**WCU AGM 2022**

**Report of Chairman of Selection Committee**

Again Covid has taken its toll on OTB representative events, not least on the aspiration to hold the postponed 2020 Olympiad in 2021. Instead a second on-line rapid-play Olympiad was organised at short notice in July-August consisting of matches between teams of six, two places open to anybody, two places for women, one player (either sex), and one girl both born on or after 1 Jan 2001. Each country was entitled also to nominate one reserve for each of these six ‘main’ players. We struggled to find enough players willing to take part in these categories to generate the need for much of a selection exercise and the captain we had appointed, Jason Garcia, was left scratching around to gather a team together, especially as players were often unprepared to give up other activites in favour of this event. In the circumstances Jason did a brilliant job and the team did well enough in its preliminary group to move forward to the next highest level for another nine matches.

The recovery of OTB chess with the organisation of the biennial European Team Championship, a nine-round Swiss, in November turned out to be another exercise in non-selection. Stronger players were circularised about availability, again at short notice, with the outcome that only two players were definitely, and one possibly, ready to join a squad of five. At that point I informed those I had contacted that we would not be sending a team. Then, just before the event, I was informed that a team had been put together independent of any further input from the Selection Committee. This team eventually competed, having been further weakened by a withdrawal caused by Covid, and like the previous Welsh team to compete in 2013, came last, but put up a very much better show in doing so. As something of a constitutionalist, I remain very doubtful indeed about the process which led to the participation of this team, which felt more like getting a Cardigan A or Morriston B team out in the local league, than selecting international representatives But I must say I have to admire the enthusiasm and determination of those who took part in the cause of representing Wales in an international competition.

Looking to the future, with word this week that India is stepping into the breach, there may yet be a 2022 Olympiad for Open and Women’s teams.

I am very willing not to stand for re-election if the meeting feel that experience should give way to enthusiasm in this post.

Howard Williams