

THE SWORD

The magazine of the membership since 1948

British Fencing Magazine

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RICHARD KRUSE WINS CAIRO WORLD CUP P5
VETERANS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ROUND UP PP12–18



WHEELCHAIR FENCING CHAMPION PP19–20
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Kruse wins Cairo World Cup.

Photo: Devin Manky/Augusto Bizzi

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Welcome to THE SWORD



Janet Huggins receives Vice Presidency from Chair, Hilary Philbin

- 4 **ON THE BOARD**
- 5 **NEWS**
- 8 **INTERNATIONAL ROUND UP**
- 12 **REPORTS**
 - World Veterans Championships Report 2017
 - GBR Wheelchair Fencers on Top of the World in Rome
 - John-Paul Shaw's Senegal Adventure
- 23 **INTERVIEW**
 - Interview With Steve Garrett
- 24 **DEVELOPMENT**
 - Coaching or Teaching: Considering Learning Situations
 - Coach Behaviours
 - Building Relationships
 - Is Your Club Visible Online?
 - Club Spotlight
 - An Interview with Laylla Stanley
- 31 **FEATURES**
 - Scotland Feature
- 33 **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**
- 34 **ALL FOR ONE – DANISH STYLE!**
- 36 **BOOK REVIEWS**
- 39 **RESULTS**

On the Board

AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL ABRAHAMS

The Sword: Many people in the sport know you, your passion for fencing and your involvement on the Board. However being a Board Director is a voluntary role. Tell us about your job?

Paul: I head up corporate communications for an information and analytics company called RELX Group. It has a low profile, but is the 15th biggest company in the UK by market capitalisation. I started off doing a Ph.D. in history which required me to live in the French Alps for 15 months. I then wrote an article about the problems of people doing obscure Ph.D.'s getting jobs in the real world, which the Financial Times published. I then sent in a copy of the article with my CV to the newspaper and they gave me a job. I was a journalist for 15 years at the FT in London, Tokyo and San Francisco before moving to the dark side - corporate communications. I'm now officially a spin-doctor.

The Sword: What is your role/objective on the Board?

Paul: The role of a non-executive is three-fold. First to support the Chief Executive in formulating a strategy for British Fencing. Second to hold the Chief Executive and her team accountable for executing that strategy. And finally, to ensure that when the strategy is executed it is done so in a way that reflects British Fencing's values - Honesty, Excellence, Respect.

The Sword: You've just been re-elected. Congratulations! Tell us about the work that you did in your first term and how you intend to develop your achievements in your second.

Paul: There's a steep learning curve when you join the board of a national governing body. The first thing is to understand the role - it isn't an executive role. You have to leave the running of sport to Georgina and her team. What you can do is constructively challenge. So if there are parts of the strategy that don't seem to be making progress as fast as you would like, you can challenge the executive why that might be the case, and whether it should be prioritised. In terms of achievements, I'm a member of the nominations committee and pleased with the process and outcome in selecting the new chairman. In terms of the next four years, we have to keep British Fencing in a financially strong position in what is a difficult environment. I would very much like to make the BF events programme a source of profit rather than loss. I think there's a lot of opportunity there.

The Sword: Your family is heavily involved in the sport. Tell us what you and they do. Are there any weekends when an Abrahams isn't doing something to do with fencing?

Paul: Fencing has been a part of my life for more than 40 years. My sister, Viveca Abrahams, was a fencer and introduced me to the sport when I was eight years old. The innovation award at the British Fencing dinner is named in her memory. I still fence at least once a week, sometimes twice, nearly always foil. I still turn up at veterans competitions with sabre kit as well. I referee regularly both domestically and internationally - I'm writing this in Moedling, Austria where I'm officiating. Matthew, my son is trained by my old university coach Ziemek Wojciechowski. Matthew's a first year junior and will be competing in Havana, Cuba in December. My daughter, Sophie is an epeeist and referees foil. My wife, Abby, provides support in many ways, but refuses to wash my kit since it's so gross. In terms of non-fencing weekends (and there aren't many), there's normally a trip to the cinema.

The Sword: Outside of fencing, what do you do to pass the time?

Paul: I spend about an hour on the Northern Line every day, and I read a lot, sometimes science fiction, more recently non-fiction. I'm still a huge history fan. I have an addictive personality for computer games, so I try to ration myself - a fun, but not particularly useful way to spend time. Abby is Canadian and we go to British Columbia a lot to ski. I used to race at university level. It keeps me fit and prepares me for the British Veterans Age Group Championships. I'm still hoping to qualify for the Veterans World's in my age group again, but it's getting more and more challenging for some reason.



Board Director: Paul Abrahams

News

KRUSE WINS SEASON OPENER IN CAIRO

Pyramids set backdrop to Kruse's fifth Olympic Qualifying Campaign



Ziemek celebrates win with Richard in Cairo.
Credit: Augusto Bizzi

he saw out the fight with two superb parry ripostes, claiming the first crown of the season, 15-5. You can watch the action from the individual and team events on the Facebook page of the Egyptian Fencing Federation.

Speaking after the event, Richard said, "I'm very pleased to have won the first World Cup of the season in Cairo. My fencing got better as the rounds progressed. The backdrop for the final was of the Pyramids of Giza. I don't think it'll be easy for any fencing competition to top that!"

His coach, Ziemek Wojciechowski added, "Richard gave a phenomenal performance, confirming that he is still World class. The recent loss of U.K. Sport funding for fencing means that Richard is 100% reliant on sponsorship to give him the best chance to qualify for Tokyo 2020. If you are interested in supporting him in anyway, however modest, please contact headoffice@britishfencing.com."

This result means that Richard climbs to number 4 in the World rankings.

On 21 October, thirty-four year old Londoner, Richard Kruse, began the new men's foil (fencing) season in Cairo in stunning fashion, by beating Italian, Alessio Foconi 15-5 in the gold medal match to claim the Cairo World Cup title.

The British fencer headed into the new season ranked sixth in the World. This meant that he avoided competing in the qualification rounds. He beat teammate Keith Cook, 15-12 in the first round – his closest match of the tournament – and then German, Andre Sanita, 15-7 in the second. His third opponent was Russia's 2014 World Champion, Alexey Cheremisinov, who Kruse has a good record against (4-2 lead in head-to-head). Consistent with form, Kruse went on to beat him 15-9. That victory meant a match-up against long-standing adversary and 2011 World Champion, Andrea Cassara of Italy. Kruse won 15-10 to confirm his place in the semi-finals and at least a bronze medal.

Cheung Ka Long was his opponent in the top four. The fencer from Hong Kong had surprised America's World number one, Alex Massialas, in the previous round, beating him 15-13 in a fascinating fight. Using his patience and experience, Kruse made light work of Cheung, closing out the fight 15-7 in the second period to set up a fight with Foconi for the first title of the season.

The final was a repeat of last year's [Shanghai Grand Prix final](#), where Kruse had dominated. Much the same followed here in Cairo. The Great Pyramids of Giza were the stunning backdrop for the outside arena set up especially for this final. Kruse rose to the occasion again. He controlled the first period with a mixture of his trademark counter-attacks and spectacularly sharp attacks, taking a strong 10-3 lead into the first break. In the second period, Kruse controlled the pace luring Foconi into attacking him. Relying on his defence



The Sphinx watches over Kruse beating Foconi for gold. Credit: Augusto Bizzi

News (continued)

GOLD & SILVER FOR GBR AT LONDON SATELLITE SABRE

WILL DEARY CLAIMS GOLD FROM JAMES HONEYBONE AT LEON PAUL CUP

The biggest sabre tournament of the year held in the UK, saw thirty-five fencers line up for the Senior Men's Sabre FIE Satellite event – The Leon Paul Cup on 29 October. Will Deary (Truro) won the event hosted at The Copper Box, Queen Elizabeth II Olympic Park. He beat fellow countryman and teammate James Honeybone in the final.

In a field of seventy-five, Deary came through the first round dropping one of his six fights whilst Honeybone defeated all six of his opponents. Honeybone, ranked first, had a bye through the round of 64, before going on to beat 21 year old Canadian, Pitura 15-8, Belgium's second highest ranked fencer, De Visscher 15-10, teammate Webb 15-11 and the 25 year old Italian, Scepi 15-14 to make

the final. Meanwhile, Deary, ranked eleventh beat teammate Martin 15-3, the 26 year old American who won the 2013 Reykyavik Satellite, Kolasa 15-9, two Hungarians, 21 year old Pech 15-13, then 20 year old Galgozy 15-9 and 29 year old Italian Repetti 15-10.

The final between clubmates was always going to be tight but Deary came out on top with a 15-11 victory. Speaking shortly after the medal ceremony, he said, "I have worked very hard for this competition and its good to see that over the years it has paid off! A big thank you to all the coaches and support team that have helped along the way!"

The two Italians, Giovanni Repetti and Stephano Scepi, shared the bronze medal position.



James Honeybone (silver) & Will Deary (gold)

BRITISH MEDALS AT GLL CAMDEN INTERNATIONAL

GBR FENCERS REN AND RICHARDS MAKE THE PODIUM AT LONDON EFC CADET SABRE EVENT

On 28 October, Ian Ren (Leon Paul Sabre) claimed silver and Julian Richards II (Bergen Fencing Club) took bronze at the GLL Camden International Sabre event in London.

Held at the prestigious London 2012 venue, The Copper Box, the men's event began with a



Men's Podium – GLL Camden International

field of one hundred fencers. Ren and Richards II stormed through the first round winning all six of their fights. Ranked fifth and sixth respectively, Ren and Richards II both gained a bye through the round of 128. Ren went on to beat Robertson (GBR) 15-2, Jean (CAN) 15-9, Wei (CAN) 15-11 and Kato (JPN) 15-10 to qualify for the quarterfinals. Richards II beat Florez De Vargas (ESP) 15-13, Perroud (SUI) 15-14, Hemelsoet (BEL) 15-9 and Dinu (CAN) 15-14 to join Ren in the top eight.

In the quarterfinals Ren came up against GBR fencer Luke Haynes (Truro) who he beat 15-7 whilst Richards II defeated Kato (JPN) 15-12. Richards II had to settle for a bronze medal as he fell 15-9 to Santamaria (ESP).

Meanwhile Ren won his semi-final 15-5 over Marciano (ITA) to set up a final showdown with the Spanish fencer in the final. In a

closely fought fight Santamaria edged out Ren to take the gold medal 15-13.

Speaking about his silver medal, Ian said, "It was a well run competition. Thank you to my coach. I feel like I fenced well and I will take what I have learnt with me to the event in Eisingen." Ian's coach, Alex Bella added, "Practice! More practice makes good results."

Pleased with his bronze medal, Julian said, "This event was an awesome competition to experience. I loved the venue and quality of officiating. This was a well run competition and I learnt a lot for it. I found myself down at the halfway point in a lot of my bouts but I managed to comeback and win. Next time I will come back stronger." His coach, Oleg Stetsiv added, "Julian had to fight back in several bouts today and did not let himself down. We lost in the semi-final and will try to do better next time. It was fun today."

News (continued)

BRITISH CADETS WIN ONE TEAM GOLD & TWO BRONZE MEDALS SUCCESS FOR BRITISH TEAMS IN LONDON & KLAGENFURT

A fantastic weekend for British fencers at Cadet level concluded on 29 October with a haul of three team medals on the European Fencing Confederation Circuit.

GLL Camden International Sabre

Following on from the success of Ian Ren and Julian Richards II in the individual event on Saturday, Great Britain won the men's team gold medal and women's team bronze on Sunday.

There were three British teams in the field of sixteen in the men's event. Luke Haynes, Ian Ren and Julian Richards II lined up for GBR A and beat GBR C 45-29, USA 2 45-36 and Belgium 45-35 to line up a gold medal match with Japan. A thrilling contest followed which GBR A edged 45-44 to claim top spot on the podium.

Speaking on behalf of the team, the coach said, "The final wasn't easy as Japan are a



GBR A Men's Team take Camden gold (l to r: Julian Richards II, Ian Ren, Luke Haynes)



GBR A Women's Team claim Camden bronze (l to r: Maia Fashokun, Ellen Robbins-Wilkinson, Elsie Llewellyn, Lumeng Yang)

difficult team to beat. However we stuck together and worked hard for our victory."

Canada beat Belgium to secure the bronze medal as GBR B (Louis Bedford, Samuel Boorne and Kajetan McDonnell) finished sixth and GBR C (Darcy Holdsworth, Anuj Mathur and Rohan Smith) fifteenth.

In the women's event, Great Britain fielded four teams in the field of fourteen. GBR A lined up with Maia Fashokun, Elsie Llewellyn, Ellen Robbins Wilkinson and Lumeng Yang. They beat GBR D 45-18 and the USA 45-49 before losing their semi-final 45-40 to the EU team. This meant that they faced Belgium in the bronze medal match, which they won 45-38. After the medal ceremony, the coach said, "Great experience! Thanks to GLL for making a really well run competition and venue. It's good to know we have a really strong team

and today will help us to prepare for the future European tournaments."

Bulgaria claimed the gold medal by beating the EU team in the final.

Klagenfurt Men's Epee Team – EFC Circuit

Great Britain fielded three teams in this event amongst a field of thirty-eight. GBR A (Benjamin Andrews, Jacob Foulsham, Stephen MacPherson and Joshua Willcox), ranked ninth had a bye through the round of 64 and then beat Slovakia 45-23, defeated Israel B 45-34 and Ukraine B 45-42 before losing their semi-final 45-43 to USA B. They edged an extremely tight third place play-off against USA D 42-41 to claim the bronze medal.

Switzerland beat USA B 45-40 to win the event.



GBR A Team win Klagenfurt bronze (l to r: Joshua Willcox, Ben Andrews, Jacob Foulsham, Steven MacPherson) Credit: Jacqueline Lever

We are always looking for stories from youth internationals.

**Submit your stories to
the editor:**

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International Round Up

INTERNATIONAL ROUND-UP

The new fencing season is well under-way and by the time you are reading this the first set of Grand Prix events will have taken place. We pick those up in the next issue so for now we'll focus on the World Cup events that have concluded before we go to print.

Men's Epee

The men's epeeists kicked off their season in Berne, Switzerland in October. An enormous field of 252 began the event and despite it not being a good individual day overall for the fencers from Asia, Park Sangyoung of Korea came out on top. Ukraine would have been pleased with their outing as they claimed the remaining three podium spots with Bogdan Nikishin in second place as Igor Reizlin and Volodymr Stankevych sharing third. Japan were the surprise package in the team event – beating number one seeds, France, in the quarterfinals. They lost their semi-final but then beat third seeds Italy to claim the bronze medal. Korea continued to grow as a team unit by beating Russia in the final.



Park Sangyoung celebrates Berne gold.
Credit: Augusto Bizzi



Team Korea take first title in Switzerland.
Credit: Augusto Bizzi

The second World Cup took place in Legnano, Italy with 272 fencers in attendance. Last year's Hungarian World Championships bronze medallist, Andras Redli, came out on top beating his teammate Daniel Berta in the final. Switzerland's Max Heinzer shared the bronze medal position with Ruslan Kurbanov from Kazakhstan. In the team event the top four seeds progressed to the semi-finals and Russia claimed the gold medal by beating Italy in the final. Korea made it back-to-back team medals by beating France in the third place play-off.



Andras Redli (right) celebrates Legnano gold with teammate Berta. Credit: Augusto Bizzi



Russia top the Legnano team podium.
Credit: Augusto Bizzi

The top four in the individual World rankings – Paolo Pizzo, Park Kyoungdoo, Yannick Borel and Nikolai Novosjolov – are separated by just sixteen points. Marco Fichera sits in fifth place, nineteen points behind Novosjolov.

Korea have overtaken France at the top of the team rankings despite both being on 314 points. Russia is three point back and Italy a further eleven points with Ukraine trailing by another thirty-two points.

Women's Epee

Estonia's capital, Tallinn, was the location for the season opener for the women's epeeists

and it was a happy hunting ground for Italian fencer, Mara Navarria. She claimed gold, from a field of 203, beating the ever-improving Russian, Tatiana Gudkova in the final. Home favourite and ranked number one for the event, Julia Beljajeva shared bronze with Hungary's reigning Olympic Champion, Emese Szasz-Kowacs. Italy was in great form in the team event. They took out Russia, ranked fourth, in the top eight and then number one seeds, China in the semi-finals. Germany surprised Estonia in the bottom half of the draw, knocking them out in the quarterfinals and then narrowly lost to France in their semi-final. France was too strong from Italy in the gold medal match and China just beat Germany into the bronze medal position.



Tallinn Individual Podium (l to r: Gudkova, Navarria, Szasz-Kovacs & Beljajeva). Credit: Augusto Bizzi



France celebrate Tallinn team gold. Credit: Augusto Bizzi

The women's epeeists moved on to eastern China for the second leg of their series and the Suzhou World Cup. It was a good day for home fencer Sun Yiwen who won the title beating Nathalie Moellhausen of Brazil in the final. The bronze medals went to two Polish fencers,

Renata Knapik-Miazga and Magdalena Piekarska. Things got even better for Poland on the team day as they knocked out China and Russia on their way to beating Korea for the gold medal. Estonia claimed bronze with victory over Russia.

Estonia's Julia Beljajeva sits at the top of the individual rankings on 176 points with Emese Szasz-Kovacs in second on 164, two ahead of Poland's Ewa Nelip. Suzhou winner Sun holds fourth spot with 142 points with Violetta Kolobova of Russia in fifth with the same number of points.

China is at the top of the team ranking, thirty-six points ahead of Estonia who are fifty-nine points ahead of France. The French are just twelve points ahead of Korea but then just twenty-one points splits them from Russia, Poland and Italy.

Men's Foil

Britain's Richard Kruse won the first World Cup for the men's foilists in Cairo in October which boasted a field of 168. Full report on page 5. He beat Italian Alessio Focconi in the final with Cheung Ka Long of Hong Kong and America's Race Imboden claiming the bronze medals. The top four seeds made it to the semi-finals but both of those matches went against seeding as Russia beat France and the USA beat Italy. The American team steam-rolled their way to the gold medal over Russia as Italy edged France for the bronze.

Japan and the Tokyo World Cup was the next stop on the men's foil tour and it was Erwann Le Pechoux of France who took the gold beating long-term rival Andrea Cassara of Italy in the final. Cassara's teammate, Edoardo



Kruse beats Cheung on his way to Cairo gold. Credit: Augusto Bizzi



Team USA take Cairo crown. Credit: Augusto Bizzi



Sheer joy for Le Pechoux in Tokyo. Credit: Augusto Bizzi



Two out of two team golds for USA. Credit: Augusto Bizzi

Luperi and American Gerek Meinhardt were the bronze medallists. Meinhardt joined up with his squad to win the team event in Japan, beating Korea in the final. The impressive Danish team made it to the semi-finals, having beaten Italy and China on their way there. They lost to Korea and then Japan beat them to the bronze medal.

Just twenty-eight points separate the top five in the World rankings. Alexander Massialas of the USA is still number one (202), followed by Russia's Timur Safin (194) but he hasn't competed yet this season. In third place is Italy's Olympic Champion, Daniele Garozzo on the same number of points – 179 – of fourth placed Brit, Richard Kruse. Alessio Focconi rounds out the top five on 174 points.

The USA top the team rankings with both France and Italy behind them by just sixteen points. Russia are a further sixty points back in fourth. The four teams in the chasing pack are split by a further fifty-eight points.

Women's Foil

The very first event of the new season was the Cancun World Cup in Mexico. The field of 118 was topped by American, Lee Kiefer who beat Italy's Alice Volpi in the final. Two other Italians sealed the bronze medals, namely, Martina Batini and Arianna Errigo. The Italian team, who won every event last season, were overcome in the final by Russia. The continually improving Canadian team took out France in the quarterfinals before losing to Italy and faced the USA in the bronze medal play-off. America was too strong and claimed that medal.

There were surprises all round in the individual event at the second World Cup in St Maur



Kiefer delights with Cancun win. Credit: Augusto Bizzi



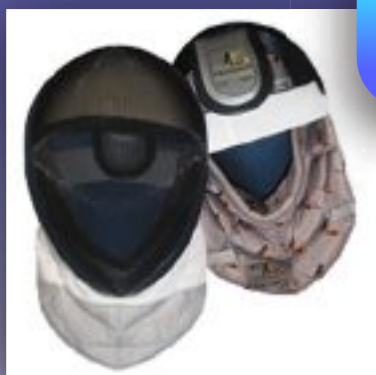
Team Russia break Italian dominance. Credit: Augusto Bizzi

with Korea at the centre of most of them. Twenty-nine year old Yang took out Cancun winner, Kiefer in the round of 64 but perhaps an even bigger surprise was the winner, Hong Hyo Jin. She beat Volpi in the final – the Italian securing back-to-back runners up medals so far this season. Another Korean, Chae Song Oh shared bronze with Svetlana Tripapina of Russia. Italy were back to winning ways in the team event, gaining revenge on the Russians in the final as China beat the USA to the bronze medal.



Korea's Hong Hyo Jin win St Maur gold. Credit: Augusto Bizzi

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Italy back to winning ways in St Maur

Alice Volpi is the biggest winner so far this season, in terms of rankings. She sits on 219 points, just five behind teammate Arianna Errigo. Kiefer is on 248 at the top of the rankings with Inna Deriglazova on 230. France's Ysaora Thibus is fifth in the rankings on 185 points.

Italy are still clear at the top of the team rankings on 448 points with Russia in second on 340. The USA and France occupy the third and fourth – the remaining automatic Olympic qualification spots.

Men's Sabre

At the time of writing there has only been one World Cup so far this season in Algiers. Rising American star, Eli Dershwitz won the event beating another emerging talent, Italy's Enrico Berre in the final. Russian, Kamil Ibragimov



Dershwitz take Algiers title



German Team and Coach Szabo celebrate Algiers gold

made a good day for the younger contingent in Algeria, by sharing third place with teammate, Veniamin Reshetnikov. Germany had a cracking day in the team event, taking out top seeds, Korea in the round of eight before going on to beat Italy for gold. Hungary beat Iran for the bronze medal.

It's Korea's Gu Bongil who sits at the top of the individual World rankings on 231 points, forty-one ahead of reigning World Champion, Andras Szatmari from Hungary. Italy's Luca Curatoli (177), Hungary's double Olympic Champion, Aron Szailagyi (163) and Korea's Kim Junghwan (160) complete the top five but the trailing pack aren't far behind.

Korea (376) and Italy (364) have a clear lead at the top of the team rankings with Hungary (300) and Russia (272) in third and fourth. Thirty-one points separate the next four (USA, Iran, Germany and Romania) so results in the next few events will be crucial as we head into the Olympic qualifying period.

Women's Sabre

The first chapter of the women's sabre circuit played out in Orleans, France. The field of 177 was conquered by Rosella Gregorio of Italy. She beat her teammate, Loreta Gulotta in the final as Manon Brunet of France and Romania's Bianca Pascu settled for the bronze medals. The top four seeds made it the semi-finals of the team event as Russia



Gold medallist Gulotta signs fan's shirt in Orleans



Russia top team podium in Orleans

overcame Italy and France defeated Korea. Russia claimed the gold medal comfortably over France whilst the Koreans edged Italy for bronze.

The second event in this series was in St Niklaas, Belgium with a field of hundred and fifty-nine fencers. Olga Kharlan of Ukraine confirmed her injury comeback was complete by winning the tournament with some ease. Gregorio followed up her Orleans gold medal with second place as her teammate, Irene Vecchi shared the bronze medal position with Yana Egorian – who has also been recovering from injury. Italy picked up their first team medal in Belgium and a gold one at that. They beat France who picked up their second silver in succession as Korea defeated Russia for the bronze medal.



Kharlan with St Niklaas Trophy



Italian team beam in Belgium

Hungary's Anna Marton sits at the top of the World rankings on 197 points, 25 clear of Kharlan. Egorian is in third on 160 points with Rosella Gregorio one point behind and Cecilia Berder of from a further four points back.

Italy lead the team rankings by some way on 400 points with Korea (320) sitting in second followed by France (316), Russia (312) and the USA (264).

World Veterans Championships 2017

(Images provided by Gillian Aghajan)

The 2017 Veterans World Championships took place in Maribor, Slovenia, 15-21 October. Great Britain fielded a massive team of sixty-three with entries in every single event.

Day One

Men's Foil – Cat B (60-69 years old)

In a field of forty-three, Tony Bartlett (V3D2), Paul Wedge (V4D2), Paul Lowen (V4D1) and Stephen Fox (V2D3) all qualified for the direct elimination. Bartlett, Wedge and Lowen all received byes through the round of 64 and were joined in the 32 by Fox who beat Fallwickl (AUT) 10-1. In the next round Wedge beat Imreh (HUN) 10-6, Lowen defeated Lee (IRL) 10-3 and Fox overcame Hasszan (HUN) 10-7 but Bartlett lost 10-9 to Szabo (HUN). In the round of 16 Wedge beat Fox 10-4 and Lowen went out 8-6 to Agranovich (ISR). Wedge went on to beat Paroli (ITA) 10-5, Agranovich (ISR) 10-8 and then Umezawa (JPN) 10-5 to claim the first World crown of the Championships.



Steve Fox v Paul Wedge

Speaking after the event, Wedge said, "This was my fourth World Championships and as ever was nervous ahead of it. Since winning in 2015, I suffered in 2016 as a knee operation took far longer to recover from than

I expected. Whilst I started badly, losing my first fight 5-0, as the DEs started I relaxed more and fenced well and was naturally thrilled to have won again."



Foil fans

Paul was joined on the podium by Kenichi Umezawa (JPN), Boris Agranovich (ISR) and Thomas Lutton (USA).

Men's Foil – Cat C (70+)

There were also forty-three fencers in this event, including four from Great Britain. Brian Causton (V4D1), Malcolm Cawton (V1D4), Paul Harden (V4D1) and Graham Paul (V4D1) all made it through the first round. Causton, Harden and Paul received byes through the incomplete round of 64 but Cawton went out 10-3 to Abdoukadyrov (FRA). The remaining three made it through the next round as Causton beat Visser (GER) 10-3, Harden took out Gacesa (CRO) 10-5 and Paul knocked out Vadasz (HUN) by the same score. Only Causton progressed further by beating Harden 10-6 as Paul went out 10-5 to Patterson (USA). Causton went on to beat Precht (GER) 10-7 and Aftandilov (RUS) 7-6 to make the final. There he faced Eiichi Ide (JPN) and despite a brave battle lost 10-7 to claim the silver medal.

The bronze medals went to Gari Aftandilov (RUS) and Jan Patterson (USA).



Brian Causton faces Aftandilov (RUS) in the semi-final



Delighted duo - Brian Causton and Paul Wedge

Women's Epee – Cat A (50-59)

Ingrid Heskitt (V3D3), Margarette Oniye (V3D3), Kate Morwell-Neave (V2D4) and Denise Silk (V1D4) all qualified for the elimination stages after the poule stage which forty-seven fencers competed in. In the round of 64, Heskitt beat Brousse Brunel (FRA) 9-8 and Oniye defeated Pena (ESP) 10-5 but Morwell-Neave went out 4-2 to Moser (SUI) and Tran (FRA) beat Silk 10-5. Both of the remaining British fencers went out in the next round as Heskitt lost 10-4 to Wuopio (SWE) and Gyiurkan (HUN) beat Oniye 9-8.

Leslie Marx (USA) took the title, beating Pia Albertson (SWE) in the final as the bronze medals were shared by Ewa Borowa (ITA) and Bettina Fichtel (GER).



Chilling out time

Women's Epee – Cat B

Four more British fencers took part in this event, amongst a field of forty-one. Jane Clayton (V4D2), Mariette Mason (V2D4), Jennifer Morris (V5D1) and Caryl Oliver (V3D3) all progressed to the elimination stages. Clayton, Morris and Oliver all received byes through the round of 64 but Mason was knocked out 10-6 by Piccinino (ITA). In the next round Clayton beat Oliver 8-7 and Morris overcame Lundgren (FIN) 10-7. Morris then lost 8-7 to Fischer (GER) but Clayton progressed with a 6-5 victory over Lopez (FRA). British interest ended in the quarterfinals though as Clayton fell 10-9 to Kircheis (GER), narrowly losing a medal place.



Coach Sue Benney advises Mariette Mason

Dagmara Fischer went on to win the event, beating Ludmila Chernova (RUS) in the final as the bronze medals were awarded to Gianna Cirillo (ITA) and Astrid Kircheis (GER).



Teammates Caryl Oliver and Jane Clayton

Women's Epee – Cat C

Twenty-two fencers took part in this event including four from Great Britain. Silvia Brown (V3D1), Janet Cooksey (V4D0), Margaret Myers (V1D4) and Carole Seheult (VoD5) progressed to the knockout stages but Seheult was eliminated in the round of 32, 10-9 by Bedrosian (USA). Brown and Cooksey earned byes through that stage but Myers was defeated 10-5 by Polkko (FIN). Brown went out in the next round 10-9 to Julien (USA) but Cooksey progressed 10-6 over Graham (USA). The quarterfinal was as far as Cooksey could make it though as she also lost to Erica Julien (USA) 10-9.

The American shared the bronze medal position with Marja-Liisa Someroja (FIN) as Marie Chantal Demaille (FRA) struck gold with victory over Coraine Sopru (AUS).



Teammates watch the action

Day Two

Men's Foil – Cat A

A field of sixty-four athletes took part in this event including four from Great Britain. Kola Abidogun (V6Do), Jeff Kiy (V2D3), Mike McKay (V3D2) and John Troiano (V4D1) all progressed through the first round with Abidogun earning a bye. He was joined in the round of 32 by McKay and Troiano who beat Pavlovic (CRO) 10-3 and Heiskari (FIN) 10-5, respectively. Kiy went out 10-6 to Erman (FRA) in the 64 and Troiano followed in the next round, losing 10-7 to Blaschka (AUT). Abidogun went on to beat Lazzarini (BRA) 10-8, Wang (CHN) 10-5 and Peters (GER) 10-7 to make the medal matches. He was joined there by McKay who progressed with victories over Zvincu (ROU) 10-8, Davis (USA) 9-8 and Csak (HUN) 10-3. The two Brits had to settle for bronze medals through as Abidogun lost to Bel (FRA) and McKay was knocked out by Mishagin (RUS). Laurent Bel won the event beating Vasily Mishagin in the gold medal match.



Mike McKay celebrates

Speaking after the medal ceremony, Mike said, "I never thought I'd win a medal. I had hoped for a L16 if I fenced well. Once I was in the DE I just took each fight at a time until the quarterfinal when getting a medal became a real possibility.



Kola Abidogun warms up

I felt really focused and with such fantastic support from the rest of the team it felt amazing to dominate the fight and come out on top. Unfortunately the semi-final didn't go my way but next time!! At the end of the day standing on the podium, especially alongside a team mate, was such a great feeling I can't wait to try and do it again next year!"



Kola Abidogun and Mike McKay share a medal moment

Men's Sabre – Cat B

Thirty-eight fencers contested this event including four British charges. Barry Coulter (V5D1), Carl Morris (V4D2), Chris Prett (V4D1) and Stephen Rennie (V3D2) not only progressed through the poules but also received byes through the first knock out round. Coulter went on to beat Hasszan (HUN) and Morris overcame Arefiev (RUS) 10-5 but Prett fell 10-7 to Gestsson (ISL) and Paroli (ITA) defeated Rennie 10-8. British interest in the event ended in the round of 16 as Streb (USA) took out Coulter 10-2 and Taillandier (FRA) saw off Morris 10-6.

Giulio Paroli (ITA) won the event, beating teammate Enrico Antinoro in the final as Carlton Badger (USA) and his teammate Davis Seuss took the bronze medals.



Carl Morris and Barry Coulter

Men's Sabre – Cat C

The thirty athletes in this event included four more British fencers. Peter Baron (V1D4),

Malcolm Cawton (V3D2), Richard Cohen (V3D2) and William Osbaldeston (V2D3) all progressed to the round of 32, where Cawton lost 10-6 to Baron and Osbaldeston went out by the same score to Herbst (GER). Cohen joined Baron in the round of 16 by beating Miyasaka (JPN) 10-6. Baron went on to beat Pinkus (USA) 10-7 before losing 10-6 to Shubert (UKR) whilst Cohen made the medal matches by beating Chaboisseau (FRA) 10-7 and Prechtel (GER) 10-8. He lost his semi-final to Aleksander Anastasov (MKD) who went on to win the event, beating Vasyl Shubert (UKR) in the final. Richard shared the bronze medal position with Fabrizio Filippi (ITA).



The Cohen point in line



Richard Cohen with Kola Abidogun and Mike McKay

Women's Team Epee

Brown, Clayton, Cooksey, Heskett, Mason and Oniye lined up for Britain in the team event which included entries from eighteen countries. They beat Japan 24-28 and lost 30-10 to France in the poule stage, earning a bye through the round of 16. They then lost 30-13 to the USA to finish sixth.

USA went on to claim gold narrowly beating France 24-23. Germany took the bronze defeating Australia by 24-12.



Women's Epee team

Day Three

Women's Foil – Cat A

Four British fencers lined up in this event in a field of thirty-nine as Caron Hale (V3D3), Jacqueline Hibbert (V1D4), Kate Morwell-Neave (VoD5) and Gillian Worman (V3D3) all made it through the first round. Hale and Worman earned byes through the round of 64 and were joined in the 32 by Hibbert who beat Born (CAN) 10-4. Morwell-Neave lost 10-8 to Jordan (AUS). In the next round Hibbert fell 6-2 to Hilgers (GER) but Hale and Worman progressed with victories over Michieli (ITA) 10-9 and Biro (HUN) 8-6, respectively. Hale went on to beat Hilgers (GER) 10-9 in the next round but Worman lost 10-7 to Bisson (FRA). The quarterfinals saw Hale go out 10-2 to Carter (USA).

Silke Weltzien (GER) took the title by beating Jane Carter (USA) in the final as the bronze medals went to Benedicte Bisson (FRA) and Judit Gyiurkan (HUN).



Caron Hale fences in the poule

Women's Foil – Cat B

The thirty-six entries in this event included four from Britain. Sheila Anderson (V3D2), Jane Clayton (V4D1), Clare Halsted (V2D2) and Jennifer Morris (V2D3) all made it through the first round, receiving byes through the incomplete round of 64. Anderson then beat Ezinler (TUR) 10-3 and Clayton took out Hinterseer (AUT) 10-5 but Cirillo (ITA) beat Morris 10-4 and Zhdanova (RUS) just defeated Halsted 7-6. British interest in the event ended in the round of 16 as Anderson fell 10-9 to Walters (USA) and Cirillo (ITA) beat Clayton 9-3.

Ludmila Chernova (RUS) claimed the title defeating Corainne Aubailly (FRA). Bronze medals went to Judith Offerle (USA) and Jenette Starks-Faulkner (USA).



Jane Clayton reports to the referee

Women's Foil – Cat C

The twenty-three entries into this event included three from Great Britain as Janet Cooksey (V3D2), Margaret Myers (V2D2) and Kristin Payne (V2D3) all progressed through the first round. Byes for Cooksey and Myers were complemented with a 10-4 victory for Payne over Kitami (JPN) that ensured all three Brits made the round of 16. There, Cooksey beat Schlede (GER) 10-4 and Myers beat Peterson (DEN) 10-7 but Payne went out 10-2 to Someroja (FIN). Cooksey then went out in the quarterfinals to Palm (SWE) 10-6 and Myers to Someroja (FIN) 10-4.

Kirsten Palm (SWE) went on to take the gold beating Marj-Liisa Someroja (SWE) 10-8. Bronze medals went to Brigitte Greunke (GER) and Marie Chantal Demaille (FRA).



Janet Cooksey

Men's Sabre – Cat A

Sixty-five fencers took part in this event including four from Britain. Andrew Bex (V2D3), Peter Howes (V3D2), Keith Rogerson (V1D5) and Duncan Rowlands (V4D1) all qualified for the elimination stages earning byes through the round of 128. Unfortunately, all were knocked out in the next round as Brock (GER) beat Bex 10-4, Howes lost 10-8 to Zelikovics (LAT), Skorynin (BLR) saw off Rogerson 10-6 and Rowlands fell 10-5 to Foster (AUS).

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Stefano Lanciotti (ITA) won the event, beating teammate Filippo Carlucci into silver. Geza Kas (FRA) and Andrej Rebenok (BLR) shared the bronze medals.



Andy Bex tests

Men's Team Foil

Ten countries entered this event including Great Britain (Abidogun, Bartlett, Causton, Paul, Troiano and Wedge). They beat Hungary 30-11 and Russia 24-23 in the poules stage, earning themselves a bye through the round of 16. They faced Hungary again in the quarterfinals and just lost 28-26 to finish fifth.

France took the title, beating Italy 26-22 in an exciting, dramatic final with red cards and showmanship in abundance. Hungary defeated the USA for the bronze medal.



Men's foil team look on

Day Four

Men's Epee – Cat B

There were sixty-six entries into this event including four from Britain. John Hyde (V4D1), Ralph Johnson (V3D3), Neal Mallett (V4D1) and Anton Pollard (V1D5) progressed to the elimination stages and all received byes through the incomplete round of 128. In the 64, Hyde fell 9-8 to Pfulg (SUI) but Johnson beat Muller (SUI) 7-6, Mallett defeated Aleksandrovski (MKD) 8-7 and Pollard overcame Noel (FRA) 10-4. Johnson went out in the next round 10-4 to Pianca (ITA) but Mallett progressed with a 10-7 victory over Lartz (USA) and was joined in the 16 by Pollard who took out Takaki (JPN) 10-8. Pollard then went on to beat Bena (FRA) 7-6 but Mallett went out 10-6 to Ringeissen (FRA). In the quarterfinal Pollard was unable to handle Szczesny (POL) losing 10-8.

Walter Dragonetti (USA) won the event beating Carlo Romanelli (ITA) 10-9 in the final as Werner Hensel (GER) and Jacek Szczesny (POL) collected the bronze medals.



Anton Pollard checks the score

Men's Epee – Cat C

Another four GB fencers lined up in a field of fifty-eight for this event and Brian Causton (V3D2), Robin Davenport (V4D1), William Osbaldeston (V5D1) and Graham Paul (V5D1) all progressed to the knockout stages. Paul received a bye through the round of 64 as Causton defeated Tuberoso (ITA) 10-8 and Davenport beat Andriadze (GEO) 10-2 but Osbaldeston went out 10-8 to Maier (AUT). Causton fell in the next round, losing 10-8 to Vitsas (NED). Davenport went on to make the semi-finals, beating Buongiardino (ITA) 10-6, Munster (DEN) 4-3 and Anastasov (MKD) 10-3 but had to settle for a bronze medal, losing 7-5 to Ide (JPN). Paul made the final by beating Varjo (FIN) 9-8, Pasmans (BEL) 10-9, Steffensen (DEN) 10-7 and Allkaemper (GER) 10-7. He went on to face Eiichi Ide (JPN) in the final and won 10-8, claiming another World title for Great Britain.



Graham Paul discusses



Graham Paul and Robin Davenport on the podium

Men's Team Sabre

The eleven countries entered into this event included Great Britain who lined up with Cawton, Cohen, Coulter, Howes, Morris and Rowlands. In the poules they beat Canada 30-12 and Hungary 30-16 but lost 30-29 to the USA. Ranked fourth they received a bye and then beat France 30-24 before losing 30-20 to the USA in the semi-finals. In the bronze medal match they beat Germany 30-24 as Italy claimed gold 30-19 over the USA.



Sabre support



Teammates Duncan Rowlands and Malcolm Cawton



Bronze medal men - Richard Cohen, Malcolm Cawton, Carl Morris, Duncan Rowlands, Barry Coulter (Peter Howes unable to attend medal ceremony)

Women's Team Foil

Anderson, Hale, Halsted, Myers, Payne and Worman lined up for Great Britain in this event amongst a field of ten. In the poules they beat Austria 30-16 and Canada 30-17 but lost 30-27 to France. Like the men's sabre team, they were ranked fourth for the knockout stages, earning a bye through the round of 16. They then beat Italy 30-23 before losing 30-25 to Germany in the semi-finals. A bronze medal match against Canada followed which GB won 30-23. The USA beat Germany to claim the gold medal.

After the medal matches, some of the proud team members shared their thoughts:

"What a privilege to captain the feisty, determined, collaborative members of the women's foil team. All six contributed to that exciting bronze medal result." - Clare Halstead

"You always learn in a team match. In the World Championships with only six matches, looking across three age groups you have to be alert to the decision points. Great to be part of the Women's Foil team this year, great advice, support and encouragement all day - and lots of fencing." - Sheila Anderson

"I loved being part of our Bronze Medal Winning Women's Foil team. We worked together, supported each other, performed for each other and we did it! An exciting day with memories to savour, and a bonus medal as well! Clare, Sheila, Caron, Maggie, Kristen - well done ladies." - Gillian Worman



Gillian Worman v AUT



Women's Foil Team - (back) Caron Hale, Clare Halstead, Sheila Anderson (front) Margaret Myers, Kristin Payne, Gillian Worman

Day Five

Men's Epee – Cat A

Eighty-six fencers took part in this event including four Brits. Keith Barnett (V3D3), Pete Eames (VoD5), Adrian Griffin (V2D4) and Granville Ward (V4D2) made it through the first round. Ward received a bye through the round of 128 as Barnett beat Luby (SVK) 10-4 and Griffin saw off Lyu (CHN) 10-8 but Eames lost 10-4 to Luihn (NOR). Another Norwegian, Falck-Ytter got the better of Ward in the next round beating him 10-5 as Griffin also fell, 10-7 to Tivenius (SWE) but Barnett beat Hamm (AUS) 10-6 to make the 32. Normile (USA) then ended British hopes in this event by beating Barnett 10-6.

Volodymyr Sokolov (UKR) won the gold medal by beating Guido Quanz (GER) in the final and the bronze medals were presented to Jan Falck-Ytter (NOR) and Cosimo Ferro (ITA).



Keith Barnett

Women's Sabre – Cat A

Thirty-three athletes were entered into this event including another four from Great Britain. Caroline Clancy (V1D5), Grace Coulter (V2D4), Vanessa Hendra (V2D4) and Michele Narey (V4D1) all progressed through the poule stages and received byes through the round of 64. Clancy then beat Enochs (USA) 10-8, Hendra defeated Urbano (ESP) 10-7 and Narey saw off Stocco (ITA) by the same score but Barbier (FRA) beat Coulter 10-2. Only Narey made it through the next round, beating Zini (FRA) 10-5 as Clancy lost 10-7 to Fabry (USA) and Born (CAN) beat Hendra 10-8. Narey then lost 10-8 to Zoppke (GER) in the quarterfinals.

Friederike Janshen (GER) took the title beating Lydia Fabry (USA) in the finals as Min Yi Du (AUS) and Christine Zoppke (GER) claimed the bronze medals.



Michele Narey shares a joke with the referee

Women's Sabre – Cat B

There were twenty-eight fencers in this event which again included four from Britain. Sue Benny (V2D4), Angela Findlay (V1D5), Jane Hutchison (V6Do) and Jennifer Morris

(V4D2) all made it to the elimination stages. Hutchison received a bye through the round of 32, as Benny beat Aubailly (FRA) 10-9 and Morris defeated Goryainova (RUS) by the same score but Runyan (USA) saw off Findlay 10-6. In the round of 16 Benny fell 10-3 to Eyre (USA) but Hutchison beat Amari (JPN) 10-5 and Morris took out Derose (JPN) 10-6. Neither of the remaining two British fencers made it through the quarterfinals as Hutchison just lost 10-9 to Bandieri (ITA) and Eyre (USA) defeated Morris 10-3.

Karin Jansen (GER) claimed the World title by beating Delia Turner (USA) in the final. Claudia Banieri (ITA) and Jane Eyre (USA) picked up the bronze medals.

Women's Sabre – Cat C

The final individual event was the Cat C Women's Sabre as four more British fencers lined up in a field of sixteen. Silvia Brown (V3D1), Vivien Frith (V4Do), Patricia Shepherd-Foster (V2D3) and Elizabeth West (V2D3) navigated the first round poules. In the round of sixteen West fell 10-1 to Frith as Hammann (GER) knocked out Brown 10-7 and O'Leary (USA) beat Shepherd-Foster 10-6. Frith went on to make the final beating Hammann (GER) 10-1 and Demaille (FRA) 10-9. Frith dominated the final against Yoshiko Tachibana to claim the World crown with a 10-4 victory. Marie Chantal Demaille (FRA) and Brigitte Greunke (GER) claimed the bronze medals.

Speaking after the event, Vivien said, "Maribor was the best Worlds ever for me. An added bonus for me, as it was for others as well, was having Sue Benney in my corner for both the Individual and the Team events. Winning Gold is something I have worked towards for many years and I am delighted to have finally achieved it."



World Champion Vivien Frith



Vivien toasts victory

Day Six

Men's Team Epee

There were eighteen countries entered into this event including Great Britain who lined up with Barnett, Davenport, Mallett, Osbaldeston, Pollard and Ward. In the poules the British team beat the Czech Republic 30-10 and Switzerland 25-24, going into the direct elimination ranked third. They faced Switzerland again in the round of 16 and beat them 29-18 before losing 22-19 to Sweden to finish seventh.

The USA claimed the gold medal by beating Germany in the final as Sweden beat Italy to the bronze medal.



Men's Epee Team cheer the opposition - Granville Ward, Keith Barnett, Robin Davenport, Neal Mallett (capt), Bill Osbaldeston and Anton Pollard

Women's Team Sabre

The final event of the tournament saw Great Britain (Brown, Coulter, Frith, Hutchison, Morris and Narey) line up in a field of five. In the poule unique they beat Japan 30-23, France 30-20, Germany 30-16 and the USA 30-22 to go into the elimination stages ranked first. Great Britain then met USA to fence for gold and in an exciting and well-fought match narrowly lost 30-28 and settled with silver. Germany won the bronze medal match against France.

Team Captain Sue Benney said, "They all fenced fantastically and worked very well together as a team."



Sabre team talk



Bronze medal women - (back) Jenny Morris, Silvia Brown, Grace Coulter, (middle) Jane Hutchison, (front) Vivien Frith, Michele Narey



Sabre hug

Great Britain ended the event with three gold medals, two silvers and six bronze medals which meant that they finished fourth in the medal table. The USA topped that table followed by Germany and Italy.

Speaking about this amazing performance, the proud team manager, Gillian Aghajan, said, "It was an honour and a pleasure for me to be Team Manager for the Great Britain Squad in Maribor. What a range of emotions we went through. Exaltation, disappointment, drama and fun but above all the camaraderie and support for each other throughout was fantastic. The level of fencing was superb. Congratulations to all fencers, team captains and supporters, not just the medallists. Thanks to our referees: Mike Thornton, Adrian Speakman and Ana Kovrlja.



Team Manager Gillian Aghajan

Thanks also to the Organising Committee, Max Geuter, DT, referees, military, caterers and all volunteers for a fabulous Championships. Superbly and professionally run, fantastic competitive fencing in a great venue and friendliness all round. Congratulations and well done to all!"

GBR Wheelchair Fencers on Top of the World in Rome

It was a week that went down in history for Great Britain's wheelchair fencers when they competed at the IWAS World Championships in Rome, Italy recently and what an amazing few days it was, with Dimitri Coutya and Piers Gilliver bringing home an amazing four medals from four events!

Dimitri Coutya made British history when he won both the Men's Cat B Foil & Epee making him Britain's first wheelchair fencing World Champion for 60 years! This also gave Dimitri another record under his belt, as these results also secured him the Cat B World No1 slot in both weapons – a fantastic achievement indeed!

The first day of competition on 7 November, saw Coutya compete in Foil and after poules went through to the elimination stages ranked No2, giving him a bye to round of 16, where he met & defeated Italy's Leopizzi 15-5. With a 15-6 quarterfinal victory against Wyganowski of Poland, Coutya went through to the semis to meet another Pole, Gaworski. This was a closer match but another victory 15-13 saw Coutya through to the final, where he took a convincing win 15-9 over Ukraine's Datsko and his first World Championship title!

Wednesday 8 November saw Coutya in action again - this time in the Cat B Epee event. Again, after poules going through to the elimination stages ranked No2 and after a bye Dimitri met and defeated Korea's Kim 15-8 and Guissone of Brazil 15-6 to go through to



Dimitri is a double World Champion (Credit Jo Gilliver)

the semi-finals where he defeated the Rio 2016 Paralympic silver medalist Ali Amar 15-12. So to another final, this time against Italy's Sarri. After a nail-biting finish Dimitri secured another win 15-14 and another glorious World Championship title!

The 8 November also saw another of GB's men take to the piste, this time Piers Gilliver in the Men's Cat A Sabre. Gilliver, who changed to this weapon from Foil in the new year, still felt he had a lot of catching up to do however

he didn't let it show and put in a strong performance.

Piers had an amazing debut at Pisa in March, with a finals victory 15-9 over the reigning Paralympic Champion Demchuk of Ukraine to take gold and the two were to meet once more - this time in the Sabre quarterfinals at the World Championships where Gilliver again took the victory 15-14. His campaign was to end there, after a 15-9 defeat to Russia's Shaburov in the semi-finals, meant Piers



Bling (Credit- Dimitri Coutya)



Piers Cat A Epee World Silver (Credit Jo Gilliver)



Piers Succeeds With Sabre (Credit Jo Gilliver)

finished the competition a bronze medalist. This was certainly a great result with a new weapon!

Gilliver competed again on 9 November, this time in his main weapon, Epee and after an excellent poule saw him go through to the elimination stages ranked No1. After a

bye, Gilliver made quick work of progressing through the rounds with victories 15-3 over Nejjar Spain, 15-6 against Frenchman, Citerne, 15-4 versus Poland's Pender and then 15-4 against Russian Yusapov until his winning streak came to an end, again losing to the on-form Russian Maxim Shaburov 15-12 in a tactical final. So the Paralympic Silver medalist, Gilliver had to settle for the silver medal once more as Shaburov took his second World Championship title of the event.

GB's Gemma Collis-McCann also competed on in Epee and Foil. For Gemma, who has recently had to take some time off from training and competition to manage her health, this

World Championships was a testament to her determination and Gemma placed a respectable 10th & 14th.

Overall, this was a remarkable World Championships for GB Wheelchair fencing and it's performance programme, headed by Lead Coach Peter Rome, along with its support staff, bringing home an amazing four medals!

All with sights set on Tokyo 2020, it will be exciting to follow the progress of these athletes as they look towards the 2018 World Cup season, Europeans & Paralympic qualifiers!

Jo Gilliver



The Team with Coach Peter Rome (Credit Dimitri Coutya)

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John-Paul Shaw's Senegal Adventure

We recently heard about an ambitious project set up by a Kent teenager to raise money to support a fencing project in Africa to give children a second chance in life. Fascinated by what we had heard from his mother Merrill, we asked her to chronicle John-Paul's story for us. Here is what she had to say.

John-Paul Shaw, 13, of Biddenden, Kent, a keen fencer, has been inspired by US Olympic fencer, Daryl Homer, to take his sport off-piste.

In October of 2016, Daryl visited a juvenile prison in Thiès, Sénégal, about an hour from the capital, Dakar. He was there to teach fencing and to support a programme started in Sénégal by the Association Pour le Sourire d'un Enfant (ASE) and supported by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). The programme, initiated by Nelly Robin of ASE, uses fencing as a way to help the minors in the prison and street children adapt to life outside prison walls. Fencing, with its white uniforms, masks and blades, teaches self-confidence, social skills, discipline, respect for each other, and how to come back from defeat. One might think arming prisoners with weapons would be risky, but the programme has been a huge success. They are hoping to extend the fencing to other youth prisons in Sénégal.



John-Paul, after seeing a news clip of Daryl Homer at the centre in Thiès, decided to raise money to send fencing kit to the children in Sénégal. He was able to convince his school coach, Dr. Kornel Kossuth, at St Ronan's School in Hawkhurst, Kent, to help him do just that. Dr. Kossuth organised a fencing marathon with the fencing club. At 1:30pm on 19 June, 2017, the fencing began. Seventeen students fenced continuously for two hours in scorching heat, fuelled only by ice lollies. To facilitate the fencing, the children chose to fence without electric kit, known as "steam fencing", so appropriately! Clara Shimmin, one of the fencers, said of the 'fence-a-thon', "I

felt quite proud that I raised money for charity with fencing. It was really fun, and I liked fencing people I had never fenced before." With the support of parents and friends, the children raised over £1500 for the initiative. Dr Kossuth said of the day, "The atmosphere in the hall was fantastic with everyone in high spirits. I'm so proud of what the small group of fencers achieved and how they all pulled together to help disadvantage children in a country far away learn through fencing. They all proved fencing can make a big difference."

Wanting to know exactly where the kit was going and to see the programme for himself, John-Paul, now a student at Sevenoaks School, delivered the kit, accompanied by his mother, to Sénégal in October. He was very much looking forward to meeting the children and fencing with them. "Fencing is something I love. It has done so much for me and made the world a much smaller place. I couldn't wait to share it with children in Sénégal." The only thing he was nervous about is that he fenced sabre, and the children fenced foil. However his club coach, Phil Shepherd-Foster of MX of Sevenoaks, was able to teach him a few foil moves before he went!

So, on 23 October, John-Paul Shaw and his mother, arrived in their trusty pick-up at the prison in Thiès, where they were met by one of the coaches for the *Association Pour le Sourire d'un Enfant*. Ablaye Gueye led them to the fencing salle around the corner from the prison. The salle was built by the association with support from the Swiss embassy in Dakar and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). When they arrived, the teenage foilists were training with another instructor, Jacques Faye. The training was very impressive, with girls and boys fencing each other. In Senegal, many activities are separated by sexes, but this program aims to help boys and girls relate to each other as people, not just members of the opposite sex.

Everyone is equal behind their masks on the piste!

JP was happy to see Britain already represented by Leon Paul kit! He was also happy to augment their well-worn supply of kit with even more Leon Paul equipment. The fencers have access to electric equipment, but it is used for special occasions and competitions. After presenting the kit to the very grateful coaches and fencers, and short speeches were said, JP was taken to another area of Thiès to meet the youngest fencers.

At the orphanage on the outskirts of Thiès, which is run by Oulimata Kebeye, John-Paul was shown around the classrooms where the young children learn to read and write. They often arrive at the centre having had very little education at all. Like the children from the prison, these children also develop other skills through art and design, and of course, fencing. The children here have their fencing skills assessed as equally as their learning skills. Fencing is integral to their development. In a large open-air hut, a fencing demonstration was put on, with one of the children acting as a referee. The children are taught to referee as another way of teaching them responsibility and respect for each other. John-Paul took note of the skills required for foil, as he was to fence an opponent next.

The match between one of the boys and JP went well, but the instructors noticed that JP was definitely a sabreur. While the match was a close one, JP took the ultimate loss humbly!

Afterwards John-Paul and his mother were treated to a lunch of *Ceeb bu Gen*, the delicious Senegalese national dish of fish and rice, at the offices of *Pour le Sourire d'un Enfant*. When asked if the program has been a success, Mr. Gueye and Mr. Faye replied absolutely. The children who have gone through the fencing program have learned many life skills, such as self-respect, respect



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SOURIRE
D'ENFANT

De la misère... à un métier



Jean-Paul Lead St Ronan's School "fence-a-thon"

for others, self-confidence, self-control, how to win and how to lose. They also learn that hard work does pay off. If one day they lose a match, they work harder for the next one. Many of the children are ashamed of their situation. In fact some didn't want their pictures taken at all because then they would be recognised as a prisoner. The fencing program changes that. By the time they come out of prison, in general they are reformed and ready to either continue their education or start apprenticeships in various trades.

At the end of the stay in Senegal, John-Paul and his mother met with Mrs. Harriet King, the Deputy Head of Mission in the British Embassy in Dakar. Her daughter is also a fencer, and she was happy to learn that British fencers in Kent had taken such a keen interest



JP proudly hands over the kit

in a program in Senegal, a country which generally gets support from other countries such as France and the United States. It shows what a wonderful, international sport fencing truly is and how it makes the world a smaller place.

You can find out more about this amazing project by watching [this video](#).

Editor's comment: When I first heard about this project I was taken aback by the passion of someone so young to use fencing as an inspirational tool for young people in Africa. Over the past few months I have had regular contact with Merrill and been so impressed by both her and her son's dedication to this project. Well done for your tremendous effort and promotion of fencing for such a worthy cause.

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Interview With Steve Garrett

SPOTLIGHT ON: TALENT PATHWAY MANAGER

In this regular feature, we will introduce a member of the British Fencing team. Up first is Talent Pathway Manager- Steve Garrett. Steve took on the Talent Pathway role in June as maternity cover for Maxine McCombie.

Q: So Steve, you've been working as the British Fencing Talent Pathway Manager for over six months now, what does this entail?

A: I am responsible for the management of the British Fencing talent programme. The programme is funded by Sport England and aims to develop talented fencers between the ages of 15 and 23. I work with a small team in Hendon as well as contracted coaches to ensure we deliver the best talent programme possible.

Q: What led you to this role?

A: Good question! My academic background is in science, genetics more specifically. I moved into sport whilst helping to produce a university sport strategy and haven't looked back since! I have worked in both universities and colleges as well as for their representative bodies (British Universities and Colleges Sport and the Association of Colleges). Most of my work has focussed on developing individuals through sport. This could concern their leadership skills, resilience or team work but ultimately sport is about people. The talent programme is no different. As the Talent

Pathway Manager I am doing a lot of work to support the development of fencers and their coaches.

Q: Since starting in the role of Talent Pathway Manager, what has been your biggest challenge?

A: That's a tough one. I've tried to get to know as many in the fencing community as possible, and they've been very welcoming. Our biggest challenge collectively is demonstrating to Sport England that the loss of UK Sport funding, although hugely disappointing, does not prevent us from running a highly effective talent programme.

Q: You mention the word development, what is your philosophy when it comes to developing fencers in the talent programme?

A: To borrow a phrase, simply put I am looking to work with as many fencers, in the best environment possible, for as long as possible. Obviously, this is limited by resources, but the talent programme is looking to work with wide range of fencers between the ages of 15 and 23 and, just as importantly, with their current support teams, especially their personal coaches.

Q: Does working with large numbers of fencers not risk lowering the quality of the programme?

A: I strongly believe that the programme's quality is decided by the activities undertaken and not the initial capabilities of the athletes who take part. The progression of these



Steve Garrett

athletes towards their own personal goals is most important. I believe it is only by raising the overall quality of fencing in the UK that we will see more GBR fencers performing well on the international stage.

Q: Moving away from fencing, what do you get up to in your spare time?

A: I am a keen 400m hurdler and athletics coach. Training with a variety of top international coaches and athletes has given me a great insight into some of the ingredients needed to make it at the top. I've also seen how much can be achieved by athletes and coaches who are willing to work hard! Away from sport I like to travel, and now I am fortunate to have a pilot for a brother, so I am working through the list of destinations available.

Thank you for taking the time to answer some questions and best of the luck with the Talent Pathway Manager role.

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Coaching or Teaching: Considering Learning Situations

Concerned by the tendency towards short-term coaching approaches, Steve Kemp discusses the difference between coaching and teaching, and asks whether a focus on learning might be the best approach.

A critical review of coach education practices would highlight that they are mostly formal, often theoretical and usually based on technical repetition. They are qualification and content-focused rather than coach-focused. There is an emphasis on a sport's technical skills and more on declarative knowledge (facts) than procedural (how to do it).

It may be that such an environment has developed to help a coach pass an assessment; after all, while any high-performing coach in any domain will be a committed life-long learner, it is not unreasonable that they may also be conscious of their development and their next post. But such practices have the potential to create a focus on short-term learning.

Across coaching there is a widespread acceptance that coach education has failed to capture the variety of learning situations (Lara Bercial, 2014) and that coach accreditation is less valued than experiential learning and other less formal learning opportunities. (Mallett et al, 2009). If coach education programmes are delivered with a short-term approach, it should be no surprise that the behaviours demonstrated by coaches after coach education courses match some of the outcomes discussed above: technically focused coaches, short-term developments and coach-centred coaching. If you accept that an athlete starting out as a coach will replicate their own experiences, it follows that coaching would be slow to adapt to innovation and evidence-based developments.

Of course, it should also be recognised that there are pockets of excellent practice among providers of coach education. Many providers have moved away from short-term processes but an outdated cycle can be perpetuated by those that are resistant to change.

It is fair to say that a number of the statements above would align neatly (and perhaps a little uncomfortably) to the old British Fencing coach education framework, so maybe it is time to look at this from another angle.

For example, at British Fencing we make distinctions between teaching and coaching.

Simply put, we use the term 'teaching' to mean the process of imparting knowledge to or instructing (someone) as to how to do something; and the term 'coaching' to mean enhancing and developing basic skills by improving timing, distance and speed of execution. So rather than teaching or coaching, should we consider learning?

What is learning? Some definitions: "...[A] relatively permanent change in behaviour... that occurs as a result of experience" or a "Measurable and relatively permanent change in behaviour through experience, instruction, or study".

The opportunities and situations to learn are everywhere and there has been some research to define these situations. The description of mediated, unmediated and incidental learning situations (Moon, 1999-2004) is a case in point.

In a mediated situation the fencer is guided by some knowledgeable other. In coaching, these can be seen in formal coaching programmes where the coach controls the learning.

In unmediated learning situations there is no formal coaching: the fencer takes the initiative and is responsible for choosing what to learn. It could be what we might call 'on-the-job learning', sessions that could include game-related practices or competition. It could be self-directed, with the fencer watching opponents compete and practice. It could be reflection, where after training or competition the fencer self-questions to identify areas for improvement. It might also involve informal sharing, whether talking to other fencers or the coaches.

In incidental learning situations we find learning that takes place without any intent to learn. It happens in many ways: through observation, social interaction and problem-solving. The coach, parent or team manager may model a good or bad behaviour, which is copied and becomes a permanent change.

For those with a responsibility for fencers there is need to create meaningful opportunities for mediated learning, find ways



to foster unmediated learning and encourage ways of incidental learning to promote fencing.

For those with responsibility for coach education the need is the same. This starts with looking to put the coach at the centre of the development process. It also involves looking at the next development the coach needs to become better at what they do and consideration of the context of where they coach. This should then shape the learning situations.

After such a discussion, here are some reflection questions that may help coaches looking to develop their own approach to the coaching process:

- What are the best learning situations for your fencer and is the balance right?
- How can you influence the incidental learning situations to gain a positive outcome?
- Where did you experience your last piece of learning?
- Where will you look for your next learning experience?

Steve Kemp is the Coaching Development Manager at British Fencing.

Coach Behaviours

Research into the most common instances of poor practice that come from safeguarding issues, disciplinary issues and complaints within British Fencing highlights the following most common areas of poor practice:

1. Favouritism
2. Overly familiar behaviour
3. Controlling behaviour of the fencer by the coach
4. Shouting at referees, competition organisers and opponents
5. Harassment & bullying behaviour
6. Bad language
7. Rude/aggressive behaviour
8. Coaching at the side of the piste

As a result of this research, we will be publishing a series of articles discussing how different groups of people within sporting communities play a role in promoting a positive culture and reducing the volume and impact of poor behaviour. This article will focus on the role of the coach, which will be followed by the role of the parent.

Coaches

Whilst some of areas of poor practice relate to the behaviour of the wider community (these being parents, fencers, organiser, etc), the role of the coach plays a fundamental part in how we address this poor practice going forward.

The coach, by the very nature of the position, is a role model for fencers, parents and other coaches, and a representative of fencing. The coach's behaviour, and relationship with others should be of the highest standard.

For one simple reason; children see children do. [Click here for the film.](#)

The fencers that you coach are inevitably in part a reflection of you, your values and your philosophies. In the future when they are asked to describe their best coach and what makes that coach the best, will they describe you and how you nurtured the best from them?

Many of the complaints and disciplinary issues can be mapped to competition weekends, which links to a winning first mentality seen in a number of sports. This isn't just a coaching issue, but coaches are in the best position to help recognise the negative impact this has on young people and help change this culture.

Other sports have recognised these issues and have looked at some of the core reasons for some of the poor behaviours. Their findings were similar to the "winning first" ethos with similar behaviours as described earlier. Perhaps the poor behaviours, shouting, bullying link to the win-at-all-cost culture is one of the reasons why more children than ever before are choosing not to participate in youth sports.

Watch the Ted Talk – [Echo's – the lasting power of a coach's words.](#)

Therefore if it is "winning first", it means that "children are second" in the sports environment. Some NGBs have looked at how they intervene to encourage children first, some of these interventions include changing the way the game is played and festivals where results are not published. There have been drives to push a values and behaviours culture into the community sector of the sport, via campaigns and additions to Coach Education courses. Whilst these NGBs are making progress not all coaches buy into this approach.

Take a look at Changing the game in youth sport.

Some sports organisations and researchers have started to look at how they make connections to help the participant love the game/sport. Rather than asking adults what the children want, researchers have spent time with the children, and the children had a different view. They wanted to be like an elite athlete, but not always wanted to be an elite athlete.



When the children were asked about their wants and needs they simply wanted fun and enjoyment. Fun came in many forms:

- Meaningful competition
- Good skill development
- Coaches who are going to make them better
- Being with their mates
- Coaches that are not too serious and don't shout

So if they are happy, they enjoy it, and they learn to love the game.

At its best, sports are safe spaces where children can develop skills, have fun and learn how to win and lose with humility. They are a blank canvass on which the next generation can begin to harness the benefits of teamwork, camaraderie, perseverance and other invaluable lessons which help them mature into better versions of themselves. These being underpinned by the 5 C Model and the research into Transformational Coaching by Prof. Jean Cote.

So as coaches we have the choice to further demonstrate the best behaviours, that create cultural norms, where all children thrive, as they are the centre of the development process.

Where we can, try to embrace parents and help them understand the behaviours expected whilst their child is enjoying all the benefits of fencing. To gently remind each other of the all the great attributes that make fencing so special.

Or we can see the rise in safeguarding issues, disciplinary issues and complaints due to fear, ego and greed, as highlighted in this clip from the [USA in 2012.](#)

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Building Relationships

By James Craig (BF Commercial Manager)

Understanding ourselves, the fencing market that we operate within and where we want to go as an organisation has really helped us identify who we formalise relationships with. Also knowing that we don't have, nor are going to be able to have, a marketing department or significant budget to invest in product development, could leave some organisations a bit anxious. However, BF's approach over the last couple of years has shown that we can do the building, measuring and learning in conjunction with likeminded organisations to bring about a new product or service, that will have benefit for both parties, in a relatively short period of time.

One partner to highlight in this issue of the Sword is Multi Sport Pro (MSP) Ltd. MSP are a multi-sport activity provider based in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire and have seen that fencing evokes values such as respect and honesty in a natural way and wanted to collaborate on a product which would work well for Primary Schools. MSP liked and wanted to deliver the Mini Sword and Go/Fence Achievement Awards but both parties agreed that there were not the needed resources as a beginner/entry level coach, that

would standardise the onward delivery and add value to the current achievement awards.

Since April 2017 MSP have been formalised as a 'Business to Business' (B2B) partner which is one of the ways BF formalise relationships. The recipient of a B2B agreement gets a list of services and products in return, such as preferential rates for certain equipment, account management and other reductions such as training provision for a Core Coach course.

The agreement has three access points and MSP came in at option two, which allows an individual or organisation to access our collaboration agreement (formally called a Joint Venture Agreement) as well as access certain services and products. Both parties wanted to collaborate on an add-on resource that brings out the technical and tactical outcomes of some of our current BF Achievement Awards.

The products take the form of outcome based, standardised add-on resource packs designed for 6-week blocks of activity, each one of which is intended to achieve a BF Achievement Award.

These resource packs will be designed to:

- Support 6 fencing sessions including games, expected to be delivered once a week over a 6-week activity block.
- Support delivery in Primary Schools and other MSP delivery environments. In 2018/19 it is the ambition that the resources will be available for anyone to buy.
- Develop the student's skills and knowledge to meet the proficiency levels required by the agreed BF Achievement Award levels.

Each resource pack will be designed to achieve one of four existing awards:

- Go Fence Achievement Awards – Bronze Award Resource Pack (KS 1)
- Mini Sword Achievement Awards – Blue, Yellow and Green Award (KS 1& 2/age 8+)

If you have any ideas that you think are worth exploring then please get in contact with James Craig, Commercial Manager at British Fencing who would be more than happy to discuss your ideas.

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Is Your Club Visible Online?

Keeping up with society's technological expectations is a current fast-growing movement within the sport and activity sector. With the advances in technology and the country's expectation on phones, tablets and computers to support everyday lives, the sporting sector has its part to play in embracing technology to enable the nation to become more active.

Some clubs would have already seen or heard of activity finders that list hundreds of different sport and activity opportunities to the population. Some may have already signed up to have their club appear on their local County Sport Partnership. If you are unaware of what an activity finder is, search for BBC Activity Finder or Get Active North East for a local example.

But what are they all about?

What should we be doing to ensure clubs have a positive presence online?

How is British Fencing supporting clubs to increase their online visibility?

Let's start with what British Fencing currently have; the Club Finder. All the information provided to this finder is driven from your club's account on the Sport:80 platform. When you register as a club you have the option to opt in to be on the Club Finder and the chance to offer more detail on your club sessions (e.g. time, date, venue, brief description).

With the Club Finder being one of the top visited pages on the website, British Fencing understand and recognise the importance

of it to enable people to discover their local club. We are currently reviewing its performance with the objectives to improve the functionality, interactivity and reliability.

Whilst we are adjusting the back end of the Club Finder page, we are calling all our clubs to update their data through their Sport:80 account to ensure all information is up to date, relevant and valid to reduce the risk of an individual attending a session that is not available.

To receive a simple guide on how to update your information please contact josef.thomas@britishfencing.com.

Open Active

British Fencing is currently working alongside Open Active, which is a community-led initiative being coordinated by the Open Data Institute, whose aim is to:

'Get more people active in England, by making data about physical activity opportunities more openly available, enabling customers to make easier and more informed choices.'

Open Active are working alongside NGBs, leisure providers and activity providers to open 'Opportunity Data'. This includes the type of activity, where and when it's taking place and the availability. It is data that activity providers and leisure operators usually want to be seen by customers, for example through their own booking platforms. In our case it is the data available through the Club Finder. Making it open means it can reach customers in more ways. Once it is published as open data, anyone can access, use and share it.

Personal or commercially sensitive data is not needed and will not be published.

What is open data and how do I already consume it?

When you search for a holiday online you find the same hotel featured on lots of different

websites, each with accurate information and a simple booking process. That's because Expedia, Hotels.com and Lastminute.com all use the same data, which is shared by the hotels' booking systems according to defined standards.

Equally, finding the quickest way from A to B in London has been transformed over recent years by a proliferation of apps and services, including Citymapper, powered by Transport for London data being published over the last eight years.

We can do the same in the physical activity sector, with activity providers making data about their activities available as open data. Once open, these opportunities can then be made more visible through a range of apps and services - from HR departments getting their employees more active, to health insurance companies promoting activities to their membership, to improving search results on Google.

What data will be open?

By working with Open Active, British Fencing is looking to use the Club Finder as the base of data to be released to enable clubs to increase their visibility online through activity finders and therefore attract more participants to your club. To find out more about the Open Data project, how you already consume open data and common questions, please head to www.openactive.io to find out why they want to work with British Fencing clubs.

If you have any thoughts on this project, please get in touch.



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Club Spotlight



Written by:
Dr. Shilpi Bhatia
Club Welfare and Fundraising Officer
Camden Fencing Club

Camden Fencing Club not only caters for the Elite competitors but all levels of Fencer!

The club is one of the UK's most successful fencing clubs offering both foil and sabre weapons to children and adults. Camden Fencing Club has a broad range of abilities ranging from beginners to members of the GB national teams, Commonwealth Fencers and has Olympian coaches for both weapons. We are one of the very few clubs in the country who offer multiple sessions on certain days and training five days a week.

Accessible to All

In addition to our support of the elite fencers (in particular the ex WCP fencers), we have also made a conscious decision to invest time at our grassroots level membership and those that might not yet have had the opportunity to try the sport. With this in mind we have actively bid and secured funding from a number of different sources. These have been local trusts, foundations, our local CSP- county sports partnership, local and national funding charities and governing bodies

One area of particular focus has been to expand the amount of fencing available to children and adults from disadvantaged backgrounds, ethnic minorities, BAME communities, children with learning difficulties and low self-esteem. With our aim to see fencing as a sport inclusive and accessible to all, irrespective of any barriers they might be facing in their present circumstances.

Some examples of successfully implemented initiatives over this year have been:

'I-DIP' – I Deserve It Project!

(Think Active, Think Happy, Think Fencing.... Camden Fencing Club)

The funding for this project has enabled us to provide coaching for children that would not otherwise have had the opportunity to try the sport, both as bespoke sessions held within schools and at our clubs base in Camden. One part of this project allowed us to introduce a programme of fencing specifically aim at 11-13 year-old girls that were previously deemed below the minimum physical activity levels set by DH (The Department of Health).

As a result of this initiative, the school is now looking to continue the club's involvement, providing fencing as part of the school curriculum, and thereby increasing the presence of fencing in schools.

In addition, we continue to work very closely with other local schools and community centres to encourage more children to take up fencing. We regularly take part in local community events, offering demos and give people free taster sessions and the opportunity to participate. The ethos of these projects, and of our club as a whole, is that anyone who wishes to try fencing should be able to do so, irrespective of their financial status and/ or other disadvantages they might be facing.

All for one and one for all

Medal success is obviously important to the club and with such vast range of fencers in our membership, the Club, celebrates all of its members successes from novice and intermediate at local competitions, to cadets or elite fencers competing in Major Championships and FIE events. Over the course of a year (May - April) we achieved in excess of 160 medals in all categories.

The flexibility of coaching at our club helps to meet everyone's individual needs. Everyone is always made to feel extremely welcome and be part of the "Camden Family". The Coaches make all their students feel valued and bring out the best in them, irrespective of their level. The longevity and retention of students over the years is a testament to the quality of coaching at the club and the positive affect that it has had on all the fencers involved. At CFC, we shall continue to make this amazing sport accessible to everyone, developing fencers, both as individuals and as 'family', at all levels from grass roots to top level fencers with the support of coaches to best they can be.

It's been a significant year with huge upheaval in funding streams for our sport, and despite all of this at Camden we have chosen to focus and celebrate all that we do have. The goodwill of volunteers, the strength of the fencing community and the tireless support and warmth of the 'Camden Fencing Club family'.

Camden Fencing Club would like to thank everyone for their contribution and wish everyone "All the Best" in their journey and endeavours in helping to continue to make a positive contribution to the beautiful world of Fencing!

If you would like to get in touch, please contact [here](#) **TO BE CHECKED!!!**

An Interview with Laylla Stanley

BY IAN STEWART
BRITISH FENCING'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME MANAGER

Where and what type of fencing do you deliver?

I currently deliver the Sabre:Lite Fencing programme at Arts University Bournemouth, and I'm running a variety of taster sessions at Bournemouth University to introduce fencing there too.

What made you want to be involved?

After giving up playing rugby due to injury, I felt like I didn't really have a sport that I associated with anymore. I decided to get involved in fencing to try out a new sport and develop my coaching knowledge. This opportunity meant that I could become part of a new sport, and plan and deliver the sessions in my own way. It was also a great opportunity to do some work with the local arts university, which was one of my main roles during my university work placement with Active Dorset County Sports Partnership. The idea of introducing a brand new sport to the university that very few people would have tried before made me really excited as I was able to develop something from scratch and really make it my own.

How was your first experience in fencing?

My first experience of Fencing was very daunting. I had never fenced before in my life, so attending the University Fencing Officer training workshop and being in a group with people who were clearly very experienced fencers was quite intimidating. However, I come from a coaching background so I had to keep reminding myself that I know how to coach. I just need to learn the skills of fencing to ensure that I am doing it properly. I had lots of support from the other members in my group who offered me tips on performing the right techniques which enabled me to develop my understanding. Although I was the least experienced person, I never felt like I was being judged on my abilities. It was evident that everyone was there for the same purpose - spreading the word about how great fencing is!

How do you get people excited about fencing?

I welcome them into the sessions with a smile, and reassure them that it is absolutely fine that they have never fenced before because every other person in the room is



Laylla Stanley

in the same boat! When promoting, I tell potential fencers about how much fun it is, and recall the countless times that I have left classes with an aching jaw because I have been laughing so much. I remind them that we are here to have fun and try something completely new. After all, what is not fun about hitting people on the head with metal swords?!

What do you like most?

I like that it is so alternative and attracts people who are not stereo-typically 'sporty'. I get to interact with so many different people on a regular basis and it has been great to learn how to fence with them. Whenever I am fencing, I am having so much fun that I

almost forget that I am also exercising. I really like that the people who attend my classes are completely new to fencing also. It is so rewarding to watch them learn and to think, 'they know what they are doing because I taught them that.' Also, to know that if these students weren't fencing, then they may not be doing any form of sport at university. So, offering them something that engages them because it is so unique makes me love fencing even more!

What has this experience given you?

This experience has developed my coaching abilities massively. As a student studying sports coaching, I am in a great place post-graduation as I have experience coaching a sport that very few other sports graduates will have. Challenging myself to try out this new sport has opened so many opportunities for me, from voluntary work and even paid work. I have been approached by Bournemouth University to introduce fencing as a new sport there too. I feel so much more confident in my own coaching abilities as I have gone from knowing nothing about fencing, to now being able to teach someone how to fence sabre. I have coached a variety of sports in my career so far, but coaching my fencing group has by far been the most rewarding and enjoyable. I turn up to the sessions knowing that I am going to have a great time with a group of people that I have built close friendships with.

Describe fencing in 4 words?

Unique, enjoyable, challenging, technical



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Scotland Feature

This Girl Can campaign was launched in 2014 and its aim is to encourage more women and girls to participate and compete in sport. Scottish Fencing spoke to three women who started fencing as adults to find out why they began and what motivates them to compete and keep learning.

A common thread is the camaraderie and friendships found at club and as a team competing internationally along with an enjoyment of competition. Is there someone you know who is keen to try fencing? Perhaps reading these inspiring accounts will encourage more women into the sport. These accounts show that it is never too late to start ... and there are some pointers for clubs on how to welcome adult beginners, how to support them through competitions and eventually to representing their home nation and GB at World and European tournaments. These Girls Can!

Jackie Baxter, 28, Glasgow West End Fencing Club

Jackie began fencing 3 months ago, aged 28

How did you find out about fencing? What attracted you to the sport?

It was actually through a very good friend of mine who does it obsessively. He kept pestering me to come and try fencing and eventually I just went along to shut him up! I knew absolutely nothing about it but against

all my expectations I really enjoyed myself and just keep coming back.

What do you enjoy the most about it so far?

I love trying new hobbies. I'm a musician and I do a lot of running, cycling and hill-walking on my own during my spare time so it's great to do something totally different. I've got a very competitive side and fencing allows me to use this – you can't really have a competitive hill-walk! There's also a social aspect to it where I get to see people. And let's be honest, after a long day, stabbing people is very therapeutic!

Do you have any goals for yourself in the sport?

Other than beating my friend? I'm an impatient person... but I'd like to be able to compete at some level and be able to give folk a good fight. But I've only been doing this a few months, so give me a few more and who knows....

Michele Narey

Michele began fencing aged 44 and has recently won a silver medal at the Veterans World Fencing Championships as part of the Great Britain Ladies Sabre team.

How did you first find out about fencing?

I first heard about fencing when my son Matthew did a foil taster session aged 11 at school. He joined the school club and for five



Michele Narey

years he fenced in lots of competitions so I became a fencing taxi mum.

What were the first steps you took to get involved and why sabre?

Shortly after Matthew leaving home Bristol City Council sponsored some sports taster sessions and there was a sabre session at his old school. I had a go, loved it and have been a sabreur ever since. I chose sabre because you don't have screws, springs or tape to mess about with - I'd had five years of that.

Were there other women fencers in the club you joined of a similar age? – did this fact influence the club you chose to join?

There was a broad range of ages at the club and a couple of other females. The kids were great, they still call me Mrs Narey and I guess I will always be Matt's mum. Even now they are 25 years old they still won't call me Michele! I joined Bath Sword Club and Hunt Roeder to train with Jane Hutchison and Chris Previtt. Dennis Hunt is my coach and his patience is incredible.

What barriers did you encounter?

None

What has retained you in the sport

I went to see the British Veterans Championships in Gloucester because Oxtalls is close to my parent's home. Viv came over to me asking if I had any Scottish relations. I said my dad was from Glasgow and before I knew what was happening she had signed me up for the Scottish Team, fencing in The Celtic Challenge in Truro.

I had a fantastic time in Truro, the fencers were such a brilliant friendly group and I was hooked on competing for Scotland. Since then I have fenced in all of the Quads, Celtic Challenges and Vets Commonwealth Championships for Scotland. Our Scotland sabre team bronze in Christchurch was brilliant. I have also represented Scotland in



Jackie Baxter in action

Scotland Feature (continued)

the senior quad at the age of 51. The Scotland Vets Team are fantastic fun and we have enjoyed some great social occasions.

What has been your greatest fencing moments so far?

I have competed in three European Team Championships winning two golds and a silver. My best individual European result was a bronze in Chiavari. I have competed in three Vets World Championships in Limoges, Stralsund and Maribor with a GB team silver in 2017. I have seen countries that I would never have visited if it hadn't been for fencing and I now have friends all over the world. The GB fencing trips are just fantastic fun and win or lose we have a superb time training and supporting each other. There is a special bond amongst sabre fencers. We are like an extended family.

What should clubs do to attract and retain women fencers, returning to sport?

Women taster sessions are a good way to attract women to fencing. We have recently been holding WI taster sessions at my club. There is no age limit in fencing so we need to promote the achievements of those who take up the sport later in life.

What would you like to achieve next?

I have no real aspirations other than to get better, work hard, keep learning, stay fit and healthy and above all else have fun with Viv (read on!).

Viv Frith

Viv began fencing aged 60 and won an individual gold medal at the Veterans World Fencing Championships, in Maribor, this year as well as being part of the Great Britain team who won silver.

What were the first steps you took to get involved and how old were you?

I had always wanted to take up fencing but, being at the time, a single parent with a very demanding and time-consuming job, I was simply unable to take it further. However, when I retired, aged 60, I thought I had to do it then, before it was too late and I found out from the internet where my nearest club was and went along.

Were there other women fencers in the club you joined of a similar age? – did this fact influence the club you chose to join?

There was nobody else of my age and all the female fencers were much younger than me.



Viv Frith

The Club members were mainly children and teenagers. I took the month-long induction course, but it was the sabre fencing that attracted me most. It looked more fun and I was sold on it.

What barriers did you encounter?

I can't say I encountered any barriers – the youngsters just thought I was a bit odd to start at my age!

What has retained you in the sport

The coach – Peter Rome, a Master Coach who trained in Hungary – encouraged me to become part of Veterans Fencing and my first competition was the British Veterans Nationals where I met Michele who was also there for the first time.

Thinking it was fun, I decided to do the Birmingham Open (which I didn't tell my coach about) and came a resounding last, but I loved it and thought that the only way from then on was up.

After that I badgered the coach for lessons, and I was extremely lucky that Peter, who I consider to be the best coach in the country, made me understand that you never stop learning, so can never become bored.

It is this that really keeps me going in the sport and ten years later I am still learning.

The other major factor has been the camaraderie and friendships I have made with people of all ages and nationalities.

I no longer have Peter as a coach as he has moved on to be the number one coach to the GB Paralympic team, which is a full-time job (the team having come in leaps and bounds since he took on the role) and I have had to alter my training accordingly. After a lull, I now fence at two clubs three times a week and do an Open competition at the weekend if there is one.

What has been your greatest fencing moments so far?

Obviously my greatest achievement has been winning the gold medal at the World Championships this year – something I had been aiming for all along. Along the way I have also won gold at the Europeans, World and European silver and have won Commonwealth gold every year apart from one year when I couldn't compete due to a clash with the Worlds.

Advertising the fitness aspect of the sport and leaflet drops are probably the best way of attracting people to clubs, together with the odd public exhibition. There must be many people who would enjoy the sport but who have not considered it or know how to go about joining a club – and maybe think it is expensive and elitist.

What should clubs do to attract and retain women fencers, returning to sport?

Once new participants have been attracted to a club I think it is essential that the existing members help them by fencing with them at least once a night, being helpful and, in effect, mentoring them.

What would you like to achieve next?

My ambition hasn't changed since the day I started fencing and that is just to get better – I am my own severest critic.



Viv Frith and Michele Narey representing Scotland at the Veterans Commonwealth Fencing Championships in New Zealand.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

When I received the electronic copy of *The Sword* at the beginning of October, I thought that the once-yearly paper copy had gone for good... I was really pleased to receive a hard copy in the post the following week!

I find the electronic copy hard work. No matter how computer literate you are, whatever you are reading always seems to need its font-size increasing, or the page to be scrolled up or down. The paper copy is always much easier to read; to refer back to or simply to find a copy of the previous issue.

A case in point for me was the advertisement for 'The Fencer' DVD. A friend in Germany had written regarding this film (*Endel der Fechter*) and I had wondered about how to obtain it. I certainly didn't notice the advertisement in the electronic copy - but casually on leafing through the printed copy the advert was there for all to see - and now I will be able to drop some hints on what to get for Xmas.

The Sword is a first class magazine, and it is a shame to see it relegated to an electronic copy for three out of four in the year. What are the chances of restoring it to a paper copy for all issues?

I imagine that finance is at the heart of this. What about reducing it to three issues a year, judiciously timed, like school terms?

Equally, surely more use can be made of advertising, especially for items such as general sports clothing, travel accessories, travel insurance & credit cards, items likely to be of interest to fencers, and/or to include flyers from appropriate firms too.

Hoping we can see a return to the printed *Sword*, before long.

Regards
Michael Clemitson, Wales

Response:

Michael, firstly many thanks for your kind words about the content in this magazine. A lot of hard work goes into pulling together each and every issue and my thanks goes to everyone who contributes.

As you suggested, the move from print to electronic distribution was mainly down to finances. However, there was also motivation generated from the feedback from some of our membership, to modernise our approach by using technology. That aside, British Fencing simply do not have the funds to produce four printed issues per year. There is no getting away from that I'm afraid.

Having worked on this publication for a few years now, I can tell you that the hardest part of my job is to decide which stories and features have to be dropped due to a lack of space. Whilst reducing the number of issues to three will slightly reduce costs, my belief that the what is already a difficult editing job will become almost impossible.

You make an interesting point about advertising. Since becoming involved in the magazine I have updated our processes for advertising to reduce administration. We now offer a discount to advertisers who commit to more than one issue per year at the beginning of the year. This has freed up more of my time to deliver

the stories that I find interesting...and hopefully you do to! Time to proactively sell advertising is extremely limited. However, if anyone reading this knows of companies/ organisations who would be interested in advertising please do point them in my direction.

To finish on a more positive note, you are not the only member who has expressed a desire to receive a printed copy of the magazine. In our efforts to listen to the membership we are investigating print-on-demand services. That work has only just begun and I cannot give you a timeline for if/when we can offer this service but we'll update you when we can.

We are always looking for stories from youth internationals.

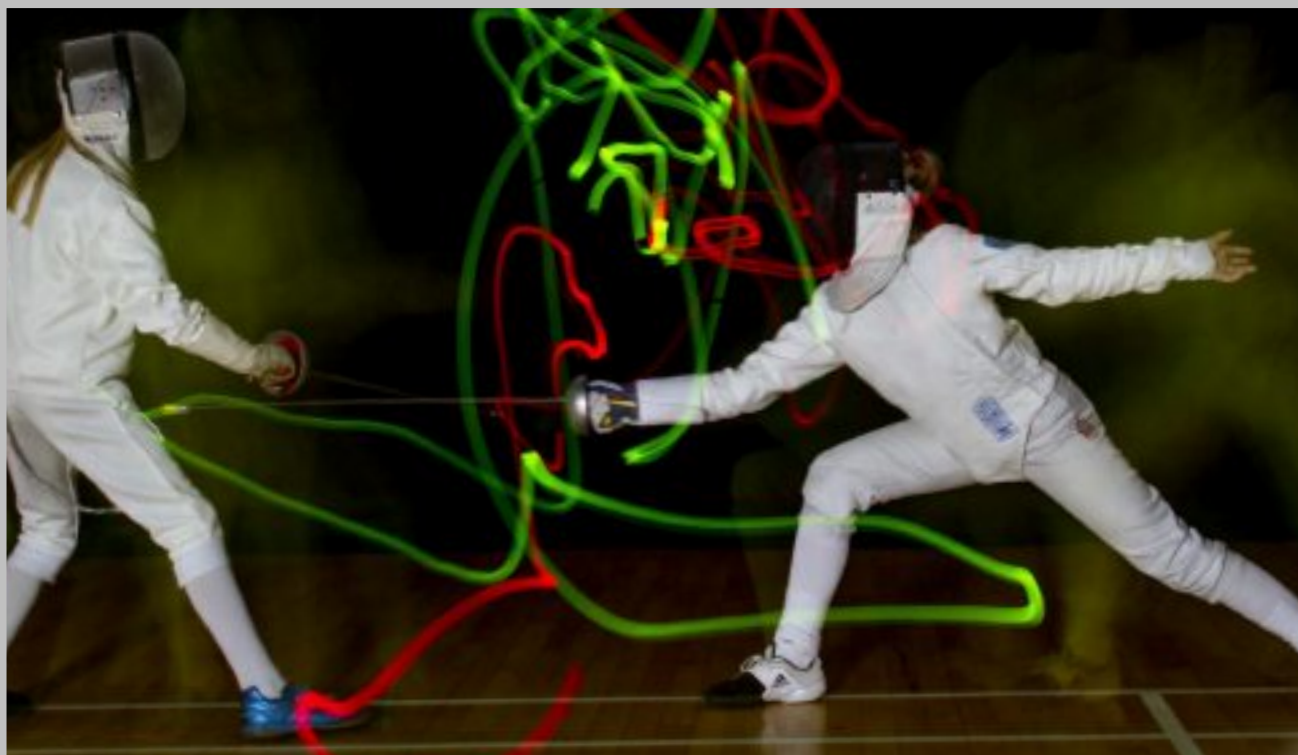
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To state your interest in the offer or to ask for further information please write in English to mail@steen-bjerre.dk.

METROPOLITAN COPENHAGEN

THE AREA: Metropolitan Copenhagen surrounds the capital of Denmark. It has about 2.4 million inhabitants. Originally a Viking fishing village founded in the 10th century, Copenhagen became the capital in the early 15th century. Since the turn of the 21st century, it has seen strong urban and cultural development, facilitated by investment in its institutions and infrastructure. The city is the cultural, economic and governmental centre of Denmark. www.kk.dk

THE UNIVERSITIES: With 40,000+ students, the University of Copenhagen (founded 1479) is the largest Danish institution of research and education (www.ku.dk). Metropolitan Copenhagen is also home to Copenhagen Business School (www.cbs.dk), IT University of Copenhagen (www.itu.dk), Roskilde University (www.ruc.dk), and Technical University of Denmark (www.dtu.dk).

THE CLUBS: Metropolitan Copenhagen has close to 20 fencing clubs (www.faegtning.dk).

AARHUS

THE CITY: With a population of 320,000, Aarhus is Denmark's second-largest city. In the past 10 years, it has received 15,000 new residents and created 20,000 new jobs, the majority within the knowledge, service and innovation industries. www.aarhus.dk

THE UNIVERSITY: Established in 1928, Aarhus University has developed into a major Danish university with a strong international reputation across the entire research spectrum. It places a high value on close collaboration with business and industry, and takes pride in its deep involvement in the development of the society of which it is part. It has 42,000+ students. www.au.dk



THE CLUB: Jysk Academic Fencing Club (JAF) has existed since the 1950s. As the name suggests, the club has always been associated with academia. It is still a university club, but it caters to everyone from playful children and adults to ambitious fencers attending European and World Championships. www.jaf.dk

ODENSE

THE CITY: With a history dating back more than 1,000 years, Odense is one of the oldest cities in Denmark. With 200,000 inhabitants, Odense is the 3rd largest Danish city. The open, modern city of Odense is home to more than 180 higher education programmes, a university hospital and several strong clusters in the fields of robotics, drones, welfare technology and IT. www.odense.dk



THE UNIVERSITY: The University of Southern Denmark welcomed the first students in Odense in 1966, and things have been developing by leaps and bounds ever since. It now has five faculties with 32,000+ students, almost 20% of whom are from abroad, distributed across the main campus and four regional campuses. www.sdu.dk

THE CLUB: Odense Fencing Club (OFK) was founded in 1970 but fencing began in the city as far back as 1890 – and Odense had a fencing club for 40 years before the foundation of the present one. www.ofk.dk

AALBORG

THE CITY: Aalborg is the 4th largest city in Denmark. No other Danish city experiences growth at the same rate as Aalborg. In particular, young people are attracted to the city and the university. Aalborg is the capital of the North Denmark region with a total population of 580,000. www.aalborg.dk

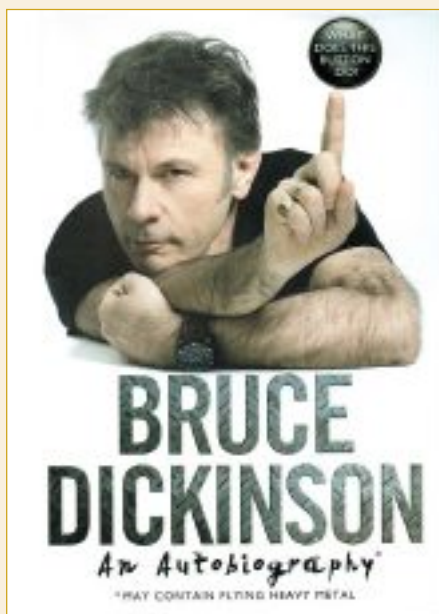
THE UNIVERSITY: Aalborg University has 19,000+ students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs. All degree programmes and research activities are problem and project-based and have an interdisciplinary focus. Through intense collaboration with public and private sectors, the university offers degree programmes with a realworld approach and provide world-class research.



www.aau.dk

THE CLUB: Aalborg Fencing Club (AAF) was founded in 1931. It is open to anyone interested in fencing, also non-Danes studying or working in the city and the region. The club has room for everyone – no matter if they want to indulge in fencing on exercise level or participate in competitions. www.aalborgfaegteklub.dk

Book Review



"What Does This Button Do?" Bruce Dickinson – An Autobiography

I was once presented with a T-shirt emblazoned with the words "SEX – DRUGS – EPEE" which I wore proudly at the now defunct "Duel on the Beach" competition in Cornwall, organised by Richard Bonehill. It always amused me because, in many respects, learning fencing in the sixties, those words epitomised much of what every young teenage fencer aspired to, but rarely achieved! So, it was with great delight that I opened Bruce Dickinson's tome on his life as a heavy metal rock star and engrossed myself in the days when rebellion was in the air and rock music ruled the airwaves.

Bruce's rise to fame as the lead singer of Iron Maiden is legendary; his ghoulish stage shows with the iconic Eddie was the stuff of parent's nightmares and his ever increasing world tours made the headlines with reports of wild behaviour and screaming teenage fans at every city in which they played. This autobiography covers his early years in Worksop, his progression through the educational system which encompassed Oundle School – not a particularly flattering account! – his time at Queen Mary College, University of London studying history and then the realisation that his future was intrinsically tied up with the burgeoning world of the heavy metal rock bands. A succession of dodgy managers, wild gigs in salubrious pubs and clubs with even wilder band members, produced the enduring band that so many people know and love today!

So why on earth am I writing this review on this rock star's life? It was because Bruce was a foilist and pretty good one at that. Fencing had entered his life at an early stage as a means of escape from his everyday world and like many of us today, it buried itself deep within his psyche. Throughout his life, Bruce returned to fencing whilst on the road, initially as a means of escaping from "the rock and roll ghetto of the tour bus" and later as an extra curricula activity that provided him with construct in his hectic lifestyle whilst moving from country to country and venue to venue.

It is particularly intriguing to see what the effect of a single inspirational fencing master at a school – in this case John Worsley at Oundle – had on the young Bruce over the rest of his life. It helped him seek out fencing clubs and fencers wherever he toured and his list of coaches and mentors resembles a "who's who" of GB's best foil coaches over the past thirty years. These include Brian Pitman and his son Justin, Zsolt Vadaszffy and Ziemek Wojciechowski; the latter is of course still coaching our top Olympic foilist, Richard Kruse. Bruce loved his foil lessons and saw them as fitting his own particular feeling about life, imparting "a philosophy of thought, strategy and movement" that enabled him to see fencing as a sport of combat by proxy – reaching a different level of consciousness that overcame fear of failure. This power of thought saw him – whilst still touring with Iron Maiden – win the British Junior Foil Championships and be selected to represent GB at the European Championships whilst ranked in the top 10 of the country. No mean feat for a rock star at the height of his profession. Everywhere he went, whether it was USA, Canada, Japan, he would still seek out fencing clubs in which to ground himself and provide an opportunity to be himself rather than a mega-star of whom everyone else wanted a share.

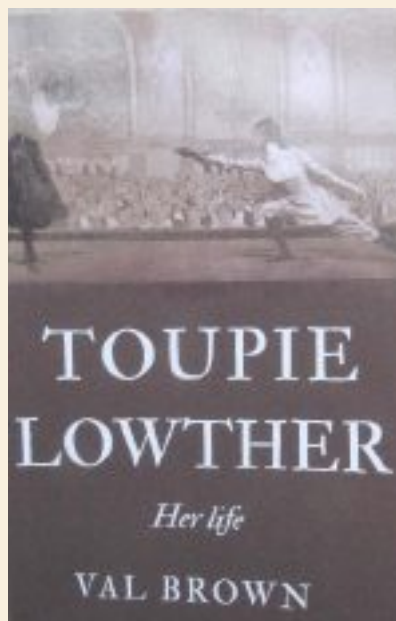
I had met Bruce on a few occasions whilst I was Chairman of the Combined Services Fencing Association. Bruce had always had a huge interest in the military and was prepared to invest time and money in helping the Services when their prime sponsor – Wilkinson Swords – pulled their sponsorship of the Combined Services fencing before one of the Royal Tournaments in the 1980s. He stepped in and provided prizes and was to have presented the Master of Arms Trophy in the Earls Court Arena before Royalty. Unfortunately, the organisers of the Royal Tournament refused our request as they felt that a long haired rockstar in jeans was not the correct dress code to appear before Royalty. A very stupid decision and one that lost the Services a lot of credibility that day – I know that the Royal member and the audience would have loved him!

Nevertheless, since then, Bruce has helped out many military charities in other ways. He obtained his commercial pilot's licence in 2000, formed his own airline and, in between flying Iron Maiden to gigs around the world, helped fly aircraft in and out of some of the more war torn areas of the Middle East, Cyprus and Bosnia to bring back soldiers to the UK.

This is a formidable man of many parts. Musician, Fencer, Pilot and now cancer survivor. His recent brush with death after being diagnosed with head and neck cancer has produced this incredible book of anecdotes and tales of living life to the full. However, what really stands out for me in this book is that throughout his life, fencing has been a constant. It is this which resonated with me whilst reading the book. Fencing is in his blood and I really feel that above all else, he deserves to be presented with his own T-shirt that reads "ROCK and ROLL and FOIL" – what better summation of Bruce's life!

Lawrence Burr

Book Review



The World's Champion Lady Fencer

Toupie Lowther, if she is remembered at all in the fencing world, is just a name on a trophy that, until 1988, used to be presented to the winner of a competition for unclassified women foilists. Few know of her exploits as perhaps the best woman fencer in the world at the turn of the 20th century, before competitions started. But now, with the publication of Val Brown's excellent biography*, the full story of her remarkable life is revealed.

Born in 1874, the daughter of Lieut. Francis Lowther of the Royal Navy, Toupie (as she was always called, although christened May) began fencing at the age of 15 at McPherson's School of Arms in Chelsea. She also studied in Paris and Brussels, becoming an overnight sensation in 1898 when she took part in a display at Aldershot to encourage fencing among women. A special train was chartered to bring 500 spectators from London. Toupie beat, not only all the other women fencers, but also the army sergeant instructor. The event was reported as far afield as the New York Times and the Evening Telegraph headlined her as "The World's Champion Lady Foil Fencer".

Four years later in 1902 she defeated the French champion, Madame Gabriel. But, although she fenced in another display at the Royal Palace Hotel, Kensington, in February 1904, she never competed in the British women's championship that took place later that year. Perhaps, like many fencers of her generation, she performed best in one-off exhibition bouts and was temperamentally unsuited to open competition. Yet she was a competitive tennis player, winning the British Covered Court Championship three times and twice reaching the Wimbledon semi-finals. She was also a talented musician and composer.

During World War I, frustrated with the lack of opportunities the British Army offered women, she organised an all-female team of ambulance drivers, the Hackett-Lowther Ambulance Unit, consisting of 20 cars and around 30 women drivers, many of whom provided their own large cars. Toupie drove her own six-cylinder Wolseley. A wealthy woman, fluent in French and with a wide range of contacts, she got the unit attached to the French army. Operating close to the front line, they would collect casualties from local hospitals and delivery them to the railway station for evacuation. During the final hostilities the unit was twice mentioned in dispatches and all its members were awarded the *Croix de Guerre*.

Toupie returned to London in August 1919 after 2½ years in France and resumed her social life. She began to appear in the diaries of Una Troubridge whose partner Radclyffe Hall was the author of the landmark lesbian novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, which was banned after official medical advice that it would encourage female homosexuality and lead to "a social and national disaster". The novel's female protagonist, Stephen Gordon, was said to be based to a large extent on Toupie Lowther. She died in 1944.

**Toupie Lowther, Her life* by Val Brown, 2017, Matador, £8.99.

Malcolm Fare

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Photo: Augusto Bizzi

Please forward all your suggestions for additional on-line fencing results to: amy.grant@britishfencing.com





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