

# Two Hundred Years... And Counting

September of this year saw a very important date marked in Manchester, as Graham Phythian explains

On a balmy September evening in 1817 – Wednesday 3rd, to be precise – nine local worthies met in the Albion Hotel, Piccadilly, Manchester, with a view to forming the world's first ever bona fide chess club.

The great Philidor had died, an exile in England, over twenty years before. Howard Staunton was just seven years old. At the time the European, if not the world, centre of chess was Paris, or more specifically the famous Café de la Régence. Deschappelles and La Bourdonnais, oddballs and chess fanatics both, were considered to be the best players of that post-Napoleonic era.

Manchester, although nominally still a town, was bursting with ambition, thanks to the prosperity afforded to the borough's elite by the cotton industry. This new energy and enterprise no doubt fuelled a striving for identity, recognition, and expressions of communal pride. A collateral effect of this urge would have been the formation of select clubs – the Portico Library and Meeting Rooms, for example, and the chess club.

The initial group of members comprised a mixed bunch: it included a Market Street draper and future Boroughreeve, an eminent physician, a silk manufacturer, a Constable, and one of the founders of Boddington's brewery. They were politically diverse: Tories rubbed shoulders with fervent reformers (one of whom was to write a scathing narrative of the Peterloo massacre two years later).

To be sure, chess had been played informally for centuries, but this was the first stab at forming a club with a specific membership, rules, and constitution. The prospective members met again the following night, and a set of rules was drafted and agreed upon. Some of the regulations smacked of Regency bureaucracy, and emphasised the jealously guarded exclusivity of the club:

No food was allowed in the playing room, and members were restricted to one glass of alcohol per evening. Wine by the bottle was forbidden, as was smoking.

Introduction of new members was by ballot. Three negative votes meant that the prospective member was rejected.

Visitors and guests were allowed, subject to the scrutiny of the club President. However, excepting members, residents of the town, and anyone living within five miles of Manchester, were banned from participating.

Annual subscription was two guineas (£2.10p) payable on each 3rd September.

A spectator of a game who gave hints or made comments on the game was fined half



Manchester take on old rivals Liverpool. In the foreground on the left is Aidan Rawlinson, who is a founder member of Manchester's newest club, the Social Chess Club, which meets on Tuesday evenings in the Crown and Anchor on Hilton Street in the Northern Quarter.

a crown (12½p). If anyone started a game after 11pm, both players were fined a half-guinea (52½p) each.

The winner of every game played had to hand in the result to the club secretary. Failure to do so resulted in a one shilling (5p) fine.

At the time there were some bizarre playing rules too:

If a player made an illegal move, he had to retract it and move his king. If the illegal move was not noticed until after the opponent's next move, play had to continue as if no error had been made.

If a player gave a check without announcing it, the opponent was not obliged to respect the check.

According to English rules, a player whose king was in stalemate won the game. In most other countries, it was a draw.

1817 was also the year in which the first ever steamboat ferry operated between Tranmere and Liverpool – the one that would be immortalised in song by Gerry and the Pacemakers some 150 years later. This will serve as a clumsy segue into the main topic of this article: September's celebratory bicentennial match between Manchester and Liverpool.

Superbly organised by Alan Burke and Manchester team manager John Reyes, and played in a pleasingly convivial atmosphere – reflected in Mick Norris's and Jim Gallagher's

opening speeches – it took place on Sunday 3rd September (of course) at the Albert Square Chop House close to Manchester Town Hall. It was a match of 25 boards for players of all levels, with a junior tournament of 20 boards. Since Liverpool were the away team, they had White on odd boards. Manchester won both matches: 15½-9½ in the main competition, and 14-6 in the juniors. In the latter, 100% was achieved in the two games played by Sharon Daniel, George Harman, and Tejas Rao.

There was some rollicking attacking chess, as befitted the romantic, devil-may-care attitude of Regency Britain. Echoing the era that brought us Beau Brummell, Frankenstein, and the last, mad years of the Marquis de Sade, here are two of the more cut-and-thrust games.

## Notes by Paul Macklin

**D.James-P.Macklin**  
Manchester vs Liverpool  
*Wade Defence*

1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♙g4 3 c4 ♘d7 4 e4 e5  
5 ♙e2 ♘gf6 6 ♘c3 ♙e7 7 ♙e3 0-0 8 0-0  
c6 9 ♘e1?!

I'm not sure about this as it loses time and disconnects the rooks.

9... ♙xe2 10 ♖xe2 exd4 11 ♙xd4 ♖e8

12 ♖d2 ♜f8 13 f3 a6 14 a4 d5!?

An attempt to take advantage of White's lag in development. Black obtains decent compensation for the pawn.

15 exd5 cxd5 16 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 17 cxd5 ♗c5 18 ♙xc5 ♙xc5+ 19 ♖h1 ♜e5 20 ♖d1 ♜h5 21 g3 ♖d7 22 ♗g2 ♙d6 23 ♗f4 ♜f5 24 ♗g2 ♖xa4 25 ♗e3 ♜e5 26 ♖c3 ♜h5 27 ♖g2



27...♜xh2+!

In the 19th century spirit for this 1817 commemoration!

28 ♖xh2 ♖h4+ 29 ♖g1 ♖xg3+ 30 ♗g2 ♖h2+ 31 ♖f2 ♙g3+ 32 ♖e3 ♜e8+??

32...♖xg2! 33 ♖d3 ♖d8, etc, is clearly winning for Black according to *Stockfish*. The white king is kept in the centre for much longer, whereas now Black is only a bit better as the king does a runner.

33 ♖d3 ♖xg2 34 ♖d2! ♖h3 35 ♖c2 ♙d6 36 ♖b1 ♖f5+ 37 ♖d3 ♖f6 38 ♜fe1 ♖d8 39 ♖a1 g6 40 ♜e4 ♙f8 41 ♖c3 ♖f5 42 d6 ♙g7? After 42...♖b5 Black is still edging it. 43 ♖c7 ♙f6



44 ♜e7?

The rapid finish is pretty brutal and induces mistakes like this. After 44 ♖xb7! White is better.

44...♙xe7 45 ♖xe7 ♖d7 46 ♖c1?

A collapse, but it should be lost now anyway by now, as after 46 ♖e3 ♖e6 47 ♖d4 h5, etc. 46...♙xe7 47 dxe7 ♖d7 0-1

### Notes by Alan Smith

**B.Meluades Suarez-A.A.Smith**  
Manchester vs Liverpool  
*Czech Benoni*

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e5 4 ♗c3 d6 5 e4 ♗bd7 6 g3 g6 7 ♙g2 ♙g7 8 ♗ge2 0-0 9 0-0 a6 10 a3 ♜b8 11 ♖d3 ♗e8 12 b4 b5 13 cxb5 axb5 14 ♙e3 c4 15 ♖c2 ♗c7

16 ♜fb1 f5 17 f3 To meet 17...f4 with 18 ♙f2.

17...♗f6 18 h3 ♙d7 Maybe 18...f4 is better.

19 ♜a2 f4 20 gxf4 ♗h5 21 fxe5



21...♙xh3! I had intended to play 21...♙xe5, but did not like the look of 22 ♖d2.

22 exd6 ♙xg2 Realising that 22...♖d6 23 ♙c5 favours White. 23 dxc7 ♖xc7 24 ♙xg2 ♜xf3! Otherwise White will consolidate. 25 ♙xf3 ♜f8+ I had originally intended 25...♖h2, but 26 ♗f4 wins. 26 ♖g2 ♖d7 27 ♙f2 Building a bridge back to safety for his king. 27...♖g4+



28 ♖f1

28 ♗g3 is met by 28...♗f4+ 29 ♖f1 ♗d3 30 ♗f5 ♖h3+! and White is not out of the woods yet.

28...♖f3! 29 ♗g1?

29 ♗d1 is better, but 29...♖h1+ 30 ♗g1 ♗g3+ 31 ♖e1 ♙h6! is very strong.

29...♗g3+ 30 ♖e1 ♖g2?!

This wins, but I played it too quickly. Instead, 30...♙xc3! ends the debate

31 ♗ce2

Analysing the next day I found a nice line: 31 ♖d1 ♖f1 32 ♙e1 ♖xe1+! 33 ♖xe1 ♜f1+ 34 ♖d2 ♙h6#.

31...♜xf2 32 ♖c1 0-1

White's flag fell, but he is losing anyway: 32...♜f1+ 33 ♖d2 ♙h6+.

Brilliance or swindle? The choice is yours!

The Manchester team significantly outgraded the Liverpoolians on the higher boards, which was a major factor in the clear home win. But the tables may be turned in the return match, planned for next year. Besides, in December Liverpool will celebrate the 180th anniversary of their chess club, which is the oldest one which has remained continually in existence.

My thanks to Mick Norris for some of the information in this article, and Ian Lamb for the photograph of the top boards – Manchester players are on the left. And 'last but not least', the Chop House for supplying the tasty buffet lunch and coffee.



## Results from Manchester vs. Liverpool held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017

Albert Square Chop House, Manchester

MANCHESTER			LIVERPOOL		
1	Adam Ashton FM	227	½-½	Roger Williamson	209
2	Andrew Horton FM	226	1-0	Steve Jones	206
3	Paul Macklin	222	1-0	David James	194
4	Jamie Horton	204	½-½	Marek Mazek	188
5	Aidan Rawlinson	206	1-0	Daniel Savidge	187
6	Daniel Lee	195	½-½	Mike Stone	184
7	Alan Smith	194	1-0	Mel Suarez Buceta	UG
8	Peter Mulleady	182	1-0	Mike Hardman	177
9	Tim Hilton	169	½-½	Mike Clarke	164
10	Glen Trueman	166	1-0	Tom Whitby	UG
11	Stephen Stokes	160	1-0	Tomas Lancario	158
12	Dennis Owen	159	½-½	Mike O'Mahoney	155
13	Harry Lamb	158	1-0	Kevin Sartain	154
14	Carlos Vigier Lopez	E155	½-½	Diego Agejas	147
15	Tim Chatys	151	0-1	Piotr Lipka	146
16	Martin Gaune	149	1-0	Steve Lloyd	146
17	Ian Lamb	135	½-½	Dave Leeming	143
18	Grzegorz Chatys	132	½-½	Ian Stephens	134
19	Gordon Glover	128	0-1	Tony Morley	131
20	Lawrence Harold	121	0-1	Tom Iveson	124
21	John Hennessy	114	1-0	Joe Butterworth	118
22	Sajjad Afifi-Dehghan	97	1-0	Mike Barret	114
23	Gabor Somogyi	97	½-½	Radu Tatar	114
24	Liam Loughweed	94	0-1	Peter Leonard	107
25	Melanie Rawlinson	E80	0-1	Sylvia Hebden	UG

Match result: Manchester 15½ Liverpool 9½