

The 89th Bristol Congress 31 March – 2 April 2023 - Peter Marks

The Bristol Congress returned this year for the first time since 2020. This was the 89th edition and was the biggest yet with over 150 players evenly distributed across the three sections: the Open, Boniface (U1900), and Foundation (U1600)

The venue for the Congress was the Great Hall at Bristol Grammar School, which must be one of the most special venues for chess in the country, additionally we had extra rooms for relaxing, analysis, and chess talk. The grammar school is a super location being in central Bristol making it accessible by public transport and having on-site parking for drivers. The event was excellently organised by Igor Doklestic supported by his authoritative arbiter team of John Shaw, Vince Southcott, and Derek Walker.

As with previous editions the Congress was well supported from the Bristol league, across the UK, and from abroad. It was terrific to see so many promising young players and to catch-up with returning weekend congress regulars, many of whom are old friends. The final round was played in brilliant spring sunshine which added to the special feeling.

All three sections saw clear winners. In the Open, which featured two GMs, one IM and two FMs, IM Chris Beaumont demonstrated his enduring class to win on 4.5 points holding off FM Roland Bezuidenhout and Ben Ogunshola who drew their last round match up to finish on 4 points each. Ken Hobson also finished on 4 points after a first-round bye. Chris's victory comes 34 years after his first victory in 1989!

In the Boniface, there were 9 players who were unbeaten over the Congress. The winner, again on 4.5 points, half a point clear of the field, was Mark Jones. He had been one of three players going into the final round on 3.5 points and secured the title with a good win over the promising junior Mohit Kamal Karangad.

The Foundation was very competitive, and as ever saw many wild games. Bristol's Tom Weale won outright by beating Dalrymple Graeme in the last round to finish on 4.5 points. As with the other two sections the winner finished half a point ahead of the field.

The prize fund totalled £2,340 with the winners of the three sections receiving £970, £770, £600 respectively.

There were of course several high quality and exciting games. We've picked out the following games, two from the Open and one from the Minor:

Firstly, Chris Beaumont's second round victory over Steve Meek [Chris Beaumont v Steve Meek Rd 2 Open Section](#)

Secondly, a draw between GM Keith Arkell and Bristol University's Tom Shepherd [Keith Arkell v Tom Shepherd Rd 4 Open Section](#)

And finally, Tom Weale's fourth round win over David Buckell [David Buckell v Tom Weale Rd 4 U1600](#)