

The Howard Staunton Society Announces Plans to Register as a Charity

The Howard Staunton Society is set to register as a charity, expanding its mission to use chess as a tool for mental health and memory well-being.



London, United Kingdom Dec 6, 2025 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Less than a month ago, on Friday, 14 November 2025, the Howard Staunton Society marked a historic milestone in its 30-year history with a sold-out black-tie revival dinner at L'Escargot, London's oldest French restaurant.

Over thirty members gathered in the historic Soho townhouse for an evening honouring Howard Staunton's lasting influence on chess, literature, and British cultural life. Brian Clivaz, CEO of L'Escargot and one of the Society's founders, opened the evening with a warm welcome, introducing fellow founders, Raymond Keene OBE, an English chess grandmaster and a FIDE International Arbiter, and renowned sculptor Barry Martin, who reflected on the Society's origins and its mission to restore Staunton's neglected legacy.

Sir Alan Fersht FRS captivated the room with a demonstration of a rare early Staunton chess set signed by Staunton himself, while Dr Richard Eales delivered an insightful address on Staunton's profound intellectual and cultural impact. HSH Prince Marek Kasperski, travelling all the way from Australia, delivered the closing remarks. Raymond Keene OBE presided over the dinner and presented a new edition of his best-selling book "Howard Staunton: The English World Chess Champion", co-authored with R. N. Coles, with every guest receiving a signed copy.

Today, following this historic revival dinner, the Howard Staunton Society announces its intention to register formally as a charity. After three decades devoted to preserving Staunton's memory, commissioning the granite knight headstone for his once-unmarked grave, supporting tournaments, conserving historic chess sets and promoting his contributions to Shakespearean scholarship, the Society is preparing for a new chapter: using chess to drive meaningful public benefit.

The Society believes this moment is urgent. Chess is no longer merely a game or a cultural artefact; it is increasingly recognised as a powerful, low-cost tool to support mental health, strengthen memory, enhance concentration and help address widespread cognitive decline. In a world strained by anxiety, digital overload and post-pandemic loneliness, chess offers something rare: deep focus, human connection and a proven mental workout capable of supporting psychological well-being across all ages. Studies and practitioners alike highlight chess's capacity to reduce stress, encourage presence, and support memory in ways traditional interventions often fail to reach, benefits that are gaining new relevance amid rising mental-health pressures and ageing populations.

As a registered charity, the Society will expand its educational and cultural initiatives, including republishing Staunton's writings, supporting young players, promoting research, and conserving historic Staunton chess sets. It will also develop outreach programmes to bring chess into schools, community centres, care homes and mental-health organisations, ensuring that the game's therapeutic potential becomes accessible to all. The strategic alliance with L'Escargot provides a distinguished central London home for future gatherings and public events, strengthening the Society's ability to advance these initiatives.

Raymond Keene OBE emphasised the significance of this transformation, remarking: "Chess is more than a contest between two opposing powers; it is a refuge for the mind and a gymnasium for memory and imagination. In a world racing towards forgetting, we must give the brain a chance to remember and to heal." His words capture the urgency of the moment, and the necessity of bringing chess to the forefront of contemporary well-being.

With its evolution into a charity, the Howard Staunton Society is calling on supporters, philanthropists and cultural patrons to join its mission. The board is set. The pieces are ready. And as the challenges of the modern world grow more complex and more personal, the time to act is unmistakably now.



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