

Amsterdam, December 21th, 2003

Dear members,

I'm very happy with the enthusiastic reactions from all over the world about the founding of the Ken Whyld Association (KWA). Our founding assembly in Braunschweig was successful; the Wolfenbuettel library which we visited beforehand was very impressive; imagine a room with tens of thousands of books bound in white vellum, with handwritten titles on the back – all written by Duke August of Braunschweig, also known as “Gustavus Selenus”! I'm very grateful to the family Klittich-Pfankuch and their co-workers at the auction house in Braunschweig who organized the day!

During the meeting, with about 40 members taking part, the founding of the KWA and the proposed board were approved. I wish to thank all of you for the trust given to us.

Thousands of emails have been exchanged before the foundation, many of which our secretary, Michael Negele, has written or read. Without him, no KWA could have been founded!

The website www.kwabc.com proved to be a good advertisement for the KWA. Our thanks must go to Ralf Binnewirtz who is doing great work!

My intention was to surprise the founding members in Braunschweig with the gift of a reprint of (The) Chess Reader, edited by Ken Whyld (Spring 1955- Christmas 1963, Midsummer 1965). Vlastimil Fiala made a reprint of my bound volume (according to Michael Negele, the reprint looks better than the original) at cost price (thank you, Vlastimil!) but unfortunately, the German customs took charge of the books. The remainder hasn't yet arrived in Amsterdam, so friends, please be patient!

For distribution and payments, the KWA will try to make use of the “snowball” principle”: a local representative will distribute locally and receive payments from the members of his homeland.

Please don't forget that the main information exchange will go by email and our website.

In order to execute the database project properly, we need advice from experts. During the weekend of January 16-18 (during the famous Corus tournament – formerly: "Hoogovens") in the Netherlands, a meeting of the board and expert(s) is planned with publication of (more) technical details. Please look regularly at the website for news. Some details and a request of cooperation, are given in Supplement 1.

The database project.

I would like to call your attention to public chess libraries which are in danger.

The separate chess room in the Royal Library in The Hague is threatened with closure. A reorganisation has been announced to move part of the chess literature to a "new space provided in the reading room on the second floor". In effect, most books and magazines will be moved to storage rooms which will severely reduce the possibilities for efficient research. See the Supplement: *Reading rooms in development.*

The Max Euwe Centre receives fewer subsidies, has less income from sponsors, while its costs are rising. I will publish more details in January on our website. Also, the Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek at Kiel needs our attention after the death of Horst Lüders.

I would like to end with a translated quote from a recent letter by Dr. Jean Mennerat, the famous French collector: “I wish you good luck with your important initiative for a general bibliography of chess literature. I've been dreaming about it for a very long time. I can only spur you to work steadily - but what an enormous labour!”

If all members cooperate, it must be possible!

Thank you,

Chess and Season's Greetings,

Jurgen

Supplement 1 The database project.

A short sketch of the current state and ideas.

The database which, at the moment, only contains (a part of) the catalogue of the Van der Linde – Niemeyer collection in the Royal Library in The Hague – but with some additional editions added when available in my own collection – will be improved soon. On the one hand, the interface with the user will be improved with a password (and a mechanism for obtaining a password). For the catalogue – a shortlist of titles - the password will be freely available upon request, for the bibliography – a longlist which may contain all kinds of information (of copies of) each title – for members only. We intend to start with a rough bibliography by entering catalogues and bibliographies that we can easily obtain. Please let us know if you have a catalogue of your collection (preferably in digital form) or other digital catalogues or bibliographies available! This way, the database will contain lots of partly duplicate and conflicting entries. These entries will all be *unconfirmed* entries. The main work will be the *integration* of these entries. We will need experts to authorize entries, thus changing their status into *confirmed* entries. We reckon on the help of the members to *improve* entries and add new entries. In particular, members can add the fact that they *own a copy* of a title already entered in the database and may *add* or *improve* information using their own, particular copy; and they can *add new titles* to the database. (The status (confirmed, unconfirmed) of such member contributions will depend on the kind of contribution given and the authority of the source).

On different levels, advice from experts is needed.

Experts for the confirmation of entries (subject and language experts)

On the definition of (entries in) the database:

- what fields do we need/want.

- specification of the relations between the fields

- how to structure the data (e.g. in different tables – which?)

The technical requirements and specification of the server with the database and its connection with the website and the users of the database (and the possible use of mirror sites).

The interface with the users (GUI) on webpages [but other possibility may be an independent programme to be distributed to members]. Which menus do we want and need?

Publication of (more) technical details is planned for the weekend of January 16-18, as indicated in the letter to the members. Please look regularly at the website for news.

Supplement 2 The Hague Royal Library: Reading rooms in development.

Below the text of an announcement of the Royal Library with my translation into English; a short comment is added.

Leeszalen in ontwikkeling November 2003

Verplaatsing schaak- en damcollectie

Op dit moment bereidt de Koninklijke Bibliotheek een herinrichting van de leeszaal voor die in de loop van 2004 haar beslag zal krijgen. Om een betere indeling van de beschikbare ruimte te bewerkstelligen, is besloten om alle aparte, aan één collectie gewijde leeszaal op te heffen. Voor de schaak- en damcollectie betekent dit sluiting van de huidige leeszaal. Hiervoor de plaats komt een nieuwe voorziening in de leeszaal op de tweede verdieping.

Op deze locatie zullen naslagwerken en de zichtkasten met lopende tijdschriften een plaats krijgen. Bovendien zal er plaats worden gereserveerd voor de gebonden jaargangen van de belangrijkste schaak- en damtijdschriften. Deze staan nu deels in open opstelling op de huidige leeszaal en deels in het magazijn. Dit betekent een verbeterde beschikbaarheid ten opzichte van de huidige situatie.

Een deel van de monografieën zal niet terugkeren in de nieuwe opstelling, maar naar het magazijn worden verplaatst. Daar zullen deze – vaak kwetsbare – boeken onder de juiste klimatologische omstandigheden worden bewaard. De boeken kunnen via de catalogus worden opgevraagd en in de leeszaal Bijzondere Collecties worden geraadpleegd.

De schaak- en damcollectie zal eind december 2003 tijdelijk worden gehuisvest in de leeszaal Bijzondere Collecties. De definitieve verhuizing zal in 2004 plaatsvinden.

Wij houden u op de hoogte.

Voor verdere inlichtingen kunt u zich wenden tot drs. Chantal Keijsper, hoofd van de Afdeling Informatie & Collecties, telefoon 070-3140439.

Reading rooms in development November 2003

Transfer of chess and checkers collection

At the moment, the Royal Library is preparing a redesign of the reading rooms which will be executed during the year 2004. For a better use of the available space, it was decided to close-down all separate reading rooms which were dedicated to a single collection. For the chess and checkers collection, this means the closure of the currently used reading room. In its place, (a) new space is provided in the reading room on the second floor.

There, reference works and open book cases with running subscription will be placed. Also, room will be reserved for bound years of the most important chess- and checkers magazines. Part of these bound magazines are currently in the separate reading room, the other part is in the magasin (stocks). This move will give an improved access with respect to the current situation.

A part of the monographies will not come back in the new reading room, but will be moved to the storage rooms. There, these – often vulnerable – books will be stored in the right climatized environment. These books can be applied for using the catalogue and then be read in the reading room Special Collections.

The chess and checkers collection will at the end of december 2003 be moved to the reading room Special Collections. The final move will be made in 2004.

We will keep you informed.

For further information you can contact drs. Chantal Keijsper, head of the Department Information & Collections, tel. 070-3140439.

Comment [JS]: The move will mean that a part of the collection (the “hidden” part of the collection, apparently monographies) will be moved to the storage rooms and only can be viewed in *another* reading room (Special Collections). This means that the reference works will NOT be available while studying the “hidden” books! Moreover, it is not clear if the titles applied for will be (as a rule) be available in a reasonable time. Furthermore, the possibility for easy and cheap xeroxing is also threatened. Finally, chess researchers will find it more difficult to discuss matters since they may disturb other non-chess researchers sharing the reading room.