

First progress report of “The Amsterdam Group”

Dear chessfriends,

It may have been a long time since you received a message about “The Amsterdam Group” – or this initiative may be still be unknown to you!?

For those new to the subject, the original introductory letter and questionnaire are appended (see the appendix 1, 2). (Questionnaire as attachment, too.)

Below we discuss the progress, current state and intentions of “The Amsterdam Group”.

First (introductory) meeting

On Saturday, November 30th, 2002, a meeting of chessbook collectors was organized by Jurgen Stigter in his house in Amsterdam with the aim of uniting the collective knowledge and information of all collectors and chess libraries. In the meeting, the need for an association or foundation was acknowledged. For lack of a better name, we decided to use the name “The Amsterdam Group” (inspired by the name “Königstein Gruppe”) as “working title”.

Michael Negele and Jurgen Stigter were designated as the provisional board to prepare the official founding of the “The Amsterdam Group”.

Questionnaire

The next step (apart from preparatory announcements and contacts to collect (email) addresses of prospective members) was to compile an introductory letter and a questionnaire.

A follow-up meeting of the provisional board (together with Hans-Jürgen Fresen) was held at Wuppertal for further discussions and detailing.

(2002-12-21, see photo on the website <http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Jurgen.Stigter/>)

Michael Negele prepared and distributed the questionnaire soon afterwards.

The response was somewhat disappointing, many persons apparently postponed completing the questionnaire and still have not completed it. If you haven't completed the questionnaire (yet),

please send the completed questionnaire!

First evaluation of the returned questionnaires

The received reactions were positive, but sometimes critical of the bibliographical project. The membership fee of 50 euro was supported, but a joint association to CCI (Chess Collectors International) not.

CCI was seen as badly compatible with „The Amsterdam Group“. Some people indicated willingness to act as bibliographical expert, but mostly only if they find the time for it. For a better evaluation, additional completed questionnaires are needed!

Address lists

Lots of addresses have been collected, but we will not distribute these addresses, certainly not without consent of the addressees. But we look forward to any information on people that may be interested. Distribution of our letters and questionnaires is warmly approved.

Bibliographical project and website

The bibliographical project is still in a preliminary phase; there was another “technical meeting” at Amsterdam in February 11th (Stigter, Negele and people of “Scutala”).

A temporarily website was established, the design of a more definitive version is being prepared by Ralf Binnewirtz. The final design will be discussed at the end of August at Amsterdam. The homepage will be contain a sample database consisting of (part of) the catalogue of the Van der

Linde – Niemeijerian collection in the Royal Library in The Hague, with additions (and some corrections) by Jurgen Stigter. On this project, Jurgen Stigter held a lecture in Marburg, see next paragraph.

Marburg presentation

In April the VI. Board Games in Academia Colloquium was organized at Marburg by the Spiele Archiv. At the colloquium on April 8th, Jurgen Stigter presented the bibliographical project of “The Amsterdam Group”. The presentation was well-received, “sheets” can be found on the website <http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Jurgen.Stigter/>. Publication of the lecture is planned.

Foundational meeting in Braunschweig / Wolfenbüttel

On June 22nd there was another meeting of Jurgen Stigter and Michael Negele at Hans-Jürgen Fresens home (and garden) at Bochum, just after the 42nd Klittich-Pfankuch auction. There the decision was made up to plan the foundational meeting of our group for November, on the Friday afternoon before the next (43rd) Klittich-Pfankuch auction. The definite date for the meeting will be determined in September. The auction house (Roger Klittich) has gratefully offered to organize the meeting and also to sponsor it!

By the end of August, Michael Negele, Jurgen Stigter, and Ralf Binnewirtz (and maybe some others) will meet at Amsterdam again to discuss the proposal for the foundation. In particular, we have to design the articles and a proposal for the complete board. We are still in talk with a person to take the treasurer function, which we prefer to be Dutch (to simplify financial arrangements). We will keep you informed!

Death of Kenneth Whyld

On July 11th, one of our first supporters died. See for reactions on his death:

<http://www.bcmchess.co.uk/news/obitwhyld.html>

Because the work and interests of Ken Whyld have a large overlap with the intended activities of the Amsterdam Group, we intent to bring his name in connection to “The Amsterdam Group”. But this has to be harmonized with the intentions of the Whyld family.

Follow-up

In September 2003, a new progress report will be distributed. We also intend to publish news on the website <http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Jurgen.Stigter/>

Hope to hear from you soon, and to meet you in November at Braunschweig / Wolfenbüttel!

Chess greetings,

Jurgen Stigter (Jurgen.Stigter@inter.nl.net)

Michael Negele (michael.negele.wtal@t-online.de)

Appendix 1. The original introductory letter

Dear Chess Friends,

Please forgive the intrusion, but having received your addresses from several chess friends (Tony Gillam, Horst Helten, Vlastimil Fiala, Bob Jones et al.) we trust that you will be interested in the following project.

The idea of compiling all available chess related bibliographic data in a (huge) database has been mooted. Jurgen Stigter and others were discussing the foundation of a association of chess book collectors to do this.

A first meeting at Jurgen Stigter's home in Amsterdam on November 30th 2002, following the chess bookmarket at the Max-Euwe-Centrum, was joined by some 20 colleagues including Juri Averbach, Ken Whyld, Walter Simon (Vienna), Peter Holmgren (Sweden), a Dutch contingent with Hans Engberts, Joop Jansen, Harold van der Heijden, René van der Heijden, Bert Corneth, Gert Timmerman, and a German one with Harald Balló, Ralf Binnewirtz, Horst Lüders, Hans-Jürgen Fresen, Norbert Fieberg, Ralf Binnewirtz and Michael Negele.

Our initial questions:

1. Would you be interested in cooperation / participation ?
(What are your main interests in chess literature ?)
(What are the main languages you are able to read / write ?)
2. Should we include your name and address into our database ?
3. Who of your contacts could be interested in joining this group, too?

The Chess Bibliography project

Five years ago we would also have written: mission impossible.

But now - using intensively the internet and email contacts - there will be a realistic chance of realisation.

Very important will be a solid definition of the requirements for the database.

Jurgen Stigter is a computer-expert, so he knows a lot of this business (and also people who are able to do the jobs needed). He is quite confident that the integration of existing databases (like of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Hague or may be of the " Kieler catalogue", too) could be a good starting point for the new database. Also some bibliographies and catalogues of private collections are available for integration into our database.

But the main (and very time-consuming) work will be to obtain full title descriptions - since many catalogues like L/N only give (very) short ones – and to find the missing titles.

The main idea is really to create a world wide web of chess collectors (and other specialists) who are using the same "mask" that will be defined (and designed) to complete existing datasets or to create new ones.

This should be done by "country administrators" who are able to do a transcription of the original title (and some other informations) into English.

There should be also a kind of "theme-specialists", such themes could be e.g. problems, studies, magazines, columns, chess in non-chess-literature and so on.

So there will be a fixed matrix of organisation to do the job.

A lot of points are still to be considered, e.g. transcription of non-"latin"-script-titles; comments should be in principle in English, but other options are possible - using the mother-language of the administrator and later translation.

Amsterdam-group

Jurgen Stigter and the others of the initiating meeting are aware that it is a significant task to bring this project to run - but also a very advantageous one.

In a few days a questionnaire will be send to chess book collectors, (chess) antiquarians, chess sellers, big (chess) libraries and others to clarify who is interested to take part in this project (and / or in the association to be founded).

Maybe this Amsterdam-group will be associated with Chess Collectors International (as e.g. the Königstein-group), which would be helpful to use an existing world wide organisation. A yearly membership fee (like \$50) could be used to finance the software and server costs for the database, and other activities like an additional leaflet to the "The Chess Collector" magazine, organisation of meetings and conferences, own publications like reprints of old chess literature or non-print publications (e.g. CD-ROM).

Yours sincerely
Jurgen Stigter & Michael Negele

(provisional board of the "Amsterdam Group")

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Appendix 2. The questionnaire.

Dear chess friend,

Amsterdam-group is the “provisional name” of our (at the moment) small team of chess collectors, chess historians, librarians and antiquarians who have met at Jurgen Stigters home end of November 2002.

Answering this questionnaire will help us to meet your interests much better.

(Be sure, your address will be kept confidential. Please tell us if you don't like your email-address being forwarded.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

1.

Yes, I would like to join the Amsterdam-group

No, at the moment I don't have the opportunity to join the group

2.

Would you like to attend our follow-up meetings

Yes, please inform me about the meetings in near future No

3.

Chess bibliography-project

Do you like to work with us in the project Yes No

(Short description of our proposal in the attached letter)

If yes, what are the special fields you would like to contribute to:

(e.g. French chess literature or Correspondence Chess or Endgame studies &c.)

Which are the main languages your are capable to read / write:

Would you like to be involved in any technical questions concerning the database and its content ?

Yes No

Would you regularly visit a webside giving some (or all) informations of this database

Yes No

4.

Would you support any reprints / CD-ROM publishing activities of our group ?

Yes No

5.

Are you interested in any kind of printed periodical publication of the Amsterdam-group ?

Yes No

6.
Are you interested in any barter of chess literature at an organized market ?
Yes No

7.
Are you interested in (electronical) auctions of chess literature organized by our group ?
Yes No

8.
Do you think it should be an aim of this group to support public chess book collection like
Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague; Max-Euwe-Centrum, Amsterdam; Kieler
Landesbibliothek or others ?
Yes No

9.
Some points to consider for future kind of organisation
Your preference would be:

Amsterdam-group as an independant association, may be sited at Amsterdam

Amsterdam-group as part of Chess Collectors International
(like Königstein-group)

No association but only a loose contact via Internet and Email

Do you think a yearly membership fee of 50 € could be appropriate
(Mainly to be spent for activities given under No. 3 to 6)

Yes Too low Too high

10. Any additional suggestions / remarks from yourside

Thank you for answering our questions, hopefully we will meet or keep contact via email.
[Best to send back as a filled up word.doc attachment or as a pdf-scan of the filled up
questionnaire. If you like to send by FAX, please use 0049202362635 (Negele)]

Yours sincerely

Jurgen Stigter (Amsterdam) and Michael Negele (Wuppertal)

("provisional board" of the Amsterdam-group)