

George Harris Horne

It is in total shock and with sorrow that I write this tribute to George and not something I thought I would be doing. George passed away suddenly in Furness General Hospital Barrow-in-Furness last week after a bout of pneumonia and came as a complete surprise to his friends and those who knew him in the chess community.

I first met George in 1983 when he joined Barrow Chess Club one week after I had joined the club and we quickly got to know each other. It is fair to say that George had a very unusual and endearing personality which was both inoffensive and gentle. He was a true gent whose mild nature belied a very deep intelligence, quick wit and acerbic sense of humour which had many of his friends creased with laughter. There are so many stories within the chess world that this piece couldn't do justice to the mental gymnastics that George came out with. He was eccentric in the best possible way and at the same time studiously conventional, as seen in his time as Chess Treasurer for the NCCU (Northern Counties Chess Union), Cumbria Chess Association and Barrow Chess Club for over twenty years. But George was more than just a numbers man, as seen when he became NCCU President 2014-16.

In his role as chess Treasurer he was honest, meticulous and a tremendous servant to chess and I never heard a bad word said about his accounting skills; although what the auditors made of his book keeping is unknown, except to say the amount of small pieces of paper relating to accounts George kept in his pockets was unbelievable; seemingly in chaos but all in order!

Over the years George became a strong chess player winning many honours such as the Cumbria Individual Open in 2017 and being Cumbria Minor Champion on four occasions. He was also Barrow Chess Champion three times. In Congresses, George won a number of prizes over the years at Scarborough, the South Lakes and many others. He was also part of Barrow teams that won the Cumbria League Open in 1985 and 1991, whilst being part of the winning Barrow NCCU Seniors team and playing many times for the Cumbria County side, not without controversy playing in an Under 150 match with a 150 grading!

Unbelievably George was a bit of a fitness fanatic and very competitive who played tennis and mini golf constantly with another good friend Barrow chess player Tony Kirby, until Tony sadly passed away during covid.

Over the years of playing chess we became close friends and socialised before and after the matches. Along with Frank Whalley, George and myself could always be found in the bar and more often than not followed by a meal in the local Indian restaurant where George would invariably have the hottest curry 'not' on the menu and then ask for added chillies! When queried if it was hot (as the sweat streamed down his face) George replied 'It is like ice cream...'

George did like to socialise and on one memorable occasion the Barrow four man team playing in the Cumbria league and being 2-0 up, myself and Frank went to the pub, leaving George still playing with the white pieces a pawn up and seemingly cruising to victory. Within five minutes of being in the pub, George walked in after offering his opponent a draw so he could join us. We gave George some stick over his quick draw offer, but the logic of his response could not be faulted; 'I took a draw to win the match for the team,' knowing full well he took the draw as he couldn't bear not having a pint when the rest of the team were!

George loved chess, a fantastic servant to the game and who will be difficult to replace. He was a great character and a loyal and trusting friend. I will miss him.

Dave Cole

George winning the Cumbria Championship 2017



A memorable game by George from the 2001 South Lakes Chess Congress from 'Chess' Magazine.

How did he win it?!!

T.Eggleston (Durham) *White*
 G.Horne (Barrow) *Black*
Alekhine's Defence

1 e4 ♘f6 2 e5 ♘d5 3 d4 d6 4 c4 ♘b6 5
 exd6 cxd6 6 ♘f3 g6 7 ♘c3 ♙g7 8 ♙e3
 ♘c6 9 ♙e2 0-0 10 ♖d2 a6 11 ♙h6 ♗c7
 12 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 13 h4 h5 14 d5 ♘e5 15
 ♘xe5 dxe5 16 b3 f5 17 ♙xh5 gxh5 18

♗g5+ ♚f7 19 ♗xh5+ ♚f6 20 ♗h7 ♙d7
 21 g4 e4 22 ♗5+ ♚e5 23 ♗xe7+ ♚f4 24
 ♘e2+ ♚f3 25 ♗h3+ ♚g2 26 ♗g3+ ♚h2



27 d6 ♗c5 28 ♘f4 ♗d4 29 ♗g2+ ♚h1
 30 ♗d1 ♗b2 31 ♗e5 ♗xa2 32 ♗c3 e3 33
 fx3 ♗xg2 34 ♘g2 ♚xg2 35 ♗e5



35...f4 36 ♗d2+ ♚h3 37 e4 ♗ae8 38
 ♗c3+ f3 39 ♗d4 ♚g2 40 ♗d2+ f2+ 41
 ♚d1 ♚g1 42 ♗e3 ♙g4+ 43 ♚c2 ♗f3 44
 ♗d1+ ♚g2 45 ♗d2 ♗xe4 46 c5 ♗fe3 47
 cxb6 ♙xd1+ 48 ♗xd1 f1=♗ 49 ♗xf1+
 ♚xf1 50 g6 ♗xh4 51 d7 ♗h2+ 52 ♚d1
 ♗e1 mate.