

YARM CHESS FESTIVAL ~ 2009

The Yarm Chess Festival this year attracted teams from Wakefield and York, as well as Newcastle and Teesside. There were ten teams in the Senior school section and nineteen (!) in the under-11s. NPS and St Teresa's were two Newcastle schools making their first appearances in this event. We had a new venue too, playing in the Sports Hall at the Yarm Prep School. It was a glorious sunny day, sitting which made sitting out in Yarm School's 'quiet area' most pleasant. We are, as always most grateful to Yarm School in general and to Johannes Grundmann and Sean Marsh in particular for their organisation of such a great event.

In the Secondary Schools section newcomers, All Saints from York, led by the Weller brothers, Jean-Luc (grade 184) and Pierre (only 12 years and grade 152), were obviously a team to watch. QEGS, from Wakefield, with Nick Rigby (grade 176) and James Bowler (again 12 years old and grade 156) would run them close. RGS, last years champions, had a weaker team this year. In the event All Saints and QEGS tied for top place with 17½ points and RGS'B' team, ahead of their 'A' team finishing third. A play off match of 5 minutes chess gave QEGS the Champions trophy for this year.

In the Under-11 Section Champions RGS retained the same team as last year (Naman Garg, Abhishek Kamath, Akhil Gupta and Arjun Anilkumar) though last year they had been called RGS'B'. At the start of the final round RGS 'A' team led the competition with the new RGS 'B' team just two points behind. They had to play each other and despite a splendid win by Tabitha Burnett for the 'B's, the 'A' team won 3-1 to retain the Championship convincingly. RGS 'E' team – all under-9s! Led by Manav Gupta and Anthony Lai – surprised everybody except themselves by overtaking the 'B's into second place. Newcomers NPS nipped into third and, half a point behind them, the RGS 'B' and 'C' teams shared 4th place with St Teresa's (led by Zheming Zhang and Jack Hughes). It will not be long before NPS (coached by Richard Boddy) and St Teresa's (coached by Tim Adams) are posing a very serious challenge to RGS.

All in all a splendid and enjoyable day's chess