

## BCET Nominations 2020

### **Woodbridge School**

Dear John,

I would like to put forward Woodbridge School for this award.

Previous winners, back in 2004 Woodbridge has been one of the very few schools in the country to employ a full time chess teacher, IM Adam Hunt who has now been teaching at the school for 15 years and offer chess lessons through the day as a 1-1 or 2-1 option from Year 2 onwards.

The school has in recent years most notably produced International Master Justin Tan, who achieved his title and a large rating point jump whilst at Woodbridge, and the Grandmaster title shortly after leaving. Justin is currently the British blitz champion. In September 2018 German student Oliver Stork joined the school. At the time he was rated 2196 and has now achieved the FM title and a current FIDE rating of 2367.

Woodbridge runs a variety of tournaments throughout the Prep (Year 3-6) and Senior school (Years 7-11) levels, including house chess championships, a knockout event which the whole of Year 7 competes in and has hosted and supported the Suffolk Megafinal and a London junior championship qualifier for the last 20 years. Last year Woodbridge Prep introduced a celebratory 'week of chess', teaching the whole of the school the game. There are scholarships and bursaries available for outstanding students and the Tony Miles chess trophy, awarded at speech day for the school champion as well as numerous other internal chess prizes.

Woodbridge has it's own chess website, at [www.woodbridgechess.wordpress.com](http://www.woodbridgechess.wordpress.com)

Kind regards

Mr Adam Hunt  
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### **Hallfield School, Edgbaston**

My nomination this year.

#### **Hallfield School, Edgbaston**

Hallfield School has over 160 children across the school from Year 1-6 taking part in weekly chess lessons. Hallfield has regularly excelled in the National Schools Championships, winning the ECF competition in 2018. The EPSCA Finals are normally populated by schools from London, and Hallfield is a rare example of a school north of London that regularly qualifies for it and has been in the top 3 on a few occasions in the past few seasons. Children from the school normally make up the majority of the Warwickshire county junior teams. A number of its children regularly win the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) trophies in their age groups. Recently they've been invited to participate in the Birmingham & District Junior League team competitions, which is

predominantly for secondary schools, and in February 2019 they won their league Blitz tournament ahead of all of those schools! In recent times, Manvith Sandhu, Rohan Pal, Kanav Monga and Kai Miller have all represented the ECF in European and World Youth and Cadets Championships.

Alex Holowczak

Laxton Junior School, Oundle

## Oundle School – National Chess player

Posted November 30, 2012 .

In the British Rapidplay chess competition in Leeds over the weekend of 23/24 November, Third Form (Year 9) Oundle School pupil and resident of Barnwell near Oundle, Sam Herring (13) scored 7.5/11, gaining his second 'half norm' and thus qualifying as a member of the National Junior Squad. He also won a grading prize, coming joint 5th in his section.

At the end of June, Sam won the U14 section of the SAAFA County Congress and the U14 County Grand Prix. A couple of weeks into the summer holiday, Sam was also called up to play for England in the Robinson Cup – the U14 home nations, against Scotland, Wales and Ireland. England came 3rd but only missed out on 1st place by 2.5 points.

In late July, Sam participated in the U13 British Championships in North Shields where he scored 4/7. This result gave him his first 'half-norm'. In August, he took part in an U13 tournament in Oldham where he came 2nd. At the Cambridge Rapidplay in late October, Sam won a grading prize and shared the Junior prize, scoring 3.5/5.

The School Chess Team currently lies second in Division Two of the Northamptonshire Chess League known as the 'Silver King' and play teams of adults. They field a team consisting of only one adult (either Tim Herring (Sam's father) or coach, Geoff Crook) and the rest are pupils.

Oundle's Chess coach, Geoff Crook commented, ***"Sam continues to excel not only in tournaments, but also playing in the Oundle School chess team, for which he has now been promoted to play top board. His hard work and study of the game is really bearing fruit and his inclusion in the National Squad is just reward for his effort."***

Sam started playing chess in Year Six at Laxton Junior School where there is a flourishing programme of chess clubs led by teacher Graham Trotter, who encourages pupils to participate in competitions at regional and national levels. Geoff, who teaches chess at both Laxton Junior School and Oundle School added, ***"Sam's success has been helped by the joint chess initiative that has been set up between both schools and we hope for more chess champions to follow in Sam's footsteps."***

Sam commented, ***"I am delighted to have gained a place in the National Squad and I look forward to playing for my country in the New Year"***.

This coming weekend, Sam is playing for the Midlands against Scotland, Wales and the North in a two day tournament in Liverpool followed by the London Junior Chess Championships in mid December.

Dear John

I have been teaching chess since I left school and am currently in my 40<sup>th</sup> year of teaching our wonderful game. I was inspired to teach as I had the most wonderful chess teacher myself when I was young and I have always been keen to pass on what I learnt from him.

I have been working at both the Junior and Senior Schools in Oundle since 2002 and in that time we have produced a number of exceptional talents and players and have a number of thriving clubs. I currently attend the schools two days a week driving the 50 miles from home to do so. At the Junior school I run both lunchtime and evening clubs on both days and at the Senior School I run a club on one evening.

At the Senior School we mostly play games rotating ourselves throughout the session with each individual getting to spend time on a one to one basis with me so learning takes place. I also support individuals who take chess as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Previously, we had a school team playing in Division 2 of the Northamptonshire Silver King League, which we won in the season 2016-7. However, the time taken to take children on the long round trips in evenings became too much so I now refer school players to the local clubs around Oundle, where they can develop their game further. This is how our nomination for the BCET award came about as Peterborough Chess Club have been the main beneficiaries in recent years.

At Oundle we have a new House called Scott House. The House allows a smooth two year transition from the Junior to Senior schools for pupils. I'm very pleased that the children still play regular chess, which is encouraged by the Housemistress and for the last two years we have run a Scott House chess tournament for the pupils.

At the Junior school lunchtime clubs are set up as turn up and play. If a child needs help with their chess they will come and ask me or discuss problems with other children. The older, more experienced players are always encouraged to help our younger children and they also help out at my Wednesday evening club, which is primarily for Years 2-4. I am always delighted to see that even on the sunniest of days the lunchtime classes are always full with between 30-40 children.

Both evening clubs start with a short chess lecture and updates on what is current in chess, either globally or locally. Then we play a serious league game in the leagues that I set up. After that it's friendly games and problem solving. In the Spring term we participate in the Delancey Schools' Chess Challenge. I currently have 68 children split between the evening clubs.

I think if I added up the number of different children in attendance at all clubs I must see between 80-100 different children each week, which is around 50% of the children in Yr2-6.

As well as playing on traditional boards, we have for a number of years used the ChessKid software on computers and tablets, which allows the children to learn at their own speed. I monitor progress each week and feedback to individuals on their weekly activity and I use material from their games in club lectures.

In summary, I view our success with chess primarily on the number of children that we have playing the game and coming along of their own free will to attend clubs. However, competition, and success in it, is an important marker and aim for the children. My

philosophy is that I will always actively support any child to fulfil their potential whatever that aim is and I am inclusive of all abilities.

In competitions we have twice had teams in the U-9 National Final of the EPSCA National Primary Schools Chess Championships, which, given that we sit in rural Northamptonshire with little local competition, was quite something. In recent years it has been difficult logistically to take part in this competition so the children compete in local and regional competitions on a more regular basis and I support them as often as I can by going along.

For a number of years we have produced a variety of County Champions at all ages from U-7 to U-18 and this year was no exception as we had four county champions and four runners up in the sections from U-7 to U-12.

A number of players have developed to National Level, our first was Sam Herring who was runner up in U-18 section of the Delancey competition a few years ago. Sam also represented England, and whilst at the Senior School he came down to help teach some of the youngsters on a Wednesday afternoon at the Junior School as part of his community action. He is now at University, but still playing very good chess.

Alexander Richards has recently moved up to the senior school, but has also represented England in International competitions. At the Gibraltar Junior International Chess Festival in 2019 he finished equal third in the U-12 section, his best performance to date.

Rion Ray qualified and played in the European Rapid and Blitz Championships in Estonia in 2019 as well as reaching the Delancey TeraFinal. I have added below a message in support of our nomination from Rion's father, Rito.

Whilst being relatively new to the game George Calvert is the latest youngster to get the chess bug and he has been teaching his brother William too, who is equally coming along well. George has recently joined Peterborough Chess Club, which is why Francis Bowers nominated the school. I am sure he is going to excel at the game as he recently won the U-9 County Championships with a perfect score 6/6. George's mother has also added a message of support to the nomination.

In addition to the above, I have added Francis's original nomination for the school.

Geoff Crook

Dear Mr. Wickham,

It has just been brought to my notice regarding the nomination of Laxton Junior School towards the BCET school award by a parent of the school.

May I take this opportunity to thank Mr Francis Bowers for his kindness to nominate the school and to further appreciate the significant input Mr Geoff Crook has had towards this institute's chess prowess.

As a parent of Rion Ray (student of Year 5), who has achieved significant progress in this specific sport, I can proudly and unhesitatingly support this nomination. Please feel free to use my citation if you need to, in any form or shape.

My son Rion has been playing chess in Laxton Junior School since reception. Under Mr Crook's guidance and support he has risen from a casual player to winning the Northamptonshire County Championship for U7 right up to U10. Geoff has seen Rion through his ups and downs. From moments of despair to epitomes of elations at getting Country level recognition by playing for England via ECF. Geoff has not only been an excellent teacher for the school but his pastoral care, emotional support and sometimes counselling services to, not only my son, but all the children of Laxton, has been an exceptional example of mentorship

Under Geoff's nurture and caring guidance, Laxton School's chess club is thriving with lunchtime and evening clubs in excess of 30 pupils in each between Year 2 and Year 6. This achievement in its own shows how popular this game has become in LJS under his tutelage.

Another commendable thing of note is his dedication to the game and his pupils. We have seen him attend numerous county and national level games - often in his own time and money, over weekends, to support his students. Under his guidance we have had many students who have made appearances for the England Chess Federation. Sam Herring, Alexander Richards are prominent names that come to mind. But apart from such excellent achievers, there has been many more who has been inspired by this game and turns up at every county event to support and play chess. So me, like many other parents of LJS I know, is indebted to Geoff for his unyielding support and dedication to the game and the school.

We are also grateful to Mr Robertson, School Headmaster, without whose support all of these progresses would not have been possible.

Kind Regards

Ritabrata Ray

Father of Rion Ray

Year 5

Laxton Junior School

Dear Mr. Wickham,

I am emailing you regarding the nominations for your BCET school award. The head of our local club (Peterborough chess club), Francis Bowers, was incredibly generous to have nominated my sons' school, Laxton Junior School, for your award. I was most honoured that Francis would think to nominate our school and as a parent of two boys who play chess at Laxton Junior School, I would very much like to second this nomination.

Both of my sons, George and William have attended Laxton Junior since they were four. They began going to Laxton Junior School chess club in September 2019. Since then under the excellent tuition of Mr Geoff Crook who runs the club, they have blossomed in their chess playing, from being complete beginners to both being selected to represent Northamptonshire County in their respective age groups in just a few short months.

Mr Crook has been a great inspiration to George and William, instilling in them a true passion for the game that has led to them being incredibly self motivated to learn new strategies and game play. They take themselves off to practice without any prompting from either myself or my husband and display a focus and determination to learn that we are extremely proud of. The boys are also active in recruiting their friends to join the club as they want to share with them how much fun playing chess is.

Laxton Junior School Chess club has also nurtured development of current junior players representing England, notably former pupil Alexander Richards and current student Rion Ray. Oundle School pupil Sam Herring is another former Laxton pupil who is a hugely accomplished chess player. In addition to these successes, the club is very well supported by a great number of children from all year groups who play recreationally and have a genuine love of playing chess. None of this would have been possible without Mr Crook's unwavering support, dedication and undeniable expertise as a teacher. For all of the aforementioned successes of the club, I would ask that you strongly consider Laxton Junior School in your judging process, the school chess club is a true asset to the chess playing community.

With very best wishes, Hannah Calvert

Dear Hannah,

When you go to Laxton School you could mention that George has joined the English Chess Federation as a silver member and has a published chess Grade of 72

(not bad for being 8 years old) and has joined Peterborough Chess Club.

I am also the Cambridgeshire and East Anglian Junior Organiser.

each year the English Chess Federation awards a school a prize.

I have nominated Laxton Junior School for a Prize on the basis that George goes to that school.

Alexander Richards used to go to the school and does his brothers and sisters and Sam Herring now graded 174 and at uni now used to go to Laxton and was a member of Peterborough chess club

Francis Bowers

Newton Longville CofE Primary School

See attached pdf



BCET Newton  
Longville.pdf

**Kings College Wimbledon Junior School**

John

I would like to nominate King's College Wimbledon Junior School for a BCET award, and I attach their citation.

Yours

Neill Cooper

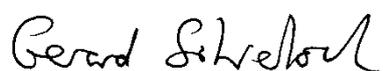
ECF Manager of Secondary School Chess

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Dear Dr Cooper

Please find below details of our chess club provided by Matt Hortin who runs the club and teams. I hope this will make a strong case for the school when your nomination for a BCET award is considered.

With warm regards and thanks for your nomination.



King's College Junior School is the Prep (Years 3-8) department of King's College School, with which it shares a campus in Wimbledon. There are 437 boys on the school roll.

A weekly chess club was formed in 2009 to accommodate keen players "graduating" from the lunchtime coaching sessions held by Aaron and Claire Summerscale. The school played its first chess match in 2010 against a local prep school 200 metres away, and in the decade since it has expanded its horizons to become ECF U11 champions, EPSCA U11 champions and ECF U13 Junior Team Chess Challenge champions.

Working very much on the principle that there is no such thing as too much chess, the school also plays in the ECF U19 National Schools Chess Championship (hosting a preliminary round in recent years) and is currently the only junior school competing in the Briant Poulter Surrey Schools U18 league. For the last 8 years, the school has hosted a free school team jamboree, taking advantage of the generosity of Mr and Mrs Summerscale with their time and equipment. This draws more than 160 boys and girls every year, and for many of these it is their first experience of a chess tournament. In more recent years the event has also doubled as a qualifier for the Junior Team Chess Challenge.

There is clearly, though, such a thing as too little chess; to ensure that the Covid-19 induced lack of OTB play doesn't make the pupils forget the pleasure and excitement the game brings, the school has already played 7 online fixtures. The intention if the summer term is also affected is to play both standard and rapid-play online fixtures against schools around the country.

The benefits of chess in terms of concentration, memory, decision making, and so on, have been well rehearsed. At KCJS these are all accepted, but the club's real success is in encouraging pupils to see chess not as game for primary school children but as a lifelong source of enjoyment. From the age of 8 a boy who plays a good enough game will represent the school against an 18 year-old. This is a possibility unique to chess, and means that pupils are then emboldened to test themselves in adult tournaments and join external clubs.

Chess provides an additional possibility for a child to discover a talent and experience success as part of a team. The school values the fact that pupils from 6 different year groups can play together as a team: it builds relationships through the school and allows older players to take on a leadership and mentoring role. The ECF and EPSCA national competitions also offer opportunities for players to experience a residential trip as part of a team – the "Sports Tour" is not the preserve of the Games Department!

The KCJS chess club has no intention of resting on its laurels. In the last couple of years Thomas Rendle has been added to the coaching team, and a school championship inaugurated. We still hope to hold the championship at school this year, but if it has to be played online, then so be it. To encourage younger players a Year 3 and 4 championship has also been introduced, and thankfully successfully completed this year. The chess club is looking forward to a second decade of fun and success.

#### **Long Marton Community School – NCCU Nomination**

In my capacity as the fairly newly appointed Cumbria Chess Association Junior Organizer, I would like to nominate Long Marton Community School for the BCET award.

For 10 years John Davis (a Long Marton Teacher) has been organizing a tournament for his and other schools in the area.

I attended the tournament earlier this year, and was very impressed by what I saw.

Despite being in a sparsely populated and pretty remote location, 12 schools and 76 children took part.

The early part of the day consisted of 2 different coaching sessions for the children.

The children were asked to choose if they went to the basic or advanced coaching session, based on their playing strength.

The rest of the day consisted of the chess tournament and a break for lunch, followed by the prize giving presentation.

In April there is going to be a chess match between the northern and southern clubs in the Cumbria league.

The match is to be held in a very public setting to try and promote the game to the general public.

A junior match is to precede the adult match, in order to promote the game to children and give them some experience of representing the part of the county that they live in.

As I am new to the Junior Organizer Post, I asked John if he could help me with getting some juniors who could take part in the match.

He is in the process of contacting the most suitable children to let them know of the match and see if they would be available.

During the day, I mentioned to John that I planned to restart having a Cumbria Junior Tournament, so that every child in Cumbria can have the opportunity to compete to become Junior Chess Champion of their county.

Being new to my post, finding a suitable venue was going to be one of my issues to resolve.

A few days later, I received an email from John to say that he had spoken to Rachael Smith (Long Marton Community Headteacher), and that she had agreed to allow their school to be used to host the tournament.

This is to take place on a Saturday in June.

John has kindly agreed to give up his Saturday to go in, open up the school and help with the running of the tournament.

John's dedication and enthusiasm for helping the children to develop and play a positive role in the community, by the use of chess and other activities is impressive.

John Lydon

# **SOUTHERN COUNTIES CHESS UNION**

**FOUNDED 1892**

## **Citation for the British Chess Educational Trust**

### **Hampton Hill Junior School, Hampton**

The Southern Counties Chess Union would like to nominate Hampton Hill Junior School for a British Chess

Educational Trust Award.

### **HAMPTON HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL CHESS CLUB**

Hampton Hill Junior School (HHJS) is a mixed community junior state school with 360 children. The school is renowned in its borough for its social, emotional and mental health provision for children with extra educational needs. The chess club is led by a former parent, Verity Pettit, who's own ASD child benefited from HHJS' outstanding education, and who not only shares the school's deep passion for inclusivity, but is highly driven to bring the game of chess and all its benefits, to as many young children as possible. HHJS asserts that its chess club warmly welcomes every ability, especially those with additional needs, and welcomes every age group, and strives to foster a love of chess in them for life, giving them not just the skills to play, but the skills to lose, to cope with disappointment, to commiserate and congratulate, to find ambition to succeed for themselves as well as to take part nicely within a team, to share their chess knowledge through mentoring as they progress, to develop strong skills in planning ahead and have confidence in their choices.

HHJS chess club is proud to have achieved extraordinarily large numbers of children choosing to be part of their fast paced, highly structured lunchtime groups. There are currently 98 children playing each week across four lunchtime clubs. The teaching style is ambitious, following a set formula. In a ten week term, each child will play ten different opponents, notate the solutions to ten different puzzles, receive interactive teaching on ten different topics, and will watch ten different chess videos. HHJS have encouraged Duke of Edinburgh volunteers to come to assist with coaching. There are many motivational mini prizes for many reasons and the club recognises that these may sometimes be the sole reason a 7 year old child first comes to chess club but they go on to build skills they can be proud of. All children are recognised for the strengths they bring. They learn to contribute their ideas, strategy, and plans without fear of ridicule.

Taking chess out to tournament level was a big step, but HHJS found that with their attitude of it being totally fine to come last, holding heads high to simply be taking part, they have found they have not come last, and as the years go by, HHJS are often finding ourselves up at the top. It's not just the same set of children achieving this, HHJS have sustained strong performances over the past five years at external events with all the year groups.

HHJS' more recent achievements include:

- In September 2020 an HHJS player will take up a chess scholarship place at Hampton School.
- HHJS qualified through to the NPSCC semi-finals with two teams this year, and with three teams last year, taking 1<sup>st</sup> place with their U11A teams in both of those years at the Richmond first round zone. This is HHJS' fifth year of participation in this annual EPSCA tournament, qualifying for the semi-finals four times, achieving a total of two gold, two silver, and two bronze awards at Bristol.
- At the November 2019 South East Championships at Sandown Racecourse, HHJS took 26 children. One of their boys won the U11 Boys trophy, and one of their girls won the U11 Girls trophy. Overall, the Boys team took 1<sup>st</sup> place, improving on their 2<sup>nd</sup> place position in 2018, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in 2017.
- HHJS take part in the UK Chess Challenge every Spring term, running the first round during their club time. In 2019, 19 children went on to play in the Megafinals, with 12 qualifying to the Gigafinals, and finally 2 players made it through to the Terafinal Challengers.
- 20 HHJS players took part in the annual UKI tournament in June 2019. The Boys team had finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place the previous 2018 year and in 2019 they were delighted to top that by taking 1<sup>st</sup> place. In addition, 2019 was the first year that they had enough strong girl players to form a girls team and this was their first tournament.
- In the past four years HHJS have played many friendly inter school matches with several local schools, both state and independent. This included organising a marathon 25 board challenge over four weeks with one of the schools.

Sadly, Covid-19 brought the 2020 chess season to a standstill but HHJS chess club has brought chess to the children at home through creating a YouTube channel. Their series of videos taught the children how to create the 'checkmate in one' puzzles that the children all know how to solve. A booklet of 18 selected puzzles was then circulated to the parents for the children to work on whilst in lockdown, crediting each puzzle's author.

HHJS' passion is to enjoy learning through happy play, with no pressure, and plenty of positive reinforcement, and they succeed. Chess is firmly on the map at HHJS. The management there are incredibly supportive to the chess club, always celebrating the children's efforts in assemblies and newsletters, inspiring the children to shine.

Mark Murrell, President, Southern Counties Chess Union

31<sup>st</sup> May 2020