

# NEWS OF THE WORLD

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## LEON ROPER reckons he's king of the chess board. But he has a chequered past he would like to keep secret.

We can reveal that the not-so-grand master is useless at the game. Even 12-year-old schoolboys easily beat him.

And that's not all. The woman he lived with was once a man.

She calls herself Countess Racquel von Kruger but was born Christopher Collins.

Mr Roper claims to be a chess professional who has played for England and his country.

He is due to give a lecture to Dover College—one of Britain's best public schools—on the finer points of the game. The college is unaware that none of the chess authorities seems to have heard of him.

### PAWN

And in demonstration matches against another school, he was just a pawn in the hands of his young opponents.

Five of the boys, aged 12 to 17, wiped the board with him.

"I've never seen anyone who calls himself a professional play so badly," said Mr Colin Forrest, biology master at Dane Court Secondary, in Broadstairs, Kent.

Mr Roper was supposed to give a lecture for the show, but was not.

—I've checked through

By STEVE BISHOP

the records and there's no mention of him playing for Kent, let alone England."

Gordon Lloyd, secretary of the Thanet Chess League, wants to see Mr Roper kept in check.

After beating him in a club friendly, Mr Lloyd said: "He must be exposed. He will give chess a bad reputation."

At his flat in Westgate Bay Avenue, Margate, Mr Roper tried to explain his defeats by school children.

"I wasn't feeling too good on the day," he said.

"It doesn't really matter if I lose, the important thing is to give the children an interest and teach them properly."

"I don't remember say-



SEX-CHANGE Racquel: His ex-lover

ing anything about playing for England, but I think once or twice I played in county games.

"The education authority wouldn't have given me a letter to teach if they didn't think I was a genuine, would they?"

Mr Roper, a former hotel laundryman, came clean about his sex-change mate when he appeared as a prosecution witness at

his ex-lover's trial. He told of his relationship with the 35-year-old self-styled Countess at Canterbury Crown Court.

The Countess was found guilty of two arson charges, and was remanded for reports.

After the case, 27-year-old Mr Roper said: "It would be unfair to call me a queen. When I was sleeping with Racquel, I thought she was a woman."

In court, it was revealed Mr Roper has convictions for theft, burglary, assault and attempted fraud.

He said: "In the past I may have done things I've regretted. But show me some person who's perfect."



## The French don't like it

SHE USES a man's name, wears gents clothes and sings in a deep, rumbling voice.

But French singer Ronny's new masculine image is in stark contrast to her former career as a fashion model.

"I suppose I look like this because it's the way I feel... I really don't feel I'm a man or a woman," Ronny tells me brightly. "I'm a bit of both. I've always been a bit boyish."

"Some people have accused me of being a lesbian but it doesn't bother me."

Ronny, who has just released her new single To Have And Have Not, has worked with Soft Cell.

Vangelis and Pete Townshend She hopes to tour with Roxy Music later this year.

"In France they couldn't accept my deep voice," she adds. "In England it has been entirely the opposite."

### MARRIAGE GUIDANCE



"What do you mean I should have brought my husband? ... This is my husband!"

### Prison's sex swap poser

A THIEF is baffling jail authorities in Michigan... for he is changing sex and they do not know where to put him.

An official said: "If he goes to the men's prison, they'll kick the book down to get at him."

MY husband went to a fancy dress dance as a lovely lady and won a prize—two pairs of silver earrings. And his ears aren't even pierced!

Mrs TINA PARKER, West Bromwich, West Midlands.

THE annual sex change is taking place at Whitchurch. John Boucher is starting to dress like a woman, while Sue Ellis is slipping into a man's role.

But what else can you expect as pantomime fever hits the village?

### I WAS surprised when my husband bought me some fancy underwear.

Later when I asked him to call at a shop for knitting needles he refused, saying he would be too embarrassed.

Why should he make the first errand but not the second? I asked.

His logic: "Everyone can see that I don't wear a size

38 bra but they can't see that I don't knit."

—Mrs. J. Ratcliffe, St. Helens, Mersey.

