

# Jessie Gilbert...9 Years Gone

By **Alexander Baron** - Jul 26, 2015

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*Jessie Gilbert (30 January 1987 – 26 July 2006)*

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SHARES

Jessie Gilbert died in tragic circumstances 9 years ago today. It is difficult to believe so much time has passed, or that it was nearly twice that since I first met her when we played in the first round of a small chess tournament in South West London. She was eleven years old at the time, nearly twelve, and the shyest little thing you ever did meet, as well as the cutest. Less than three months later she was catapulted to fame when she won that historic title at the Hastings Chess Congress, far from her first and by no means the last she would win in **her short life**.

Jessie was born January 30, 1987, the second of four sisters. Some of the photographs you see here are published for the first time; there are a lot more, and should I live long enough, I will publish them on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death.

At her funeral, one of her many schoolfriends said Jessie was the sort of person you meet once in a lifetime. I have been blessed to meet not one but several people of whom I might say that, including **Chris Tame**, who died earlier the same year. Although he lived nearly three times as long, fitness fanatic Chris was struck down by a particularly virulent form of cancer, and died well before his time. As I said, there have been others, but none so young, and none so tragic.



*Jessie on the beach in 1990.*



*Jessie loved the water, here she is boating in 1991.*



*A young Jessie on the beach again, circa 1992.*



*Jessie at Wey Valley, June 30, 1996. As usual she was among the prize winners. She was never an ugly duckling, but she would eventually blossom into a beautiful swan.*



*Jessie in New York, April 16, 1999, with braces on her teeth.*



*Jessie looks glum in her passport photograph, but this is not the way she was in real life.*