

AYDON CASTLE 2010, 22nd May



Brian Siddle, the English Heritage curator at Aydon Castle, told me a fortnight ago that the swallows had arrived at the castle ten days earlier than usual this year. This, of course, meant that the weather would be better this year than last and indeed it was. It was a glorious cloudless summer day, already getting hot as the first of the 40 or so children arrived to take part in the sixth annual Aydon Chess Congress (Yes, we did hold Chess in the Castle before that, but at Prudhoe, not Aydon).

Two sections were played – a select group of over-11s and a large number of under-11s. Lara Barnes, Alex McFarlane and Richard Boddy controlled with Gerry Beldon running the computer. Brian and John from English Heritage did a good trade, not just for sweets and drinks, but also for swords, spears, shields, bows and arrows. We had St John's Ambulance standing by in case of accidents, but they were not needed. Tom Cleminson introduced me to my first taste of Dandelion and Burdock for about 60 years and very good I found it on a hot day.

We had six visitors representing three of the Carlisle schools and they simply dominated the Over-11 section. Camas Millar and Chris Royle (both from Trinity School) shared top place, but with Camas winning a play-off match to take the U-13 trophy. Half marks was sufficient to win Tom Cleminson the U-15 competition as he was the sole entry! Anthony Lai gave an outstanding display in the Under-11 Section. Still an U-9 he showed little respect for his elders. Another U-9, Manav Gupta shared second place with big brother, Akhil and Martin Wright from Austin Friars, Carlisle. Peter Wilson had led the tournament into the last round when Anthony overtook him. RGS took 10 of the top 11 places here. Tabitha took the girls trophy at U-11 and Darina at U-9.

However everybody deserves credit for a splendid days chess, fiercely competitive and yet played with a sense of fun and good humour. Everybody won a prize of some sort, rosettes (left over from the Megafinal), badges, medals and of course golden king trophies. And they all deserve them!

