

## **Langley Chess Teams of 4 Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

Yarm and Austin Friars, Carlisle, are well known for their popular, annual Teams of 4 competitions, and so it was appropriate for Newcastle to return the favour by hosting a comparable event. Langley First School Head Teacher Judy Williams encouraged and supported the idea, which gave us the foundation we needed to organise the tournament, and one that we hope will prosper in future years.

We were delighted that 18 teams entered the event, 9 in each section, and it was especially pleasing that we were able to welcome new schools, Our Lady and St Annes, Marden and Christchurch Primary. Teams were allowed and indeed motivated to invent their own team names, and so the Jesmond Knights triumphed in the U9 section with a round to spare. A very strong RGS team comprising in board order, Anthony, Manav, William and Hamish, dominated, conceding only half a point over all six rounds, finishing with 23.5/24. Our lips are sealed over who drew... They deservedly won the winners' boxed medals and trophy and will hopefully be persuaded to return it in time for next year's event. Second place with 17 were a committed NPS team with the strong line-up of Aaranya, Peter, Shay and Lewis, who were proud to receive a Norman Florence wooden carved chess piece trophy. We might encounter some resistance in retrieving that too.

In U11 The Flying Pigs flew away (couldn't resist) with the honours by amassing 19, so congratulations to Arjun, Abishek, James and Sam. Another well deserved trophy for RGS. The battle for second was fascinating, as going into the final round Tall Cat Terrors (St Teresa's, Jack, Daniel, Kate and Peter) and NPS (Iman, Sam, Jonathan and Rahim) had 12, while the RGS Chessotrons were slightly ahead on 12.5. Second place received another beautifully carved Norman chess trophy. Unusually for afternoon sessions the games were long and complex, and eventually Parth, Daksh, Will and Omkar claimed the runners-up place by half a point.

Current Northumberland Girls Champion Kate Garrett of St Teresa's played some very impressive chess and claimed the Best Girl trophy on board three in U11 by scoring an unbeaten 5.5/6, while Jack Hughes also of St Teresa's, was chosen to be Best Boy for his 4.5/6 performance on board one. Aaranya Nodiyal is developing into an excellent prospect and she was awarded the Best Girl in U9 for her board one total of 4/6. Kieran Bell in only his third tournament claimed Best Boy for outstanding attitude and commitment. Parth Mannikar was awarded a special prize for honesty, and we were very impressed by his behaviour. It is not always easy to do the right thing, but Daksh stood by his principles and impressed everyone. Well done.

The climax of the day was undoubtedly having the pleasure of presenting Lifetime Achievement awards for services to junior chess to Paul Bielby and Norman Florence. Many people will not know Norman, but he was one of the founder members of the NJCA and originally asked Paul to participate in junior chess in Newcastle! He organised many, many events over the years, initiated interest in the EPSCA tournament and raised thousands of pounds

for the charity. When he left the NJCA some years ago, Norman developed the Northern Schools Association, where he taught in schools and continued arranging camping weekends with a chess theme. It is only recently that Norman has retired from chess teaching at Langley and we wish him well for his next operation. Paul of course needs no introduction as he has been the principal driving force of the NJCA ever since Norman left and has taught at Kings, Thomas More and is presently the very successful teacher at RGS. We are sure that all parents, children and schools will give a huge thank you to both real gentlemen for everything they have done. Junior chess in this area would literally not be the same, if it would exist at all.

Every competitor received a certificate of attendance and we hope parent and child alike enjoyed the day. We certainly did. Thanks must go to Sunil Nodiyal, and John Byrne, who worked very hard all day on the difficult tasks of pairing and result recording, while we are grateful to Sophie Seeber, whose experience in arbiting was invaluable in the afternoon. It was good to see her father Martin, and his friendly chess advice and good-natured support was, as always, much appreciated. Kyran Brady helped Abi all day in the tuck shop, and when he had time played as well! Events such as these are impossible without the cooperation and invaluable support of caretakers, and Kevin Jones provided information and hard work, which made the day go easier.

The day before the tournament it was sad to note the retirement of John Harrison from his post as Head teacher at St Teresa's. John attended nearly all the NJCA and UK Land Chess Challenge competitions and was instrumental in bringing chess to the school and inviting myself and Abi to teach there nearly two years ago. He is a trained first aider and his presence and professionalism when a child injured himself at last year's Megafinal was indispensable. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all his support and encouragement and to wish him well in his future endeavours.

Looking forward to seeing you all again next year.

Abi & Tim Adams