

2023-01-28

Tony Gillam turns 80 years old



Tony Gillam, Wijk aan Zee 2016

On 20 January 2023, our member, Anthony John Gillam turned 80 years old. Mostly known as “Tony” Gillam, he started his career as chess author in the 1970ies with a couple of well-received books for beginners. At the same time, he worked with one of the leading English chess players Bernard Cafferty, issuing in 1977 *Chess with the Masters*.

Probably inspired by this cooperation, Tony dugged deeper into chess history and started the Chess Player series in Nottingham. Starting with a modest 50 copies of the Schiffers v. Chigorin Match 1897, the series on “Rare and Unpublished Tournaments and Matches” grew until now to an impressive number of 138(!) publications *Historical Chess from The Chess Player* (chessbooks.co.uk). He thus contributed considerably to making available hitherto unknown games and tournaments: I can only assume how many hours of difficult research, of reviewing chess magazines and consulting public libraries it must have cost him to edit books about virtually all tournaments between 1870 and 1945. In my personal research about this period, I could not have “survived” without consulting Tony’s great work on the matter!

On top of that, Tony contributed a number of biographies on lesser known or researched masters, by either writing himself or giving colleagues a platform for publications. In this respect, his Mannheim and the

Interned Russians 1914 (2015) set a new standard in the field. Tomasz Lissowski, another esteemed member of our society, could fill important gaps on Polish chess history with his biographies on Przepiorka, Winawer and the young Najdorf, thanks to Tony's series. Tony further contributed to new discoveries in US history by offering a new series from Joost van Winsen, focusing on Mason and Mackenzie and chess in New York 1866-1880.

Further to being a prolific writer and publisher Tony supported the interaction between chess historians world wide and became an active member of our society! In particular, he helped other members to polish their English works, which was greatly appreciated.

On behalf of the CH&LS I wish to express my best wishes to his birthday and our deep gratitude for his tireless work on disseminating important rare and unpublished material about the royal game.

Frank Hoffmeister 22/1/2023