A number of George’s teammates and friends from his time in Aberdeen (from the mid-90s onwards) have also wished to express their sorrow at his passing and provide tributes to a lovely person, an innovative chess player and a much-respected coach to aspiring juniors.

I am shocked and very sad to hear this. I knew George well as he was about my age.  I remember him form when we played at Ferryhill. As Hamish says he was very friendly and encouraging to all players. We would quite often go over games and discuss chess.

I think he used to stay Bridge of Don side of Aberdeen so ended up playing for Newmachar and supporting the club. Knowing George probably just to help out and made the league more competitive. He was graded around 1600 for a few years then after Uni and/or in-between jobs he started studying chess and his chess strength jumped to high 1800s. His grade went up may over 200 points in one year. He played 1.B4 Polish, Sokolsky for a while beating and drawing with many strong 2000+ players. He wasn't board 1 for the 1st Bon Accord team but may have been board one for the 2nd team.

Along with another chess player, Scott Marshall, I even stayed with him at his parents house so we could all play the Edinburgh Congress. I was lucky enough to beat him in that tournament and get a grading prize for 4/5. He still wanted to go over the game and there were no hard feelings about losing the game and the grading prize. I did buy him a pint!

We lost touch when he moved away from Aberdeen. I was always hoping that he might come back to Aberdeen and play more chess. I really enjoyed our games and he'll be sadly missed.

Jeremy Mitchell, Bon Accord Chess Club

Terrible news, very sad to hear that. I remember him well from when he used to go to BA regularly, circa 2009.

He was always very friendly and encouraging to me, telling me I just needed to be more confident, and would take time to analyse with me despite being much stronger. I remember we had a lot of interesting games. When we last met at the chess club (perhaps 2018) he was very happy as he had just become a father.

When analysing he would often refer to an interesting Roddy McKay quote (via Rowson) that evaluating a position was best done by closely comparing both side’s bishops.

Hamish Olson, Bon Accord Chess Club

Thank you for the sad news about George Mackay. As well as being a Bon Accord member, he also played for Newmachar in the NE league. Perhaps I can also add that the success of the Newmachar club in winning the NE League in 2002 was built on George’s 100% success (6/6/) on board 2. He had a very innovative style at the chess board and the term ‘a boring game’ never arose when George was one of the players! As also mentioned by Hamish and Gregor, he was always willing to provide coaching especially to aspiring youngsters. My memories of George are a genuinely nice person, liked by all who met him and simply fun to play alongside or even against. It is just tragic that he has left us so early. Deepest sympathies go to his family for their great loss.

Gerald Lobley, Newmachar Chess Club

Very sad news indeed, another taken far too young. George was a lovely guy and a great chess player.

Mike Esson, Newmachar Chess Club

Goodness that is sad news indeed. He gave up a lot of time coaching the youngsters at Newmachar. A very amiable chap. Like you say after the year Paul Hopper played for Newmachar as Board 1 he took over that position. He later transferred across to Bon Accord and their gain was our loss.

Dave Smith, Newmachar Chess Club

Oh no that’s extremely sad, so young. I was actually thinking about him the other day when I was trying to think what type of ‘coaching’ I got as a junior.

He was always so happy to sit down with me every week, thrash me, then go over the game in detail. Such a nice bloke.

Gregor Smith, Newmachar Chess Club