

Chess in Schools and Communities Newsletter No. 2, February 2016

It's been a busy few months for CSC – read on for the highlights and our future plans...

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The London Chess Classic

In December, the 7th London Chess Classic was again a great success. It's now firmly established as one of the world's leading tournaments, as [Sagar Shah from ChessBase explains](#). World Champion Magnus Carlsen won the Grandmaster section in a late-night tiebreak, which also secured him the inaugural Grand Chess Tour title.



Meanwhile, five continents were represented at the London Chess Conference, and the LCC Festival received over 1,000 entries. We were pleased to repeat the offer of free entry for women and under-25s, two groups which are under-represented in the chess world.

But for Jonathan Bryant, the real stars were the children visiting the free school activity days – [the hidden classic...](#)

Yes2Chess

CSC are delighted to announce the renewal of our partnership with Barclaycard, and that [the 3rd Yes2Chess International Challenge](#) is open for registrations. As well as giving schoolchildren access to a secure, free and entirely web-based chess server, the initiative includes an international chess tournament, played online, for primary and elementary schools from the UK, the USA, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.



The Yes2Chess mentoring scheme will also continue, with Barclaycard employees donating their time and expertise to scholastic chess projects, both after school and in lesson time. Last year 443 Barclaycard employees gave the equivalent of over two working years to such projects across 8 countries, as Yes2Chess impacted over 40,000 children.

The Brian Kerr Girls' Award

The charity is pleased to announce the establishment of the Brian Kerr Girls' Award, funded by a £25,000 bequest. [Brian Kerr](#) (1944-2014) was a Cambridge mathematician who became an Irish international and competed at the Chess Olympiad at Havana in 1966. Over the board he was an imaginative tactician and an enthusiastic chess problem solver who played in the British Solving Championship.



The bequest will include a £1,000 award each year for ten years, to fund four girls on CSC courses who demonstrate exceptional enthusiasm and achievement. The remainder of the funds will be used to promote girls' chess within CSC.

And finally...

Congratulations to Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School from Liverpool, who have enjoyed a double tournament success. In November they won the North-West regional stage of the National Schools U-11 Chess Championship (and celebrated their success with



a real (arch)bishop!) Then, in January, three Sacred Heart teams qualified for the finals of the EPSCA Championships, with Joshua Roque, Bashar Rovezi and Roman Rivera all qualifying for the England U-11 trials despite playing up a year – congratulations to them!

Your support

If you'd like to learn more about how you can help the charity, then please feel free to call us on 020 7935 3445, or e-mail us at info@chessinschools.co.uk.

YOUR SUPPORT is key to ensuring the work of the charity continues, and that we keep bringing the benefits of chess to our schools and communities. Please do pass on this newsletter to your contacts and help to spread the good word! If you, your organisation, friends or acquaintances wish to make a donation to help the charity then please [read more](#) and remember to Gift Aid the donation, if possible.



Thank you!

What makes the London Chess Classic special? by Sagar Shah



An extended version of this article is available [here](#).

On the surface the London Chess Classic 2015 looks like any other elite tournament. Top players like Magnus Carlsen, Vishy Anand, Hikaru Nakamura, Veselin Topalov, Anish Giri showcase some high class chess, and the entire chess world learns from their games. However for a person who was present at the playing venue for all of these ten days of the event I have to say that there is much more to the London Chess Classic than what meets the eye. The moment the doors of the elevator open on the third level of the Olympia Center in Kensington, London, you can see the entire floor buzzing with chess activities. This article pays a tribute to many of the individuals and special things that make the London Chess Classic what it is – a celebration of chess!

The huge audience and the chance to meet your idol

In the past grandmasters loved to play in Russia. The reason: crowds there understood chess really well, and they would in some ways motivate the players to showcase their best chess. The scenario was not so different in London. A huge number of chess-literate people turned up to watch the top players in action, and the organizers reciprocated by giving them a chance to not only see their chess idols up close but also to take pictures, selfies and autographs with them.

Simuls and blitz with GMs

If you are greedy, and just meeting the grandmasters is not enough for you, the London Chess Classic gives you plenty of opportunities to play against titled opponents, and in fact face world famous players like John Nunn, Jon Speelman and Luke McShane. These three gave a simultaneous exhibition on three different days of the festival, and many chess enthusiasts, young and old, enrolled themselves for a lifetime opportunity to play against a GM.

School events and the chess atmosphere

More than 1700 kids from different schools of London converged upon the Olympia Center from the 7th to the 11th of December to participate in chess events representing their schools. I am sure you can imagine how this chess atmosphere can really get the kids hooked onto the game of chess for a lifetime.

London Chess Conference

This year's London Chess Conference was bigger than ever with more than 120 participants from nearly thirty countries, spanning all continents. It was held nearby the London Chess Classic at the Hilton Olympia in Kensington on the 5th and 6th of December 2015. Some of the really well thought out topics included chess with refugees, chess and old people, chess in prisons, where to invest public money in chess, chess and mathematics, chess and football and others. The number of speeches and talks were so great that it was impossible to keep a track of all of them. But one thing is certain – attending this conference will surely give you new horizons and dimensions in which to perceive the game of chess. This unique meeting was rounded up by a Social Chess Entrepreneurship Bootcamp starting on 4th December and workshops on New Chess Research and Advanced Topics in Teacher Training on 7th December.

TDAH y ajedrez: rehabilitación cognitiva, a Spanish project that develops chess as an educational intervention for children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), has been voted as the clear winner of the Best Social Chess Project competition by the attendees of the Chess and Society conference.

The Pro-Biz Cup

The Pro-Biz Cup was held on the 14th of December 2015. It brings the best business minds and the world's leading grandmasters together in a fun knockout tournament to raise money for the UK charity, Chess in Schools and Communities (CSC). The businessmen bid for their favourite players and one who bids the highest gets the chance to team up with the grandmaster.

British Knockout Championships

Top players of Britain, with the exception of Michael Adams and Nigel Short, took part in the inaugural British Knockout Championships. The eight players at the start included David Howell, Luke McShane, Nicholas Pert, Gawain Jones, Jonathan Rowson, Jonathan Hawkins, Daniel Fernandez and Yang-Fan Zhou. Top seeded David Howell won the event and took home a hefty check of £20,000, by beating Nick Pert in the six-game final by a score of 4-2. Nick Pert, however, was surely the man of the event, as he knocked out two higher rated players, Jonathan Hawkins and Luke McShane, to bag the runners-up prize of £10,000.

London Super Rapid and Fide Open

On the 12th and the 13th of December a ten-round Super Rapid with the time control of 25 minutes + 10 seconds increment was held. The first prize was quite a high sum of £2,500, which attracted a lot of strong players to the event.

Parallel to the elite event a strong FIDE Open consisting of 216 players from all around the world took place. The rating average of the tournament was 2125 and there were 27 grandmasters taking part, six of them having an Elo above 2600.

The Hidden Classic

by Jonathan Bryant

"Are you doing this again next year?"

Around 2pm on Friday 4th December, the first day of this year's London Chess Classic, I was standing just by the lifts in the foyer at Olympia. This was a couple of hours before the first

pawn would be pushed in the Grand Chess Tour event, but I wasn't there waiting to welcome people as they arrived. I was saying goodbye.

There was just one school left to go. As the doors of the lift opened and the teacher ushered her group inside one young lad - he must have been 8 or 9 - turned back and asked me his question. "Are you doing this again next year?"

Next year? I was going to be doing it every day the following week! 'It' being organising the five hours of chess activities that Chess in Schools and Communities (CSC) had offered free to schools across England.



By the time we were done 101 schools had visited, bringing 1718 children with them. The kids played a total of 4141 games of chess in 31 separate tournaments across the 6 playing days. We awarded 24 trophies to schools and 272 medals (133 Bronze, 78 Silver and 61 Gold) for individual achievement. 43 CSC chess tutors worked 151 shifts between them to make it all happen.

The CSC schools' events are probably the London Chess Classic's biggest secret. They're a huge part of the festival, but because the children go home before most of the grown-ups arrive a lot of people don't know that they were ever there. On coming across 300+ school kids playing in the East Hall one afternoon, GM Keith Arkell said that although he'd competed at the Classic since the inaugural event in 2009 this was the first time he'd had an inkling that anything like this was happening.

So who comes along? Mostly it's junior schools, although we had half a dozen or so seniors too. A lot of our

visitors are from London schools and already signed up to a CSC programme of curriculum time chess classes. This is far from universally the case, however.

Three-quarters of the schools this year were London based, but the remainder came from Oxford, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford and even Teeside. Thanks to Kajetan Wandowicz - CSC's hyper-enthusiastic coordinator of activities in South West England - as many as a dozen schools travelled up from Bristol and Bath.

The split between CSC schools and those who weren't already receiving our chess lessons was about 60:40. A much greater proportion of children would have come from our existing schools though, because while non-CSC schools tend to bring members of their chess club, CSC schools usually take the whole class of children that is learning chess with us. This year several CSC schools brought 50-60 children but non-CSC groups could be as small as 3 kids.

The days themselves were jam-packed for the children and festival staff alike. By the time schools arrived at 10am the CSC tutors had already spent 90 minutes preparing for the day ahead. There was a lot to get ready but it was very much the calm before the storm. Once the children get to Olympia there wasn't much time to take a breath.

The morning was all about chess training. A chess lesson for the children followed by a simul - a chance to play against the CSC chess tutors and warm up for what was coming later.



As you might imagine these sessions were very demanding to lead. We knew which schools are coming, but had little idea of the strength of players within each group. Some of the children had only begun learning chess in our programmes a few months earlier; Others were much more experienced and one or two even had grades. Our tutors had to weigh up their group very quickly and adjust their lessons accordingly.

The second part of the morning was the Chris and Danny show which was held in the main auditorium. GMs Ward and King - ably assisted by Lateefah Messam-Sparks who deputised for Daniel on the Wednesday - have been running their interactive chess show for years now and this time around it was more popular than ever.



The highlight of show was the children getting a chance to get up on stage and play using the sets that the world's elite would be using later in the day. The boards were already hooked up to the giant display screens at the back of the stage so everybody could follow along. Imagine Carlsen playing Caruana with live

Grandmaster commentary battling to be heard above several hundred children in the audience screaming out advice and encouragement for their classmates. Not exactly standard tournament conditions, but it was a lot of fun.

After a short lunch break it was time for the main event of the day: the afternoon tournaments. For many of the children it would be their first ever organised chess competition.

We divided the events by year group so we had up to six different tournaments running at once. Make no mistake, they were competitive - we awarded medals to the highest scorers in each year group and trophies to the best performing school - although that wasn't the real point. We worked hard to ensure the emphasis remained firmly on taking part and enjoying the experience.

To end the day each school got a group photo, the children who came along on the Wednesday being particularly fortunate to get a Super-GM gatecrashing their pictures. Maxime Vachier-Lagrave was a great sport. Photographer Ray often got the children to leap in the air as he took their picture. After doing this a couple of times I heard him say "Maxime, you don't have to jump too". Elite chess player or not, MVL just shrugged and carried on just the same.

We squeezed in one last surprise as the children made their way to the lifts to start their journey home: a chess-themed goody bag for everyone. Several schools told us that five hours of chess simply hadn't been enough and their kids had played with their new pocket sets all the way back to school.

I'm very proud of what we achieved with the schools events at the Classic. "It's been such fun", "A fantastic opportunity" and "The best party bag ever" were three of the children's comments that stand out.

I have to end by thanking the CSC staff who worked so hard to ensure a fun time for the children and a stress-free day for the teachers who accompanied them. Not forgetting all the cleaning up the tutors did at the end of the day to make sure that you'd never know we were there. Like I said, the schools events are the Classic's biggest secret.

And what of my young friend who was getting in the lift that first Friday afternoon? I told him that we'd come back in 2016 if he would. He promised me he'd be back for sure. I feel exactly the same way. Organising a week of schools' events for CSC at Olympia next December? You try keeping me away.

What the Teachers Had to Say

All the children had a fantastic day and have already asked if I can book for next year.
Nicole, NJHS

... the children had a great day.
Maggie, William Hogarth

... thank you for providing the children with an inspiring opportunity. I know they absolutely loved it and were all bursting with joy on the way back to school.
Gamze, Morningside

We were delighted to be able to join the tournament ... staff and pupils thoroughly enjoyed the day. A bronze medallist was an added bonus!
Catherine, London Fields

We greatly enjoyed the day - "It's been such fun" - "A fantastic opportunity" - "The best party bag ever" being three of the children's comments that stand out. Although disappointed to be so close to winning medals but sadly, this year, unsuccessful (only 1 point away for two of them), the children did us proud and were very good sports. ... we look forward to next year!
Tracy, Oliver Goldsmiths

... thanks again for organising such a brilliant day. The children really enjoyed themselves and have become avid chess players.

John, Godwin

Yes2Chess 2016

Chess in Schools and Communities is delighted to announce that Yes2Chess is getting underway again. Barclaycard and Chess in Schools and Communities will be partnering to bring the 3rd Yes2Chess International Challenge to schools in the UK, USA, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Yes2Chess gives schoolchildren access to a secure online chess server, free of charge and entirely web-based where they can play chess anonymously against other children in a safe environment. The Yes2Chess International Challenge is a tournament for primary and elementary schools and is open to every UK primary school, not just those in the CSC programme. Teams consist of 5 players born after 31st December 2004 and must include at least one female player. The tournament begins with a regional group stage before progressing to national and international knockout rounds; matches can be played either face-to-face or online via the Yes2Chess server.

The Yes2Chess mentoring scheme will also continue with Barclaycard employees donating their time and expertise to chess in school projects in London, Northamptonshire, Liverpool and Teesside, where employees will help with chess lessons, both after school and in lesson time.

Last year 443 Barclaycard employees gave the equivalent of over two working years to such projects across 8 countries as Yes2Chess impacted over 40,000 children.

Key Dates

Registration opens: Wednesday 10th February
National Tournaments begin: Monday 22nd February
Registration closes: Thursday 31st March
National Tournaments
Final Stages: Monday 9th May
National KOs/Finals: w/c Monday 30th May
The Final: w/c Monday 4th July

Links

2015 Grand Final: http://www.chessinschools.co.uk/yes2chessfinals_2015.htm
Photos: <https://raymorris-hill.smugmug.com/keyword/Yes2Chess/>
2015-16 Tournament Rules: <http://yes2chess.org/uk/information/tournament-rules/>
Web Client User Guide:
<http://www.chessinschools.co.uk/download/y2c/Yes2Chess%20Web%20Client%20User%20Guide%202016.pdf>

For more information please visit www.yes2chess.org.

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Brian Kerr (1944-2014) was an Irish international, Cambridge maths graduate and successful problem-solver. He was also a sharp attacking player:

B. Kerr – O. Penrose, National Club Championship 1966 1. d4 f5 2. e4 fxe4 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. f3 exf3 5. Nxf3 d5 6. Ne5 c5 7. Bg5 e6 8. Bb5+ Bd7 9. O-O



9... cxd4 10. Bxf6 gxf6 11. Bxd7+ Nxd7 12. Qh5+ Ke7 13. Qf7+ Kd6 14. Nb5+ Kc5 15. Nxd7+ Kxb5 16. Qxe6 Rc8 17. Qxd5+ Ka6 18. Rxf6+ b6 19. a4 Bc5 20. a5 d3+ 21. Nxc5+ Rxc5 22. axb6+ Kb5 23. Qb3# 1-0

End of Newsletter no.2