

Messere, K., 1979. *The Potter Memorial*. Sutton Coldfield: Chess Ltd.

I have not added any new volumes to my chess book collection of late and so, feeling our editor's need for copy, I have, like Rambling Syd Rumpo, rummaged in my gander bag and pulled out this old book which goes after this fashion. Ahem.

The Potter Memorial was an international postal chess tournament organised by the British Postal Chess Federation (BPCF) and took place between 1974 and 1976. The tournament was named in honour of BPCF secretary, Reg Potter, who had died in 1972 soon after the idea that the BPCF could organise such an event was accepted.

The tournament was won by Adrian Hollis with the score of 9/12. Surprisingly, Hollis actually lost two games while the Finnish player, Risto Kauranen, lost only once but finished on 8.5/12.

Adrian Hollis (1940-2013) was a distinguished academic in the field of Classics, especially Roman poetry, working at Oxford University his entire career having previously been a student at the same university. He was also the son of the MI5 Director General Roger Hollis. Roger Hollis was accused in 1984 of being a Soviet 'mole.' Subsequently the accusations were shown to be false.

Hollis's games in the Potter Memorial are an absolute joy to play through. In particular, his 100% score with white demonstrate such controlled aggression in games developing from opening 1 d4, 2 c4. I assume the opening theory in some of these games has moved on somewhat since the 1970s but the games themselves are magnificent. His victory in the tournament gave Hollis the title of Correspondence Grandmaster, a title he had narrowly missed out on earning at the previous Olympiad.

British Chess News has a nice article about Hollis in which it is noted, *inter alia* (seems right in a piece about a Classicist!), that he encouraged, while at Oxford, British chess stars Jonathan Rowson and David Norwood among others.

One interesting thing about the participants is that they included Fritz Baumbach who went on to become Eleventh World Correspondence Champion in 1987. So Hollis's victory is a significant and impressive one.

Enough about the winner, what about the book? The author, Ken Messere, was a correspondence IM and a participant in the tournament, finishing with the rather disappointing 4/12. He writes in an engaging style and has contributed a number of annotations to the games. Other players have also provided notes.

The book itself is a slender volume, just 110 pages, and uses figurine algebraic notation which, I think I am right in saying, was still a minority interest among British players in 1979. I was a schoolboy then and my battered scorebook from the time contains my games played for Staines Chess Club recorded in descriptive.

The book is no longer in print but there do seem to be a number of copies available to buy on the internet thing should you be interested and I would recommend that you are.

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