 7: M Thomas 4.5/9
- Board 8: J Garcia 1.5/9
- Board 9: A P Baker 2/9
- Board 10: M J Griffiths 0.5/9
- Board 11: N Clifford 2/9
- Board 12: C J Grier 1.5/9

Following the formation of WCCF, Wales participated in EU/TC10

European Team Championship X, Section 1 (2014)

- Board 1: A Lockwood Ongoing
- Board 2: A Balshaw Ongoing
- Board 3: M Adams Ongoing
- Board 4: P Varley Ongoing
- Board 5: J Claridge Ongoing
- Board 6: R Sherwood Ongoing
- Board 7: D O Vaughan/A Davies Ongoing
- Board 8: A Bullen/H Sherwood

North Atlantic Team Tournament

No record of the first North Atlantic team tournament exists on the ICCF webserver, however Wales participated from the second to the fifth editions of this event.

North Atlantic TT II (1985)

- Board 1: P A Lamford (IM) 4.5/9
- Board 2: J D Thornton 3.5/9
- Board 3: Mrs D M Cooper-Evans 2.5/9
- Board 4: C I Price 4/9
- Board 5: R M Bollen 1/9
- Board 6: G Cantello 4.5/9
- Board 7: J Tiplady 2/9
- Board 8: K O Jones 0.5/9

North Atlantic TT III (1990)

- Board 1: M Thomas 3/10
- Board 2: M Williams 0/10
- Board 3: G Sinnett 1.5/10

- Board 4: G H Phillips 2/10
- Board 5: M J Griffiths 4.5/10
- Board 6: D T Guy 1.5/10
- Board 7: C J Grier 5/10
- Board 8: K Scantlebury 3/10
- Board 9: J Whittaker 2/10
- Board 10: P Bowers 3/10

North Atlantic TT IV (1996)

- Board 1: P A Richmond 6.5/10
- Board 2: M Thomas 3/10
- Board 3: J A Simmons 2.5/10
- Board 4: G H Phillips 3.5/10
- Board 5: D B Thomas 2/10
- Board 6: A P Roberts 5/10
- Board 7: J Coleby 2.5/10
- Board 8: Dr T J Hammond 2.5/10
- Board 9: K Scantlebury 2/10
- Board 10: D T Guy 1/10

North Atlantic TT V (2001)

- Board 1: G H Davies (SIM) 4.5/10
- Board 2: M Lane 2.5/10
- Board 3: D A Phillips 4/10
- Board 4: G Sinnett 4.5/10
- Board 5: M Adams 4.5/10
- Board 6: J A Simmons 1/10
- Board 7: J M Barrett/G H Phillips 2.5/10
- Board 8: A J May 0.5/10

- Board 9: C J Grier 0/10
- Board 10: M R Wakeham 0.5/10

By the time of the sixth (2008) edition of the NA/TT the old WCCA had become inactive and were no longer affiliated to ICCF; if there is a seventh edition, Wales will of course be represented by WCCF.

Thor Løvholt Memorial U-2300 Team Tournament

WCCF had not yet been constituted at the time of the first Thor Løvholt Memorial in 2011, however a Welsh team did enter the second edition in 2013.

Thor Løvholt Memorial U-2300 Team Tournament Semi Final 1

- Board 1: J L Williams 6.5/9
- Board 2: R Sherwood 4.5/9
- Board 3: D Roberts 0/9
- Board 4: Dr A M Robertshaw 3.5/9
- Board 5: A M Llewellyn 0/9
- Board 6: M R Wakeham 0/9

Contemporary friendly matches

The Welsh Correspondence Chess Federation are currently active in playing friendly matches

- Peru (2012)
- Sweden (2012)
- Netherlands (2013)

- Spain (2013)
- Venezuela (2013)
- Latvia (2013)
- USA (2013)
- Ireland (2014)
- Venezuela (2014)
- Poland (2014)
- Australia (New South Wales) 2015
- Scotland 2015
- Germany 2015
- SchemingMind (international) 2015
- Finland 2015
- India 2015

British Tri-Nations

Perhaps the most successful team event to date has been a three way team match between Wales, Scotland and England for players rated under 2200, held in 2014. Wales won this event with an incredible score of 32.5/40, England 14/40 and Scotland 13.5/40.

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