# Great Yarmouth Chess Congress 9/10 April 2022

Returning after a three year absence the Congress proved popular with 94 entries received. Inevitably, there were withdrawals before the event due to illness though this was just three, all in the Open. So, we were left with 18 in the Open, 43 in the Major (U1900) and 30 in the Minor (U1600). This was more than our first Congress at the Racecourse in 2019. We only had two withdrawals during the event which was good.

The Great Yarmouth Racecourse is an excellent venue, and the staff were very helpful. Setting up before the event and after was made easier due to their help. We were also helped by the Sponsorship of Bodo Bio Security and Great Yarmouth Town Centre Partnership. There were several donations which with the sponsorship enabled us to have a decent prize fund and to add extra prizes. Finally, Patrick Mc Dermott, who some will know from his articles in En Passant, sponsored the Junior prize. My thanks to them all.

The entrants were from various areas of the Country, as far West as South Wales and in the North Lytham St Annes. One entrant, Andrei Ciuravin, came from Hull but his home Country is Ukraine. There was a lot of local interest in one former Gt Yarmouth player, Clive Cubitt, living in Slough, who had not played for around 20 years. He was playing around the same time as Owen Hindle and Owen and Kathy did call in to meet him, as did Patrick McDermott who was in the same club as him. As the results show Clive is still playing at a strong level.

It was also good to see Alan Holmes back after his stroke and knowing Alan I am not surprised that he had made such an effort to return. Dennis Driscoll who was supporting him is doing a great job and I hope with such help Alan will improve.

The Open section was strong with Ratings of 1957 to 2501. Alan Merry got off to a good start with two wins. His first win was an unfortunate one for Jeff Dawson who appeared to have miscalculated an exchange of pieces that left him a piece down. Alan like many others took a half point bye in round three. In round four he drew with Martin Walker who was also having a good tournament. This left four players, Alan Merry, Shabir Okhai, Martin Walker and Nigel Birtwistle on three points going into the final round and the possibility of a two way or possible more than four way tie for first. Alan was drawn against Shabir, who was the second highest rated player. Alan managed to win and with Martin and Nigel drawing, he won the Open outright to add to his many successes at this event (Andy Hartland did joke that we have a standing order set up for Alans prizes). Four players, Andrei Ciuravin, Martin Walker, Clive Cubitt and Nigel Birtwistle shared second place. Good results here for both Martin and Clive. The U2005 Rating prize was shared by Jeff Dawson, Craig Kennedy and Stephen Pullinger.

The Major with 43 entrants was the largest section and was also strong with ratings from 1482 to 1893. After three rounds there were several on two and a half points and many on three points. This was also a tight group. Early leaders were Gary Thurston and Andy Hartland, among others, however by round 5 Gary Thurston had moved in sole lead on three and a half points but was being chased by nine players on three points. Gary agreed a draw with Sam Gaffney putting him on four points. There then followed wins for Paul Kenning, Jason Long and Andrew Di-Vetta meaning a four way tie for first place. The U1770 rating prize was a clear win for Stephen Williams who had travelled across from Cwmbran. The U1670 rating prize went to Tony Bynnersley (Who was the lowest rated person in the section and scored an impressive three points) and Gert De Block (from Cambridge).

In the Minor there were 30 entrants with ratings from 950 to 1581. Michael Burrage from Yarmouth started off well with three wins but ended up with 3 and a half points. Two players, Liam Chapman and Andrew Duffell quietly moved up to be on three and a half points after round four and were followed by five on three points. They both agreed a draw and none of those on three points could manage more than a draw meaning that Liam and Andrew shared first place. They are both players who perform well and it is good to see both wining prizes. As they were the highest scoring Norfolk registered players, they will share the Peter Vivian Memorial Shield.

Third place was shared by 6 players, Johnny Danger, Mark Nettleton, David May, Alan Collins, Charlie Ball and Katie Ball. Mike Burrage scored the same points but as he qualified for the U1450 rating prize he received that as it was the larger one in value. As mentioned above Patrick McDermott sponsored a Junior prize and he agreed that we could waive our only one prize rule to let the Junior(s) win both the Junior prize and one other. This meant that the prize was shared by Katie and Charlie who you may have guessed are sister and brother.

With prizes being paid by bank transfer we had a low key prize giving which was mainly me reading the list of winners and thanking all the players for entering and playing in a sporting manner. Adrian Elwin, who was the Chief Arbiter, and I had few issues and only had one illegal move to deal with. We did have a recurring theme of lost glasses being handed in which was a new one for us. Otherwise, an enjoyable congress for the players, organiser and arbiters.

I was assisted on the Friday by Mike Read who helped me set up the equipment and arrange the room. His previous experience in shifting furniture is invaluable and my thanks to him.

Also, I must thank Adrian Elwin. Running an event of this size on your own is not advisable and would probably not have been good for my health. Adrian is a FIDE International Arbiter (the one above my FIDE Arbiter title) and was very good at helping find the bye in those rounds where it was required but also with all other aspects.

Finally, I should mention Andy Hartland, our Treasurer, who helped chase up monies owed on the day and has been working on payment of the prizes. I think those that are not involved in the organisation of these events are unaware that the work does not finish with the close of the event. There is work to be done after the event for many days.

David Wild did his usual quick and excellent work in posting the results on the C4 website and submitting the rating files. He is retiring at the end of the season, and I will miss his help and assistance. We all owe him thanks for his work over the years.

With many compliments on the venue, I will look to book it again for next year. As the same weekend is Easter next year then I am hoping to book for the following weekend.

John Wickham

12/4/22