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This is the official newsletter of the British Othello Federation, edited by Graham Brightwell and Peter Bhagat. Any correspondence concerning the newsletter should be sent to:

Graham Brightwell, 42, Rossiter Road, Balham, London SW12 9RU. Tel. 01-675-8873, or
 Peter Bhagat, 86, Devonshire Mews, Devonshire Road, Cambridge, CB1 2BB. Tel. 0223 62323.

Correspondence concerning the general activities of the Federation should be sent to:

David Haigh, 62, Romsey Road, Winchester, Hants., SO22 5PH. Tel. 0962 53826.

The British Othello Federation is an independent body. Annual membership costs £1 for the first year and £3 thereafter. Ten years membership is available for £25. A foreign subscription costs £5 per year, or £45 for ten years. Cheques or postal orders payable to the Federation should be sent to David Haigh.

Notation.

a1	b1	c1	d	e	f	g	h1
a2							
a3							
4							
5							
6							
7						X	C
8						C	h8

The board is split into eight columns and eight rows. Each column is a vertical line of eight squares, labelled with a letter, from 'a' for the left-hand column to 'h' for the right-hand column. Rows are numbered from '1' for the top row to '8' for the bottom. This is the opposite convention to that used in chess. Thus the top left corner is called 'a1', and the bottom right is 'h8'.

A square such as b2, one in diagonally from a corner, is known as an 'X-square', and a square such as h7 adjacent to a corner is a 'C-square'.

Compass directions are sometimes used when describing regions of the board, so for instance the area of the board near to h1 is called the North-East corner, and row 8 is called the South edge.

Editorial *by Graham.*

I regard the newsletter as being due mid-January and mid-July. But it's now mid-August. This is basically my fault, as I was away for large parts of June and July. But anyway, here is a new edition of the newsletter, and as you can see it's bigger than ever, with 32 action-packed pages. I'm also delighted to say that lots of people contributed to this newsletter—particular thanks to Mike Handel for several meaty articles, but he was by no means the only one.

Have you ever considered organising a tournament? If not, next year would be a good time, as we could be a little short on venues for Regionals, particularly in the North and West. There's surprisingly little involved: you just need to find a room which can cope with about 20 players, borrow some chess clocks from somewhere (sets can be arranged), be available to tell people how to find the tournament, and run it on the day (we can give you large amounts of advice on that). If you're interested, please let me know before the beginning of December.

We want to encourage you to join up for more than one year at a time—it saves on paperwork and postage, and we don't lose you! If you join for ten years, it'll cost you just £25 (£45 for foreign subscribers).

Othello: Brief and Basic is still available from David Haigh at £5 per copy. Buying this book *will* improve your game (unless of course you have a copy already).

About The Cover.

The editors of this publication feel that far too much attention is paid to silly stuffed toys in Othello. Readers will be glad to note that we shall not stoop to such levels. A further expression of our thoughts can be found on page 26.

The 1990 National Championships *by Peter Bhagat.*

29th September	2pm	Reception and informal Quickplay tournament
	4pm	Annual General Meeting
	6pm	Dinner
30th September	9am	National Championships and Challengers Tournament
	6pm	Presentation

All events will be held at the University Centre, Mill Lane, Cambridge. (This is the same venue as for the Cambridge Open.)

The Championship weekend has come to Cambridge this year. We try to make it a fun weekend for all members with the friendly quickplay (10 minutes per player per game), a meal (costing about £5) on the Saturday, and a Challengers tournament alongside the Nationals on the Sunday.

The AGM is your chance to find out how the Federation is run and to suddenly find yourself helping to organise it. The debates are usually quite lively.

The National championships are open to those players who have qualified at one of this year's regional tournaments, and also to the winner of last year's Challengers tournament. If you have not qualified you are still very welcome to enter this year's Challengers tournament which is held at the same time as the Nationals.

The top three players in the Nationals will qualify to represent Britain in the World Championships which will be held in Stockholm from the 3rd to the 5th of November.

Cheap accommodation is available. A double room in a guest house can be arranged for about £15 per person. Anyone bringing a sleeping bag will be put up for free.

If you wish to come please contact Peter Bhagat with details of when you are arriving and what sleeping arrangements you would like made. Ring 0223 62323 or write to 86, Devonshire Mews, Devonshire Road, Cambridge. Maps of Cambridge and travel advice are available.

OK. You've just discovered this game called Othello, and you want to find out more about it How? Reading this newsletter is an excellent start, and this article should further point you in the right direction. Here's some advice on how to improve your play.

1. Buy the book *Othello: Brief and Basic* by Ted Landau. [Available from David Haigh at £5 – Ed.] This is an excellent and easy-to-read introduction. If you want to find out about the strategies behind this fascinating game, there is no better starting point than this.
2. Subscribe to this newsletter. Also an excellent and entertaining read. In particular I refer you to some of the back issues, which have very informative introductory articles. In *Feinstein A Go-Go* (Jan 1990), the Rockinghorse article is a superb beginner's guide (provided that you can stomach the bad taste). In *Nine Hot Spleens* (Dec 1987), there are two very good articles: 'Brightwell v. Ralle game analysis' and 'For the Beginner' by George Greaves.
3. Find a playing partner. If you want to improve rapidly, then a regular and enthusiastic playing partner is vital. Preferably of similar ability to yourself.
4. Play in as many Othello tournaments as you can. Britain is the strongest nation for Othello outside Japan, so don't expect much from your first few tournaments. But don't get disheartened! You are sure to learn more from every loss than from any victory, especially as Othello players are a nice bunch of people who will be delighted to show you where you went wrong. Take advantage of these free lessons.
5. In tournaments, write down the moves you make, so that you can go over the games later. A must if you want to see the mistakes made by both sides, you will learn to eradicate your own errors and to take advantage of your opponents'.
6. Learn Othello notation, given on the inside front cover of every British newsletter.
7. Play through any games that appear in the newsletter. Think through every move. Imagine where you would play, then compare with the actual move. Questions you should be asking yourself include: Who is winning? Why did he/she play there? What is the plan for both sides? Experiment: try out your own ideas. [“When I first learnt the game, I got absolutely nothing out of playing through expert games.” – J.F.Feinstein (just in case you thought you were the only one). But he persevered ...]

Now onto some specifics.

The Opening. Black's first move leads to the same position wherever you play. The only difference is the orientation. Let's assume black plays e6. Now white has three choices: d6, f6 and f4.

d6 – The Parallel. This opening is useless, just don't play it!

f6 – The Diagonal. In general, this leads to more complicated positions than f4, so I would not recommend you play this one either. If your opponent plays the diagonal, then I suggest you play 3f5 4d6 5c5 6e3 and now you can choose between 7d3 and 7e7. Unfortunately, there's no such thing as a simple opening, but at least in this line of the diagonal mistakes are less likely to be disastrous.

f4 – The Perpendicular. Recommended if you are white. Typical lines: 3e3 4d6 5c5 6f3; 3c3 4c4 5d3 6d6; 3d3 4c4 5e3 6d6.

It is worthwhile remembering these lines, because you aren't going to learn much against a better player unless you are still in the game at move 10.

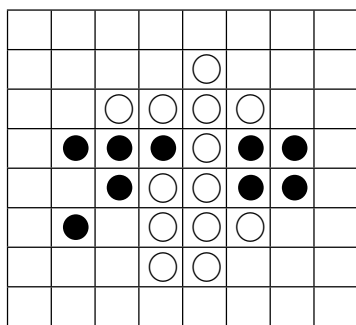
The Middle Game. On a simple level, the middle game is about setting up and playing good moves for yourself, whilst trying to force your opponent into playing bad moves, e.g., giving up a corner. The number of good moves you have depends on the number of external discs your

opponent has. Therefore try to take interior discs only. Having pieces in the centre will give you good moves, and your opponent none. There are no particular squares that should be played on: each position has different demands. But remember that X-squares (one square in diagonally from a corner) are to be avoided, and C-squares (adjacent to a corner) are weak.

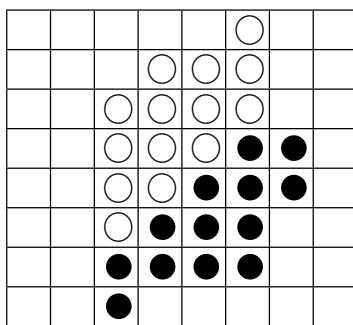
To take an edge is to make a trade. You are saying: “I don’t mind ultimately having difficulties in the endgame, in exchange for you having no good moves now.” Taking edges does tend to limit the choices of your opponent, but in general they are bad things to have. The main reason for this is that edge pieces make it difficult for you to make central moves. If your opponent takes an edge, consider yourself to have achieved a minor goal towards winning.

There are three basic types of middle game.

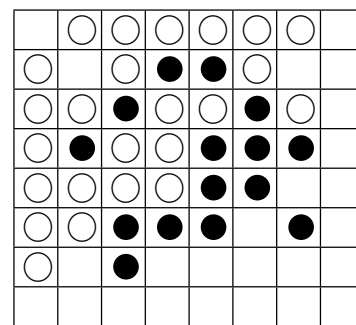
1. **The fluid game.** Both players have lots of moves, and the battle is to get the more central position.
2. **The double wall game.** Where all your moves are on one side of the board, all your opponent’s on the other. Both players strive to “chip away” at the wall, trying to force the opponent to break through, whereupon their game collapses.
3. **The edge-grab game.** One player has edges, but the other player has very few moves. The player without edges is trying to force the opponent to give him/her new moves before giving up a corner. These middle games are the most complex in Othello and the beginner would be wise to avoid them at all costs.



The fluid game.



The double wall game.



The edge-grab game.

The Endgame. There’s not much advice I can give here, every endgame is different. Corners become less important as the endgame draws near. Try to get the last move in every corner region, and if you can’t do this, make it costly for your opponent to do so. Don’t seal yourself off from corner regions, especially if that region has an odd number of squares.

Forthcoming Tournaments.

Doncaster Mini-tournament

2pm, 18th August at 17 Newhall Road, Kirksandall, Doncaster, DN3 1QQ.

This will be held at the home of Iain Barrass. It is being organised by his mother Sue Barrass who can be contacted on 0302 882476. If this newsletter arrived too late for you to attend, then, er, sorry.

Northern Trophy Re-Inaugural Tournament

2pm, 24th November at 49, Balmoral Road, Doncaster.

After the disturbing events reported elsewhere about the Northern Fox a new trophy will be purchased and a tournament held to decide the first champion. Mike Handel will referee. More details from Eileen Forsyth on 0302 364626.

The 1990 Regional Tournaments *compiled by Peter Bhagat.*

The first regional of the season was held at the London School of Economics on March 10th, writes *Graham Brightwell*. I was a little disappointed at the turnout of 13, although some people had come from quite a distance: David Stephenson from Leeds, for example. However, what the field lacked in size it made up for in strength, featuring no fewer than four past and present National champions.

Current champion Joel Feinstein was off to a particularly good start, with pre-lunch wins against Garry Edmead, David Stephenson and Peter Bhagat. Also on 3/3 was that dangerous oldcomer Imre Leader, who had had a less demanding first session. Imre beat Joel, but then lost to Pete in the next round.

Meanwhile the shock of the tournament was unfolding as previously unheralded John Bass beat Joel 34–30. Alec Edgington had moved quietly to 4/5, sharing the lead with Imre and Pete, while a pack of players were one point behind.

Into the last round, and Alec's hopes of an upset victory were dashed as he lost to Pete. Imre beat David, and Joel clinched the third spot by accounting for Jeremy Benjamin.

Pete and Imre scored 5/6, with Pete a convincing winner on tiebreak. Joel, Alec and Aubrey de Grey all scored 4; David, John, Jeremy and Garry scored 3. Behind them, Tim Wong made an impressive debut, tying with Lee Evans on $2\frac{1}{2}$, Keith Ringrose scored 2, and Graham Parlour finished on 1.

The change of venue for the Doncaster Regional proved very successful, says Eileen Forsyth, being cost-effective, quiet and with pleasant surroundings. The minor tournament was thwarted by rail works delaying two of the players and with 15 players "raring to go" it was decided to have just the major tournament.

Round 1 saw Joel Feinstein, Peter Bhagat, Neil and Ken Stephenson, Alec Edgington and newcomer Wayne Clarke from Hartlepool all winning their games. By round 2 David Haigh had arrived from Winchester, along with Leroy Moxon and Paul Taylor from Sheffield, thus ending the need of a bye. Round 3 saw Peter lose to Neil and Ken to Joel.

Neil Stephenson went on to win all his games and so was first with 7 wins. Behind him there was Peter Bhagat on 6 wins, Joel Feinstein and Mike Handel on 5 wins, Ken Stephenson, Alec Edgington, Robert Stanton, and David Haigh on 4 wins, John Beacock, Mark Wormley, Neil Parrish, Iains Barrass and Forsyth and Roy Arnold on 3 wins, Wayne Clarke and Leroy Moxon on 2 wins, Paul Taylor on 1 win and that very sporting player Sarah Parrish brought up the rear (the position I usually hold) and said how much she had enjoyed it.

It was decided to give the minor tournament trophy to Neil Parrish as he had the highest strength of opposition total, making it a good day for both Neils. Our thanks to Maurice Kent for so ably refereeing the tournament.

The next report comes from *Joel Feinstein*.

The 1990 Leeds regional was held at the University of Leeds. As the organizer, I would like to thank everyone who supported this tournament, which was the first regional to be held in Leeds for several years.

Twenty competitors took part. On their current form, Graham Brightwell and John Lysons were the pre-tournament favourites, with a strong challenge coming from the rest of the field.

After three rounds, three players had won all their games: John Lysons, Simon Turner and Mark Wormley. Mark Wormley is dangerously unpredictable, and had already beaten David Stephenson, Ken Stephenson and Graham Brightwell (see game report on page 28).

From this point on, John and Graham were both invincible (the random element in my pairings system kept them from playing each other) and finished first and second respectively.

Mark Wormley beat Simon Turner in round four, but then lost his last two games. Mark still came third on tie-break, and since none of the top three players had qualified elsewhere, they were also the three qualifiers. from the regional. Equal fourth on 4/6 were Mike Handel, Ken Stephenson, David Haigh (who won his last four games) and Aubrey de Grey.

Among those on three points was promising junior Iain Barrass. Iain had a nasty shock in round 5 when he was wiped out by Alec Edgington, but then showed great strength of character by defeating former British champion David Stephenson in the last round.

Four players were eligible for the beginners' trophy, which was won by Jim Hall of Leeds on tie-break.

Full results: John Lysons 6; Graham Brightwell 5; Mark Wormley, Ken Stephenson, Mike Handel, Aubrey de Grey, David Haigh 4; Crichton Ramsay, Alec Edgington, Simon Turner, Iain Barrass, Iain Forsyth, Robert Stanton 3; Martin Craven, David Stephenson, Samuel Gardner, Jim Hall, Sui Cheng 2; Phil Marshall 1; Eileen Forsyth 0.

The carrier pigeon expired before delivering its vital invitation to William Hunter to send us a report on the Edinburgh Regional. However I can tell you that keenies Guy Plowman and Garry Edmead were spotted there taking first and third places. David Stephenson was second. Winchester was next.

Those present in Winchester were Imre Leader, Peter Bhagat, Graham Brightwell, Aubrey de Grey, Tim Williamson, Alec Edgington, Jeremy Benjamin, Keith Ringrose, The Forsyths, Graham Parlour, and a newcomer—Stuart Routledge. *David Haigh* was the man in charge.

Graham B. started well beating Pete and Imre before lunch. Afterwards he lost to Aubrey, who also beat Pete using a daft opening. Pete then used the same opening to beat Imre.

Graham just beat Aubrey on disc count to win the tournament thanks to Aubrey refusing a crushing win against him for a 33–31 one. Aubrey, Alec Edgington and Tim Williamson qualified and Iain Forsyth came close.

The final scores were Graham B., Aubrey 6, Imre, Pete 5, Alec 4, Tim, Jeremy, Iain, Stuart 3, Keith 2, Eileen and Graham P. 1.

Ex-star Paul Smith refereed the Cambridge Regional in Pete's absence. He wrote the following report.

The East Anglian Regional was held in the usual subterranean dive below Trinity College. A special competition to find out who was the most inept at carrying tables up and down stairs was also laid on as an extra entertainment. In the absence of Joel Feinstein there was no clear winner in this event.

Fourteen seasoned players turned up for the Othello and one intrepid newcomer - Anne-Marie Clemence. No-one was taking any bets as Imre Leader prepared to record his umpteenth successive victory in a Cambridge Regional. With Graham Brightwell, Aubrey de Grey and Alex Selby also in attendance it looked like a surefire win for the Cambridge mafia. Little did they know that a new force had arrived in British Othello. The shocks began in the first round. Guy Plowman drew with Aubrey while Garry Edmead completely crushed Graham 63–1.

Meanwhile Imre was winning in his usual fashion. Alex also won and Jeremy Rickard, who beat Imre last year, lost to Alex's brother Matthew.

Imre had a very close game in round three only winning 33–31 against Alex. This left him clear in the lead.

In the next two rounds Imre won comfortably against Aubrey and with some difficulty against Alec. Garry and Guy were still making strong progress. Graham lost again and seemed to be slipping out of contention.

In the final round Imre won again while Alex lost to Guy, so Imre won by two clear points. Congratulations to Imre on yet another win here and to Guy and Garry on adding a lot of points to their ratings.

The full results were Imre 7, Alex, Graham 5, Guy $4\frac{1}{2}$, Garry, Alec Edgington, Helena Verrill 4, Aubrey, Matthew $3\frac{1}{2}$, John Bass, Jeremy Rickard, Jeremy Benjamin, Dilip Sequeira 3, David Moore $2\frac{1}{2}$, Anne-Marie 1.

Alex, Helena and Matthew qualified. I'm sure Aubrey committed some terrible misdemeanour in the restaurant afterwards but unfortunately I've forgotten what it was. The only disappointing feature of the competition was the distressingly low number of games lost on time. I can see I'm going to have to come out of retirement to rectify this!

The Eastbourne tournament clashed with the cup final (yes, football). At least, that was the excuse I had from one player. Apparently lots of other people found excuses too, and the turnout of 5 must have been a huge disappointment to the organiser, *Rodney Hammond*. One consolation for Rodney was that he got to play in the event, and qualified in third place behind Ian Turner and David Haigh. Rodney's son Ashley was one of the unfortunate non-qualifiers, along with Graham Parlour.

And so to Loughborough, where Jeremy Das was in charge. This time Graham failed to lose in the first round and continued to fail to lose all the way through, ending on 7 points. Behind him was Mike Handel 6, Mark Wormley 5, Garry Edmead, Iain Barrass, Phil Brewer 4, Robert Stanton, Roy Arnold 3 and Jim Brewer 1.

Iain and Phil both qualified. The final available place was between Robert and Roy. They had equal points, equal SOS ... and even equal discs. So they both qualified as well.

Robert Verrill qualified in last year's challengers tournament, so the full list of qualifiers is as below. It is pleasing to note that there are eight who have not previously qualified. They are Robert V., Guy + Garry, Matthew, Rodney, Phil, Iain and Roy. Congratulations to them in particular, and thanks to everyone who turned up at a Regional this year, especially the tireless organisers.

Qualifiers for the 1990 Nationals.

Robert Verrill	Peter Bhagat	Imre Leader	Joel Feinstein
Neil Stephenson	Mike Handel	Ken Stephenson	John Lysons
Graham Brightwell	Mark Wormley	Guy Plowman	David Stephenson
Garry Edmead	Aubrey de Grey	Alec Edgington	Tim Williamson
Alex Selby	Helena Verrill	Matthew Selby	Ian Turner
David Haigh	Rodney Hammond	Phil Brewer	Iain Barrass
Robert Stanton	Roy Arnold		

Quote of the year from Paul Smith:

"The subgroup seems to be being supplanted by the Othello Brat Pack."

Babić Mirko, of Yugoslavia, is the Director of the *International Correspondence Games Club*, which organises 5-player tournaments in Othello, as well as other games. Anyone interested should write to Babić at: Zagrebačka 47, 41 320 Kutina, Yugoslavia. Playing in one of the tournaments will cost you £2.

Rate Your Endgame by A. Composer.

Six endgame problems, some easy, some fiendish! In each case it is white's (your) turn and in each case there is only one move that leads to victory (provided of course that white plays all the right moves afterward). Write down the move you would play in each position, and compare with the answers on page 30 to find your rating.

	●	●	●	●	●		
	○	●	●	●	●		●
●	○	○	●	●	●	●	○
●	○	○	○	●	●	○	○
●	○	●	●	●	○	●	○
●	○	●	○	●	●	●	○
●	○	●	●	●	●	○	○
●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Problem 1.

			●		●		
○		●	●	●	●		
○	○	●	●	●	●	●	
○	●	●	●	○	●	●	●
○	●	○	○	●	○	●	○
○	○	○	●	○	●		○
○		●	○	●	●		○
	●	●	●	●	●	●	

Problem 2.

	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		●	●	○	○	○	○
	●	●	○	●	●	○	●
●	●	○	●	●	○	●	●
●	○	●	●	●	○	●	●
●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Problem 3.

		●	○	○	○	○	●
●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●
●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●
●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●
●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●
		●	○	●	●	●	●
		○	●	●	●		●

Problem 4.

●	○	○	○	○	●		
○	○	○	○	○	●	●	
○	○	●	●	○	●	●	●
○	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
○	●	○	●	●	○	●	●
○	○	●	●	○	○	●	●
○		●	●	○	●		●
		●	●	●	●		

Problem 5.

	○	○	○	○	○		
○		●	●	●	●	●	○
○	○	●	●	●	●	●	○
○	●	○	●	●	○	●	○
○	●	●	○	○	○	●	○
○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
	●	○	○	○	○		○
		○	○	○	○		

Problem 6.

Othello Addicts' Master Quiz by Ian Turner.

And another quiz. Ian Turner wrote to us about "The Parity Test" in FAGG. He thought it was "well biased in favour of the Cambridge Othello Set" and I'm glad that he's decided to do something about it by devising his own quiz. Ian was a member of the Federation before ANY of the Cambridge (bred?) players (with the exception of Imre?) and so the quiz is very difficult.

1. By what other name has Othello been known?
2. What is the name of the play to take a corner from this side position?

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
		●		○	○	○	
3. Where were the 1984 National Finals held?
4. Who is the current World Champion?
5. Who was the first British Champion?
6. Why is Othello called Othello?
7. Which well known DJ was once reported as being "Hooked on Othello?"
8. How many players took part in the 1980 National Finals?
9. Which nations' players competed for third and fourth places at the 1982 World Finals? (Who won?)
10. Who was the first British player generally acknowledged as playing a strategy of reducing the opponents options?

Answers on page 30.

Witch Doctor by Mug.

This article is split into three sections: an analysis of the game between David Shaman and myself (played in round 9 of the 1990 Cambridge International), an analysis of possible variations and a glossary. Hopefully this has made the article as smooth to read as possible. The variations are intended for the more experienced player but with any luck most people will be able to get something from the analysis.

53	23	22	20	21	24	25	58
54	40	26	19	17	18	57	47
39	14	15	12	2	10	29	38
35	16	1	○	●	7	9	32
36	27	6	●	○	3	8	44
30	42	11	13	4	5	41	31
37	52	51	49	33	28	46	56
60	59	50	43	34	45	48	55

David Shaman 30 Mug 34

This move grabs the *centre* and *checkerboards* white, giving me only one reasonable response: 8 G5 taking some centre back. We played a standard sequence until I (white) ran out of *book* after David's 17. (Figure A.)

	23	22	20	21	24	25	
		26	19	●	18		
	○	●	○	●	●		
	27	●	○	●	○	○	
		●	●	●	●		

A. White to play at 18.

would be a good idea to play A6, since David will find it hard to respond quietly on the west edge. Hence 28 F7. At 31 David uses this same structure to good effect.

		●	●	●	●	●	●	
			○	○	●	●		
		○	○	●	●	○	29	
		○	●	●	●	○	●	32
		●	●	●	●	○	○	
30		●	●	●	●			31
					28			

B. White to play at 28.

		●	●	●	●	●	●	
			○	○	●	●		
		○	○	●	●	●	●	
35		○	○	○	○	○	○	○
36		○	●	○	●	○	○	
○		●	●	○	○			●
37					33	○		
					34			

C. Black to play at 33.

33 E7 (Figure C) is more than a quiet move. It threatens H3 (where I have a *tempo*) forcing me to weaken my position further with 34 E8 (edges are bad things, you know). Now it is black's turn to find a plan. He is going to have to play on the west edge eventually, and he reasons that now is the best time, because 35 A4 doesn't flip B4, retaining some control on the west edge.

Things are getting tricky, and after the edge grab 37 A7 (keeping my options limited), the heat is really on. (Figure D.)

	●	●	●	●	●	●	
	40	●	○	●	●		
39	●	○	●	●	●	●	38
●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
●	○	○	○	○	○	○	
●		●	●	○	○		●
●				○	○		
				○			

D. White to play at 38.

	●	●	●	●	●	●	
	○	○	○	●	●		47
●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
●	○	●	○	○	○	○	44
●	42	●	●	○	○	41	●
●	52	51	49	○	○	46	
		50	43	○	45	48	

E. Black to play at 41.

Both 38 A3 and 38 A2 are no good: I can't allow black B6. instead I take my last tempo in the east i.e. H3. 39 A3 is worth playing to stop an annoying A2 from white at some point. I reply 40 B2, which poisons B6.

We are now into the endgame, and a fresh look is needed. (Figure E.) David took his time on this one, examining every aspect of the position. The position is tight. From here on, every move is either spot on, or a game loser.

White is short of moves with a huge ugly south east wall. Even worse, I am barred from the north east *odd region* - a terrible *parity* handicap. On the other hand, black has two big edges which poison otherwise good moves. His problem square is B6; he can't play it, I can. If the south west region opens up, this square will become a real thorn in his side. The only way that David can get there first is to play off A1 - A2, but then I have A8. Even more problems: he has no nice moves on the south edge. David rises to the challenge with 41 G6! setting up D8 for himself while allowing me only one decent move: that bugbear B6.

53	●	●	●	●	●	●	58
54	○	●	○	●	●	57	●
●	○	○	●	○	○	●	●
●	○	○	○	●	○	○	●
●	○	○	●	○	○	○	●
●	○	○	○	○	○	○	56
60	59	○	○	○	○	○	55

F. Black to play at 53.

My second *X-square*, 46 G7, may look like a blunder; after 47 H2 black is going to get H8 and H7. But I have time to play G8, avoiding the *swindle* and getting the last move in the south east.

The finale is shown in Figure F. The black plague strikes again! Black has all the control, but white gets the last move in all four (even) regions, turning back discs which black has just flipped. Strong stuff this parity. Strong enough to win me the game from a losing position.

Variations.

8 All other choices here are obviously no good, except 8 G6. See the game Rose v Ralle in MAAW for a typical, crushing continuation.

18 Both D2 and G3 need a reply, so white should respond 18 B6, a typical sequence is 18 B6 - D2 - D7 - B5 - A5. If 19 G3 then 20 D2 leaves black neither D2 nor F2.

24 After F1 - G1, G3 becomes instantly more attractive for black. So maybe this pair should be left until white can do something useful with it.

33, 35 or 37 Possibly black's best plan here is H5 - H7 (forced) - G6! Now the game simply wins itself: white is forced through the south wall while being poisoned in two directions.

38 Better than H3 is the startling B6! Jumping on the key square of the game and saving H3 for just a little longer. Black is cheated of A3 (and B6). Sample lines: 38 B6 - C7 - A2! - H5 - H7 - G6 - H3: Black is soon forced to A3. 38 B6 - F8 - A3! - A2 - D7 - G6 - H3 - H5 - G2 - D8 - C8 - B7 - C7 - H1 - H2 - B2 - A1 - B8 - A8 - (P) - G8 - G7 - H8 - H7. 34-30 to white.

38 B6 – D7 – D8 – H5 – H7 – G6 – C7 – C8 – B8 – A3 – B2 – A1 – A2 – G8 – B7 – F8 – G7 – H8 – (P) – H3 – G2 – H2 – H1. 36–28 to white.

46 Here 46 H7 fails to 47 A1 – A2 – B7 – A8 – D7 – C7 – G2 – H1 – H2 – G7 – H8 – C8 – B8. 35–29 to black.

50 I believe the game sequence 39 to 49 is perfect play but the “best” move at 50 is B7, leading to 51 A1 – A2 – A8 – C8 – C7 – B8 – H8 – H7 – G2 – H1. 33–31 to black. This, however, is rather an easy win. 50 C8 is one disc worse but the correct sequence is much more elusive.

55 The moment black takes the H8 corner he is lost. The reason is that white will, as a result, get the A8 – H1 diagonal. If first 55 A8 – B8, he can then take the 7 - row instead of the south edge with 55 H7. Now white has been wiped off the crucial A8 – H1 diagonal and the last move will take only the south edge: 55 A8 – B8 – H7 – H8 – G2 – H1. 34–30 to black. Instead he played 55 H8 – H7 – B2 – H1 – B8 – A8 getting a great last move himself but just not quite finding enough discs. 34–30 to white.

In conclusion offence is trickier than defence. David was ahead throughout the game, but his choices were always harder than mine. I only managed to hang on by complicating the position at every turn. The endgame (38 onwards) was fascinating, and I believe well worth study.

A great debt and many thanks are owed to: Eileen and Iain Forsyth, who made sure I didn't starve, Mark Wormley, who drove us all the way from Doncaster to Cambridge - and back, Graham, for sharing his Sunday breakfast, Pete, for offering to buy me lunch, Aubrey, for putting me up, and Elizabeth, who let me go in the first place.

Editor's Note. We at the B.O.F. offices aren't so keen on 41g6, which allows 42b6 quietly. Imre Leader suggests 41g2, after which play might continue d7-b7-c7-c8-b6-a1-a2-d8 and Black has won parity.

Glossary.

ACCESS The ability to play a legal move on a certain square.

CENTRE The central portion of the area so far played.

CHECKERBOARD An opening position where one side has very few, scattered discs on the periphery of the area played, providing that player with few legal moves.

EVEN REGION An empty, enclosed area of the board containing an even number of squares.

ODD REGION As above, but with an odd number of squares. To keep parity white must play into odd regions, forcing black to play into even regions. If white can't do this it is black who has parity.

LOUD A move which takes lots of discs.

OPENING BOOK That knowledge of tried and tested openings with which a player is armed before the game.

PARITY Essentially endgame advantage. The ability to get the last move in all regions of the board. Re: the last eight moves of the game.

POISON To poison a move is to make it undesirable because it flips unwanted discs. One can un-poison and self-poison moves.

QUIET A move which takes few, usually interior, discs.

SWINDLE When one player gets all or most of the moves in a certain (usually corner) region. The effect is usually devastating.

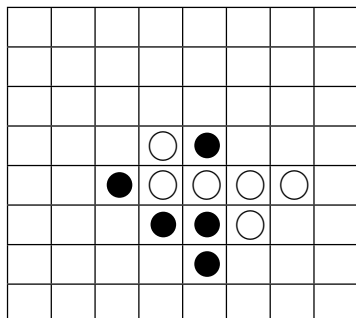
TEMPO Literally “time.” To get the last move in one area forcing the opponent to open up play elsewhere.

WALL A line of exterior pieces all one colour barring one player from legal moves in that area.

X-SQUARE A square diagonally adjacent to a corner.

The Heath Bat – Should it be banned? by *Graham Brightwell.*

If White should be so daring as to venture the Diagonal opening, he may well find his opponent playing the Heath: 1f5 2f6 3e6 4d6 5e7. Now, unless White cares to risk the Chimney 6f4, or the probably unsound 6f7, he has to play 6g5. Up until a few years ago, he could rely on his adversary playing 7g6, and the game would proceed along standard Heath lines, with one or other player usually winning. Then it occurred to some imaginative person to try 7c5—see Figure 1.



1. The Heath Bat

Actually, this move doubtless occurred to several people with various levels of imagination, and at least one computer with no imagination whatsoever, but the aforementioned imaginative person was the one who realised that 7c5 (a) was not strategically appetising, but (b) might actually be good.

Any well-brought-up Othello player will tell you that this is the sort of move that brings the game into disrepute: it does nothing for centre control, it starts to build a wall, it leaves White with several obvious replies: f4, f7, d7, c6, c7; and about its only merit is that it flips just one disc. All in all, it's the move that would be made by someone who had just that minute learnt about

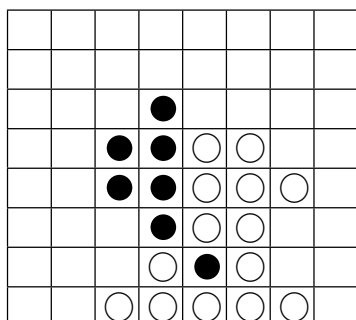
minimisation.

It turns out to be rather a good move. In fact, one of the reasons I gave up the diagonal last year was that I had no idea what to do against it.

There is a school of thought which says that there's no point trying to understand Opening Theory—you just have to learn it. Actually, you probably wouldn't get many people to say that explicitly, but the thought is there nevertheless. The problem is that an expert can sit with a board for hundreds of hours, and analyse an awful lot of variations of a particular opening. At the end of this time, that expert may not know whether the opening is good or bad, but (s)he'll know how to get a good position from the opening most of the time, from either side. Having done the analysis is the equivalent of being able to look ahead dozens of moves, without taking hours over it each time.

Several years of analysis and play by the world's experts suggest that a lot of lines in the Heath Bat are good for Black. It's difficult to say *why* that is: it's just that in five or six moves time, White doesn't have any nice moves. That doesn't tell us whether a move like 7c5 would be any good in other, extremely similar, positions: on balance, the well-brought-up Othello player still thinks they aren't.

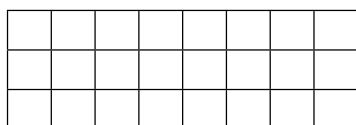
Let me give you an example. 8f4 looks like a good response to the Heath Bat, as it takes away Black's potential quiet moves to f4 and c6. But Black plays 9c4 10d7 11f7 12e8 13f8 14g8 15d8 16c8 17d3 and is, apparently, ahead. See Figure 2.



2. After 17d3.

Now hang on a moment, you say. *If* this position really is good for Black (and you'll probably admit it looks it), then White should play a different move 14, or 12, or 10. These things are possible, but what different moves do you have in mind? If you're a w-b-u Othello player, and you know that edges, especially unbalanced ones, are a Bad Thing, you might sneer at 14g8. But if White doesn't take that edge, then Black will, leading to lines like 14c7 15d8 16c6 17c8. This is hardly terminal for White, but I think I'd rather take my chances in the 14g8 line. Going back a move, 12c6 is eminently legal, and I suspect it may in fact be the best move. The usual continuation is 13c8 14e8, and now

I'm rather taken by Takeshi Murakami's move 15c7! Again, White is still kicking, but not very fluently. What about a different move 10? (See Figure 3.)



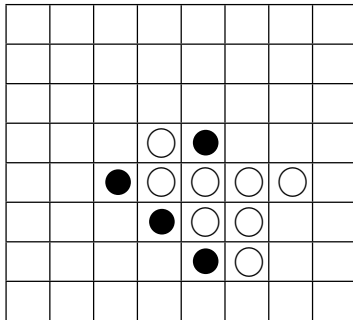
After all, White's problems in the above line seem to stem from his excess of discs after 10d7. Yes, but there isn't much else. 10b4 11c3 is unhelpful, 10e8 11d3 is dismal, 10d8 11f8 is depressing, 10c6 11c7 is different, but no better. When you look at it, 10d7 is a good-looking move which happens to be well-met by Black's fine sequence with 11f7 and 13f8.

I should say a couple of things in defence of 8f4. Firstly, the position in Figure 2 is not as bad for White as it may appear. White may have a lot of discs, but they're all in a block and it's hard for Black to cut across conveniently. Also, White's position is excellently suited to dramatic moves extracting almost all the

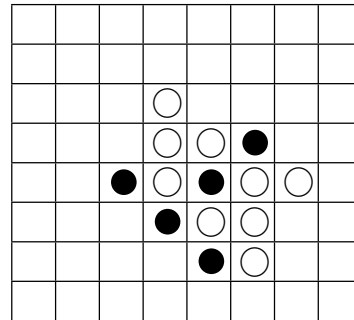
Black pieces.) White should not play 18c7 19e3, but should prefer 18c6. Now the game goes 19e3 20f3 (20e2 is a little *too* dramatic) 21g4 22e2. This is actually an extremely complicated position, but Black is almost certainly winning. Secondly, not everyone has been converted to 17d3, and a lot of players, especially in Europe, are still playing the older move 17g6. After this, . . . Well, there are are a lot of lines, but White isn't doing too badly.

Conclusion: 8f4 is probably a bad move. However, I almost guarantee that someone in the future will find a line in here that doesn't work out too badly for White—opening theory changes. Note that, to assess a move 8, we had to look at positions after 22 moves. I should say that this is an extreme case: the Heath Bat is a very narrow opening, which has been regarded as critical for a few years, and so the theory has had to be very carefully worked out.

Not everyone has given up 8f4 yet. But what do the in-crowd play now? The answer is that most of them have converted to 8f7. See Figure 4.



4. After 8f7.

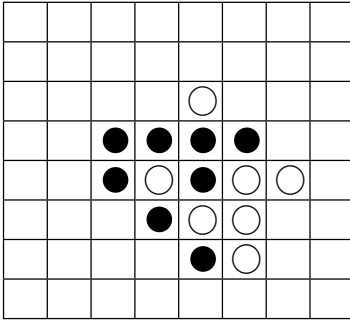


5. After 9f4 10d3.

At first glance, this doesn't look so great, as it does nothing about Black's quiet move to f4. If Black does play 9f4, White doesn't appear to have any attractive moves, but it turns out that 10d3, taking away the Black access to c6, is considerably better than it looks. (See Figure 5.) The theme is that Black is off the mini-diagonal f5-e6, and can't very well cut on. Thus 11g6 is well-met by 12e8, and now it is Black who has trouble finding a move. (In this type of position, it is actually better for Black to play g6 when it does turn the f5 disc.) In essence, White's wall in the SE is not such a bad feature, since Black can never conveniently play through it.

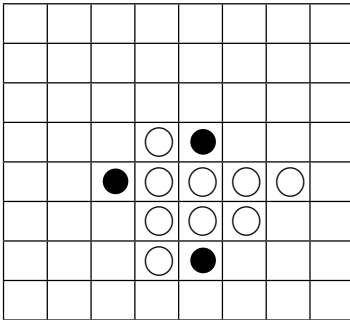
After 10d3, it may well be that 11c4 is better for Black than 11g6. This threatens both c6 and g6, and it seems to be worthwhile for White to fight this by playing 12e3. Strategically, this is terrible, as it turns several outside pieces and builds a solid wall; however, Black is again short of immediate good moves.

In fact, 9f4 is not the most popular response to 8f7. People seem to prefer the straggly 9c4. Now White should not play 10f3 11e3, but instead should take e3 for himself. Black plays 11f4 at this point, reaching the position below.

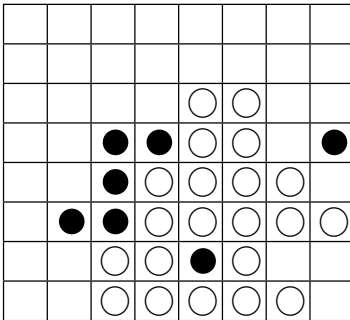


6. After 9c4 10e3 11f4.

The other move 8 which Heath Batsmen need to know about is 8d7. This is another old move, but I feel this one has lasted better than 8f4. See Figure 7.



7. After 8d7.



8. After that long line.

All of 12c6, 12d3 and 12f3 have their advocates here. My choice would be 12f3, I think. Again, this is a little brutal, but the aim is to keep forcing Black to play to the East, while leaving the mangy black structure to the West as it is.

The other plausible response to 8f7 is 9c6. The game would normally continue 10f4 11g6 12c4, and I suggest this is good for White.

As you can tell, the variations after 8f7 are much less well worked out than those after 8f4. I wouldn't like to say yet whether the move is really good for White, but it certainly seems to be playable.

As usual, Black is down to very few pieces, but those that he has are scattered. Everyone plays 9c4, and now White can choose either 10e3 or 10f3. Either way, Black's plan is the same as in the 8f4 line: play f7-e8-f8 and, when White takes, give him the five. Black also has the option of starting with (10f3) 11f4, after which White has nothing better than 12e3. In that case the mass of white discs is even larger. A typical line goes something like 10f3 11f4 12e3 13f7 14e8 15f8 16g8 17d8 18c8 19g6 20c6 21b6 22c7 23h4 24h6. I'm not sure I really like this for White, but it's better than perhaps it looks. See Figure 8.

Black is going to have to give White the East edge and then sacrifice against it with g7 to stay alive. Then White will be forced to break through, but he'll have parity, and one corner already.

If White wants to avoid this type of struggle, he can play c6 in response to f7, again as in the 8f4-line. There seems to be a consensus that it is better to prepare this by starting with 10e3 rather than 10f3. Play invariably goes 10e3 11f7 12c6 13c8 14d3 15c7 16e8 17f8 18d8 19g6, which is supposedly better for Black, although I'm not so sure myself.

All those who have fought through to here get to see some illustrative games, played by some of the world's top masters. There's also a vintage Brightwell loss.

58	56	38	54	29	36	41	53
49	57	55	23	22	35	52	42
34	48	33	17	19	20	26	47
37	32	9	○	●	8	21	25
31	30	7	●	○	1	6	24
59	46	18	4	3	2	28	27
60	39	40	10	5	11	45	51
44	43	16	15	12	13	14	50

Rose v. Shaman
U.S. Nationals, 1988

49	45	44	41	43	59	58	47
50	48	32	27	26	28	40	37
42	31	30	17	23	24	34	39
46	29	9	○	●	8	25	36
55	19	7	●	○	1	6	38
60	18	12	4	3	2	35	33
53	22	15	10	5	11	57	56
51	52	13	20	14	16	21	54

Murakami v. Marconi
World Championships 1988

54	52	32	46	58	33	55	50
59	53	43	27	29	28	49	45
60	39	18	10	11	30	31	36
41	40	14	○	●	9	15	38
44	17	7	●	○	1	6	21
34	20	12	4	3	2	26	37
48	42	23	13	5	8	51	56
47	35	19	24	16	22	25	57

Senchev v. Tamenori
World Championships 1989

46	51	38	28	49	50	36	60
39	41	37	23	34	33	58	57
27	30	15	14	10	12	32	40
42	20	9	○	●	11	31	35
43	19	7	●	○	1	6	29
44	25	18	4	3	2	13	48
45	47	16	17	5	8	53	56
52	59	26	24	21	22	54	55

Ishii v. Azuma
83rd Kanto Open, 1988

59	39	48	38	30	35	36	49
54	53	32	33	29	37	52	51
47	60	46	27	12	10	42	26
50	44	9	○	●	11	28	23
55	45	7	●	○	1	6	25
56	21	20	4	3	2	19	24
57	34	22	8	5	13	31	43
41	58	18	17	14	15	16	40

Ralle v. Brightwell
World Championships 1987

58	57	55	54	59	47	60	51
45	43	56	35	52	46	53	40
34	20	31	14	10	39	29	38
33	22	9	○	●	26	23	21
28	25	7	●	○	1	6	37
27	24	12	4	3	2	19	36
32	30	15	8	5	11	48	44
41	42	13	18	16	17	50	49

Rose v. Leader
World Championships 1988

Doncaster Meetings *by Eileen Forsyth.*

The monthly Tuesday meetings in Balmoral Road have continued throughout the Winter months with very pleasant and happy gatherings. We do appreciate the long journeys which some of the players make from as far afield as Nottingham, Worksop, Sheffield, Leeds and Selby [*Who He? – Jr. Ed.*].

We have decided to have a three month Summer break from June and then a change of evening commencing with Thursday, 13th September at 7.00pm—we do hope the change to the 2nd Thursday of the month will suit everyone.

Mini-Tournament – Saturday February 3rd *by Eileen Forsyth.*

This friendly tournament, with the Alpha group having a strong field of eight players including our current British Champion Joel Feinstein, got off to a good start with Joel and John Lysons each winning their games in the first two rounds.

Round three saw Joel and John meeting in a very exciting game which resulted in a 33–31 win to John. In the fourth and final round Joel beat Robert Stanton with John continuing his winning form against Mike Handel.

Thus John was the unbeaten winner with Joel second. Mike Handel was third, Mark Wormley fourth and Robert Stanton fifth, all on two wins with strength of opposition determining the order. Iain Barrass was sixth with Iain Forsyth seventh, both with one win, and Roy Arnold was eighth.

In the Delta group, the three players were joined by the ubiquitous Roy, with Roy emerging the winner.

Game Analysis *by Joel Feinstein and John Lysons.*

60	59	16	12	23	24	39	40
37	42	5	7	19	25	41	33
34	11	2	1	4	27	26	30
35	10	3	○	●	17	28	29
13	14	8	●	○	22	18	38
21	36	6	9	20	15	31	58
43	44	53	46	48	32	52	55
45	54	51	50	49	47	57	56

Feinstein 31 Lysons 33

This game was played in the Doncaster Mini-tournament reported above. Eileen asked the players to comment on the game. Here are their interleaved annotations, with Joel bold in typeface but cowardly in claiming that his notes are only informal.

There are only two places where duplicated comments have been removed! Great minds think alike?

5 C2 The Peasant opening - I was going to try a Heath Bat, but I chickened out!

5 Popular continuations for white now are 6 D6 or 6 C5. I've not known many other players try my continuation.

6 John always plays this line. It is supposed to be

inferior to both C5 and D6.

7 Joel chose the standard sequence.

10 G5 *Trying to split the black position and gain centre control. However black has two nice moves: B3 and B5.*

13 A5 Planning an eventual move to A6 after white plays B5.

15 F6 White has very few attractive lines.

15 F6! *Forces white to play another edge move and, at the same time, setting up for himself a quiet move in F4.*

17 F4 Keeps up the pressure. I thought that white now had to play 18 E7.

18 *A horrible looking move. The obligation of having to make a move has become a real burden for white.*

19 *Now at last white can play E6 and F5 making his piece on G5 not look so bad. If white tried playing E7 now to try and steal a tempo black would simply have both A6 and B6 with white having trouble actually getting into E6.*

19 E2 Unpoisons E6 but gives access to A6, which doesn't happen in every line.

22 F5! *The position doesn't look too bad for white now. Although white doesn't have a lot of mobility it looks as though black will have to give him some soon. However Joel can play this sort of position very accurately indeed and keep the pressure on white in the following play. Note that the black piece on F6 may give white a choice of moves but none of them are any good as they give black the nice response B6.*

22 onwards Black's piece at F6 is poisoning an otherwise ideal move at B6. White must not turn this isolated disc.

23 E1! *White can't afford to refuse the edge.*

26 White's last bid to stay alive.

29 H4 Planning to take the bad 3. I had to have a plan here: maybe not this one.

29 *Setting up G6.*

31 *At last white can take the F6 piece without giving black B6.*

32 F7! *Black must now either give white some mobility or take a C-square.*

33 H2! *The correct decision. The start of an ingenious plan which includes sacrificing the H1 corner but giving no quarter on mobility.*

33 H2 Is it good enough?

34 Cleverly planning B6 followed by H5. I'm not afraid! (Maybe I should be).

34 *Playing on the H-file is the sign that white is struggling for mobility.*

36 B6! *If white had played A7 then black at B1 would have given white all sorts of trouble.*

38 H5 As expected.

39 G1! *Black prefers to give up the corner than give away all his mobility. Notice that 39 G2?? would have failed to 40 H1 and white would have also had G1.*

39 G1. Is my master plan succeeding?

44 *White is in "only one move" mode and is forced to give away the A8 corner.*

45 + It is astonishing that from this position I end up with no pieces on the B-file (B1 to B8).

46 Tempting to play C7, which loses to D8.

46 D7! White wants to try to keep away from black's corner.

47 and 49 Too greedy too soon and cost black the game.

50 D8! *White has the parity and mustn't give it up. Therefore the plan is to use G7 in the odd region at the bottom right.*

51 C8 Inevitably loses the whole of the B-file due to the power of white's parity.

52 John spotted the "crushing" G7 which for some reason never entered my head!

55 H7 A last desperate attempt and makes things complicated again! But John's line beginning 56 H8 is good enough to win 33–31. Well played John!

The London Othello Club *by Graham Brightwell.*

Venue: The Grotto Club, 24, Golden Square, Nr. Piccadilly Circus, London.

Date: The third Wednesday of each month. (Next two meetings – Aug 15, Sep 19.)

Time: From 8 p.m.

The cost is £5 per annum to join the Grotto Club, but you can easily save this much on drinks! The London Draughts Association meets here every Wednesday, and invited us to make use of the premises. You can in fact turn up any Wednesday (there are sets available), but the third Wednesday is a night when (a) there are no serious draughts matches, and (b) you are guaranteed a game of Othello.

We've been running for a few months already, and seem to have a hard core of six or so members. Please come along and join us!

So far, we've just been playing friendly games at the Club, except that one Parrot match has been played (illegally, I maintain!). However, we do propose to hold a ladder-style competition, with the current head of the ladder holding, er, would you believe a cuddly toy? In this case, it's a "Top Dog," kindly donated by Keith Ringrose's daughter. Keith has prepared a set of rules for this competition, which appears (lightly edited) below. One novelty you'll note is that we're going to try using a handicap system.

London Othello Club – "Top Dog" Trophy and Othello Ladder *by Keith Ringrose.*

Introduction. The purpose of the trophy and ladder is to add to the enjoyment of playing the game and the atmosphere of the Club. Neither should be taken too seriously but the following rules will apply.

Games should be played at reasonable speed. In order to allow players to concentrate on the game there should be no casual conversation in the playing area. There should be no smoking during play.

All games will be played at the Club. Changes in position on the ladder and of handicap will be on the basis of a match of two games with the challenger playing black first. In the event of a draw, the position on the ladder and the handicaps will remain unchanged. A player will go to the bottom of the ladder if away three months running.

Handicapping System. The handicapping system is intended to be dynamic and to respond quickly to winning and losing. Each player will have a handicap which will be added to their disc count at the end of each game to decide who has won. Handicaps will be between 0 and 60; handicaps below 18 will be divisible by 2 and handicaps over 18 divisible by 3.

The committee will decide the initial handicap and position on the ladder for new players. At the end of a match of two games (unless drawn), the winner's handicap will be reduced by 2 or 3, and the loser's handicap increased by 2 or 3. The winner will move one place up the ladder and the loser one place down the ladder. Note that the two players in a match need not be adjacent to each other on the ladder.

The **TOP DOG** trophy will be held by the player at the top or nearest the top of the ladder who is present on the evening. The trophy will be displayed by the player and will be kept at the Club between Club nights.

If anybody wants any further details about the Club, please contact me (Graham Brightwell).

Now then, with any luck this article will have at least doubled our membership. Can we do the same for your club? We'd very much like to know about what goes on at other clubs around the country. Write us a short article about your activities and *we guarantee to publish it.*

The 1990 Cambridge Open *by Graham.*

An impressive array of foreign stars came to this year's tournament, including David Shaman from the U.S.A., Per-Erik Wählberg from Sweden, Anders Kierulf and Stephan Waser from Switzerland, and a selection of French, Italians and Belgians. British players came from far (e.g., Doncaster) and wide (e.g., Oxford).

In the event, Pete won again. This is Pete's tournament: he's won four times out of seven now, as well as a second and a third. What is his secret? My theory is that it involves playing well. It is not however my tournament: my most stirring performance ever was a fifth equal, and this time I scored a disappointing 6/11.

In the final, Pete beat Imre 2-1, and a watching David Shaman pronounced himself very impressed by the standard of play. France's Marc Tastet was the only foreigner in the top four, beating Helena in the 3rd/4th play-off.

Helena had an excellent tournament throughout, and was the only person to beat Pete in the Swiss. She lost 2-1 to Marc in the play-off: the scores of 42-22 4-60 56-8 are a fair reflection of the match.

So what happened to Mr. Shaman? David was playing almost as badly as I was, and ended in a tie for fifth with six others, including his most surprising conqueror: Mike Handel. Mike also had a win against his mentor Joel Feinstein. Joel wasn't too impressive, mind you. He opened with losses against Mascort and Plowman, and then had to suffer the ignominy of a bye. However, Joel wishes to point out that he did beat Jeremy Das.

Guy Plowman is a fairly recent arrival on the scene. His victims in this tournament included Alex Selby as well as Joel, and he has a Parrot game victory against Imre Leader to his credit as well. Obviously a force to be reckoned with. What is his secret? It all comes down to practice against a good opponent, in this case Garry Edmead. These two live a few doors apart in Wellingborough, and play most evenings, all evening. A little infusion of *Brief and Basic* and the British Newsletter, and there they are, frighteningly good.

Dominique Penloup has only been playing seriously for about two years, but already he is one of the top players in France. When he beat me in Milan it was something of a shock. When he beat Imre here (the only person other than Pete to do so), it was again a shock, and then he followed that up with a win over David Shaman. When he beat me in the last round everyone politely looked surprised. Since Cambridge, Dominique has continued to progress, and now has the distinction of being the first ever winner of an International tournament in Belgium.

Speaking of Belgium, Aubrey de Grey's flat is probably famous there by now. I can't be bothered to explain: go and visit Aubrey and find out. Alternatively, visit Belgium. Belgian Othello seems to be booming right now, with several exciting new players coming through.

As usual, there was a meal for huge numbers of people on the Saturday night. Unfortunately, the restaurant seemed (understandably) unprepared for our invasion, and hadn't put aside enough tables. Pete Bhagat blamed Aubrey de Grey (this seemed reasonable): Aubrey blamed Emmanuel "Chief Referee" Lazard (this was tortuous): Emmanuel blamed Pete (on general principles).

Actually, most of the things that went wrong were Emmanuel's fault. Pairing me against Pete in round 1, for instance. Most of the things that almost went wrong would have been Pete's fault: not photocopying the previous year's transcripts springs to my mind as something he almost omitted to do. (We shan't mention the '88 transcripts.) I was perfect throughout, of course, except when I got near a board.

Seriously, thanks are due to everyone who helped organise the event, principally Pete.

David Shaman is anxious to point out that, had Pete beaten Helena in the last round, he would have reached the play-off for 3rd place. I am anxious to point out that I always do better in the Autumn.

Full results. 1. Bhagat 10/11 (won final 2–1), 2. Leader 9, 3. Tastet 8 (won play-off 2–1), 4. Verrill 8, 5. Feinstein, Handel, P.Jeangille, Lazard, Penloup, A.Selby, Shaman 7, 12. Brightwell, di Meglio, Edgington, L.Jeangille, Kierulf, Mascort, Plowman, Wählberg 6, 20. Sequeira 5½, 21. Benjamin, Das, de Grey, Delfante, Edmead, Militello, Perotti, Rouillon, Waser 5, 30. Atkinson 4½, 31. Forsyth, Graham, Guercini, Haigh, Wormley 4, 36. Richardson, M.Selby 3, 38. Monk 2, 39. Arnold 1.

55	58	59	44	25	52	51	42
46	60	15	8	57	56	41	43
45	16	2	3	14	34	33	24
28	13	1	○	●	6	9	37
26	17	4	●	○	7	22	35
29	21	11	5	18	23	20	36
30	32	12	10	19	39	48	50
53	54	31	27	38	40	47	49

Bhagat 44 Brightwell 20

57	56	49	14	50	33	59	60
40	51	13	8	11	34	58	29
20	19	2	3	17	16	28	27
31	18	1	○	●	6	25	46
12	9	4	●	○	7	23	26
21	10	15	5	35	30	22	24
32	41	43	39	36	37	52	47
42	44	45	48	53	38	54	55

Leader 40 Verrill 24

54	49	36	15	33	42	48	51
39	50	11	10	20	47	52	35
46	24	7	9	2	22	13	34
18	16	1	○	●	12	19	25
27	17	6	●	○	5	14	30
32	37	8	23	4	3	41	26
38	40	28	29	21	55	44	31
45	58	43	59	57	56	53	60

Kierulf 27 Bhagat 37

50	60	29	28	32	33	53	51
27	59	19	21	10	30	42	54
25	22	8	9	2	6	15	18
46	17	1	○	●	3	23	38
24	31	4	●	○	12	13	37
26	11	20	5	7	39	14	16
47	44	34	43	35	40	56	55
48	49	45	41	36	52	57	58

Verrill 33 Bhagat 31

Bhagat v. Me. I was losing for pretty much the entire game, after Pete refuted my “experimental” 14. Then in the 40s, it suddenly turned out to be very tricky for him to cut the long diagonal. His 41 was a good shot, but I should have tried 42f1 (as recommended after the game by I. Leader). After I’d missed this I was always going to lose to a swindle in the NW.

Leader v. Verrill. Imre Leader got an excellent position out of the opening, but Helena hung on by taking edges, and Imre had to make some ungainly moves (e.g., 29, 41) to stay alive. I don’t think Helena made the best of her endgame chances—48d8 looks wrong, and Imre found a nice sequence to gain control.

Kierulf v. Bhagat. One of the hallmarks of a good player is the willingness to sacrifice to gain control. Here is a classic example from Peter Bhagat. Pete might have been ahead if he’d played routinely at 44, but I’m sure he was right to go for the kill. Later, 50a1 would have led to a very close endgame, but Pete chose to give up some more edge in order to get both moves in the NW.

Verrill v. Bhagat. Here too, Pete chooses to play actively: 42g2 more-or-less forces Black to walk into the Stoner trap on the West edge. But overall, it turns out that White has sacrificed more than he’s won, and Helena gives a good demonstration of what can be done without parity.

And here are the three games of the final. They need no comment (actually they do, but I have neither the time nor the space here).

53	50	51	15	57	37	54	52
60	49	11	10	28	39	47	44
48	33	7	9	2	24	13	38
18	16	1	○	●	12	34	27
20	17	6	●	○	3	14	41
19	31	8	21	4	5	25	42
26	55	30	22	32	23	43	58
56	46	29	45	36	35	40	59

Bhagat 15 Leader 49

47	48	27	26	24	29	56	57
37	38	28	25	10	23	59	60
34	20	8	9	2	6	22	39
36	13	1	○	●	3	19	43
33	11	4	●	○	12	15	42
32	31	17	5	7	14	40	44
35	50	30	16	18	21	55	45
51	52	53	54	46	41	49	58

Leader 29 Bhagat 35

43	40	41	54	55	49	48	53
45	44	35	39	38	37	56	32
46	22	36	12	2	10	33	31
57	24	1	○	●	7	9	28
30	29	6	●	○	3	8	23
58	34	11	13	4	5	20	27
59	42	25	18	14	17	47	26
60	52	19	16	21	15	51	50

Bhagat 34 Leader 30

Letters from Copenhagen from Our Correspondents.

From Mr. Peter Bhagat:

It was a warm and sunny day when I left Heathrow one May morning. It was a warmer and sunnier day when I arrived in Copenhagen two hours later.

Due to careful planning Joel chose an expensive flight from Heathrow rather than a cheap one from Manchester. This required a dash from Leeds after giving an early morning lecture.

More careful planning ensured that we were put up in a (very good) Youth Hostel instead of the advertised beach-side holiday home. I had to abandon organising the Cambridge Regional to those better placed than I (i.e., in the right country).

Joel sent us an almost coherent account of the Copenhagen Tournament so, unexpected by him, we have decided to publish it. Paragraph breaks have been added to protect the innocent, and sundry other minor changes have been made.

We would publish some games from Copenhagen but we haven't received any yet. [*A disgrace - Shameless Jr.Ed.*] [*To avoid letters complaining about the "in" nature of this newsletter, I am bound to point out that this is a reference to the 1988 Cambridge transcripts, which are "almost ready" ©P.Bhagat - Sr.Ed.*]

From Dr. Joel Feinstein:

Pete got off to a pretty good start, with 3/3, while I had only 1/3 (beating Jonny Justvik). Pete didn't lose on time to Vidar Aas. Unfortunately, Pete lost his next three games. At the end of the day, Pete and I each had 4/7, and had both lost to Marc Tastet. Karsten Feldborg had 7/7, Nils Berner had 6/7, Marc and others had 5/7. Vidar Aas and Serge Alard were both playing pretty well. I think Vidar had 5/7, Serge had 4/7. (I forgot to say that there were 23 people there, with more French than Danes. Frederieke Lelieveld was there, but revising hard for an exam on Tuesday.) I can't seem to remember who beat me in round 3. Anders Kierulf had beaten me in round 2, but he ended day 1 on 3/7, and the only point he got on the second day was a bye! True, he had to leave before the last round because the tournament was behind schedule.

Pete won the first round on day 2, while I lost to Emmanuel Lazard from a position that had seemed crushing, until he played a horribly good X-square.

At the end of round 9, Karsten had 9, Nils had 7, Erik Jensen and Marc had 6, Pete and I had 5, some other people had good scores but I can't remember who. Oh yes, I had to swindle Serge Alard: he played rather well against my Heath chimney, and I played an X-square at move 18 (I considered it at 16, but decided to be conservative). Pete and I now had to play: I played my favourite variant of the usual chimney (as white), Pete tried the same thing that beat me in the World Championships, but died horribly against my prepared reply. So I may have reduced Pete's chances in the Grand Prix. Karsten was busy losing his last two games, Nils was on 8/10, Marc and Erik on 7/10. Rather unfairly, I beat Nils in the last round, and he ended up 4th on tie break, in spite of having been second throughout the tournament.

Marc made the final, and Erik was third. I was 5th equal with Rikhard Andersson. Pete was 7th equal, along with Dominique Penloup, Jean-François Puget, Vidar and Serge. I remember now, it was Puget who beat me in round 3. The only time I have ever beaten him is still the game won in the endgame by a flipping error in Milan (but I did win a five minute game against him on the Monday).

Karsten won the final 2-0, the second game being a criminal swindle, the first being won, in spite of parity, by turning vast numbers of discs (this was, apparently, planned in advance).

There was a France v. Denmark five minute tournament in the park the next day, with me being an honorary Dane. Have I left anything out? If I have, it's probably because I can't remember it! [I blame ruthless editing - Ed.]

European Grand Prix Update.

Pete Bhagat and Augusto Brusca both scored 170 points from Milan. Since none of the top Italians ever come to Cambridge or Copenhagen (Shame!), that put Pete over 100 points clear of his rivals. Then on top of that he went and won Cambridge. Then he decided to skip the key Cambridge Regional and go to Copenhagen. This was all a fiendish plot to sew up the Grand Prix before Paris (where Pete traditionally fails to perform to his potential), but it came to naught when Pete scored a mere 10 Grand Prix points in Denmark. The current leaderboard reads Bhagat 380, Tastet 250, Feldborg 200, Brusca 170, Leader 140, Jensen and Berner 75, Verrill 60, and so on. It's even better for Pete than it looks, since only the best three scores for each player count. Basically, if Marc Tastet wins Paris then Pete needs 61 (60 to tie), and if Karsten Feldborg wins then his target is 31. We confidently expect Pete to make it four British wins in five years.

Yes, you've guessed it—it's time for the traditional Paris ad.

The fourth and final stage of the European Grand Prix will be held in Paris on the 1st and 2nd of September. Once again a large British contingent will be going. Why not join us. The main party will leave together on the Friday before, and return on the Tuesday. Travel costs about £50 and the entrance fee is about £15. Sleeping bag accommodation is available to all, or we can arrange a reasonably priced hotel.

Ring Peter Bhagat on 0223 62323 for details.

There will also be a France–Britain Othello match on Monday 3rd September with 5 to 7 players per team.

Further into the future, the EIGHTH Cambridge International Tournament will be held on the 16th and 17th of February 1991. Make a note in your diary. More details in the next newsletter.

Bassetlaw Open *by Roy Arnold.*

The first Bassetlaw Othello Open Championships, held at the MIND offices in Worksop on Saturday 30th June, attracted seven competitors.

In the first round all games went to form, with John Beacock playing particularly well to wipe out Leroy Moxon. During this round the game between Mark Wormley and Roy Arnold was interrupted by a photographer from the Worksop Guardian who took pictures of the game in its early stages.

The second round saw the first of two upsets when National Champion Joel Feinstein lost 33–31 to Mark. There were also victories for Iain Barrass (39–25 against Roy) and for John (48–16 against Eileen Forsyth).

The third round saw easy victories for Joel against Eileen and for John against Mark. This round also saw the other upset when Leroy beat Iain 37–27.

It looked likely that there would be a three-way tie for first place with Joel, John and Mark having three wins each. In fact that was the situation after Joel beat John 54–8 and Mark beat Leroy 53–11 in the final round.

Mark Wormley became the 1990 Bassetlaw Open Champion on strength of opposition, but it needed disc count to decide who would take the runner-up trophy. This went considerably in Joel's favour, which meant John Beacock was third. Fourth, fifth and sixth places were occupied by Leroy Moxon, Iain Barrass and Roy Arnold, and seventh place went to Eileen Forsyth.

		●			●		
		●	●	●	●		
○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
○	○	●	○	●	●	●	○
○	●	○	●	○	●	●	○
○	○	●	○	●	●	●	●
○		●	●	○	●		
		●	●	●	●		

Wählberg v. Feinstein

Anyway, without further ado, here is the first ever winner of an official B.O.F. competition. Ladies and gentlemen, will you welcome please, M. Marc Tastet!!!

Editor's Note. In the last issue, we published the position opposite. Joel Feinstein (White, to move) could have reached a play-off for a place in the world semi-finals if he'd won from this position. Joel's line was 44d1 45e1 46b7 47b1 48g2 49a8 50b8 51g1, which was not a success. We offered a year's free subscription for the most convincing analysis of a win for White from the diagrammed position.

Naturally, with such a valuable prize at stake, we were flooded with entries, and it was a very tough job to select the winner. It was an even tougher job to select the runner-up, and in the end we decided regretfully not to award the fabulous second prize.

Prizewinning Analysis by Marc Tastet.

First, there is the computer point of view: "All moves but one win at 44. The one that doesn't is 44b8." But here, nobody cares about computer analysis and I bet nobody wise would have played b8.

Meanwhile, there is the human point of view. At first sight, White is in a much better position: Black has lost access to many regions of the board. However, here this could turn out to be an advantage for Black. Let me explain: there are three even regions in which Black has no access (the northern edge and the two eastern corners). If White doesn't take care, he will have to play first into each of those regions, and Black will get the last move in all three of them.

To prevent this, I think White has to find a swindle in one of the two eastern regions. And actually, there is the possibility of a neat swindle in the south-east region. Try to find it by yourself before reading further. If you didn't find it, I can give you a hint: White has to use the fact that the diagonal c2-g6 is all black and the diagonal b3-f7 is nearly that way too, so as to play three of the four moves in the south-east region, leaving the corner to Black. Try again. As a last hint before the answer, White's idea involves sacrificing the western and eastern edges and getting the northern and southern edges with most of the central discs, which is usually about a 40-24 win.

White should then start with 44b7. The natural (and best) reply for Black is 45a8. But let's check the other options to make sure: if 45a2, 46a1 and Black has gained nothing; if 45b8, White has no difficulties in cutting the diagonal with 46e1, winning easily; if 45b2 then 46g2 is a diagonal grab and, when Black turns g2, White will be able to play both a2 and a1 saving the western edge and winning, even if meanwhile Black plays both a8 and b8.

Now, after 44b7 45a8 46b8, Black has only two moves: 47a2 and 47b2, and both turn b3 so that White will be able to play g8 without flipping f7.

Suppose first that Black plays 47a2. White plays 48h7 and Black is forced to play h8. Now, White can play 50g8 without giving Black access to g7. It's safer to play it now, (even if Black passes which is usually a bad thing for White) rather than wait and find that you've accidentally put a white disc on the b3-f7 diagonal. White continues with 51b2, and Black has to chose between 52a1 or 52b1—it doesn't really matter. Let's suppose he plays a1. Then White plays out the pair e1-d1. Now, he musn't forget to feed Black in the north-east corner, playing 55h2 (a typical feed move). The normal feeding sequence is 56h1 57b1 58g2 59g1 (P) 60g7: 25-39. However, here, White can do a little better after 56h1: he can play the last four moves with 57g7 (P) 58g2 (P) 59g1 (P) 60b1: 24-40. (If Black wants to prevent this with 56g2, it's even worse for him since the sequence 57h1 58g1 59b1 (P) 60g7 is a 23-41 win.) Note that White sacrificed the four corners and yet wins easily.

If Black had played 47b2, then again 48h7 49h8 (if 49a2 then 50h2) and the idea is the same as previously: 50g8 51a2 52h2 53h1 54g7 (P) 55a1 56b1 57g2 (P) 58g1 59e1 60d1: 25–39.

At move 44, White could also have played the pair h7-h8 before playing b7-a8-b8: it's just an inversion of moves. In the game as it was played (44d1 45e1 46b7 47b1) White can still win with the same swindle: 48h7 wins 27–37 after 49h8 50g8 51g2 52h1 53b2 54g7 55g1 56a2 57a8 58a1 59b8 60h2. Even after 48g2 49a8 50b8 51g1 as was played in Warsaw, the same swindle can still give White a draw: 52h7 53h8 54h1 55h2 56a1 57b2 58g8 59a2 60g7. But Joel played 52g7, Black 53b2 and White was lost.

I think this swindle was the key to the position: it was difficult for White to lose playing it and difficult to win without playing it.

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Spoilt by Choice *by Sid Cox.*

It is the year 2048. The latest Interplanetary Business Machines 31415926 hyper-computer, model 2718, with massively parallel self-optimising cellular architecture, implemented in crystal-scale superconducting integrated circuitry with features etched to the fineness of individual atoms by quantum tunnelling technology, running with a clock speed of 100 GHz, is about to play the Solar System Grand Master of Chess, who has been flown to Earth from Titan for this long-awaited match, a meeting of the two most able minds in the Solar System. Its programmers expect the hyper-computer to win every game.

The Grand Master, playing white in the first game, makes his first move. Pawn to King Four. The hyper-computer does not respond immediately. Five, ten, fifteen minutes pass. Has it decided to use psychological gamesmanship, after the manner of one Parker, a long-forgotten Othello player who was rumoured to have once used this technique against the British Othello champion? No; at last, a message appears on its response screen.

“I resign!”

What an amazing demonstration of the powers of the hypercomputer! It has completely analysed the entire game and concluded that there is no way that it can stop white winning.

Wait a minute though. How come this pinnacle of artificial intelligence has managed to lose its first game against a mere human? It is because a fatal flaw has unwittingly been built into the machine by its programmers. The flaw is that *it has assumed that its opponent has the same deductive powers as itself*, and will therefore be able to find the sequence of moves that will guarantee a win.

I apologise for using chess rather than Othello in this little story, but to my knowledge Othello players are not in the habit of resigning in hopeless situations, unlike chess players. However, I think it has a moral for Othello programmers and players.

Suppose your Othello endgame analyser has concluded that all of its available moves lead to a loss. How should it choose its move? Should it go for the best disc-count? I believe that, instead of doing this, it should choose the move that makes it most difficult for the opponent to win. Suppose there was a line of play in which, although it leads to a win for the opponent if he plays correctly, at each of his turns there is only one move out of the several available that will lead to his victory. One incorrect move at any turn by the opponent and the endgame analyser will be able to find the moves which lead to its win. If the opponent cannot analyse the situation perfectly, he will not necessarily be able to find the correct moves, and there is a real possibility of him going astray from this line. Therefore the best choice in an apparently hopeless situation is to make life as difficult as possible for the opponent.

The same rule applies earlier in the game where, after looking ahead and assigning some necessarily approximate figure of merit to all the situations reached, all available moves look equally bad. Unless a program is playing against itself, it is very unlikely that its opponent would

come up with equal figures of merit for all these situations. In the middle game it is less likely that the opponent would follow the envisaged lines, because of the differing and less-than-perfect (as opposed to potentially perfect in the endgame) analyses of the merit of the situations reached when looking ahead. Hence the correct choice is again to minimise the probability of the opponent finding the right line, by choosing the move which gives him the most opportunities for making a mistake.

	○	○	○		○	○	
○		○	●	●	●		○
	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
	○	●	●	●	●	○	
○	○	●	○	○	○	○	
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
○		●	○	○	○		○
	○	○	○			○	

Black to play and win

How might this work in practice? I was inspired to write this article by the discovery by David Shaman of an “equally” good solution to one of Takeshi Murakami’s puzzles (opposite), the one which appeared on the front cover of the Spring 1990 Othello Quarterly.

[*Editor’s note. Some of our readers might even like to try to solve this puzzle. The solution appears just below, so restrain your enthusiasm a little. The point of the puzzle is that Black will win if he gets to e1 without giving anything away, so it’s a matter of playing out the doublets on the other three edges so that you’ll have access to e1 at the end of the sequence. Finding*

the right answer is an excellent exercise in visualising the board position after a longish sequence of moves. At the (to me, acceptable) risk of offending everyone, let me just say that it beats me why anyone should be interested in optimising the sequence, finding an alternative line, or arguing about which line is better!]

Takeshi’s line, optimised by Clarence Hewlett, is 47a3 48a4 49f8 50e8 51h4 52b2 53h1 54e1 55a1 56h5 57a8 58b7 59g2 60g7 61h8.

David’s line is 47h5 48h4 49f8 50e8 51b2 52e1 53a3 54a4 55g7 56b7 57h8 58g2 59a8 (P) 61a1 (P) 63h1. [OK, I admit it. This is also a fine sequence. – Ed.]

Now, which move should black choose to increase the likelihood of white failing to find the optimum line? To work this out we need to know the number of moves available to white at each of his turns. For each of the two lines, these are as follows.

	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62
Takeshi	5	6	6	5	3	3	1	-
David	4	5	4	3	2	1	0	0

So at every turn, Takeshi’s line gave white more choices, and hence a greater chance of going wrong. Therefore I would say that Takeshi’s a3 at move 47 is better than David’s h5. This example would have been better if black had been in a losing position, with a win if white made any mistake, but it is hard to think up good, error-free examples, and I am sure that by now you will have got the point.

To sum up, I believe that this is a way in which one move can be called “better” than another, even though they both lead to the same disc-count with perfect play. Programs which take this into account should on average win more often. As for us humans, when in a bad situation we should seriously consider moves which complicate things for the opponent. This is especially true when it is the stronger player who is in trouble. One of the delights of Othello is that there are exceptions to most of its rules-of thumb for good play, and here is an exception to the rule “limit your opponent’s options”, in that there are situations where maximising your opponent’s options is the best thing to do!

I must now reveal that, when I was playing out the two solutions to Takeshi’s puzzle, I found that the Takeshi-Clarence line leads to a score of 46–18 and David’s to a score of 45–19, whereas in the OQ the score for both was stated to be 45–19. Alas, Graham’s deadline is looming and I don’t have time to find a flawless example. You’ll just have to imagine that the scores are the same.

Creature Feature by Clare Fox.

FOXNAPPED! by our Northern correspondent.

The police are baffled tonight by the mysterious disappearance of the Northern Fox. They believe that he was foxnapped by an admirer while his minder's attention was distracted.

Curvaceous Mike Handel, 22, has made a tearful plea for the Fox's safe return. No ransom note has yet been received.

Reports in the gutter press that the Fox may have gone off looking for a Lady Fox have been vigorously denied by Mike, the current Fox holder (or not, so it seems).

Negotiations for the rights to the Fox's life story are continuing.

Parrot News.

Garry Edmead and Guy Plowman from Wellingborough have recently shown an unhealthy interest in the Parrot. They challenged Aubrey for it in May (each playing one game of the challenge) and succeeded. However the Parrot rules say that the Parrot must be kept in Cambridge so they immediately had to return it to Aubrey. This seems to have prompted the following letter.

Since our recent disappointment at having to concede the Parrot, just because we don't live in Cambridge, we have decided to initiate a national Othello challenge trophy "Eric the Tiger," which can reside at any location in the British Isles.

At present Eric's home is in Wellingborough with us. The rules are enclosed [but not printed here – Ed]. If any challengers are interested, contact Guy on (0933) 678886 or Garry on (0933) 677995.

Regards G + G.

G + G have also challenged Imre for the Parrot since he won it off Aubrey. The only news I have on this match is a rumour that Imre is wondering why I haven't rung up to tease him about "half losing the Parrot to G + G." [*Imre lost to Guy and beat Garry – better informed Sr. Ed*]

Who did Aubrey win the Parrot off? Pete, as usual.

The Northern Fox Escapes by our Southern correspondent.

The Northern Fox was on the run last night after escaping from guardian Mike Handel's Maximum Security bedsit in Leeds. He is thought to have taken advantage of an open window to make a desperate bid for freedom. The Fox is not said to be dangerous.

Police have admitted that they are foxed. They have put out an All Dens Bulletin and issued the photofit picture on the front of this newsletter.

At a Press Conference it was announced that the Fox's successor would be a Tiger. On being told that It Has Been Done the organisers returned to the meeting room for crisis talks. The outcome is not yet known.

On other pages: How I Married a Cuddly Toy – Samantha Fox.

News has reached us of other Parrot emulations: the French have a French Cock, made of glass, and the Danes have a Chicken which they abuse more than Aubrey could. [*Don't tempt him – Ed.*]

Return of the Selbi *not by George Lucas,*
with apologies to just about everyone.

Fluke Fastwalker stared at the board, conscious of the menacing ticking of the clock at his side. If he couldn't find a win for White in the position below, he would die, and the rebel forces, representing all that was noble and good in the galaxy, would be utterly destroyed, along with his friends Princess Leada, (Mike) HanDolo and Chewbhaga, the Cookie.

		○	○	○	○		
●		●	●	●	●		
●	○	●	○	○	●	○	○
●	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
●	●	●	●	○	●	○	○
●		●	●	●	●	●	○
	●	●	●	●	●	●	

Vader v. Fastwalker

Across the board loomed his opponent, the evil Darth Vader. Behind the impenetrable black mask sat a sinister figure who might or might not be Fluke's father, but certainly wasn't Ken Stephenson. The archfiend had artfully siezed the c3-g7 diagonal, and Fastwalker could see no way of cutting across it to gain access to h8. Fluke contemplated what seemed to be the only chance: the free move at b1. It looked grim for the forces of Light, as 52b1 could be met by either 53b2 or 53g2, and Fluke could see no way to win against either.

As Fluke's clock ticked ever onward, he recalled the words of his friend and mentor, Obi-wan Ken'ichi. Many a time, before his untimely demise at the hands of Vader, Obi-Wan had intoned "May the Parity be with you." But in this game the Parity had been subverted to the evil dark side, as evidenced by the odd region, the single square h8 where Fluke could never hope to play. But, obedient to his training, Fluke closed his eyes and let the Parity flow through him. He stretched out his hand, allowing himself to be guided solely by the Parity within himself. When he opened his eyes again, he had played b7, an apparently pointless move, allowing Black to take a8. Worse was to come. "That's a flipping error," intoned Vader, cruelly.

Indeed it was, and Fluke was forced to turn along the seventh row, giving his evil opponent access to h8 as well as a8. Fluke began to prepare himself for defeat, but, as time dragged on and his opponent seemingly could not decide on a reply, he forced himself to turn back to the board.

Black's task was not quite so simple, as he could not take both corners at once. Whichever corner he took, White could grab the other diagonal. If, for instance, Vader took h8, then Fastwalker would go to g2, and the game might continue h2-h1-b2-a8, and finally White would get both a1 and b1, with a comfortable win. Alternatively, Black could try 53a8 54b2 55b1 56a1 57g2 58h8 (P) 59h2 60h1, with a White win by 36 to 28.

After an agonising wait, Vader took neither corner, but instead played 53g2. Fortunately for the future of mankind, 54h2 cut the diagonal, and the game finished 55a8 56h8 57b2 58b1 (P) 59a1. Fluke had saved the Galaxy, 34-29.

"Oh, Fluke, you were wonderful," exclaims Princess Leada. "Marry me."

"Er, I can't. It turns out you're my sister."

"Oh well, I'll marry Han then."

As Fluke explains his winning line to an awestruck audience, he is distracted by the insistent beeping of a2h2, the squat robot from the Aubrey line.

"I'm sure there's some mistake Master Fluke," explains the fussy translator 'droid Cee Squarepio. "His logic circuits have been behaving very strangely recently. I don't think that new OLU has done anything for him. Perhaps we should go and get it replaced."

But the smaller 'droid is not to be deterred. "He says," translates Squarepio reluctantly, "that Lord Vader would have won if he'd allowed you to play b7 without flipping horizontally."

"I knew that," lies Fluke, "but, er, I wanted to give him the chance to redeem himself at the last. I believe that, in the end, he overcame the Dark side of the Parity within himself, and turned back to the Light."

Of such are legends made.

A Game I'm Sure You All Wanted To See by the Loser.

50	57	52	55	54	59	60	47
45	46	51	26	53	58	56	36
44	41	49	11	6	34	33	38
29	40	48	○	●	20	35	19
28	21	10	●	○	1	14	37
23	22	9	4	3	2	15	18
32	27	12	7	8	5	39	43
31	30	17	16	13	24	25	42

Edmead 63 Brightwell 1

Frightening, isn't it? This was a game from the first round of the Cambridge Regional. I have a host of excuses ready, but basically Garry played better than I did. A lot better.

14g5 is a new Japanese move that perhaps I shan't be playing again. 16d8 seemed like a good idea at the time, but probably 16h6 immediately is better. 21b5 is one of the best moves I've seen for ages: it looks very unnatural to break down the wall to that extent, but I'm left with no moves. Having said which, I'm not proud of 22b6—I totally missed the obvious reply. At 26, I think I had to try c2 rather than d2, but again I missed the response, which is massively spectacular and, I think, good. It

certainly seems to have thrown me off balance for long enough to be fatal: two more moves. My last real chance was to play 28g7 immediately, aiming for c4, and retaining the possibility of cutting the a8–h1 diagonal with a5 after g7-b4-c4-b3. But after I played out the “harmless” pair a5-a4, 30g7 is met by b4-c4-b3, and I am totally dead. The right move at 30 was undoubtedly a2. After that, Black should not grab the corner, and then White will always have to watch out for a swindle. Still, there are some chances for a comeback in that line, whereas 30b1 lost very quickly. I had missed the extra tempo coming Black's way after 33g3.

After 36h2 (maybe h3 is better), Garry's sequence was devastatingly accurate. But once Black has sacrificed the h8 corner, White might reasonably expect to get more than 1 disc! The remainder of the game was enjoyable for exactly one of the two players.

Lessons to be learnt.

1. Just because you're supposed to be better than he is doesn't mean you're going to win.
2. When one or other player is very short of moves, look out for “unnatural” moves or sequences, especially X-squares, which finish the game off then and there.
3. When your opponent plays something spectacular, stop and think *hard*. The game has just changed completely, and needs a complete rethink.
4. Don't just play off pointless pairs of moves to delay a decision.
5. Don't lose games in Regionals—somebody's bound to write them up for the newsletter.

Mark Wormley vs. Graham Brightwell by Joel Feinstein.

This game, played in Round 2 of the 1990 Leeds Regional, shows how dangerous it can be to underestimate Mark Wormley.

55	56	24	27	29	30	57	59
43	54	31	13	14	18	58	60
44	15	2	1	4	17	11	28
40	8	3	○	●	5	10	25
45	16	19	●	○	21	12	26
49	22	20	6	7	33	53	41
50	48	23	9	32	39	47	42
51	36	35	34	37	38	46	52

Wormley 37 Brightwell 27

The opening is a variation of the Tanida (or Sailboat) opening which I know very little about, so I should leave the comments there to the experts. [*13f3 is standard – expert Ed.*] Black's move 15 looks unusual.

Graham Brightwell appears to have underestimated the danger of becoming decentralised. After 16b5 (intending 18c5), Mark played the strong move 17, which turned three pieces but denied Graham access to c5, while setting up black access to moves at c4 and f4. With 20c6 and 22b6, White recovers some centre, but 23c7 leaves White badly in need of a plan. Black's only large wall is to the South, so it appears as if White should play elsewhere

(otherwise this wall might disappear entirely, since White is quite badly poisoned by the edges in the East and West). Graham decides to initiate play on the North edge, but this leads to a lost position (probably) by move 31. I don't have any definite conclusion about move 24, but I suspect that White should try immediately the sequence that he delayed until move 32, i.e., 24e7

25f6 26d8 27c8 28b8, and hope that this gain of tempo (i.e., after this sequence, it is Black's turn to look for something to do) will be enough to compensate for the bad edge.

Back to the game. The play on the North and East edges from 24 to 31 is complicated but instructive. White is trying to gain a tempo without doing too much damage, but in the end is left with no tempo gain and two edges! Note that if White plays 28e1, then Black can play 29h3, because White will have no access to c2. At move 32, a3 may be an alternative. As Black, I would then play 33b2, though some might prefer 33a6. By move 39, White has finally gained his tempo, provided he plays 40g8. However, Graham decides to keep this as a free move, and plays 40a4 instead, which looks unnatural. Black can probably win most easily here by seizing the a1–h8 diagonal immediately with 41b2, but Mark's play achieves the same objective by different means. The pair 41h6 42h7 (which looks like a prelude to a misguided sacrifice at g2) turns out to be slightly costly for Black as it eventually leads to White gaining the East edge when Black sacrifices the h8 corner.

After move 47, play looks accurate from both sides, with White having parity in two regions, but not enough pieces. Note that 48b7 looks like a Stoner trap, but that 49a6 is a perfectly good reply. In the end, Mark scored a well-earned victory.

Editor's note – in the next issue, we plan to publish lots of Brightwell wins—if there are any.

BYE – A Profile *by Magnus Maestro.*

Barnaby Y. Everett, known to his many friends as BYE, has been a games player for more years than any of us can remember. He has played in chess tournaments all over the world without, it must be admitted, any great success. In the late 1970s, he was attracted to the new game of Othello, making his tournament debut in the U.S. in 1978 in the New York State Open. His score of 0 out of 6 in that event gives a false impression of his standard of play, as all of his games were hard fought until the end.

BYE moved to the U.K. in 1980, although he still plays regularly in events in many other countries. Due to an unfortunate misunderstanding in a Russian chess tournament, where he failed to secure a full point against a visiting English grandmaster, he was declared a non-person by Stalin. This meant that, until recently, BYE did not have the opportunity of playing in Eastern European Othello events.

Since 1980, BYE has participated in roughly half of the B.O.F. official tournaments, an amazing record, surpassing even that of David Haigh. In fact, his rating is known so accurately that is possible to predict even the disc-count in all of his games.

Probably the high point of his career came in the 1987 World Championships, where he did well enough to be paired against all the top players, although he was ultimately a few points short of reaching the semi-finals.

We in the B.O.F. offices have been fortunate enough to know BYE for much of his career. He is one of the few players who accepts defeat without complaint. Indeed, I have never once heard him grumble about anything, even on the not infrequent occasions when he has been ejected from a tournament half-way through.

Outside of Othello, BYE still participates in many other sports, and is a much sought-after opponent. In his professional life, he has had many positions, ranging from Head of the B.O.F. Complaints Division to a prestigious position in charge of Dan Quayle's Think-Tank.

BYE is married to French Othello player Bernadette I. Parasol. They met at a tournament in Paris in 1984, where BYE was barred from playing due to his nationality, and were engaged a few months later. Strangely, BYE and BIP have never played each other in a tournament, although by all accounts they would be well-matched.

Answers to Problems (from page 9).

First, the solutions to the endgame puzzles from A. Composer.

- 1.** This one is easy only if you don't allow yourself to be bothered by black's swindle in the NW. If black gets both a1 and a2, you get all three moves in the NE! Surely a worthier swindle! So score seven points if you played h1, with a1-g1-a2-g2 34-30 to white.
- 2.** 6 points for g6, 2 points for g2. This one is taken from an actual game: I chose to play h3, and, as is often the case, realised where I should have played straight afterward. After g6, black has little choice but h8. White replies g7 and has little difficulty in mopping up. g2 is exciting, but it doesn't win: either g6 or h8 works against it. The key to this position is parity. After g6-h8-g7 black has run out of moves, but after h3-g6 the NW region is odd and white is forced to sacrifice a1 (and a8) to keep parity, giving up too much edge to win.
- 3.** Standard technique would be to feed black two moves in the NW even region, playing h7 in the meantime, and then take the last move. Unfortunately it doesn't work here. a2 is met by b2, and black gets the last move in the NW after all. Equally frustrating is a3, this time a genuine feed, but there follows b2-h7-a2-a1: 33-31 to black. (3 consolation points for this.) The winning sequence is g8!-(pass)-b2-a3-a1-(pass)-a2: 34-30 to white. A lovely swindle, well worth 4 points.
- 4.** No swindles here, just accurate play and some fast flipping is needed. b8 is the best move (3 points) with a8-g8-b7-a7-(pass)-a1-a2: 34-30 to white. a7 is a valiant shot: a8-b8-b7-g8-(pass)-b1-a1: 34-30 to black, 2 points.
- 5.** Three odd regions, which one do you play in? b7 is no good: black gets b8 then a8. g8 gives up too much and g7 allows black h8 then g8. So white must play in the Northeast. g1 is too extravagant: a8-g8-h8-g7-h1-h2-b7-b8: 33-31 to black. One point. But the forcing move h2 wins: h1-g1-a8-g8-b7-b8-h8-g7: 35-29 to white and 3 points.
- 6.** White has four edges, three of them bad, yet wins. And what's worse, a8 and h1 both lead to a draw! a8-b8-a7-g7-h1-g1-b2-a1-(pass)-h8: 32-32, one point. h1-b8-a7[!-Ed]-h8-g1-g7-b2-a1-(pass)-a8: 32-32, one point. The winning move is of course a7!! putting a piece on the crucial a7-g1 diagonal: a7-a8-h1-a1-b8-h8-g1-b2-g7: 34-30 to white, 2 points.

If your brain isn't scrambled after all that, you can now find your rating.

14-19 You really know what you're doing. 20-24 Brilliant.

25 Is your name Hideshi, by any chance?

It's hard to improve your skill at endgames, so I hope these have provided you with some worthwhile practice. If you didn't get full marks, try them again in six months and check your progress. But remember, there's no such thing as an easy endgame!

And now, those Turner answers in full.

1. Reversi. 2. Stoner Trap. 3. Birmingham. 4. Hideshi Tamenori. 5. Alan Woch.
6. Because Goro Hasegawa's father was a Shakespearean scholar. (At least that is the official reason). [*Jnr & Ex-Snr Ed's comment: Hasegawa is the man who "invented" Othello (see answer 1).*]
7. Ed Stewart. 8. 4. 9. Morolli of Italy beat Bruyninckx of Belgium (35-29).
10. David Finan. (Runner Up in the 1977 Nationals).

Ian offers the following grading scheme:

- 3 - fair
- 6 - good
- 8 - brilliant
- 9 - apply for a job as Othello historian
- 10- you probably cheated.

Ratings Update *by David Haigh.*

One of the rewards I get from maintaining the rating list is the healthy interest shown in the ratings by a fair number of you. Some players like to try to work out how their rating will change after a tournament, and are puzzled when their answer turns out to be less accurate than expected. These discrepancies are caused by two things: firstly, some details that were not mentioned in either of my two previous articles [*The more recent was in Much Ado . . . , July 88 – Ed.*], and secondly, some minor changes that I have made and applied to this year's calculations. So the time seems to be ripe for another article about the ratings.

Two details which probably have the most noticeable effect on the ratings are the procedures called "feedback" and "loss limiting", which are only activated if an established player's rating changes too much.

"Feedback" occurs when an established player's rating rises by more than ten times the number of games he played in a tournament. The excess rise is divided by the number of games he played and the resulting number is added to each of his opponent's ratings. This is reasonable, because if this very successful player's rating rose dramatically, it was too low at the start of the tournament, so his opponents should get more credit for having played him.

The "loss limiting" procedure is simply that an established player's rating cannot fall by more than ten times the number of games he played in a tournament. The idea of this is to stop a rating falling by too much if a player has an "off day".

In a tournament which consists entirely of players with established ratings, the sum of their ratings before the tournament will be the same as the sum of their ratings after the tournament. This might be taken to imply that the total Othello-playing ability was the same before and after the tournament. But this is very unlikely to be the case, as it is not uncommon for players with newly-established ratings to continue to improve rapidly for several tournaments after their ratings were established. Therefore it is desirable to introduce a little gentle inflation into the rating system, and this is what the feedback and loss-limiting procedures provide. Feedback happens perhaps two to four times in a year's tournaments, but loss-limiting is thankfully rather rarer, occurring maybe once a year.

Now I will move on to the changes introduced this year. The intention of these changes is to make established ratings more stable. Last year, an established player's rating changed by 40 times the difference between the number of games the player *actually* won in a tournament and the number of games the player was *expected* to win in the tournament. This meant that games against unrated, provisional and established players all had the same influence on an established player's rating. Given that provisional ratings are less accurate than established ratings it seemed sensible to make the former have a smaller influence on established ratings than the latter. Therefore this year the above-mentioned factor of 40 was changed to 8 for games with unrated players and to 16 for games with provisionally rated players. It was also changed to 32 for games with established players, to make it the same as the factor now used by the USOA.

Last year, an established player's rating would have been increased by 3.6 if he beat a player whose rating was 400 less than his. It would have been increased by the same amount if he beat a player whose rating was 1400 less than his! In theory, therefore, it was possible for an established player's rating to rise without limit even if he played only people that he was almost certain to beat. To eliminate this undesirable possibility, the win probability table used for established ratings has been changed so that for rating differences of 600 or greater a win for the higher-rated player is deemed to be a certainty. (For rating differences between 600 and 400 the probability changes linearly.) This means that established players gain no credit for beating players whose rating is 600 or more less than theirs, and conversely they are not penalised by being beaten by players whose rating is 600 or more greater.

I hope you will all agree that these changes should make the ratings more accurate and fairer.

And here it is: the rating list itself. David actually maintains rather more data than is recorded here. Only those people who have played in an “official” tournament (roughly, this means one where the results were sent to David) in the past two years are listed here, but there is also a list featuring everyone who has ever played—at least since 1985. The highest rated of the inactive players is 1981 British Champion John Parker, weighing in at 1696. There is also a list of nasty rotten foreigners, particularly one Karsten Feldborg, whose provisional rating of 1916 is totally unrepresentative of his play.

Anyway, at the top of the list your editors have swapped places (*but this is entirely due to seasonal fluctuation and in real terms my rating has actually gone up – Graham*), while old-timers Neil Stephenson and John Lysons have gained a little at the expense of National Champion Joel Feinstein. Not much farther down, there are alarming rises for Mike Handel and Guy Plowman, while Britain’s Othello Jeremys are in decline. The highest new entry is that young whippersnapper Edmead. Other giant strides towards the top came from John Bass and Iain Barrass. One notable who has dropped out of the list through inactivity is George Greaves: we hope to see him back next year! Finally, the Ratings Manager has made the controversial decision to cease publishing Grace Parrish’s rating. We stress that this is not a disciplinary measure, but is entirely due to the fact that, with only one game to go on, the rating is almost completely meaningless.

1	Imre Leader	154	1911	32	Phil Brewer	40	1312	63	Chris Lund-Yates	12	1049
2	Peter Bhagat	164	1868	33	Rob Cannings	27	1304	64	Neil Parrish	49	1043
3	G. Brightwell	141	1824	34	Gary Read	59	1299	65	Maurice Kent	6	1037
4	Neil Stephenson	95	1747	35	John Bass	18	1292	66	Martin Craven	6	1018
5	Alex Selby	90	1682	36	David Haigh	188	1286	67	Roy Arnold	74	1016
6	John Lysons	96	1681	37	Gary Baker	66	1282	68	Jim Brewer	44	1015
7	Joel Feinstein	143	1673	38	Robert Verrill	26	1279	69	Leeroy Moxam	35	1008
8	David Sharman	54	1629	39	Andrew Burgess	53	1269	70	Roy Morley	13	1007
9	Paul Smith	110	1618	40	Matthew Selby	23	1265	71	David Guy	18	995
10	Aubrey de Grey	152	1594	41	Colin Graham	63	1252	72	Alison Hughes	31	994
11	Helena Verrill	91	1588	42	Lee Evans	19	1231	73	Sui Cheng	6	990
12	Michael Handel	88	1544	43	Robert Stanton	93	1229	74	Anne-Marie Clemence	6	964
13	David Stephenson	97	1529	44	Stuart Routledge	7	1223	75	Tallis Haydn-Davies	4	963
	Ian Turner	49	1529	45	Keith Ringrose	43	1205	76	Steven Coates	11	955
15	Guy Plowman	41	1512	46	Samuel Gardner	8	1204	77	Pierre Courtney	12	952
16	Ken Stephenson	89	1482	47	David Moore	12	1198	78	David Rogers	6	922
17	Andrew Blunn	26	1480	48	Julian Richardson	46	1180	79	Edward Wilson	7	889
18	Alec Edgington	97	1464	49	Simon Turner	60	1176	80	Michael Penrose	20	859
19	William Hunter	67	1457	50	Trevor Penrose	19	1175	81	Paul Taylor	37	842
20	Tim Williamson	92	1456	51	Iain Barrass	33	1149	82	John Owens	15	841
21	Jeremy Das	120	1434	52	Wayne Clarke	7	1148	83	Graham Parlour	71	839
22	Mark Wormley	142	1431	53	Sepehr Taheri	6	1143	84	Winifred Brown	20	838
23	Marcus Moore	71	1421	54	Iain Forsyth	170	1137	85	Ashley Hammond	8	837
	Andy Gannaway	63	1421	55	Andrew Hannam	12	1129	86	Anthony Williams	6	813
25	Garry Edmead	36	1418	56	G. Haydn-Davies	3	1097	87	Phil Marshall	6	812
26	Jeremy Rickard	49	1396	57	Donald Baker	39	1082	88	Eileen Forsyth	68	788
27	Jeremy Benjamin	102	1386	58	Rodney Hammond	28	1070	89	Mary Bell	24	721
	Crichton Ramsay	53	1386	59	Tracy Monk	6	1066	90	Sarah Parrish	9	693
29	Dilip Sequeira	63	1371	60	Jim Hall	6	1065	91	Elizabeth Braim	3	454
30	Mark Atkinson	62	1358	61	Stephen Turner	7	1064	92	Fluke Fastwalker	1	453
31	John Beacock	51	1346	62	Tim Wong	5	1050	93	Darth Vader	1	53