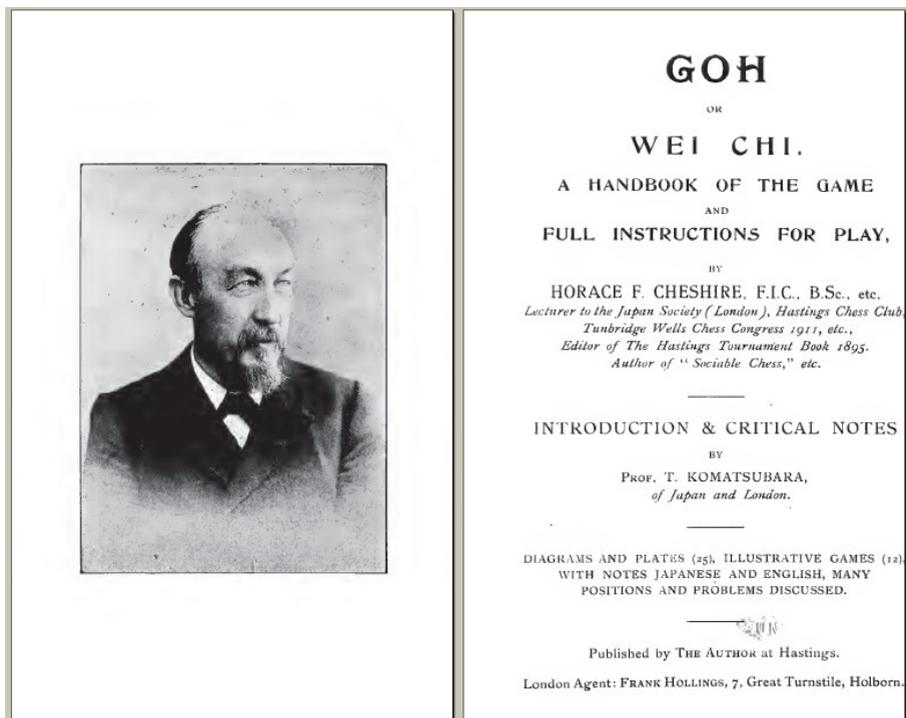# GOH OR WEI CHI BY HORACE F. CHESHIRE

Tony Atkins   ajaxgo@yahoo.co.uk

Those who have read the BGA history pages[1] will probably know about the important early Go book in English by Horace F. Cheshire. This historically important book was published by the author in Hastings in 1911. The BGA should have a copy of this book in its archives, but when Harry Fearnley checked the archive contents a few years back it was unfortunately missing. I have seen an original copy as Erwin Gerstorfer, the avid book and art collector from Austria, brought a copy lovingly wrapped in tissue paper to a European Go Congress.

For a long time I have longed to get hold of my own copy, so one day I idly typed it into Amazon and to my surprise it came back with a hit. Not with the original, but with a reprint available for less than £12. So I quickly sent off my order and eagerly awaited the post.

However I was grossly disappointed to find that what I had bought was not a facsimile reprint of the original, but an optical character recognition (OCR) scan. This had been produced by General Books and came neatly bound with about 64 pages in a glossy card cover. However, the first thing

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[1]www.britgo.org/history/ukhist

they say is that they do not proof read the results, nor do they convert diagrams or illustrations, missing these out, and they do not keep the original pagination. For a Go book, to miss out the diagrams makes it next to useless as a technical document, but what I was interested in was the historical and cultural sections, so I should still have been okay without. Unfortunately, the original book used some archaic fonts in headings, which the OCR was unable to read, and the OCR did try to convert the Go move sequences and some diagrams, which had come out as complete gobbledygook. In move sequences, the OCR's favourite character seems to be Â, whatever that might mean.

However all was not lost, as purchasing the book gave a free limited membership to their online library of facsimile scans[2]. Their login and download software is not very good, and it offered me a download that hung and charged me $9.99 for the privilege! Eventually I got the free login to work, and I did indeed

manage to download the original scan of the book in PDF format (only 3 MB). This revealed that the original that had been scanned came from Cornell University Library.

However to get hold of the facsimile it was worth every penny (and every cent), and it is a good and clear copy. It even includes the photographs of Japanese sword-guards, diagrams, the covers and even the adverts, running to 184 pages in all.

However I would not recommend using the book to fulfill its second function, as in its subtitle "A Handbook of the Game and Full Instructions for Play". It uses a notation called "English", based on quarters of the board, in most diagrams (for example "244" is the star point in the corner of the second quarter of the board). At least it can be read (Â turns out often to have been a dash) and you too can marvel over this important piece of British Go history and wonder what pearls of wisdom the advertised books on Chess and Draughts contained.

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[2]www.million-books.com