

ANOTHER busy and successful season draws to a close.

By the end of June we ran nine training days and 10 tournaments. More than 215 children, aged between four and 15 have attended at least one event, with average attendances of 40 - 50 children at training days, and more at tournaments. In addition, the Schools Cup competitions in three age-groups (U11, U14 and U16) attracted an entry of 50 teams.

We are lucky to have several chess dynasties where multiple siblings attend regularly; but a new record was set this year when a very determined Laura Borland, aged just three, joined her brothers at a training day and held her own admirably all day!

Our Sussex junior teams continue to flourish. The U14s won the NYCA National Championships - the fourth successive year this cohort have been national champions. Our U9s, U11s, and U11 girls teams all qualified for the finals of their events, and despite the best efforts of the volcanic ash disruption, all succeeded in being placed fourth!

“The competition was toughbut Sussex triumphed after a very tough final”

Our youngsters taking on Europe



Celebrating winning the Battle of the Giants

It was with regret that we decided not to compete at U12 and U16 level this year due to the difficulty of the location. However, we have fielded teams in U14/U140, U13 and U18 events, helping our teenagers bridge the gap between junior and adult chess. More than 90 children have had the chance to represent Sussex so far this year.

A particular highlight this season was sending a mixed-age

team to The Netherlands to defend the Battle of the Giants title Sussex won two years ago.

The competition was tough, against top sides from France, the Netherlands and Germany but Sussex triumphed after a very tough final against St. Petersburg.

There have also been considerable individual successes – 12-year old Amy Hoare was selected to represent England in the prestigious European Youth

Championships; Matthew Payne and Rhys Cumming travelled to Poland with the England squad; similarly, Otto and Ramsay Pyper travelled to the Czech Republic and Daniel Sutton to Belarus.

Sussex has an enviable record in supplying players to the England squad – congratulations to Billy Twigge-Molecey and Toby Harris, who achieved this milestone this year. We also have two part-qualified players on the cusp - we wish them well with that for next season.

Sussex Junior Chess has existed in its current form for only 15 years, and it is very encouraging to note that six alumni have qualified for the British Championships this year – good luck to GM David Howell, IM Thomas Rendle, George Salimbeni, Grant Bucher, David Grant and Rhys Cumming.

Once again, we hosted the Sussex Megafinal for the UK Chess Challenge – the UK's largest junior



Enjoying some lively game analysis

competition. More than 360 5-17-year-olds competed including a record entry of 39 under-7s, and we will be sending more than 100 Sussex qualifiers to the Gigafinal in Berkshire in July. It was also our turn to host the EPSCA National U9 final.

This being exactly a week before the Megafinal put considerable strain on our resources; so many thanks to the parents, friends, local club players and our own teenagers, who helped make this a very



Serious concentration by some of our youngest players

exciting and happy day.

Last but not least, we have approved a new constitution and elected an enlarged committee which should enable us to move forward with our vision of promoting junior chess in Sussex.

So – a lot going on! It just remains to thank all parents for their support in so many ways – transporting and encouraging children, helping at events and behind the scenes.

This year we offer sincere thanks to Margaret and Andy Burch, Trevor Norton, and Nick Yates who all step down from some or all of their roles after many years' service. We would like to extend a warm welcome to anyone who feels they could offer to help us take Sussex Junior Chess forward.

To keep up with our activities throughout next season, please visit our website www.sussexjuniorchess.org which is regularly updated with news from our events and details of our forthcoming events.

We also welcome your ideas and feedback – email info@sussexjuniorchess.org.

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