

OBITUARY

I know little of Vic Soanes' early life except that he came from Tottenham and was placed third in the British Boys' Championship of 1926, the year it was won by Alexander. When he left school he was persuaded to devote his time to the family business.

In the late 40's he came North and joined the Liverpool Chess Club. It was from here that his career in chess administration began. As Match Captain he organised many short tours of the Liverpool team to the Lake District and to play against leading London clubs. He also initiated L'pool's Dutch connection by taking a team to Amsterdam. On two occasions under his captaincy the team reached the finals of the National Clubs Competition.

From the Presidency of the Liverpool Club he became in the mid-50's the President of Lancashire and his part in the great success of the 1956 Blackpool Congress was considerable.

His contributions as Lancashire delegate to the NCCU and the BCF were always constructive and not long after his return to the South of England he was appointed Chairman of the BCF Executive Committee. After three years in this office he became Vice President of the Federation and after a further three years BCF President.

One might assume that having completed that tour of duty he would retire from public office but not so: he continued to allow his name to be put forward for many BCF sub-committees on which he served with distinction. He acted as non-playing captain to our International teams and was particularly interested in Junior Training. At a time when the BCF Congress was going through a bad patch he stepped in to put it back on course. It was he who established the very good relationship that exists between the BCF and Grieveson, Grant.

I remember many typical incidents. In the early days of the L'pool Junior Congress Vic would be invited to attend the Prizegiving but he would always volunteer to come earlier in the day and entertain the prizewinners with a simultaneous display. He never took voluntary services for granted. At the conclusion of the 1956 Glorney Cup match he presented the local organiser with a book signed by all who had taken part. When Anfield Junior Boys' became the first Primary school to win a BCF Shield he brought Sir Leonard Swinnerton-Dyer to make the presentation before many local dignitaries and more than four hundred people.

At a time when the Liverpool Junior was the fastest-growing Congress in the World and needed many more trophies he presented a lovely silver cup. But not in his own name. He had it inscribed for one of the co-founders and the then Director, T.J.Beach.

He was often used as a 'trouble shooter'. I have known him travel very long distances, always at his own expense, to attend Union, County and even club meetings to pour oil on troubled waters. His authority was recognised and respected. He gave problems a lot of thought and came up with many excellent, practical solutions.

Although he will be remembered as an administrator he loved playing the game and took as much delight as any of us in demonstrating one of his wins, often a French Defence. He was a sound player, of Major Open standard, who is said never to have lost a game at correspondence.

The last time I saw him was when it was announced he was to be made Honorary Life Vice-President of the BCF. It was an honour that he deeply appreciated and certainly richly deserved. We may be advised to beware the enthusiast but it would be difficult to remember Vic Soanes' enthusiasm without respect and indeed affection.

G.A.M.B.