

BEVERLEY CHESS CLUB'S VENTURE INTO THE NORTHERN COUNTIES
CHESS UNION CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS 2016 by David G. Mills.

In 2016 Beverley Chess Club entered teams in two of the Northern Counties Chess Union (N.C.C.U.) tournaments – to the best of my knowledge, our first venture into competitions featuring teams from different counties. At a meeting of the Hull and District Chess Association Executive Committee, of which I am a member, constituent clubs were offered funding to undertake new activities that would raise the profile of chess in East Yorkshire. After confirming that the N.C.C.U. competitions fulfilled this aspiration and sufficient club members wished to participate, I opted for the Minor and Seniors tournaments. To my surprise and disappointment, each competition attracted just four entries.

Our fixture in the Seniors tournament was away to Heywood. There are provisions for neutral venues, however, after liaising with opposing captain, Bill O'Rourke, I offered to drive the Beverley team to Heywood and play at the Holy Family High School – the venue of the Lancashire v Yorkshire Open and under 160 grade matches several weeks earlier. A date of 16th April 2016 was agreed for the contest.

Team captains are familiar with the need to cope with unforeseen problems, however, being informed at less than 24 hours' notice that the venue you have booked is no longer available would tax the ingenuity of most of us. Somehow Bill secured the use of a friend's flat and on arrival I discovered that the tenant was Harry Praeger – my opponent in the Lancashire v Yorkshire under 160 match on 21st February 2016 and on his own admission, the only Scotsman who does not like Whisky. Playing conditions were ideal and we agreed a three-hour session because of the delayed start.

Heywood enjoyed a grading advantage on three of the four boards and the coin toss gave them white on boards 1 and 4. A win for Heywood's Dave Almond on board 3 was answered by Paul Kendall's victory for Beverley on board 1. John Addison and David Gibson then drew on board 4, leaving the outcome to be decided by the respective captains on board 2. Bill O'Rourke needed to win with white while I knew that a draw would enable Beverley to progress on board count.

Using the Exchange Variation against the French Defence had given the Heywood captain the upper hand and this plus persisted into the endgame. Both players later concluded that white had to maintain doubled rooks on the sixth rank to have a chance of securing the win. I managed to force the exchange of a pair of rooks and Bill sacrificed a pawn in a desperate winning attempt. Had he not also exchanged the final pair of rooks, I would have had winning chances, however the bishops of opposite colours plus pawns was theoretically drawn. Before my time expired I claimed a draw on the grounds that white could not win by any means other than on time. This was accepted after a few minutes' deliberation.

Round: Seniors Semi-final.				16 April 2016.			
Heywood.			v	Beverley.			
1.	127034F	Simon Woodcock	186	0-1	127456K	Paul S. N. Kendall	160
2.	176606F	William O'Rourke	144	½-½	225656D	David G. Mills	140
	278458						
3.	A	Dave Almond	134	1-0	111701E	Alec Grice	140
	234749						
4.	A	John Addison	133	½-½	136227G	David J. Gibson *	127
				2-2			

* Yorkshire Chess Association grade.

**Board 2. White: W. O'Rourke. Black: D. G. Mills. French Defence. Exchange Variation.
N.C.C.U. Seniors. 16th April 2016.**

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.Bd3 Bd6 5.Ne2 Ne7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nf4 c6 8.Qh5 Ng6 9.g3
Qd7 10.Be3 Qg4 11.Be2 Qxh5 12.Nxh5 Nd7 13.Nd2 Nb6 14.b3 Be6 15.c4 Nd7 16.f4 f5
17.Nf3 h6 18.Ne5 Ngxe5 19.fxe5 Be7 20.Nf4 Bg5 21.Kh1 Bxf4 22.gxf4 Kh7 23.Rg1 g6
24.Rg3 Rg8 25.Rag1 Rg7 26.Bc1 Rag8 27.h4 Nb6 28.c5 Nd7 29.b4 a6 30.a4 Nf8 31.Rb3
Bd7 32.Be3 Ne6 33.Bd3 Nc7 34.Rb2 Be6 35.Rgb1 Bd7 36.Kg2 Be6 37.b5 axb5 38.axb5
cxb5 39.Bxb5 Nxb5 40.Rxb5 Bc8 41.Rb6 Rd8 42.Rf6 Rdd7 43.Rbb6 h5 44.Rf8 Rc7
45.Kf3 Bd7 46.Rb8 Bc6 47.Rb2 Rg8= 48.Rxg8 Kxg8 49.Ra2 Rc8 50.Bd2 Kf7 51.Bb4 Ke6
52.Ke3 Rg8 53.Ra7 Kd7 54.Ba5 Rc8 55.Bb6 Ke6 56.Ra2 Bd7 57.Kd3 Bc6 58.Ra7 Kd7
59.Ba5 Ke6 60.Bd2 Kd7 61.Kc3 Kc7 62.Kb4 Kb8 63.Ra1 Kc7 64.Bc3 Re8 65.Re1 Kd7
66.Rg1 Rg8 67.Re1 Re8 68.e6+ Rxe6 69.Rxe6 Kxe6 70.Ka5 Kd7 71.Kb6 Kc8 72.Ka5 Kc7
73.Kb4 Kd7 74.Kb3 1/2-1/2**



Board 1.

Paul Kendall (Beverley Seniors) plays white against Simon Woodcock (Heywood Seniors).



Boards 3 and 4.

Dave Almond (Heywood Seniors) plays white against Alec Grice (Beverley Seniors).

In the background David Gibson (Beverley Seniors) plays White against John Addison (Heywood Seniors).



Heywood Seniors on the left against Beverley Seniors on the right.

The Minor Tournament pitted Beverley against Penrith. As Beverley were classed as the home team, I made attempts to secure a neutral venue in the Thirsk/Northallerton area. No one responded to my messages. Penrith captain, Andy McAtear, suggested some Yorkshire venues and, with the assistance of Paul Pritchard, we opted for Apley Grange, Harrogate – the home of the local Yorkshire Chess Association team – on 30th April.

On this occasion I took the role of non-playing captain/driver for the journey to Harrogate, preparing refreshments prior to departure. Compared with catering for 32 people at Yorkshire League fixtures in Hull, a 4 board match was simple. On meeting Paul Pritchard, we were shown around the venue and informed of procedures regarding use of the premises. (On the basis of this experience, and with the agreement of the Barrow team captain, the final of the Seniors Tournament was staged here four weeks later.)

Penrith fielded slightly higher graded players on every board and the toss for colours gave them white on boards 2 and 3. Several unusual openings soon featured. Andy McAtear adopted Bird's Opening on board 3, winning a piece for two pawns when Tom Hackett confused two variations. The latter fought back tactically to earn a material plus himself and his opponent resigned after 37 moves.

Fred Clough's gambit against David Gibson on board 2 proved a potent weapon, earning him material and positional advantages. Lots of tactics, but after move 28 the issue was never really in doubt and Penrith equalised the scores after 58 moves.

Alec Grice's gambit of a pawn on board 1 appeared to offer insufficient compensation for the material deficit and matters deteriorated further when Lewis McAtear won a knight for two pawns. The open position of the black king enabled Alec to deliver a series of checks and his opponent opted to accept a draw offer at move 38.

Penrith superior board count in the event of a drawn match meant Beverley required a win from Gerry Johnstone on board 4. It was not to be. The Queen's Gambit Declined gave rise to a level position and equality was maintained into a rook and pawn ending. A draw was

agreed at move 44, allowing our guests passage to the final against Heywood, although the Beverley team gained valuable experience for another campaign next season.

Round: Minor Semi-final.

30 April 2016.

Beverley.		v	Penrith.			
1. 111701E	Alec Grice	140	½-½	227560A	Lewis A. McAtear	146
2. 136227G	David J. Gibson *	127	0-1	267670K	Fred Clough	133
3. 303746A	Thomas L Hackett *	120	1-0	173552E	Andy G. McAtear	122
4. 296421B	J. Gerry Johnstone *	105	½-½	288573G	John Grave	113

* Yorkshire Chess Association grades. **2-2**

Board 2. White: F. Clough. Black: D. J. Gibson. Sicilian Defence.

N.C.C.U. Minor. 30th April 2016.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.b4 Nxb4 4.c3 Nc6 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 e6 (365Chess.com gives this a better record than 6. ... d5 which surprises me.) **7.d5 exd5** (7. ... Qf6 is an interesting alternative) **8.exd5 Nce7?** (365Chess.com offers two games continuing 8. ... Bb4+ and 8. ... Qa5+. Black loses both!) **9.d6 b6 10.dxe7 Bxe7 11.Bc4 Bf6 12.0-0 Bxa1 13.Qd5 Qf6 14.Re1+ Ne7 15.Bg5 0-0 16.Bxf6** (My initial thought was if white plays 16.Rxe7 black can resign with a clear conscience. However, 16. ... Qg6 seems to keep him in the game.) **Nxd5 17.Bxd5 Bxf6 18.Bxa8 d6 19.Bd5 Bf5 20.Na3 Rc8 21.Nb5 Kf8 22.Nxd6 Rd8 23.Nxf5 Rxd5 24.Ne3 Ra5 25.Re2 Rb5 26.g3 Rc5 27.Rc2 Rxc2 28.Nxc2** (White minds his work and gives his opponent no chance to recover.) **Ke7 29.Kf1 Kd6 30.Ke2 Kc5 31.Kd3 a5 32.Nd2 Be7 33.Nb3+ Kb5 34.Nbd4+ Kc5 35.a4 Kd5 36.Ne3+ Kc5 37.Nec2 Kd5 38.Nb3 Bd6 39.Ne3+ Kc6 40.Kc4 Be7 41.Nd4+ Kb7 42.Kb5 Bf6 43.Ndf5 Bc3 44.Nd6+ Ka7 45.Nxf7 Be1 46.f3 Bd2 47.Nd5 h5 48.h3 Be1 49.g4 hxg4 50.hxg4 Bf2 51.Nd6 g5 52.Nc8+ Kb7 53.Ncxb6 Be1 54.Nc4 Ka7 55.Nxa5 Bf2 56.Nc6+ Kb7 57.a5 Ka8 58.Ka6 Bb6 59.Nxb6# 1-0**

Board 4. White: J. G. Johnstone. Black: J. Grave. Queen's Gambit Declined.

N.C.C.U. Minor. 30th April 2016.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 c6 6.Nf3 Bd6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.0-0 Re8 9.Qc2 h6 10.Bh4 e5 11.dxe5 Nxe5 12.Nxe5 Bxe5 13.cxd5 g5 14.Bg3 Bxg3 15.hxg3 Nxd5 16.Nxd5 Qxd5 17.Rfd1 Qe5 18.Rac1 Be6 19.b3 Rac8 20.Qe2 a6 21.Bc4 c5 22.Qh5 Kg7 23.Qf3 b5 24.Bxe6 Qxe6 25.Rd5 c4 26.bxc4 Rxc4 27.Rxc4 bxc4 28.Qd1 Qf6 29.Qc2 Rc8 30.Rd4 c3 31.Kf1 Qc6 32.f3 Rb8 33.Rd3 Rb2 34.Qxc3+ Qxc3 35.Rxc3 Rxa2 36.Rc6 a5 37.Ra6 a4 38.e4 a3 39.f4 Ra1+ 40.Kf2 g4 41.e5 h5 42.f5 Ra2+ 43.Kf1 Ra1+ 44.Kf2= ½-½



Penrith Minor Team.
Fred Clough. John Grave. Andy McAtear. Lewis McAtear.



Beverley Minor Team.
David Gibson. Thomas Hackett. Gerry Johnstone. Alec Grice.

A late start in the season to the N.C.C.U. tournaments left Beverley and Barrow team captains struggling to find a suitable date for the final of the Seniors competition. Barrow rearranged a Cumbria League fixture to enable play to take place on Saturday 28th May. As thousands of Hull City football supporters made their way to Wembley, the same Beverley Chess Club players who had travelled to Heywood took another car trip to Harrogate. Our opponents opted for a train journey to Harrogate station plus taxi to Apley Grange. We agreed a four hour playing session and were under way just after 2.00 PM.

Barrow had higher graded players on every board but the disparity was greatest on board 4. Dave Cole won the toss for colours, giving his team white on boards 1 and 4. Your scribe's contest was the first to conclude. Adopting a London System against Martin Gawne's Modern Defence gave me equality but no more. Anticipating a mass exchange of material, I offered a draw at move 17 and this was accepted.

On board 1 Dave Cole chose 4. Qc2 against Paul Kendall's Nimzo-Indian Defence. I was surprised to see white able to play 6. e4 – a move black's system is designed to prevent – and made a mental note to check the theory on returning home. (365chess.com gives 14 games featuring this variation!) Paul maintained material equality by tactical means at the

cost of the bishop pair and his draw offer at move 19 was accepted. I am uncertain as to who, if anyone, is better in the final position.

George Horne's choice of Alekhine's Defence on board 3 gave rise to a variation that I have seen Alec Grice play with both white and black. A draw was agreed on move 17 following the exchange of several pieces and further trades in the pipeline. Beverley now required a draw on board 4 to win the match on tie break. (Lower graded team.)

David Gibson had the hardest task of the day, playing black against an opponent graded 20 points above him. Frank Whalley proved a formidable adversary and gained a two pawn advantage. David was unable to recover despite a determined rear-guard action and he resigned after around 2¾ hours play.

Congratulations to Barrow – worthy winners on the day – however their opponents enjoyed some compensation a few hours later when a Mo Diamé goal propelled Hull City back to the Premier League at the expense of Sheffield Wednesday. Beverley's decision to enter these N.C.C.U. competitions has been vindicated and I am trying to encourage other clubs to test the water in the coming season.

Round: Seniors Final.				28 May 2016.				
Beverley.				v	Barrow.			
1.	127456K	Paul S. N. Kendall	160	½-½	108582H	Dave Cole	161	
2.	225656D	David G. Mills	140	½-½	201047B	Martin Gawne	153	
3.	111701E	Alex Grice	140	½-½	112989C	George Horne	148	
					124188			
4.	136227G	David J. Gibson *	127	0-1	G	Frank Whalley	147	
* Yorkshire Chess Association grade.				1½-2½				

Board 1. White: D. Cole. Black: Paul S. N. Kendall. Nimzo-Indian Defence.
N.C.C.U. Minor. 28th May 2016.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 Nc6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.e4 e5 7.d5 Nd4 8.Nxd4 exd4 9.a3 Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 d6 11.cxd4 Nxe4 12.Bd3 f5 13.0-0 Qh4 14.g3 Qf6 15.Bb2 Bd7 16.c5 Rae8 17.Rae1 Ng5 18.Rxe8 Rxe8 19.f4 Ne4= ½-½

Board 3. White: A. Grice. Black: G. Horne. Alekhine's Defence.
N.C.C.U. Minor. 28th May 2016.

1.e4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.e5 d4 4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.Qxd2 Qxd2+ 7.Bxd2 Bxg7 8.0-0-0 Nc6 9.Nf3 a6 10.Bd3 Bf6 11.h3 Be6 12.Kb1 h6 13.Rhe1 0-0-0 14.g4 Bd5 15.Be4 Bxe4 16.Rxe4 Nd4 17.Nxd4= ½-½



Barrow Seniors Team.
Dave Cole. George Horne. Martin Gawne. Frank Whalley.



Beverley Seniors Team.
Paul Kendall. David Mills. David Gibson. Alec Grice.