

## SCOTTISH CHESS ASSOCIATION—founded 2 February 1884

Information from the chess columns of the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* (GWH), edited by Sheriff Spens, showing the promotion of the idea for a national organization.

Sheriff Spens outlined his thoughts about a Scottish Chess Association, and what it might achieve, in the *GWH* column of 25 August 1883.

### PROPOSED SCOTTISH CHESS ASSOCIATION

The desirability of a Scottish Chess Association has for some time been present to the mind of the editor. The object of mooted this suggestion here is that those who may take an active interest in the subject may ventilate their views in our chess columns, and, if the proposal appears to meet with substantial approval in our small Scottish chess world, we then may think of starting a subscription list. There has in the last year been a wonderful access of interest on the part of the public in connection with chess, due, no doubt, in great measure to the recent international tournaments, and this encourages us to hope that the suggestion made may lead to something definite. The principal objects which we have in view are—(1) A federation of the Scottish chess clubs, who could then work together in the dissemination of that game which we believe to be a moral and social elevator—a delegate from each club entering the federation to form the committee of the association, which would then elect its own office-bearers. Each club proposing to enter into the federation to subscribe a certain sum, say not less than three guineas. While such sum might be fixed, this would not, of course, preclude the larger clubs from subscribing more handsomely. It is also, of course, intended that individuals able and willing to subscribe should give separate contributions. (2) The institution of a Scottish Chess Champion Cup, the holding of which should be competed for annually at such time and at such Scottish city or town as may be fixed by the committee from year to year. There are no professional players in Scotland, so far as we know; and our idea is that a silver cup, of not less than £50 in value, should be competed for as the badge of championship, and that it should only pass out of the hands of the association on its being held for three successive years by the same individual. Such individual would hold the title of champion until defeated by a successor who had by three years' successive victories placed himself on an equal position, in which event the latter might challenge the former. A new cup, in the event of a champion's threefold success, of course, would require to be provided by the association; but the proviso of three years' successive victory would prevent any excessive strain on the funds of the association. (3) Besides the competition for the Champion Cup, to have also an annual competition for players who do not consider themselves strong enough to compete for the championship, for such prize, and on such conditions, as may be fixed by the committee.

With reference to the above, we may add that we propose very much to carry out the programme of the Counties Chess Association, but limiting our base of operations to Scotland, and putting the association at once on a definite and practical basis, in which

we think there has hitherto been something wanting in the association referred to. So far as Scotland is concerned, the Counties Chess Association has not supplied what is wished by Scotch players. Only one or two players from Scotland altogether have been able to afford the time, trouble, and expense of attending meetings in England; but if meetings were held annually in—alternatively say at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen—it would bring the opportunity of competing with chess players of eminence within the range of almost every skilled chess player in Scotland from time to time. These views we merely ventilate—nothing which has been said is not open to modification or alteration—we merely desire to point out the desirability of a Scottish Chess Association; and if there be a general consensus as to the desirability of this object, we hope that there will be no difficulty in carrying out what would merely be matter of detail. In the meantime, however, we may state that, apart altogether from this question, we should be glad to know the number and location of the different chess clubs in Scotland, and should be obliged by the secretaries of these clubs forwarding the names and office-bearers of their respective clubs to the editor.

Sheriff Spens returned to the topic in his GWH column of 13 October 1883. He reprinted his 25 August article in full (except for the request for club details), but added these comments:

#### **PROPOSED SCOTTISH CHESS ASSOCIATION**

We promised to revert to the subject early in October, by which time we knew that most of the Scottish chess clubs would have commenced their winter campaign. Since publishing the article of 25<sup>th</sup> August, we have had both oral and written communications from various quarters with reference to the subject, all of these approving of the suggestion. Further consideration, in light of these communications, has induced us somewhat to modify our view as to what should be the constitution of the association. We have come to be of the opinion that the association should be entirely self-supporting. At one time we thought that each club proposing to enter the association should pay a certain entry fee, and as it was clear that no very large amount of money could be expected from this source, that an appeal should be made to those interested in chess, and able and willing to afford it, to give such donations to the association as they chose. We have come to be of opinion that such a course would be inexpedient and undesirable on various grounds. We now propose that the membership of the association should be constituted by a small annual payment from individuals. We suggest 5s per annum, but as it is desirable at first that a considerable sum should be raised to meet the expense of the champion cup and the necessary preliminary expenses in connection with the formation of the association, we think it should be in the power if chess players, who may wish to assist in the formation of the association, to become life members by subscribing £2 2s. We anticipate that at least one hundred and fifty chess players will respond to the appeal we make to join the association, but we propose to go on with it if intimation of intention to join be given by a hundred. It will be necessary, we think, in order to have the association formally constituted, to have a general meeting of those proposing to become members. We are of opinion that, looking to the

probability of the largest proportion of the members of the of the proposed association being resident in Glasgow and the West of Scotland, it is desirable that this meeting should take place in Glasgow; but that is a matter for those proposing to join the association to decide by a plurality of votes. Mr D. Forsyth, 169 West George Street, Glasgow, has, at our request, kindly consented to act as interim secretary to the proposed association, and we would be obliged by all gentlemen—we beg pardon, all ladies and gentlemen—who think of joining the association sending to Mr Forsyth at the above address a postcard intimating such intention. It will be sufficient simply to write the words “Chess Association,” “life,” or “annual,” and the name and address of the sender. The senders might also, however, add the name of the town at which they propose the inauguration meeting should be held. We think it should certainly be one or other of the following towns:—Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, or Perth. Of course, in the meantime, no subscriptions to be sent. We further make an appeal to Mr Fraser, Edinburgh; Mr Baxter, Dundee; Mr Pagan, Crieff; and Mr Grant, Tullymet, to assist us in the matter in their respective districts. Mr Chambers, of Glasgow, has kindly promised to interview the members of the northern clubs. Before the end of the year we hope to be in a position to announce definitely whether the association is to go on or not, and if we have the pleasure of announcing that it is to go on, we shall at the same time fix a Saturday in January or February for the inaugural meeting. At such meeting the editor will come prepared with draft constitution and rules.

The proposal to form the association met with a positive response, as explained by Sheriff Spens in his GWH column of 24 November 1883:

#### **THE SCOTTISH CHESS ASSOCIATION**

As we are able to announce today the names of considerably over a hundred ladies and gentlemen who have intimated their intention of joining the proposed association, and as we stated previously that we were prepared to go on with the scheme upon intimation by a hundred or more of their supporting it, in compliance with our previous announcement we propose that a meeting to inaugurate the association should be held in Glasgow at two o'clock afternoon, on the first Saturday in February. The place of meeting it is not as yet desirable to fix, and if the day is unsuitable to any of those proposing to join the association we will be very glad to change the suggested day of meeting. It was previously stated that the editor would come prepared to the meeting with a draft constitution and rules, but as there is a considerable margin of time between the proposed day of meeting and the present date it may possibly be advisable to publish these in the *Weekly Herald* on an early day, and invite suggestions from intending members with reference thereto.

We should like to say a word or two more about the objects of the association. We understand that a good many clubs are starting in Scotland at the present time, and that young players are reported to have said “What good can the association do us?” We wish to point out that there are numerous reasons which should induce support to the

association by all Scotch chess players. Some years ago Dr Clerk Rattray, the president of the Edinburgh club, had a project of starting an association similar to that which we think we now speak of as actually inaugurated. From a letter which he has written to us on the subject we extract the following:—

*“The objects of the scheme I thought of some years ago are not exactly the same as in the one you propose. I certainly contemplated a confederation of all Scottish chess clubs, somewhat on the principle of the Caledonian Curling Club, having for its objects (1) the aiding of the foundation of new clubs; (2) the getting of chess stars, blindfold players, &c., down to different parts of Scotland; (3) the arranging of matches between different clubs for small prizes; (4) and generally for encouraging chess throughout the length and breadth of the land. These objects, however, can easily be added to your scheme when it has succeeded. I have always thought that, with the exception of Glasgow and Dundee, Scotland has been inferior both in the quantity and the quality of the chess it has produced. The days of Donaldson and Cochrane have passed away, let us hope to return again soon. More or less flourishing clubs exist in Wick, Blairgowrie, Crieff, and other small places; but there are none in Perth, and St Andrews. Now, such inequality ought not to exist. Query, could your confederation forward the establishing of clubs in these cities? I believe it could, but am quite willing to wait till the objects you have proposed have succeeded.”*

Unquestionably the views of Dr Rattray are very much our own. We hope that the Scottish Chess Association will come to be as it were the central chess authority of Scotland, and by its means clubs may be established in many different parts of Scotland; that it may arrange tours for eminent chess players to the different clubs who are confederated under its auspices; that it may bring about matches between different clubs in Scotland, and annual competitions between the clubs of different portions of Scotland, *e.g.*, such as East v West; that it may provide prizes for an annual problem competition among Scotch problem composers; that it may take into its own hands such prizes as the West of Scotland Cup, and any funds which wealthy or munificent chess friends may dedicate to the cause of chess; and, lastly and chiefly, may foster and encourage the development of our favourite game throughout Scotland. The annual match for the championship we imagine will furnish a worthy object of ambition to all aspiring young chess players; while the annual week of play at the meeting of the association will present, we hope, varied features of interest to all chess players who are able to be present. We have, we think, said enough to show that to all chess players, whether old or young, the proposed association not only presents features of special interest, but is an institution which ought to be supported from pure love of the game. Chess, we take it, to all chess players worthy of the name is a good deal more than a mere pastime. They believe that it is a recreation which braces the mental faculties, and generally acts as a social and moral elevator to those minds which appreciate the game, and it is in this view that we appeal to the chess players of Scotland for a more extended support than we have yet received to the association. To those who have already put down their names as intending members, and who share in the views which we have inadequately endeavoured to express, we would venture to point out that if every intending

member of the association were to get one chess friend to put down his name the association would certainly be placed at once in a very strong and flourishing condition.

We may again note that annual membership, it is proposed, should be constituted by a yearly payment of 5s; life membership by a single payment of £2 2s. Mr D. Forsyth, 169 West George Street, Glasgow, will be glad to receive notice of intention to join from any lady or gentleman.

**List of ladies and gentlemen willing to become members of the Scottish Chess Association:—**

**Ladies**

Mrs Harvey, Glasgow  
Mrs Jebb, Glasgow  
Mrs Nichol, Glasgow

**Gentlemen**

Life Members \*

Mr J. Abrahams, Dumbarton	Mr E. Duvoisin, Glasgow
Mr J. Allan, Port Glasgow	*Mr B. Eekhout, Glasgow
*Sir W.C. Anstruther, Bart., Thankerton	*Mr A. Orr Ewing, M.P., Killearn
Mr George Baird, Pollokshields	Mr Alex. A. Fergusson, Glasgow
Dr George T. Beatson, Glasgow	Mr R.G.M. Forbes, Glasgow
Mr George Beckett, Glasgow	Mr David Forsyth, Glasgow
Mr Alexander Berwick, Glasgow	*Mr John Fraser, Edinburgh
Mr James Birch, Glasgow	Mr J. Friedlander, Glasgow
Mr Wm. Borland, Glasgow	Mr Peter Fyfe, Pollokshields
Mr R.A. Boyd, Glasgow	Mr G.B. Galloway, Edinburgh
Mr Campbell, Pollokshields	Mr Gibson, Dalmellington
*Mr J.D. Chambers, Old Cathcart	Mr George Gibson, Edinburgh
Mr Chamberlain, Glasgow	Mr John Gilchrist, Glasgow
Mr Carmichael, Dalmellington	Mr Daniel S. Grant, Tullymet, Ballinluig
Mr David Chirrey, Glasgow	Mr John S. Grant, Tullymet, Ballinluig
Mr W.C. Cotton, Cumbernauld	*Mr Wm. Harvey, Glasgow
Mr John Court, Glasgow	Mr Edwin Hedderwick, Glasgow
Mr John Crum, Bothwell	James Hedderwick, LL.D., Glasgow
Rev. F.W. Davis, Blairgowrie	Mr William Heggie, Pollokshields
Mr William Dickson, Glasgow	Mr Edmund Hunt, Glasgow
Mr Alexander Dimmock, Airdrie	Rev. David Hunter, Partick
Rev. Mr Dinwoodie, Hawick	Mr Robert Hunter, Pollokshields
Dr George Donald, Leith	Mr J.R. Jackson, Glasgow
Mr J.R. Duguid, Glasgow	Mr John Johnston, Langside
*Dr Eben. Duncan, Crosshill	*Mr T.R. Johnstone, Glasgow
*Dr J.H. Dunlop, Glasgow	Rev. Mr Jonas, Coatbridge
Mr George Jonas, Coatbridge	*Mr D.E. Outram, Glasgow

Mr Neil Kennedy, Glasgow  
 Rev. J. Seton Kerr, Strachur  
 Mr William Kinghorn, Glasgow  
 Mr John Kirk, Glasgow  
 Mr William Lang, jun., Glasgow  
 Sheriff Lees, Glasgow  
 Mr Thomas Low, Glasgow  
 Mr J. Marshall, Crieff  
 \*Mr C. Meikle, Edinburgh  
 Mr S.L. Miller, Berwick-on-Tweed  
 Mr William Miller, Glasgow  
 Mr Wm. Morton, Ayr  
 Mr Murdoch, Dalmellington  
 Rev. George R. Murison, Glasgow  
 Mr W.F. Murray, Rutherglen  
 Mr Murray, Dalmellington  
 Mr P. Macfarlane, Glasgow  
 Mr J. Mackenzie, Islay  
 \*Mr Claud Macfie, Gogar Burn, Corstorphine  
 \*Mr John Macfie, Edinburgh  
 \*Dr Johnstone Macfie, M.D., Glasgow  
 AE J.G. Mackay, LL.D., Edinburgh  
 Mr R. M'Call, Glasgow  
 Mr William M'Combie, Glasgow  
 Mr M'Cready, Dalmellington  
 Mr M'Culloch, Dalmellington  
 Mr Peter M'Gregor, Ballinluig  
 Mr John M'Innes, Berwick-on-Tweed  
 Professor Nichol, LL.D., Glasgow

Mr John S. Pagan, Crieff  
 Mr William Paterson, Hawick  
 \*Mr Robert Pirrie, Glasgow  
 Mr Wm. R. Pitt, Glasgow  
 Mr Samuel Pitt, Glasgow  
 Mr J. Temple Pollock, Glasgow  
 Mr Francis Pollock, Glasgow  
 \*Mr James Pringle, Edinburgh  
 Mr Quin, Glasgow  
 \*Dr J.C. Rattray, Edinburgh  
 Mr Rennie, Dalmellington  
 Mr W.W. Robertson, Edinburgh  
 Mr Arthur Russell, Cupar, Fife  
 Mr John Russell, Glasgow  
 Mr Duncan Smith, Glasgow  
 Mr J.G. Spens, Glasgow  
 Mr N. Spens, Glasgow  
 Sheriff Spens, Glasgow  
 Mr D.A. Stark, Glasgow  
 Mr Stewart, Dalmellington  
 Mr Wm. Tait, Glasgow  
 Mr G.A. Thomson, Glasgow  
 Mr J.J. Vernon, Hawick  
 \*Mr W.N. Walker, Dundee  
 Mr J.L. Whiteley, Glasgow  
 Mr James Wilkie, Ballinluig  
 Mr Williamson, Helensburgh  
 Mr James Young, Glasgow

Lady Members .....	3
Life Members .....	18
Annual Members .....	93

The GWH column showed 20 Life Members, but only 18 were indicated.

The GWH column of 8 December 1883 indicated that Mr Forsyth, the interim secretary, now reported that 138 ladies and gentlemen had intimated their intention to join the association.

The column of 26 January 1884 included a suggestion by D.M. Latta of Edinburgh that the organization of a correspondence chess tournament should be considered by the association's council. It also included a list of additional intending members of the association.

### Ladies

Miss Mary Lancaster Laurie, Fairlie Lodge, Fairlie

### Gentlemen

Mr Chas. R. Baxter, Dundee	Mr Alex. Inkson M'Connochie, Aberdeen
Mr John C. Bremner, Broughty Ferry	Rev. F.R. Macdonald, Cupar-Angus
Mr George Campbell, Brora	Mr J.D. Maclean, Glasgow
Rev. A. Chisholm, Banff	Mr Wm. M'Pherson, Ballinluig
Rev. Mr C. ?	Mr James Mavor, Glasgow
Rev. J. Donaldson, Kirkconnel Manse ('Delta')	Mr Robert Miller, Edinburgh
Mr Bernard Dunne, Muir of Ord	Mr W.W. Mitchell, Millport
M. Jules Farre, Rutherglen	Dr Murison, Cumbernauld
Mr A. Fraser, Brora	Mr David Murray, M.A., Glasgow
Mr G.B. Fraser, Dundee	Mr Charles L. Ramsden, Edinburgh
Mr Robert Johnston, Glasgow	Mr J.C. Reid, Dundee
Mr Frederick M. Keith, Glasgow	Mr David A. Scott, Edinburgh
Rev. R. Kemp, Blairgowrie	Mr James H. Scott, Inverness
Mr David M. Latta, Edinburgh	Mr Thomas Soutar, Blairgowrie
Mr R. M'L. Livingstone, Glasgow	Mr John Stewart, Barrhead
Mr Wm. Lawson, Balthayock	Mr George Sutherland, Brora
Rev. G. M'Arthur, Edinburgh	Mr C.G. Wright, Glasgow

The following, given in the original list as annual members, had now become life members:-

Mr William Morton, Ayr

Mr Duncan Smith, Glasgow

Mr George Gibson, Glasgow

#### Errata

For John A. Grant, Tullymet, and  
Mr Wm. Paterson, Hawick, in former list,

Read Mr James A. Grant, Glasgow, and  
Mr Wm. Paterson, Berwick-on-Tweed.