

## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION 1922-70

### Formation in 1922

The only evidence about the formation in 1922 is the opening paragraph of the 1933-34 yearbook. "The Notts Chess Association owes its inception and establishment to a group of the members of the Nottingham Mechanics' Chess Club, very ably led by J W Broadbent, who became its first hon. Secretary and held that post for the period 1922-29, being succeeded by H W Histon." The reasons can be guessed at – the long-term aim of promoting the game and the more immediate possibility of running a County team and individual championship. The most important would seem to be running an annual individual championship – this was required by the constitution until very recently, and was the only activity by the Association during the war.

J N Derbyshire presented the first trophies



Silver Rook



Junior Shield

## League

How many clubs were there at the foundation of the association in 1922? Mechanics obviously and Nottingham. The only other possibility is Mansfield. The 1934-35 yearbook says this "The Mansfield club, which dropped out for a season or two, having been revived, had the effect of increasing our matches, and adding interest to our league contest". So Mansfield did not play in 1933-34, probably not 1932-33 but had done so earlier. The sentence suggests the club folded, rather than simply not affiliated, though this is not conclusive. There are two suggestive pieces of evidence to indicate they existed in 1921, and were founder members. The first individual champion was Albert Green of Mansfield (he also won in 1945). The league trophy gives Mechanics as the winner from 1921-34. The association did not take over the running of the league until 1927-28 (presumably requiring a set of rules to be drafted). So if the trophy is to be believed there was an informal "league" 1921-27. And to describe a competition as a "league" you need three teams (two is just a match) so therefore Mansfield were the third team. All very tentative – more evidence needed.

The league grew in the 1930's, with the addition of new clubs West Bridgford, Boots, University College and Sutton-in-Ashfield. Derby also joined and were the winners in 1935-36 and 1936-37 – the first team other than Mechanics to do so. A northern section was formed in 1936 of Chesterfield, Worksop and Retford.

In 1934, with the league now firmly established, J N Derbyshire



## County Team

The County team won the MCCU Championship in 1930. It was an isolated success, and in marked contrast to the heavy defeats of the following few years. Below is the oldest known County team sheet. The top five boards were all County Individual Champions, so it may well be close to full strength.

Nottingham, Saturday November 21<sup>st</sup> 1931

Nottinghamshire			Leicestershire
1. J W Broadbent	½	½	V H Lowell
2. F J Hingley	½	½	R A Wale
3. C N Rushton	0	1	A C Garratt
4. A Green	0	1	F E Collier
5. G E Argyle	0	1	A Lenton
6. C E Collinge	0	1	A G Thompson
7. H Parkin	0	1	D Gould
8. G A Peck	1	0	H W Lea
9. R C Thorp	0	1	H H Watts
10. T A Thornton	1	0	G A Rowley
11. H Barnes	0	1	Dr.H Mason
12. S B Pickthorne	½	½	A W Lawrence
	<b>3.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	

From 1934-35 the team was styled “Notts and Derby” in the yearbook entry, as was the report on the league in 1937-38 and 1938-45 Yearbook. The addition of some Derby players could be part of the explanation for the improving County Team results in the late 1930’s. Was there ever any intention to create a Notts & Derbys association? The phrase “in the absence of a Derbyshire Association” (1933-34 Yearbook) and the use of Derby rather than “Derbyshire” suggests not.

The first U14 Championship was held 1937-38, though the trophy only starts from 1949.



**Under 16 Shield**



**Under 14 Shield**

## 1940's

During the war the League, County Matches and County Junior Championships shut down. West Bridgford did not reassemble in October 1939 and started meeting again in 1944. Sutton-in-Ashfield, Retford and Boots did not re-form after the end of the war. A Derbyshire Association was formed at long last on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1945. Riddings and Chesterfield affiliated to the new association and did not re-join Notts. Derby and the new clubs of Long Eaton and Rolls Royce joined for just one season. So once the dust had settled there were just six affiliated clubs – Mechanics, Mansfield, University College, West Bridgford, Worksop and a new club Ericsson's (Plessey from 1969). Worksop and University did not contest the League in 1946/47 so that year it was just 4 teams. Here's the match that probably sealed the title for Mansfield (the dominant team in this period) played on Wednesday 23 April 1947

<b>Mansfield</b>				<b>West Bridgford</b>	
1.	Mr.L.Calvert	½	½	Dr.H.Barnes	
2.	Mr.G.Allcock	1	0	Mr.S.B.Pickbourne	
3.	Mr.A.Green	1	0	Mr.W.J.Hickling	
4.	Mr.S.Allcock	1	0	Mr.J.W.Fuller	
5.	Mr.J.Love	0	1	Mr.K.Stocker	
6.	Mr.D.Brailsford	½	½	Mr.H.N.Wallis	
7.	Mr.Graham	½	½	Mr.S.G.Milliship	
8.	Mr.King	1	0	Mr.C.Cragg	
		<b>5½</b>	<b>2½</b>		

Matches that season were usually 8 boards, reduced to 6 the following year no doubt to encourage more teams to enter. Worksop re-joined in 1947. The club was to have an on-off relationship with the league, with three spells ending in 1974. Matches against West Bridgford, and presumably the other Nottingham based teams, were played on Saturdays at mid-way venue for double points. There seemed to have been a tacit understanding that the match against WB would only be played if necessary, since it was invariably the last match of the season and there are three occasions up to 1954 when it was not played.

University and Players in 1948 and a re-formed Boots in 1950 joined. It had taken five years to restore the league to its pre-war level. Here's the league table from 1949-50:

	Pts
Mansfield	26
Mechanics	25
University	20
Boots	16
Worksop	12
Ericssons	7
West Bridgford	6
Players	0

## Institutes League

During at least part of the 1950's the Association had a rival in the Institutes League. West Bridgford dropped out of the league in 1950-51 and again 1954-57. In 1955-56 and 1956-57 the club played in the Institutes League. There were also teams from Mechanics, Boots and Players, presumably made up of weaker players. Here's the league table from 1955-56.

	P	W	D	L	For	Ag	Pts
Ukrainians As "A"	18	13	2	3	83	25	14
Pearson & Sons	18	13	1	4	75	33	13½
West Bridgford Chess Club	18	10	5	3	72	36	12½
Nottingham Mechanics	18	11	2	5	67	41	12
Normides	18	9	1	8	53	55	9½
Blind S C "A"	17	7	0	10	50	52	7
Boots	17	7	2	8	49	53	7
Ukrainian As "B"	18	6	1	11	37	71	6½
Players	18	5	2	11	36	72	6
Blind S C "B"	18	0	0	18	12	96	0

Matches were played over three boards, scoring 2 for a win and 1 for a draw, and played at a round per week. The following year, down to 8 teams, each opponent was played 4 times – giving a punishing 28 matches for the season. The Ukrainians played in the Notts League from 1960-63, so perhaps 1959-60 was the last year for the Institutes League.

## 1960-70

The season 1959-60 was to be a low point for the number of affiliated clubs with just seven – the eight from 1950 less Worksop. However a second division had been added to the league. The 1960's were the start of a long 30 year boom. By 1970 the number of affiliated clubs had trebled to 21, with 36 teams in the league organised in 5 divisions. A County second team was started in 1964. The first team played Leics, Lincs & Derbys in 1960. Northants and Huntingdon & Peterborough had been added by 1970. An U16 (1963-64) and U12 (probably the same time) had been added to the existing U18 & U14 Junior Championships. Peter Dodson was the last all purpose General Secretary (1959-63) - the officer who largely ran the association. By 1970 there was a League Secretary, Grader and Individual Championship Controller. The further posts of Registration Secretary and Adjudication Secretary were to be added in 1972-73 and 1973-74 respectively.