

July 15th

Memory Verse: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Genesis 1:1

A game to play!

The first ever International Chess Tournament ended on 15th July 1851. The organiser, Howard Staunton (1810-1874) was regarded as the world's greatest chess player at the time. It was Staunton who promoted a standardized set of chess pieces all of easily distinguishable shape which is still in use today. These sets are called Staunton Chess Sets and are still prescribed for competition use. You can see what the pieces in this type of set look like in the picture.

Staunton earned a living as a writer, contributing a regular column about Chess for the *Illustrated Daily News*. His *Chess Player's Handbook* is still in print and he also edited an edition of the works of Shakespeare.



Staunton organised the chess tournament to coincide with London's *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations*, held in Hyde Park in 1851.¹ The exhibition, housed in a huge glass palace like a vast garden conservatory, attracted exhibitors from all over the world. The organisers of the chess tournament hoped that by timing it to coincide with the exhibition, competitors would find it easier to obtain the necessary leave from work and those from abroad would find it easier to get passports.

The tournament ran from May 5th to July 15th and the winner was a German player from Prussia, Adolf Anderssen (1818-1879). Anderssen was a maths teacher who had learned to play chess from his father when he was nine years old. He remained unbeaten until 1858. Runner up was wealthy Marmaduke Wyville (1815-1896) of Denton Hall, Wharfedale, the Liberal MP for York.

The game of chess is played on a chequered board like draughts but chess men never jump over other pieces as draughts' pieces do. Chess has thirty two pieces set out to start with as in the diagram on the next page. Each player has sixteen pieces, white for one player and black for the other. One player may take another's pieces by landing on the square they occupy. The objective is to capture the opponent's King. Each player has one King. The King can only move one square but it can move horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.



Each player has eight Pawns. Pawns can move forward one square, if that square is unoccupied. For its first move, the pawn has the option of moving two squares forward provided both squares in front of the pawn are unoccupied. A pawn cannot move backwards. A pawn can also move diagonally but *only* if it is doing so to take an opponent's piece.



Each player has one Queen which can move any number of vacant squares diagonally, horizontally, or vertically.

Players have two Bishops each. These pieces can move any number of squares but only diagonally.



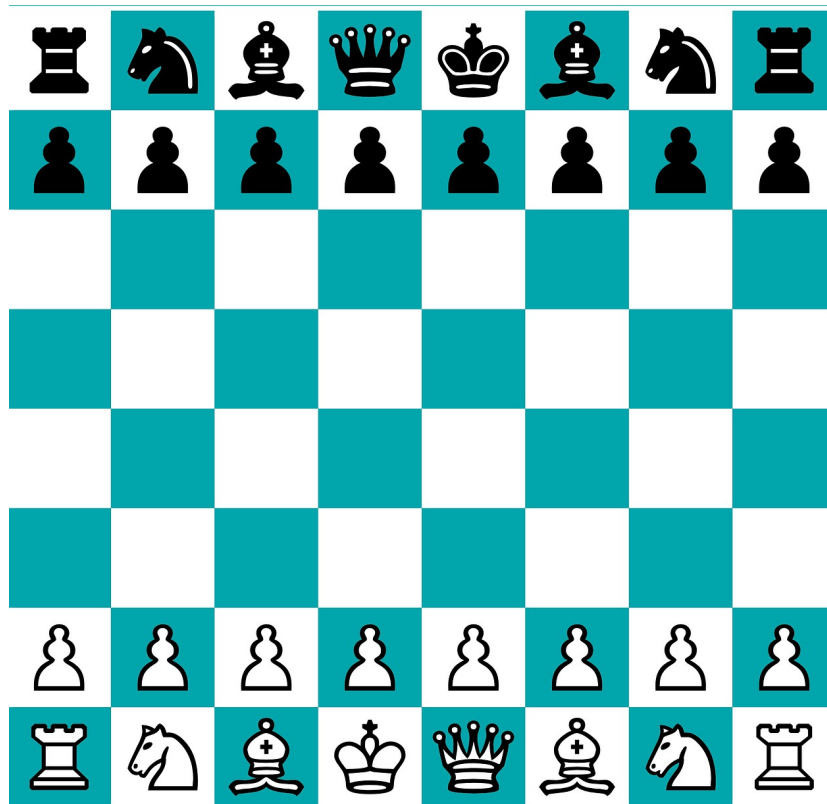
There are also two Knights to each player. These have an L-shaped move of two squares forward, backwards, left or right and also one square at right angles to the two squares.

¹ For more about the Great Exhibition see the lesson for 1st May.

The Rooks (they look like little castles) move any number of squares in a straight line vertically or horizontally.



The board is set out like this to begin play:²



Something to make

If you want to make your own chess pieces, Lego is good. You do not need to buy a fancy Lego Chess set kit! Use square “four dot” bricks as pawns. Then decide on something grander and taller for the Kings. An L shaped piece might do for the knights as that will remind beginners of the move. Use your imagination! Upright cross shapes for the bishops? Some sort of castellated top for rooks? Of course it won't be a Staunton Chess Set but it will be yours!³

Something to think about

The proto-reformer Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498) of Florence⁴ is famous for his sermon, “The Art of Dying a Good Death.” In it he said, “Death is the most solemn moment of our life. Then it is that the Evil One makes his last attack on us. It is as though he were always playing chess with man, and awaiting the approach of death to give him checkmate. He who wins at that moment wins the battle of life.”⁵ Jesus Christ “won the battle of life” for all his children on the cross. If we trust in him that moment will not be “checkmate” but victory.

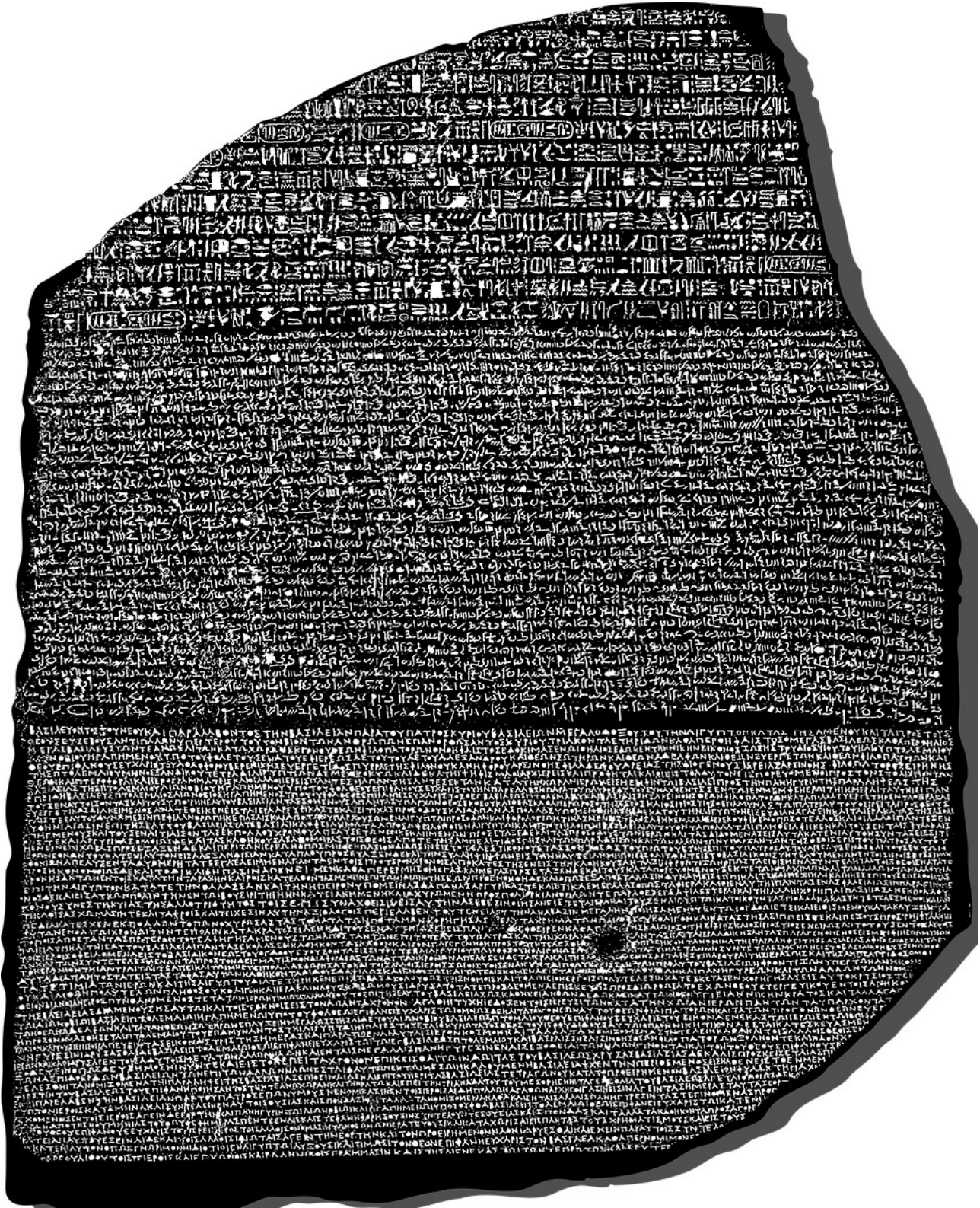
² You can learn all the moves for playing chess here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-uwGvx4V_A.

³ You can print your own simple chess set here: <https://www.printchess.com/download-printable-paper-chess-set>.

⁴ See the lesson for 23rd May for more about Savonarola.

⁵ Quoted in Purves, Jock, *Sweet Believing* (Stirling, n.d.) p. 21.

On **15th July** 1799 The Rosetta Stone was found in the Egyptian village of Rosetta by French Captain Pierre-François Bouchard during Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign.⁶ If you look at this picture of the stone you will see that it is covered with writing which is in three clear sections? What do you notice about the writing?⁷



Can you see what kind of writing the top section is in?

6 If you downloaded Mary MacGregor's *The Story of France* <https://www.heritage-history.com> yesterday, you can use it to find out just what Napoleon was doing in Egypt and how it ended.

7 The three sections all have different kinds of writing on them.

The top section of writing is in Egyptian hieroglyphics, the writing of Egypt in the time of the Pharaohs. At the time when the stone was found no one could read the Egyptian writing any more. Many ancient inscriptions had been found in Egypt but no one could read them.

The stone was being used just as building material but Captain Pierre-François Bouchard's sharp eyes noticed that it was something extraordinary. He took the stone away and when Napoleon deserted his troops and they were defeated, it came into British hands. It is now one of the most important objects in the British Museum.

Look at the letters on the bottom section of the stone. Can you work out what kind they are?

A , B , Γ , Δ , E , Z , H , Θ , I , K , Λ , M , N , Ξ , O , Π , P , Σ , T , Y , Φ , X , Ψ , Ω ...

They are Greek letters. This alphabet was very well known. It is the alphabet used to write the original Greek of the New Testament.

But what about the middle section? At first no one even knew what that was. Then it was realised that it was Demotic, a later way of writing the hieroglyphic which was not often used on stone inscriptions.

It turned out (as Captain Pierre-François Bouchard had suspected) that all three inscriptions on the stone *said the same thing* but in three different languages! The stone's long inscription was the key to translating Egyptian hieroglyphics. It took a long while to decipher all the writing on the stone – which was not particularly interesting in itself, being a priestly decree about the young King Ptolemy. However, there was enough written on it for scholars to be able to start building up a dictionary of hieroglyphics. Now many other inscriptions and writings could be translated – the stone was the key.

Something to do

Learn how to read and write some hieroglyphics. You may be able to find out how to do this using your own encyclopaedias or you could request a book on the subject from your local library.⁸

⁸ Or use this worksheet: [images.scholastic.co.uk > assets > jet-pb-a-9788](https://www.images.scholastic.co.uk/assets/jet-pb-a-9788)