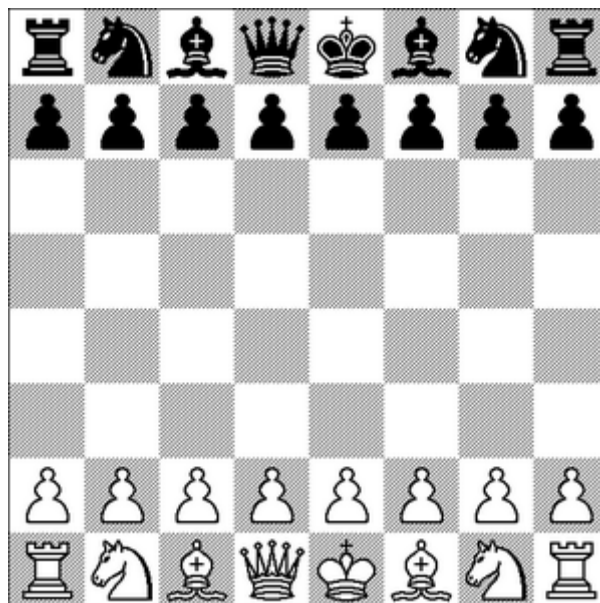


A History of

HARROW CHESS CLUB

The First One Hundred Years

1907-2006



Compiled by Roy Maddock

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Introduction

In 1996 I thought that it might be interesting to mark the ninetieth birthday of Harrow Chess Club by looking back over those years and recalling some of the events and many of the people that had contributed to the continuing life of the club. The centenary would perhaps have been a more appropriate occasion for such a venture, but I felt that if I were still 'available' in ten years time I could then complete the job. Fortunately, I was, and I did! 'A History of the First Ninety Years' was published in September 1996 and an account of 'The Final Decade' appeared in September 2006. This on-line version now combines the two.

The club's first season was a short one, being only the first half of 1907, so the 'Centenary Season' was September 2005 to July 2006. On the actual 100th birthday of the club, members, both past and present, met at a dinner to celebrate the event. And... further to the comment in the 'Playing On' section (following the 90th season), we did indeed receive a letter from Buckingham Palace!

The first half century of this account is based on the nineteen articles published in the club bulletin, 'Harrow Chess Pieces', between October 1971 and February 1975 (No's 2-32), which were researched from the club's minute books, of which we have the complete set, and by using other archive material. I have continued the story using the same sources, with the additional benefit of my own memory since 1961 and, from 1971, the further help of the magazine mentioned above which provides detailed coverage of all club activities up to the present day. Despite having all this information available there are still a number of occasions when details of results and final tables etc. are missing, because the relevant leagues simply failed to provide them.

This account may appear to be a catalogue of results and a succession of names, but as that is the very foundation upon which the club is built, it is almost inevitable.... and in case you require even more detail, I have concluded with several pages of statistics!

I am proud of my association with Harrow Chess Club and of being able to have made a small contribution to its history, but I hope that there will be many more names and an abundance of results for someone else to record at some future date.

Roy Maddock
October 2007

The Opening Moves

Harrow Chess Club was born on 14th January 1907, the brainchild of Mr. A.A. Sainsbury. At the inaugural meeting Mr. Sainsbury was appointed 'Secretary, who shall also act as Treasurer', which post he was to hold for twenty years, and he also agreed to perform as Match Captain for the time being. There were other members, however, and a President and a Committee were duly elected.

It is interesting to note that the entrance fee was fixed at 2/6d [12½p] (today it is eight times that amount) and the annual subscription was just double that at 5/- [25p] (today, well - the increase is of a somewhat greater proportion!). Members chosen for matches, if unable to play, had to give three days notice otherwise be fined 1/- [5p]. I wonder how this would be greeted today - a fine equivalent to a fifth of the sub!

The new committee met again just nine days later to make further arrangements for getting the club started including a proposal 'that 4 boards and 4 sets of pieces be purchased at a cost of 30/- [£1.50].' The meetings were on a Monday at the Greenhill School in St. Ann's Road, (roughly where Marks and Spencer now is), although during the summer months members played at their own homes taking part in a knockout tournament. Much work was done by the Secretary to arrange matches and tournaments so that when the club reconvened in September it was possible to announce at the first Annual General Meeting that ten matches were arranged and a winter tournament was to start. A Mr. Coldwell, one of the Vice-Presidents, would give 'an exhibition of simultaneous play'.

That first full season of the club in 1907/8 seems to have been a success with sufficient support to run a Championship tournament, the first winner of which was Mr. Kootz, and an 'American Tournament' in three classes. Those in the First Class were handicapped by having to give the KB pawn and the move to players in the Second Class who in turn gave the same to the Third Class. First gave Third a knight. Of the matches there is, unfortunately, no record of the results.

At the start of the 1908/9 season the club moved its headquarters to the Gayton Rooms, being reception rooms owned by Messrs, Wright Cooper who described themselves as 'refreshment contractors' but were better known to the citizens of Harrow as bakers. The premises were situated where Superdrug now stands in Station Road. Although its stay now was to be for only a few years, the club was to return to these luxurious quarters later in its history.

Early Days

At the A.G.M. held at the start of the 1909/10 season, business must have been speedily concluded as it is reported that 'the meeting was then addressed by the famous chess master, Mr. Gunsberg, who subsequently played 17 games simultaneously - winning 14 and drawing 3.'

During the season members expressed a desire to meet more often than once a week and the first Thursday meeting took place on November 18th. To meet the extra cost, subscriptions were raised 50% to 7s.6d. [37½p].

There was some concern over membership at the turn of the year and it was agreed to have two posters displayed 'at the Metropolitan Station for a month, at a cost of 2/6d. [12½p].' It was also agreed 'to write a pressing letter of invitation to ladies to join', although to whom these letters were directed is not clear, neither is it recorded whether they achieved the desired response. However, by the end of the season the overall membership had risen to 31 and the financial position was described as 'Expenses having balanced receipts' - the Treasurer was obviously a financial wizard!

The 1910/11 season saw the continuation of the Championship and Handicap Tournaments but again there is no record of match play. A Match Captain had been appointed but it seems likely that only a few friendly fixtures were undertaken. Two social evenings were proposed and, strangely, appear to have taken place in the form of Whist Drives.

The following season the championship was run on a ladder basis, the winner being determined by 'the member who won most frequently throughout the season the game for the top place on the club ladder'. Rules of the tournament were complicated and unusual and now seem rather quaint, particularly that saying 'The time for any one move shall not exceed five minutes, except that each player may claim ten minutes twice during a game.' (This is equivalent to no more than 12 moves an hour!) The rule goes on 'Players should warn each other in turn when the time limit is being approached!!! No mention is made of chess clocks which were presumably not available. The time-keeping must, surely, have led to many an argument. Members who were challenged to play before 9 pm. could not refuse without a valid reason or they would forfeit the game, but challengers after 9 pm. Had to 'make an appointment to play on one of two alternative meeting nights.'

Towards the end of the season great strides forward were taken to obtain competitive match play. Up to this point all the matches against other clubs had been of a friendly nature, and indeed, 'friendlies' were to play a large part in the Harrow fixtures throughout the 20's and 30's,

being the only match play available to the weaker players. Some friendly matches were still being played well into the 50's and 60's. In 1912 the first inquiries were made of the London League in an attempt to secure admission to Division 'C'. However, this was later discarded - and our entry to the London League thereby delayed for many years - when the Middlesex County Chess Association announced a proposal to form a league between groups of Middlesex clubs, which was welcomed by Harrow.

A proposed increase in the rent for 1912/13 meant a departure from the Gayton Rooms (although we were to return there several years later), the Secretary engaging rooms at an establishment rejoicing in the title 'Elias' Health Bakery'. Further efforts at recruiting members were made including 'an announcement on the screen of the cinema' and 'by cards in public places'!

Difficult Years

1912/13.

The first season in the Middlesex Inter-club Competition, as the new league was called, was a rousing success with the trophy coming to Harrow. 13 matches were won, 1 was drawn and 1 lost.

With the advent of the First World War the next few years were, understandably, difficult ones. 1913/14 started with membership down to 20. At the A.G.M. a rather odd election to the office of President took place, it going to a Captain Johnson 'subject to his being interested in chess and willing to accept.' Apparently he was, and did!

Although the club again moved its headquarters - back to Greenhill School - it was only a short stay, the next stop being at the premises of Messrs. Howe & Sons, 1 Peterborough Terrace, Station Road. Financial troubles struck Harrow at the start of 1914 when the situation became so desperate it was decided that for the remainder of the season the club should only meet on the occasion of a home league fixture.

The club was later able to recover its feet and although the war had now started, Harrow still managed to meet once a week at various venues; Elias' Bakery, Greenhill School, Howe and Sons, and even an establishment called 'The Soldiers Rest House', Peterborough Parade. During the war years match play ceased and the club discontinued its championship, but handicap tournaments were still held.

Into The Twenties

With the end of the war, plans were made for a full resumption of activities for the 1919/20 season. Yet another new home was found, this time at the Bridge Schools on whose site now stands the Civic Centre. The club now met twice a week, the club championship was resumed and entry into the Middlesex Trophy was made but with only moderate results. At the end of the 1920/21 season a social evening and whist drive was held with the Maurice club as guests.

The following season honours again returned to the club in the form of the 'Middlesex Trophy'. Membership was again the cause for some concern - it averaged about 25 in the early twenties - and in 1923 the club reverted to meeting once a week, on Mondays.

In 1924 Harrow deserted the Middlesex competition and at last entered the London League, playing in Division 'C'. (The league identified its divisions by letters and did not change to numbering them until 1971). In their first season Harrow finished fifth with 5 wins and 4 losses. It is recorded that it had "not been possible to put our best team out for any match, some of the strongest players being absent every time" - a strangely familiar cry! The next season the team played in Division 'B', although quite how this promotion was achieved is undisclosed in the records. The answer seems to be that the league did not have automatic promotion and relegation until after the second war and the club decided to apply for the higher division, which was granted. The team proved worthy of this status by finishing second, one point behind the winners. The following season, 1926/27, the team again finished second in this division with what seems an unusually moderate record for such a high placing: 5 wins, 1 draw and 4 losses.

1927/28 saw some important changes. After being settled for so long at the Bridge Schools the club moved its headquarters to Heathfield School, which was in College Road (it disappeared to make way for the St. Ann's Shopping Centre), where they met on Wednesdays. The founder of the club, Mr. Sainsbury, who for 20 years had been automatic choice as Secretary/Treasurer, left the club, the reason being that he would not be able to attend in future as he was leaving the district and moving - to Watford! One assumes that Watford was much further away in those days! Well, maybe not in miles but in length of journey time. Another decision was to enter the Middlesex County Cup in preference to the London League; an unexpected move with an unsuccessful outcome.

Next season the club withdrew from all outside competitions with the exception of a challenge match against local chess players outside the club. This rather bleak period was overcome by the acquisition of

new accommodation; back to Wright Cooper's Gayton Rooms in Station Road which was to be our home for many years. Match play was limited to a friendly against the Watford club but membership rapidly improved in numbers and regularity of attendance with the much more comfortable surroundings. The Club Championship was a tie between F. Artis and L. Walls, two former 'giants' of the club, Mr. Artis, as Captain of the Middlesex Correspondence team, had the honour of bringing the County Correspondence Championship to Middlesex for the third season running.

The Early Thirties

The 1930/31 season started on a high note with a simultaneous display by F.D. Yates, who had been British Champion in 1913, 14, 20, 26 & 28 and was to be Champion again in 1931. Mr. Yates won 22, drew 6 and lost 2 - to F. Artis and S. Davis. Members of the public were invited to attend and a few of them took boards, including a youngster named Charles Jahn, who was to later serve the club with distinction and will still be remembered by some of today's members. (He was one of the draws on that occasion).

The Silver King that is still the Club Championship trophy some 65 years later, was purchased in that season with Mr. Artis as the first recipient.

F.D. Yates again visited the club, this time as reigning British Champion, at the start of the 1931/32 season and demolished the Harrow opposition ranged simultaneously against him, winning 20 games, drawing 7 and losing none. Another popular event at this time was the President's Team versus the Captain's Team match, but apart from an entry into the Eastman Cup and a couple of friendly encounters, there was still an absence of league match play.

Another name that will be familiar to our older members now appears for the first time; that of A.E. (Bert) Hopkins, and in the next season, 1932/33, he was the Club Champion. An absence of 13 of the previous season's members meant a serious decline in membership and contributed to financial difficulties; the season closed with a balance in hand of 8d.[just over 3p]! Steps were taken to advertise the club by means of leaflets which Mr. Walls undertook to distribute.

The Handicap Tournament of those days was organised on a somewhat different basis to today. Whereas it had previously been on a system conceding material, in 1932 it was amended to playing with equal material but with the stronger player being required to mate the weaker player within a definite number of moves to score the full points.

Five matches were played in the County Cup; 1 win, 1 draw and 3 losses. Bert Hopkins gave two lectures under the title "My Chess Alphabet". This was during the 1933/34 season, and another event was a tandem simultaneous display by members, A. S. Davis and L. Walls. This was repeated at the start of the next season during the course of which the club fared better in the County Cup, winning three matches and drawing two, which gave them second place. Although matches were few by today's standards, an attempt to provide second team 'friendlies' was thwarted by the lack of opponents.

The 'Simultaneous Display' seems to have been a very popular event around this time and the visitor in October 1935 was Sir George Thomas who took on 22 Harrow Members, defeating 17 of them, drawing with 3 and losing to 2, in a session that lasted 3½ hours. It was declared the most successful evening that the club had experienced up to that time; but it could not compete with the event that is recorded in the next chapter.

The Koltanowski Story

Georges Koltanowski, the Belgian Master, specialised in the fantastic art of 'Blindfold Chess' - in other words, playing a game without seeing a board, except the one in his mind. Not only was he able to perform this remarkable feat but he also undertook to play several games simultaneously by this method. Indeed, on the 20th September 1937 he set a World record of no less than 34, played at Edinburgh, and quoting from a letter he then sent to the Harrow Secretary, Leonard Walls, "I was in top form yesterday and in 12 hours I won 24 and drew 10." 12 hours!! I see that a well known book of records states that in 1960 he played 56, winning 50 and drawing 6, but whether this was from a simultaneous start or on the replacement system is not quite clear.

Earlier in 1937 Harrow had been given the opportunity to receive Koltanowski for such a display and on February 15th he visited the club and provided the most exciting evening in its history for the greatest number of people ever seen at the club.

Koltanowski sat with his back to his ten opponents and a teller was appointed to convey the moves to and from him. At the end of a fascinating evening lasting some 4½ hours, six of the members had been defeated, three had obtained draws and one had managed to overcome the Master.

Leonard Walls was inspired to write the verse on the opposite page which bears repetition today, although it does seem to conflict with his later report to the club in which he said, "We congratulate Mr. Bonwick on his victory and Messrs. Behmber, Moulton(?) and Artis on securing

draws.

On reading this story when it was previously published in 1972, Don Rose recalled that midway through the evening, after quite a few moves, the Master asked for a 20 minute break, during which he went for a walk accompanied by one of the members, and smoking half a dozen or more cigarettes in rapid succession. On his return he offered to play over the moves made so far in any of the ten games. Two members asked him to do so and he was able to reel off the moves in their games - and all this without seeing a single chess set!

The 'Harrow Observer', which was then a substantial broadsheet, fully covered the event, publishing a picture above a detailed account of the evening, written in some awe, which extended to over 900 words. although they did credit Harrow with an additional draw - by G. S. Wallis - and spelt the winner's name as Bomwich.

In Memoriam

KOLTANOWSKI V HARROW

TEN Harrow Chess Players
Sitting in a line
HOPKINS left his Queen 'en pris'
Then there were nine

NINE Harrow Chess Players
Looking for a mate
WALLIS thought he'd found one
Then there were eight

EIGHT Harrow Chess Players
Asking help from heaven
DEAYTON lost a Bishop and
Then there were seven

SEVEN Harrow Chess Players
Feeling in a fix
BROWN forgot to castle and
Then there were six

SIX Harrow Chess Players
Hard to win did strive
JEPPS essayed to fianchetto
Then there were five

FIVE Harrow Chess Players
O'er the board did pore
HAMILTON fell in a trap
Then there were four

FOUR Harrow Chess Players
Holding on with glee
JAHN thought he'd Queen a Pawn
Then there were three

THREE Harrow Chess Players
You'll find then in WHO'S WHO
BONWICK tried to find a 'Stale'
Then there were two

TWO Harrow Chess Players
Our tale is nearly done
BEHMBER made a sacrifice
Then there was one

ONE Harrow Chess Player
All his comrades gone
ARTIS gently passed away
Then there were none

The Late Thirties

The late Thirties were happy and successful years for the club. The 'County Trophy' came to Harrow in 1936/37 but, as if content with this achievement, the club decided to switch its allegiance back to the London League in the following season, entering division 'C', which they proceeded to win. What in those days was considered a 'long programme' of 13 matches resulted in 11 wins and 2 losses. A large wooden chess clock with a silver plate recording this achievement was presented to the club. This clock was still in use some 50 years later but has now been pensioned off. With still no automatic promotion the club was told that unless division 'B' was to be reconstituted we would have to continue in 'C', and so it proved. Once again we were Champions with the remarkable record of 12 wins and 1 draw, which earned us another clock.

1938 saw a return visit from Georges Koltanowski; not for a blindfold display this time, but a lecture followed by an ordinary simultaneous, or should it be 'extraordinary' as he won 20 games, drew 2 and lost none! Leonard Walls, who had won the Club Championship in 35/36 retained it the following season. Charles Jahn, won his first title in 37/38 and the then President, Frank Artis, was to be the last Champion before the war commenced.

War And Pieces

The club's fortunes were rudely interrupted by the outbreak of the Second world War and it was to suspend activities at the start of the 1939/40 season. However, this was reconsidered in January 1940 with the result that the club resumed meeting regularly from then until April, running a successful handicap tournament, in which 31 members competed, and staging a simultaneous display by B. H. Wood.

At the start of the 40/41 season the increasing air-raids brought about a further curtailment of activities. There were, in fact, some informal meetings held during the summer of 1941 and repeated in the following year, which took place at 'The Carlton Commercial College' Kenton, but attendance were described as somewhat meagre.

It was not until September 1944 that it was decided to reopen the club at the Gayton Rooms, after a 4 year absence. It proved to be a very successful season despite the hazards of V.1's and V.2's. But neither 'doodlebugs' nor rockets could dampen the enthusiasm of members hungry for chess, and good attendances were reported throughout the season. There were 45 paid members. Nine friendly matches were played of which eight were won, and J. Mises gave a

'simultaneous'. The Club Championship was resumed, with A.F. Behmber successful, and a Handicap Tournament was held.

Back On Board

1945/46 was the first full season of 'peace' but there were plenty of battles to come over the Harrow chess boards. A new continuous tournament was devised in which 10 points per game were at stake to be distributed 10 to the winner and 0 to the loser if checkmate was given in not exceeding 20 moves, 9 & 1 up to 30 moves etc. up a scale to 6 & 4 if not more than 60 moves. Over 60 or draws scored 5 each. The winner was J.A. Fuller with 80 points from 10 games which was a remarkable achievement - but then he was both the British Boys Champion and the Boy's Champion of London. We shall hear much more of John Fuller in future chapters. The Club Champion that season was Charles Jahn.

The London League started up again with a single division containing 15 teams. Harrow finished 9th having won 6 matches and lost 8. It was an unexpected blow to learn at the start of the following season that with the league now reinstating additional divisions, Harrow had been demoted to division 'B'. A strong protest was made to the league but they refused to reconsider their decision; so to show that our team was worthy of the 1st division, we proceeded to win the 'B' section with 7 wins, 1 draw and 1 loss.

The county announced that it was about to inaugurate a new competition but Harrow records show that 'interest was not expressed in the proposed new Middlesex League', and instead it was decided to enter a 'B' team in the Middlesex Trophy. Then it was learnt that the Trophy and the County Cup had both been superseded by the new league, so it was agreed to support it after all. There were only five other clubs taking part (Hampstead, Eastcote, Ealing, Muswell Hill and Wood Green) and they finished in that order behind Harrow, who had the pleasure of becoming the first winners.

The 'Continuous Tournament' of the previous season was now discontinued and the handicapping system of mating in a specified number of moves reverted to. The Club Championship would be run on 'American Tournament' lines with competitors being divided by ballot into sections of six, the winners of each of the 5 sections playing off to determine the Champion. For the second year running this honour went to Charles Jahn.

On the 4th March 1947, in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the club, a dinner was held at the Gayton Rooms (which was then, of course, the club's luxurious headquarters). A plate bearing the club's

name had been made and was now affixed to the hall entrance. During the summer months the club opened on alternate Thursdays for a supplementary fee.

At the start of the 1947/48 campaign there was again a reluctance to enter the Middlesex League but this was later overcome. The league had attracted many more clubs and they were split into two zones, East and West, with the top two in each playing off in a Final Pool. This seems to undermine the principles of the 'league' system when a team can finish second (however poorly) in the main competition, yet still be League Champions by doing well in the play-off, but it was to apply for the next 20 years with several cases of Harrow either benefiting or losing out because of it. It is interesting to recall the other teams in that first Western Zone: Ealing, Eastcote, Greenford, RAF Ruislip, Sperrys, Wembley, Uxbridge and West London. Harrow finished 4th .

The delight at regaining London League 1st division status was short-lived for, despite a gallant effort, the team came 11th and were relegated. They had found the opposition far too strong for them; West London's side had included I. Konig, E.G. Sergeant and Sir George Thomas. Two matches were won but nine were lost including one to Battersea by 5½-6½. As Harrow were drawn to play Battersea in the Eastman Cup (the London League's knockout tournament) this same meeting was used to determine the result, but over the first 10 boards of the 12 in the league match. As Harrow lost on the last two boards they won this encounter 5½-4½; so the team had the unusual experience of both winning and losing on the same evening. Harrow then went on to reach the final of the Eastman Cup, but they were well beaten by Hampstead who had a certain J. Penrose in their side - on board 3!

The Championship that season was won by L. Walls. I. Konig visited the club to give a simultaneous and he returned for a similar event at the start of the next season, 48/49. Now back in the second division of the London League, the team had an unhappy season. After winning the first match there was a run of five defeats and the side was at the foot of the table heading for relegation again, but they responded well to the situation and were able to win their last three matches including one against one of the teams that was to be promoted to the first division.

In the vital match v. B.B.C. (it was their last match of the season which they had to win to stay in the division, and we had to win for the same reason) their top board persistently offered Mr. Jahn a draw and Mr. Jahn, although a pawn down, persistently refused. The B.B.C. player then went on tour and he had to make a special journey from Sheffield

to finish the game at Mr. Jahn's house on a Sunday afternoon. The B.B.C. lost! A second team was entered in the London League and competed in division 'C' where they finished a creditable third.

In the Middlesex League we finished at the top of the Western Zone, 1½ points ahead of the nearest rivals, Ealing; and yet it was Ealing who became Champions as they pipped us in the Final Pool.

One of the highlights of the season was a 16 a side 'Lightning' match against Eastcote which was said to be the first such match to have ever been played in Middlesex and caused quite a bit of interest in the chess world. Harrow won 108-44. There were again changes in the Club Championship rules and it reverted to being by invitation, with John Poole taking his first title.

1949 saw the first Harrow Summer Open Knockout Tournament which attracted 40 players, many from other clubs, but the winner was one of our own members - later to become President, K.S. Schofield.

The Club Champion in the 49/50 season was J.A. Fuller, starting a run of three consecutive years as champion. That year he was also fifth in both the Hastings Tournament and the British Championships, and he represented England versus Holland. C.H.O'D. Alexander visited the club for a simultaneous display and was unbeaten, winning 12 and drawing 10.

Harrow teams did not have a very successful season. The London League 1st team finished 6th in division 'B' and a 2nd team which was entered in division 'C' often had difficulties in raising a full team and were placed 8th out of 10. The Middlesex team were third in the Western Zone. The third round of the National Club Championship was reached and a 3-3 draw was achieved against Hampstead but we went out on the elimination rule. There was some discontent over the problem of finding opponents for friendly games at the club and it was said that there was too much tournament play. As a result some elaborate rules were brought in, including one to prevent members declining friendly games whilst waiting for tournament opponents. Ironically, at the end of the season there were complaints that insufficient tournament games were available!

Into The Fifties

1950/51.

In the London League Harrow's 1st team fortunes took a distinct turn for the better when they earned themselves promotion as division 'B' champions. The 2nd team, however, again finished 8th in division 'C'. The Middlesex team also came top of the table but missed taking the title by being only second in the Final Pool. The 3rd round of the 'National

Club' was again reached.

Besides being the Club Champion, J. A. Fuller also won the Lightning and the Summer Knockout and then became the County Champion. He also entertained members with a simultaneous (+12, =5, -4) as did C.H.O'D. Alexander who made a return appearance scoring +15, =4, -1.

Harrow played an interesting challenge match against the Warwickshire Club Champions, Erdington C.C. in July 1950. Harrow secretary, John Poole, arranged lunch for the visitors and an 18-board match at the Duke of York Tavern, Kings Cross. Although weakened by the absence of several leading players, Erdington restricted Harrow to the narrowest victory, 9½-8½. The club also started an airmail correspondence match with Barton Chess Studio, San Francisco, one of the foremost U.S. clubs, which was not to be completed until the last day of the following year, some 15 months later. The score was: 4 wins, 12 draws and 4 losses.

There were causes for concern within the club as membership declined somewhat and the financial situation deteriorated - the season showed a loss of £21 leaving a balance in hand of just 6/7d.[33p].

Over the years since the formation of the club, the tournament to determine the Club Champion had taken a variety of forms, but for the 1951/52 season it was decided to combine what was then in existence, a Major and Minor Championship, into a single tournament on the 'Swiss' system over 10 rounds, with the winner as Champion and one or two minor prizes. This was to be an experiment but as this is the form that it takes today (except that we play 2 rounds less), it obviously proved successful.

With the club's finances at a very low ebb, it was decided not to increase subscriptions on the grounds that this might deter future members, but to request a donation of 5/-[25p] from existing members to build up a bank balance. This met with a somewhat disappointing response but with 23 members paying an additional subscription for a summer session, the club was able to start the season with about £10 in hand. At the end of the season the club had only just covered itself financially and it was agreed that more income had to be found. This resulted in the introduction of a board fee of 6d. [12½p] per evening, a thankless task for the Treasurer.

The club's joy at having been promoted to the top division of the London League was once again short-lived, for they were unable to hold their own in that company and at the end of the 51/52 season found themselves in the relegation spot. The second team finished 4th in division 'C'. However, some success did come Harrow's way as not only

did they again head the Western Zone of the Middlesex League but they also managed to finish top of the Final Pool to become Champions.

There were again two simultaneous displays, by J.A. Fuller (+15, =1, -4) and C.H.O'D. Alexander, back again, (+15, =7, -2). A club dinner was held and proved very successful. Ostensibly it was to celebrate the club's 45th anniversary but, as the banqueting suite of the Gayton Rooms was where meetings were held anyway, perhaps any excuse was welcome. John Poole relinquished his Secretaryship and was succeeded by Brian Locke.

1952/53 proved to be a particularly successful season for Harrow. The London League team having been relegated to division 'B' now found much better form and finished as the division champions - the third time in seven years that they won the 2nd division. The second team came 2nd in division 'C' (section B) and narrowly missed promotion as only the winners of each section qualified. The Middlesex team were in 4th position.

But perhaps most glory was achieved from a remarkable run in the National Club Championship. In the first round Harrow were drawn against Hoddesden and beat them, not too convincingly, 3½-2½. In round 2 the visitors were Hampstead, who were the reigning London League Champions and were to finish as runners-up that season, and they were doubtless astounded to find themselves defeated by a margin of 5-1. Harrow's scorers were McLeod, Jahn, Collins and Gilles who all won, and Govas and Walls who drew.

If that result was something of a shock, the next round was little short of sensational. The opponents were the holders of the trophy, the redoubtable Oxford University side. As the 'CHESS SUPPORTER' reported: "Harrow continued in the role of 'giant killers' when they knocked Oxford University out of the National Club Championship to secure a place in the last eight. Oxford won the Championship last season and were strong favourites to repeat the performance." The scores were, (Harrow names first): Bd.1 N. A. McLeod 0 R. Persitz 1; Bd.2 C. Jahn 1 D. Horseman 0; Bd.3 J. Poole ½ R. Barrett ½; Bd.4 D. J. Collins ½ R. W. Judson ½; Bd.5 G. H. Govas 1 J. D. Watt 0; Bd.5 W. J. Gilles 1 D. Taylor 0. Result: Harrow won 4-2.

So to the next round where Surrey Champions, Sutton and Cheam, were the victims; the score, a convincing 5-1. Harrow were now in the semi-finals and were drawn to play Finchley whom they had already beaten in a London League fixture (Finchley were to come 2nd to us in div. 2), so hopes of a place in the final were high. But it was not to be, for on this occasion it was Finchley who ran out winners by 4-2 and thus Harrow's splendid run was halted. (Finchley were beaten

by Ilford in the final). A remarkable feature of this achievement, and also our league success, was the fact that the Harrow No. 1 player, John Fuller, was suffering a prolonged illness and took no part in these events. In all matches there were 25 wins, 3 draws and 7 losses.

The Club Champion was N.A. McLeod, a Scottish international who also distinguished himself by beating Alexander in a televised game.

Success and failure seemed to follow each other at Harrow at that time and it is not unexpected to find that the 1953/54 season was, as far as the London League was concerned, a great disappointment. The newly promoted team found the 1st division opposition far too strong for them and they finished bottom of the league with just 1½ points from 9. The second team, playing in the 3rd division, which was then divided into two groups, were 4th in their section. (Harrow put a proposal to the league that a division be formed so that promotion and relegation could take place, and this was accepted for the following season). The fortunes of the Middlesex team were the reverse, for they won the Western section and went on to take the Championship by winning all three Final Pool matches.

An interesting feature of that season was the return, after many years, of George Koltanowski who gave another of his 'blindfold simultaneous' displays over 8 boards, winning 4 and drawing 4. The season also saw a tandem simul. given by Messrs. Poole and Collins, plus the departure of G.R. Brown who had been a member for 40 years and President since 1940. Mr. Brown, who was marrying and moving from the district, was made a Life Vice-President and presented with two inscribed smoking pipes.

The Mid-Fifties

1954-55 saw another change in fortune for the London League teams, and as the Middlesex team repeated its performance of winning the Zone and the Final Pool, it was a notable season from the playing aspect. The London 1st team were division 'B' Champions by virtue of winning all nine matches, and the 2nd team were runners-up in division 'C', so that both sides earned promotion. The combined playing record of the three teams was a remarkable one: P.27, W.24, D.2, L.1.

Despite this success, it is recorded that for the season there was an appreciable drop in the number of members which contributed to financial difficulties following a deficit on the season of £21. Various schemes, including the organising of social events, were considered in an effort to raise funds, but nothing transpired except the increasing of subscriptions by 25% to £2.

The following season the 'Swiss' system was temporarily

abandoned as a means of determining the club champion, in favour of three all-play-all tournaments designated A, B and C. The winner of section A was to be the Champion. Members could choose which section they wished to enter although the right was reserved to transfer players from one section to another in order to even off entries. The Champion was, as was usual around that time, J.A. Fuller. Other events that season were a talk by Harry Golombek, and a 'simultaneous' by the Russian Master V. Ragozin from which some 'very satisfactory publicity resulted'.

The London League team, back again in the 1st division, managed to hold their place at that level - the first time that this had been achieved. In fact, they finished in 9th place, scoring four points from eleven, but they had the satisfaction of holding the Champions to a draw. The second team, which had also been promoted, could not retain their place and finished at the wrong end of the table with a mere 1½ points. By coming second in the Western Zone, the Middlesex team qualified for the Final Pool in which they scored 2/3 and were runners-up.

However, perhaps the most significant feature of the season was the departure from the Gayton Rooms. It was - as they say - "The end of an era." For nearly 30 years the club had met in these luxurious surroundings to which in later years the older players would look back and regale the newer members with tales about the richly decorated rooms, the thick carpeting, the comfortable furniture and refreshments with waiter service. Now the club was suddenly faced with the loss of its headquarters as the owners of the Station Road premises, Messrs. Wright Cooper, were selling out and it was to be redeveloped. It emerged as Universal Stationers, a high-class store selling fancy goods, records, books etc. on two floors, but in recent years has become the more prosaic 'Superdrug' store.

A sub-committee was set up to look at alternative accommodation and many places were considered before the Roxborough Hotel offered a room with which the committee was 'most impressed'. The hotel, which stood at the Roxborough Bridge end of College Road, must then have been in a better state than the run-down pub to which we returned for a brief stay some years later, and which has since made way for Aspect Gate. Thanks to the good work of the officers of the day, the club was able to continue meeting without a break.

1956/57 started with a number of changes to the officers of the club. Leonard Walls stepped down after two years as President and Charles Jahn began a five-year stint. The Club Captain, Len Winters, also stood down, as did his deputy, Don Rose. Len, with Don's help, had

been responsible for the teams in both the London and the Middlesex Leagues for the past ten years. A.F. Stammwitz and R. Broom were appointed to run the London teams and George Canter the Middlesex side.

A new appointment was that of Tournament Controller. Up to then it seems that running the various tournaments had been the responsibility of the Secretary, but now D.J. Collins took it on.

For the new match captains it was to be a far from happy season. The first London League team finished in the relegation spot in division 1, having obtained only 3 points from 11 matches, although John Fuller (still Club Champion) with 77% achieved the best board one performance in the division. The second team were 4th in div. 3 with 5½ points, and the Middlesex side were 3rd in the Western Zone and so failed to qualify for the Final Pool.

50 Years Old

The most important event of the 1956/57 season was the occasion of the 'Golden Jubilee Banquet' which was held on January 24th 1957, just 50 years and 10 days from the club's first meeting.

A distinguished company gathered for the evening, with John Poole making a speech of welcome to the guests who were headed by the President of the British Chess Federation, Sir Leonard Swinnerton-Dyer and Lady Dyer. It was fitting that among the guests was Mr. A. A. Sainsbury, the man who started the club all those years ago. From a newspaper report it was learned that his first name was Arthur, it never having been mentioned anywhere in the club records; in those formal days he, and most others, were addressed as Mr.. Anyway, Mr. Sainsbury, although now at an advanced age, had travelled especially from his home at Lowestoft, and contributed an entertaining speech. There were also speeches from Mr. J. Hamilton welcoming 'the Ladies', to which Mrs. Stammwitz replied, from Lionel Dent, and from Harrow President, Charles Jahn. The speeches were transcribed by Mr. A.H. Law and make interesting reading. After the meal and the speeches the members and guests received some musical entertainment.

Rounding Off The Fifties

The 1957-58 season saw a transformation of fortunes with the club winning the London League 2nd division championship with a 100% record and a remarkable games score of 63½ for, and 26½ against, an average score of 7-3 for the nine matches! The second team also won their division, dropping only half a point, and Harrow also became Middlesex League Champions. With all three teams champions of their

divisions, it must have been the most successful season the club had experienced.

1958 saw the resumption after a break of the Harrow 'Open' Summer Knockout Tournament, for which John Poole now presented a cup. Designed to provide competitive chess during the quiet summer period, with games being played mostly at the competitors homes, the tournament attracted a large entry from a wide area for some 30 years until, with the proliferation of weekend tournaments etc. it declined and finally petered out.

In the 1958-59 season the London League team managed to retain their division 1 status by finishing 6th out of 12 teams, their best ever position at that time. The second team, however, was unable to live with the opposition in division 2 and came last; they were never to reach such lofty heights again. The Middlesex League team was third in the zone and missed qualifying for the Final Pool by just half a point.

The following year, after three seasons under the captaincy of Alf Stammwitz, the London League team was taken over by George Canter, with whom they were able to repeat their 6th position. The 'seconds' were relegated again when, for the second year running they came 10th (out of 10!), but the Middlesex team resumed winning ways by finishing as runners-up in the Western Zone; they went on to head the Final Pool and take the title.

Negotiations for the visit of a team from The Hague Chess Association had been in progress for some time and we eventually entertained them during the summer of 1960. The Dutch brought over a strong side and won the match 9-5. Hopes for a return match were not fulfilled as insufficient volunteers could be found to make the trip to Holland.

The decade ended with an invitation from Wormwood Scrubbs Prison for members to be incarcerated (for a three-hour sentence) for the purpose of playing a match against the inmates, and this was to be repeated on at least two other occasions in future years. A further invitation was suddenly withdrawn at the last moment due to 'security reasons' and was never repeated.

Around this time we were advised of a proposal that Richmond and Twickenham Chess Club intended to put to the London League, which was that league positions should be decided by game points rather than match points. Harrow members agreed to oppose such a revolutionary idea and other clubs probably expressed a similar view as no record can be found of such a proposal actually being tabled.

Into The Swinging(?) Sixties

As far as the London League was concerned, any swinging at the start of the sixties was in a downward direction. As we were competing in Division 1 for the third season, it had been hoped that we could lose the tag of being the 'Yo-Yo Team' which had been acquired as a result of the side's habit of oscillating between the first and second divisions. Unfortunately, although scoring 3½ points they could finish no higher than 11th and were demoted once again. The second team fared no better and would have been relegated for the third year running had it not been for the fact that at that time Division 4 was the lowest! The Middlesex team finished second both in the zone and the play-off.

The 60/61 season had started with a change of venue as the room at the Roxborough Hotel was now required for other purposes. The Committee found accommodation at the Methodist Church Hall in Welldon Crescent, conveniently located premises that were to be our headquarters for many years. To meet the increased cost involved, the subscriptions had to be raised to £2.2.0. For those members who had been used to the comfort of previous accommodation, especially at the Gayton Rooms, the stark church hall and its facilities must have seemed distinctly basic. The furniture consisted of trestles upon which long table tops had to be balanced. They were housed in compartments under the stage from which they had to be extracted and returned, not without some difficulty. The club acquired some long green baize cloths which when draped over the table-tops at least transformed their appearance.

The close of that season saw the end of the reign of John Fuller who moved to Coventry, having been sent there by his employers! He had been Club Champion for 11 out of 12 years including the previous 8 in a row; the only year he missed was because of absence due to ill-health. It was agreed that in future the Club Champion would be decided by a Swiss Tournament to be run throughout the season and, excepting that it was then over 10 rounds, it has remained so to this day. Don Rose had taken over as Controller in 1960 and was to hold the post for the next seven years.

1961-62. Club Secretary for the past ten years, Brian Locke, had the previous season also taken on the role of London League Captain, but now decided to concentrate his efforts on that job and the post of Secretary was entrusted to Rowland Wilson. Rowland worked for the local press and was later appointed Editor of the Harrow Observer, all of which ensured ample coverage of our activities in that paper. There was also a change of President with Charles Jahn handing over to John Poole who was to be in the chair for the next eight years.

Now back in the 2nd division of the London League the senior side had a reasonable season, finishing in 4th place, whilst the second team found improved form to win the Division 4 title. The Middlesex team mirrored the previous season's performance by coming second in both the Zone and Final Pool. It fell to George Canter to take on the mantle of Club Champion, but it was to be for one season only.

In an effort to boost membership the club decided to hold an 'Open Evening' in order to attract outsiders. It was announced in the local paper that visitors would be welcome on March 8th, and it is recorded that 18 people took up the invitation with 6 of them (including the writer of this account!) signing up as members.

1962-63 was a desperately disappointing playing season. The London League team was locked at the very foot of the 2nd division table (10 out of 10!), and this meant that they would be relegated to the 3rd division for the first time ever. The 'seconds' having just completed a season in that division, coming 8th out of 10, thought that they had managed to avoid demotion, only to find that they would have to drop down a section as the league did not allow a club to have two teams in the same division. They were not to know that never again would they compete at that level.

It had been decided that in view of the increased membership the club should, for the first time, enter a second team in the Middlesex League (to be known as the 'B' team), and as this league did allow two teams in one division, they competed in the Western Zone where they had the distinction of finishing 11th out of 11; the senior team had been placed 4th.

The Swiss Tournament resulted in a tie between George Govas and A.E. (Bert) Hopkins. Both had 8 points from the 10 rounds and they agreed to share the title of Club Champion, only the second time this had been recorded. Bert Hopkins had last won the title in 1933, exactly 30 years before, and he declared that he intended to win it 30 years hence.

The playing records may have disappointed but attendances at the club increased to such an extent that table space became difficult to find. Additional tables were set up on the stage, and members could even be found in the kitchen area with a board precariously balanced on a chair. A spate of vandalism in the area led to the hall being broken into and our equipment cupboard forced open, but fortunately nothing was taken; they were probably baffled by its contents!

A new Victoria Hall had just been built in Harrow and enquiries were made as to its availability, but the rent required proved to be beyond the club's means and it was to be some 25 years before we

could make it our home.

Several youngsters were now attending the club and so it was decided that for the next Season (63/64) a Junior Section be set up and run by Bert Hopkins. Bert also offered to give a series of lectures initially at the club before the start of the evening meeting, but when this proved too disruptive he held them at his own home. George Govas was again champion, this time outright. Board fees, which on and off over the years had been imposed on all but visiting teams, were finally abolished, much to the relief of the Treasurer for whom the collection of these dues was a thankless task.

The lesser opposition found in the London League's Third Division gave our players a chance to shine and they comfortably finished top of the table. The second team, now captained by Roy Hopkins, came 6th in Division 4. There were also captaincy changes in the Middlesex League where Frank Pett moved from the new 'B' team to lead the 'A's to third place, whilst Roy Maddock took over the 'B's who came 9th.

1964-65. Back in Division 2, the London League team managed to finish 5th whilst the second team were in the same position, but in Division 5. This apparent relegation came about because the league changed from having Division 4 in two sections, and instead introduced a fifth division to which our lowly placing in the previous year had condemned us. Although the Middlesex League team had over the years been consistently close to the top of the Western Zone, this season was to be the first time for ten seasons that we had finished first, and it was a disappointment that we could only come second in the Final Pool. The 'B' team improved to 7th place.

The Club Champion was John Poole who had last won the title 18 years previously.

The Second Half Of The Sixties

Harrow began the 1965-66 season with a new London League match captain; Brian Locke having left the district, Ken Schofield took over and led the team to sixth place in Division 2. The second team were 7th in Division 5. There was increased interest in the Middlesex League with more teams wishing to join, and they decided that the time had come to create a second division, whilst still retaining the first division in two zones although now with fewer clubs playing on a home and away basis, whereas the teams had formerly only met each other once a season. The league title was still decided by a Final Pool of the top two from each zone, for which we again qualified by finishing second, but we were also only second in the final. The 'B' team were placed in the new Division 2 and finished in the lower half.

The Club Championship was again shared, this time by Messrs. Schofield and Collins. and the Junior Section had expanded sufficiently to allow them to have their own Swiss Tournament, the first winner of which was a very young George Leyton. The season also saw a visit to the club by Leonard Barden who gave a simultaneous display, and he was to make a return visit the following season.

During the mid-sixties there was an on-going discussion with Cedars Chess Club regarding a proposed merger with Harrow. The club, which played at Cedars Community Centre, Harrow Weald, had developed a remarkably successful team from limited resources and had won the Middlesex League a number of times. Their leading lights were the Davids, Rumens and Mabbs, both of whom had previously attended Harrow as schoolboys. (David Rumens reappeared at Harrow in 1995 as Hampstead's board 1!). Now they were in financial trouble and it was agreed that they would incorporate with Harrow who would take on their debts, but at the last moment they decided to try to carry on for a little longer. They folded a couple of seasons later but despite the years of discussion there were no further moves to amalgamate.

Our two London League teams were to just miss promotion by finishing third in their respective sections, and the Middlesex 'B' team also came third, but the 'A' team were again second in both the zone and the play-off. John Poole became Club Champion for the third occasion after beating L. Rooza in a play-off, and J. Boschetti won the Junior title.

In the British Championships of that summer (1967) the club was delighted to learn that the Ladies title had been won by Dinah Dobson, albeit shared with Mrs. Bruce. Dinah had joined us as a young girl some years previously and had worked her way up to becoming the Ladies Champion by winning the British Under-18 title in 1963 and 1964. She was to retain the Ladies title in 1968, winning it outright, and then make it a hat-trick the following year.

At the 1967 A.G.M. a motion was proposed that instead of the Club Champion being decided by the Swiss Tournament, there should be a separate Championship Tournament held later in the season in which previous champions and other selected strong players, plus a number (yet to be decided) from the top of the 'Swiss' would be invited to compete, the object being to ease the demands on the stronger players who it was felt were unable to play in all the matches and also take part in the Swiss Tournament. After much discussion, a counter-proposal that the Club Champion be decided by the Swiss Tournament, as in past seasons, was overwhelmingly carried.

For the 1967-68 season there were sweeping changes amongst the club's officers, with the members taking the unusual step of electing Joint-Secretarys. Dinah Dobson joined Rowland Wilson who was to be less available due to work demands, and in fact he had to drop out altogether during the season, with George Canter substituting. There was also a new 'Swiss' Controller, Mike Gyton, and a new name on the trophy, Arthur Hall. The Junior Swiss attracted no less than 32 entrants and was won for the second year running by J. Boschetti. Roy Hopkins finally managed to find a successor as Treasurer in Don Rose who began what was to be a nine year spell in the post.

It was a remarkably successful season across the board, with the senior team winning the London League 2nd Division and the second team coming top of Division 5a under its new captain, Mike Gyton. Both Middlesex League teams also had new skippers. The 'A' team, under Roy Maddock, came top of the Western Zone and entered the Final Pool where they met the winners from a now split Eastern Zone, having to settle for second place. Jack Gamse had a less happy introduction when his 'B' team finished bottom of division 2.

For the 1968-69 season it was felt that with membership standing at over 60 a third team in the London League could be supported, but this was to prove over-optimistic. Before a match had been played, the appointed captain asked to be relieved of the job. A replacement was eventually found but he experienced great difficulty in fielding a full side during the season and they were to finish 8th out of 9. This was to be the only season in which Harrow was represented in three different divisions. Following their promotion to Division 4, the second team struggled to finish in 7th place, but there was a real triumph for the senior side which managed to come 3rd of the twelve teams in the 1st Division, which was their best ever performance to that point and, indeed, thereafter!

For this season the Middlesex League decided that it was time to abandon their zonal system and with it the necessity for a Final Pool, redistributing the competing clubs into two eleven-team divisions, playing each other once, and introducing promotion and relegation. Harrow's 'A' team, now under Arthur Hall, just failed to win the title and had to be content with second place, but the 'B' team did well to finish third in Division 2. The season had been the most active in the club's history with five teams playing 46 matches.

As in the previous season, the Swiss Tournament resulted in a tie involving John Poole, but this year he had to concede the title to Keith Ingram following the play-off. The Junior Champion was John Foley.

For this season the Joint-Secretary system was dispensed with and Roy Maddock was elected for what was to be his first spell in the post of Secretary, one which was to last for eight years. At the end of the season John Poole decided not to seek re-election as Club President as he was President-elect of the Middlesex County Chess Association. His successor was Ken Schofield.

During the season the long-standing arrangement whereby Swiss contestants received round by round notification of their opponents through the post, had to be discontinued. This splendid service had been provided thanks to the generosity of Charles Jahn who, through his Company, had carried out the duplicating and distribution by post of the notifications without any cost to the club. Now his auditors were advising him that it should cease, especially in view of the increased postal charges, but he agreed to continue producing the pairing sheet for the controller to distribute by hand at the club.

The last season of the decade (69-70) was one of widely contrasting fortunes for the club. Arthur Hall was congratulated on the way he 'so enthusiastically led his team to become Middlesex champions, they having won the league by a comfortable margin'. The games score was 52½ for, and 24½ against. The 'B' team were again third in Division 2. In contrast the London League teams had a miserable season. From their 'best ever' third place of the previous year, the senior side subsided to 12th and last place, having won only one match all season. The new captain, Mike Gyton, who had moved up from the second team, was rarely able to field the strongest, nor anywhere near the strongest side, and defaults were incurred with monotonous regularity, which attracted penalty points leaving us with none at all! The second team, under Derek Gay, were 9th in Division 4 and they, like the seniors, were condemned to relegation.

It seemed an inauspicious time to introduce a new award, 'The President's Prize' for the player with the best match record, but it was won by George Leyton for his performance in the Middlesex League of scoring 7½ from 8 games. Curiously, there is no record of it ever being awarded again!

The Club Championship was won by Charles Jahn, his fourth title, the first having been way back in 1938! The Junior Swiss was won by Richard Lee. The Junior tournament had this year been transferred to Monday evenings as a result of the noise and disruption that had been experienced on club nights during the previous season, especially during matches although it was pointed out that the senior members were equally responsible for excessive noise and inconsiderate behaviour (wasn't it ever thus!).

A large collection of chess books was presented to the club by the family of the late J. Hamilton, an old member, but as the club's existing library was rarely used it was decided that, with the exception of a few works of reference they should all be sold off to members with the proceeds going to the club funds. Many a bargain was available at the book sale that preceded the next A.G.M..

...And Into The Seventies

During the summer of 1970 a Grand Challenge Match took place between the Juniors and the Seniors with, it was reported, 'the Seniors proving too strong', although the actual score was not recorded. In November Leonard Barden paid another visit to the club to play a simultaneous against 24 members, for which we do have the result: Won 15, Drawn 4 and Lost 5.

Although the President announced that he was likely to be moving away later in the year, he was re-elected at the A.G.M.. When he eventually departed to Budleigh Salterton, where he could indulge his other great interest of croquet at its headquarters, Roy Hopkins was asked to take the chair for the remainder of the season.

It was very much a time of change at the club, with the continuing departure of long-term members who were sadly missed for both their playing skills and their administrative abilities. The Swiss Tournament was described as being 'both numerically and in terms of strength, one of the poorest for many years', although this should not detract from the performance of the 19-year old George Leyton, who won it with 8½ points from the nine rounds. The Junior Swiss, also less well supported than of late, was to provide our introduction to its winner, Colin Crouch.

On the match front there was little comfort to be found. The fortunes of the Middlesex teams declined after last season's successes, as both 'A' and 'B' teams finished 5th in their respective divisions, whilst the situation in the London League plumbed new depths. Just before the first match of the season the second team captain declared himself unwilling to continue, causing the match to be conceded, and despite efforts over several weeks to find a replacement, it was to prove impossible. Even getting anyone to play at all was difficult and it was decided to withdraw the team. A similar problem almost occurred with the senior side when it was found that the first four matches had all been lost with 23 of the 40 boards being defaulted! This brought a concerned letter from the League Secretary, and another from their Committee strongly rebuking us for failing to fulfil a fixture and offering no explanation. It was also revealed that an Eastman Cup match had been conceded and a National Club Championship match was lost after

fielding a scratch side, although it was reported that the fixture was recorded as a walkover for the opposition!

Matters needed to be swiftly taken in hand, and after accepting the captain's resignation, the Secretary agreed to take over the team for the remaining five fixtures in an effort to restore the club's good name. The players rallied to the cause to such good effect that not only were we able to complete the outstanding matches but to actually win three of them. Unfortunately, the deduction of the penalty points incurred as a result of the earlier defaults, condemned us to bottom place and demotion to Division 3.

The Years 1971 To 2006 - Season By Season

1971-72.

September 1971 saw the birth of 'Harrow Chess Pieces'. The Secretary had long felt that information about club activities was very difficult to obtain; match details were often known only to those participating in them. Results were occasionally posted on the notice board but members then, as now, were very negligent in consulting it, and if instead, all the information was handed to them in the form of a bulletin, whilst they might still not bother to read it, at least it would be readily available and, hopefully, create more interest in club affairs.

Similar ideas had been tried in the past; odd bulletins had appeared in 1949/50 and more regularly in '52 & '53. The minute book reveals that during the 60's plans to introduce another bulletin were often discussed, but intentions never became fact. Also, whereas these earlier attempts had been rather dull single-sheet newsletters, the intention now was to have a folded and stapled magazine type publication which would cover the club's activities in detail, plus articles and features to which the members themselves could contribute. Most such ventures usually die off in a very short time, but the fact that 25 years and some 140 issues later 'Harrow Chess Pieces' is still very much alive, seems to show that it was a worthwhile undertaking.

That first issue's main story was about the impending visit of the British Champion, R.G. Wade. In fact, Bob Wade had become champion in 1970 when he regained the title he had won 18 years previously, and by the time he visited the club on September 30th he had relinquished it by coming only third in the 1971 tournament. Now he had been elected to succeed John Poole as President of the Middlesex C.C.A. and wished to visit all the Middlesex clubs in order to learn how their members felt about chess in the county and the game in general. The equipment cupboard stayed locked as Bob Wade addressed the meeting on various

aspects of the game and called for questions as well as asking a few of his own. 30 members had a 'different' but interesting evening, although a few may have preferred to have had the sets out!

Roy Hopkins, who had taken over the chair the previous season, was now elected President, a term of office that was to last for five years.

This season the objective was to reconsolidate our position in the London League following the traumas of the past couple of years. A new captain was appointed, Bill Phillips, and over the next few years he was to restore the club's reputation. Now in Division 3, the Harrow team found the weaker opposition very much to their liking and led the table for most of the season. Going into the last match they knew that a win would ensure promotion and probably the division title, but they somehow contrived to lose it and were fortunate to be placed second by a solitary game-point advantage. An interesting analysis of results by board number showed where the team's strengths and weaknesses lay. Sequential scores for boards 1 to 10 (Max.9): 8, 5, 7, 6½, 4, 6, 5, 1½, 4½, 1½.

Harrow also played in the National Club Championship. After beating Eastcote 4-2 they achieved a sensational win over the team that was to be the First Division Champions, Cavendish. With a side missing several of the top players, and thoroughly out-graded on all boards, Harrow held their opponents to 3-3 and got the victory by the fractional board count of 10-11. Perhaps the outstanding performance was that of 15 year old Colin Crouch (then 159) who, playing Black on board 1, decisively beat A. J. Whiteley (215), who in the last British Championships had finished second just half a point behind Raymond Keene. Naturally, a much stronger Harrow side were well beaten in the next round, (5-1).

The Middlesex League teams also had new captains, Andrew Horton and Peter Graham, who managed to repeat the previous season's performance of finishing 5th in their divisions.

The Czech-born Master, C. Kottbauer, gave a simultaneous display in November and he was to give his opponents the unusually generous option of turning their boards round and taking the White pieces. Seven members took advantage of this offer but only one was successful. The full result was 17 wins, 2 draws, 4 losses (including young Colin Crouch).

The Club Champion was Paul Timson who scored 8½ points out of 9, but there seems to be no record of the Junior Swiss winner or, indeed, if the tournament ever took place.

1972-73.

Perhaps the most important event around this time happened many miles away from the club in the unlikely location of Iceland and was, of course, the Fischer-Spassky match. This was to have a significant effect on chess in general and on club memberships in particular. Harrow, like most other clubs benefited greatly and towards the end of the season the Treasurer was able to announce that he had received 102 subscriptions. This brought problems in accommodating everyone wishing to play, particularly when matches were due, for which the stage area was reserved. Fortunately, the number of home matches was comparatively few when compared with today. Only the Middlesex League matches took place at Harrow, all the London League fixtures being played in central London, mostly at St. Bride's Institute. Also, the equipment was stretched to, and sometimes beyond its limit, and for a while members were asked to augment it with their own sets and clocks until new ones could be purchased.

The season had started with an 'Open Evening', a means of attracting new members that had hardly been needed! On the second evening a 10-second Lightning Tournament took place. For some time it had been a tradition to hold such a tournament at Christmas (as indeed it still is) but the previous tournament had proved so popular that an additional one had been requested for this season.

The club was to have two British Champions in its ranks. At the 1972 Championships, John Quinn took the Under-21 title with 10 points from 11, whilst Colin Crouch followed up his outstanding 71/72 record for Harrow of 13½ from 18 matches by becoming British Under-16 Champion with a remarkable score of 10½ from 11. Our previous British Champion, Dinah Dobson, now as Mrs. Dinah Wright, finished third in the Ladies Championship.

Andrew Horton took over from Ralph Bazen as controller of the 'Swiss', in which 42 competed with Paul Timson retaining his title, the first time an outright champion had done this since John Fuller a dozen years before.

The previous season's Junior Swiss may remain a mystery but this year's tournament is well documented. It was conducted by that most experienced of junior chess organisers, Bert Hopkins, and it attracted 32 entrants, many resulting from our circularising the local schools. They included a 15 year old Paul Girdlestone and a 12 year old Nevil Chan, but at the end of the competition Harrow schoolboy T. Barrett and J. Greiller of Merchant Taylors, were level. The play-off resulted in a 1½-1½ score so they agreed to share the title.

Now in Division 2 of the London League, the Harrow team started the season in top form by winning the first five matches with ease, and Division 1 began to loom. But as the Bulletin warned, 'it might be unwise to count ones Queens before they are pawned', the next three fixtures all being lost, and although they recovered in the final match, the team had to be content with 4th place in the division.

For the second year both Middlesex teams had new captains, with Paul Timson leading the 'A' team to 6th place in Division 1, whilst Ricky Fortnum, beginning a four year spell, could get the 'B' team no higher than 7th in Div.2.

With the pressure on space and the continuing vandalism in the area, the Committee pursued their search for alternative accommodation, but with no success. At least there had been some redecorating of the hall following an earlier fire, one which had fortunately not affected our equipment. However, in 1973 the police had found a 10 year old boy in possession of one of our boards and men when he had been caught in another act of theft. The equipment cupboard was housed in the kitchen into which anyone from outside could enter without been seen from the main hall, so in future the kitchen door was kept locked and entry to it was via the open service flap.

1973-74.

The surge of interest in chess caused the London League to expand to seven divisions in order to accommodate all the new teams wishing to enter. One of the new entrants was Harrow II which, it was felt, our increased membership could now sustain. When the team had been withdrawn from the league in 1970 it had been in Division 4, but now it had to start at the bottom again, and under the captaincy of David Powell they managed to finish 3rd.

The big success of the season, however, was provided by the senior team. As in the previous season they won the first five pre-Christmas fixtures, but this time did not slip up in the second half and went on to win all the remaining matches to become Division 2 Champions with a 100% record, and a games score of 61 for, and 29 against. One can wistfully look back at the names then available for a typical team - Paul Timson, Mike Lambshire, Paul Gait, John Quinn, Colin Crouch, Andrew Horton, John Poole, Bill Richards, Dinah Wright, and the captain, Bill Phillips, plus the back-up of David Tuckett, Josef Sirola and Martin Avery.

In the National Club Championship the team progressed to the third round which entailed a visit to Oxford, where the University did us

the honour of choosing a very strong team (including John Nunn), and yet were only able to win 3½-2½.

For the third season running the Middlesex 'A' team had a new captain, this time David Tuckett, who was starting a long and exceptionally successful run with the side. That season they finished 3rd of 11 teams with 7 points from 10. An appeal by Centymca Lions against what had seemed a reasonably adjudicated draw for John Quinn, was upheld. And this not only amended the match score from 4-4 to 4½-3½ in their favour, but also gave them the league title. It also robbed John of an otherwise unbeaten record in all match and tournament games throughout the season; and it was a particularly sore point that the final decision was only received in May for a game that taken place the previous November! In Division 2, the 'B' team were 5th out of 12.

During the season Andrew Horton moved out of the district, and although he carried on playing in London League matches, he was unable to continue running the 'Swiss' at the club and the Secretary had to take it over. There were 48 entries and the winner was Colin Crouch, the youngest ever Champion. That summer Colin was to take part in the 1974 British Championships and win the Under-18 title.

Bert Hopkins decided to give up organising the Junior Tournament (sadly, he was to die the following March just before his 78th birthday) and Bill Phillips took it over, changing it from a 'Swiss' to all-play-all groups giving semi-finalists. The eventual winner was Paul Girdlestone.

It had been an exciting season, especially when power cuts were introduced (and naturally, Thursdays were chosen for Welldon Crescent) but playing chess by candlelight and without any heat was a diversion that quickly lost its charm!

1974-75.

The season opened with Colin Crouch playing 25 members simultaneously (+15, =7, -3), the first time since the days of John Fuller that the Champion had presented such an event at the club, but one that was to set a precedent for the following years.

The London League team's return to Division 1 started dismally with three defeats, but they then beat the reigning champions, Cavendish, who remembering that Nat. Club defeat a couple of seasons back, must have considered Harrow as their bogey team. Further losses followed; seldom were we able to field the strongest team (the familiar cry!) and all eleven matches had a differently made up team. By February there was concern for our future in the top flight, but a splendid run of wins towards the end lifted Harrow to the safety of 6th

place (out of 12). The second team finished 4th in Division 7.

The Middlesex 'A' team also started poorly when they lost the first match to a side that was to end the season in the relegation spot. So it seemed hardly likely that Harrow would finish as champions, but there followed seven wins and a draw which took them to a last-match encounter with Centymca Lions who were on 6½ points, with one to play. On the night the score stood at 3½-3½ with a confident claim for a draw to be sent to the adjudicator. This meant that the Lions would have to win their last match 7½-½ if they were to overtake Harrow on games aggregate. In the event they could only score 5-3, but this was of no consequence when we learnt that the 'certain draw' had been adjudicated as a loss to Harrow, giving Lions that match and the championship! Further study of this particular game showed that it was somewhat less 'certain' than had at first been thought. Nevertheless, skipper David Tuckett prepared a mass of analysis in an attempt to disprove the adjudicator's verdict and we eventually heard that the appeal had been upheld. Thus the match became a draw and Harrow were declared Champions with Centymca Lions second. It was an ironic twist of fate for the Lions, who themselves had won the title the previous year on a successful appeal in the Harrow match, which had left us in third place. The 'B' team slipped to 7th place in Division 2.

John Quinn was Club Champion after winning the 'Swiss', in which Eddie Crookbain managed to both act as controller and to finish fifth. Paul Girdlestone did even better in the Junior Swiss by combining organising it with winning!

That season the Treasurer reported having received 110 subscriptions of all classes.

1975-76.

During the autumn the Methodist Church closed as a result of the formation of the new United Reform Church. Fears that our hall would also close were allayed when it was made known that it would still be used for social purposes; indeed, it was proposed to transfer several activities from other churches to our hall, and also to the old church. This rather upset our plans to use the hall on certain other evenings in order to relieve our fixture list, but at least it was hoped that with the increased use would come some improvements to the lighting/heating and general conditions. The number of members was recorded as 118 which remains a club record.

Unlike last year when the London League team started badly but finished strongly, this season was to provide the reverse. The opening match was against Richmond and Twickenham who had players graded

229, 224, 211, 200 etc. which Harrow couldn't begin to match, and yet despite having lost the services of the Pauls, Timson and Gait, we ran out 7½-4½ winners, thanks to some outstanding individual efforts. It really was a quite remarkable result, endorsed by the fact that at the end of the season Richmond were crowned League Champions, whilst Harrow were rooted to the foot of the table. It was the only win in a season that saw two draws and eight defeats. It was reported that 'At no time was the strongest side available (again?!) and frequently far from it, so that the team selection was often difficult to understand'. The captain, who had led the team with considerable success during the preceding four years, now decided to hand over the job; he may have realised that this season had signalled Harrow's first step on the slippery slope that was to lead - albeit not for 14 years - to the club's extinction from the London League.

The second team started their programme with three defeats followed by the resignation of their captain. Peter Harris took over the job and the remaining ten matches were all won which lifted the side to third place out of fourteen.

For the third year running the Middlesex title concerned Harrow and Centymca Lions, and the rivalry seemed to have been settled in Harrow's favour when we played them in the penultimate fixture and emerged as surprisingly easy 5½-2½ winners. However, it was learnt that Hendon had been accumulating points and we had to travel there for our last match knowing that only a draw was needed for the title. The evening started ominously when Andrew Horton arrived at Welldon Crescent only then to realise that it was an away match. As his wife had departed with the car, he was rushed over to Hendon by Roy Maddock, who himself was pressed into service when Derek Gordon failed to meet the default time. Hendon also had a last minute reserve, on bottom board, who was graded no less than 210, a tactic that didn't go down too well. Despite a remarkable 10-move win by Mike Lambshire, the rest of the Harrow team collapsed to a 2-6 defeat. This left both clubs on 8½ points and it became a triple tie when Centymca Lions won their last match, but it was they who had the better games aggregate (helped by one of their opponents defaulting the match 8-0), with Harrow having to take second place. The 'B' team struggled in Division 2 and finished in 8th position, whilst a new 'C' team was entered in Division 3 under Hugh Rushton, which was intended to give match play to the weaker members, and they were able to take 6th. place out of ten teams.

The Swiss Tournament, now back to ten rounds, was won by David Tuckett who scored nine. The Junior title was shared by Clive Romain

and Jeremy Taffel after a 1½-1½ play-off. It was a remarkably strong tournament containing such names as, Nevil Chan, Jeremy Grundy, Graham White, David Tuddenham and the Hockaday brothers, John 13, Jim 10 and Joe 7, who along with their father Doug, were keen club members.

One interesting event that took place at the end of the season was a Kriegspiel match against Hayes, many of whose representatives were ex-Harrow players. For many years this game had been permitted at the club during the summer or the last few weeks of the season, and several of our members played it regularly at home. The event was a light-hearted affair (a euphemism for 'somewhat disorganised'), and the visitors just ran out winners by 8½-7½, give or take a few!

Approaching the A.G.M. it became clear that sweeping changes were due to take place amongst the officers of the club. Roy Maddock announced that after eight years he wished to give up the role of Secretary, a decision aggravated by certain 'incidents' during the season. Quite coincidentally, the President, Roy Hopkins, had also come to the conclusion that it was time for him to step aside, and then Don Rose decided, perhaps not quite so unrelatedly, that he would vacate the Treasurer's seat that he had occupied for the past nine years. So at one blow the three leading officers departed, shattering the continuity that had existed for five years.

At the meeting, Dinah Wright was elected as President, only the 12th in the seventy years to date, and certainly the first lady to hold the post. It was difficult to replace the Secretary and Treasurer but Ricky Fortnum and Cyril Bridge were persuaded to take on the jobs. David Tuckett was to be the only officer remaining at his post - as London League captain - and he agreed to also look after the Middlesex League 'A' team. Hugh Rushton moved up to the 'B' team with Ken Hiron taking over the 'C's. David Stott came in to captain the London second team. And one more change, Peter Larwood taking over as Swiss Tournament Controller.

Enquiries about the possibility of Harrow entering a team in the Hillingdon League resulted in a reply confirming that they had decided not to extend their competition to clubs outside the Borough of Hillingdon.

1976-77.

There was a post-A.G.M. decision to create an additional team, this to play in Division 6 of the Thames Valley League under the captaincy of Peter Harris; the boundaries of this league were obviously fairly 'fluid' if they could extend to Harrow! Doubts expressed at the meeting

regarding the ability to accommodate such a team were overcome by arranging to play five home matches at Harrow High School in Gayton Road.

With local vandals continuing to target the Welldon Crescent hall until it was described as being 'almost uninhabitable', the club was pleased when it was given the opportunity to move into the old church building, which was actually around the corner in Angel Road. Matches could be played in a small back room but other games took place in the body of the church which was quite compact, and although now deconsecrated still had much heavy dark wooden furniture.

Several names were missing from this season's tournaments and matches, including Colin Crouch now at university, but Michael Macdonald-Ross came in on board 1.

The London League team were again in trouble, with the first six matches being lost, but they managed to stave off relegation by winning the last two fixtures, both by a surprising 8-2 margin, and having an earlier win confirmed after an unusual dispute. Metropolitan appealed against the result of a game that John Quinn had won on time, claiming that the clock (which was their own!) was faulty and the flag had fallen early. The League Committee duly inspected the offending timepiece and agreed that it was falling ten seconds early, and they ordered the game to be resumed - an extraordinary decision which would seem to invite all sorts of questions and objections. Fortunately, John completed the win and condemned Metropolitan to defeat. The second team, having been unexpectedly promoted to Division 6 as a result of a reorganisation of the league, were to come 3rd.

The Middlesex 'A' team had no problems this season and 9½ points from 11 made them clear Champions. The 'B' team were 4th in Division 2 and the 'C's' 5th of 11 teams, many of which included players with remarkably high grades considering that it was the 3rd division. The new Thames Valley team managed to take fourth place in their first season.

In the Swiss Tournament, Bill Phillips and Nevil Chan, who had disputed the leadership throughout the season, eventually both finished unbeaten on 8½/10 and they agreed to share the title. The Junior winner was John Hockaday, 5/6.

1977-78.

As usual the season opened with a 'Simul' by the Club Champion, but this year as there were joint-champions it was staged as a tandem display with each taking alternate moves, and although this sounds

even harder they were able to achieve a 70% result.

There were more changes to officers with Peter Larwood taking over the Secretary's role and being replaced as Swiss Controller by Richard Symonds. The winner of the tournament, which had a record entry of 60, was David Tuckett who thus regained his championship title. There is no record of a junior winner and it would seem that as their numbers had been diminishing over recent years, the tournament was no longer held.

A new London League captain was elected, Rick Glew, and he managed to take the team to 5th place in Division 2. The second team were 4th in Division 6. David Tuckett was able to concentrate on the Middlesex 'A' team and again led them to the top of the table, winning 10 of the 11 matches. For the second year running Harrow were Middlesex Champions, but this was to be the last occasion that we have been able to claim this honour. The 'B' team were 5th and the 'C' team, now led by Mike Lynn, were 3rd. The Thames Valley team also won their division in only their second season, being unbeaten with ten wins and two drawn matches.

The main concern during the season was the accommodation. The move from the church hall into the former church itself had not brought the improvement in comfort that had been anticipated and it was difficult to heat such a lofty room. The local mindless vandals had transferred their attention to the church and the authorities could not keep pace with boarding up the broken windows; sometimes the small leaded panes were missing altogether (stoned glass windows?!). Unhappily, the winter was a severe one and the icy winds blew through the holes so that it became usual to have the ludicrous spectacle of members enveloped in thick coats and scarves, sometimes wearing hats and even gloves as they attempted to play. When the snow blizzards came, the flakes would blow through the gaps and settle on the boards of those unwise enough to sit near the windows. It is a story that has since been recounted many times, and one which usually gains in the telling so that one might be led to believe that the pieces became frozen to the board or they had to negotiate snow-drifts on the long diagonals. In fact it wasn't quite that bad, but with the attendances plummeting it became obvious that the club could not survive another winter under such conditions.

Some years previously the club had joined the Harrow Arts Council in the unfulfilled hope that there might be some financial advantage, and it was now learnt that Council had just acquired extensive premises in the shape of some old school buildings at Harrow Weald. They offered us the use of some out-huts, but the problem was that in

addition to the fact that the site was more difficult to get to, the huts had no furniture and it would have to be transported to and from the main building at each meeting, and also the only evening we could have would be Tuesday instead of our traditional Thursday. Then another possibility was found, the Roxborough Hotel which we had left some 20 years earlier to come to Welldon Crescent; it would not be the previous room, but a separate one with its own entrance located under the main building.

The alternatives were put to the members at the Annual General Meeting with the Committee recommending that the Arts Centre be chosen. After a lengthy debate the meeting rejected this and approved a move to the Roxborough with club nights remaining on Thursdays.

The last couple of seasons had shown deficits in the accounts, and despite the additional income received as a result of the vastly improved membership numbers (although this was now waning), the club's finances were now causing concern; the subscription rate had been held down for too long and with the prospect of having to pay more rent, the fees had to be raised by the equivalent of 30%.

1978-79.

The first meeting of the season was on September 21st and five weeks later on 26th October an Extraordinary General Meeting was called to discuss the new premises. The move to the Roxborough Hotel had not proved a success as the initial impression of comparative comfort was deceptive. On the first evening the management took orders for tea or coffee and the room's small bar was open to serve stronger tastes, but these facilities were quickly withdrawn when it was realised that we had come primarily to play chess. It now seems difficult to believe that our members caused the landlord to voice his disappointment with us in this respect! Dull lighting and awkward seating arrangements did not help, but the greatest hazard was, ironically, one that was not encountered at Welldon Crescent, that of noise. For it was found that a pop group operated in the room immediately above and chess became somewhat difficult in the face of pounding guitars and thumping feet!

The Club Committee had continued to search for alternative accommodation and once more came up with two options, the YWCA hall in Shepcote Road, central Harrow - although there were still doubts about the conditions of its use - and the Arts Centre in Harrow Weald again, where they now offered us the main hall with plenty of tables and chairs available, plus the use of it on Thursday evenings. A proposal that the decision be deferred pending further information from the YWCA Management Committee was defeated by 15 to 11 and then

the least accessible of the two, The Arts Centre, was chosen by 24-22, the closeness of the decision showing that there was a large body of opinion against the move away from the centre of Harrow. Although there were several bus routes serving it - indeed, it was opposite the bus garage - there were no rail connections and it seemed more remote by car.

Another problem was that the club had to provide a representative to attend Arts Council meetings; we had been rather nonchalant about this in the past, but now that we were 'in residence' it had to be taken seriously. Also we were required to produce a working party to join the other organisations on a rota for the purpose of maintaining and cleaning the site on a Saturday morning. The general membership displayed a curious lack of interest in this (!) and it fell to a few committee members to undertake it on pain of a fine for the club, which over the years to come was not always circumvented. One other irritation was that the equipment cupboard could only be housed in one of the huts, so the sets etc. had to be transported to and fro across the old playground in all weathers at each meeting.

The first meeting at the new premises was on November 9th so all our opponents had to be advised of the change of venue - and a few of those arriving from a distant southerly direction would not always be too happy after their longer journey. The move caused the loss of a few members, including Hugh Rushton who, having moved to Chorleywood, had been happy to break his journey from town at Harrow station but was not prepared to undertake the additional trek out to Harrow Weald. So another Middlesex 'B' captain had to be found, and Peter Larwood took it on for the remainder of the season, leading them to third place. The 'A' captain, David Tuckett, who had been the advocate for the move to the YWCA, also resigned, but he did continue to play for the team which Nevil Chan now skippered.

The Middlesex League had this season decided to introduce a 'Premier Division' comprising the top seven clubs and rename Div. 2 as Div. 1, and 3 as 2, a new 4th. division (called 3!) being added. It seemed to serve little purpose other than to confuse everyone, but at least whereas opponents had previously met only once a season, fixtures in the 'Premier' were on a home and away basis.

As reigning champions, Harrow found it surprisingly hard going in the 'super-league'. All the matches were closely contested but we seemed to come off worse more often than not. The 12 matches resulted in 3 wins, 2 draws and 7 losses and the fact that 26 different players were used for an 8-board team, including Mr. D. Fault on eight occasions, illustrate the captain's problems. No final tables were ever

received but it is thought that Harrow were in 5th place. The 'C' team, now led by John Clenshaw, struggled to finish just clear of relegation to the bottom division.

The London League team started off in tremendous form by winning their first six matches, but then lost three of the last four to finish in 3rd place and miss promotion with a poorer games score. They also used a large pool of players (23), but it was commented that 13 of them had a published grade of more than 170! The second team fared even better, winning Division 6 by scoring 9 points from 10.

For the first time in its history the club decided to run a seventh team by entering a 'B' side in the Thames Valley League, and captained by Neale Evans it came 4th out of 8, after being docked one match point for using an ineligible player. The 'A' team, now led by Ken Hiron, were also penalised by having a match they thought had been won by default when their opponents failed to turn up, awarded against them when the league upheld Richmond's contention that they had not been notified of the new venue.

Nick Rutter achieved the remarkable record of winning all ten rounds in the Swiss Tournament to earn the championship title, a feat claimed to be a 'first ever'.

1979-80.

Once again it was all change amongst the officers. Peter Harris was elected as the new President and Rick Glew took over as Secretary, his former role as Senior Match Captain passing to Mike Dymond. Richard Symonds moved to the Middlesex 'A' team with Ken Hiron replacing him as Swiss Controller, a tournament that was to attract a record 63 entries, and was to be won by Farrukh Khan (8½/10) who at 16 was believed to be the youngest ever Club Champion.

On the match scene Harrow teams had a mixed season. Both London League sides scored exactly 50% and finished 5th and 6th in their respective divisions. In the Middlesex Premier Division four of the seven teams finished joint last with 4 points each but Harrow's game score put them into 5th place, just out of the relegation spot. The same could not be said of the 'B' team who came last in their section, but this was compensated for by the 'C' team, now under Bob Pleasants, who led them to 2nd place.

This season two new Thames Valley League captains settled in, Barrie Hughes and Ron Watts. The 'A' team successfully earned promotion to Division 4 by coming 2nd whilst the 'B' team were placed 5th in Division 6.

The 'Main Event' had occurred early in the season when members had arrived at the Arts Centre on November 22nd. To find that the club had been turned out of the main hall and moved into the old huts hidden away in the far corner of the grounds. It seemed that our presence in the main hall during the past year was not welcomed by some of the Arts Centre people and matters came to a head when it was alleged that some of our smokers were abusing the newly laid floor. Although 'No Smoking' signs had always been displayed there was a tacit understanding that we could disregard them, but this was now withdrawn. Reaction amongst members who smoked was varied; some accepted the ban but others stated their intention of leaving the club. The Arts Council offered us the use of another room (the huts!) where we could smoke and which would also enable us to have the equipment cupboard there, and we would not have to put away the tables which we had also been accused of failing to do in the main hall. As occupation of the huts had been rejected some 18 months earlier, before the ill-fated move to the Roxborough Hotel, and also at the last A.G.M., when they had again been discussed, the President announced his intention of distributing a referendum form for members to decide democratically whether to accept this move. Sadly, the Arts Council acted less democratically and moved us out of the hall before a vote could be taken. Despite the initial objections to our eviction we were to settle in reasonably comfortably for the next few years. We had the use of two rooms so that matches could take place in one and the general meeting in the other. One disadvantage was that we were now distanced from the bar in the main building. As it closed at 10.30, it was often suspected that many a game was prematurely adjourned or even resigned in order to beat 'time'!

1980-81.

The failure to find anyone willing to captain the Middlesex 'A' team led the Secretary, Rick Glew, reluctantly to take it on, and yet despite a miserable first season, he must have found it rewarding as he was to remain there for four years. The side had the misfortune to finish at the foot of the table and so were relegated, which meant that for the first time since the formation of the league, Harrow would no longer appear in the top division. The previous season the 'B' team had been relegated whilst the 'C' team had earned promotion, but because of the difficulty in raising teams to travel the 'C's were rewarded by being dropped, which at least saved the embarrassment of having a 2nd team playing in a lower division than the 3rd! The 'B' team were now to just fail to get reinstated by finishing third.

To compensate for the loss of a Middlesex team it had been agreed to reapply to the more local Hillingdon League now that they had decided to extend the scope of their league to outside the borough. However, we heard that we would not be accepted because they feared that we would be far too strong for them and would dominate the tournament. Some of the clubs had even threatened to resign if we entered!

If the Middlesex team's decline had been unfortunate, the London League side's performances were a disaster. New captains Richard Symonds and Peter Harris achieved (if that is the word!) similar records: 11th of 11 and demotion.

The one bright spot of the season was provided by the Thames Valley League teams who both finished second in their respective divisions, but although the 'A' team earned promotion to Division 3, the 'B's missed out as only the winners of Division 6(North) were promoted.

The Club Champion for the second year running was Farrukh Khan. The season saw a large turnover of members. At the start there had been 93 of which 34 failed to renew their membership, but as 28 new members joined it produced a balance of 87.

To continue what had been a fairly depressing season, the Annual General Meeting turned out to be a nightmare (according to the President), or 'something less than a well organised success' (per mag. report). Only 18 members attended, and this included the officers. 16 other members showed their interest in club affairs by playing chess in the other room - it was not discovered who had breached the unwritten rule of not opening the equipment cupboard on A.G.M. night! Mark Bullock, who had been elected Treasurer for that season, failed to appear and no accounts were available, so that all financially related matters ran into difficulty. Tournament prize winners were conspicuously absent (not that the cash prizes were available!), but it was reported that the Club Champion did manage a late appearance - between moves - to be photographed receiving the trophy.

Fortunately most of the officers agreed to continue in their jobs although a new Treasurer was elected, Spencer Cowan. The London League 1st team captaincy remained vacant but the second team was taken over by Fred Hiron.

Now that the club had acquired a large number of uniform plastic sets, the assorted wooden sets that were housed in boxes or bags, along with some of the old wooden boards, were offered for sale to the members; thus more links with the club's history were lost. It also did away with the ritual that had occurred every season - the sorting of the pieces into their correct sets. Although, sadly, it is still necessary to

re-sort the plastic sets occasionally; as they are interchangeable it is very much easier than having different sets.

1981-82.

The season commenced with an Extraordinary General Meeting to consider the accounts which were now belatedly available. It started promptly and proceeded so smoothly with the balance sheet being approved with such a minimum of discussion, that some members arrived to find that they had missed part or all of it.

Renovation of the huts had been carried out by the Arts Centre making the accommodation more comfortable; we now had our own loo instead of a walk over to the main building! Unfortunately, with the rooms now being more in demand, we could no longer have one on a Monday for our Thames Valley matches, and also we were restricted to one of our two rooms on certain evenings, which led to some fairly crowded meetings, with three matches on one October evening.

The good news of the season came from the Middlesex League where the 'A' team managed to restore their Premier Division status at the first attempt by finishing 2nd out of 11, only a last-match 3½-4½ defeat by the eventual champions preventing Harrow from claiming that title. The 'B' team also earned promotion by taking second place in their section.

Another promoted side was the Thames Valley 'B' team who this season managed to come top of Division 6(North). In the challenge match against the Southern section winners, they beat Hampton 3½-2½. The 'A' team consolidated their position in Division 3 by coming fourth.

The London League 1st team, now reduced to third division chess, could only finish 8th out of 11. Their best effort was against our favourite opponents, Cavendish (although this was their second team!), who were said by our captain to resemble a Harrow side in that it contained three of the Hockaday family and three defaults! Without an elected captain, although Peter Harris took most of the matches, Harrow again suffered too many defaulted boards. The 2nd team had a slightly better season, being 3rd in Division 6.

The Swiss Tournament ended in a tie with Cecil Swick and Richard Symonds both scoring nine points from the ten rounds and, being friends, agreeing to share the Club Championship title. The result was decided by the game between the two of them, a sixth round pairing which somehow did not get played until after the last round! At this point Cecil had a 100% score but he lost to Richard who remained the only unbeaten player.

As Cecil Swick also won the Handicap Tournament, a strong entrant in a tournament usually dominated by weaker players, and won the 'John Poole' section of the Middlesex County Tournaments, it was highly successful season for him.

1982-83.

The season started with a tandem 'Simultaneous' by the joint-champions who were reviving the custom that had lapsed over the past couple of years.

Three days later in the main hall, Vlastimil Hort, the Czech Grandmaster, was due to give a Simultaneous Display which had been organised by the London Chess Association in conjunction with the Harrow Arts Council and with the help of Harrow Chess Club. It attracted 31 entries, predominately club members, who on arriving may have been surprised to find that the Czech bore an uncanny resemblance to the British GM, Tony Miles. The reason for this unexplained substitution was that Hort was unwell, although had managed to be runner-up in the Lloyds Bank Tournament which had just finished. As Tony Miles had been the winner it could be said that the change was an improvement, but there was not quite the same excitement as meeting a foreign master. One unsatisfactory note was that nobody thought of keeping a record of the results although the visitor did admit to one defeat and at least three Harrow members claimed draws.

The club now had a new President in Barrie Hughes, who was replaced as Thames Valley captain by Mike Tribe, the only other change of officers being the Tournament Controller where John Poole came in to organise, and play in, the club championship competition that he had first won 34 years ago. The winner on this occasion was Cecil Swick who, like the previous year, scored nine points, but this time was a clear leader over his nearest rival who was 1½ points away.

In the London League the first team had a moderate season, finishing midway in Division 3, but the second team won 7 of their 9 matches and were somewhat aggrieved to find that after beating Islington III by 9½-½, the match point was forfeited when it was alleged that an ineligible player had been used; this left them un-promoted in third place.

Back again in the Premier Division of the Middlesex League the 'A' team were third out of five after two teams had withdrawn mid-season and had their results eliminated, which was a shame as Harrow had scored 1½ points from 2 against them! The promoted 'B' team were happy to finish 7th of 13 in the much stronger company that they now

met.

The Thames Valley League 'A' team had a tremendous start by winning the first three matches (the first by 6-0) but then ran into difficulties and could only finish 5th in Division 3. The 'B' team, however, earned further promotion by being runners-up in Division 5. Six Harrow players had taken part in the annual North v South match at the start of the season and had helped the North to gain a comfortable victory. They also won an unexpected prize for themselves when they were awarded the J. M. Ellam Memorial Trophy for the club whose players obtained the highest percentage score in the match, which was 75%, although the players had been unaware that it was at stake.

During the season the club also played with distinction in the Winters Trophy and the National Club Championship. Harrow had taken part in these competitions on a fairly regular basis over the years but had seldom achieved results that warranted a mention in this account. This year they reached the final of the Winters Trophy which paradoxically, is a summer tournament, it having been inaugurated by the Middlesex League at the end of the 50's in recognition of the many years service as League Secretary by Len Winters, a former Harrow Vice-President and club captain. This year we entered two teams and perhaps the best result was the second team's defeat of the strong YMCA side which had already eliminated our first team. Harrow's line-up of Colin Crouch, David Watts, David Groffman and Nigel Alldritt wasn't bad for a second team! Sadly, in the final Kings Head had players graded 216, 225 and 217, and won easily.

In the 'National Club' (6 boards) Harrow beat Maidenhead 5-1, Mushrooms 3½-2½ with an average grade of 156 against our opponent's 192, and YMCA 'B' 4-2, but after drawing with Oxford City in round 4 we were eliminated on board count.

Other tournaments in which Harrow played irregularly over the years were the Eastman Cup (the London League's knockout tournament) from which in the 82-83 season we departed in round 2 after having beaten Athenaeum 7-2 in the first, and the British Lightning Championships, in which we finished 19th considered a good result in view of the strength of the opposition. Also, the Middlesex C.C.A. May Day Bank Holiday Tournament for teams of four which this year (1983) was billed as the United Kingdom Open Team Championship. It attracted 37 sides and a modest Harrow contingent was placed 20th in the tournament which was adjudged to be the most meritorious performance by a 'little team', for which a chess clock was awarded (and is still in use). The captain claimed that they could now consider themselves to be the reigning 'best little team' in the United

Kingdom!

This season the Hillingdon League accepted our application after we had convinced them that the purpose of our entry was to provide match play opportunities for our weaker members and, apart from the 95-96 season when we did use a stronger side to make a better showing in Division 1, this has remained our objective. In this first season we played in the second division, which was then for teams of four, and finished as runners-up.

1983-84.

Members at the A.G.M. had been agreeable to the proposal that the club night be changed to Monday as it was thought that this would guarantee two rooms at the Arts Centre; too often we were restricted to only one on Thursdays. However, it was later found that existing advance bookings for the Mondays ruled this out, although we were told that the two rooms could be reserved for us for next year.

Financially the previous season had been a poor one with the accounts showing a large deficit for the year, prompting a rise in the subscription rates. Membership numbers had been declining since the exceptional days of the mid 70's, although still good by today's standards. A recruiting drive was urged although it was realised that this could cause some problems in view of the threatened restricted accommodation.

In a 'cabinet reshuffle' of officers, Rick Glew stood down as Secretary and his place was taken by Spencer Cowan who moved from the Treasury where he was superseded by Ken Hiron. Tournament Controller, John Poole, took on the additional responsibility of the London League team and he brought more success than for some years. It was only when it became clear that the adjudication and adjournment results had gone against us in otherwise evenly placed matches that promotion hopes were abandoned and we had to be content with third place. The second team managed only to finish mid-table in Division 6, again having struggled to get people to turn out for them. The venue for matches had this season moved from St. Brides to Bishopsgate Institute but this had proved no more attractive to our members.

The Middlesex 'A' team used 25 players for its twelve 8-board matches and still had several defaults, finishing only 5th. The 'B' team slipped one place to 8th in the division below. In the Thames Valley League both Harrow teams finished far better than earlier results had promised. In an amazingly similar situation the 'A' & 'B' teams were placed joint second in divisions 3 & 4 respectively, well behind the run-

away winners. Because the league does not recognise games scores it meant that both had to play a match to determine who would be promoted, and in each case the outcome was dependent on adjudicated games. The 'A' team's board 1 claim against Staines was rejected so they had to remain where they were, but the 'B' team were more fortunate and their claim against Maidenhead was upheld, so they were promoted to join the senior team in Division 3, having risen from 6 to 3 in consecutive years.

With the Hillingdon League team having been promoted to Division 1, where they had to compete against opposition far too strong for them and not surprisingly finished bottom, it had been decided to enter a second team in Division 2 to give the weaker players more chance (both divisions now being of five boards), and they came 6th of 8. With two sides in each of four leagues the club had fielded a record eight teams.

In his first full season with the club, Paul Cawte became Champion by achieving a 100% record in the Swiss Tournament, ten out of ten! At the start of the season former Champion, Farrukh Khan had been joint-winner of the 1983 British Under 21 title, but we were to lose him to the university and have not seen him since.

The season closed with a lively Annual General Meeting. Once again the accounts weren't available for consideration, the reason this time being that the auditor hadn't completed his work and still had the books. The meeting elected a new auditor and he was asked to take over the job and produce the accounts for presentation at a later meeting. One piece of good news that the Treasurer was able to impart was that despite earlier fears to the contrary, there should now be a healthy surplus on the year. The question of smoking again came up for consideration with one of the more recent members suggesting that one of the two rooms be designated 'No Smoking', but it was pointed out that there could be a problem when a smoker plays a non-smoker - do they meet halfway?! Several other suggestions were discussed but in the end all were rejected and it was 'Carry on Smoking' as before.

Perhaps the most important item at the meeting concerned the change of club night from Thursday to Monday. The ongoing search for other premises, and the desire to move back to central Harrow, had led the committee to look again at the Welldon Crescent hall, now fully refurbished and operating as 'The Welldon Centre', but it was found that Fridays were the only evenings available, so with the assurance that we could now have the two rooms at the Arts Centre on Monday, the change of night was agreed for the 84-85 season.

1984-85.

September 3rd saw the first Monday meeting, a change that was to result in the loss of a few members who had other commitments on Monday evenings. Two weeks later a very brief E.G.M. was held to approve the accounts when it was confirmed that all the fears that had been expressed well into the season had been overcome and there was in fact a considerable surplus. Contributing to this had been some good donations, profit from a raffle and savings on both BCF registrations and insurance charges.

The previous Saturday had seen Harrow's first venture at promoting an all day Quick-Play Tournament. Visions of the Arts Centre's main hall crowded with players seeking the £50 1st prize, which had been donated by Mr. A. Shindel, or one of the grading prizes, occasionally fortifying themselves at the bar, all proved somewhat misguided. There was no main hall, no crowds, no grading prizes, not even a bar! In fact, just 20 people competed and the whole event was cosily accommodated in one of our club rooms. In a six round Swiss the first (and only!) prize was won outright by the only lady present, the leading British player, Sheila Jackson, who achieved 100%.

Changes in the officers of the club saw Alan Marshall move from the Thames Valley League to the Middlesex to take on the 'A' team, whilst the President, Barrie Hughes, took charge of the London League side. It was decided that in view of the difficulty in getting people to travel to town, the second team would be dropped from the league. A new Tournament Controller was appointed, David Stott, and it was to be nine years before anyone else had to be found for the job. The Champion that season was Nigel Alldritt with 8 wins and 2 draws, and we also heard that Hassan Afnan had won the Middlesex Correspondence Championship - he was later to take over as controller of that tournament.

The most successful league team was the Hillingdon League side which won Division 2 with 6½ points from 7. Instead of entering a second team this year it had been decided to put a third team into the Thames Valley League, but such was the pitifully poor level of communication from the league at that time that not only were the final tables never received but the results of several adjudicated games will for ever remain a mystery! What is known is that this new 'C' team earned promotion from Division 6, probably as runners-up. and that in Division 3 the 'B' team, now led by Fred Hiron, had a better season than the 'A's, and scored at least 6½ and 5 points respectively, but as this was from 14 matches they probably occupied places 4, 5 or 6 of the 8 teams.

The outstanding result of the season occurred in the Nat. Club Championship when the Harrow team of David Watts, John Quinn, Nigel Alldritt, Richard Dixon, Mark Lyell & Marc Shaw whitewashed a Mitcham side 6-0, despite being out-graded on every board. The opponents had P. Large (214) on top board and a 196 on board 5, whilst our bottom board overcame a 40 grading points deficit. Sadly, in the next round the same Harrow side was outplayed by an Oxford University team that contained three IM's, our only score coming from Nigel Alldritt who drew with C. McNab.

At the A.G.M. several officers decided not to seek re-election for the 85-86 season. Bob Pleasants was chosen as President, a post he was to hold for the next six years, and Neale Evans took over as Secretary. There were a number of changes in team captaincy, with all three Thames Valley captains retiring for one reason or another. Alan Marshall moved back from the Middlesex League to take over the TV 'B' team and Hassan Afnan was elected to skipper the 'C' team. This left vacancies for both the Middlesex and Thames Valley first team positions. It was decided to reinstate a second team in the Hillingdon League, under Bob Conway, and as we had successfully applied to decline promotion after winning Division 2, both teams would now play in that division.

1985-86.

With still no appointed Middlesex 'A' team captain and fixtures due to be played, Nigel Alldritt agreed to take it on, but after losing the first two matches news of the team's progress became difficult to obtain. Details of two more lost matches were received late in the season but, apparently unbeknown to anyone at the club, several other matches had been forfeited or defaulted, and it was with some surprise that we were notified by the league that because of the team's failure to meet their commitments they had been expelled and the results of the four matches that had been played (of which, strangely, they said we had won one!) were to be "expunged from the records"!

As founder members of the league forty years previously, since when we had enjoyed considerable success, it was a sad moment and an ignominious way to lose our place in the top division. It is now hard to understand how such a situation was allowed to occur.

Fortunately, there was better news from the other leagues. The London League team failed narrowly to gain promotion to Division 2, having finished equal on points with the second placed team and only losing out because they had won just one fewer game, so they had to settle for third place for the third season running.

The vacant Thames Valley 'A' team captaincy was solved by moving Alan Marshall up from the 'B's, and Hassan Afnan from 'C' to 'B', bringing in Derek Trowell & Alan Reid to jointly run the promoted 'C' team, which did not prove a success as they finished bottom of the table and were withdrawn at the end of the season, never to reappear! The 'A' & 'B' teams came 4th and 5th in Division 3.

Once again Harrow 'A' came top of the Hillingdon League 2nd division, this time sharing the title with West Drayton, but allowing them the 'privilege' of going up as we still didn't want to be promoted. The 'B' team were half a point behind in 3rd place.

The Club Champion was Mark Lyell who won the tournament with 9 points from eight wins and two draws, as had so many in recent years. Mark also had an excellent record for the Middlesex League team, scoring 8½/9 at an average grade of 209, which was to help boost his published grade from 179 to 188. It is worth recording that the Handicap Tournament, which although scarcely mentioned in this account had been a regular feature of the club's programme for many years, was won for the fourth season running by Professor Sir Bernard Katz who, despite the severe handicap of the top grade to which he ascended, was a clear winner. Some years previously the Club Committee had made a presentation to Roy Maddock in recognition of his work on the club magazine and it had taken the form of a cup bearing his name which he wished to award annually to the winner of the Handicap Tournament which he ran (and still does!). There had also been a small cash prize but this had disappeared during one of the financial cutbacks and has never returned!

1986-87.

Following the prior year's problems, Harrow now had to restore its good name in the Middlesex League which had now decided to abandon its 'Premier Division' policy and revert to a normal 1, 2, 3 etc. system, and by limiting each division to eight teams which would now play home and away, more divisions needed to be created. Harrow had decided to have just the one team, under Bob Pleasants, until we had re-established our credibility, and this was assigned to Division 3 where, after an indifferent start they finished very strongly and won the last five matches to take second place, and with it promotion.

With the third Thames Valley side also abandoned, the club had two fewer teams this season compared to last with, as it happened, the three senior teams in the London, Middlesex & Thames Valley Leagues all competing in a 'Division 3' which prompted the question "Had we become a third-rate club?"!

Jeremy Grundy who, despite his absence at the A.G.M. had been elected to captain the London League side, declared that he didn't want the job but later changed his mind and led them to 5th place in the table.

The 'top team' of the season was the Thames Valley 'A' side who won 9 of their 14 matches and lost just 2, both of them, unbelievably, to the 'B' team; it was not a case of misguided generosity, but perhaps a lack of it by the 'B's who were to finish in mid-table. However, the two would not meet next season as the 'A' team's record gave them the division title and took them up into the 8-board second division, all the lower ones being of six boards. In the eleven years since Harrow had entered the league we had climbed from the sixth to the second division, but this was to be the peak of our achievements.

The Hillingdon League also had two Harrow teams in one division, the second, with the 'A' team just failing to top the table for the third year running, but the 'B' team having to prop it up after losing all their matches.

Ludwig Szeri, having attended the club for many years prior, and more recently since, made his first (and only!) appearance in the Swiss and won it with nine points. John Poole, celebrating his 50th consecutive season as a Harrow member, during which he had three times been champion, was placed second on 8½.

At Easter the club tried its hand at organising a weekend congress, with an eight-round Swiss on Fri/Sat/Sun, and a Swiss Quick-Play on the Monday. At least, that is how it should have been, but in fact one person was primarily concerned with organising it and among the many possible reasons why it attracted such a poor response was that hardly anyone knew about it due to a pathetic lack of publicity. A couple of lines did appear in the local paper, but that was after the decision had been taken to cancel it, at least all but the Quick-Play which attracted five adults and six juniors. Enquiries as to who had won it received a typical response, "A chap from Pinner"!

In the continuing quest for better premises a sports ground club house near Headstone Lane station came up for consideration, but a questionnaire given to members to get their reaction to such a move showed that it would not be popular, one reason being that the location was even more remote than Harrow Weald. A move back to Central Harrow was becoming imperative but later negotiations with Victoria Hall fell through when it was found that on the only available evenings a choral society would be rehearsing in another room, which was as bad as the Light Opera Society and the Clog Dancers that we had endured when the Arts Council had let out our 'second room' to them.

The season closed with a poorly attended Annual General Meeting. The 'top table' of President, Secretary and Treasurer faced just 13 other members, some of whom had turned up unaware that it was A.G.M. night, whilst others, realising their mistake, disappeared before business began. All this could be interpreted either as a display of confidence in the committee's ability to run the club, or alternatively, a depressingly apathetic concern with club affairs, other than turning up each week for a game and assuming that someone else is organising things. It is a situation which, no doubt, is encountered at chess clubs everywhere.

In the event most of the club's officers were re-elected, the only change being that with Alan Reid's departure, the Hillingdon 2nd team was dropped and the Thames Valley 3rd team reinstated, a reversal of last year's decision.

1987-88.

At last Harrow Chess Club found a really good move. After nine years at the Arts Centre the long-awaited return to central Harrow was achieved, and at the same time we were able to revert to our traditional club-night. When it was learnt that Thursday evenings had become available and without any vocal competition, the committee acted swiftly and secured the accommodation. The last meeting at the Arts Centre was on Monday, November 2nd and on the 5th we were installed in Victoria Hall (and the local residents seemed to be letting off fireworks to celebrate it!)

We were not in the main hall, which we might well have needed had our numbers still been at the 1970's level, but in the room downstairs which is much smaller in size, and in its rent! As a room there is little to commend it, but for playing chess it has what we need; tables and chairs, although on two-match nights additional tables have to be brought down from upstairs, adequate lighting and efficient heating, in fact too efficient at times, and as we do not have access to the controls, to cool the place down the windows have to be opened allowing in the racket from the passing traffic on the main road outside. Other snags are that the equipment cupboard is in a small room upstairs and, being attached to a church, the hall has no bar!

However, it's significant that from the time that the club left the Gayton Rooms in the mid-50's until our arrival at Victoria Hall, wherever the club had been, and whatever length of time it was there, the subject that came up for discussion more frequently than any other, both at Committee Meetings and Annual General Meetings was 'alternative accommodation'; but in the nine years of our occupation of

Victoria Hall it has scarcely been mentioned!

Later in what was to be a significant season for the club, members were stunned to learn of the particularly unkind set of circumstances that had conspired to take the life of our Secretary, Neale Evans. Neale and his wife decided at very short notice to take a holiday break and the travel agent found them places on the island of Majorca at the end of April, where they hired a car. On one of their first outings into the interior they came to a deserted unmarked level crossing, rough and overgrown, and in true melodramatic fashion the car stalled across the rails. Unconcernedly thinking that the line was not in use, they were horrified to find that one of the few trains that did come that way had chosen this very moment to appear and was bearing down upon them. Mrs. Evans managed to scramble from the vehicle thinking that Neale had done likewise but, sadly, he failed to make it and was crushed by the impact which carried the car down the line.

Alan Marshall took over the secretarial duties for the remaining weeks of the season.

As before when we had moved our headquarters in November, all the visiting teams had to be advised, but this time there was the added complication of a change of evening, so all the fixtures had to be renegotiated; fortunately, most of them remained in the same week.

Jeremy Grundy started a second season as London League captain but then dropped out due to pressure of work. Paul Cawte took it over and although only 16 players were used in the ten 10-board matches, they were, with the exception of the captain, far below the strength needed to match the opposition, even at 3rd division level, and with the lowest games points in the division they were duly relegated.

The Middlesex team started well and were leading the table at the halfway stage, but with only half a point from the final five matches, due to the reluctance of members to play 'away', the team slipped to 5th place out of 8.

Having reached Division 2 of the Thames Valley League, it soon became apparent to the 'A' team that they were playing in a much higher standard, so that 5th place was regarded as a very satisfactory result. It was even more satisfactory for the 'B' team who finished at the top of Division 3 with 10½ points from 14 thanks to the discovery that Fulham 'B', who had beaten us twice, had used ineligible players whose game results (two wins and a draw) were changed to losses which converted the match results into a win and a draw for Harrow. The prospect of being promoted to play alongside the 'A' team again was viewed with some concern and it was agreed to ask the league to allow them to remain where they were. The reinstated 'C' team which

had been entered in Division 6 failed to fulfil its fixtures because the captain claimed that he was unable to raise a team, particularly for away matches. He had told the League Secretary that he was withdrawing it but failed to inform the Club Committee who, had they known, might have been able to appoint another captain to keep it going. One club (Fulham, again!) turned up at Harrow towards the end of the season with their 'D' team to play the original fixture but we managed to field a scratch side for a 'friendly'!

The Hillingdon team repeated the previous season's performance by coming 2nd in Division 2.

Towards the end of the season it was learnt that the Arts Centre was moving out of the old school buildings at Harrow Weald and relocating in more attractive, but even more remote, premises at Hatch End, so it seemed that we had timed our departure well. One of the benefits that was expected to accrue from the return to central Harrow, that of more members joining, had failed to happen and in fact there was a decrease in numbers. The resulting drop in income, plus the increase in the rent that we now had to pay, was reported by the Treasurer at the A.G.M. as having produced a considerable deficit on the year, and it was agreed that fees would have to be raised. The vacant office of Secretary was to be filled by Roy Maddock who had been persuaded to resume that role after a twelve year break. It was thought that we were now in a position to reinstate the second team in the Middlesex League and it was accepted into division 4. Several new captains were appointed, and there was the unusual situation of both the Middlesex and Thames Valley 1st team captains stepping down to take over their respective second teams, but in the event both remained where they were and only one of the six captains were to serve the teams for which they were elected.

1988-89.

From the beginning of the season the club was beset with problems over match captains. It had started with the failure to fill the Middlesex post following Bob Pleasants' proposed move to the 2nd team, but this was overcome when Bob agreed to continue with the first team and Ken Hiron was recruited to take over the seconds. Then came a shock when Paul Cawte announced that he was unable or unwilling to continue leading the London League side after he had been elected in his absence on the assumption that he would do so; in October he turned up at the club playing for Kings Head in a Middlesex match! It was Hassan Afnan, who had been anticipating a break after his success with the Thames Valley 'seconds' the previous year, who came to the rescue

with the first match only a week away. The third blow came when Iain Campbell decided that because of changes at work he would not now be available to captain the Thames Valley side, so Alan Marshall remained with the first team but as no replacement could be found for the 'B' team there was no alternative but to withdraw them, although they did fulfil their first fixture.

So the club was back to having five teams which, after all the changes, were to have only a moderate season. The only team to be led by its elected captain was in the Hillingdon League where they did manage to come third in Division 2.

The Middlesex League had stopped using A, B, C etc. to identify teams from the same club and now showed them as I, II, III etc. Harrow had tried to retain the old system but now fell into line. Harrow I finished 5th of eight, having incurred a half match-point penalty for defaults, and would have been in trouble had not the bottom two clubs each received 2½ points penalty. Harrow II were 6th in Division 4 where again both clubs below them were heavily penalised.

Twenty players turned out for the Harrow team playing at the lowest ever level for a senior side in the London League and despite the points provided by Graham White on Board 1, they finished 10th out of eleven and were only spared the further indignity of plunging into Division 5 because other teams dropped out altogether.

The best news came from the remaining Thames Valley team who climbed to 3rd place in Division 2, which has proved to be the pinnacle of their achievements in this league. The team had included George Govas, returning to the club a quarter of a century after being its champion, and he played and won four games. He also won five rounds in the Swiss before suddenly dying in April. The Swiss was won by Nigel Alldritt with 9½ points, although the tournament had been badly marred by withdrawals and defaults, a third of the original entry failing to complete their programme.

In March the club bulletin, now in its eighteenth season, reached number 100, which was marked by a 'bumper edition' mostly devoted to reprinting stories and articles from the past issues.

Despite another deficit on the year it was decided to leave the subscription rates as they were. The only change in officers elected for next season was that David Powell, who had returned to the club, was soon recruited to take over the Middlesex first team, allowing Bob Pleasants to revert to the 'seconds' as he had intended to do last year. After many unsettled years, apart from some financial worries to be sorted out, the club was now entering a period of more stability.

1989-90.

Before the start of the season the club received an unexpected invitation from the Middlesex League to regain its first division status, despite having finished only 5th in Division 2 last season. The vacancy had arisen because Hackney withdrew one of their teams and, as another Hackney team were third in Division 2 and the fourth team Ealing had declined the offer, we were chosen - and at first accepted. The prospect of competing in the premier division with our limited resources was challenging, if somewhat daunting, and although new captain, David Powell, was willing to "give it a go", other team members were less than enthusiastic and it was thought prudent not to proceed with it. So, one week later we were back in Division 2!

Despite again only having five teams, it was suggested that too many matches were being played, and it sometimes appeared so as, with the serious decline in the membership numbers it was often difficult to field a complete team. The London League continued to be particularly hit, especially as people didn't want to travel to town anyway, and few still worked there. At least one board was defaulted in every match, but they did manage to complete their fixture list, losing nine matches and drawing one, and that only because the opponents also defaulted on the same board! At the end of the season the captain said that he didn't wish to continue, and with the prospect of Division 5 chess next season it was generally agreed that the time had come to part company with the London League. Indeed, had we wished to continue there would have been the further ignominy of having to apply for re-election because of the bad record of defaults. In view of our long association with the league, which was still regarded as the most important competition of its kind in the country, it was a sad decision and the Secretary when advising them of our withdrawal, made the request that should the situation change and we wished to rejoin, that they would look favourably on our application. Today the position is unchanged because for this to happen it would probably need them to abandon the rule of playing all matches in central London, which is most unlikely.

Another competitive event coming to an end was the Harrow Open Summer Tournament which with the proliferation of other events during the summer months had in recent years been attracting fewer and fewer entries. The 1989 tournament had started with just nine competitors and two finalists were eventually produced, but at the end of the 89-90 season news of the outcome had not been received, and it is still unknown today. In view of this lack of interest the tournament was allowed to slip away to a peaceful end!

Lack of numbers also affected the Swiss Tournament which had its poorest entry for many years, 24, of which 22 finished, with Nigel Alldritt retaining his title with 9/10.

Harrow I had an inconsistent Middlesex League season; indeed, of the three possible match results (win/draw/loss), they didn't achieve the same one twice against any of the seven teams played, and recorded five wins, three draws and six losses to finish fifth again. Harrow II earned promotion by coming 2nd in Division 4, which also had eight teams, although they played each other only once.

The Thames valley team struggled for much of the season with the top boards usually well out-graded, but no defaults were conceded and they managed to keep just clear of the relegation zone in sixth place. As had happened in 85/86, Harrow shared the top place in the Hillingdon League, Division 2 with West Drayton, and we again declined promotion to allow them the prospect of being outclassed in Division 1.

One other consequence of the dwindling membership was the continued decline in our income from subscriptions, and this contributed to a large deficit on the season, the third year running that the accounts had shown a loss. Our reserves that had been so carefully built up over earlier years had now fallen to a dangerously low level and urgent action was needed to reverse the situation. The first obvious target was to increase the subscriptions which had, perhaps, stayed at the same rate for too long, and at the A.G.M. that closed the season the members agreed to accept a 25% increase. Joe Fogg suggested that Life Membership be available and offered himself as the first applicant with a generous sum that was gratefully accepted, but he was to remain the sole participant in this scheme. He was later presented with a parchment scroll to record the event. A drive to attract more members was launched, with better publicity, and the Trustees of Victoria Hall agreed to make a small concession in the rent. The departure from the London League also had the beneficial side-effect of saving us the considerable entry fee.

The club had for long remained open throughout the year but it was now decided that it should close for a few weeks during the poorly attended July/August period in order to reduce the expenditure on the rent.

All these measures helped stem the decline, and although there was still to be a slight deficit on the next season, later years were to restore the position to good health.

1990-91.

Apart from no longer requiring a captain for the late lamented London League team, all the serving officers of the club were re-elected in an exceptional show of solidarity.

The recovery in membership numbers was slow to develop and it seemed that numbers in the Swiss Tournament would reach a new low with initially only 22, but late entries brought it up to 27, although two others failed to complete the course. Two who did were Graham White and Nigel Alldritt (again!) who each scored $7\frac{1}{2}$ points from 8, the decision having been taken to reduce the tournament by two rounds. As Champion for the previous two years Nigel had opened both seasons by giving a 'simultaneous', scoring 63.3% against 15 opponents in the first and this year improving it to 81% against 16.

The 'rapid-play finish' that had for some time been used in tournament chess now came to the Middlesex League who proposed its introduction at their A.G.M., but the general reaction amongst club members seemed to be unfavourable. Indeed, Hampstead threatened to withdraw their teams if it was implemented, so it was something of a surprise when later, at the fixture meeting, the proposal was carried by 14 votes to 12, Harrow, and no doubt Hampstead, being among the 12! It was to remain a contentious issue throughout the season, and when it was barely into its second half there was already a motion tabled for the league's June A.G.M. proposing that the new system be scrapped. This was to be narrowly passed and the original arrangements restored. At that same meeting, a proposal from David Powell was also carried. It called for the weighting of default points against the higher boards to discourage teams from misallocating their missing players.

It proved to be a season in which six of the eight second division teams were fairly evenly matched and Harrow came 4th, just edged out of third place on games score. In contrast, Division 3 contained teams of widely varying strengths, the weakest of which proved to be Harrow II who were to make a quick return to division 4. One match they did win was when only half the Hammersmith team arrived just on default time, they having been to the Arts Centre! Hammersmith subsequently petitioned the League Secretary for a rematch because they 'were unaware of the change in venue'. We pointed out that we had moved over three years ago; the correct venue had appeared in the B.C.F. year book for three seasons and it was also shown in the league's own directory. What's more, Hammersmith had even played at Victoria Hall with at least one of the same players. As far as we were concerned it was checkmate to Harrow!

The Thames Valley team struggled at first but won just enough points in the second half of the season to finish one place above the relegation zone. It used only 13 players, 9 of whom played in 92% of the matches.

Harrow's fourth team, the fewest we had fielded for many years, competed in Division 2 of the Hillingdon League where they neatly scored 50% and were placed third of five teams.

At the club's Annual General Meeting which closed the season, the Treasurer had the embarrassment of informing members that there were no accounts to review. They had been with the auditor for some while and had not been received back in time for the meeting, which all had a familiar ring to it. He proposed that in order to overcome the perennial problem of getting the accounts on time, instead of the auditor producing the balance sheet from the Treasurer's books, another committee member who was an accountant should prepare the accounts to the audit stage and they then be checked by someone from the general membership. Joe Fogg offered to undertake this role, and was duly elected Auditor.

The President for the past six years, Bob Pleasants, felt that it was time to hand over the chair and David Stott was elected to succeed him. Bob also gave up the captaincy of the Middlesex second team and this was taken over by Ray McSharry. It was agreed to add another team in the Hillingdon League, to be run by Roy Maddock.

During the season it had been learned that Colin Crouch had attained International Master status.

1991-92.

Once again the season opened with an Extraordinary General Meeting to approve the accounts, which made it clear that the steps taken to reduce costs had proved effective. There was still a small deficit on the year, but this was because of a special item relating to the Championship trophy. The large 'Silver King', which had been used since 1931, was now full with the names of past champions, and in order to keep this unique trophy in use an additional plinth had been added to it.

The main feature of the 91/92 season was 'The Great Escape', starring the Middlesex 1st team and the Thames Valley side. Both teams had remarkably similar records, each starting with a drawn match, one achieving only two points (four more draws) from the next ten matches, and the other 1½ from nine. Match 12 brought the first win for the Middlesex team when on Friday the 13th they travelled to Fulham and achieved a handsome 5½-2½ score. It was now vital that

Camden, one of the other relegation candidates, be beaten on their visit to Harrow, and although a last minute reserve was needed for a missing top board, we fielded a strong team, and yet struggled nervously to overcome them. Finally we managed to win just one game, the other seven all being drawn! Although the final match was lost, 4½ points with a better games score just gave us the edge over Metropolitan. Harrow II were placed 7th of 11 in Division 4.

The Thames Valley team won match 11 against the other relegation prospects and then proceeded to win the next two fixtures. Although they too lost the final match, a better game score also kept them from being demoted.

The two Hillingdon League teams had moderate seasons, the 'A' team coming 5th of 10 with the new 'B' team two places lower.

Nigel Alldritt became Club Champion for the fourth year in succession, winning the Swiss outright with 6½/8. To start the season Nigel had joined forces with Graham White to give a tandem simultaneous, scoring 73.5%.

At the end of the season the Treasurer was able to report a comfortable surplus on the year, the first time for five seasons that there had not been a loss. The only change in the officers was the Middlesex second team where Gerry Luetchford took over. The two octogenarian Vice-Presidents, Don Rose and Roy Hopkins, were made up to Life Vice- Presidents in recognition (if somewhat belatedly!) of their past services to the club over many years.

1992-93.

For a change from a 'Simultaneous' by the Club Champion to commence the season, a Quick-Play Tournament was arranged - conducted by David Stott and won by Graham White. It proved so popular that it has now become an annual event.

The two senior league teams that had both had a remarkable escape from relegation at the end of the previous season, began this one by giving the impression that it had been merely delayed. Although the Thames Valley team did manage to draw the first two matches that had looked to be certain defeats after the first session, they then had a series of set-backs and it was only towards the end of the season that they picked up sufficient points to avoid the drop, although three wins and two draws had seemed barely good enough.

Harrow I struggled for most of the season in Division 2 of the Middlesex League and their fate was very much in the balance until April, so that the final position of third out of eight was an amazing result. It was achieved by some excellent late wins, starting with a

remarkable 6-2 victory over a strong Kings Head side after several of our best players, including the top three boards, had dropped out. It also helped that the other mid-table teams were beating each other, so that Harrow's third place was obtained with just one more match point than the team that was to be relegated in seventh place! Harrow II were 5th from 10 in Division 4.

The success of the season was the Hillingdon 'B' team that won Division 2 with a 100% record, leaving the 'A' team languishing in 5th place. However, it was an unwelcome success as the league had by now decreed that promotion could no longer be declined. We were therefore destined to be thrown to the lions in the first division.

The rivalry for the Club Championship title between Graham White and Nigel Alldritt continued with Graham (7½/8) coming out on top, their pairing having been drawn. Nigel was in second place with 6 points. David Stott felt that after nine years as controller of the tournament he was ready for a break and Mike Williams was elected to succeed him.

Membership numbers had at last shown an improvement and as some excellent donations had also been received the accounts showed a large surplus for the year. The club felt that it could now afford to remain open throughout the year, but when members were asked for their views there was little positive response and it was generally felt that it was not worth staying open during the height of the holiday season.

Alan Marshall had undertaken to submit reports of our activities on a regular basis to the Harrow Observer in the hope that this would make our existence known to more people. They were printed erratically at first, often in 'News in Brief' but were later to appear somewhere in the sports pages, where they are now a regular feature.

1993-94.

The publicity surrounding Nigel Short's involvement in the World Championship Final helped the club to increase its membership considerably during the season, although it only brought it back to the levels enjoyed when we were at the Arts Centre.

Once again the senior league teams started poorly but recovered later in the season, a familiar pattern in recent years. In the pre-Christmas period the Thames Valley team managed just one win and one draw from the seven fixtures and looked strong relegation candidates, but in the New Year they exactly reversed that record and were placed fifth in the table. One match that is still talked about took place at Addlestone, who at that stage had a chance of promotion.

When the Harrow captain found that none of his top six players were available he almost tried to postpone the fixture, but eventually fulfilled it with a thoroughly out-graded team - six of the opposition graded higher than any of the Harrow players - and yet it was Harrow who came away with an astonishing 4½-3½ victory.

In the Middlesex League, Harrow I could only gain one point from the first five matches but then produced an excellent run of four wins and three draws which included demolishing the eventual champions, Metropolitan I, by 6-2 and drawing with the other promoted team, at Wood Green, but disappointingly losing the final match to a side that was to be relegated. They were placed 4th which was higher than had at one time seemed likely.

Harrow II, who last season had come fifth in the 4th division, received a surprise invitation to play in Division 3 following team withdrawals in the higher sections, but at the end of the season they must have been wondering whether they should have accepted the opportunity of meeting stronger opponents, as the outcome was the same as it had been three years previously when they had last played at that level - 8th out of 8! They scored only 2 points from 14 matches but did at least hold the champions to a draw.

Harrow's involvement in the Hillingdon League called for some juggling, with the promoted 'B' team being renamed Harrow 1 (for div. 1) with Ken Hiron coming in to lead them and, so that two weaker sides could remain in Division 2, an additional team was entered, they continuing to be known as 'A' & 'B'. The outcome was an almost predetermined pattern, Harrow 1 successfully losing all their matches except the one inconsiderately defaulted by their opponents. The new Harrow 'B' up-staged the 'A' team by coming 2nd in Division 2, skilfully avoiding the top position by a half a point. The 'A's were safely down in 8th place of the ten teams.

The new 'Tournament Controller, Mike Williams, managed to enlist the support of his employers, Geest Ltd., who made a donation for the prize in the Swiss as well as enabling the entry fee, which had stood at £2 for many years, to be halved. It was the first occasion that the club had been subsidised in this way but further sponsorship that had been talked about fell through when, sadly, Mike and Geest parted company. It was probably a coincidence that the highest ever prize money attracted the best entry for some years, the result being a tie between Paul Hatchett and Ravi Mukherjee who both scored 7½/8. Curiously, the winners were not paired together during the tournament.

With the considerable increase in the amount received from subscriptions due to the improved membership, a substantial surplus

was produced which more than restored the club's reserves to their former level.

1994-95.

The early part of the season was much concerned with the question of smoking (or not!). At the A.G.M. Mr. Murphy had wished to propose a ban on smoking at the club but it was ruled that such a contentious issue should have had prior notice and could not be dealt with in 'Any Other Business'. However, a discussion was allowed and a 'straw poll' showed that it would have been narrowly defeated, but it was agreed to refer the matter to the committee for consideration. After canvassing more members on the first night the committee duly met and agreed by 8 to 1 that there was insufficient demand for such a ban. In the meantime, Mr. Murphy had involved the local press and Raymond Keene in The Times, as well as writing numerous letters to the club secretary. He rejected the committee's decision and their displeasure at his bringing harmful publicity upon the club and continued to contact other outside people and campaigned to get support for an E.G.M.. When he finally realised that all his efforts had come to nought he departed from the club to end a matter that had dragged on for nearly six months, during which the Secretary had compiled a dossier containing nearly fifty documents.

Across the board the club was to enjoy a remarkably successful season. In the three months before Christmas Harrow's seven teams played 36 matches with a success rate of 68%, the best start for a very long time. The full season's results showed: Played 82, Won 47, Drew 8, lost 27. = 62%.

It had been decided that another team be entered in the Thames Valley League to accommodate some of the 'regulars' who had been displaced from the first team with the arrival of new players. This brought our teams up to seven for the first time since 84/85 when, in fact, we had eight, although we did then have two rooms and one team played all matches in town. Now we had to accommodate 42 matches in the 28 weeks from October to April, which meant hosting more than one on a number of occasions. We had always attempted to keep the first Thursday of a month clear as a 'Swiss Night', but this had become increasingly difficult and now, with the exception of the last round in May, the tournament would have to share the evening with a match, and in four instances two matches!

Without initially any greater expectation than usual, the Middlesex 1st team enjoyed its best season for many years. Although we lost the services of Graham White, who had left the area, there was the

welcome return of Nevil Chan after many years absence, plus the addition of Andy Jenkins and Gerald & Lee Jacobs who had joined during the second half of the previous season. Colin Crouch turned out half a dozen times to win all but the last game which was his first defeat for Harrow since 1984.

After cruising through the season as unbeaten leaders, Harrow I almost threw away the Division 2 Championship with an untidy end to their programme. With 11½ points from 12 matches the title seemed assured, but then came a defeat at Hendon, the only other team in contention. Even so, there would only be a problem if Harrow lost their last fixture and Hendon were to win all their three remaining matches by a good margin....And this is exactly what happened!

Harrow contrived to turn up for their last match with two men short and went down 3-5. Hendon, meanwhile, had been comfortably winning their matches, including an 8-0 default, and this put them fractionally ahead of us on game points. It seemed that the title had eluded us until, by an extraordinary turn of fate, it was found that Hendon had also had problems with missing players - and on high boards - and under the new rules whereby higher boards incur more penalty points, Hendon's three defaults scored eight, which just happened to be the exact figure at which a half match-point deduction was imposed. The irony of the whole situation, as far as Hendon were concerned, was that this change in the method of calculating default points had been agreed following a proposal from David Powell who was, of course, the Harrow captain!

Harrow II were also in winning form for much of the season but they too suffered a couple of late defeats to leave them with 7½ points from 10. It was assumed that this still earned promotion but when the dust finally settled over the outstanding results it was found that Imperial College II had 8 points to top the table, and that two other clubs were both on 7½, and each had a games score of 48 whereas Harrow's was only 45½, leaving us in 4th place, a poor reward for falling half a point short after having led the division for much of the season.

At the pre-season Middlesex League meeting the subject of rapid-play finishes had been resurrected, but although a move to re-impose it had been defeated, an amendment was agreed to allow individual team members to decide before starting their game whether to adjourn/adjudicate or play a rapid finish. We thought that this could create a potentially chaotic situation and would, because of our maximum 2½ hour limit, mean playing different time controls in the same match. The club had always opposed 'rapid-play' although a few team members preferred it, but it was decided to declare that Harrow

would not participate in such finishes in any matches.

The disappointment of the season was the Thames Valley 'A' team which not only failed to overcome the usual poor start but couldn't produce the customary improvement in the second half of the season. They finished in the last but one place with 4½ points from 14, but it was later learnt that because of the reluctance of some of the third division sides to come up from the six-board section into an eight-board division, Harrow were to be allowed to remain where they were, and so preserve the record of never having been relegated in this league. The new 'B' team, under David Stott, was allocated to Division 6 which contained only five teams and so it was decided that they should play each other four times, twice at home and away, giving 16 matches. This made a long programme for such a small section but promised to produce an exciting finish when, with Hayes well ahead on top of the table, Harrow drew with the only other challengers for the runners-up position, leaving us only needing to avoid defeat in the final fixture against Hounslow, but it was something of an anti-climax when they defaulted the match. Later it was discovered that because of changes in the composition of the upper sections, all the Division 6 teams would in effect be promoted!

In the Hillingdon League there was more 'juggling', with Harrow 1 disappearing and a new Harrow 'C' team coming into a Division 3 which had now been established. This left our 'A' and 'B' teams in Division 2 and the 'A's were to finish top of the table with the comparatively modest record of 6½ points from 10, whilst the 'B' team, which Colin Burt had taken over following the withdrawal of the elected captain, were in 4th place with 4½ points. Harrow also won the 3rd division, with the 'C' team similarly scoring 6½ points, but from eight matches.

So four Harrow teams had achieved promotion, three of them as Division Champions, and a fifth just missing out. With the bonus of the Thames Valley team's escape from relegation, the season's results were probably the best in the club's history.

32 players entered the Swiss Tournament, and with Ravi Mukherjee dropping out early on when he became unavailable on Thursdays, Paul Hatchett went on to take the title outright with 7 points. A new controller was appointed for the next season with Alan Marshall taking on a fresh challenge after having captained the Thames Valley team for the past ten years. Mike Williams took over the captaincy, the pair neatly swapping roles. Gerry Luetchford was elected to captain the Hillingdon 'A' team now returned to the difficult first division, and he declared that he would attempt to make a better showing at that level by fielding a stronger side.

Financially the season had produced another surplus taking our reserves to an all-time high. It was thought that members should now benefit from this, and rather than take the extreme step of actually reducing the subscriptions, the Treasurer came up with a scheme whereby existing members would receive a bonus, effectively reducing their fees - a sort of dividend on their investment? - and in future any surplus amounts could be controlled in this manner.

1995-96.

It is rather a shame that this account does not close at the high point achieved at the end of the 94/95 season, as the club's ninetieth year was almost bound to be something of an anti-climax.

In an otherwise undistinguished playing season the contrasting fortunes of the two Thames Valley League teams was the highlight (and lowlight?!). It fell to the 'B' team to take the honours by winning the Division 5 championship. After being promoted as runners-up to Hayes 'B' in the previous year, it so happened that we now had to meet them in the first fixture of Division 5, and the Harrow side were disappointed to lose by the narrowest margin. However, our team then proceeded to win all the remaining nine matches and reverse the positions with Hayes who had to settle for second place. The most remarkable feature of this success was that, apart from nine moves, the same players (Messrs. Powell, Pleasants, O'Hara, Maddock, Stott & Hiron) turned out for Harrow in every match; on the solitary occasion when one of them was unavailable, the deputy won in those few moves. Between them they achieved a 67.5% score.

This success was somewhat overshadowed by the failure of the 'A' team who, following some years of struggling to avoid demotion, finally subsided after obtaining a mere two points from 14 matches. It relinquished our proud record of never having had a team relegated in the Thames Valley League since we had joined 20 years ago, during which our various sides had fought 34 campaigns.

The remaining Harrow teams all managed to achieve mid-table positions. The Middlesex League first team, now back in Division 1, started well despite losing narrowly to the powerful Wood Green and West London sides, but they proceeded to pick up points here and there throughout the season to finish with 5½ which gave them 5th place out of 8. Amongst the successes was a 6-2 victory in the return match at West London, a draw with the eventual Champions and 7-1 & 6½-1½ wins over the once mighty Kings Head and Hampstead teams, although we were heavily defeated on the return visit to Kings Head. But it was gratifying to know that whilst Harrow retained its top status, those two

teams were condemned to spend the 96/ 97 season in Division 2!

The position regarding the Middlesex second team proved to be far from satisfactory when a study of the Division 4 final results sheet revealed that several matches had been left with unresolved or erroneous scores, four of which affected the Harrow side. Lack of communication between captains and league controller was blamed, and there was obviously what is best described as a deficiency in the controller's record system. One of our matches was shown as 3½-3½ although we had won the outstanding game and with it the match. Even more seriously, another match was reported as a 3½-4½ loss whereas we had won it on the night by that score. Furthermore, our opponents were reported as having incurred only one default throughout the season, and yet they had turned up three boards short on that night! This undeserved match point gave them 7½ from 9 and with it the division championship when, in fact, they should have been placed second behind the team that scored 7. As this was only discovered after the trophy had been awarded, it had to stand. Harrow II are therefore recorded as having achieved 4 points and are placed 6th whereas we know that they actually scored 5½ and should have been 4th!

Gerry Luetchford's ambition to win the Division 1 title in the Hillingdon League was to be unfulfilled. Like the Middlesex 2nd team captain he was at times frustrated to find that some of his chosen players were required by the 10 more senior teams. With a club record of 81 matches during the season, the better players were much in demand. Nevertheless he did manage to put out some surprisingly strong sides at times and was able to finish in third place. In Division 2 the 'B' team was 5th with the 'C's going one better in 4th place.

The Club Championship title was again shared, with Paul Hatchett getting his name on the trophy for the third year running, alongside Nevil Chan who had been a very young winner nineteen years previously. The Handicap Tournament was won by Frank Viegas for the second year in succession and in addition to the cup also received a chess computer which was presented by Martin Harris.

Financially it was a very profitable year with a surplus of £551 which was mainly due to the large number of new members that had arrived during the season. With one or two exceptions they were fairly weak players and they tended to drift away towards the end so that it seemed likely that we would not see them next season. Sadly, we were also faced with the problem of losing a number of stronger players, which bode ill for the future of our league teams and we would badly miss Paul Hatchett, Steve Retallick, Ravi Mukherjee, and Mike Williams

who were mostly moving from the district or would otherwise be unavailable because of their work. Despite the anticipated decline in future subscriptions, the Treasurer felt confident enough to propose at the A.G.M. that we continue the new discount scheme for existing members, even to the extent of doubling the previous amount to £8.

The stability of the club's management was assured when all but one of the officers were re-elected, the only vacancy being brought about by the departure of Mike Williams. It was not easy to find a replacement Thames Valley 'A' team captain but the problem was solved when Gerry Luetchford agreed to change jobs and take up this post leaving Ken Hiron to fill the now vacant captaincy of Hillingdon 'A'.

Several members of the Middlesex first team had expressed a desire to be able to use the 'Rapid-Play' finish as permitted by the league, although second team players were not so keen. Nevertheless, it was agreed to change our policy and in future allow individual team members to decide, but it would remain to be seen to what extent rapid-play would disturb others in the match wishing to play on to adjudicate, or on other matches or tournament games being played at the same time.

The meeting produced a curious turn of events, and for the writer of this history, a certain amount of embarrassment tempered by a feeling of intense pride. The Club President, David Stott, has offered this account of it:

"Before this A.G.M. there had been behind the scenes discussions between some of the Committee, who felt that the time had come to formally recognize Roy Maddock's substantial contribution to the club and thank him for all his efforts, which had given so much enjoyment to the members for more than three decades. They thought there should be a motion that Roy be elevated to the rank of 'Life Vice-President', the highest accolade we can bestow on one of our members and only rarely done so throughout the club's history. Naturally he should be kept in the dark about this until the matter was raised at the meeting. It was decided that Alan Marshall was the ideal choice to propose the motion, which he duly did after making a warm and sincere tribute. Roy joined the exalted company of John Poole, Roy Hopkins and Don Rose, who had been appointed in earlier years in honour of their work for the club over a period from the 40's to the 70's.

By a strange coincidence a week before the A.G.M. Roy, being completely and blissfully unaware of the "sub-committee's" decision, informed the President who was to chair the meeting, that he would like to propose that Alan Marshall be made a Vice-President in recognition of his work over several years and furthermore, that Alan should not be

forewarned of this impending motion! It subsequently amused the meeting to hear these two eulogizing each other in close succession, but everyone was assured that there had been no collusion and neither had the faintest idea of the other's intentions beforehand."

The closing moves of the club's ninetieth season were provided by a 'Losing Chess' tournament. For some years a few members had indulged in this esoteric version of the game towards the end of the season, and more recently an informal tournament has been arranged to follow the A.G.M.. It is jocularly called 'The Losing Chess World Championships' in the absence of any knowledge of a similar competition making such a bold claim. This year the entrants increased to ten, but although it has never been deemed serious enough to keep a record of the winners, it is still a 'fun' way to round off a hard season before returning after a short summer break to resume playing (it is to be hoped!) 'winning chess'.

Playing On

So we have now reached adjournment time, that moment when no matter what has happened on the way, one must sit back and carefully consider the current position. It is, I believe, a winning one!

For ninety years Harrow Chess Club has been able to provide facilities for the people of N.W. Middlesex to enjoy the game of chess. As we have seen, there have been many ups and downs on the way. Some seasons produced highly successful results, others have been most disappointing. Some years the club has attracted many members, in others the support has fallen away. There have been long periods of stability at the same venue, but there have also been times of change and insecurity. Financial difficulties have often arisen, but periods of prosperity have usually followed. Whatever has befallen the club, we have always managed to find the right move or a clever combination to restore the position.

Today, we may no longer compete with the top London League teams, which limits our attractiveness to the very best players, but we still have a faithful following and a large membership which enables us to support seven teams in three other leagues as well as providing tournaments within the club. Of the many other clubs that we visit in the course of a season, there are very few that can approach our set-up of being able to stage a home match - and often two matches - and still have plenty of other members present on that evening playing friendly or tournament games; this supports our slogan of recent years that we are able to provide "both friendly and competitive chess at all levels".

In just one more decade the club will celebrate its first one hundred years; a telegram from the Queen (or perhaps the King) would seem to be appropriate! With the popularity of chess now established in this country, Harrow Chess Club will certainly continue to make an important contribution to the game. Yes, there is definitely a lot of play left!

1996-97.

The club entered the last decade of its centenary in good shape, with a well organised and stable management. The triumvirate of President, Secretary and Treasurer had been unchanged for five seasons - and was to continue as such for a further seven years - and there was an experienced band of members looking after the teams and organising the tournaments.

True, the membership numbers were now far lower than they had once been, but this was a current trend throughout the chess scene. The game was coming under threat from so many other activities and was now available on the internet for those not prepared to make the effort to visit their club. As one who prefers his chess to be across the board, facing a living opponent, I think that is their loss.

Despite this, the club was still running seven teams in three different chess leagues. In the Middlesex League the senior team was ready to undertake a second season back at the top, having regained its Division 1 status following a number of years in the Second Division, but it would not be easy as there were some very strong sides at that level, as had been discovered the previous season when they had struggled to re-establish their place among the top teams. They started poorly with two losses but then followed a remarkable 6-2 win against West London. It was the first occasion for some time that Harrow had been able to field two 200+ graded players, IM Colin Crouch who was to play regularly for most of the season, and the introduction of Chris Duncan. The opponents, however, went one better by arriving with three players over 200, and yet this trio were able to manage only half a game point between them!

Later, former Club Champion George Leyton, reappeared to play in half the fixtures including both matches against Imperial College who were to finish as Division 1 Champions. In the home match Harrow ran Out winners despite having a reserve on board 4, and in the return fixture it had looked certain that they would complete the double after finishing 4-3 up on the night plus a favourable position in the adjourned game. Sadly, it was not to be, as on continuation the game turned into a loss and they had to be content with a drawn match.

There were very few other successes and the season ended with only 5½ points from the 14 matches. In the previous year this same number had placed them 5th but now they were either 6th or 7th out of 8. The uncertainty was due to the lack of information provided by the league, a situation that we'd had to contend with for several seasons and which we would continue to suffer for years to come. This year was particularly bad; three months after the end of the playing season no final league tables had been produced. We were eventually told that Harrow had been placed in the relegation spot of 7th despite the fact that there were still unresolved adjudications affecting the teams placed either side of us. Subsequently we learned with some surprise that Wood Green were withdrawing from the league and we would therefore be able to remain in Division 1. No final tables were ever received!

At least Division 4, in which our second team was playing, was a little more straightforward, although the results of three outstanding adjudications went unrecorded. We were placed third with 8½ points, the same as the runners-up but with a poorer games score. However, the team was not displeased at missing promotion to a higher division.

The Middlesex League was now operating 'Rapid-Play Finishes' when both players were agreeable, but Harrow had earlier decreed that its team members should decline this option as it was thought that an element of noise and confusion could arise with different time controls in operation, a pair scrambling to complete a rapid finish would trouble those on an adjacent board quietly trying to reach a position for adjudication and deciding on a sealed move. However, at the previous A.G.M. it had been said that several of the stronger players would prefer the rapid finish, and it was agreed to rescind the club's ruling. It has since become general practice in all the leagues, and also our Swiss Tournament, where it seems to have operated without any of the perceived disturbances!

We were also playing in the Thames Valley League where, over the years, the 'A' team had gradually worked its way up from Division 6 to Division 2 but had struggled for some while to achieve the breakthrough to the top section. Indeed, the previous season the side found itself at the foot of the table, and after 20 years of entering one, two or even three teams in the league this was to be the first occasion that any of them had ever been demoted. The aim now was to reverse the direction as quickly as possible, but the team could only finish 5th with a 50% record. The 'B' team also achieved 50% in Div 4 although they were placed 4th.

We were running three teams in the Hillingdon League. The 'A' team were trying to win Division 1 but just as the previous season

when they had finished 3rd (out of 6) under Gerry Luetchford, the new captain, Ken Hiron, could only produce a similar result. In Division 2 the 'B' and 'C' teams were definitely not trying to come top as they had no wish to become out of their depth in the higher division. In fact, with only one team promoted, they finished in second and third positions, but it was the 'C' team that claimed the runners-up spot ahead of the third placed B's!

There was a new name on the Club Championship trophy when Billy Gray topped the Swiss Tournament chart, whilst Frank Viegas was taking the Handicap Tournament title for the third year running.

During the season we said goodbye to Roy Hopkins who died at the age of 93. A former President of the club and holder of many posts over the years, it was amazing to realise that when he had first joined the club way back in 1947, he would have been already well into his forties. Although we did not realise it, it seems we were also saying farewell to John Poole. At the A.G.M., John was appointed a Life Member of the club and presented with a framed diploma to commemorate the fact that he was the longest ever serving member. He is another whose name appears repeatedly in our lists of officers, and in addition he served as President of Middlesex, Southern Counties and later the BCF. Although this latest honour gave him free membership of the club for the rest of his life, this was to be the last we ever saw or heard from him.

Another appointment reported was that Alan Marshall had been elected Secretary of the Thames Valley League. As a result he relinquished the role of Swiss Tournament Controller and was replaced by Audrey Panovka who had considerable experience of organising chess events. Another new appointment for the following season saw Nigel Colter commence what has proved to be an unbroken run as the Thames Valley 'A' team captain. He took over from Gerry Luetchford who moved to the Hillingdon League 'A's, while in the Middlesex League the second team captain, Martin Harris, wished to stand down and John Clenshaw took over the role.

1997-98.

An interesting feature of the season was to be the remarkable disparity in the performances of the club's two senior teams, playing in the Thames Valley and Middlesex Leagues; the former, undefeated Champions of their division, while the latter were relegated from Division 1 as bottom team. For Nigel Colter it was a dream start to his team captaincy career, the side winning twelve of their fourteen matches with the other two drawn. The board count was 40 games

won, 35 drawn and just 9 lost, and one of those was a default. They had already secured the Division Championship title with three fixtures still to be played!

In contrast the Middlesex 'A' team, using some of the same personnel, plus other stronger players, would have been expected to fare better than they did, even though it was against significantly higher graded opposition. The captain reported that "There were not enough strong players available regularly enough". The highest graded seven players used were Colin Crouch, Chris Duncan, Nigel Alldritt, George Leyton, Nevil Chan, Billy Gray and Gerald Jacobs, which sounds a formidable group, but only once did they all play in the same match (which was lost 2-6!), while in the other 13 fixtures there were ten occasions when only four from the group were present. No match wins were recorded, but two were drawn and two were left unfinished with adjudications. The results of these were never received and the promise by the League Secretary that final tables would be available for the September fixture meeting was unfulfilled both then and thereafter. But whatever the final outcome Harrow could not have avoided finishing last and forfeiting their First Division status.

The second teams in both leagues produced similar records in their respective divisions with just three wins and two draws from their fourteen matches.

In the Hillingdon League the 'A' team finished midway in Div. 1 while the 'B' team scored 50% in Division 2. But it was the 'C' team, also in Div. 2, that created the most interest by spending much of the season desperately hoping to avoid the possibility of promotion to the very much stronger 1st Division. Despite the average grade of the 'C' team being well under three figures they found themselves at the top of the table. For the vital fixture vs. Eastcote 'B', Harrow were without one or two of their stronger (or less weak?) players - claimed to be genuinely unavailable! - and managed to get beaten by the narrowest possible margin. This resulted in both sides sharing the division title with identical records, even down to the game scores. With only one team promoted in this league it was not known how the matter would be resolved but, fortunately for all concerned, Eastcote were happy to accept the step up to the dizzy heights of Division 1.

The Club Championship was won by Nevil Chan, who had experienced his first taste of the title way back in 1977, when as a very young man he had finished equal with Bill Phillips.

After some years away from the club he returned in the early 1990's and in 1996 had again shared the title, this time with Paul Hatchett. Now two years later, he made sure that there would be no

more sharing by achieving a 100% record over the eight rounds to win the title outright, which was to be the first over five consecutive years. Robert Hanson was the successful Handicap Tournament contender.

1998-99.

After the many changes in personnel last year, for this season all the officers had been re-elected, except one where the post no longer existed. At the Annual General Meeting it had been decided that the club could not continue to support seven league teams. There was the continuing erosion of our membership numbers, and the fact that having 'first teams' each seeking honours in three different leagues meant that the stronger players were much in demand and their support was being overstretched. Many of the senior players were also deciding that they could no longer commit themselves to the Swiss Tournament with the result that the title of Club Champion was in danger of becoming devalued. The obvious casualty was the Hillingdon League 'A' team and even the captain supported the decision that it be withdrawn.

We had originally joined the Hillingdon League in order to provide match play for newcomers and others who might not otherwise get a regular place in one of the other league teams. It was intended that they would compete in the league's lower divisions but on two occasions the 'A' team had earned promotion to the considerably stronger top section, with the predictable result of being relegated the next season. When they were again promoted in 1995, the captain decided that as we now had three teams competing in this league he could afford to make more of an effort to win the first division title, but despite the use of stronger players the team could only finish mid-table for the two years prior to their demise. We would still keep the 'B' & 'C' teams, both currently in Division 2, and also retain their nomenclature to show that their composition was unchanged.

We thus had the unusual situation of entering second & third teams without a first, and it was to prove a none too happy season for either of them. In a division of just five teams they occupied the last two positions. The 'C' team, which last year had been pleased to have avoided going up, were this season doomed to travel in the opposite direction.

Both Middlesex teams had reasonably good seasons, the senior side, now back in Division 2, scored 7 points from its 12 matches which was sufficient to get them into third place. The 'seconds' also finished third, in Division 4, with 5½ points, this being from 10 matches.

After their outstanding promotion season the Thames Valley 'A' team found Division 2 more of a challenge; two extra boards were required and much stronger opposition was encountered. Despite a string of narrow defeats they did manage to consolidate their position and finish fifth in the table. The highlight was an early victory over the eventual run away Champions, Surbiton, who were to win all their remaining games bar one. However, it was the second team that was to produce the best record of the season by earning promotion as runners-up in Division 4.

Nevil Chan was again Club Champion with six wins and two draws while David Stott won the Handicap Tournament after a break of eleven years. The Christmas Lighthing Tournament was proving to be a speciality of Gerald Jacobs and this year his son Lee made a rare appearance at the club. He was in fact, the highest graded player on the night and duly made his way through to the final to play Gerald in an 'All-Jacobs' cracker, with the honours going to Dad once again.

An unwelcome gift at this festive season was being given notice of a £6 per week increase in the rent of our room. It figured prominently at the A.G.M. held at the end of the season. The Treasurer stated that the subscriptions would also have to be increased by £6 (but per annum!). This would mean that effectively each member would be funding one week of the rent increase. The blow was softened by the fact that the subscription rates had been unchanged for the past seven years. The Treasurer made another, more contentious, proposal that the half price concession for members reaching retirement age should be discontinued for those doing so in the future, claiming that they were not given at other clubs A show of hands produced an equal number of members both for and against the idea, although even more declined to register a preference. The Chairman cast his vote in favour of the status quo, and this concession still remains today.

1999-00.

There was widespread dissatisfaction over the problems arising from the BCF's attempt to computerise its grading system. A remark made to a prominent national chess correspondent about the non-appearance of the published listing produced the response, "The BCF is just incompetent".

When the list did eventually get published it was of little value to Harrow players as none of the previous season's Thames Valley or Hillingdon League results had been included. It was said that the leagues' own graders had not met the deadline for submitting results, which was now required to be done in a computerised format, but it

transpired that faults in the provided software meant that - neither had been able to process it. Even the former BCF Director of Grading, who had been called back to sort it out, admitted, "The BCF grading database is in a mess". The Harrow club bulletin dubbed it 'The Great Grading Fiasco' and this was also independently used by the Northumberland Association Bulletin, which claimed that 'insufficient guidance had been given to local graders', as well as by the Hillingdon League.

There was just one change among the officers for this season, necessitated by Audrey Panovka's decision to move to Israel. Lee Branca took over as Swiss Tournament Controller and was to settle in for the remainder of the Club's centenary decade. Nevil Chan duly registered his hat-trick as Champion, emulating his achievement of two years ago by winning every round, while Colin Burt added his name to the Handicap Tournament trophy.

On the match scene a good season saw two Harrow teams as Champions of their divisions, and both trophies were proudly displayed at the end of season A.G.M.. In the Middlesex League the senior team fell just short of promotion in third place with 8 points from 14 matches, but Harrow II took the Division 4 title with 6½/10, the same as Hammersmith but with a superior game score.

Both Thames Valley League sides had cane close to the relegation zone, each finishing 6th out of 8 in their respective divisions. The 'A' team had started with three defeats but a spell of four wins from five matches kept them safe, while the 'B's retained their place by beating rivals for demotion, Hayes 'B', by 4½-1½ in the final fixture.

The Hillingdon League 'B' team finished mid-table with a 50% score, but the 'C' team ensured a quick return to Division 2 by easily heading the third section.

2000-01.

It was disappointing to learn that the Hillingdon League results had again not been included in the published grading list, the BCF Grading Director claiming that, rather than them having missed the deadline, he had not received anything from the league for the past two years. Some clubs suggested withdrawing from the grading system altogether (and thus save some money!) but others, including both Harrow captains, declared that they would not wish to remain in the league if its games were not graded. A new League Grader was appointed to help ensure that this would not happen again. The BCF confirmed that last season's Thames Valley results had been included but said that the previous year plus the past two of the Hillingdon were now considered

lost for ever, which left many grades inaccurate.

The Middlesex Captain, David Powell, having led the club's senior team for the past eleven years, felt it was time to step down. The position was accepted by John Clenshaw who, having just taken the second team from divisions four to three, now found himself catapulted into Division 2, and by the end of the season to achieve a further step up to the very top by producing a Divisional Champions team for the second year running. The fact that Colin Crouch could play only twice as against twelve appearances the previous season was a blow, but some new middle boards helped, although the captain admitted to a little assistance from visitors who defaulted boards and also to some generous offers of draws from opponents in unexpected circumstances; he suggested they may have been content to remain in Division 2! The Middlesex seconds welcomed back Bob Pleasants as Captain, a role he had last performed ten years earlier. Although the team had been promoted it was found that because other clubs had dropped out, divisions 3 and 4 had been amalgamated with 11 teams meeting each other only once, and despite losing four matches they achieved a respectable fourth place.

The Thames Valley 'A' team started slowly before they too were to benefit from the new players and produce a series of wins that made promotion to the top division seem achievable. But then, on losing a routine home fixture, the Captain declared that all the mistakes that he would expect during a season had been concentrated into that one match. In the end they suffered the cruel fate of missing promotion by the smallest possible margin. They had a similar record to Hounslow, a team they had beaten twice during the season, but because Hounslow had accumulated just a solitary game point more, it was they who were placed second with Harrow third.

For this season, the two Hillingdon League teams reverted to 'A' and 'B' rather than continue as 'B' and 'C' following the demise of the original 'A' team. The 'A's achieved a comfortable mid-table position in Division 2 but the 'B' team would return to Division 3 after finishing last.

Once again Nevil Chan was crowned Club Champion having won the Swiss Tournament for the fourth year in succession. Over that period he achieved the remarkable record of remaining unbeaten, and winning twenty games with four drawn. The Handicap Tournament was won by Igor Odinston.

At the end of February the club was hit by another increase in the cost of the room at Victoria Hall which would be a further £6 per week with immediate effect. This, together with a similar increase in January

1999, meant that in just over two years the rent had gone up by 75%. There were further worries about the club's tenancy when it was learnt that in May the Church Trustees would be handing over the administration of the hall to the YMCA. In the event it transpired that our regular booking was welcomed and that there would be no requirement for our members to be either Y, M or C! In fact they sought to increase the use of the hall by other organisations and even undertook to refurbish some of the more run down aspects of it.

The rent increase triggered an inevitable discussion about the subscription rates at the A.G.M. and, despite the fact that the club had made a surplus on the season, the Treasurer proposed, and received approval, for an increase of £10 per annum. For existing members this was mitigated by raising the discount for prompt payments from £2 to £6 giving a net increase of £6, again similar to what happened in 1999. The discount had been operated for a few seasons to assist the Treasurer in collecting subs and also ensure that the funds were available for the early season expenditure.

For next season there would be just one change among the officers, David Stott stepping down as Thames Valley 'B' team Captain and being succeeded by Alan Marshall.

2001-02.

International Master, Petr Neuman, from the Czech Republic, made an impressive debut at the club by winning the Quickplay Tournament with a 100% score, and was to play for both the Middlesex and Thames Valley teams. But hopes of having extended use of his skills were dashed in mid-season when he returned home to take up a new job. Also starting a slightly longer association with the club was Rory Quinn from Ireland; he played in 17 league matches this season with a score of 70.8%, not far behind Colin Crouch (78.6%) in the new Team Player Award chart. This award was created to honour the player with the best score from matches at any level throughout the season, possibly prompted by the report that in the previous season Nigel Colter had achieved an outstanding 80.77% from 17 games. The winner was presented with the John Poole Cup, which was originally donated for the now long defunct Summer Knockout Tournament but with this new use would perpetuate the name of the club's former President.

In the Swiss Tournament, Nevil Chan, after winning for the past four seasons, looked likely to lose his Club Champion title to Nigel Alldritt, but a long delayed fourth round game between the pair was resolved only on the eve of the presentation when the Controller was informed that Nevil had beaten Nigel to finish equal with 7 points, so

sharing the title. A new name was added to the Handicap Tournament Cup, that of Lee Branca who completed his tenth qualifying game (and tenth win!) only on the final playing evening.

Harrow's league teams enjoyed a very satisfying season, with two of them becoming Champions of their divisions, and the other four achieving comfortably placed positions. The highlight was the way in which the Thames Valley 'A' team, which had so narrowly failed to secure promotion the previous year, struck back to score 8½ points from the reduced ten match programme, and achieved a total game score of 57½-22½.

After entering the league in 1976, the team had slowly worked their way through to Division 2 where they were to languish for nine seasons before taking their first and only step back. But this was quickly reversed and they had now gone on to emulate their Middlesex colleagues in becoming a premier league team. The Thames Valley 'B' team were placed third in Division 4, equal on points with the runners-up but with an inferior game score, and were quite content not to qualify for promotion.

The two Middlesex sides both occupied mid-table positions, the seniors winning six of their first eight fixtures but only one from the remaining six. The second team won six of their fourteen matches.

The Hillingdon 'A' team were also very happy to miss promotion in a competition where only the top teams are elevated, finishing as runners-up in Division 2, but the 'B' team ran away with Division 3, being unbeaten with nine wins and a drawn match, and a remarkable total game score of 42-8.

During the season Alan Marshall achieved the distinction of appearing, and scoring, for all six Harrow league teams. He was a regular member of both the Middlesex and Thames Valley seconds and always on hand to help out beleaguered captains of the other four teams, playing a total of 27 games.

Prior to the end of the season both Middlesex League team captains had announced that they wished to step down. Nigel Alldritt had offered to take over the senior side and was duly elected at the A.G.M., but no one could be found to look after the second team, and the position was left open.

The club's accounts revealed that there was a large deficit on the year and members were asked to ensure that this was not repeated next season by a further increase in their subscriptions. Joe Fogg, who for the past twelve years had audited the books also wished to retire and Nigel Alldritt - was appointed to the post.

2002-03.

In order to keep the Middlesex second team going, Alan Marshall agreed to run it, in addition to his captaincy of the Thames Valley 'B' team, remaining hopeful that someone else could still be found to relieve him of it, but once installed there was very little chance of that!

The Middlesex League had amended its rules regarding quick play finishes in Division 1. Whereas these had been allowed only if both players agreed, they would now become mandatory unless both players wished not to do so.

For the first time Harrow now had a team in the top division of both the Middlesex and Thames Valley Leagues and each was to complete the season in fifth place in their respective tables. The Middlesex side began well enough under their new captain, winning two of the first three matches but managed only two more wins and a draw from the remaining nine fixtures. They were outshone by the exploits of the second team whose reluctant captain had aimed to achieve a position in the middle of Division 3, but as he said, "We failed abysmally since first place is certainly not middle of the division"! After winning all seven pre-Christmas fixtures they had gone on to finish with 10½ points from the 14 matches to become champions of Division 3.

On their Division 1 debut, the Thames Valley 'A' team suffered almost the worst possible introduction by losing their first five fixtures before any points were achieved (and that only a half), but in the second half of the season, as if to deny that they were overawed by playing at this level, there was an amazing sequence of six wins from seven matches to establish their place in this company. The 'B' team, after last year's near promotion, could finish no better than fourth in a division of only six teams.

There were just five sides in Division 2 of the Hillingdon League in which the two Harrow teams were playing, presenting a challenge to both in their aim to avoid finishing in either promotion or relegation positions, but they achieved it perfectly with the 'A' team second and the 'B's' third.

With rapid play finishes now in general use, it was decided that the Harrow Swiss Tournament should now permit them if both players were agreeable. This season's event included seven new entrants, five of whom scored at least 50%, but it was last year's joint winners, Nigel Alldritt and Nevil Chan who led the way. Both were unbeaten, but drew with each other, leaving Nigel the winner with 7½ points as Nevil had also drawn two others, including his game with Billy Gray who was to join him in second place on 6½. Billy was a clear winner of the Team Player Award and Frank Viegas won the Handicap Tournament for the

third time after a break of six years.

Following the Christmas break it was learned that Club Secretary, Roy Maddock, had been admitted to hospital over the holiday suffering from a mysterious illness, the cause of which was never determined, but it was debilitating enough to require an extended convalescent period following his discharge, and he was not to reappear at the club until the final weeks of the season. Emergency measures had been quickly put into place to cover his duties, Alan Marshall taking over the secretarial role and even producing two editions of the club bulletin, while Lee Branca assumed the captaincy of the Hillingdon 'B' team and also took care of the Handicap Tournament.

Approaching the A.G.M. and the start of his 74th year, Roy felt that he should now reduce his activities at the club and, perhaps, return to the backbenches. He would continue to look after the Handicap Tournament and produce the club bulletin, which he considered to be his 'baby' (if such a description can be applied to a 32 year old!), but would not seek re-election as Secretary, thus ending a run of 15 years in the position, which together with an earlier spell during the 1970's made a total of 23 years. The records show this is the longest length of service by one person in any of the elected posts during the history of the club. At the meeting his obvious successor, Alan Marshall, was duly elected as Secretary, but the long occupation of the 'top table' was further shattered by the fact that Ken Hiron was stepping down as Treasurer after having equalled the 20 consecutive years of the first holder of that office, the Club's founder whose time had included the First World War years. Although the Committee had been aware that it was Ken's last season, it had not been generally made known until the meeting and no successor had been prepared. Nigel Alldritt offered to take it on which necessitated a new Auditor, and Billy Gray was elected to that post.

There were also changes among the match captains, with all three second teams having new appointments. Alan Marshall was now officially confirmed as the Middlesex skipper but he gave up the Thames Valley captaincy and David Stott was persuaded to return in that role. Lee Branca agreed to take over the Hillingdon 'B' team.

2003-04.

Towards the end of the previous season we had been approached by members of the Weight Watchers Association, an organisation that also met at Victoria Hall on a Thursday, using the main hall upstairs. We had a room on the ground floor which was fairly comfortable, with good heating - sometimes too good - and sufficient space to house two

matches played side by side and leave room for other friendly or tournament games. We occasionally staged three matches, but this meant bringing additional tables from upstairs, and did make it distinctly crowded. The ladies were having problems carrying up the stairs, heavy boxes containing various products and literature, plus notice boards, and later taking them back down again. They enquired how we would feel about exchanging accommodation.

We had long coveted the main hail, and as our equipment cupboard was in a small room upstairs, it would also save us a lot of carrying, in our case, down and up. However, we had to tell them that we could not afford the higher rent that was charged for the hall, but the ladies said they would be prepared for us both to continue paying the same rents, and to just occupy each others rooms. We were secretly delighted at this and told the ladies that we should be happy to help them out and, provided that the management were agreeable to this arrangement we would undertake the swap. They were, and we did!

We soon settled into our new spacious accommodation, being able to set up the match tables in a line down the length of the hall. Whereas downstairs it had been necessary to place two boards on each table, now each game could have its own table, and staging three matches was no problem. Compared with many of the other clubs that were visited in the course of a season, it was extremely comfortable. The one downside was the continued lack of bar facilities which may have been a factor in the problem of attracting, or keeping, certain players. It was noticeable that many other clubs met in licensed premises, and their members seemed to accept the uncomfortable, sometimes quite squalid, playing conditions that their chess rooms offered.

Harrow's league teams had, for the most part, started the season promisingly but then later began to falter before eventually plunging into almost a state of free fall as the sides vainly struggled for match points. It was noted that of the final fourteen matches played by the combined teams there was a solitary narrow win, with the remainder all comfortably lost.

The Middlesex first team had what their captain described as 'a difficult season'. They were heavily outgunned by most of the opposition, but did manage to finish 6th of eight teams helped by the rare high-spot of 'doing the double' against Willesden with a board total of 15½-½! The second team having been promoted to Division 2, had expected a tough season-and they got it, finishing at the foot of the table. For the Thames Valley 'A' team it was a season of two halves. At

the year end they had found themselves proudly topping the Division 1 table with 4½ points out of 5, but this was soon reversed over the remaining nine fixtures of which all but one were lost, and they had by then plummeted to equal 6th place, saved from relegation only because they had won two individual games more. The 'B' side, however, were the most successful of all the Harrow teams, finishing equal first in Div. 4, scoring 8½/10 but placed second as they had won two games less.

The Hillingdon League teams finished 3rd and 5th out of 6 in Division 2 having seasons described by their respective captains as 'unremarkable' and 'miserable'.

Colin Crouch regained the Team Player Award, as did Nevil Chan the Club Champion title, he having also won the QuickPlay Tournament at the start of the season.

On the Thursday before Christmas, Colum Jezierski from the West London club, was at the hall to continue an adjourned Middlesex League game against one of our members who had injudiciously arranged it for an evening when a bell would be sounding every ten seconds, this being the traditional night for our Christmas Lightning Tournament! As his opponent was late arriving, Mr. Jezierski was invited to take part in the tournament, and he proceeded to qualify for the play-offs as group runner-up with the best score, and then beat Ludwig Szeri in the semis and overcome Nevil Chan in the final, to ensure that he didn't have a wasted evening!

Earlier in the season Harrow Chess Club had taken one small step into the technological age. Lee Branca had offered to use a page from his own website to show Harrow's match and tournament results, and he further enhanced it to include games and a comprehensive list of links to other interesting chess websites, including those of other clubs and leagues. At the end of the season, Lee was able to report that the site had received over 2300 hits from all over the world, much of it coming via the BCF and Southern Counties websites, but it was interesting to know that Harrow players were being searched for by name on Google.

The Annual General Meeting revealed that the club's accounts showed a large deficit on the year with the continuing decline in membership numbers being cited as one of the main causes. The Treasurer had calculated that if this trend continued, plus allowing for proposed increases in the BCF Game Fee charge, and probable rent rises, an increase in subscriptions of as much as £15 would be needed to break even, in the coming season. It was eventually agreed to raise them from £52 to £56 p.a. and to drop the discount for prompt payments, currently at £6, effectively making it a £10 increase, the

most that members had ever been asked to find.

Nigel Alldritt, now seeking to reduce his chess activities did not wish to undertake a second season as Treasurer, and David Powell was elected to the post, and with Billy Gray not able to continue as Honorary Auditor, Roy Maddock agreed to try to revive his past accounting skills in order to take it on. One further change was that David Walker would take over the captaincy of the Hillingdon 'B' team.

2004-05.

At the end of the season a new name would be engraved on the Club Championship Trophy, as the current champion was not defending his title and no other previous winners had entered the tournament. Although 26 competed in the 'Swiss', the highest graded player was 142, and he was not the winner! The records failed to reveal any past Champions with a grade at this level, but at least it did provide some keen competition between several players who felt that this was an opportunity to take the title. In the end that new name was Jamshid Oryakhel who secured 7 points from the eight rounds. There was also a new name on the Handicap Tournament Cup, that of Bak Chew, while Neville Blackie won both the Quickplay and Lightning Tournaments. The Team Player Award went to Phil Humphry which aptly illustrated that this honour could be won by any match player who is successful at his own level.

It was not a happy season for our league teams, especially the senior side playing in the Middlesex League. They lost their first twelve fixtures (two without even competing) and it was unlucky 13 when what appeared to be a winning $3\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ lead turned into a 4-4 result. Then it was back to normal with a 6-2 defeat in the final match and, although the drawn result had saved the whitewash, the half point obtained was converted into a minus half after being docked a penalty point for the defaulted matches. This gave them the rare, but unwelcome, feat of achieving a negative points total!

In contrast the second team were having more success now that they were back in Division 3. Harrow 2 completed their programme with 7 points and seemed likely to occupy a promotion spot, although they would prefer to stay down, but they knew that if, or more likely when, the first team was demoted they would be able to decline promotion to the same division.

The Middlesex League website had remained dormant for a couple of seasons, but at least this year some information was available as the County Grader was putting detailed match results on the Kings Head website, but unfortunately this stopped being updated shortly before

the final matches were completed. We heard that Imperial College had finished with 8½ points to give them the division title, and that a winning run by Hendon could put them above us on 7½ if their final unfinished match was won. We were then told that a winning lead had been secured in that match, so Harrow would be placed third.

In the Thames Valley League the 'A' team had a difficult season trying to avoid the relegation zone, and eventually were able to do so only because Pinner failed to complete their fixtures and were penalised for other defaulted games. The promoted 'B' team found Division 3 hard going, with the top boards especially struggling for points. Although the team did achieve four match points, the division's other seven sides all scored more!

In Division 2 of the Hillingdon League, Harrow 'A' were a safe second 3 points behind the leaders, but the 'B' team finished at the foot of the table and would again be dropping down. So with three of our teams coming bottom of their divisions and another very lucky not to be relegated as well, the only good news was, oddly enough, that the other two sides had been successful in avoiding promotion.

Our top teams had been missing some of the stronger players; Colin Crouch was unwell for much of the season, another was abroad and, it was learned that two more would be taking on foreign jobs next year, which seemed an extreme measure to avoid playing. On top of that, Nigel Alldritt who had said that this was his last year as Middlesex captain, was now doubtful about being available at all next season. A search for a replacement captain was unsuccessful which meant: no captain, no team. The situation was discussed at the A.G.M. and it was accepted that there was no choice but to withdraw the Middlesex first team from the league. It was a sad blow for a club that had been one of the founder members back in 1947. Although the team had considerable early successes, they had not won the title of League Champions since 1978. The second team would remain as our only representatives, continuing to play in Division 3. In order to accommodate the remaining displaced members of that senior side it was proposed that a strong team be entered in the more accessible, five-board Hillingdon League with the aim of becoming Division 1 Champions. Nigel Colter was prepared to take on the captaincy in addition to the Thames Valley.

Towards the end of the season it was felt that the club's website should have its own address, so it was redesigned and set up by Lee Branca as www.harrowchessclub.org.uk, making it more easily identifiable. Not only has it been kept going, but Lee ensures that it is regularly updated, which can not always be said of many similar sites.

2005-06.

The club's centenary season started unpromisingly with the discovery that all three leagues in which we competed had decreed that there should be a Harrow team in a division in which we had not expected to play/should not have been playing/or did not want to play!

At the Middlesex League fixture meeting our match captain was amazed to find that Harrow I would still be competing in Division 1 despite the fact that they had finished the previous season rock bottom of the table with a minus points total. Because Athenaeum had dropped out, only one team needed to be relegated and that team was apparently Hammersmith who had been in 7th place, 4½ points above Harrow. In any case, the Harrow side had already been withdrawn, a fact that the League Secretary had forgotten. It was decided that Division 1 would now have only seven teams; no move was made to reinstate Hammersmith, who should not have been relegated, and odd that no protest was made by that club. It seemed that the incomplete tables produced by the Grader had been used with regard to the lower divisions. The news that Hendon's later results had placed them above Harrow in Division 3 had been disregarded, and objections by both clubs that it was Hendon 2 and not Harrow that should now be in Division 2 were overruled. We had seemed likely to struggle in this company, but the team did manage to acquire 4½ points to finish 6th out of 8.

Our plans to challenge for the Hillingdon League Division 1 title were thwarted by the discovery that the 'new' 'A' team had been placed in the 2nd Division. The reason given was that as Pinner were also entering a strong team, it would be unfair to put only one of them in the top section. It was not explained why both could not have played, especially as that division only contained five teams, whereas Division 2 now had seven. As if to question the wisdom of that decision the Harrow team proceeded to win all twelve matches with such ease, that of the 60 games involved, 48 were won, 8 drawn and just 8 lost. The alleged threat from Pinner never really materialised; their 'A' team could only finish 4th. and it was the 'B' side, which had Colin Crouch's help, that were runners-up. Our own 'B' team finished in 6th place.

It was thought that we had won another 'Divisional Champions' title when the 'C' team finished top of the Division 3 table. They had trailed Hayes 'C' for much of the season, and in the matches between the clubs, both had won away from home. When Hayes slipped up in one of their final fixtures it left the teams with equal points. Harrow were declared Champions on a superior games score and were presented with the trophy at the Hillingdon League A.G.M.. On the very

evening of our own A.G.M., where we had planned to display it along with the Second Division trophy, an E-mail was received from the League Secretary. He had discovered that our team had inadvertently used an ineligible player in one match. Unfortunately, not only had it been a winning game, but also happened to be in a match against our rivals, Hayes, and the one that Harrow had won. So a 3½-1½ score-line now became 2½-2½ from which Hayes gained half a match point and Harrow lost a half, and with it the title!

In the Thames Valley League the Harrow 'B' team, happily expecting to be demoted after finishing bottom of Division 3 found that, because of changes due to teams dropping out, no relegations had been required from any of the divisions. They had to remain where they were, but did better than they had feared, finishing fifth of the eight teams, and even achieved a positive games score, even if it was only +1. The biggest disappointment was to be provided by the 'A' team who were to lose their Division One status, the second season running that this fate had befallen one of our senior sides. With one team withdrawing, a programme of twelve fixtures remained, and results from the first third of them were to give no indication as to the final outcome. All four were won - but then, they were all at home. The remaining two home matches were lost, as were all the away ones. 4 out of 4, followed by 0 out of 8! The 4 match points might have been enough to keep them up on another occasion, but so close was the competition this year that the three teams immediately above Harrow each had 5½ points, and the Champions only collected 7½.

There was more disappointment when the Thames Valley Knock-out Tournament eluded Harrow by the narrowest margin. On the few occasions that Harrow had entered this event in the past, they had never progressed very far, but this season they won through to the final. The result of the match, against Richmond, was 3-3 and was unable to be settled by board count as this still left it level. So the elimination rule was used, leaving our opponents the winners by virtue of a 2-1 lead on the top three boards.

It was thought that the replacement of our 8-board Middlesex League first team with a 5-board team in the smaller Hillingdon league would have lessened the demand on our players. However, because of changes in the number of teams competing in the various divisions, the result was just the opposite. The fixture list had a total of 76 matches (excluding knockout pairings) compared to 68 the previous season, which involved 488 individual games against 468. Many players were still appearing in two or more teams.

Jamshid Oryakhel retained his Club Champion title with one defeat, to David Powell who was runner-up. Bak Chew made it a hat-trick of Handicap Tournament wins, while Simon Warman won the Quickplay Tournament and Nevil Chan the Lightning. The winner of the Team Player award was Habib Rahman with an outstanding record of 15 wins, 1 draw and just 2 defeats.

David Stott stepped down as President, having completed 15 consecutive years, a record for that post. Lee Branca was elected to be the club's seventeenth President. Another new appointment was Ian Cross to take over the captaincy of the Thames Valley 'A' team. Vice-President Ken Hiron, agreed to form a sub-committee to explore various ideas about the best way to commemorate the club's 100th birthday.

...And The Next One Hundred Years?

In the postscript to the previous account, I was optimistic about the future of the game and Harrow Chess Club's continued involvement in it. Now, ten years on, I am less sure. Chess has a long history and is old enough to take care of itself, but it is the way it is played that is changing. Many clubs are finding that their membership numbers are diminishing and the chess leagues are contracting because clubs are unable to enter as many teams, or have to drop out altogether. Electronic chess seems to be taking over. I fear that the time will come when players are no longer prepared to go out in all weathers, often making difficult journeys in order to play at venues that are frequently far from inviting. Perhaps by then we shall be able to play each other on screens, team-mates and opponents all brought together by some interactive group method, and all from the comfort of our own armchairs.

If developments progress during the next century as they have in the past, there is no telling what unknown wonders await us. Maybe one day it will even be possible to transmit the moves by some form of thought transference! We just do not know what to expect, but one thing I can forecast with a fair degree of certainty is that, if Harrow Chess Club is still functioning in whatever format after a second century, this time I shall not be available to review it.

Into The Second Century

2006-07

Harrow Chess Club commenced the first season of its second century in a confident mood. Despite the fact that, in common with most other chess clubs, membership numbers were well down from what they had once been, Harrow were still able to support six teams, competing in three different leagues; one in the Middlesex, two in the Thames Valley and three in the Hillingdon. The only problem was the perennial one of finding players willing to captain them.

At the AGM held at the end of the previous season, the long serving captains of both Thames Valley League teams had declined re-election. After leading the 'A' team for nine years, Nigel Colter wished in future to concentrate on the Hillingdon League 'A' team which he had additionally taken on the previous season and led it into the First Division. Ian Cross had agreed to captain the Thames Valley 'A' side, but for the 'B' team no one could be found to replace David Stott who had captained them for ten of the previous twelve years, so the position had been left vacant in the hope that someone would come forward before the fixture meeting.

It was suggested that the more regular members of that team could take turns in leading the side during the season, but this did not seem a very satisfactory solution and, in any case, the league would require a nominated individual for contact purposes. In the end, Alan Marshall performed the role for the sake of keeping the team going, despite the fact that he was also captaining the Middlesex side and had in addition his duties as Secretary of both the Harrow club and the Thames Valley League itself.

In his first season as a Harrow captain, Ian had the satisfaction of leading the 'A' team back into the top division of the Hillingdon League after only one season in Division 2.

They finished second to the runaway winners Hayes 'A', with 10 points from 14 matches. The 'B' team scored 5½ from 12 and were placed 3rd of seven teams but well behind the joint leaders who both obtained 9½.

After winning Division 2 the previous year with a 100% record, the Hillingdon 'A' team found that the top division was very much stronger. They did manage to finish in third place despite losing three home matches by a 2-3 margin, but reversed that score in the other two, one of which was the only defeat that the league winners were to suffer. The 'B' team finished mid-table in Division 2 with 3 wins, 3 losses and 2 draws and, as the captain reported, "You can't get more average and

middling than that!". The winners of Division 3 dropped only half a match point, and that was to Harrow 'C' who were to finish second behind them.

In the Middlesex League, the captain retained many of the players from the second team that this side had originally been, and a few fortunate circumstances were needed for them to avoid demotion. Because a team had dropped out earlier, only one would be relegated, and Kings Head had been placed last, equal on match points with Harrow only because they had been penalized for excessive defaults, and then due to having an inferior games score of just one!

The award for the best team player was shared. The top three all just achieving the minimum of 8 qualifying games, with Joe Rozewicz established in first place before Colin Crouch played in the very late last match of the season to join him with an identical score of 81.25%.

The early season Quickplay Tournament produced a three-way tie with Paul Gait, Nevil Chan and Jamshid Oryakhel each scoring 5 points from the six rounds, while in the Christmas Lightning Tournament Nevil Chan emerged as the winner when he defeated Colin Crouch in the final. Nevil was also to become Club Champion when, as the highest graded competitor, he duly won the Swiss Tournament, one which had provided a number of unexpected results during its progress. The Handicap Tournament was won for the fourth consecutive year by Bak Chew, thereby equalling the feat that Bernard Katz had achieved in the mid 1980's.

The most memorable event of the season, however, was surely the celebration of the club's 100th birthday. It had been decided that members should hold a commemorative dinner and when several likely - and unlikely - venues were suggested, it was agreed to let the members choose, and the most favoured was the Sorrentina Restaurant. This had the merit of being located opposite the club's headquarters, and with whom Nevil Chan had negotiated a favourable arrangement.

Normally closed on Sundays, they were prepared to open on January 14th, the actual day of the centenary, for the sole use of the club. They would provide a three-course menu at a reasonably fixed price with a choice of dishes to suit all tastes. A minimum of thirty diners was required and this seemed easily obtainable as it was intended to extend the invitation to former members and all partners. However, the response was not at first overwhelming. A disappointing number of current members declined, but Nevil was assiduously tracking down and contacting many of the old members, and although some had a clash of events or were now living too far away, he was

able to persuade a number of them to join in. He finished with a total of 38 people, although five of them 'defaulted' on the night. The final sitting was made up of 17 current members, 8 partners and 8 'old boys' who were ex-President Bob Pleasants, former Club Champions Bill Phillips and John Quinn, who was also the British U-21 Champion while at Harrow, John Foley and David Tuddenham from way back when they were juniors, Frank Viegas four times Handicap winner, Peter Ackley and Sean Butler.

It was calculated that thirteen of those present were, or had been at some time, match captains. Several photos taken on the evening were processed by Nevil and printed in a way that the Bulletin Editor was able to include as a 'colour supplement' in the next edition. Some of the scenes were also pictured on the club website. Ken Hiron had also been in contact with many bodies and had received letters of congratulation from Buckingham Palace and the Mayor of Harrow. He'd had less success with radio and television companies for whom it seems that Chess no longer exists! At least the Telegraph Chess Correspondent, Malcolm Pein, who played a few matches for Harrow in the past, devoted the whole of his column to the club on that Sunday.

At the AGM held on the last day of the season, there were again problems regarding captaincy. Alan Marshall would not be available for several weeks in November/December and withdrew from the Middlesex League post, and nor would he be able to continue looking after the Thames Valley B team. Mike Williams agreed to be elected as Middlesex captain, but the Thames Valley position was again left vacant in the vain hope that a last minute volunteer could be found. Nevil Chan expressed an interest in controlling the Swiss Tournament, and Lee Branca, who had performed that role for the past eight years was happy to pass it on.

2007-08

It could be said that this was a season of ups and downs. It certainly applied to three of the club's five league teams, one of which was to gain promotion, while the other two finished in relegation zones with the prospect of being demoted to the division below. Also on the downside was the fact that for the second year running the club had to discard one of its teams — and for the same reason — because no one could be found to run it.

The Thames Valley League 'B' team captaincy, which had been left vacant at the AGM, had failed to attract any late interest. All the deposed members did already play for, or were now able to move into, at least one of the other teams, but it had the effect of reducing the overall number of games available for members to play to 350 compared to 401 in 2006-07 and 470 in 2005-06. It was also reflected in the Team Player Award, where four of the first six listed names were able to complete only the minimum eight qualifying games, including the winner, Bak Chew. He obtained 6½ points from eight games, all played for the Hillingdon 'C' team who became the Division 3 Champions. They will now return to the Second Division and rejoin the 'B' team who were happy to achieve their customary middling position. The 'A' team again failed in their quest to win the Division 1 title, but were able to finish as runners-up to Hayes who again had that honour.

With the 'B' side now withdrawn, it was left to the 'A' team to represent Harrow in the Thames Valley League, but they had a poor season and seldom seemed likely to avoid finishing at the foot of the table. They achieved just one win and three draws from their 14 matches, during which they used 21 players (including Mr. Default!) over the eight boards. As a result, they again relinquished their first division status. The Middlesex League team fared only slightly better, ending up one place above the bottom team in Division 2, but still relegated. They won three matches, all at home, and also used 21 players, but at least did not default any games. The captains of both demoted teams commented on the difficulty of getting the stronger players to travel, so that the sides for the away matches were often very different to those available at home.

It was widely agreed that a definite plus point of the season was the Swiss Tournament, which determines the Club Champion. The holder, Nevil Chan, would now control it rather than play, and he devoted much time and effort in making it the success that it proved to be. At the previous AGM he had successfully proposed that the modest entry fee for this tournament be removed, arguing that the club's subscription rate should allow members to take part in all club activities

without further cost. Not that this was a particular factor in his ability to persuade several former entrants to return to the tournament. He was also quick to sign up any new faces appearing at the club, which had the added value of immediately involving them in the club's activities and sealing their ongoing membership.

As a result the total of 42 competitors was not only the highest number, but also the strongest for many years, although even Nevil was unable to prevent the usual problem of a few dropping out along the way.

The tournament was organized on congress lines with each pairing numbered and the players finding their appropriate boards on the night, with clocks started at 7.45pm. Those unable to attend on the appointed evening of a round were given another date to do so. This all helped to overcome the problems of previous years when the 'Swiss' system was often badly affected by a build-up of unplayed games.

The winner was Paul Gait who had resumed playing matches for the club over the past six seasons, but was only now making his debut in the Championship Tournament. Sadly, it was also to be his last season as deteriorating health problems would prevent his further activity in club events.

There was also a new name on the Handicap Tournament trophy; that of Has Shah who had long been a keen supporter of this event. Both the early season Quickplay Tournament and the Christmas Lightning were won by Colin Crouch.

The season also saw the continued re-emergence of the Junior Section. Back in the 1960's and 70's the club had a strong junior element, but this had disappeared until recently. Now, with Colin Crouch returned to Harrow from his years of coaching the juniors at Pinner, the club could again provide tuition for the younger players. At the end of the season it was felt that Harrow could now support a junior side and it was agreed to enter a team into the Hillingdon League for the following season.

2008-09

A successful season much of which revolved around the Hillingdon League. The new junior side was duly placed in Division 3, the first time that the club had ever entered a junior team in a chess league.

There was a setback for them before the start of the season when it was learned that the two boys that had been expected to be the backbone of the team had moved to India, together with their father who was to have been the captain. Two replacements were found and the team of four boys and a girl played in all eight matches. They had a dream start, beating the once mighty Pinner Juniors 4-1 on their own ground, but although another win, against Ealing, was forthcoming, the remaining fixtures were all lost, leaving them at the foot of the table. Despite this, the captain thought that the venture had been a success for the experience it had given the youngsters whose chess playing had matured during the season.

It was the Hillingdon League 'A' team, led by Habib Rahman in his first season as captain, that proved to be the most successful side by becoming Division 1 Champions. Only six fixtures remained after the reigning champions, Hayes, had unexpectedly withdrawn their team. To restore the balance, the league decided to reinstate the demoted team, but when Pinner also decided to withdraw, it again left a division of just four teams providing a programme of only six matches, four of which would be against the same club, as Greenford had both their 'A' and 'B' teams in this section. This was the first occasion that a Harrow side had been champions of any chess league since 1978, when David Tuckett's team achieved that goal in the Middlesex League for the third time in four seasons.

Habib's team now went on to complete the double by beating Hatch End 3½-1½ in the final of the Hillingdon Knockout Cup. Over the three five-board rounds, not a single game was lost (by Harrow!), and only three were conceded of the 30 played in the league. Harrow's 'B' and 'C' teams were happy to finish mid-table in Division 2 with almost identical records.

The Middlesex League team had a season of very mixed score-lines, achieving 55% of match points and yet only 48.75% of the games, and this with the help of five default wins. They finished joint second and missed a quick return to Division 2 only because of an inferior board difference. The Thames Valley team could only achieve a mid-table position in Division 2, and were beaten in the semi-final of the Knockout Cup.

In his first full season with the club, Steven Coles became Club Champion by winning the Swiss Tournament with 7½ points from the

eight rounds. There was also a new name on the Handicap Tournament trophy with Balaji Musiri winning at his first attempt. The winners of the Quickplay Tournament and the Christmas Lightning were the more familiar names of Nevil Chan and Colin Crouch respectively. Colin also won the Team Player Award with a high score 17/21 for an average of 80.95%.

The Junior section of the club continued to grow during the season and it was thought that there was sufficient strength to support a second team in the Hillingdon League. At the AGM this was approved; Tony Holyland would move from the first team to captain them as his son would be likely to play for that team, while another parent, Balaji Musiri, would look after the first team. Colin Crouch who had done so much in the development of the section, was appointed to a new committee post of Junior Chess Co-ordinator.

There were also several new seniors at the club, some of whom had already become members with others expected to do so the following season. It was thought that there would be insufficient team places to provide match chess for all those wishing to play for the club. A further team, or teams, would be desirable, but there was the usual lack of people willing to act as captain. In recent years both the senior Middlesex team and the Thames Valley B side had been withdrawn because replacements could not be found for retiring captains. It was left with the hope that something could be arranged before the following season.

With Lee Branca wishing to step down as President, Nevil Chan was elected to succeed him. Lee will continue to act as Webmaster, for which the members passed a vote of thanks for his excellent work. David Powell and Phil Humphry were elected Vice-Presidents in recognition of many years of work on behalf of the club.

Statistics

The remaining pages provide a record of the main results and activities of the club and its members covering the past one hundred seasons.

Harrow Chess Club Officers

Up to 1935 the posts of Secretary and Treasurer were combined and held by the club's founder for the first 20 years! The date shown below is the year of election.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>HON. SECRETARY</u>	<u>HON. TREASURER</u>
1907	A.K. Carlyon	A.A. Sainsbury	A.A. Sainsbury
1913	Capt. Johnson		
1919	E.G. Hendley		
1926	C.E. Goddard		
1927		W. Vokes	W. Vokes
1929		L. Walls	L. Walls
1935			A.S. Davies
1936	F. Artis		J. Hamilton
1940	G. Brown		

Some elected officers did not complete the season and the following acted in the post:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>HON. SECRETARY</u>
1967-68		G. Canter (For Wilson)
1970-71	R.W. Hopkins	
1987-88		A.R. Marshall
2002-03		A.R. Marshall

Years Of Service

<u>PRESIDENTS</u>	<u>HON. SECRETARY</u>	<u>HON. TREASURER</u>
D.A. Stott 15	R.E. Maddock 23	K.R. Hiron 20
G. Brown 14*	A. Sainsbury 20#	A. Sainsbury 20#
C.E. Goddard 10	L. Walls 17*	J. Hamilton 13*
J. Poole 8	B.G. Locke 10	R.W. Hopkins 12
E.G. Hendley 7	R.H. Wilson(1Jt.) 7	W.D. Rose 9
Capt. Johnson 6#	J. Poole 5	L. Walls 6
A.K. Carlyon 6	R. Glew 4	G.P. O'Kane 3
R.H. Pleasants 6	R.N. Evans 3	W. Vokes 3
C. Jahn 5	A.R. Marshall 3	R.E. Edwards 2
R.W. Hopkins 5	W. Vokes 2	C.E. Bridge 2
F. Artis 4	P. Larwood 2	J.K. Brown 2
Dinah Wright 3	S.N. Cowan 2	S.N. Cowan 2
P.H. Harris 3	D. Dobson (Jt.) 1	D.M. Powell 2
J.W.B. Hughes 3	R. Fortnum 1	A.S. Davies 1
L. Walls 2		R. Hale 1
K.S. Schofield 2		M. Bullock 1
		N.R.E. Alldritt 1

Includes 1st World War years. * Includes 2nd World War years.

Post-War Officers

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>HON. SECRETARY</u>	<u>HON. TREASURER</u>
1945-46	G. Brown	L. Walls	J. Hamilton
1946-47	G. Brown	J. Poole	J. Hamilton
1947-48	G. Brown	J. Poole	J. Hamilton
1948-49	G. Brown	J. Poole	J. Hamilton
1949-50	G. Brown	J. Poole	G.P. O'Kane
1950-51	G. Brown	J. Poole	G.P. O'Kane
1951-52	G. Brown	B.C. Locke	G.P. O'Kane
1952-53	G. Brown	B.C. Locke	R.E. Edwards
1953-54	G. Brown	B.G. Locke	R.K. Edwards
1954-55	L. Walls	B.G. Locke	R.W. Hopkins
1955-56	L. Walls	B.G. Locke	R.W. Hopkins
1956-57	C. Jahn	B.G. Locke	R.W. Hopkins
1957-58	C. Jahn	B.C. Locke	R.W. Hopkins
1958-59	C. Jahn	B.G. Locke	R.W. Hopkins
1959-60	C. Jahn	B.C. Locke	R.W. Hopkins
1960-61	C. Jahn	B.G. Locke	R.W. Hopkins
1961-62	J. Poole	R.H. Wilson	R.W. Hopkins
1962-63	J. Poole	R.H. Wilson	R.W. Hopkins
1963-64	J. Poole	R.H. Wilson	R.W. Hopkins
1964-65	J. Poole	R.H. Wilson	R. Hale
1965-66	J. Poole	R.H. Wilson	R.W. Hopkins
1966-67	J. Poole	R.H. Wilson	R.W. Hopkins
1967-68	J. Poole	R.H. Wilson and Dinah Dobson	W.D. Rose
1968-69	J. Poole	R.E. Maddock	W.D. Rose
1969-70	K.S. Schofield	R.E. Haddock	W.D. Rose
1970-71	K.S. Schofield	R.E. Maddock	W.D. Rose
1971-72	R.W. Hopkins	R.E. Maddock	W.D. Rose
1972-73	R.W. Hopkins	R.E. Maddock	W.D. Rose
1973-74	R.W. Hopkins	R.E. Haddock	W.D. Rose
1974-75	R.W. Hopkins	R.E. Maddock	W.D. Rose
1975-76	R.W. Hopkins	R.E. Maddock	W.D. Rose
1976-77	Mrs. D. Wright	R.J. Fortnum	C.E. Bridge
1977-78	Mrs. D. Wright	P. Larwood	C.E. Bridge
1978-79	Mrs. D. Wright	P. Larwood	J.K. Brown
1979-80	P.H. Harris	R. Glew	J.K. Brown
1980-81	P.H. Harris	R. Clew	M. Bullock
1981-82	P.H. Harris	R. Glew	S.N. Cowan
1982-83	J.W.B. Hughes	R. Glew	S.N. Cowan

Post-War Officers (cont.)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>HON. SECRETARY</u>	<u>HON. TREASURER</u>
1983-84	J.W.B. Hughes	S.N. Cowan	K.R. Hiron
1984-85	J.W.B. Hughes	S.N. Cowan	K.R. Hiron
1985-86	R.H. Pleasants	R.N. Evans	K.R. Hiron
1986-87	R.H. Pleasants	R.N. Evans	K.R. Hiron
1987-88	R.H. Pleasants	R.N. Evans	K.R. Hiron
1988-89	R.H. Pleasants	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1989-90	R.H. Pleasants	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1990-91	R.H. Pleasants	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1991-92	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1992-93	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1993-94	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1994-95	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1995-96	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1996-97	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1997-98	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1998-99	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
1999-00	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
2000-01	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
2001-02	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
2002-03	D.A. Stott	R.E. Maddock	K.R. Hiron
2003-04	D.A. Stott	A.R. Marshall	N.R.E. Alldritt
2004-05	D.A. Stott	A.R. Marshall	D.M. Powell
2005-06	D.A. Stott	A.R. Marshall	D.M. Powell
2006-07	L. Branca	A.R. Marshall	D.M. Powell

N.B. Dinah Dobson became Mrs. D. Wright (and is now Mrs. K. Norman)

Harrow Club Champions

The following is a complete list of Club Champions and the Tournament Controllers, a post first elected in the 1956-57 season, prior to which it had been part of the Secretary's duties.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHAMPION</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CONTROLLER</u>	<u>CHAMPION</u>
1908	M. Kootz	1957	D.J. Collins	J.A. Fuller
1909	A.A. Sainsbury	1958	D.J. Collins	J.A. Fuller
1910	A.A. Sainsbury	1959	D.J. Collins	J.A. Fuller
1911	A.A. Sainsbury	1960	D.J. Collins	J.A. Fuller
1912	A.A. Sainsbury	1961	W.D. Rose	J.A. Fuller
1913	G.R. Brown	1962	W.D. Rose	G. Canter
1914	A.A. Sainsbury	1963	W.D. Rose	G.H. Govas/ A.E. Hopkins
1915-19	No competition			
1920	M. Kootz	1964	W.D. Rose	C.H. Govas
1921	G.S. Beavis	1965	W.D. Rose	J. Poole
1922	G.T. Womack	1966	W.D. Rose	D.J. Collins/ K.S. Schofield
1923	G.T. Womack			
1924	W.S. Jackson	1967	W.D. Rose	J. Poole
1925	G.T. Womack	1968	M.D. Gyton	A.(Arthur) Hall
1926	A.G. Kershaw	1969	M.D. Gyton	K.R. Ingram
1927	Abandoned	1970	M.D. Gyton	C. Jahn
1928	A.S. Davies	1971	R. Bazen	C. Leyton
1929	A.S. Davies	1972	R. Bazen	P.F. Timson
1930	F. Artis/L. Walls	1973	A.R.G. Horton	P.F. Timson
1931	A.S. Davies	1974	A.R.G. Horton	C.S. Crouch
1932	L. Walls	1975	E.G. Crookbain	J.M. Quinn
1933	A.E. Hopkins	1976	E.G. Crookbain	D.C. Tuckett
1934	L. Walls	1977	P. Larwood	N. Chan/ W. Phillips
1935	A.S. Davies			
1936	L. Walls	1978	R. Symonds	D.C. Tuckett
1937	L. Walls	1979	R. Symonds	N. Rutter
1938	C. Jahn	1980	K.R. Hiron	F. Khan
1939	F. Artis	1981	K.R. Hiron	F. Khan
1940-44	No competition	1982	K.R. Hiron	C. Swick/ B. Symonds
1945	A.F. Behmber			
1946	C. Jahn	1983	J. Poole	C. Swick
1947	C. Jahn	1984	J. Poole	P. Cawte
1948	L. Walls	1985	D.A. Stott	N.R.E. Alldritt
1949	J. Poole	1986	D.A. Stott	M. Lyell

Harrow Club Champions (cont.)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHAMPION</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CONTROLLER</u>	<u>CHAMPION</u>
1950	J.A. Fuller	1987	D.A. Stott	L. Szeri
1951	J.A. Fuller	1988	D.A. Stott	P. Cawte
1952	J.A. Fuller	1989	D.A. Stott	N.R.E. Alldritt
1953	N.A. McLeod	1990	D.A. Stott	N.R.E. Alldritt
1954	J.A. Fuller	1991	D.A. Stott	G.A. White/ N.R.E. Alldritt
1955	J.A. Fuller			N.R.E. Alldritt
1956	J.A. Fuller	1992	D.A. Stott	N.R.E. Alldritt
		1993	D.A. Stott	G.A. White
		1994	M. Williams	P.D. Hatchett/ R. Mukherjee
		1995	M. Williams	P.D. Hatchett
		1996	A.R. Marshall	P.D. Hatchett/ N. Chan
		1997	A.R. Marshall	W. Gray
		1998	A. Panovka	N. Chan
		1999	A. Panovka	N. Chan
		2000	L. Branca	N. Chan
		2001	L. Branca	N. Chan
		2002	L. Branca	N. Chan/ N.R.E. Alldritt
		2003	L. Branca	N.R.E. Alldritt
		2004	L. Branca	N. Chan
		2005	L. Branca	J. Oryakhel
		2006	L. Branca	J. Oryakhel

Handicap Tournament

In addition to the Club Championship Tournament there has usually been a minor competition, generally on handicap lines, although several different methods of handicapping have been used. The present system was formulated in 1948, but during the 60's it was suspended in favour of a Newcomers Tournament in which new members could play for two years. It was resumed in 1970 and apart from 1977/78 when, following a season during which insufficient games were played to determine a winner, a new method was tried (but with the same outcome!), it has continued to this day. Handicap Tournament Controllers during this period were: 70/71 & 71/72 R.W. Hopkins, 72/73 to 76/77 R. Grayson, 77/78 W. Phillips, 78/79 to date R.E. Maddock.

Handicap Tournament Winners

70-71 P.G. Graham	82-83 B. Katz	94-95 F. Viegas
71-72 P.G. Graham	83-84 B. Katz	95-96 F. Viegas
72-73 J. Sirola	84-85 B. Katz	96-97 F. Viegas
73-74 W. Gray	85-86 B. Katz	97-98 R. Hanson
74-75 D.H. Rushton	86-87 K.R. Hiron	98-99 D.A. Stott
75-76 W. Gray	87-88 D.A. Stott	99-00 C. Burt
76-77 No winner	88-89 G.A. White	00-01 I. Odintson
77-78 No winner	89-90 C.H. Collier	01-02 L. Branca
78-79 E. Taylor	90-91 J. Goulding	02-03 F. Viegas
79-80 W.D. Rose	91-92 K.R. Hiron	03-04 B. Chew
80-81 C. Swick	92-93 G. Luetchford	04-05 B. Chew
81-82 C. Swick	93-94 A. Mehta	05-06 B. Chew

Team Player Award

In 2001 it was decided to create an award for the player with the best average score obtained from all matches in a season (minimum 6 games in that year, but 8 thereafter). He holds 'The JOHN POOLE CUP' which was previously awarded for the now defunct Summer Tournament.

2001-02 C.S. Crouch	2004-05 P.S. Humphry
2002-03 W. Gray	2005-06 H. Rahman
2003-04 C.S. Crouch	

'Junior' Swiss Tournament

For a short period the club had a large junior section and a championship tournament run on a Swiss system was held. The winners were:

65-66 G. Leyton	71-72 No record
66-67 J. Boschetti	72-73 T.I.M. Barrett/J. Greiller
67-68 J. Boschetti	73-74 P.C. Girdlestone
68-69 J. Foley	74-75 P.C. Girdlestone
69-70 R. Lee	75-76 C. Romain/J. Taffel
70-71 C.S. Crouch	76-77 John Hockaday

The Harrow 'Open' Summer Knockout Tournament

There is evidence of a Summer Tournament being played in the early 50's with K.S. Schofield and J.A. Fuller as winners, but it then appears to have lapsed until 1958 when John Poole presented a trophy. Thereafter it was competed for until 1988 when the Final remained unplayed and the tournament was discontinued. Winners of the 'John Poole Cup':

1958 - J.A. Wall	1974 - C.S. Crouch
1959 - J.A. Fuller	1975 - P.C. Girdlestone
1960 - D. Broido	1976 - C.S. Crouch
1961 - E.B. Sandercock	1977 - N. Chan/D.C. Tuckett
1962 - W.G. Whitaker	1978 - M.V. Lambshire
1963 - R.L. Barnett	1979 - R. Glew
1964 - D.J. Mabbs	1980 - D. Groffman
1965 - L.J. Dent	1981 - R.N. Dixon
1966 - H.V. Chan	1982 - C. Swick
1967 - S.A. Seale	1983 - Not held
1968 - P.F. Rosman	1984 - M. Lyell
1969 - R.L. Barnett	1985 - M. Lyell
1970 - P.F. Timson	1986 - M. Lyell
1971 - R.L. Barnett	1987 - J. Grundy/N. Rutter
1972 - D.C. Tuckett	1988 - Unfinished
1973 - C.S. Crouch	

Quickplay And Lightning Tournament

For many years the season opened with a 'Simultaneous Display' given by the Club Champion, but with the decline in popularity of that event it lapsed in the early 1990's and the club has staged no simuls since that time. It was replaced by a Quickplay Tournament which takes place on or near the start of the season. It is a six round Swiss with ten minutes for each player.

Lightning tournaments (ten seconds per move) had long been an occasional feature at the club before becoming established as a Christmas Tournament held on the last meeting prior to the holiday. Played in all-play-all groups, dependent on the number of entrants, with the winners and often the best runner-up in a play-off. Because of draws in the latter stages it has sometimes not been possible to complete it before the close, when the finalists usually agree to share the title. The winners were:

<u>Quickplay Tournament</u>	<u>Christmas Lightning</u>	
1992 G.A. White	1988 N. Colter	1997 G.S. Jacobs
1993 M. Harris	1989 G.A. White	1998 G.S. Jacobs
1994 A. Jenkins	1990 P.D. Hatchett/ H. Afnan	1999 G.S. Jacobs
1995 R. Mukherjee	1991 G. Luetchford	2000 G.S. Jacobs/ S.P. Butler
1996 N. Chan	1992 L. Szeri	2001 W. Gray
1997 G.S. Jacobs	1993 R. Mukherjee/ D.A. Stott	2002 G.S. Jacobs/ N. Chan
1998 G.S. Jacobs	1994 G.S. Jacobs	2003 C. Jezierski
1999 N. Chan	1995 G.S. Jacobs/ A. Laurence	2004 N. Blackie
2000 G.S. Jacobs	1996 C.S. Crouch	2005 N. Chan
2001 P. Neuman		
2002 G.S. Jacobs		
2003 N. Chan		
2004 N. Blackie		
2005 S. Warman		

Harrow Chess Club And The London League

Before the second World War, Harrow played only occasionally in the London League, first entering in the 1924/25 season, coming 5th of 10 in Division 'C'. Promotion and relegation did not commence until after the war and so for the 1925/26 season the club elected to play in Division 'B', finishing 2nd and repeating this the following year. They did not enter again until 1937/38 when they won Division 'C' and the following season were Division 'B' champions. In the first season after the war there was only one division, but when more sections were added the following year Harrow were allocated to Division 'B'. The divisions were labelled A, B, C etc. until 1971 when they changed to numbering, but for the list below they are shown numbered throughout. The suffixes a & b indicate that the division was split with only the top team in each section being promoted. P = promoted, R = relegated.

London League 1st Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
45-46	1	F.W. Rose	9 th (15)
46-47	2	G.S. Wallis	1 st (10) P
47-48	1	A.L.L. Winters	11 th (12) R
48-49	2	A.L.L. Winters	5 th (10)
49-50	2	A.L.L. Winters	6 th (10)
50-51	2	A.L.L. Winters	1 st (10) P
51-52	1	A.L.L. Winters	Rel. (12) R
52-53	2	A.L.L. Winters	1 st (10) P
53-54	1	A.L.L. Winters	12 th (12) R
54-55	2	A.L.L. Winters	1 st (10) P
55-56	1	A.L.L. Winters	9 th (12)
56-57	1	A.F. Stammwitz	11 th (12) R
57-58	2	A.F. Stammwitz	1 st (10) P
58-59	1	A.F. Stammwitz	6 th (12)
59-60	1	G. Canter	6 th (12)
60-61	1	B.G. Locke	11 th (12) R
61-62	2	B.G. Locke	4 th (10)
62-63	2	B.G. Locke	10 th (10) R
63-64	3	B.G. Locke	1 st (10) P
64-65	2	B.G. Locke	5 th (10)
65-66	2	K.S. Schofield	6 th (10)
66-67	2	K.S. Schofield	3 rd (10)

London League 1st Team (cont.)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
67-68	2	K.S. Schofield	1 st (10) P
68-69	1	K.S. Schofield	3 rd (12)
69-70	1	M.D. Gyton	12 th (12) R
70-71	2	M.D. Gyton (R. Maddock)	10 th (10) R
71-72	3	W. Phillips	2 nd (10) P
72-73	2	W. Phillips	4 th (10)
73-74	2	W. Phillips [100%]	1 st (10) P
74-75	1	W. Phillips	6 th (12)
75-76	1	W. Phillips	12 th (12) R
76-77	2	D.C. Tuckett	9 th (11)
77-78	2	R. Glew	5 th (11)
78-79	2	R. Glew	3 rd (11)
79-80	2	M. Dymond	5 th (11)
80-81	2	R. Symonds	11 th (11) R
81-82	3	R. Symonds (P. Harris)	8 th (11)
82-83	3	P.H. Harris	Mid. (11)
83-84	3	J. Poole	3 rd (11)
84-85	3	J.W.B. Hughes	3 rd (11)
85-86	3	J.W.B. Hughes	3 rd (11)
86-87	3	J. Grundy	5 th (11)
87-88	3	P. Cawte	Rel. (11) R
88-89	4	H. Afnan	10 th (11)
89-90	4	H. Afnan	11 th (11) R

For the 68-69 season only, there was a 3rd team in Div. 5b captained by R. Bazen who was later replaced by D. Gay, which finished 8th out of 9.

Harrow resigned from the league after the 89-90 season.

Where a captain left during the season, his replacement is show in ()

London League 2nd Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS.(of)</u>
48-49	3b	W.D. Rose	3 rd (8)
49-50	3b	W.D. Rose	8 th (10)
50-51	3b	W.D. Rose	8 th (10)
51-52	3b	W.D. Rose	4 th (10)
52-53	3b	W.D. Rose	2 nd (10)
53-54	3b	W.D. Rose	4 th (10)
54-55	3	W.D. Rose	2 nd (10) P
55-56	2	W.D. Rose	10 th (10) R
56-57	3	R. Broom	3 rd (10)
57-58	3	R. Broom	1 st (10) P
58-59	2	R. Broom	10 th (10) R
59-60	3	R. Broom	10 th (10) R
60-61	4b	R. Henson	7 th (8)
61-62	4b	R. Henson	1 st (7) P
62-63	3	R. Henson	8 th (10) R
63-64	4b	R.W. Hopkins	6 th (8)
64-65	5	R.W. Hopkins	5 th (10)
65-66	5	R.W. Hopkins	7 th (11)
66-67	5	R.W. Hopkins	3 rd (10)
67-68	5a	M.D. Gyton	1 st (9) P
68-69	4	M.D. Gyton	7 th (10)
69-70	4	D.R. Gay	9 th (10) R
70-71	5	Withdrew w/o playing	
73-74	7	D.M. Powell	3 rd (10)
74-75	7	D.M. Powell	4 th (10)
75-76	7	D.M. Powell (P. Harris)	3 rd (14) P
76-77	6	D.A. Stott	5 th (10)
77-78	6	D.A. Stott	4 th (11)
78-79	6	D.A. Stott	1 st (11) P
79-80	5	D.A. Stott	6 th (11)
80-81	5	P.H. Harris	11 th (11) R
81-82	6	F.A. Hiron	3 rd (11)
82-83	6	F.A. Hiron	3 rd (10)
83-84	6	F.A. Hiron	Mid. (10)

Harrow Chess Club And The Middlesex League

Prior to the Second War Harrow played intermittently in various county competitions (Middlesex Trophy, Middlesex Cup etc.), and with a fair amount of success. In 1946 the club was a founder member of the present day Middlesex League. The first season it comprised one division, which Harrow won, but with additional clubs entering in the following year, it was reformed into two zones, East and West, with the zonal winners playing off for the title. The next season this was changed to the top two in each zone playing in an all-play-all Final Pool to determine the Champion.

Promotion and relegation was not introduced until the 68/69 season. For the period 82/83 to 88/89, the league designated its divisions as 'Premier', 1st, 2nd etc., but in order to retain comparisons the following record shows them in the true description, 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc.

Middlesex League 1st Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>	<u>F. POOL</u>
46-47	1	A.L.L. Winters	1 st (6)	N/A
47-48	1W	A.L.L. Winters	4 th (9)	-
48-49	1W	A.L.L. Winters	1 st (10)	2 nd
49-50	1W	A.L.L. Winters	3 rd (8)	-
50-51	1W	A.L.L. Winters	1 st (?)	2 nd
51-52	1W	A.L.L. Winters	1 st (?)	1 st
52-53	1W	A.L.L. Winters	4 th (9)	-
53-54	1W	A.L.L. Winters	1 st (9)	1 st
54-55	1W	A.L.L. Winters	1 st (7)	1 st
55-56	1W	A.L.L. Winters	2 nd (7)	2 nd
56-57	1W	G. Canter	3 rd (7)	-
57-58	1W	G. Canter	2 nd (9)	1 st
58-59	1W	G. Canter	3 rd (9)	-
59-60	1W	L.J. Dent	2 nd (8)	1 st
60-61	1W	L.J. Dent	2 nd (7)	2 nd
61-62	1W	L.J. Dent	2 nd (8)	2 nd
62-63	1W	L.J. Dent	4 th (11)	-
63-64	1W	F.S. Pett	3 rd (11)	-
64-65	1W	F.S. Pett	1 st (10)	2 nd
65-66	1W	F.S. Pett	2 nd (?)	4 th
66-67	1W	F.S. Pett	2 nd (6)	2 nd
67-68	1W	R.E. Maddock	1 st (6)	2 nd

Middlesex League 2nd Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
62-63	1W	F.S. Pett	11 th (11)
63-64	1W	R.E. Maddock	9 th (11)
64-65	1W	R.E. Maddock	7 th (?)
65-66	2W	R.E. Maddock	4/5? (6)
66-67	2W	R.E. Maddock	3 rd (6)
67-68	2W	J. Gamse	3 rd (6)

After Commencement Of Promotion And Relegation

Middlesex League 1st Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
68-69	1	Arthur Hall	2 nd (11)
69-70	1	Arthur Hall	1 st (11)
70-71	1	Arthur Hall	5 th (10)
71-72	1	A.R.G. Horton	5 th (11)
72-73	1	P.F. Timson	6 th (11)
73-74	1	D.C. Tuckett	3 rd (11)
74-75	1	D.C. Tuckett	1 st (11)
75-76	1	D.C. Tuckett	2 nd (11)
76-77	1	D.C. Tuckett	1 st (12)
77-78	1	D.C. Tuckett	1 st (12)
78-79	1	D.C. Tuckett/ (N. Chan)	5 th ? (7)
79-80	1	R. Symonds	5 th (7)
80-81	1	R. Glew	7 th (7) R
81-82	2	R. Glew	2 nd (11)P
82-83	1	R. Glew	3 rd (7)
83-84	1	R. Glew	5 th (7)
84-85	1	A.R. Marshall	6 th (7)
85-86	1	N.R.E. Alldritt	* (7) R
86-87	3	R.H. Pleasants	2 nd (8) P
87-88	2	R.H. Pleasants	Mid.(8)
88-89	2	R.H. Pleasants	5 th (8)

* Played only 4 matches and records expunged from the league.

Middlesex League 1st Team (cont.)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
89-90	2	D.M. Powell	5 th (8)
90-91	2	D.M. Powell	4 th (8)
91-92	2	D.M. Powell	6 th (8)
92-93	2	D.M. Powell	3 rd (8)
93-94	2	D.M. Powell	4 th (8)
94-95	2	D.M. Powell	1 st (8) P
95-96	1	D.M. Powell	5 th (8)
96-97	1	D.M. Powell	6 th (8)
97-98	1	D.M. Powell	8 th (8) R
98-99	2	D.M. Powell	3 rd (7)
99-00	2	D.M. Powell	3 rd (8)
00-01	2	J. Clenshaw	1 st (8) P
01-02	1	J. Clenshaw	5 th (8)
02-03	1	N.R.E. Alldritt	5 th (8)
03-04	1	N.R.E. Alldritt	6 th (8)
04-05	1	N.R.E. Alldritt	8 th (8) R
05-06	2	A.R. Marshall	6 th (8) #
06-07	2	A.R. Marshall	

In 2005 the second team now replaced the withdrawn first team.

Middlesex League 2nd Team

YEAR	DIV	CAPTAIN	POS. (of)
68-69	2	J. Gamse	3 rd (11)
69-70	2	J. Gamse	3 rd (11)
70-71	2	R. Passfield	5 th (11)
71-72	2	P.G. Graham	5 th (9)
72-73	2	R.J. Fortnum	7 th (9)
73-74	2	R.J. Fortnum	5 th (12)
74-75	2	R.J. Fortnum	7 th (9)
75-76	2	R.J. Fortnum	8 th (9)
76-77	2	D.H. Rushton	4 th (11)
77-78	2	D.H. Rushton	5 th (11)
78-79	2	D.H. Rushton/(P. Larwood)	3 rd (11)
79-80	2	P.H. Harris	11 th (11) R
80-81	3	R.H. Pleasants	3 rd (10)
81-82	3	R.H. Pleasants	2 nd (12) P
82-83	2	R.H. Pleasants	7 th (13)
83-84	2	R.H. Pleasants	8 th (13)
84-85	2	R.H. Pleasants	10 th (12)
85-86	2	R.H. Pleasants	12 th (12) R
88-89	4	K.R. Hiron	7 th (9)
89-90	4	R.H. Pleasants	2 nd (8) P
90-91	3	R.H. Pleasants	8 th (8) R
91-92	4	R. McSharry	7 th (11)
92-93	4	G. Luetchford	5 th (10) P
93-94	3	G. Luetchford	8 th (8) R
94-95	4	M. Harris	4 th (8)
95-96	4	M. Harris	4 th (10)
96-97	4	M. Harris	6 th (8)
97-98	4	J. Clenshaw	7 th (8)
98-99	4	J. Clenshaw	3 rd (6)
99-00	4	J. Clenshaw	1 st (6) P
00-01	3	R.H. Pleasants	4 th (11)
01-02	3	R.H. Pleasants	5 th (8)
02-03	3	A.R. Marshall	1 st (8) P
03-04	2	A.R. Marshall	8 th (8) R
04-05	3	A.R. Marshall	3 rd (8)

From 1975-80 Harrow entered a 3rd team (in Div. 3) with the following record

75-76	R.H. Rushton	6 th (10)
76-77	K.R. Hiron	5 th (11)
77-78	M.G. Lynn	3 rd (11)
78-79	J. Clenshaw	9 th ? (11)
79-80	R.H. Pleasants	2 nd (11)

Harrow Chess Club And The Thames Valley League

The Thames Valley League was formed after the war but Harrow's involvement with it did not commence until 1976, by which time the league had extended its boundaries to cover areas that one would not usually think of being within the valley of the Thames (Harrow-on-the-Hill?). With the possible exception of Pinner who, in any case, had not entered for the 2005-06 season, Harrow is the club most distant from the river, and as a result our teams have longer journeys to away venues than the majority of others.

Thames Valley League 1st Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
76-77	6	P.H. Harris	4 th (8)
77-78	6	P.H. Harris	1 st (7) P
78-79	5	K.R. Hiron	3 rd (8)
79-80	5	J.W.B. Hughes	2 nd (8) P
80-81	4	J.W.B. Hughes	2 nd (8) P
81-82	3	J.W.B. Hughes	4 th (8)
82-83	3	M.L. Tribe	5 th (8)
83-84	3	M.L. Tribe	2 nd (8) *
84-85	3	M.L. Tribe	5/6? (8)
85-86	3	A.R. Marshall	4 th (8)
86-87	3	A.R. Marshall	1 st (8) P
87-88	2	A.R. Marshall	5 th (8)
88-89	2	A.R. Marshall	3 rd (8)
89-90	2	A.R. Marshall	6 th (8)
90-91	2	A.R. Marshall	6 th (8)
91-92	2	A.R. Marshall	5 th (8)
92-93	2	A.R. Marshall	6 th (6)
93-94	2	A.R. Marshall	5 th (8)
94-95	2	A.R. Marshall	7 th (8)
95-96	2	M. Williams	8 th (8)
96-97	3	G. Luetchford	5 th (8)
97-98	3	N. Colter	1 st (8) P
98-99	2	N. Colter	5 th (8)
99-00	2	N. Colter	6 th (8)
00-01	2	N. Colter	3 rd (6) P
01-02	2	N. Colter	1 st (8) P

* Not promoted as they lost to Staines (also 2nd) in a play-off.

Thames Valley League 1st Team (cont.)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
02-03	1	N. Colter	5 th (8)
03-04	1	N. Colter	6 th (8)
04-05	1	N. Colter	6 th (8)
05-06	1	N. Colter	7 th (7) R
06-07	2	I.K. Cross	

Thames Valley League 2nd Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
78-79	6N	R.N. Evans	4 th (8)
79-80	6N	R.A. Watts	5 th (8)
80-81	6N	R.A. Watts	2 nd (6)
81-82	6N	R.A. Watts	1 st (6) P
82-83	5	R.A. Watts	2 nd (6) P
83-84	4	A.R. Marshall	2 nd (8) P
84-85	3	F.A. Hiron	4/5? (8)
85-86	3	H. Afnan	5 th (8)
86-87	3	H. Afnan	Mid.(8)
87-88	3	H. Afnan	1 st (8)
94-95	6	D.A. Stott	2 nd (5) P
95-96	5	D.A. Stott	1 st (11) P
96-97	4	D.A. Stott	?
97-98	4	D.A. Stott	7 th (8)
98-99	4	D.A. Stott	2 nd (8) P
99-00	3	D.A. Stott	6 th (8)
00-01	3	D.A. Stott	7 th (7) R
01-02	4	A.R. Marshall	2 nd (6)
02-03	4	A.R. Marshall	4 th (6)
03-04	4	D.A. Stott	2 nd (11) P
04-05	3	D.A. Stott	8 th (8) #
05-06	3	D.A. Stott	5 th (8)
06-07	3	Vacant	

Not relegated due to changes in team entries.

In 84-85 a 3rd team played in Division 6 captained by P.H. Harris and was promoted (probably 2nd). In 85-86 it was jointly captained by D. Trowell & A. Reid in Div. 5, finishing 8th (of 8) and was withdrawn. In 88-89 I.S. Campbell was elected 1st team captain but withdrew and was replaced by the 2nd team captain, A.R. Marshall. The second team (still in Div. 3) was withdrawn after playing one match.

Harrow Chess Club And The Hillingdon League

The league was formed some thirty-odd years ago as The Hillingdon Borough Chess League, and still officially has that title although it was later extended to include clubs from outside the borough. Harrow was admitted in 1982 after having been rejected earlier on the grounds that we would be likely to dominate the competition. However, it had always been the intention to use the league for the purpose of providing our new and/or weaker members with match experience. In 1995 it was decided that as we now had three sides including one in the first division, we could attempt to win the title by using stronger players. This was not achieved and the 1st team was withdrawn for the 1999-2000 season; the 2nd team became the senior side, although remaining in Div. 2, and the 3rd team which had won promotion to Div. 2 now became the 2nd team. A 'new' 1st team was reinstated in 2005, winning promotion to the first division, and the other sides reverted to being 2nd and 3rd teams.

Hillingdon League 1st Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
82-83	2	R.N. Evans	2 nd (6) P
83-84	1	P.H. Harris	7 th (7) R
84-85	2	R.E. Maddock	1 st (8) *
85-86	2	R.E. Maddock	1 st (7) *
86-87	2	R.E. Maddock	2 nd (7)
87-88	2	R.E. Maddock	2 nd (7)
88-89	2	P.S. Humphry	3 rd (8)
89-90	2	P.S. Humphry	1 st (7) *
90-91	2	P.S. Humphry	3 rd (5)
91-92	2	P.S. Humphry	5 th (10)
92-93	2	P.S. Humphry	1 st (8) P
93-94	1	K.R. Hiron	5 th (5) R
94-95	2	P.S. Humphry	1 st (6) P
95-96	1	G. Luetchford	3 rd (6)
96-97	1	K.R. Hiron	3 rd (6)
97-98	1	G. Luetchford	3 rd (6)
98-99	2	P.S. Humphry	4 th (5)
99-00	2	P.S. Humphry	3 rd (5)
00-01	2	P.S. Humphry	3 rd (5)
01-02	2	P.S. Humphry	2 nd (5)
02-03	2	P.S. Humphry	3 rd (5)
03-04	2	P.S. Humphry	3 rd (5)
04-05	2	P.S. Humphry	2 nd (5)
05-06	2	N. Colter	1 st (7) P
06-07	1	N. Colter	

* Promotion declined. (This option was withdrawn in 1992.)

Hillingdon League 2nd Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
83-84	2	R.E. Maddock	6 th (8)
85-86	2	R.A. Conway	3 rd (7)
86-87	2	A. Reid	7 th (7)
91-92	2	R.E. Maddock	7 th (10)
92-93	2	R.E. Maddock	5 th (10)
93-94	2	P.S. Humphry	8 th (10)
94-95	2	C. Burt	4 th (6)
95-96	2	P.S. Humphry	5 th (6)
96-97	2	P.S. Humphry	3 rd (5)
97-98	2	P.S. Humphry	4 th (5)
98-99	2	R.E. Maddock	5 th (5) R
99-00	3	R.E. Maddock	1 st (5) P
00-01	2	R.E. Maddock	5 th (5) R
01-02	3	R.E. Maddock	1 st (6) P
02-03	2	R.E. Maddock	4 th (5)
03-04	2	L. Branca	3 rd (5)
04-05	2	D. Walker	5 th (5) R
05-06	2	P.S. Humphry	6 th (7)
06-07	2	P.S. Humphry	

Hillingdon League 3rd Team

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DIV</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>POS. (of)</u>
93-94	2	R.E. Maddock	2 nd (10)
94-95	3	R.E. Maddock	1 st (5) P
95-96	2	R.E. Maddock	4 th (6)
96-97	2	R.E. Maddock	2 nd (5)
97-98	2	R.E. Maddock	1 st (5) #
05-06	3	D. Walker	2 nd (5)
06-07	3	D. Walker	

Finished with identical record to Eastcote, who accepted promotion.

Harrow Chess Club Headquarters - Premises Used

1907	Greenhill Schools, St. Ann's Road.
1908	Gayton Rooms, Station Road.
1912	Elias' Health Bakery, Station Road.
1913	Greenhill Schools and Howe & Son, Peterborough Terrace.
1914-18	Intermittently at the previous three plus 'The Soldiers Rest House', Peterborough Parade.
1919	Bridge Schools. Wealdstone.
1927	Heathfield School, College Road.
1928	Gayton Rooms.
1941-42	Occasional informal meetings at: The Carlton Commercial College, Kenton.
1944	Gayton Rooms.
1955	Roxborough Hotel, College Road.
1960	Welldon Crescent Methodist Church Hall.
1976	The former Methodist Church.
1978 (Sep.)	Roxborough Hotel.
1978 (Nov.)	Harrow Arts Centre, Harrow Weald.
1987 (Nov.)	Victoria Hall, Sheepcote Road.