

BRITISH

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"You played where??"

PHOTO AND SCAN CREDITS

Front Cover: Timișoara — see article inside — Paul Barnard

Above: Bowood House, near Malmesbury — Alison Bexfield

Inside Rear: Collecting Go IX: Badges — Tony Atkins

UK News: photos from the Candidates Tournament and the London-Japan Friendship Match were kindly provided by Kiyohiku Tanaka.

The remaining photos were kindly provided by the article authors.

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EDITORIAL

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Welcome to the 156th British Go Journal.

In This Issue

More letters than usual this time (that's a good thing, please keep them coming), two of which continue the discussion on rating systems. We have another in the series of articles on the introduction of Go to Europe, or more particularly, on the Chinese author of "The Game of Wei-Chi" mentioned in the last issue. Thanks to Francis Roads, this issue contains a long-overdue review of GoGoD (Games of Go on Disk), previously reviewed in BGJ 135. Barry Chandler tells me he still regrets failing to arrange this review during his editorship. David Ward continues with Part 3 of his Problem Corner.

The problems scattered through the Journal are provided by Ian Marsh: some of you may recognise them as the status problems from the recent Bracknell Tournament. Now you can have another try, in 'Black to play ...' form this time, and look up the solutions at the back if you are still stumped.

We have two Go-travel articles: one from Paul Barnard and one from the Smith family (Paul, Roella and Kelda). Alexandre Dinerchtein reviews a game played by Roella at the European Youth Go Championships. Alison Bexfield invites opinions on the Tournament Calendar.

Credits

My grateful thanks to the many people who have helped to produce this Journal, including the authors of the articles and letters: Tony Atkins, Paul Barnard, Jonathan Chin, Jon Diamond, Alexandre Dinerchtein, Guoru Ding, John Hobson, Charles Leedham-Green, Colin Maclennan, Ian Marsh, Francis Roads, Kelda Smith, Paul Smith, Roella Smith, David Ward and our anonymous cartoonist; and our valiant band of proof-readers; Tony Atkins, Barry Chandler, Martin Harvey, Neil Moffatt, Isobel Ridley, Edmund Stephen-Smith and Nick Wedd.

Pat Ridley



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: Why Am I Getting Weaker?

Toby Manning has an unanswerable case for the European Rating System to be discarded.

One has to consider first both the purpose and the effect of a grading system. Professional players are not downgraded after a poor run; a 9-dan does not wake up one morning as a 7-dan. In chess, Grandmasters remain Grandmasters. To support the European Rating System is to countenance a situation in which such demotions did occur. As far as we are concerned the primary objective is to encourage Go players, and this is incompatible with issuing public insults. The excuse for the system is that it means that players will be more evenly matched in tournaments; but this is in fact a mild disadvantage. It is better to have opponents who vary to a modest extent from one's own standard. Of course a player may decide that they are over-ranked, and enter at a grade lower than their

official ranking. The real reason for the European Ranking System is that some people have got addicted to fiddling around with a statistical exercise in an inappropriate way.

As to maintaining a reasonably consistent grading system, I don't understand the claim that there is no fixed benchmark. Surely the strength of professionals, as judged by the number of stones they can offer to amateurs, does not change significantly in 20 years, and they can provide a benchmark. Alternatively, and equivalently, competent amateurs reach a certain plateau and remain there for a long time, assuming that the amount of time and effort that they spend on the game remains steady. Toby's knowledge that he has not become worse will be based on his ability to beat opponents, as can be verified. What further proof is needed?

Charles Ledham-Green

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Subsidised GoGod for Under-18 Players

Elsewhere in this issue you may read my re-review of GoGoD¹, the suite of Go material on disc. The Trustees of the Castledine-Barnes Trust² have decided to make a number of copies of this disc available to Go players under the age of 18 years at a subsidised price of £7.50 post free. £5 of this subsidy is generously given by GoGoD, and the remaining £7.50 by the Trust. Adults who are actively involved with U-18 Go activity may also purchase at this price. Membership of the British Go Association is not required, but is encouraged by the Trust.

To order, please send to me at 61 Malmesbury Road, London E18 2NL, a cheque for the required amount, made out to T Mark Hall (sic). Several copies may be ordered at once. I shall need to know the names, addresses, and ages if under 18, of the recipients, and some indication of their entitlement to the subsidy (e.g. they play Go regularly). This information may be sent with the cheque or by email to me at the address below. As always, any such information is treated by the Trust as confidential. This offer is immediately available.

Francis Roads

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Re: The KGS Rating System, and the BGA Website

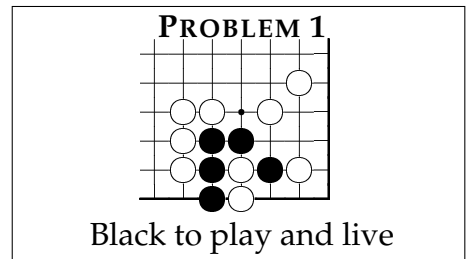
I read with interest the last British Go Journal, and thought I should respond on some points. As an admin. on KGS I have some idea of its internal

workings; Neil Moffatt would not be privy to this information. The ranking system uses a small number of stable players to help anchor ranks. These are players who have a reliable rank, that is one which KGS's rating algorithm considers to be stable, and one which corresponds closely to their offline rank. 9d is a ceiling in terms of rank, but it is not a ceiling in terms of rating. Also, and this may surprise some, not all professional players on KGS are in possession of a 9d rank.

That you can win 10 games in a row and not move up a rank is a common complaint about KGS. However, if you played only 1 game a day, you would probably move up a rank after such a streak. KGS is not optimised for those who play 5 to 15 games a day. Newer games will have a greater effect than older ones, so it shouldn't be the case that beginners are massively held back. Moving on slightly, I was interested to read of the changes to the BGA website, but was it deliberate that Junior Go was ignored in the detailed list of changes? It might be nice to see this section's profile raised?

Ian Davis

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¹www.gogod.co.uk

²www.castledinebarnestrust.org.uk

Go and the Geneva Convention

Unusually for Go players, our attitude to the Geneva Convention is sloppy and inconsistent. Do we abide by it or not? Are our prisoners 'captured' and therefore, one would hope, alive, or are they dead? We say that groups on the board are dead, but a dead group can subsequently be captured, at which point the 'stones' become prisoners and are presumably alive. This smacks of resurrection.

We can take the view that the Geneva Convention does not apply to inanimate objects such as stones (or glass, plastic, slate or shell), but I think our stones are symbolic and stand for military units consisting of people. I do not think this view helps.

We could also take a more philosophical view. Just as a flooded ant colony could be non-viable or 'dead' even though most of its ants could still be alive, our formations of stones, or armies, can be non-viable or 'dead' even though the constituent stones are still alive. But this is stretching the meaning of dead, and to make matters worse we do often talk about dead stones, not just dead groups.

Go is after all a game of warfare. I am not suggesting we should be friendly and nice — certainly not. I just think we should make it clear where we stand.

John Hobson

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SERENDIPITY **Roger Daniel**

All points are connected
Lines of communication join all points.

Information flows through the lines of communication
All is shared.

All is simultaneous
All is one.

One is at the alert
One is at the finish.

One has journeyed everywhere
One has shared.

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Jon Diamond

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Volunteers really welcome!

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the BGA, just like many other voluntary organisations. And just like other similar organisations we're short of them. It's sometimes a thankless task, so I'd like to pay tribute to everyone who's currently a volunteer — there's a list of them on our website in the section **About Us**. They all provide their time free of charge, and without them the BGA wouldn't exist.

However, people can't serve forever and some who we've relied on, such as Geoff Kaniuk, have retired recently. Some positions are vacant, so I'm specially requesting people who would like to help for the following: Recruitment and Retention, Exhibitions, Teaching in Clubs, Teaching Events and Championship Organiser. More details on what these entail are, again, on the website. There are more posts with vacancies than I've listed, so look at the list and don't hesitate to contact me if you can help.

I'm happy to say that Chris Bryant has volunteered to take over the Shodan

Challenge, which this year started on 1st July. He has some new ideas to help make it more successful, so please look at our website to find out more. It may not be too late to enter, so please use the sign-up form and see if he can accommodate you.

Although the Membership Secretary post is not vacant, Phil Beck has given us nine months notice that he wishes to spend more time with his new family, after four years in the job. If you're interested in this vital role for our Association please contact me or one of the other Council members.

Some of you might think you don't have a lot of time or don't want to get involved in organisational stuff. There are many tasks that can be undertaken at home and at your convenience. So if there's something specific you think should be done, even if we don't have a current post for it, and you want to give it a try, please contact me or one of the other Council members. We do pay expenses, so that you won't be out of pocket, and may even have some money available to help you undertake it!

Finally, I'd like to welcome our two new Council Members: Colin Maclennan from Twickenham and Paul Smith from Cambridge. Colin is Chair of the Clubs and Membership committee, and Paul is Chair of the Youth committee. If you've got any ideas for these areas, even if you don't have time to volunteer, please do contact them.

Now go out and play Go, enter some tournaments and recruit some players for your club — they're your lifeblood for the future.

GoGoD RE-REVIEWED

Francis Roads

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Regular tournament attendees will be familiar with the sight of TMark Hall sitting in a corner with his laptop, demonstrating and hoping to sell GoGoD (Games of Go on Disc)¹. Many's the time I've walked past. "I've got a couple of shelves of Go books, half of them unread", I would think, "I've no need of that stuff".

I was wrong.

If you regularly play through professional games in books (as we are bidden to do by visiting pros as means of improving), how often have you struggled to find the next move? A subtle kikashi on the other side of the board, maybe? It's tempting to give up altogether in the endgame. Maybe that's one reason why we amateurs are such rubbish at yose.

But if you can click forward and backwards through a game, you're much more inclined to see it through, and the whole process is easier and quicker. Yes, I know there is comparable material available online. But I don't think you'll find any resource which gives easy access to over 65,000 (yes, sixty-five thousand) professional games, played between 196 AD and last year. And of course there are a few fields and mountains in the UK which still lack wi-fi.

GoGoD is a suite of Go programs, together with a vast store of data. The core of this is the pro-game scores, but there is much more: a substantial number of games with commentary; articles about Go history, professional players, and much other Go lore; joseki; problems in tsume-go, tesuji and yose; a complete index to Go

World; and over 100 pro 9x9 games. This is effectively a Go encyclopaedia on disc.

The main programme is GoGoD95. This gives access to the pro-games, which can be searched by names, dates, and in various other ways. There is even a facility for recognising names written in kanji or Korean hangul. Built into this is GoScorer, whereby you can test yourself on your ability to guess the next move. I found this facility most instructive and depressing.

Kombilo and Drago are programs that enable you to feed in a position; then they will search the database for games in which that position occurred, and you can find out what happened next. For example, I am a sanrensei enthusiast, so I can set up sanrensei fuseki positions and see how the professionals developed it. The fashions changed noticeably over time.

Have I any criticisms? Such as they are, they are relevant only to the presentation. To find the various programs (and I haven't described them all here) you have to root around for .exe files inside various folders, and know what you are looking for. It doesn't work like a website where you can always click your way from one area to another. Easy enough for the computer-savvy, maybe, but I think that the internal structure of this collection could be improved quite a bit for the benefit of computer-strugglers.

More serious is the effect of loading the data (the 65,000+ games) into

¹GoGoD was previously reviewed in BGI 135, Autumn 2004

Kombilo, which crashed my computer twice. There is a workaround, if you can find the necessary instruction file, and in any case Drago does more or less the same thing as Kombilo, which worked on my computer at any rate. (Though even working out how to load the data into Drago took some patience and several goes.) I think there must be ways of making all this a bit more user friendly.

And if you are a Mac user, you may regard the following from the instructions as a drawback: "It has been reported to us that some elements work well on Mac systems — notably the sgf games and TBase html pages — but you need to provide

your own viewer and/or database program (or use a PC emulator)."

But these are all niggles. My overwhelming impression of this disc is that it is far too cheap. The sheer quantity and quality of effort that has gone into its production makes it worth ten times the price of £20. You can pay that much for a single Go book, and this disc is the equivalent of scores of them. And as you may read elsewhere (see Letters page), it can be cheaper still if you are an Under-18 player, or are involved in leading Under-18 Go activity.

But whatever your age, get one of these discs. Further details are at www.gogod.co.uk.

Postscript added 13th June

I have been informed that the creators of GoGoD, ever sensitive to constructive comment, have already added a text file explaining to the user in detail what .exe files are available, where to find them, and what each one does. This meets one of my above-mentioned niggles, though people used to websites will still have to get used to a different style of navigation. This file would have saved me some time when first getting to know GoGoD.

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

We have had many bounced emails when circulating the Newsletter and also when trying to contact a number of members directly.

If you normally receive your Newsletter by email but are missing the last one circulated early in July, or you've received the paper one but are happy to receive it by email in future (saving us the cost of printing and postage), please contact the Membership Secretary (mem@britgo.org) by email with your current email address.

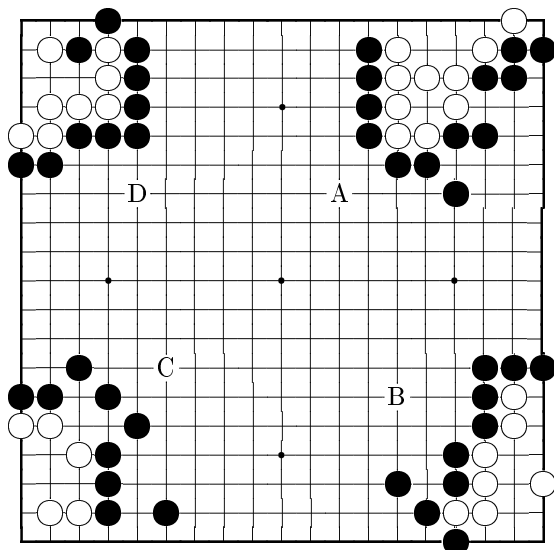
Members are reminded to let us know when their email address changes, as otherwise we might find it tricky to contact you when the need arises, and you may miss out. Also, don't forget to register for our website's RSS feed (www.britgo.org/rss.xml) so that you'll be kept up to date on all our news.

DAVID WARD'S PROBLEM CORNER: PART 3

David Ward

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Following the theme from last time, here are four more problems for you to have a go at. In all instances, it is Black to play and the groups either live or die unconditionally (i.e. no ko).



All these problems come up in actual play. I don't think there are any particularly difficult ones; but I would say that, wouldn't I!

I would recommend that you try without using a board. If you are stuck then try again with a board.

Hints for solving this set of problems can be found on page 32; the solutions are on page 38.

The .sgf files for problems and games printed in this journal appear on

www.britgo.org/bgj/current

All the .sgf files, and the answers to the problems set in the last issue appear on the BGA website at

www.britgo.org/bgj/issue155

UK NEWS

Tony Atkins

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Youth Championship

The 2011 British Youth Go Championships on 20th March had 24 competitors, aged from 7 to 18, with strengths from 30k to 2d. The new library block at Bloxham School in Oxfordshire served as a great venue. Mazhar Warraich from Aston won the championship with four straight wins, including beating former champion Tian-Ren Chen from Loughborough. Silas Yufu Shi (2d) from Loughborough was the strongest player taking part, but he has Chinese nationality; his only loss was against Mazhar in a rematch of the first round. Loughborough took revenge as they held on to the Castledine Trophy by beating Aston three games to nil.



Prizes and places went to:

Overall: Mazhar Warraich
2nd: Tian-Ren Chen
U18: Mazhar Warraich
2nd: Jamie Taylor (Leeds)
U16: Tian-Ren Chen
2nd: Matei Mandache (Loughborough)
U14: Aidan Putman (Swindon)
2nd: Thomas Meehan (Solihull)
U12: Roella Smith (Cambridge)
2nd: Ibraheem Mustafa (Aston)
U10: Not contested
U8: Anthony Ghica (Newmarket)
Open/Handicap: Silas Yufu Shi



Mazhar Warraich, Overall Winner, receives his prize from organiser Tony Atkins

Thanks to Pelican Books and author Chris Bradford, the main prize winners were able to receive copies of "The Ring of Water".

A collection was made and, together with the proceeds from the event, £150 was sent to the Red Cross Japan Tsunami Appeal.

Arundel

The second Matthew in a row won Arundel; this year, on 27th March, it was Matthew Cocke (5d) from Epsom who was the best of the 26 players. He took the first place previously won by Matthew Macfadyen. London players did well, with both Michael Webster (1k) and Adan Mordcovich (5k) winning all three games, and all those on two wins also received prizes, including runner-up Francis Roads (3d Wanstead).

After the event many players left the Football Club venue and went on to enjoy the evening of a sunny day in the Black Rabbit.

British Go Congress

Swindon Go Club hosted this year's British Go Congress in the delightful historic town of Malmesbury over the second weekend in April. Early summer weather made it too good to stay indoors, and many took the chance to wander the town, visit the Abbey, or inspect the thousands of tulips in the beautiful Abbey House Gardens. All the Go events were in the Town Hall, partly a converted chapel and centrally-placed.

The Friday evening British Lightning had 18 players, by a fortunate coincidence, thus making the draw easy — three tables of six for the round-robin. A further happy coincidence was a tie for first place on one table, generating four winners for the knockout stage. In the final, Andrew Kay (4d Durham) beat Sandy Taylor (2d Durham).



Foreground: Jon Diamond and Richard Hunter

Background: Andrew Kay and Toby Manning

Chong Han (5d) from Loughborough won the British Open on a SOS tie break from Andrew Kay and Vanessa Wong (5d); they all won prizes for five wins. As nobody else won five, prizes went to everyone who won three out of three on the first day:

Richard Hunter (3d Bath), Claas Roever (2k Galway) and Fred Holroyd (8k Milton Keynes). The tournament was blessed with two jigos, so four additional prizes were awarded to the happy participants in the two perfect games: Martin Harvey (6k Manchester), Andrew Thurman (7k Durham), Elinor Brooks (7k Swindon) and Robert Scantlebury (9k Sheffield). Forty-eight players took part.

The Nippon Club team cup was won by Durham, narrowly ahead of Manchester. Swindon, despite being the organisers, failed to complete the team entry sheet in time to be considered for the prize! Alistair Wall (2d Wanstead) won four games, which enabled him to end the year at the top of the points list to win the Terry Stacey Trophy. Two points behind on 26 was long-time contender Toby Manning (2d Leicester), and Andrew Kay caught up to finish third on 24.

Welwyn Garden City

St Albans club held the first Welwyn Garden City Tournament in the Bridge Room at Gosling Sports Centre on 16th April. Seventeen players took part, but nobody won all three games. A tie at the top was partly split, leaving Alison Bexfield (2d), from Letchworth, and Alan Thornton (1d), from the local club, as equal winners, one SOS point ahead of Andrew Simons (3d), from Cambridge. The only player unbeaten was local organiser Paul Taylor (1d), who took a bye in round one; he received free membership of Alex Dinerchtein's Insei League as a prize.

Thames Valley

As winners the previous year, Bracknell hosted this Team

Tournament in Woodley on the traditional Easter Monday. West Surrey won the Broken Go Stone Trophy and Annie Hall's giant chocolate egg for a second time, after a gap of four years. They won ahead of teams from Maidenhead, Bracknell and Reading. Mark Nubbett led his West Surrey team by being the only player with three wins. Other winners of Easter eggs, in the traditional 10x10 side event, were Xinyi Lu (3k Maidenhead) with seven wins and Tony Atkins (2d Reading) with a perfect four.

Candidates

Twenty-eight players from 2k to 5d attended the Candidates Tournament, held in the Chadwick Room at Selwyn College in Cambridge, over the first May bank holiday.



Matthew Macfadyen analyses with Stuart Barthropp and Michael Webster

Andrew Kay (4d Durham) was unbeaten winner and Des Cann (4d) won five out of six. The rest of the qualifiers, on four wins, were Hui Wang (5d Nottingham), Alan Thornton (1d St Albans), William Brooks (3d Cambridge), Nick Krempel (3d London) and Alistair Wall (3d

Wanstead). The reserves, also on four, were David Ward (3d Cambridge), Richard Hunter (3d Bath) and Paul Taylor (1d St Albans).

Reigning Champion Matthew Macfadyen (6d Leamington) was on hand for two of the days in the nearby Lyttleton Room to analyse the players' games and suss out the likely opposition, though he was not able to join the players at the Saturday evening Italian restaurant trip.

Cambridge Bar-Low

Fourteen players took part in the Cambridge Bar-Low. It was held in the Walters Room in Selwyn College on the Sunday, not far away from the Candidates. The only players winning four out of five games were in equal first: Graham Lamburn (1k), John Richardson (1k Cambridge) and Adan Mordcovich (2k Wanstead).

London International

The following Sunday saw the spring edition of the London International Teams. This time there were two divisions of six teams. The open division was a close-fought affair, with Nippon and Cambridge both having three team wins out of four, but Nippon claimed the trophy with one more player win. In the handicap division, St Albans and South London Go Club avoided playing each other and both made the maximum four team wins; St Albans was the winner, dropping only one individual game. Six players got perfect fours: Andrew Simons (3d Cambridge), Choltit Rattanasetyut (5d Thailand), Adan Mordcovich (2k Wanstead), Peter Harold-Barry (5k St Albans), John Collins (9k St Albans) and Omar Massoud (7k South London). The event was rounded

off with a commentary of one of the top board games given by Japanese professional player, Kaori Aoba (3p).



Kaori Aoba (3p) plays simultaneous teaching games with Ludan Fang, Mami Ishii and Julia Woewodskaya

In response for her time commenting and playing some teaching games, £181 was raised for the Red Cross Japan Tsunami Appeal. She was then taken to dinner by ten of the players.

Bracknell

The organiser of the Bracknell Tournament on 15th May was also the winner: Ian Marsh (1k) was the best of the 28 players who made it to the usual venue, Woosehill Community Centre in Wokingham. Also winning all three were Xinyi Lu (4k Maidenhead) and Laurence Anderson (7k Bracknell). Poland's Marcel Zantman (6k) won two and then had a last round jigo. Bahareh Afshari (7k Oxford) won the problem solving, Mile Charles (1d St Albans) won the 13x13 and Peter Collins (3k Bristol) won the caption contest.

Scottish Open

Like the previous five, the Scottish Open was held in Dundee during the last weekend in May. Twenty-four players took part — slightly fewer than previous years, not only due to

the sad closure of long-term sponsor Realtime Worlds, with the resultant loss of players in Dundee, but also for the happy reason that Greg Cox's major wedding anniversary took a number of Dundonians away from the tournament as well. A new sponsor, Denki, had stepped in to ensure that, as ever, no participant left empty-handed without a jar of Dundee's famous marmalade.

For the first time in many years, the Scottish Open was not won by a Scottish resident, but by someone Scottish-born — Sandy Taylor (2d Durham), won all five games to take his first tournament title. Prizes were also awarded to Dundee's David Lee (2d) and Belgium's Dieter Daems (9k) for four wins out of five, and to Martha McGill and Boris Mitrovic (both 2k Edinburgh), Tom Croonenborghs (1d Belgium), Eugene Kee-Onn Wong (4k Glasgow) and Andrew Thurman (7k Durham) for three wins. Edwin Brady (1k St Andrews) and Sandy Taylor jointly won the Lightning Tournament on the Friday evening, each with three wins out of four.

Challengers League

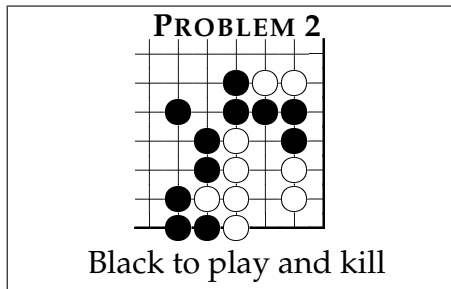
Matthew Macfadyen (6d Leamington), British Champion in 2010, won all seven games in the Challengers League to earn the right to defend his title. He will be playing in a best-of-three final against Nick Krempel (3d London), who won five games to take second place in the League. Hui Wang (5d Nottingham) and Alistair Wall (3d Wanstead) just missed out on playing for the title by one win each. The League was held as usual over the second May bank holiday, but the venue this year was the Fitzrovia Room at ISH in London.

London-Japan Friendship Match

The result of the match between the party of visiting retired Japanese Go players and the BGA/London team was very close. Held at the Nippon Club on the evening of 1st June, with one result to come in it was tied at 8–8. The outstanding game, the bottom board, decided it in Japan’s favour

9–8. Winning for the British side were Nick Krempel (3d), Alex Rix (3d), Jonathan Chetwynd (3d), Michael Webster (1k), Jonathan Turner (1d), Xinyi Lu (4k), Jiri Keller (5k) and Roger Daniel (5k).

After the match, most players went on for a meal in Chinatown.



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- Interviews.
- Reviews of the best games.
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- The real names of the top players!

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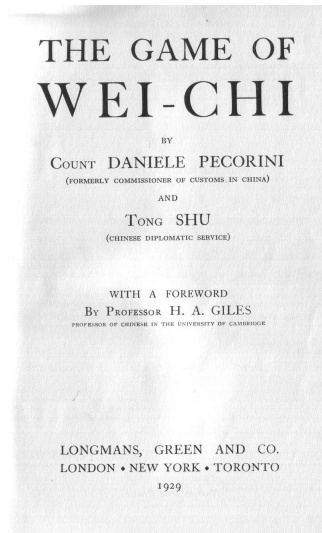
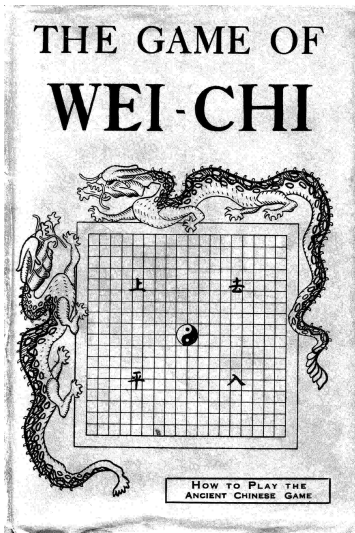
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THE MANY NAMES OF XU TONG-XI

Guoru Ding

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The previous article of this series ended with a Chinese Go writer, Shu-Tong. We know him under the name Tong Shu as co-author of “The Game of Wei-Chi”, published in London by Longmans, Green & Co. in 1929. (See: “A Milestone from Far Abroad” by Franco Pratesi, BGJ, No. 129, pp. 30–32). From this article, we know that Count Daniele Pecorini is named as the first author, but Shu is the real author. His book was not only published in Great Britain, but earlier in Italy and later in China. The book provided original information and a rather unusual method for teaching how to play, with analysis of actual games and some search for the general principles underlying the play.



Chinese names often pose problems when transliterated to a Western language. Languages have their own transliteration system; some languages have even used different systems through the years. This makes it difficult to know the real Chinese name. On top of that, Chinese can change their given names when they reach a certain age, or use another name for special occasions.

In the title page of the Chinese edition of his book we find the author's name of Xu Qu-Ji instead of Tong Shu, with

yet another name, Tong-Fu. He was in the Chinese Diplomatic Service, had been in Siberia in 1919, and came to Rome in 1924, where he stayed for three or four years.

Here new information is presented. Finding it required a number of different approaches. At first, information about Xu Tong-Xi in the “Foreign Affairs Bulletin”¹ caught my attention. A search on Google provided further interesting results. In particular, the archive of the Institute of Modern History, Academia

¹Published by the Chinese Department of Foreign Affairs.

Sinica in Taiwan, holds at least 25 original documents related to Xu Tong-Xi, including a document (a draft telegram) written by Xu from Irkutsk, Siberia, dated November 26, 1919. This information provided a promising connection between diplomat Xu Tong-Xi and Go writer Xu Qu-Ji.



Cover of the Chinese edition

Further information was derived from “The Government Gazette”. The Beijing Government (1912-1928) had been publishing the Government Gazette daily (almost) from May 1, 1912 to June 12, 1928; 5663 issues in total. In 1988, the Second National History Archives in China photolithographed those files into 240 books, with an average of 600 pages. It will be indicated as GG in the following.

Another lead was that Xu Tong-Xi compiled a genealogy in 1933, and stated that he came from Liu-Cheng. This is a famous and historic ancient town near Shanghai; its modern name is Jia-Ding. Our Go writer also stated he was from Liu-Cheng in the preface of his Chinese Go book. This provided a possible connection

between genealogy compiler Xu Tong-Xi and Go writer Xu Qu-Ji. Finally, a mimeographed copy of the genealogy, collected by the Shanghai Library, provided the conclusive evidence: diplomat Xu Tong-Xi, genealogy compiler Xu Tong-Xi and Go writer Xu Qu-Ji are indeed the same person. The author’s name should now be written in a more complete and correct way as Xu Tong-Xi (in the Chinese Pinyin System). Xu compiled a genealogy of his family in 1933 before he turned 50, the age Chinese called “knowing one’s own destiny”. According to his genealogy, Xu’s official name is Xu Tong-Xi, another name (normally taken at the age of 20 by Chinese tradition) is Qu-Ji, and his literary name is Tong-Fu. The last two names were shown on his Chinese Go books (in both the Italian and the English version of his book, co-authored with Daniele Pecorini, his name was not spelled completely, but just as Shu Tong).

徐同熙	Xu Tong-Xi
徐去疾	Xu Qu-Ji
徐通甫	Xu Tong-Fu

Xu was born on October 10, 1884. He attended the Hankou Lu-Han Railway School (probably in the late 1890s) and then the Hanyang Iron and Steel School, which was established in 1902, located in two neighbouring towns in central China; the latter also required that students had knowledge of French. He then studied abroad in the College of Electrical Technology in Paris, but did not graduate. He

came back to China and taught French in two different schools; one was in Henan Province and the other in Yunnan Province. All these activities took place before 1910.

In 1910, still in the Qing Dynasty (1616-1911), Xu started his diplomatic career; his first assignment was to Rome as an apprentice interpreter. We do not know how long he stayed in Rome; probably less than two years.

I found further information in GG. The World Expo was held in 1911 in Torino, where he worked as a Vice-Supervisor (probably in charge of the Chinese exhibition) and was awarded a 3rd grade King's Crown and Star medal by the Italian Government. There were 18 Chinese people at work for the World Expo who received medals, and Xu's was the second highest. Related information was published in GG, September 13, 1913.

After coming back to China, Xu was formally hired as a clerk by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Beijing Government (1912-1928) on September 18, 1914, by Department order No. 39 (GG September 21, 1914), ranked 8th class (the lowest rank of all officials was 9th class), by the Department order No. 41, September 21, 1914 (GG September 23, 1914). He was then promoted to 6th class on December 28, 1917, by Department order No. 146 (GG December 30, 1917). In 1918, Xu was appointed as a member of the Import Taxation Reform Committee, and he was awarded a 5th grade medal by the Chinese Government.

On June 17, 1919 (GG January 27, 1920), Xu was officially assigned, as a Vice-Consul, to the newly-established Consulate General of the Republic of China at Omsk, Siberia. However, all four members of the Consulate

General were actually assigned earlier and departed from Beijing to Siberia on April 22, 1919, according to a confidential urgent telegram from the State Council of the Beijing Government to military commanders of several Northeast provinces, dated April 20, 1919.

A little more Russian history would help us to understand why the Beijing Government (1912-1928) established a Consulate General at Omsk. In 1919 Russia was in the middle of the Civil War (1917-1922), and Omsk was the capital of the White provisional government. This was led by Admiral Alexander Kolchak (1873-1920), and was formally recognized by international powers such as the UK, USA, France, Japan, and also China (the Beijing Government). Omsk was captured by the Soviet Red Army on November 14, 1919. From Irkutsk, Xu sent a telegram to the Department of Foreign Affairs, dated November 26, 1919, and mentioned that he and other two colleagues had been ordered by the Consul General to leave Omsk on Nov 7. Xu wrote: "The situation was extremely dangerous by the end of October; radicals (Red Army) were attacking with full power, military advisers from all countries agreed to withdraw and no consuls suggested staying..."

The Consulate General of the Republic of China at Omsk existed for about a year officially, but its actual life could have been less than six to eight months. The Consul General resigned on July 31, 1920. Xu was transferred to the Consulate General at Vladivostok, Siberia, as Vice-Consul and later acted as Consul General, but without an official department appointment. When he was called back to China his title was still Vice-Consul at the

Consulate General of the Republic China at Omsk.

The Siberia experience was very important to Xu as a Go player. According to the preface of his Chinese book “Weiqi Rumen”, he became interested in Go as a child while watching people playing the game; however, people who knew the game were only willing to teach him a few basic techniques (such as how to kill a stone, etc). He also tried to learn the game from books, but all of them (mostly game records) were too difficult to understand, so his desire to study the game became weaker as time passed by. In the Spring of 1919, in Siberia, he met a colleague, Li Wei-Ru, who happened to be a strong player, and the two played the game whenever they had some free time. Altogether, Xu and Li were colleagues in Omsk, Irkutsk and Vladivostok for something more than 15 months. Li was ready to answer any question asked by Xu, and Xu could thus gradually understand the game more deeply.

With the help of the GG, I also found some information about Li. His original name was Li Guo-Wu, and another name was Wei-Ru. As a Go player, Li got his reputation around 1909, often listed after his cousin Li Zi-Gan (whose original name was Li Guo-Dong — in the past, all Chinese Go books or articles only mentioned their other names, Li Zi-Gan and Li Wei-Ru). They belonged to a famous family in the late Qing Dynasty. Li Guo-Wu’s granduncle Li Hong-Zhang (1821-1901) was the most powerful court official for about 25 years, and all his brothers and brothers-in-law were also important court officials. Li Guo-Wu was born on May 12, 1891. Li’s specialties were Russian and accounting. He, his elder brother and

two brothers-in-law all worked for the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Beijing Government (1912-1928). He was assigned as a clerk to the Consulate General at Omsk, and then to the Consulate General at Vladivostok, Siberia. Li worked as an accountant in the later part of his life, and died in 1944 in Shanghai.

The information about the Go activities of the Li brothers came mainly from an article about the Go circle in Shanghai from the early 1900s to 1949, written in 1983 by Go historian Xu Run-Zhou (1899-1984), and a Go book published by Li Guo-Dong in 1909. According to Xu Run-Zhou, the Li brothers often held Go parties at home — their grandparents had made great fortunes in Shanghai — to host famous players and elite members of society of the time. Li Guo-Dong’s book collected 130 games from the late 1890s to 1909. Xu commented that Li Guo-Dong’s strength, judging from his game records, was about that of playing first (i.e. taking black) against the best players of the time, and Li Guo-Wu was a little weaker. Xu did not say how weak he was, so it is difficult to guess, maybe taking 2–3 stones from the best players.

Xu was called back to China on October 18, 1920. According to the postscript of Xu’s “Weiqi Rumen”, it was in Beijing in 1921 that he started to write his Go book: he began to compile the Go material for fun, whenever he had spare time. Much of the material collected by Xu, however, had been lost before he left China again; what he received later on in Rome was only 40–50% of his original writings.

Xu’s next assignment was to Rome in 1924, and he ended his diplomatic career there in 1928. For this activity

we have further information from the "Foreign Affairs Bulletin": in issue No. 33 (Mar, 1924), Xu was assigned to the Chinese Embassy in Rome as a Third Secretary on January 28, 1924.

Xu's name also appears in issues No. 42, No. 54, No. 56, and No. 81. In issue No. 42 (December 1924) Xu wrote a report after attending the 1st International Law Seminar (from July 14 to August 12, 1924) organized by the International Court of Justice in The Hague. In issue No. 54 (December 1925) Xu reported on the annual conference of the International Statistical Institute held in Rome in September 1925. In issue No. 56 (February 1926) there is the good news that Xu was promoted to Second Secretary (December 5, 1925). Then in issue No. 81 (Mar 1928) there is a bad news: Xu was suspended on March 6, 1928. The order from the Department of Foreign Affairs was very short. It stated that Xu was assigned to be in provisional charge of the Embassy after the Ambassador was called back to China in July 1927. However, he violated a departmental rule by making a decision in an international matter without authorization. There was another Presidential Order, dated March 10, 1928, ordering the

Disciplinary Committee for high-ranked officials to give Xu and two other attachés involved in the incident punishment according to the law.

Since the Beijing Government (1912-1928) was soon dissolved, we do not know what punishment Xu received — no such record exists in the last issue of "Foreign Affairs Bulletin" (April 1928) or all the remaining issues of GG, whose last edition was June 12, 1928 — but it is easy to imagine that Xu's diplomatic career had thereby reached its end.

Xu probably came back to China in late 1928, and worked as a mathematics instructor at the Institut Technique Franco-Chinois de Shanghai, a college jointly financed and operated by the governments of France and China from 1921 to 1940. This was his last job listed in the genealogy. Xu had only one child; a daughter who was born in 1914 and went to Italy in 1924 with her family, but died young in 1930.

In the last part of Xu's personal records in his genealogy, he wrote: "Lifetime hobbies are Weiqi and poems; wrote a book 'Weiqi Rumen' and an anthology of poems; also loved martial arts and have been practicing Tai Chi for more than ten years."

As a result of this study, Go writer Xu Tong-Xi is now better known, and many facts of his life have been firmly established. This is important for the history of Go in Europe, because a new way of teaching Go to the European players had its origin in London in the late 1920s. On the way back to China (probably in the middle of 1928), Xu was able to stay some time in London. This occurred almost at the same time that Liu Guang-Han was using a new teaching method with Commandant Lancelin. On the London Go events of the time, an article in this series has already been published in the BGJ² and others will be soon. □

²BGJ No. 155, p. 19–21

EYGC 2011 AT BRNO

Paul, Roella and Kelda Smith

paul.smith25@ntlworld.com

Paul writes:

I travelled with my two daughters Roella (age 11) and Kelda (age 8) to the European Youth Go Championships held at the Hotel Santon in Brno in the Czech Republic in March. Brno was a convenient place to get to, as there is a regular cheap flight from Stansted.

Our journey from Brno airport to the venue was quite eventful. The bus from the airport to the city centre was the most overcrowded vehicle of any sort that I have travelled on in my life. As I was near the door, I was in prime position to fall out whenever the door opened, and to have my left leg mangled whenever it shut again. Then, despite having had excellent directions from the organiser Martin Kovarik, we managed to get lost twice. The first time was looking for the tram stop near the central station. The second time was when we left the tram at our stop, apparently very near the hotel, and couldn't work out where to go next. It was late and dark, and all we could find was a closed supermarket. Eventually someone came past who could direct us to the Hotel Santon.

After that slightly disconcerting experience, everything else during our stay went very well. The hotel was a wonderful place. The restaurant provided great meals and coped excellently with my odd dietary requirements (as a vegetarian with celiac disease), including providing wonderful gluten free Danish pastries at breakfast time.

On the first day of the tournament there was an opening ceremony attended by Stanislav Juranek, Vice-President of South Moravia. Also, it was great to meet Vanessa Wong, the other UK junior taking part in the tournament, who was the challenger in the 2010 British Go Championship.

I was a bit nervous as to how my daughters would do in the tournament, especially Kelda who I thought might be weaker than the lowest allowed entry grade of 20k. But I need not have worried as their grades did not seem to be out of step with those of juniors from other countries; and Kelda seemed to be stronger than average for a player entered at 20k. In the end Roella won two games out of six playing at 11k to finish in 13th place in the Under-12 section (out of 52 players). And Kelda won three out of six playing at 20k to finish 41st.

In the Under-16 section, Vanessa finished 2nd and qualified for the World Youth Championships.

On the day after the tournament we had quite a bit of spare time before our flight, so we went to Brno zoo, only a short walk or one tram stop from the hotel. It was at this point that we noticed, at the tram stop where we had arrived on the first day, a really massive sign pointing the way to the hotel. It was a lot of fun to travel to this event and to see young Go players from all over Europe. I believe that next year's tournament may be in the same place or perhaps in Hungary. I hope it will be possible to have a larger group of UK junior players taking part.

Roella writes:

I, my sister Kelda and my dad Paul, travelled to Brno in the Czech Republic for the European Youth Championships in March. The place where we were staying was very nice; there was a lake near to the hotel and even though it wasn't very cold during our stay there, the lake was frozen solid! Everyone played two games each day against other children in the same age group (the age groups were Under-12, Under-16 and Under-20). In my age group there were lots of children from a range of countries across Europe. As well as me and my sister, the only other player from the UK was Vanessa Wong, age 15.



Roella and the Ice

During intervals between rounds many people practised and improved their Go in a separate practising room. Aside from Go, there was a swimming pool and gym open to all hotel residents. On one night there was an interesting and exciting fire show (with jugglers and fire-eaters) that most of the Go players enjoyed.

Levels of play at the tournament were of high standard across all age groups. In the Under-16 and Under-20 age groups there were quite a few dan players. The final results are at www.czech-go.net/eygc2011/results.php?lang=en. Winners will be participating in the World Youth Championships. My sister, my dad and I wish Vanessa luck when she represents the UK at the World Championships.

After eating our last breakfast at the wonderful restaurant, we were upset that we had to leave so soon. We enjoyed the afternoon at the local zoo. It took two hours on the plane and we were back in England again. I hope that I, and more children from the UK, will be able to attend the next European Youth Championships, that will possibly be held in Hungary.

Kelda writes:

In the Czech Republic, I enjoyed playing Go, swimming in the "Wellness" area at the hotel, throwing stones onto the frozen lake, visiting the zoo and riding on the tram.



Kelda and Roella - Go Sisters

I played four people from the Czech Republic and two from the Ukraine. I won half of my games. □

GAME REVIEW: EYGC 2011

Alexandre Dinerchtein

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This game was played between two 11-year-olds at the European Youth Go Championships in Brno in March this year (see the preceding article).

White is Colin Christiaans, Dutch Under-12 champion, and Black is Roella Smith from the UK.

5 It's common to start learning Go with the Sanrensei fuseki. At least, all players from the Kazan Go School (Shikshin, me, Shikshina, Kulkov and others) used this fuseki for several years at the beginning. Later it's good to try the Chinese fuseki for a few years.

13 The Sanrensei is best for creating moyos, so it's logical to play at A, B or C next — see Variation 1. Creating a weak group is not the best plan. White can naturally reduce Black's moyo by attacking that group.

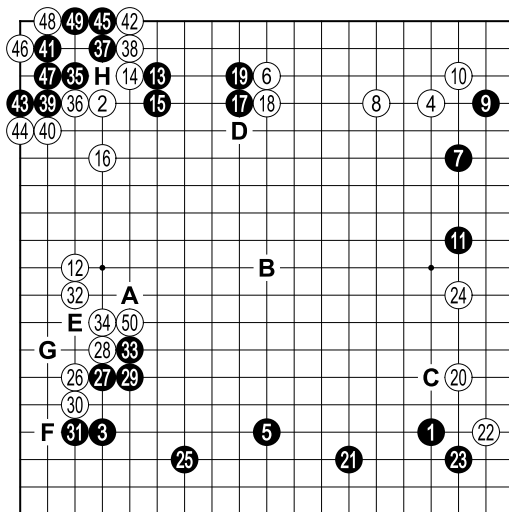
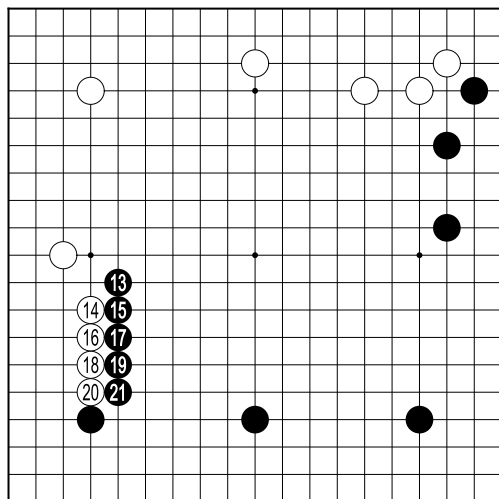


Diagram 1 (1-50)

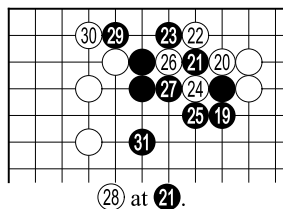
16 The right plan for White. Black has a weak and heavy group now.

19 Black's shape is not good — see Variation 2 for a better plan.



Variation 1 (at move 13)

Takemiya-sensei, who is famous for his cosmic Go style, would probably choose this plan. Black can get a nice moyo!

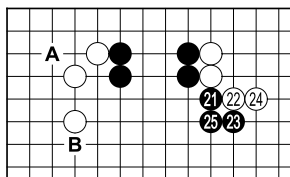


Variation 2 (at move 19)

It's more flexible to create sabaki like this.

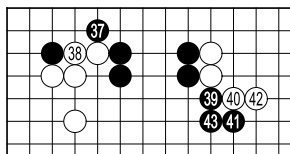
(Returning to Diagram 1 ...)

- ⑳ Tenuki is always dubious when you see such a shape. It's very important to hane at D.
- ㉑ Black missed a good chance — see Variation 3.
- ㉒ There is a weakness at E and Black can try to invade later. This move takes away the possibility. Black at F is better, locally.
- ㉓ White is happy to make the shape stronger.
- ㉔ White is already solid. The hane at D is better. If Black cuts, White can choose E or G next.



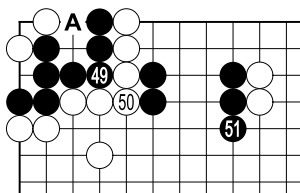
Variation 3 (at move 21)

Now Black is very solid. Later she can easily invade at A or B.



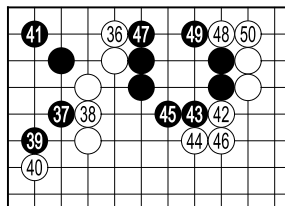
Variation 5 (at move 37)

Again it's important for Black to protect her big group.



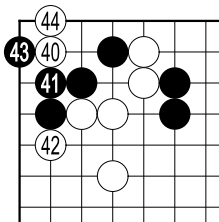
Variation 7 (at move 49)

- ㉕ This invasion is dangerous, because Black is not yet stable at the top. See Variation 4.
- ㉖ Bad solution! Black 37 at 38 is best now — it makes Black's top group stronger.
- ㉗ Wrong move — see Variation 5.
- ㉘ If White wants to kill the corner, he can try Variation 6.
- ㉙ Gote and very slow.
- ㉚ Dangerous! See Variation 7.
- ㉛ White at H instead gives a ko fight. White can start this ko right now.



Variation 4 (at move 36)

Black can probably live, but this attack is very painful!



Variation 6 (at move 40)

White can try this attack to kill the Black group.

This is the best way for Black. Her corner can live in seki if White plays at A.

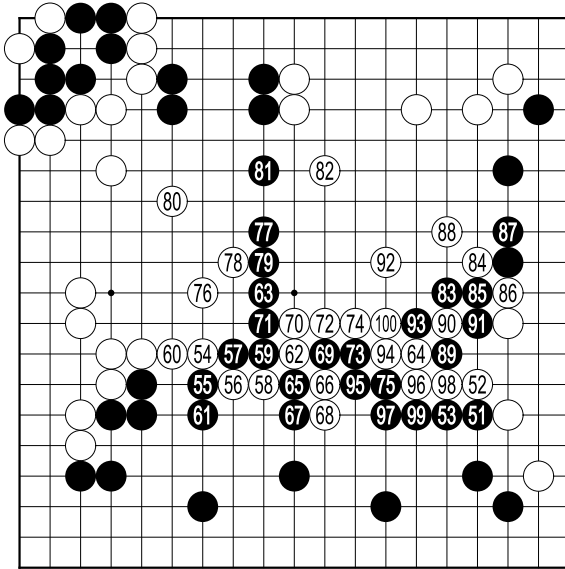
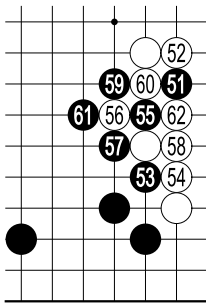


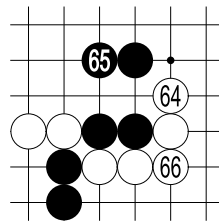
Diagram 2 (51-100)

- 51 Aji-keshi. Black has good ways of attacking this group — see Variation 8.
- 57 Sharp move! Black is behind, so it's a good plan.
- 64 I would prefer to save the cutting stones, 56 and 58. They are important, because Black's group in the centre is not alive yet. See Variation 9.
- 65 The right decision.

- 67 This is a big success for Black. She is not behind any more.
- 81 Very good move. Now Black's group on the top is alive.
- 84 Good idea. White is behind now, so he has to fight.
- 93 This must be at 98.
- 98 Now Black has problems.



Variation 8 (at move 51)



Variation 9 (at move 64)

Saving the cutting stones.

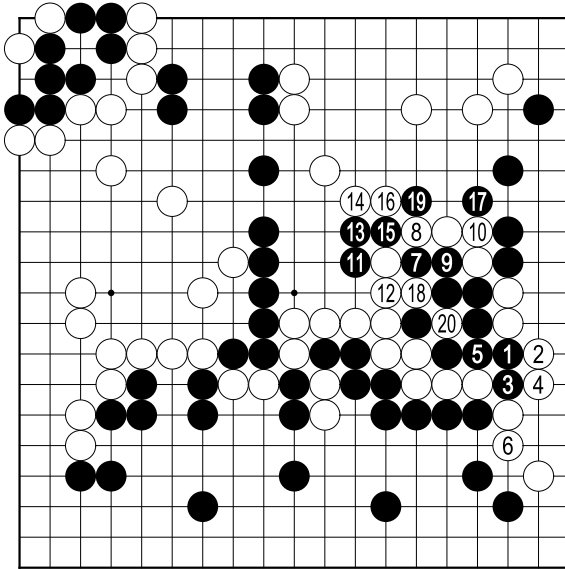
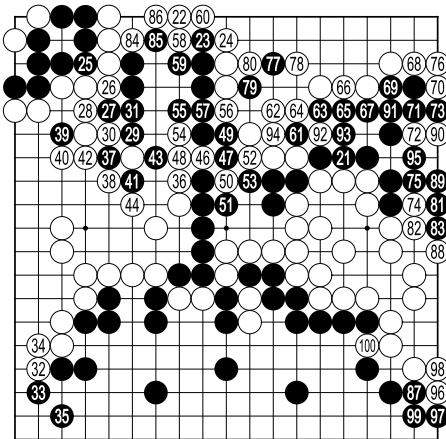


Diagram 3 (101-120)

Ⓐ This makes the black stones heavy. A black play at 108 would have been much more active.

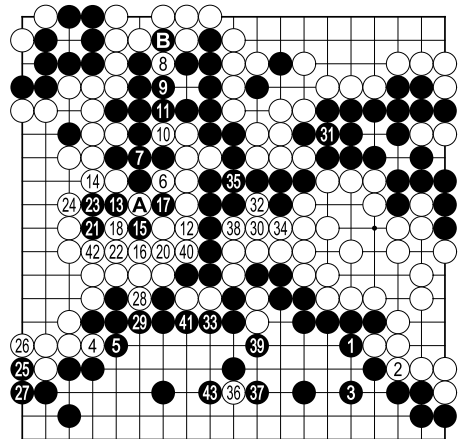
Ⓑ Big success for White. Now it's a very close game.

Finally, after some mistakes in yose from both sides, White won this game by 1 point. The remaining moves of the game are shown below.



Ⓐ at Ⓑ.

Diagram 4 (121-200)



Ⓐ at A, Ⓑ at B, Ⓒ pass, Ⓓ pass.

Diagram 5 (201-246)

The main advice for both sides: it's good to play carefully when you are leading.

WORLD NEWS

Tony Atkins

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Transatlantic Youth

Vanessa Wong helped Europe win for the first time, by six games to five, in the third online match against the USA, on 17th April. She beat Hugh Zhang (aged 14), who, in 2008, had been first in the Redmond Cup Junior Division and second in US Youth Go Championship.

Pandanet European Teams¹

The UK's second March match, on the 23rd, was against Austria. It ended, honours split evenly, as a draw. Captain Will Brooks finally broke his duck, and Jon Diamond did his duty as President, while misfortune befell Matthew Macfadyen and Andrew Simons.

Four Tuesdays later, Slovenia was the opponent. Jonathan Chin, on board four, lost a big lead in a ko to lose by just 1.5, and Jon Diamond missed a self-atari, so with a weaker team than normal (without Macfadyen) a possible match win ended up as a loss, three games to one.

The final round match on 17th May was against Spain. Despite missing Macfadyen again, and Des Cann letting his opponent make seki in his corner to win, the team ended up the winner, three games to one. Again, Jon and Andrew Simons gave their opponents chances to win, but Toby Manning won against a 9k Spanish reserve without playing, due to technical difficulties. This, unfortunately for Spain, saw them demoted.

The UK ended the season seventh out of ten, thus avoiding relegation, winning just three of their nine matches (with two draws). League B winners were Sweden, on a narrow tie-break from Poland. More details of each match, including game records, are on the BGA European Teams page².

In League C, Ian Davis led the Ireland team bravely in to battle. However they only managed one win (against Italy) and two draws (Bosnia and Bulgaria). This left them in ninth, just above Bulgaria. Slovakia won League C with eight wins, ahead of Switzerland's seven.

In League A the big guns battled out for the four places in the live finals, to be held at the European Congress in Bordeaux. The top four were Romania, Russia, Ukraine and Hungary. Close behind were France, Germany and Czechia, with Netherlands, Finland and Serbia bringing up the rear.

European Pair Go Championships

Over the last weekend in May the Europairs was held in Istanbul, the first European championship to be held in Turkey. Natasha Regan and Matthew Cocke for the UK took 11th place (the 9th best country). They lost to Czechia, France and Germany, but beat Poland and two pairs from Turkey. Best of the 31 pairs taking part was the pair from Hungary, Rita Pocsai and Pal Balogh. Czechia was second and Ukraine third.

¹see BGJ 154, Winter 2010-11, page 9

²www.britgo.org/events/euroteams

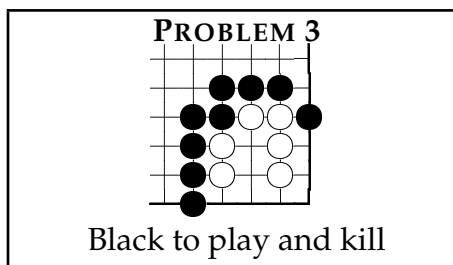
World Amateur

Despite post-tsunami problems in Japan, the World Amateur Go Championship went ahead in Shimane Prefectural Assembly Hall in the ancient castle town of Matsue, which is at the western end of Honshu, at the end of May and start of June. The UK representative at the 32nd edition was Alex Selby from Cambridge. He won three of his eight games to take 43rd place out of 57. His first game was a loss to a former World Champion, Hirata of Japan. He then lost to Radek Nechanicky of Czechia and Lorenz Trippel of Switzerland, before beating Neville Smythe of Australia. He then lost to

Davide Minieri of Italy, beat Bahadur Tahirbayov from Azerbaijan, lost to Torben Pedersen of Denmark, and won the last game against Salvador Larios of Mexico.

James Hutchinson of Ireland was well placed at 36th, with four wins against Denmark, Argentina, Portugal and Brazil, and losses to Slovenia, Turkey, Slovakia and Norway.

The unbeaten Champion was Baoxiang Bai of China. Second was Woo-Soo Choi of Korea. The group on six wins was Eric Lui (USA), Thomas Debarre (France), Hironori Hirata (Japan), Jun Fan (Canada) and Franz-Josef Dickhut (Germany). □



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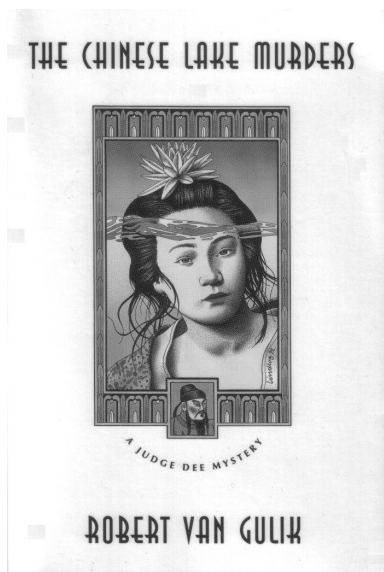
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BOOK REVIEW: THE CHINESE LAKE MURDERS

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Robert van Gulik (1910-1967) was a Dutch diplomat and scholar of oriental culture, who turned to writing novels to help popularise the genre of the Chinese detective novel. This novel is in the tradition of such works, and it and his other Judge Dee novels are based on years of research and study into China and its culture. He lived in China for a few years during the War and also in Japan, so he would be familiar with the games they played.

Judge Dee is a typical Chinese detective, having just been made magistrate in the town of Han-yuan in 666 AD. Chinese crimes are a bit like London buses — you wait ages for one and then three come along at once — so Dee is a bit busier than his counterparts in western fiction. Often, however, the crimes are related in some way, which becomes clear at the end. Go players should be well-

used to dealing with Chinese names, but the style of writing is a bit old-fashioned, the book having been published in 1960.

In one of the crimes in this book, the last words of the victim to Dee are “I hope your Honor plays chess, for...” This turns out to be a translation of “qi”, covering all such games, as a page from an old Go manual is found on the dead body. It shows a board used in the ancient Chinese way: stones are not played on the edges (as the stones fall off), and it is hence a 17x17 game. However there are many more white stones than black and the pattern seeming quite random, with all the black stones towards the middle of the board. Why this page bears no resemblance to an actual Go position is one of the key mysteries of the story.

Around about the page in chapter five which pictures the Go position, Judge Dee discusses the “chess” game with his officers. He mentions the 289 intersections and the 150 small round stones of each colour. He goes on to explain how to play, capture and win in three sentences. This prompts his sergeant to comment “That sounds quite simple!” Dee smiles back and wisely mentions that “a man’s lifetime hardly suffices for mastering all its intricacies.”

I enjoyed the book, with its twists and puzzles in an ancient Chinese setting, but the Go content is not the most extensive, and you have to work out that Go is what is meant by “chess”. The cover illustration is from the University of Chicago Press paperback edition (a different cover can be seen on the BGA webpage of celebrities).

TOURNAMENTS: TIME FOR CHANGE?

Alison Bexfield

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When I started playing in Go tournaments, more than twenty years ago, I used to attend almost every UK tournament. What has changed? I had more time then, and petrol was much cheaper, but also there were fewer tournaments, and they were much more centred on the southern heartland of England, with the further extremities being poorly served.

Today we have much more choice in which tournaments to attend. Indeed we sometimes even have two tournaments on the same day in different parts of the country. But the number of overall tournament attendances has not risen concomitantly. Consequently, each individual tournament is seeing lower numbers attending. The average local one day tournament should be budgeting at around 30 people. Twenty years ago it was likely to be double this.

I don't see this rise in tournaments as a bad thing. There are now more local tournaments spread further around the country, with several Scottish tournaments and also tournaments in Penzance. It is not feasible for active players to aim to play in all tournaments, but we can be selective. I am returning slowly to tournament play as my family grows older. I now choose to support those tournaments that are local to me and the odd tournament further afield for specific reasons — such as family connections with the area, or because it is a prestigious tournament such as the British or the Candidates. This year I found myself in a quandary as to which tournaments to play in.

While local organisers should be free to choose whatever date works best for their club and players, I do feel that the BGA Council should take a look at the calendar of BGA-sponsored national events. These are not well-spaced, and mean that choices have to be made, to the detriment of attendance at some of these tournaments.

As a dan player I find myself most interested in the Candidates and the British. This year these two events were timetabled within three weeks of each other, with the Challengers four weeks later for those successfully qualifying. With family commitments I had to choose between the first two events. I am sure others did too, with the result that attendance at both events is likely to have suffered. I notice that this timetabling will also be the case in 2012.

I consider there to be three events in the BGA calendar that are aimed at dan players — the London Open, the British Open and the British Championship. I think this is one event too many. These events need to attract a reasonable number of strong players to maintain not only credibility, but also financial viability.

I see the London Open as the UK's premier event, aimed at attracting international players so that UK players of any level can compete against other Europeans. This is healthy and enables our grades to be benchmarked to some extent. It has traditionally been at New Year, and always in London. There is no specific reason for this date, however. In recent years numbers have been falling, particularly of UK players,

and if this continues it will not be financially viable to continue it.

I see the British Open as being targeted at the strongest players in the UK, whether UK passport holders or not. There is a major title at stake. To some extent, the event duplicates the London Open in its target market. It moves around the UK, so that people from different parts of the country have the chance to attend. It has also traditionally been held around April because the AGM is held during the event, and the AGM needs to be in the Spring months under the current constitution. This timing puts it very close to the first stage of the British Championship, which means it is competing with that for the stronger players. Both these factors — timing and geographical location — can result in attendance suffering, which reduces the credibility of the event and title if the strongest players in the UK do not turn out for it.

The British Championship sees the first stage — the Candidates — being held early in May, and the next stage — the Challengers — held at the end of May. These timings are based on when bank holidays fall in the year. Some of those players who are hoping to make the Challengers are therefore likely to opt out of the British Open, if three intense weekends of Go are too much within a two month period. I would certainly be unlikely to elect to play in both British Open and Candidates while they remain so close together, at least for the foreseeable future.

I suggest below some radical proposals for reshaping these premier events, with the aim of spacing them out and hopefully increasing the attendance of the stronger players. I'd encourage BGA members to feed back their own thoughts on the

issues raised in this article. I'd also encourage the BGA Council to sound out more views and to consider the proposals — or variants proposed by other members.

Proposals

1. Keep the Candidates and Challengers in the Spring, but rename the Candidates as the British Championship Stage 1. It should be made into an attractive event for all strengths. This would need some thought, but could encompass a mixture of kyu-player tournament and teaching sessions, alongside the Candidates for those not qualified. This would then enable sufficient representation of BGA members for the AGM to be held at this event. It could move around the country in the way that the British currently does.
2. Combine the British Open with the London Open, so that we have one premier open tournament aimed at attracting foreign players. This could be the London Open renamed, but equally it could move out of London on occasion, or even move to the Autumn. The British Open title might make it easier to attract sponsors and foreign players. Spacing this further away from the closed British Championship might encourage more UK dan players to enter both events.

In Summary

I would like to see tournament attendances by UK dan players increase. I do not think the current BGA Calendar is encouraging this. Rather than tinkering, I think it needs a radical overhaul. Please contribute your views.

COUNCIL PROFILE: PAUL SMITH

Paul Smith

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I learned to play Go at the age of nine years, from the book “Discovering Old Board Games” by R C Bell. At first my only opponent was my friend Elliot Lamb. I bought a Go set from Fenwicks in Newcastle, which was very good except that the cardboard board had a big ridge down the middle which the stones always fell off. We played many games together, which usually involved large territories being invaded.

Several years later we found a copy of Iwamoto’s “Go for Beginners” in a bookshop, and in the back was the address of Newcastle Go Club. The

club met in a pub called the Bacchus. The strongest player, Paul Jordan, was 10k, and when I joined the club he estimated my grade as 17k. I was very pleased. Before long I had joined the club team in the Northern Go League, travelled with some of my school friends to the first British Schools Team Championship in Northampton, and played in my first tournament in Leicester.

In 1981 I came to Cambridge as a student, but was mostly too busy to play Go. I have lived in Cambridge ever since and now work as a computer programmer at Addenbrookes Hospital. My grade is nominally 2d, but it is probably actually significantly weaker. I am a fairly infrequent attender at tournaments and at the Cambridge Go Club. I help to run Cambridge Junior Chess & Go Club and also a lunchtime Go club at the school my children attend.

My wife and three children also play Go. In 2009 my older daughter Roella was selected as one of the players in the Japan-Europe Youth Go Exchange, and I was lucky enough to be picked as the UK team leader. My younger daughter Kelda and I have twice won the handicap section of the British Pair Go Tournament, the first time when she was only six years old. □

DAVID WARD'S PROBLEM CORNER: HINTS

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Here are the hints for the problems on page 9.

General tips to solving problems: first try to reduce eye space from the outside, only when that doesn't work look for placements. If the obvious placement almost works then treat it as a clue — perhaps it will work with a preparatory forcing move.

Specific tips

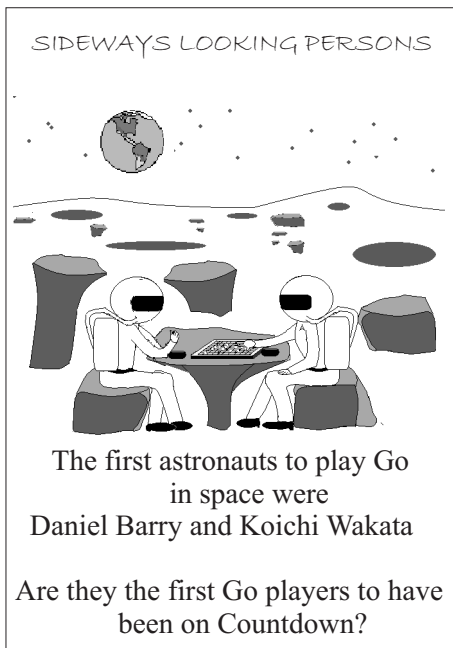
A: look for the eye stealing tesuji — all then follows on.

B: First a forcing move, then you will see why they say “there is death in the hane”.

C: Follow the general tips in order.

D: An often-used sacrifice technique of giving up two stones to steal the second eye.

The solutions are on page 38.



TONY ATKINS ON COUNTDOWN

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I am a great fan of Channel 4's programme Countdown, nowadays watching every show. For years I had been encouraged to watch every series finals by my late parents, but had never taken up their suggestion to apply to take part. The nearest I got to appearing was a quick glimpse of me in the audience during a recording late last year. At the same recording my friend Roger Edwards, the Chess arbiter at Frodsham Chess and Go Weekend, and I rose to the challenge and collected application forms. These were duly sent off and we both attended and passed auditions early in 2011. Roger was selected to appear on the show first and won three games, shown over the Royal

Wedding weekend. If he had won five he would have met me in his sixth game.

So on 13th April I went to the old Granada Studios in Manchester for the recording. My first game (to be shown on voting day, 5th May) was against Scottish lass Jennifer Strachan, who had beaten Roger's vanquisher in the previous game. For each show I wore Go-themed polo shirts, the first one being a WMSG (World Mind Sports Games) Beijing 2008 British Team shirt, thanks to Toby Manning. Moreover, the interview with the presenter, Jeff Stelling (JS), at the start provided a good chance to promote Go to the viewers.

JS: Now Tony joins us from Earley in Reading and he is a Go Teacher. Um, Tony, what's Go?

TA: Well, for those people who are familiar with the second dictionary definition of Go, they will know that it's an oriental board game, about 3000 years old. It ranks alongside Chess and Draughts and other games of skill, but it's a ... very interesting game.

JS: How long have you played for?

TA: I've played for more than 25 years.

JS: Oh, OK. Tony is the current Secretary, in fact, of the European Go Federation. Er, and he's played in the likes of Japan and Korea. Now he's captained the winning British Go Team in the US in 1994, and he says he would love to open a British Go Centre. So it's all Go Tony!

TA: It is. Yes, absolutely.

After the stress of the interview, I got off to a rocky start and did not even manage one away on the first numbers game, so I was 28–13 down

at the first advertisements. Then in round 5, an eight was fairly easy to spot, but then I relaxed the eyes and let the letters rearrange themselves

and came up with a nine. Then two rounds later, Jennifer had a nine disallowed, though similar to a valid nine. This seemed to shatter her confidence. I then solved the second numbers game and spotted some Countdown classic words to be 43 ahead already by the final round, the conundrum. And what do I like? I knew after 15 seconds and buzzed it to score another 10 points. So the final score was 42–95, but no century and, as the maximum score was 145, I could have done better!

A short shirt change later and I have moved to the champion's chair. This time I was against Jordan Humphries, a lass from Northern Ireland, whose brother Jamie had won two shows earlier in the series. With the aim to get one of everything, I had one word disallowed (using a phantom letter). However I solved all the numbers games and found some good words, including one that made guest Alistair Stewart say "Hats off to FEDORAS!". Jordan solved the conundrum very fast, but I ran out winner, 91–74.

Now the problem was, it was after nine in the evening already and a quick drink with Helen and Martin Harvey, who had been cheering from the audience in their matching polo shirts, was not enough time to unwind. Thus when I got to bed in the hotel all I could see was letters and numbers in my head. After about one hour of fitful sleep it was breakfast time, before wandering over to the studio for an early start. Isobel Ridley had replaced Helen in my fan club, but would my sleepy head do them proud?

The third show interview allowed a chance to talk about why I had never been to China, despite the WMSG. I was playing against Cliff Barnes,

a dreadlocked and lip-pierced pub landlord from Brighton. Would he be as evil as his Dallas namesake? My numbers brain was definitely asleep for the first two parts (and I was a little distracted by having met the guest star Gloria Hunniford), but I spotted some good words that put me ahead for a while. However I missed an eight and went into the final numbers game ten behind. Much to Cliff's annoyance he failed to make the target and so we went into a crucial conundrum tied at 71 each. However he cracked it in less than five seconds to win, retiring me to the audience for the rest of the day.

In the next show Cliff Barnes had to play Tom Barnes (no relation), a Barnes-stormer of a game. The game hit the news headlines as the conundrum was PNECRISIS, set by a Blackpool fan poking fun at the fortunes of Preston North End. Tom won and went on to win the maximum of eight shows and be third seed for the finals. If I had beaten Cliff I could probably have beaten Tom too. This would have been a shame as he deserved his place in the finals. Nevertheless I was happy to settle for 13th place in the series (just behind Roger in 11th).

I was able to go to the finals, though only in the audience, so did see the end of Series 64 in the flesh. I understand my appearance has prompted other Go players to apply, and try to follow in the footsteps of me, Bill Brakes, Hugh Williams, Charles Bockett-Pugh and 2003 series-winner Chris Cummins, who was a Cambridge University Go Club member at the time, and hopefully promote Go some more.

To see reviews of my shows go to www.kisekigo.com/countdown.html

TIMIȘOARA

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Timișoara (pronounced Timmy Shwarer) is not much like Bucharest. Bucharest is a big, brash commercial capital city. Timișoara is a regional capital; a city bigger than Swindon but smaller than Bristol, with a centre full of fine old buildings, having an odd but beautiful mix of architectural styles. There are three main pedestrianised squares with restaurants and cafés, museums, theatre/opera house, churches and cathedrals, and shops and hotels. There are parks, flowers, trees, and a river with row boats and pedalos. The atmosphere is happy and relaxed. I can't really speak about the suburbs, but the centre is really nice. I have just spent a week there. Why?



At the back end of April I found an email in my spam folder, evidently sent to most British Go clubs, advertising the “Walter Schmidt Cup” — a weekend tournament — in Timișoara in May. I'm not a big overseas-tournament person; not counting the Isle of Man, I've only been to one US congress and a tournament in Lyon, which I had to leave early. So I smiled and thought “Yeah, right!” But I'd heard of Timișoara; it's where the Romanian

revolution started, and I idly looked at their blurb. There was a direct flight to Timișoara on a low cost airline — good! The accommodation was really cheap — good! I started to think about it, and then started to think seriously about it. Why not?

So I said to my wife (Stella) that I was half toying with the idea of going to a Go tournament in Timișoara. Quick as a flash she asked, “Can I come?” So we looked into it, and ended up with a Thursday flight out (horribly early) from Luton, coming back a week later (even more horribly early), and a city centre hotel that looked OK, and I finally entered the tournament.

As we were checking into the hotel, Cris Bratu, the organiser, happened to come in to drop off some information for us (we'd told him where we were staying) and we ended up being given a city tour. We were made to feel really welcome. On the Friday we just wandered around a bit, enjoying the city, and located the venue, which was just a few minutes walk from our hotel; pretty central.

On Saturday the tournament started, with about 100 players. Apart from me, the foreign representation was a few Serbians and a Hungarian — the borders of those two countries are close to Timișoara. There were lots of younger players; probably well over half must have been between 10 and 25, and probably 85% were kyu players. The venue was pretty good, although not perfect — there wasn't much seating space or facilities for game analysis outside of the tournament room, but importantly it

was at a pleasant temperature despite the 28-degree heat outside.

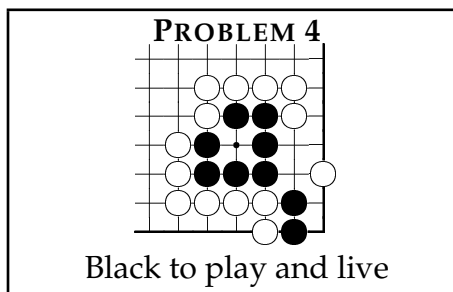
Cris ran the tournament very well, although all the rounds started a bit late. There was one game before a late lunch, which I lost to another shodan in an exciting battle where one of us was always going to lose by a lot; it just wasn't clear who until quite late. Then I lost to a 1k; she just outplayed me all the way through. Finally I managed to win against a 3k before heading off to the sushi bar (10% off for Go players) and a chance of a simultaneous game against the visiting Korean 8p professional, Kim Sung-Rae — but I wasn't selected in the draw for that.

The next day, Stella headed off for a few days in Bucharest, leaving me to jump from playing a 3k to playing a 2d, Viorel Arsinoaia, who happened to be the club president. I managed to beat him, partly because he was a bit stressed at helping to run the tournament, and then I lost my last game to a 3d. So, 2/5. Not brilliant,

but I've done worse, and it was interesting. I particularly enjoyed having my opponent in one game, about 30 seconds before overtime, decide he needed a cigarette and so stop the clock while he went for a smoke. The style of play was a bit different too, I thought — everyone seemed to place a lot of emphasis on big strong walls and outside influence; more so than most UK players.

Viorel took his revenge the next day. We sat on the terrace outside a restaurant in one of the squares for hours, drinking beer and coffee, eating lunch, and playing Go. I didn't win a game. The day after, I sat in the same place and played Cris. I'd be proud to report that I won every game, which I did, except for the fact that he is 6k and I have a dan certificate, and they weren't handicap games. Ah well, at least I did actually win!

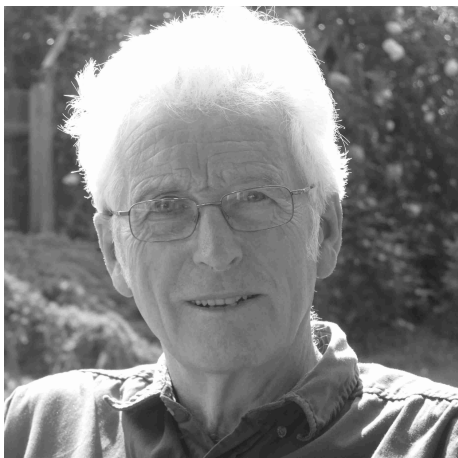
One more day, with a returned-from-Bucharest Stella, visiting some museums, and then home. Must do it again.



COUNCIL PROFILE: COLIN MACLENNAN

Colin Macleannan

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I first encountered the game of Go way back in the 1970s. A colleague at work, a keen Chess player, one day brought in a Japan Airlines leaflet about the game, and suggested we try it out in our lunch break. So that is what we did, using squared paper and drawing circles that we shaded or not to represent stones. It was a cumbersome way to play and we did not get far, although we did begin to realise that building walls enclosing watertight areas in one part of the board while your opponent did the same in another part was probably not the best strategy. But it was enough to stimulate me to visit a Go club that was currently meeting in a house in Croydon. It was a long way from where I lived, and I only managed a couple of visits before family pressures took over and I relegated Go to the “RIP” section of my brain.

Years later, after I retired from the Department of Transport (I was a traffic engineer), I took over the Chess club at our local junior school which my youngest daughter attended. Her initial interest in the game soon evaporated, but by that time I was locked-in to running the club and it was several years before I escaped! I thought about taking up the game myself, but a couple of visits to the local Chess club discouraged me. At this point I recalled my brief encounter with Go all those years before. A trawl on the Internet, which we had just installed, and I was soon visiting the Twickenham club on a regular basis. The rest, as they say, is history.

“But why the Council?” I hear you ask. Well I guess the real answer is that, as a London player, Geoff Kaniuk made me feel guilty by looking for someone to run the London Open. I didn’t feel I could offer that as Christmas is a busy time of year when you have a family, but I saw the solution when Jon Diamond put out his call for nominations to the Council. I would volunteer for that instead! I suppose you could call it “pre-emptive volunteering”!

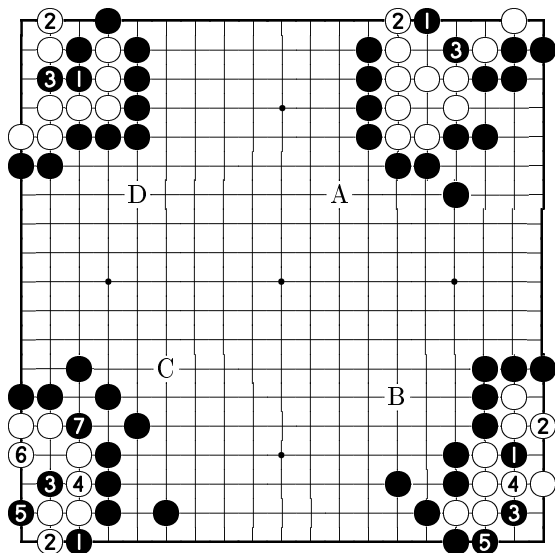
I do think it is important for UK Go players to have an active national organisation to encourage the development of the game in Britain. I hope I can make a useful contribution to this. □

DAVID WARD'S PROBLEM CORNER: ANSWERS

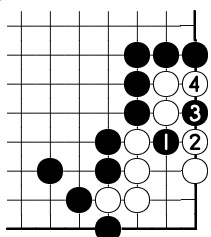
David Ward

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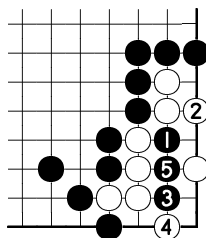
Here are the solutions to the problems on page 9.



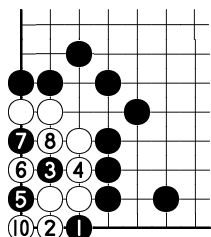
Variations



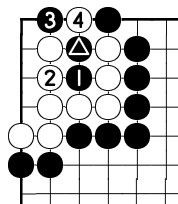
⑤ at 3
Variation B1



Variation B2



⑨ at 6
⑪ at 6
Variation C

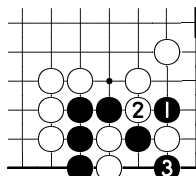


⑤ at the marked stone.
Variation D

SOLUTIONS TO THE NUMBERED PROBLEMS

The .sgf files for these problems, showing a fuller set of lines and including failures, are to be found at www.britgo.org/bgj/issue156.

Solution to Problem 1

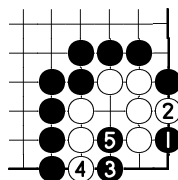


Dia. 1

This is the only place to start, but looks wrong as White can play atari on the next turn.

The second Black move is the clever move as it traps the 2-2 stone, and if White captures one stone, Black can play straight back and capture three (snapback).

Solution to Problem 3

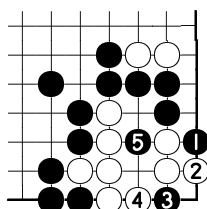


Dia. 3

In this case White does have to play inside at once. If White tries to stop the black stone escaping then he is short of liberties.

Reducing the eye space first does not work this time, nor does playing the jump at the bottom first.

Solution to Problem 2



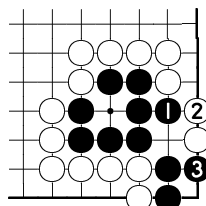
Dia. 2

The correct way to kill here is to restrict the eyespace first and then play the vital point inside.

It looks like this will make two eyes, but the wedge catches White short of liberties. Any other White move leads to a dead shape.

Playing the wedge first is no good, nor is playing the second move first.

Solution to Problem 4



Dia. 4

This is the unusual move that makes Black live. Black can make the corner eye, and White cannot separate the two. The other possible first moves here either lead to just a false eye or a quick capture of the black stones. □

EXPLANATION OF JAPANESE TERMS

Where space permits less common terms are explained in footnotes. If no explanation is provided then take a look at:

www.britgo.org/general/definitions

www.britgo.org/bgj/glossary.html

or search senseis.xmp.net/.

Please let the Editor know if the term is still not found. One of the experts can then write an article to explain it ☺

COPY DATE FOR THE NEXT JOURNAL

The copy date for the Autumn issue of the Journal is **19th August**.

Please send your contributions to journal@britgo.org.

The Editor will be glad to discuss the suitability of any material you may have in mind.

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COLLECTING GO IX: BADGES

Tony Atkins

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The publication in May of the 23rd and final part of "Hikaru no Go" in English prompted me to get out my Hikaru badges. I bought these in Germany where Hikaru was very popular with children. In addition you could buy small figurines of Hikaru, Sai and your other favourite characters to add to your collection, but I declined the offer.



This picture shows a miscellany of badges made for various European Go Congresses, the London Open and the British Go Congress. The black London Open ones were made by Russians, who brought them over to raise funds.



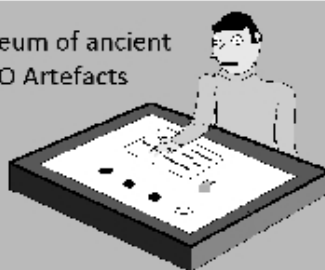
They also sold ones with dan grades on, but some thought these were gradist, with one well-known 6d buying one for his young daughter to wear. The Nottingham ones I made myself for the BGC in 1992, and I spent many happy minutes feeding the blanks into the badge machine and pulling the handle. Other club badges have included the West Surrey corner position badges, which you may have seen Steve Bailey and others wearing.

The third photo shows three American pins and one shaped like the Japanese "Go" character. They don't have the usual British safety pin attached to the rear, but are more like drawing pins with a protective clasp cover.



SIDEWAYS LOOKING PERSONS

Museum of ancient
GO Artefacts



These ancient stones found in a recent excavation show how little the game of GO has changed ...

... the fact that there were 3 black to 1 white stone is exactly the same ratio as modern stones go missing