

ICCA Newsletter



Issue 22 – Summer 2001

Irish Correspondence Chess Association
4 Wainsfort Avenue, Terenure, Dublin 6W

Games, other CC information and suggestions
for future issues are welcome and should be sent
to the above address.

<http://www.esatclear.ie/~bhenrick>

EDITORIAL

As spring turns to summer, and the cold March winds, and icy April showers turn into blue skies and warm sunshine, so too has the long dark winter of the ICCA turned into sunshine and roses. "What's he on about now?" you might ask. I'm only bursting to tell you about our new IM, Eugene Gibney, our new SIM, Darrell Nightingale and Desmond Taylor has just beaten the CC world champion, Tonu Oim.

The only cloud on the horizon is the resignation of David Blair as secretary and treasurer. This is not unexpected as last year he attempted to resign as secretary, and ended up as treasurer as well. I know his presence on the committee will be missed and we wish him well. No doubt, he will put the extra time into the enormous number of games he is playing currently.

This newsletter wouldn't have been possible without the generous input of Dr. Eugene Gibney. In the next, I hope to have an interview with our new SIM, and some interesting annotated games! Enjoy.

"BLOOMING" AGM – JUNE 16

The AGM of the Irish Correspondence Chess Association will take place on 16th June at 12:30 in the Dublin Chess Club at 3, Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2. We would encourage members to attend where possible. Sadly, our secretary, David Blair, has indicated his intention to step down. If anyone is willing to take on this post, please inform the committee as soon as possible. Please note that as a member of the committee, your grading is likely to go up by an average of 10 points per year!

DARRELL NIGHTINGALE – NEW SIM

Alan Rawlings sent the following message: "I am pleased to confirm, on behalf of TD Dennis March, that Darrell Nightingale (IRL) has achieved the IM/SIM norm in section C of the Reg Gillman Memorial with a score of 8/11. I believe that this completes his qualification for the SIM title - congratulations, Darrell!" I hope to have an interview with Darrell in the next issue.

EUGENE GIBNEY – NEW IM

More good news: Dr. Eugene Gibney sent me this message: "I have just received confirmation from the TD of MN67 of my winning result against Prodanovic in my final game in this section (my opponent went silent in a lost position). My 7.5 points exceeds the IM norm by 0.5. As this is my second norm (my first was achieved on Board 3 in NATT 3) I now qualify for the IM title."

Indeed, his IM title was confirmed on 30 April 2001. Your editor immediately sent his congratulations, and a request for an interview. Here is what Eugene had to say!

When did you learn to play chess?

I learned the moves when I was about 10 or 12 years old, but only started to take the game anyway seriously in 1972 (inspired as so many of my generation by certain events in Iceland) when I was 16 years old

When did you start playing CC?

I started playing CC in 1973 joining the British CC Association, and in 1974 began playing in the Junior sections of the Evening Herald's Irish Championship run by Jim Corby.

How strong are you OTB?

My current Canadian OTB rating is 2239, based on about 40 OTB games I've played here in the past 8 or 9 years (prior to 1993 I played no OTB chess for about 10 years). In 1997 I was co-winner of the Canadian Amateur Championship (OTB: for players rated 2200 or less), and I won a nice trophy for 1st Under-2000 at the 1999 Canadian Open. I do not intend to play much OTB in the future, as I know I would have to spend an extraordinary amount of time for study and training to improve my present OTB performance level, and I'm not really prepared to do this.

What do you like most about CC?

I just love the game. I enjoy the idea of trying to assess one's performance all the time, aiming to improve, and the means to measure one's progress (or lack of it). Although I lead a very busy life with work and a young family, I like to be always active, and my CC game load is my 'fix' at the end of a busy day or few days. I am a chess fanatic – I read a lot about the game, but I enjoy more the personalities, the stories, etc. than just playing through games. I get withdrawal symptoms if I have no current CC game where I have the move. In my postal days I was playing 50-70 games at a time, and now with e-mail I am playing around 20.

What do you dislike most about CC?

The silent withdrawal! (In what other sport does your opponent disappear in mid-game?). For example, my final game in MN67 was against an opponent from Yugoslavia against whom I needed a draw to clinch my final IM norm. Early on, the game (played by snail-mail) was interrupted by the Balkan conflict. After it resumed I achieved a winning position when my opponent went silent, necessitating the registered letters, communications to the TD etc. At least when playing by e-mail dealing with this situation is much simpler and speedier. (Have you ever noticed how really impatient CC players are when it comes to matters other than the actual moves of a game? Just look at some of the postings on TCCMB and you will see what I mean. The outsider would probably expect a CC player to have the patience of Job!).

What sort of preparation did you do for MN67?

My preparation for MN67 consisted of revising about 80% of my opening repertoire, and spending a lot of time trying to improve my endgame skills! The first proved most important in

MN67 as there were no endgames of a really decisive nature in the event (my endgame work did however help me a lot in Canadian championship events). I discarded a lot of dubious openings I had been playing (Morra-Smith gambit as white, O'Kelly Sicilian as black). I kept a record of my games in a folder with Berliner's motto ("Every move a research project") on the cover! I'm not going to pretend I succeeded in following this throughout the event, but it did help me retain a 'good attitude' towards my games.

What is your routine for making moves? For instance, when I receive a move, I do the paperwork, recording it in ECTool and on my Chessbase DB. Then I look at my analysis, review it, leave it for a few days, and then in a panic with time trouble approaching, make a move. No doubt, you are more disciplined.

I still use an old-fashioned file folder and game sheets to keep a record of my games (although nowadays I also have current games on a small separate database on computer). I do not have ECTool, nor do I have Chessbase. After recording my opponents move and time details etc. I nearly always spend a few minutes examining the new position that same day (a bit longer if the move is unexpected). This imprints the position in my mind, and allows me to sometimes work on it blindly during the day. Depending on time available, my game load etc. I will then do my main work on the position sometime within 1-3 days of receiving the move. I tend to move fairly quickly through the opening moves, but in a complex middle game position I may spend an hour analysing three or four nights in succession before reaching a decision. If I feel the position is really critical, I find it useful to take a break from it then for a few days before returning to it. I sometimes come up with interesting ideas when analysing blindly during this time (while cutting the grass, sitting in church, waiting for the lights to change). I do quite a lot of work on positions when my opponent has the move if I have the time. I often analyse early middle game positions down to the type of endgames that may result. These deep analyses are not highly accurate, but give a good 'feel' for the possibilities in a position, and often help to distinguish between advantages which are real and lasting, from those likely to disappear (often suddenly – I'm sure you know the feeling) as the game progresses.

What type of positions do you like playing?

Winning ones! But seriously, I like to play positions where I have a small positional plus and try to squeeze the most from it, preferably down to an advantageous endgame, where really precise play is rewarded, and computer generated moves are of dubious value. As white I try to aim for a small but persistent advantage rather than trying to blow black off the board, and as black I try for equality before looking for an advantage. (Luckily in the Sicilian Defence when black equalises he already has an advantage!)

Do you use computers? How do you use them? For opening research, tactical analysis, pawn structure investigations (ala Jon Edwards), endgames?

I use computers in a number of ways. Databases are used for opening research, but one has to be very careful since there are a lot of poor quality games in the large databases available. The Chesslab online database is excellent, and by selecting rating and year criteria and using the position statistics function can provide some really useful information. This overview is then supplemented by study of relevant annotated games in recent Informators and NIC Yearbooks. In opening research I also like

to look at some lines with Fritz on infinite analysis. It is surprising how often so called solid lines have hidden tactical resources not apparent in the opening literature. I use Fritz for tactical analysis (but largely ignore its evaluations in the opening and the endgame). I do most of my chess analysis on the Fritz board when I'm at home, and the ease of returning to the current position, or saving a line for later re-evaluation is a real time saver compared to the board-and-pieces of old. I do not do Jon Edwards style pawn-structure evaluations, but this I think is because I too lazy to be bothered with this (and certainly not because I think I know all this stuff already!). In the endgame the computer is useful for blunder-checking, but is very limited in really proper evaluations, even in very simple positions sometimes.

After your first norm, how often did you come close to the second and final norm?

I did not come close at all to my second norm in any event until MN67. I played in MN16 and performed very poorly, and it was this performance which led me to examine more closely my play (opening choices, amount of time spent on analysis etc) and led to the changes I made prior to commencing MN67.

What did you do differently in MN67 from the other events?

Yes, I know, you won more games, but, heh, I'm looking for the secret of your success! My readers want a panacea for their chess.

Probably the two main factors were a careful re-evaluation of my choice of openings, and changes in my life outside of chess which allowed me to spend more time on the games. (From 1993 to late 1998 I worked as a sole surgeon in a community of about 20,000 people, and was on call all the time. In 1998 a second surgeon was recruited to the community and this made a big difference to my workload and on-call schedule - which became one in two). The use of computer generated analysis also helped, in that it shortened the time I needed to spend on tactical analysis, and made it easier to analyse, save the analysis, and return to the starting position. This allowed me more time to work on positional aspects of the games, and look deeper into the positions. I don't have a panacea for your readers, but I think it is really important to try to recognise the types of positions one plays well and is comfortable with, and develop a solid opening repertoire with these types of position in mind. It is a good idea to be realistic – don't expect to blast black off the board just because you are white – be content with a small advantage out of the opening particularly if it is a lasting one. Don't be afraid of equal positions. Many equal positions are much easier to play for one side than for the other. Study the endgame, and your middle-game strategy will improve proportionally.

Do you prefer Postal or Email?

I prefer email now that I have adjusted to it and manage my game load better. It is more reliable, repeat moves are easier, and the absence of really long delays keeps the games fresh in my mind.

ICCF JUBILEE TOURNAMENTS

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the ICCF are holding four separate competitions to celebrate their 50 year jubilee. If you have inter-net access, then you can find out more at www.iccf.com. If you don't have inter-net access, you can still enter the postal tournament by contacting Tim Harding. All these events are free and have generous sponsorship.

There won't be any new team events coming up for a while so players wanting international competition should enter individual events. Entries for ordinary events with entry fees should go with payment to Jack Killane or David Blair. They will notify Tim Harding.

EMAIL OLYMPIAD

Very briefly: Tim Harding is struggling on board 1. He's already lost three games against very strong opposition. Neil Johnson on board 2 has drawn 10 games and is still battling against GM Stefan Busemann of Germany. No news from Desmond Taylor on board 3. Your editor is 2½/3 with 8 remaining. David Blair is on 50% on board 5 with 4 games remaining. Finally, Michael Sheehan is also on 50% with 6 games remaining on board 6. A very creditable performance from the team given our seeding.

NEW RATING LIST

The new rating list came out in April. David Salter was the biggest gainer, moving up 49 points, and Gerry Smith the biggest loser. As usual the biggest losers are people who withdrew from a tournament.

Name		Rating	Change
Ludgate, Alan Templeton	SIM	2515	-12
Nightingale, Darrell	SIM	2489	+7
Gibney, Dr. Eugene J.	IM	2478	-4
Love, Stephen		2474	0
Taylor, W. Desmond	IM	2446	-2
Harding, Timothy David	IM	2417	+13
Lynn, Liam (plays for BPCF)	IM	2398	
O Siochrú, Oisín Rey		2388	0
Ryan, John M. T.		2384	-2
Salter, David		2362	+48
Coll, G. Frank		2361	0
O'Hare, Ciaran		2353	-27
Ryan, Peter (jun)		2350	0
Murray, John M.		2339	0
O'Connell, Gerard		2332	-26
Johnson, Neil		2327	+8
Blair, David		2326	+24
Gibson, John F.		2320	+7
O'Kearney, Sean		2289	0
Sheehan, Michael J.		2286	+13
Fayne, Terence		2268	-4
Mooney, D.		2267	0
Murray, Cecil		2260	0
Robb, David		2260	+8
Alexander, Alasdair		2259	+19
Cassidy, Paul		2256	-11
Griffin, John P.		2254	
Humphrys, Francis J.		2238	0
Houston, David A.		2221	+1
Burke, Paul		2210	-10
Breslin, William J.		2176	+30
Kelly, Patrick		2164	+6
Coughlan, Michael		2160	-17
Bridgeman, Jerry		2152	0
Henrick, Basil		2148	-47

Delaney, John Anthony		2131	0
Kerr, David		2129	0
Duffy, Anthony		2103	
Hemming, Clive		2100	0
Murray, Victor		2083	0
McMahon, Austin		2074	-63
Sherlock, J. J. K. A.		2068	-12
Sloan, Cecil		2065	0
Adamson, Tom C.		2064	-4
Clarke, Thomas		2060	-146
McMahon, Pat		2053	0
Cafolla, Peter		2045	0
Gilmore, Alan		2037	0
Forte, Luigi		2036	-3
McDonagh, Alan		2027	1
Murphy, Sean		2026	
Conlan, Tim		1983	-41
Doyle, Charlie		1981	-2
Ui Laighleis, Gearoidin		1970	0
Stevenson, Robert		1946	0
Killane, Jack		1944	-2
Purcell, Colm		1940	+34
Keenan, Joseph A.		1928	0
Armstrong, Fred		1927	0
Murphy, Niall		1916	0
Lynch, Jackie		1912	-62
O'Farrell, Kevin		1899	-26
Smith, Gerard		1898	-218
O'Callaghan, Michael		1800	0
Stevenson, Hazel		1776	0
Grey, James		1657	0

FRIENDLY MATCHES

Ireland – Denmark: This match is due to start in the middle of June. Basil Henrick reckons we should beat them, although we'll need to play well. This should make a pleasant change for us.

Ireland-Finland: With only 4 games remaining and trailing 18½ -31½, we have already lost the match. Not surprising considering their strength.

Ireland-ASPCC: Sadly, we dropped two games since the last newsletter and are now trailing 10-16 with 6 games to finish. Lets have a clean sweep to draw the match!

Ireland-USA: We are level at 4½ - 4½ .Keep up the good work.

Ireland-NCCC: We are beating the English 19-18 with 23 games remaining. Battles with neighbours are always more important!

Ireland-Czech Republic: We are losing 3½ – 7½ but its early days yet.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Fees	
£5.00	Annual Subscription

£4.50	100 CC Cards including postage to Ireland/UK
£5.00	100 CC Cards worldwide
£4.00	100 CC Cards worldwide for orders over 500
£?..??	Donation to Heidenfeld

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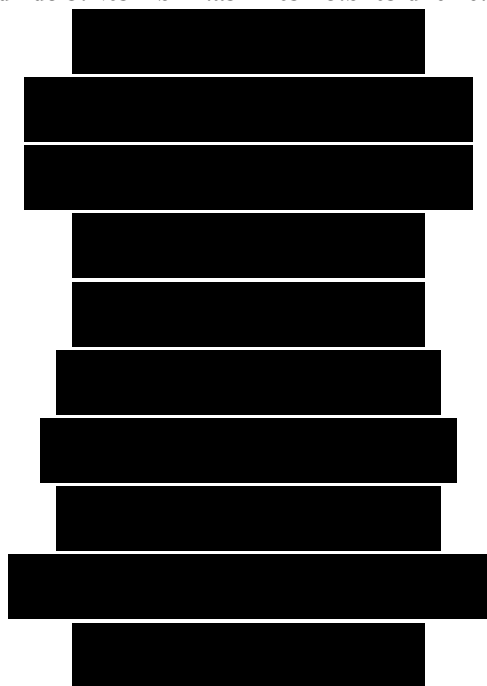
ANALYSIS CORNER

Eugene commented the following game especially for the newsletter.

Gibney,E – Kaden,F [C15]

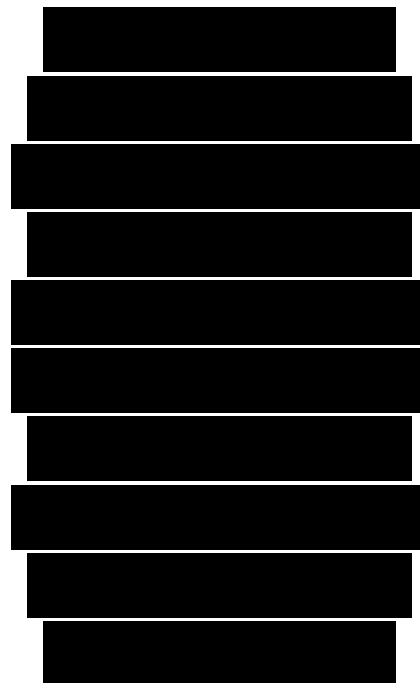
MN67 corr ICCF, 1998

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.a3 Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 dxe4 6.f3



I have a good record with the Winkelmann–Reimer Gambit in CC (+5=1-0). My win with it over Mike Conroy (Eng) in NATT4 gave me my fifteen minutes of fame as this game was published in Chess Mail (7/98), and used in an advertisement run in Fernschach for Winkelmann's book on the gambit. This win thus became my chess equivalent of Ireland's soccer win over 'the auld enemy' in Euro 1988. This is not to say I considered Mike an enemy – we developed a great rapport during our game, exchanging soccer stories, stamps, and chess material. Mike is a fine player despite the heavy burden he has to carry through life – he's a Burnley fan! **6...c5** [6...Bd7 7.Nh3 exf3 8.Qxf3 Bc6 9.Qg3 Nf6 10.Bd3 was Gibney–Conroy, NATT4 [1-0;37]] **7.Qd2** This is Gutman's idea, with

7.Rb1 the main alternative **7...Nf6 8.Bb2 Nc6** [8...0-0 9.0-0-0 (9.fxe4 Nxe4 10.Qe3 Gibney–Shura KE56 1-0/73 looks better) 9...Bd7 10.fxc4 Nxe4 11.Qe1 (11.Qe3 Qg5) 11...Bc6 12.Nf3 Nd7 13.Bd3 f5 was Gibney–Shura, Canadian Chp K55 where Black obtained a large advantage but could not convert it to a win and the game was drawn after 78 moves] **9.fxe4 Nxe4 10.Qe3 Nf6** both ...Nd6 and ...f5 can be considered reasonable alternatives here **11.0-0-0** this plan seems sharper than the alternative one of King–side development and K–side castling **11...0-0** How do we assess this position? For the sacrificed pawn White has a lead in development, open lines against Black's castled King, and his own King is safely tucked away. A computer programme will tell you however that Black is clearly winning (about -1.25 evaluation, one which under normal circumstances might even be considered an eventual winning advantage). John Knudsen recently discussed this situation in his Chess Mail interview in regard to his playing the French Winawer variation, where Black may sacrifice one or more pawns and yet have a perfectly playable position which computer programmes frequently miscalculate because of the material discrepancy. **12.Bd3 Qa5** [12...Qd5 is the alternative here and may be better 13.Qe2 Rd8 14.Nf6 remains unclear] **13.Ne2** this move, instead of the more natural–looking 13.Nf3 provides extra support to the c3/d4 pawns, leaves the f–file open, and allows White a greater choice of squares for the Queen after Black eventually plays ...Nd5 **13...b6 14.Rhf1 Nd5** [14...Ba6 15.Rxf6 Bxd3 16.cxd3 gxf6 17.Qg3+ Kh8 18.Qf3 Rfc8 (18...cxd4 19.Qxc6 dxc3 20.Bxc3 Rfc8 21.Bxa5 Rxc6+ 22.Bc3 Rg8 23.g3 Rg6 24.Kd2 Kg8 25.Nf4 +) 19.Qxf6+ Kg8 20.d5 Nd4 (20...exd5 21.Ng3 and Black is lost) 21.cxd4 cxd4+ 22.Kb1 and White is clearly winning] **15.Qh3 g6** [15...h6 16.c4 Nde7 17.Qg3 cxd4 18.Nxd4 e5 19.Nxc6 Nxc6 20.Be4 Bb7 21.Rd7] **16.c4 Nde7 17.Qh4**



White eyes the black squares around the Black King, and dreams of the Bishop on b2 coming to life **17...cxd4 18.Nxd4 Nxd4** [18...e5 19.Nxc6 Nxc6 20.Be4 Qc5 21.Qf2 Qxf2 22.Rxf2 Bb7 23.Rd7] **19.Qxe7 e5 20.Be4** [20.Rde1 also wins] **20...Be6** [20...Rb8 21.Rxd4 exd4 22.Bxd4 is no better] **21.Bxa8 Rxa8 22.Rxd4 exd4 23.Qf6 h6** a last trick, hoping for 24.Bxd4 Qg5+ **24.Kb1 1-0**