

THE SWORD

The voice of the membership since 1948

British Fencing Magazine

APRIL 2017



LAURA AND FRIENDS IN PLOVDIV



THREE MEDALS IN TEN DAYS AT PLOVDIV P5
KAT SMITH INTERVIEW P26



KARIM'S INTERNATIONAL REPORT PP8-10
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Cover photo of Laura Sheffield

taken at the Cadet European Championships, Plovdiv, 2017
Photo: Augusto Bizzi

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News

MAXWELL STARTS 2017 WITH FIFTH PLACE IN BUDAPEST JUNIOR SABRE – BUDAPEST WORLD CUP

Women's Individual

Caitlin Maxwell started 2017 with a fifth place finish at the Budapest World Cup at the weekend. She was one of nine British fencers who took part in this event making up a field of one hundred and twenty-six. She aced her poule winning all six fights and was joined in the elimination stages by Shreya Anil, Maria Chart, Jessica Corby, Alexandra Davis and Maia Fashokun. Jenna Bray, Daisy Hutton and Ella Nightingale did not progress through the first round. Fashokun, Anil, Davis and Chart went out in the round of 128 and Corby fell in the next round.

Maxwell earned a bye through the round of 128 and went on to beat Bosetti (ITA) 15-13, Ilieva (BUL) 15-9 and Battiston (ITA) 15-14 to make the quarterfinals. Lisa Pusztai (HUN) edged a close fight to progress 15-13. The Hungarian went on to win the tournament, beating Svetlana Sheveleva (RUS) in the final

as Lucia Lucarini (ITA) and Valentina Nagy (HUN) secured the bronze medals.

Full individual results [here](#).

Men's Individual

Will Deary achieved the best British result in the men's event by finishing thirteenth. There were nine British fencers in total in a field of one hundred and sixty-five. Jamie Craze and Simon Dacey were eliminated after the poule stage; James Edwards, George Suddards and Ethan Ren were knocked out in the round of 128; Nicholas Howes made the round of 64 and Joshua Maxwell and Bertie Holdsworth finished in the top 32.

Deary, having won five of his six first round matches, went on to beat Mori (ITA) 15-6, Lademann (POL) 15-11 and Dubarry (FRA) 15-9 before going out 15-13 to Neri (ITA).

Matteo Neri went on to win the tournament beating teammate Leonardo Dreossi in the gold medal match. Fares Ferjani (TUN) and Tamas Galgoczy (HUN) were the bronze medallists.

Full individual results [here](#).

Mixed Teams

Great Britain (Chart, Corby, Maxwell, Edwards, Maxwell, Suddards) was one of twelve teams to compete in the mixed event. Their seeding meant that they had a bye through the round of sixteen but then lost 40-33 to Hungary in the quarterfinals. They went on to beat Bulgaria 40-37 and Belarus 40-35 to secure fifth place. Hungary won the tournament, beating Italy in the final as Turkey surprised Russia to take the bronze medal.

Mixed team results [here](#).

10th January 2017

KRUZE TAKES FIFTH PLACE AT PARIS WORLD CUP

Richard Kruse returned to great form in Paris at the weekend securing a quarterfinal place at one of the toughest World Cup's on the men's foil circuit. He was one of eight British competitors at the event in a field of two hundred and eleven and his world ranking meant that he qualified automatically for the second day of the tournament. He began the day beating two Russian fencers – Pivovarov 15-7 and Komissarov 15-8. He followed that up by beating Italian, Foconi 15-13 before losing his quarterfinal match 15-11 to Ha of Korea.



Readers will no doubt recall this photo from the cover of *The Sword*, of Richard from Rio 2016, fencing Meinhardt (USA) – photo Augusto Bizzi.

Taegyu Ha shared the bronze medal position with Italy's Giorgio Avola and America's world number one, Alex Massialas took the title beating Russian fencer, Timur Safin in the final.

Ben Peggs and Kamal Minott were eliminated in the third preliminary knockout fight on day one, Harry Bird made the second preliminary knockout but Samuel Finch, Jai Birch, Dominic De Almeida and Rajan Rai did not make it out of the poules.

Britain lined up for the team event with Birch, Bird, Minott and Peggs in a field of twenty-four. A bye through the round of 32 was followed up by a 45-28 defeat to Germany. In the placings matches they beat Canada 45-29, lost 45-26 to Hong Kong but then beat Brazil 45-43 to secure eleventh place. Italy defeated France to win the title as the USA beat Japan to the bronze medal.

Full individual results.

Full team results.

23rd January 2017

News (continued)

THREE MEDALS IN TEN DAYS AT PLOVDIV

YASMIN CAMPBELL WINS EUROPEAN BRONZE



Podium Photo – Yasmin Campbell far right (Augusto Bizzi)

Cadet Women's Foil – European Championships 2017

Yasmin Campbell picked up a bronze medal on day two of the Cadet & Junior European Championships as teammate Isabella Gill performed admirably to make the quarterfinals.

Campbell took five victories from six first round matches to make the round of 64 elimination draw. She then beat Schreiber (SWE) 15-5, Saveanu (ROU), Szabelska (POL) 11-6 and Castro (ESP) 15-7 to guarantee a medal. In the semi-finals she faced Marta Ricci (ITA) and lost 15-6.

Ricci went on to secure the title, beating teammate Martina Favaretto 15-9 in the final. Campbell shared the bronze medal position with Adelina Bikbulatova (RUS).

Isabella Gill also produced a great result to finish in the quarterfinals, losing 15-8 to the eventual silver medallist Favaretto.

Amy Home and Seville Babaeva were also in action for Great Britain and they made the round of 64 before being eliminated.

[Full individual results.](#)

1st March 2017

LAURA SHEFFIELD WINS EUROPEAN BRONZE

Cadet Women's Epee – European Championships 2017



Podium Photo – Laura Sheffield far right (Augusto Bizzi)

Laura Sheffield picked up a bronze medal on day three of the Cadet & Junior European Championships to continue a great season.

Sheffield won all of her six first round matches and earned a bye through the round of 64. She then beat Pawlowska (POL) 15-10, Lentz (GER) 15-13, Coufalova (CZE) 15-8 and Garneri (FRA) 15-12 to secure a place in the medal matches. In the semi-finals she faced Barbara Brych (POL) and lost 15-11.

Brych went on to secure the title, beating Eszter Muhari (HUN) in the final. Sheffield shared the bronze medal position with Emilia Rossatti (ITA).

Louis Avery made the round of 32, Jasmine Heaps made the 64 and Alexandra Powell was eliminated in the round of 128.

[Full individual results.](#)

3rd March 2017

EURO SILVER FOR CADET WOMEN'S EPEE TEAM

Sheffield bags second medal with the team in Plovdiv

Cadet Women's Epee Team – European Championships 2017

Twenty countries lined up for the Cadet Women's Team Epee event today in Plovdiv and Great Britain claimed the silver medal.

Jasmine Heaps, Avery Louis, Alexandra Powell and Laura Sheffield were the British team members and their ranking meant that they had a bye through the round of 32. Heaps, Louis and Sheffield all played their part in the victory over Israel in the round of 16. Sheffield took a one hit lead into the final leg and demolished her opponent 11-6 to claim Britain's place in the quarterfinals.

Next up they faced the number one seeds, Romania. Britain fielded the same line up and again Sheffield went into the anchor leg with a one hit lead. A 9-3 leg meant that the team had two shots at a medal. Their next opponents were Ukraine and Britain remained with their winning line up. They led from the start but only just and for the third time in a row Sheffield went into the last bout with a one hit lead. This time the match was decided by the clock and Sheffield saw the team over the line 39-35.

Their opponents in the final were Hungary and they broke away from Great Britain in leg seven. Despite a brave 13-10 final leg in favour of Sheffield, the Hungarians won the match 45-35. Italy beat Ukraine to secure the bronze medal.

Great Britain (Edwards, Holdsworth, Matricciani and Pocknell) narrowly missed out on another medal in the Cadet Men's Team Sabre event as well today. They lost to Romania in the bronze medal play-off to finish fourth.

[Full team results.](#)

4th March 2017

News (continued)



Podium Photo –
GB Team Silver
Medallists (left)

BEATRICE VIO WINS 2017 LAUREUS AWARD

The Italian wheelchair fencer, Beatrice Vio, won the 2017 Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability Award, on the 14th February, in Monaco. Winning this prestigious award followed an incredible Paralympics debut at Rio 2016. Vio came into her first Paralympics with high expectations after going on an 11-match winning streak leading up to the Games. At 19 years old, she did not disappoint in her first ever Paralympics. Vio won the gold medal in the women's individual foil – category B, defeating a tough opponent in China's Zhou JingJing, whose only loss in Rio was to Vio. (www.paralympic.org – Media Centre)



(Photo: Augusto Bizzi)

A full report of the Cadet and Junior European Championships, Plovdiv, 2017, can be accessed using the following link: <http://britishfencing.com/news/latest-news/?n=1702>

FIE REVERT TO STANDARD ON GUARD LINES FOR SABRE

Today, the FIE (international fencing federation) formally announced that the on guard line for sabre will revert to the standard 4m. This rule will be implemented for all Senior events immediately but the 3m on guard lines will be kept in place for Cadets and Juniors until the end of the season. From next season all international sabre events will adopt the 4m on guard line.

British Fencing will implement this rule change from Monday 27th February 2017 for all domestic competitions. For events occurring this weekend, British Fencing asks organisers to use their discretion about whether to adopt this change of rule.

Read the full FIE statement [here](#). 23rd February 2017

Karim's Diary

A SHORT REPORT FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT ON HIS TRAVELS

My commentary journey continues as I continue to explore new opportunities. What started as a nervy debut in Sheffield at the European Championships in 2011, quickly grew to working with the FIE at the World Championships and then last season the Grand Prix events. What next I thought? The senior World Cups was the obvious next step. Obvious but not easy!

As we know from British Fencing's involvement in the Women's Sabre World Cup, "The Beazley Trophy" in its last guise, these events are run and paid for by the host federation. They are not cheap and the organisers have to be efficient with their budgets. So the pitch for commentary services is not an easy one and rather than dealing with one "client" – the FIE – I had to reach out to each host federation.

It was tough going but the organisers of the Barcelona World Cup asked if I'd go for expenses only to prove the concept (and throw in a marketing talk to boot). I hadn't been to Barcelona for a while and had a free weekend, so off I went. It went down so well, the organisers booked us, (me and "Magic" Tristan from Fencing Vision), for next year!

Meanwhile the organisers of the New York World Cup (specifically Donald Anthony, President of US Fencing) contacted me on hearing that I was going to Barcelona and asked if I'd consider going there too. My initial excitement was immediately dampened when I discovered that Tristan was already booked for the Heidenheim World Cup on the same weekend. Damn! However, Tristan is an industrious chap and decided that I could go it alone. At first I thought he was crazy. Was he seriously going to trust me to set up all of the equipment, link up to the local scoring service and make sure that I remembered to go live on YouTube? And how was I going to carry everything? Plus he lives in Leipzig and I'm in Devon.

One telephone call later and the deal was done, but I was still convinced that the whole thing was crazy! The plan was that Tristan would give me the equipment that I needed in Barcelona, train me and we'd run a test in the week from my home with him logging in remotely to do the software set up.

I spoke to the competition organisers, explained that I could either bring all of the

equipment with me and pay excess baggage or bring an assistant. They went for the assistant option, so I signed up Jeanné – my fiancé. If nothing else I was going to get some brownie points and the organisers were paying me too!

Barcelona went in a flash. I gave my talk, commentated and spent every spare second learning how to set everything up, with Tristan's guidance. When the event was over, Tristan and I swapped equipment so I could get back to the UK without needing to pay excess baggage and I returned home.

The test day was Wednesday and armed with three hand drawn "set up maps" I spent the best part of three hours setting everything up in my kitchen. It went surprisingly well, which worried me, but I called Tristan to ask him to try and log in. It worked and it worked well! My confidence was pretty high at that point – some would say a little late but better than never.



The kitchen setup.

So we headed for New York. Conveniently the event took place in the hotel that we were staying at which meant Jeanné's role was simple – helping get the equipment from our room to the competition hall. Off she went to explore New York and I set everything up. Regular check ups with Tristan smoothed the way and in no time at all we had not only completed the set up but tested it with captions from Dan at Fencing Time. Thanks Dan – you are a legend!



The New York setup – success!

The event went really well. We had a couple of dropouts on one piste but I'm glad to say that was the fault of a dodgy piece of equipment! US Fencing were pleased so I hope to go back next year! We headed home and I left knowing that this journey still has a few more twists and turns. It never fails to keep me on my toes which I find incredibly exciting.

A couple of weeks after returning we'd negotiated another expenses-only trip to the Bonn World Cup. It was another opportunity to test the live stream concept at a World Cup and was sponsored by Allstar Uhlmann. Not only that, it gave me an opportunity to return Tristan's kit and get mine back – if I drove! That's a long journey and a long story that I won't bore you with. What I will say is that the response was amazing. We went live for the finals on the FIE's Facebook page and we had a reach of just under 500,000! At least we know that you're watching!

I can't finish this piece with a few words of thanks. Firstly, to Tristan for making the magic happen remotely, but also to Don Anthony, Dan at Fencing Time and the organisers of the three World Cups, for having faith in me and a vision that I share with many, including the FIE, to bring you more fencing coverage.

Until next time ...

A Message from Leicester Fencing Club

Reader will no doubt remember Leicester Fencing Club's Guinness World Record attempt last year (*The Sword*, October 2016, pp27/28). Lee Garner has advised us that Guinness have informed Leicester Fencing Club that their world record attempt for the most fencers in a team exhibition match has been successful and that they are now officially **Guinness World Record Holders**.

Well done to all those who took part and organised this remarkable event!

International Report

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT, WITH PHOTOS BY AUGUSTO BIZZI (UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED)

The past few months of the international fencing season have flown by and before we know it the zonal championships will be upon us. So let's take a look at what has been happening since I last put pen to paper.

Men's Epee



Park Kyoungdoo wins the Heidenheim World Cup

Park Kyoungdoo of Korea picked up his second title of the season at the Heidenheim World Cup in late January, having won the Buenos Aires title earlier in the season. He beat Frenchman, Yannick Borel in the final who added his silver medal to the bronze he won in Argentina. There were two big surprises on the bronze medal step of the podium and both of them still eligible to fence at Junior (under-20 level). Nineteen year old Koki Kano of Japan shared the position with seventeen year old Hungarian, Mate Koch. It's often said that anyone can win on their day, especially in epee. That said, I think we'll be seeing more of these two in years to come.

Canada was the destination of the next event for the men's epeeists and the Vancouver World Cup. Swiss fencer, Max Heinzer claimed his best result of the season here by winning the title, but only just. He came up against little-known Cuban fencer Yunior Reytor Venet who he beat in a priority minute. Yannick Borel continued his fine form by picking up a bronze medal in Canada along with Niko Vourinen of Finland who claimed his first ever major medal.

Park Sangyoung, the Korean 2016 Olympic Champion, still sits at the top of the World rankings but Yannick Borel is in hot pursuit. Another Frenchman, Gauthier Grumier lies in third place but we are yet to see him compete this season. Korea's Park Kyoungdoo lies in fourth and Max Heinzer completes the top five.

Women's Epee

Chinese Olympic bronze medallist, Sun Yiwen picked up her second ever World Cup title in Barcelona in January, beating Irina Embrich of Estonia in the final. It was the Estonian's second bronze who is has hit the best form she has been in for a while at the age of thirty-six. Barcelona also saw Hungary's Olympic Champion return to competitive action and she lit up the place as she claimed a bronze medal. Clearly enjoying her fencing, Szasz is a marvellous ambassador for the sport. French fencer, Melissa Goram also claimed a bronze medal – her first major medal – and is further evidence that the French federation's rise back to the top is not about to stop any time soon.



Beljajeva wins the Legnano World Cup

The circuit moved on to Legnano, Italy in February and it was a debut World Cup win for Estonian fencer, Julia Beljajeva who beat France's, Lauren Rembi in an entertaining final. Tunisian World number one (at the time of writing) , Sarra Besbes shared the bronze medal position with Dzhoan Bezura of Ukraine who continued to build on her fine form so far this season.

Besbes continues to lead the World ranking in this discipline and is over 30 point clear of second placed Russian, Tatiana Logunova,



Sun Yiwen beat Irina Embrich for the Barcelona World Cup

International Report

who has not quite returned to her early season form. Hungarian Olympic Champion, Szasz-Kowacs – married last year but only registered her name change recently – sits in third place in the rankings followed by Chinese fencers, Sun and Xu Anqi.

Men's Foil

Alexander Massialas of America was back to winning ways at the Paris World Cup, having taken silver at the Turin Grand Prix in December last year. The Olympic silver medallist took out Russia's Olympic bronze medallist, Timur Safin in the final. Italy's Giorgio Avola picked up his tenth World Cup medal by claiming the bronze in Paris – a position that he shared with Ha Taegyul of Korea. Ha won the 2010 Vancouver World Cup and last won a World Cup medal in 2011 at the La Coruna World Cup. The question has to be, has he reclaimed the form of his early twenties or is he taking advantage of some of the top fencers easing off on their training post-Olympics?



Bonn World Cup 2017 Podium (l to r - Lefort, Joppich, Safin, Imboden) (photo: Ferraro Bizzi)

The men's foilists moved on to Germany and the Bonn World Cup – an event that every fencer wants to win before their career ends. Peter Joppich pleased the home crowd by winning the title beating Enzo Lefort of France in the final. Joppich's victory came eleven years after he first won the so-called "Lion of Bonn" trophy back in 2006. America's Race Imboden and Timur Safin of Russia shared the bronze medal position.

Massialas is miles ahead of the rest of the field in terms of World ranking and is followed by Safin who has overtaken Italian Olympic

Champion, Daniele Garozzo. They steady season form of Giorgio Avola of Italy and Egypt's Alaaeldin Abouelkassem see them sit in fourth and fifth place, respectively. From a British point of view, Richard Kruse sits in sixth place but James-Andrew Davis has dropped to eighteenth, which means he is likely to have to fence in the preliminary round at his next event.

Women's Foil



Thibaut wins Algiers World Cup 2017

Ysaora Thibaut of France struck World Cup gold for the second time in Algiers in mid-January. She beat Korea's Nam Hyunhee who at thirty-five picked up her first World Cup medal since bronze at the Budapest event in 2014. Arianna Errigo shared the bronze medal position with Italian teammate Alice Volpi who was claiming her second consecutive bronze in Algeria. To this point Errigo had appeared on every women's foil podium so far in the season.

That changed at the Gdansk World Cup. Errigo was not in Poland due to illness so it was an opportunity for her closest rivals to close the gap on her at the top of the World rankings. That's not quite how it panned out as rank-outsider, Svetlana Tripapina of Russia claimed her first ever World Cup medal – a gold at that – in Poland. Her scintillating form on the day took her past Pauline Ranvier of France in the final. America's Lee Kiefer continued her excellent consistent form by securing the bronze medal, which she shared with French fencer Astrid Guyart.

Errigo continues to sit at the top of the women's foil World rankings but now Kiefer is less than twenty points behind her. The American has leap-frogged Russian Olympic Champion, Inna Deriglazova this season but the Russian has a clear points margin between herself and Thibaut in fourth and America's Nicole Ross in fifth.



Gdansk World Cup 2017 Podium (l to r - Ranvier, Tripapina, Guyart, Kiefer) (photo: Ferraro Bizzi)

Men's Sabre



Szatmari with the Padua World Cup 2017 Trophy

The first competitive action in 2017 for this discipline was in Italy at the Padua World Cup. Andras Szatmari of Hungary, who had claimed his first major medal earlier in the season – a bronze at the Gyor World Cup – took the title beating Mojtaba Abedini of Iran in the final. Oh Sanguk of Korea continued his fine form this season by claiming the bronze medal. He shared the position with teammate Kim Junghwan who claimed his first medal since winning the Olympic bronze in Rio.

The series moved on to Poland and the Warsaw World Cup. Kim Junghwan claimed back to back podium finishes by taking



A special thanks to our photographer Augusto for taking this special photograph of the British squad at the Warsaw World Cup. Left to right (back): Curtis Miller, Kirk Slankard. Left to right (front): Jonathan "JJ" Webb, James Honeybone, Ethan Ren. (photo: Augusto Bizzi)'

the title, beating Olympic Champion, Aron Szilagyi of Hungary in the final. It was all Korean-Hungarian podium as Gu Bongil and Csanad Gemesi shared the bronze medals.

So Kim now leads the World rankings by 45 points over Aron Szilagyi with Vincent Anstett of France pursuing in third place. Mojtaba Abedini of Iran and America's Daryl Homer complete the top five but are another 30 points behind.

Women's Sabre

New York hosted the first Women's Sabre World Cup of 2017 which was won by Cecilia Berder of France. She picked up her second title by beating London 2012 Olympic Champion, Kim Jiyeon of Korea in the final. The Italian pair of Irene Vecchi and Martina Criscio claimed the bronze medals.



Athens World Cup Podium (l to r - Brunet, Marton, Lembach, Kim)

Further evidence of the French programme's renaissance came at the next event in Greece. Hungary's Anna Marton won the Athens World Cup – her first major title – but French fencer Manon Brunet was a losing finalist. Brunet's teammate, Charlotte Lembach, shared the bronze medal with Kim who made it two consecutive podiums in Athens.

Russia's, Yana Egorian is almost 50 points clear at the top of the World rankings, ahead of Ukraine's Olga Kharlan, who is yet to return to action after winning bronze at the Olympic Games. Another Russian, Sofya Velikaya, who also hasn't competed since winning silver at the Olympics is in third place but has Marton and then Kim hot on her heels.



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Eden Cup 2016

Photographs and words by Graham Morrison

The USA dominated the latter stages of the Eden Cup at SportDock this season, as Geoffrey Tourette took the gold 15/11 over Toshiya Saito of Japan. For his place in the final Saito just scraped past another American, Sidarth Kumbla 15/14. The other bronze medal went to the Russian Alexander Sirotkin who lost out to Tourette in his semi-final.

Fencers from five countries made up the quarter-finals; two each from the USA, France and Russia, and one each from Japan and Slovakia; a satisfying mix despite no GB representation this year. Tourette stopped Henrik Eglynes Porsok of the Czech Republic 15/7 while Sirotkin needed to work harder to



Kumbla & Saito (semi-final)



Tourette & Sirotkin (semi-final)

see off Frenchman Pierre Loiel 15/13. Saito went through 15/11 against Rafael Savin the second Frenchman, and Kumbla just managed to pass the other Russian Vadislav Zhuravlev 15/14.

The home fencers were not performing well and had a disappointing day with a best place of 52nd from Kamal Minott. He lost out 15/7 to Kumbla in the last-64. Interestingly Minott, who is coached by Pierre Harper at Newham Swords, fared far better in the Leon Paul International Sunday with 15th.

Minott made the cut after the pools, ranked 64th. Twelve others home fencers joined Minot with just one, Connor Head, ranked above him after the first round at 52nd. In all 140 fencers went through to the direct elimination stage.

Head though fell away, ending the day 74th after dropping 15/10 to Henry Hoffman of Germany. Cadet Isaac Jolley fared better ending 64th with two DE wins, first 15/13 against Sweden's Martin Poppel, followed by 15/11 over Vladislav Mylnikov of Russia. On paper at least a good result; the Russian's first round ranking was 11th against Jolley's 118th. His day ended 15/10 when he met Henrik Eglynes Porsok, who went on to seventh slot in final rankings.

Francesco Ingargiola of Italy, who had to his credit the singular distinction of a hat trick of Eden Cup wins, was unavailable to defend his title as he was passed the junior category.



Tourette & Saito (final)

This year though, the best Italy managed was 12th after Tommaso Chappelli headed for the changing rooms following his last-16 capitulation 15/3 in a one-sided encounter with Sirotkin. Italians and Germans used to dominate the latter stages of the Eden Cup. But this year the German fencers fared no better than Chappelli; their top slot was one below Italy with Magnus Hamlescher ending the day 13th after dropping 15/11 to the Czech Porsok Eglynes.

As an encore, the American fencers held their form for the team event Saturday, beating France 45/37 for the title. Third place went to Russia 45/32 over Poland. Britain ended in 6th slot in line with their initial ranking, making up in part for the disappointing performance Saturday when they managed just 52nd out of the 198-strong field. 18 teams presented themselves Sunday.

The home team, of Minott, Dominic Velluti, Franzi, Daniel Kiss and Harry Bird, received a first round bye before beating Canada by the substantial margin of 45/16. But they could not get past Russia so after a close 44/39 defeat joined the tableau of five to eight.

In the early years of the Eden Cup (had there been a team Eden Cup) Britain would have suffered against the Germans, but this time they sailed through 45/32 before settling for 6th place overall 45/21 at the hands of Japan. France clung on for silver 45/43 against Poland. Germany and Italy contested seventh place with Italy clinching it by a 12-hit margin.

Whist not unique, three days of top level fencing for the price of one air fare is good value by any standard. And so 201 fencers



Geoffrey Tourette

registered for the Leon Paul International on the Sunday; 196 started. 90 of the entry were unranked; well, ranked 9999. But that's the point; a good event tagged onto an 'A' Grade gives anyone who fancies it the chance to gain top-level experience.

The title went to Alexander Choupenitch of the Czech Republic 15/11 over the Turk Martino Minoto. Saito, and compatriot Kenta Suzumura collected the two bronze medals. They lost out 15/12 to Minoto and 15/9 to Choupenitch respectively in the semi-finals. But the top-16 result by Britain's Kamal Minott must be seen as the most encouraging result.

Cramp seemed to be prevalent during the three days of fencing with at least six fencers taking their 10-minute medical breaks. This prompted some discussion, or rather speculation around, amongst other things, the rules of medical breaks, especially when the same fencer was afflicted twice – the same muscle, or a different one? However, as the writer recalls at a Winton Cup at which he was Captain, a DT was called to determine if a particular fencer was eligible. The opinion of Bill Hoskyns was sought (surely every fencer knows the name!). His opinion was to the effect that 'we are here to fence, not hold committee meetings to argue about fencing.'

But overall, a good three days of sport on the back of what is arguably the most important event in the BFA calendar. If Britain cannot produce successful juniors it has no chance of winning medals at World and Olympic level; in reality, the Olympics is the only game in town that counts.

7/1/16



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The O'Sullivan Cup – 28 years old and counting ...

By Beatrice Fannon

The O'Sullivan Cup returned celebrating its 28th birthday this year on 19th February 2017.

Michael Clemitson (Whitchurch Fencing Club), who has run the competition since its inception, said: 'We put a lot of time and effort into running this competition because we feel that it is important to give club fencers continued opportunities to compete. We must be doing something right as, though numbers can fluctuate year on year, it remains a popular competition, which we are still running after 28 years. We're looking forward to the 30th anniversary in two years' time.'

As usual, the competition was closely fought with only one point separating the top three places. Rupert Nute (Whitchurch) took an early lead in the competition with 14 points in the first round, while William Meredith-Davies (Swansea University), who had just returned from the University Epee Championships in Sheffield, was in hot pursuit of his former club mate, winning 10 points. Adrian Stoneman (Cardiff) was not far behind William with 9 points in the first round.

The second round saw Adrian come back with a vengeance, winning an additional 12 points, edging ahead of the competition to lead by a single point. William also had a strong round, as did Rhys Williams (Russell Swords) with both competitors scoring 9 points apiece. Jacob Tucker (Whitchurch), Gareth Law (Celtic Swords) and Ernest Wong (Celtic Swords) all had impressive second rounds scores, winning 7 points each.

In an exciting third round, both Rupert and William gained an additional 11 points, enabling them to overtake Adrian to claim gold and silver, respectively. Ernest Wong, Jacob Tucker and Rhys Williams all had strong finishes, gaining 7 points each in the final round.

Rupert Nute was awarded the O'Sullivan Cup for the second year running with 31 points, narrowly beating William Meredith-Davies (30 points), who has reached the medal positions for the last three years. Third place went to Adrian Stoneman (29 points), the 2015 O'Sullivan Cup champion.

Rupert was pleased to retain his crown, saying: 'There's a lot of friendly competition between us for the O'Sullivan Cup. Both Will and Adrian were keen to knock me off the top spot, but they'll have to wait till next year!'



The fencers in this photograph (from left to right) are: Ernest Wong (Celtic Swords), Jacob Tucker (Whitchurch) and Rupert Nute (Whitchurch).

Lyndon Martin, Senior Coach from Whitchurch, commented on the need for more support for local competitions: 'Over the last few years, we have seen the disappearance of a number of important competitions on the calendar that were easily accessible for Welsh fencers, such as the Turner Cup, the Bristol Open, and the Hereford and Worcester Open. It is even more important that local fencers patronize the competitions that are available locally, otherwise there will be even fewer available. I would expect all those who run local clubs and wish to see fencing flourish in Wales to encourage greater participation in competitions.'

The prize for highest placed Veteran was awarded to Gareth Law (Celtic Swords), a former O'Sullivan champion who last won the cup in 2009. Miles Waddington (Celtic Swords) received an prize as the youngest entrant, and a prize was also awarded to newcomer Rachel Hurdley (Whitchurch), who has only recently returned to fencing after some years away from the sport and has launched herself straight back into the competitive circuit. Steve Poyser praised Rachel and the younger fencers who had come down from Celtic: 'It is always heartening to see newer fencers getting stuck in to competitions, as well as seeing the return familiar faces. The O'Sullivan is always an enjoyable event and, as it is effectively a pool unique, it is a great opportunity to fence a lot of difference people. I expect to see them all turn out next year!'

Whitchurch Fencing Club would like to thank Simon Corcoran for his armoury services, Steve Poyser and Lyndon Martin for their

assistance with the organisation and running of the competition on the day, and Peter Russell for the use of his venue, the Cardiff Academy of Fencing.



Left to right: 3rd place: Adrian Stoneman (Cardiff); 1st place: Rupert Nute (Whitchurch); 2nd place: William Meredith-Davies (Swansea University).



Simon Corcoran at work in the armoury.

Cambridge Winter Tournament 2017

By Dan Tozer with photos by Ian Whittingham

For the second year the Cambridge Winter Tournament took place at the University of Cambridge sports centre on the first weekend in January. The Saturday saw a large field of 76 fencers enter the Men's foil event. Two rounds of poules saw Tom Exeter (Leeds Uni) emerge as top seed, he proceeded serenely to the last 16, where the 16th seed Bomba Brown (Cyrano) defeated him relatively comfortably 15-6. Bomba then defeated the 9th seed Lorenzo Marzano (Cambridge Uni) 15-13 in a much tighter quarter final. However, he was undone by the same score in the semi-final by 12th seed Christopher Mollard (Saxon), who had won his previous two matches to 13 and 14 respectively. The bottom half of the draw saw a similar wasting of the top seeds with 3rd seed Conor Sharman (Loughborough) and 2nd seed Mike McKay (Sheffield Buccaneers) falling in the last 16 to Ben Andrews and Daniel Summerbell (Cambridge Uni) respectively. However, it was 7th seed Thibault Charra (Academy) and 11th seed Michael Chew (Salle Paul) who contested the second semi-final with Thibault winning comfortably 15-4. The final saw Thibault take an early lead and Christopher fight back, but he couldn't quite close the gap and Thibault went on to win 15-11.

Twenty-three women entered the foil competition with young Cambridge sword

fencer Holly Thompson proving the surprise of the poules finishing ranked in 3rd. The DE proved more difficult however and she lost in the last 16 to Kirsten Beggs (Cambridge) 15-8. Kirsten then went out to Amalia Couzof (Academy), who lost a tense semi-final to second seed Tamara Carnac (Touche) 15-13. In the top half of the draw top seed Oxana Mikhaleva (Salle Boston) progressed through the rounds before coming up against 5th seed Amber Moss (Lincoln Uni) in the semi-final. Amber, who had beaten local fencer Fiona Turnbull (Cambridge) in the quarter final, won 15-9 and then went on to take the final 15-12.



(L-R) Women's foil medallists: Oxana Mikhaleva, Amalia Couzof, Amber Moss and Tamara Carnac

A small, but experienced, field of 10 entered the Women's sabre. Former European Veterans

champion Sylvia Brown (Bedford) gave top seed Layla Wyatt (Royal Navy) a scare on the quarter final, Layla emerging victorious 15-13. Sylvia's Bedford club mate Caroline Clancy took revenge in the semi-final winning 15-6 to set up a final against former world veterans silver medallist Vivien Frith (Salle Ursa), who had beaten Annelise Whitaker (Bedford) in the semi-final 15-9. The final went the way of Caroline 15-10, as she took the title back to Bedford.



Women's sabre medallists (L-R): Annelise Whitaker, Layla Wyatt, Caroline Clancy and Vivien Frith.

The Men's sabre field contained 26 fencers, top seed Calum Wilson (Shakespeare) won his first two bouts to set up a semi-final against local Cambridge fencer, and fourth seed Emeric Decam. A high quality bout ebbed and flowed with Emeric staging a late recovery, however it was not quite enough and Calum progressed to final 15-13. The bottom half of the draw went less to form with the 2nd (Charles Gellert (Queen Mary)) and 3rd (Bryn Guy (Leicester)) seeds falling in the quarter finals. The semi-final saw 10th seed Tamas Varju (Camden) face 14th seed Daniel Wyde (Shakespeare), Daniel was unable to set up an all Shakespeare final losing 15-13. Calum proved too strong for Tamas in the final running out a 15-9 winner.

The Sunday saw both the Men's and Women's epee competitions, 28 women entered and the top half of the draw saw few surprises leading to the top (Jessica Grundy (Truro)) and 4th (Jessica Rumble (York Uni)) seeds making it through to the semi-final. This proved to be a cracker with Jessica scoring the deciding hit to make the final 15-14. The bottom half proved to be similarly predictable, although 3rd seed Jessica Varley (OPS) was beaten in the quarter final by 6th seed Ellie Wigham (Bristol Uni) 15-8. Second seed Sophie Saudo (Leon Paul) had no such problems and went through to final by beating Ellie 15-9 and then capped off a fine competition by winning the



Men's foil medallists (L-R): Micheal Chew, Bomba Brown, Thibault Charra and Christopher Mollard

final 15-7. The Men's competition contained 51 fencers a produced a local star as Hunts fencer George Partridge gave lie to his ranking of 21 to reach the semi-final, he then came up against top seed Idiris Ali (QMBL), who had been in good form all day and booked his place in the final 15-9. In the bottom half of the draw 34th seed Paul Townson (Chelmsford) pulled off the shock of the day beating 2nd seed Theo Edwards (OPS) 15-7. He couldn't maintain this form and went out to Cambridge fencer Jon Prime 15-11 in the next round. John then fenced 3rd seed Wayne Bryan (Cads) in the semi-final and was not helped by weapon failures and resulting yellow cards, with Wayne going through 15-12. The final then took place and proved a close affair with Idiris prevailing 15-13.

As organiser I would like to thank the fencers for turning up, the referees for helping the competition run smoothly and providing good quality refereeing and the other volunteers who make the tournament work. Two things struck me during the tournament, the first was the amount of kit abandoned at the end of each day, I can understand a body wire slipping away, but some of the larger and more expensive pieces of kit left and unclaimed are really surprising. Secondly and probably more controversially is whether rules about broken and second weapons should be strictly enforced. One particular example occurred where a fencer broke several weapons during



Men's sabre medallists (L-R): Emeric Decam, Daniel Wyde, TCalum Wilson and Tamas Varju

the day and had only one for his bout, this then broke. Strictly this could (should) have resulted in the forfeiture of the match, however it was decided to wait for his weapon to be fixed. There was some discussion about whether it is fair to consult the other fencer, who may be under pressure to agree

to a delay, or whether at competitions of this level a strict interpretation of the rules may result in many defaults. While decisions like this can only be made on a case by case basis organisers may wish to discuss these scenarios with their referees before the competition to ensure smooth running.

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Coach Development in a Club Environment

By David Kirby

Shakespeare's Swords was last year's "Club of the Year" and won it in part because of the coach development and support programme running throughout the organisation. Even after as successful a year as 2016, the club's methodologies continued to evolve.

But what do Shakespeare's do to develop coaches, indeed why? Shakespeare's Swords club has grown massively over the years and the club now has over 100 fencers, the bulk of them male due to the affiliated boys' school, but there are also many girls and women. It now runs eight sessions over three days each week, from beginner to performance competitor. Their coaching ethos stems from the fact that they were dealing mainly with school-age children who went on to universities at 18.

Since the inception of the club, the aim has been to develop young enthusiasts for the sport who could go on to university and know they have a skill that would enable them to be respected in their fencing clubs there. In fact many of them pass out as qualified coaches and hopefully will continue or return to coaching fencing later in life. This churning each year, where the club effectively lose an entire intake every summer, means that to create a legacy the coaches have to quickly instil a passion for the sport, and that the views of the fencers, the participants, need to be taken into account.

Shakespeare's now has six staff coaches and five apprentices to support the fencers. Therefore they need to find lots of flexible, high quality and knowledgeable coaches, who are skilful, enthusiastic and effective. So where to get them? Home-grown!

The key points Shakespeare's Swords' coaches work towards are:

- Always looking for new coaching methods, challenging traditional ways of engaging, inspiring and developing the fencers and coaches by looking outside the sport;
- Never being afraid to make mistakes and try again;
- Always looking to get better and take up the soft skills and pedagogy of coaching;
- Using reflective practice in a community of coaches, and always feeling able to ask questions, always looking for continual improvement in coaching efficacy and learning outcomes;
- Communicating supportively and widely both in and outside the sport, utilising

formal and non-formal feedback, based on research and evidence, and embracing the recent changes in coach development;

So the first point is that they are trying to coach the fencers and the coaching philosophies come as a by-product of that. Why? The coaches are driven by strongly acquisitive coaching mind-sets, which is always asking the question, Randall-style, "What can we do better?" (see Norman Randall's article in the *Sword*, 2017). It is a desire to keep learning and improving. These coaching philosophies are very evidence driven, and the evidence is gathered from lots of sources like fencing tradition, coaching trends in other countries, coaching methods used in other sports, and research and evidence reported in books, magazines and academia.

Even though Shakespeare's is very fencer centred, there has to be a structure. Their set of methods arose from asking the questions, "What is coaching?" and "What do coaches need to know?" (A good discussion start point is in Lyle, 2002 on p.38) The path comes from inquisitiveness followed by research and is mirrored by the BF approach in its reimagining of the coach development syllabus. A lot of the change was driven by fencers' and coaches' boredom with the traditional sessions model, and they evolved by exploration, discussion and using a games basis. To keep it concise, simple and to create context, they needed a new language to define the new concepts: teaching the stroke became *fencer understanding*, distance became *space*, stroke *skill*, and tactics *game sense* (see the book by Griffin and Butler, 2005).

The fencers' interest in coaching seems to start at an early age, so the club has a semi-formal apprenticeship plan to accommodate the 14 or 15 year olds. This is similar to the new BF concept of formal apprenticeship for teenagers. BF Apprentices start with their ITCF course at 16, do a planned and mentored apprentice year, and using concepts from *An Introduction to Sports Coaching*, (see the book by Jones and Kingston, 2013). They end with formal Level 2 assessment. This is designed to produce experienced Level 2 coaches directly onto the BF coaching register at 18 years old as they leave school and enter universities and the work-place.

Recently there has been a lot of research into coaching, particularly how it can become more

professional as a career and more effective as an activity. Liz Behnke describes the concepts in her article on good coaching practice in the *Sword* (Oct 2016), when she says, "Our job is to find a way to meet [the fencer's] needs, and not think that our preferred way is always the right way" (Behnke, 2016, p.19 col1). As Kathy Armour says in *Sports Coaching: Professionalism and Practice*, "Coaches should be encouraged to become autonomous learners within supportive coach learning communities" (Lyle and Cushion, 2010, p.162 col1).

One might look at John Lyle's book, *Sports Coaching Concepts* (2002) to see how to improve coaching efficacy, but first we have to define "effective coaching". "The most effective coaches are those who continually seek to improve what they do and, more importantly, how they coach." (Randall, 2017, p.21 col1). There's a definition of coaching in Sport England's new report, *Coaching in an Active Nation* (2016, p.7), "Improving a person's experience of sport and physical activity by providing specialised support and guidance aligned to their individual needs and aspirations." This illustrates the way coaching is changing in UK. The most obvious of the criteria perhaps is that an effective coach can produce effective and enthusiastic participants. However, some coaches want to work more to. Assessing their coaching effectiveness can be based on the *Coaching in an Active Nation* model. Some would be participation coaches, who teach the beginners and social fencers in their clubs. Perhaps a measure here is how well they can recruit and retain, or how happy are their fencers? These things are important for effective coaching, and Shakespeare's seem to implement them well as evidenced by various ranking lists, selections, recruitment and retention.

The standard of the coaching is the key to what makes the Shakespeare's fencers so loyal, keen and successful. The coaches are some of the best technically (top level coaching awards, masters degrees, all weapon coaches), and the most innovative as well. The Shakespeare's coaching team has a feeling of a community of practice; there is a buzz about it, which is experimental and edgy (have a look at 'Coaching Children in Sport' by Stafford, 2011). It's a real community of coaches sharing knowledge and experience. The coaches are not afraid to ask questions of each other, to draw on each other's experiences. As Norman Randall suggests,

there is a lot of reflective practice going on, involving self-reflection and feedback.

The innovative group teaching means that the traditional individual fencing lesson is made almost redundant as the coaches set up simulated group exercises, which more accurately reflect fights. When coaches do deliver individual lessons they are far from routine, which puts even greater technical demands on the coaches.

It will not come as a surprise that there is a welcoming atmosphere for anyone visiting – and coaches are especially welcome to join in or just observe. The club runs a coaching workshop every Wednesday in term time, giving up to six hours of personalised coach development tuition to anyone who asks.

The fencing sessions often follow a 'games for understanding' approach with ideas eagerly brought in from other sports coaches (Griffin and Butler, 2005). The result is fencing coaches who understand and use both attainment goal and self-determination theories. It's hard work, but it produces consistently high-standard sessions, which the fencers relish. It makes for a great fencer-centred learning environment. That's the key – the fencers learn; they are not instructed. It takes pedagogic skill to do this and that's what the Shakespeare's coaches get in their development training. They dare to take pedagogic risk by experimenting with methods of teaching, and as a result all the coaching community learns from the experience. There is no such thing as a "bad" session, only one where people – fencers and coaches alike – learn and gain experience. You will often hear the fencers themselves contributing their ideas to the content of a session. Everyone is thinking and all are engaged.

Pedagogy: the science of teaching. It is a science, and it is generic. The behaviours of coaches that produce elite fencers should be the same as those of the coaches of Dame Jessica or Sir Mo, the cyclists or the rugby players – and the coaches of the fencing novices, the Go/Fencers, the social players. The coaches who can keep the children on track and loving life need the same behavioural skills no matter what level they are coaching at (See chapter 4.9 in the Handbook of Physical Education, Trudel and Gilbert, 2013).

Recently one of the Shakespeare's coaches met with some rugby coaches and went to watch one of their sessions. The rugby club was training on the use of space and our coach thought that was applicable to fencing, too. So they returned and delivered a session based on creating, using and defining *space* on the piste – they used to call that *distance*. The fencing session that coach delivered was highly effective, and the fencers left with an enthusiasm for discovering and using space in the bout.

Here we have a description of a coach development system, which uses other sports to learn from, gains edgy and inspiring delivery methods, and a thoroughly well rehearsed

community of practice. The one major and challenging aspect is that it is all based on research and evidence, and not someone's personal opinion, however venerable. Notwithstanding that, technical expertise is at the heart of the coaching and there is much reference all round to the old (and not-so-old) masters. There are many choices here for a reference, but you can look at historical works like Crosnier (1951), or the BAF's *Compendium* to begin with (Bruce et al., 2015). You could also look at useful modern books like Szepesi (2009), Russell's (2015) or Handelman & Louie's (2015) book series, which are more coach-orientated. They contain exercises and drills (ranked for beginners, intermediate and advanced).

In his article in the *Times* recently, Paul Johnson, quoting the fox and the hedgehog story, made the plea, "So we should continue, fox-like, to seek to understand the world better and to draw in new theories and evidence" (Johnson, 2017p.37 last paragraph). Many say you can't learn fencing from books alone. But you can learn about coaching. Coaches can learn a lot from reading around and having an open and inquiring mind. And an adventurous spirit. That helps, too.

If you want any more information on what Shakespeare's is up to, call David on 07970 642967 (email to dmjksabre@gmail.com) and bring your experience and thoughts to the mill. Everyone is welcome to Shakespeare's coach development sessions. The programme culminates in the annual summer coaching course, which is run at the fencing centre in Stratford-upon-Avon at Shakespeare's old school. And for those who are interested: the next one is due to run from 7-12 Aug 2017, and will provide for the *Introduction to Coaching Fencing course* (ITCF), *Coaching Fencing and Level 3 (Weapon Specialist)* and for all weapons (that'd be Levels 1, 2 and 3 in old money!). They are also including a special 3-day transition course for Level 2 to add a second or third weapon. Applications can be made through BF web site!

Further information on Shakespeare's Swords can be found using the following link: <http://www.shakespearesswords.org.uk/>

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Since coming together as a development team, we have had the pleasure of working with some fantastic people and we would like to thank all those involved. In this edition of *The Sword*, we would like to make a special thank you to:

Linda Strachen,
Lynne Melia
Rob Bruniges

This relates to going the extra mile in delivering great fencing experiences to various youth groups, as well as developing the staff involved in these programmes.

We would like to recognise and congratulate

Viv Mills
Alan Sheriff

These are two of the many that completed the Level 2 coaching course in August 2016, they learnt lots, taught lots and in the process challenged the perceptions of "they can't do" to "they can do".

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Referee Exams

Nickie Bailey –Referee Manager & Customer Service Assistant

Great Britain has three new internationally qualified foil referees. In December, Alex Beardmore, Daniel Hazelwood and Chris Lennon passed their FIE (Federation International d'Escrime) exams held during the Eden Cup at the first attempt. The success was the result of great deal of hard work on their part, learning their art at competitions up and down the UK as well as internationally. Their efforts were helped considerably by the Referee Pathway Programme set up by British Fencing, to create both a new generation of FIE-qualified referees for the next Olympic cycle and to improve the quality of our referees on the international and domestic circuits.

British Fencing recently developed the Referee Pathway Programme¹ to support the development of international level referees through regular seminars and provide training opportunities, as well as updating British Fencing's level three and four exam syllabus. One of the most important elements of the Programme is a new initiative of holding seminars and mock FIE, weapon-specific exams to ensure that our referees are fully prepared for the next round of FIE exams. The first seminar was successfully trialled in November 2016, at the Leon Paul Fencing Centre, during the British Men's Foil Team Championship. British Fencing invited Vilem Madr of the Czech Republic, who is an FIE qualified foil and epee referee, to lead the seminar and mock exam, which was designed to mimic the current FIE refereeing exam conditions.

Vilem Madr, who put together a full seminar and exam programme, said: "The mock exam was a great opportunity to simulate real exam conditions on the current international basis. This theory and video refereeing test was helpful for the candidates. They were able to see how tricky and stressful each part of the international FIE exam can be...It was also a new challenge for me as well. One of the benefits is the opportunity to modify some topics. Thanks to that I could deliver a customised job."

Those attending the mock exam included many of the current pathway foil referees. Also attending were British-qualified FIE foil referees and the England Fencing lead referee educator, who were invited as observers. This invitation formed part of the British Fencing-led review of the level three and four referee examination system. Vilem spent the first part of the seminar giving a brief description of what is expected of an FIE qualified referee, before proceeding to examine the individual referees using videos of recent competitions and assessing their theoretical knowledge of the rules and penalties.

The following day saw the delegates arrive in time for a referee briefing prior to the practical observation. Vilem and the competition organiser, Jon Willis of Leon Paul, initially allocated the delegates in pairs for the preliminary poules. The Referees were observed carefully throughout the competition, and were then given very concise feedback on their performance, both in the theory and practical elements of the exam. Each referee was given detailed direction on how to improve certain aspects of their performance, as well as being given the opportunity to ask questions of their own. Detailed feedback notes were taken during these interviews, which were then transcribed and sent to the individual referees. These notes were then held by British Fencing and were used as part of the process to prioritise the candidates for the next FIE exam submissions.

All the delegates that attended found the mock exam useful. Following the feedback, three attendees were entered into the FIE foil exam held during the Eden Cup Junior World Cup in London in December. All successfully gained their FIE qualification.

"This was the most interactive referee seminar yet. The most useful thing about this seminar was that it was billed as a mock FIE exam; whilst we did not know what to expect, since British Fencing have never run one of these before, it meant we received a lot of individual feedback. This was mainly down to Vilem, who clearly put a lot of work in to tailoring one to one feedback. This made the mock FIE exams far more useful than the straight lectures we received in previous year's seminar. Just as important was the opportunity for Vilem



New British Fencing FIE foil referees Alex Beardmore, Chris Lennon and Daniel Hazelwood with Vilem Madr (second from left)

to observe us referee. Whilst Vilem had been very good at watching everyone and giving individual feedback at this season's European Fencing Confederation events, here he was able to spend more time with each of us. This again resulted in more and better individual feedback".

Luke Deamer

"I'm very pleased with having passed my exam and am grateful for all the support from British Fencing. The Mock FIE exam and Seminar organised by British Fencing and run by Vilem Madr provided invaluable experience and was extremely helpful in preparing me for the day."

Chris Lennon

"I'm so happy to have passed the FIE exam, and I'm really looking forward to increasing my refereeing experience throughout Europe. A huge thanks to British Fencing for their support!"

Alex Beardmore

Following on from the success of the foil mock, British Fencing held a mock FIE epee exam over the weekend of the 13th and 14th January 2017, again at the Leon Paul Centre. This was led by Daniel Vazquez of Spain, six referees and three observers (Peter Huggins, lead referee educator for England Fencing, Pat Casey and Nick Payne from the Referee Selection Panel) attended.

The next FIE exams will be held during the Cadet and Junior Europeans in Plovdiv (March 2017) and British Fencing wish all our referees entered a successful outcome.

1 The Referee Pathway Programme is open to all Level3 + referees that wish to develop into international level referees. Further information can be found [here](#)

British Fencing Coaching Development Framework

“Highly Innovative” and “A Bold Undertaking”

Over the last two years British Fencing have engaged in a significant piece of work, funded by Sport England, to establish a future proofed coaching development framework for fencing based on the most up to date research and best practice available.

The UK Coaching Framework Context

The UK Coaching Framework has provided the coaching industry with a common vision and a practical reference point to drive the development of excellent coaching practice over the period 2013-17.

In 2015 the UK Coaching Committee, a stakeholder group comprising of Sports Coach UK, UK Sport, Sport England, sportscotland, Sport NI and Sport Wales, initiated work to evolve the UK Coaching Framework through a better understanding of:

- What might the UK coaching system look like in 2026?
- What trends and societal changes will influence coaching?
- What direction does coaching need to take to keep up with those trends?

The *Future of Coaching* report, concluded with four aspirations for coaching by 2025:

1. Coaching recognised for the benefits it brings to society.
2. A flexible and agile workforce reflective of society.
3. Coaching developed to meet the full range of customer motivations.
4. Coaching embracing technology.

These aspirations were the foundation of Sport England's Coaching Plan for England. British Fencing Development Staff formed part of the working groups for the development of this plan, which was launched on the 29th November 2016

The 2015-16 BF Coaching Review & Consultations

In July 2015, the British Fencing Coaching Development Manager initiated a review of the current coach provision and structure of fencing coaching.

One conclusion of this review was that the development of a coaching system within British Fencing for various reasons has been unable to fulfill its potential, and could not be recognised as an industry standard scheme. It

was agreed that a key outcome for coaching development in fencing was to create an industry standard coaching programme, based on the needs of those taking part in fencing and the type coaching required to provide the best fencing experience

“Coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them”. Sir John Whitmore

By its very nature coaching is a sophisticated process of human interactions, and there are various types of coach, each with various knowledge and skills, these skills required to meet the needs of the specific type of fencers.

The review highlighted that the interactions where fencing coaching takes place are different and evolving environments, they are influenced by ideological, institutional, cultural and national constructs.

To gain greater understanding of these constructs within fencing, further consultation took place with organisations such as, Sport England, Sportcoach UK, UK Sport, English Institute for Sport, and National Governing Bodies of Sport including England Hockey, RFU, LTA. This consultation led to the recognition that the coaching framework needs to relate to recent changes in sports participation and sport performance.

Further discussions took place with the fencing community and senior academics in the fields of sports coaching, sports and exercise science to understand how this can be achieved in fencing.

This research led to underpinning coaching concepts such as Athlete Centred Coaching, Coaching Philosophy and Reflective Practice.

The 2017 BF Coaching Development Framework

The outcome of the reviews, research and consultation shaped the four underlying principles to the BF Coaching Development Framework:

1. **Culture of Learning** – This relates to the fencing community as a whole, to continually increase its knowledge of, competence and performance in our sport. The purpose is to make a step change in raising the standards of fencing coaching as a ‘conscious act’, (e.g. ‘are you the coach you want to be’ or ‘the coach your fencer needs’). It aims to help coaches identify what they don’t know and therefore receive training to develop themselves in areas of need.

2. **Continuous Improvement** – This is based on the principle that the best coaches are reflective practitioners and look for the next opportunity to learn and refine their coaching behavior.
3. **Flexible Modules** – The Framework importantly offers, a) recognition to people with prior coaching experience, and b) that knowledge on ‘how to coach’ is available in various formats and is delivered in a variety of ways, (e.g. informal, semi formal and formal).
4. **Coaches are Valued** – The Framework sets out to ensure that BF and the fencing community consistently recognises everyone on the Coaching pathway, regardless of where and who they coach.

The BF Coaching Development Framework also contains an articulation of the Coach’s Journey (summarised in the figure on page 21) which in conjunction with the other framework material will help coaches navigate the framework in accordance with their motivations and skills.

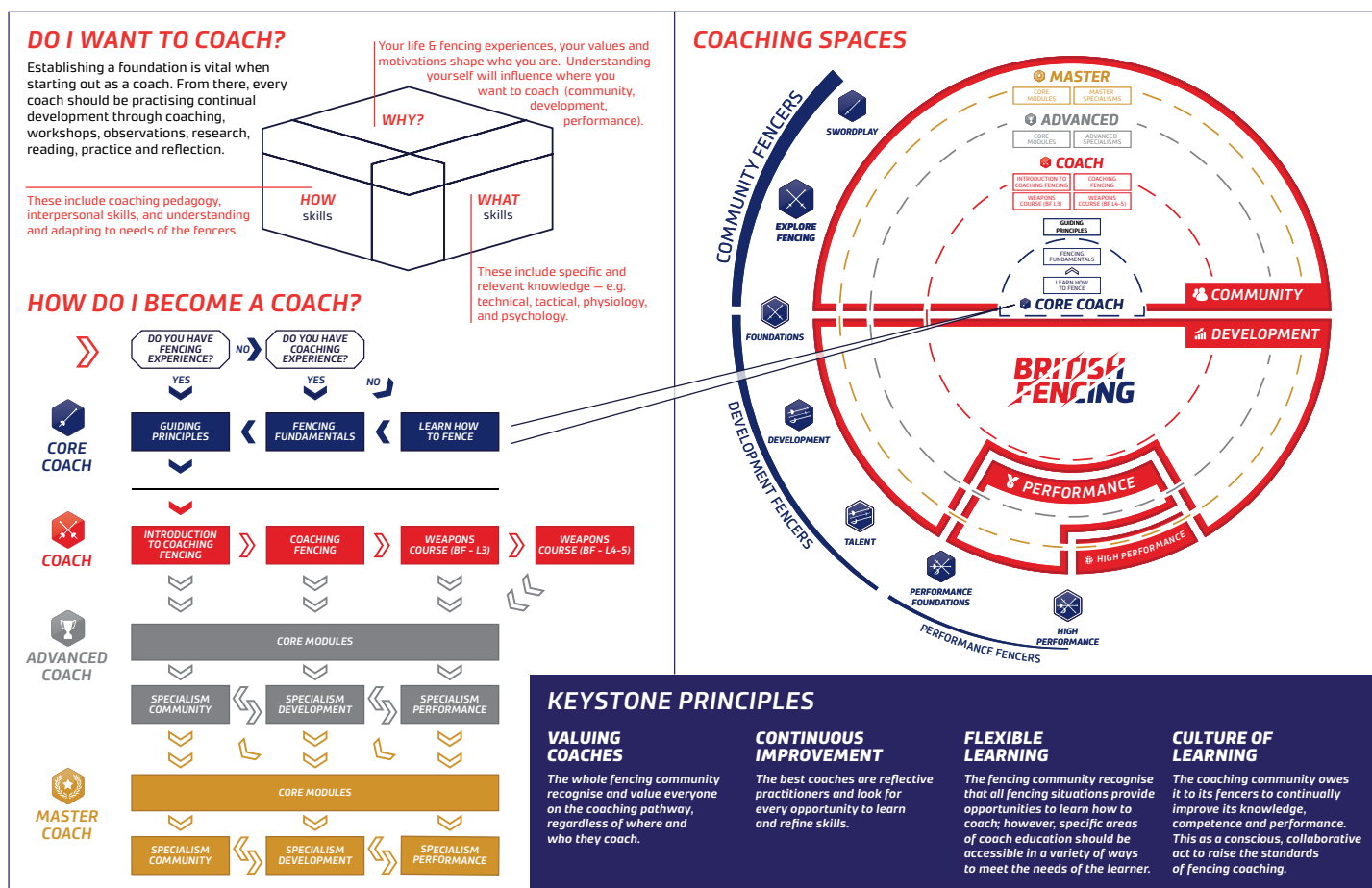
Next Steps

Work is continuing on the articulation, communication and implementation of the framework. BF’s L1 & L2 courses have been re-worked, now including modernised pedagogy content, aligning to industry standards. These courses are now more appropriately called; **L1 – Introduction to Coaching Fencing**, and **L2 – Coaching Fencing**. More developments will be published in future issue of *The Sword*.

Commenting on the framework, Stuart Armstrong, Head of Coaching, Sport England stated:

“This framework is highly innovative and challenges the traditional coach development models which are too focused on the development of coaches to support a talent development journey. It is a bold undertaking that has embraced many of the principles of the Coaching Plan for England as looks at interrelated nature of coaching from the perspective of participants from a range of backgrounds and contexts, which will help the coach to focus on the area they need to develop to meet the wants and needs of the fencers. I commend British Fencing for taking such a strong step in this direction and I look forward to seeing how this framework develops in the future”.

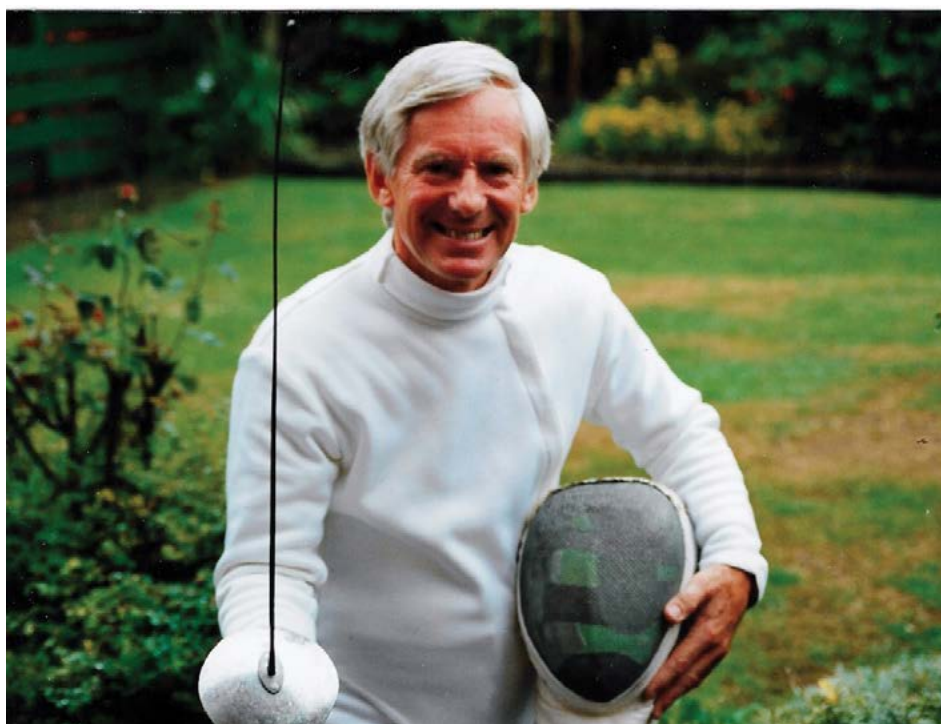
BF would like to thank everyone who has participated in the development of this framework to date and in particular Sport England for their ongoing support in this area.



The Structure of Coaching in the UK

By Les Jones

WORLD CLASS PLAN = WORLD CLASS COACHES = WORLD CLASS MEDAL WINNERS



The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the views of British Fencing.

I do not think that I am alone in expressing the view that we should be more concerned about the lack of adequately trained British coaches capable of coaching at world class level, since there are so few. Currently, there is a complete absence of any proper programme to give our Olympic and future Olympians the coaches they need at world class level; since it takes many months of training in Europe for British coaches to gain the necessary experience. This can only be considered as a long term aim and is unlikely to make any contribution to the 2017-21 plan leading to the Olympic Games in Tokyo.

I have been fencing and coaching for close on seventy years and during this time have never considered that British Fencing had any strategy capable of training coaches to achieve world class results. Following my retirement in 1994, having more time for fencing matters, I outlined my thoughts and

proposals to the Chairman of the International Committee (February 1994), with suggestions for achieving that aim. Subsequently, I was asked to forward a copy to the Chairman of the International Working Party and the President of the AFA. Sadly, as is the fate of many coaching matters in this country, it was pushed into the background and forgotten.

I was present at the Barcelona Olympics as support coach to two of my fencers; and witnessed two countries, China and Cuba, with little known previous international experience, winning silver medals. This made it very clear to me that we were slipping further behind medal winning countries. The basic problem was that we did not, generally speaking, have any world class coaches. The notable exception to this being Ziemek Wojciechowski at foil. Ziemek's fencer, Linda Martin (later McMahon), had achieved a senior world d final in 1982 and to prove a point his fencer Fiona McIntosh reached the Women's final at Barcelona. Several of his fencers were also senior world cup finalists.

In April 2000 I decided to write again to the International Committee, who's terms of reference included...*to develop and implement international policy in the areas of coaching and training*. Yet coaching was never discussed at any of the meetings I attended and I am not aware of any policy produced by the International Committee actually for coaching. My letter covered the various plans which had not achieved any of the medals we had hoped for:

1. Report on International strategy 1990 (14 pages)
2. The AFA forward Plan 1993-97 (7 pages)
3. The International Working Party Report July 1994 (16 pages)
4. British Fencing Forward Plan 1997-2001 (18 pages)
5. World Class Plan 2000-2012(45 pages, only 10 dealt with proposals)

I expressed doubt that the last plan would be any more successful than the previous plans, as it made no provision for establishing the coaches at the level we needed. Page

4 paragraph 4 pointed to how success was achieved in other countries, and then promptly ignored it: 'With the loss of state funding, many Eastern European countries can no longer support large numbers of fencing coaches. Many of these have taken up a coaching position in countries who are relatively new to international fencing but who are now achieving medals in world championships'. It begged the question 'why not in ours?' but no such proposal was ever made. The SWOT analysis in the plan did not identify coaches, or coaching, as a problem under the heading 'Weakness'. Coaching was dealt with under 'Administration'. Coaching needed its own heading and a clear strategy, similar to the training and talent identification used for fencers. The World Class Plan 2000-2012 refers to coaches with proven international experience. This is not comprehensive enough. Coaches in charge of our potential Olympic fencers must ideally have shown they have the capability to train fencers to the level of world class finals. If we go back to the Report on International Strategy 1990, pages 7 and 8 point to some of the way. 'The training and development of coaches should be given equal status to that of the training and development of fencers... The selection and education of coaches must be a prime requirement in any forward plan.' These proposals came not from coaches but from a few enlightened international fencers.

In my letter to the International Committee I indicated short and long term proposals.

Short Term

1. We need three world class coaches one at each weapon in a London training centre.
2. We need one world class coach in each of the planned Regional Centres defined on page 28 and supported by British coaches who have the right motivation to learn and work towards achieving elite coaching standard. (Although item 2 was part of the short term plan I wrote at the time I would not recommend it now, in hind sight localised elite coach training is not the answer.)

Long Term

We need a strategy for the training and development of British coaches to bring those with the right motivation and potential to achieve world class standard. This group should be headed by a coach who as previously trained world Olympic medal winners. Much of this training would need a long spell in Europe with elite training groups learning the methods and techniques used to bring the fencers up to medal winning capability.

Was the latest World Class Plan 2012-2016 any more enlightened than previous plans? I think not. It did not help that Graham Watts with his extensive knowledge of international fencing was replaced. Once again there was hardly any mention of how coaches with the

proven ability to coach at world class level would be made available. Not only that but in the second year of the plan in 2013, Ziemek Wojciechowski the coach with the best track record in foil at world class level did not have his national foil coach contract renewed. This was the day after his fencer James-Andrew Davies won the grand prix in St Petersburg. Whoever took that decision should reflect on the damage it could have caused to our medal chances, if Ziemek had not continued to coach Richard Kruse and James Davies.

Ziemek came to the UK nearly 40 years ago on the recommendation of Nick Halsted and support from Leon Paul. Why didn't British Fencing in the years that followed show the same initiative and fund leading European coaches who were looking for work, to coach in the UK? We have missed many opportunities in the past to train British coaches to world class level. Many coach training systems have been arranged in the past from the club Leaders course and exam initiated by Charles de Beaumont in the early 1950's, led by Professor Roger Crosnier. This established large numbers of club level coaches and was followed by an advanced coaching award and there it ended. There was no attempt made to take the training further and create our own elite coaches by giving those with potential the opportunity and funding to carry on their training.

Over the years many coaching schemes have been tried. The last scheme introduced by British Fencing was a major undertaking. Norman Randall was commissioned to produce a comprehensive coach education scheme acceptable to Sport England and which Sport England would support with funding. I consider all the work undertaken by Norman Randell with the widespread input from the BAF, many senior fencers and club coaches, to have produced an excellent coach education scheme. The success of which is clearly indicated by the number of coaches qualified from levels 1 to 4/5 at three weapons. However once again this is where it ended. There was no follow up programme to take those with the ability, potential and motivation, who wished to train at world class level, to be given the opportunity and funding to continue their training. Any plan for the future must address the need to establish world class coaches in this country and cater

for the training of British, well motivated coaches, with the ability and potential to train to become world class. They should be funded to train in Europe.

Item 3 of the last world class plan covers Coaching Development Framework. It states 'Continue to drive our coaching programme to embed a new culture of learning and continuous improvement in our coaching community based on the principle that the best coaches are reflective practitioners and consciously become the coach a fencer needs...there will also be flexible learning modules and a focus on valuing coaches, recognising that everyone on the coaching pathway regardless of where and when they coach. Critically for 2017 and beyond we will be focusing on establishing a financially sustainable coaching' development programme to become less and less reliant on public funding as we move forward in our new funding cycle 2017-21'

As we already have a comprehensive coach education scheme why do we need another? What is missing is a follow up to the existing scheme to train our best coaches to world class level. The work of our coaches has never received the acknowledgement they deserve from British Fencing.

There is no other sport where the coach works with the trainee at close distance transmitting his/her knowledge, technical and tactical ability and working at times as hard as the fencer. Fencing coaches do not stand on the side line with a whistle or a stop watch as they do in some sports.

I agree that we should strive to be less reliant on UK and England Sport funding, we should set up a funding subcommittee chaired by a Board member comprising of British Fencing members who have access to contacts with individuals and companies who may be prepared to support our Olympic aims. The decision by UK Sport to cease funding seven minority sports is hard to understand. If they are not prepared to fund our programme to achieve Olympic medals will they be prepared to fund an elite coaching programme? Will 2017 be the year that British Fencing initiates a strategy to select and train British Coaches who have the ability and drive to achieve the medal winning capabilities of European coaches?

Response from British Fencing: "Awareness of the feelings, motivations and levels of understanding within key communities is important to address in any development initiative. Coaching and Coaching Development have changed significantly across the sport and education sectors over the last fifteen years. In the next few issues of the Sword, we will highlight some of the adaptations in coaching designed to meet the challenges of this continually evolving landscape."

Steve Kemp, Coaching Development Manager

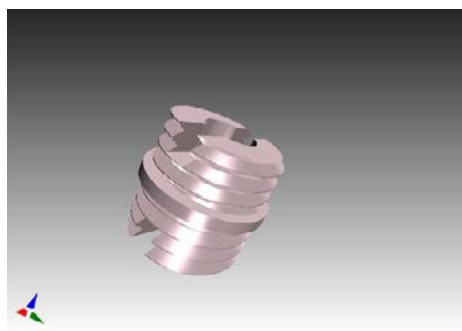
A New Design for Epee Point Screws

By Ricardo Arveras Garcia



info@fencingfan.com

These new screws are "small but tough" and were specially designed to stay on the tips of epees. I started developing them at Barcelona's SAM Fencing Club when I realized there was something to improve out from the standard grub screws. My engineer curiosity did the rest.



This **NEPS** (New epee point screws) unique design maintains basic current grub screw functionality, enhances its usability on screwing operations, as well as drives them to a stronger attachment to the steel tip, preventing screw and tip loses. For the past four years, NEPS screws have been being distributed throughout most of the world. Leon Paul has been one of the first carriers to sell NEPS.

I am glad because it seems the growing demand of NEPS openly support its original design (hollow, double-sided and protective collar) as capable of making the epeeist's life much easier.

I remember one day when, after a practical demonstration of the ease with which the NEPS worked, an Olympic Gold medal champion told me that "being 100% confident with your tip's full functionality, is like having 20% extra to give at the competition, and that makes a difference".

This design provides:

- A better grip of the screw to the tip which allows a longer operating life until the screw loses and jumps off the tip. This also implies less annoying bout interruptions and less fencer claims due to tip loses.
- Its collar design prevents from over screwing and electrical short-circuit to ground, caused by the tip's isolation layer being pierced..



- Standard 2mm flat head screwdriver can be used, although a purpose -designed NEPS screwdriver takes advantage of NEPS operation.

During the development phase, NEPS were also tested at an FIE lab for tension, torsion and fracture KIC magnitudes, taking other grub screws (a high quality grub screw) as a reference. The outcome of this test showed that NEPS improved in 40 - 47% against the reference screw.

Standard screw vs. the NEPS screw

The NEPS development period has taken place over (almost) two, incredible, exciting and encouraging years.

I remember another top FIE ranking fencer I met buying NEPS at the WC Ciutat de Barcelona store." These ones are for my brother", she said. "I already bought mine in Paris ". "Are they working ok?" I asked her. "Pretty well! Quite clever, the person who invented this!". "Yes", I answered her. " I believe he's a pretty smart guy..."

I also remember the surprise-delight facial expression that Karim (Bashir) showed, once the Women's epee World Cup (Ciutat de Barcelona) had finished, when I explained, driving him to his hotel in my own and fully baggage-loaded car, about my entrepreneurial experiences with NEPS. "I love these stories!", he told me.

I hope you also like mine.

Ricardo



ACL Injuries

A leading sports specialist physiotherapist gives top tips on recovering from an ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) injury



Tyrone Examining a Knee

Whatever sport or activity you take part in, a pop from the knee is a sound no-one wants to hear. As most footballers, runners, cyclists, gymnasts know, that pop means that there has been a rupture of the ACL. A tear of the ACL doesn't make a sound but is no less painful and will derail playing and training for some months.

Tyrone Kon, who is one of the top physiotherapists at London's Boost Physio has helped numerous sports people get back on their feet after an ACL injury and has some top tips on how to get back on track after an ACL injury.

Tyrone is based at the Boost Physio branch in the Virgin Active Gym in Cricklewood, so he has access to all the gym equipment needed to work with clients to get them back onto the pitch, the track or gym.

"There are two different ways to treat an ACL injury. The first is surgical, which can take up to a year to recover from and the second is conservatively. Treating an ACL injury conservatively means a carefully tailored, three part, physiotherapy programme that depending on the severity of your injury, could get you back to full fitness in around five to six months", says Tyrone.

Before any treatment starts get a correct diagnosis, go and see your GP or a good physio. Often a physio will be able to give you a more definitive diagnosis for an ACL injury

because they have specific tests to find out whether it is a tear or a rupture.

"Pushing your rehab too quickly can not only set-back your recovery, which can really affect your mood. Your physio should help you not only get better physically but also help you overcome fear of re-injury by giving you the confidence that your rehab is on track by not letting you progress through the three stages of rehab until you are ready. They will also show you how to exercise non injured parts so you don't lose overall fitness", says Tyrone.

Tyrone's top tips for getting over an ACL injury include:

1. The first thing you must do is rest for 72 hours, and RICE (rest, ice, compression, elevation) to relieve swelling and start the healing process. Don't keep completely still, try and move around but don't put too much pressure on the injury, be sensible and move with caution. It's important to remember that an x-ray cannot spot an ACL rupture or tear, only an MRI can do that and the NHS will not send you for an MRI for an ACL injury.
2. The first stage of rehab is to start regaining movement, this the time to start seeing a physiotherapist and to start the early stage of the treatment programme. A static bike will help regain range of motion as well as start to get quadriceps and hamstring muscle activation. Bosu balls can really

help with regaining balance at this stage too.

3. Gym equipment, like the leg press and hamstring curl machine can be used for the middle stage of rehab. Your physio will be able to assess the strength of the non-injured leg and then will devise a strengthening programme that can be monitored and progressed every two to three weeks. This will enable your physio to get an objective measure of the strength in the non-injured leg.

At the same time, it is important to improve cardiovascular fitness, single leg rowing is a great way to improve the strength of the injured leg and of course improve overall cardio fitness.

4. The third stage of recovery is getting ready for return to full fitness. Getting clients to do tasks that remind them of how they injured their knee in the first place is key. Fear avoidance is common and it is important at this stage that people start practising balancing, and jumping. Building up the muscles around the ligament can sometimes take over the ligament which can really help with recovery.
5. Post recovery recommendations: it is important to continue with sports specific exercises, strengthening the core, the quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes and calves. Your calf.

"Remember, don't go looking for exercises on the internet for treatment, you can end up doing more harm than good. It is important to have a proper assessment and let a physio work out the best rehab plan for you", say Tyrone.

Boost Physio is one of London's leading physiotherapy practices. With four clinics in North London, at East Finchley, Hendon, Hampstead and one at the Virgin Active Gym in Cricklewood, Boost Physio physiotherapists helps clients with a wide range of physical issues.

For further information, please contact: Caroline Ratner caroline@carolinecomms.com 020 8209 0120



www.boostphysio.com

Interview

An Interview with Kat Smith



Katrina Smith, or 'Kat' as she is more usually known, is a determined and energetic twenty-five year old, who wants to train for the Tokyo Summer 2020 Olympics. It was great fun to meet up with her (on Skype) recently to listen to her interesting story.

I began by asking her how her fencing career began.

'I started fencing epee aged thirteen, at a local school, after taking an interest in Modern Pentathlon. I was one of those slightly withdrawn kids, and the local coaches at Truro and Penzance Fencing Club, who were actually sabriers, helped me become more outgoing. They brought out that side of my nature, which was very beneficial, certainly as far as my fencing was concerned. After a few years, I dropped the pentathlon. I had an ankle injury which made swimming very difficult, but didn't seem to affect my fencing performance. Also, daily swimming training had become a bit tedious. In fencing, you're not just staring at a pool floor, or a wall, you're dealing with other people all the time. It was a lot more fun. I trained at Truro for many years and made it into the (British) junior squad, during the last two competitions, before I became too old to qualify.'

Who coached you at school?

'I was never formally coached in fencing at school. We had some very good P.E. teachers, who concentrated on sports like rugby, hockey, anything that didn't require a lot of equipment. When I did pentathlon training I'd do swimming in the morning, running at the interval or when I got home from school, and then I'd go either to Penzance or Truro Fencing Club, depending on what day it was. One of my coaches used to pick me up from home, take me to Truro, and then take me home again afterwards. That's what my school life was like.'

So what job do you do now?

'I'm now a fire fighter. I used to be a waitress and worked 6 days a week, on top of doing my fencing training. I used to train every morning in the gym, working on my feet all day, and then do fencing lessons with my coach in the evenings. This left me feeling very tired. Now, as a fire fighter, I have a much better work/life balance. A lot of my colleagues are involved in other sports. One woman is a canoe polo player and a double world champion. Others do martial arts, rugby, or football. Fire fighters tend to be very active and keeping fit is part of their job.'

How do you fit in your training?

'It was easier when I was in training school and I could do fencing training in the evenings. I did gym training with the other recruits during the day, so in the evenings I would concentrate on stretching, fencing lessons with my coach and sparring. But now I'm on a shift system, where I work 12 hours during the day, and on the 12 hours during the night I'm on call. I do that for 4 days in a row and then I get 4 days off. I was on shift on Monday. I got off at 8.30pm, went straight to my fencing club and was on the piste by 8.45pm; so I am learning to fit it all in. I'm living in Liverpool now and train at Liverpool Fencing Club, Marshall Fencing Club, and the University of Liverpool Fencing Club. My main coach at present is the Bulgarian fencing master, Atanas Atanasov. He coaches both the Liverpool city and University Clubs. I still fence for Truro though.'

How about competitions?

'This year has been quite quiet for me on the international front, because I've been finishing my training as a fire fighter. A lot of World Cup events start on Thursdays and Fridays and I couldn't get out of training school to do that. I won the Welsh Open and got to a satellite competition in Stockholm, just to see how I would get on. Next season I intend to enter as many international competitions as I can. My long-term plan in fencing is to keep Liverpool as my base. With my current shift pattern I get 4 days off in a row and will be free to travel to competitions. I have quite a good group of fencers to train with, including Hannah Lawrence, Mary Cohen, and others, which is nice. I'm a very determined fencer with a bright future and if the right backer comes along, who can help me financially, that would be great. It's just been announced that I'm GB no. 1! I'm very pleased.'

With such energy and sheer determination she is certainly heading in the right direction. Good luck Kat!

Editor

Round Up

CHESTER FENCING CLUB SALLE SCIPANOV'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY



Chester Fencing Salle Scipanov's fencers and coaches.

Chester Fencing Club Salle Scipanov's was formed in 2007 by the highly professional Latvian coach Valerij's Scipanov's with help and support from Brian Turner, his friend for 25 years and the first club chairman, and Linda Kent, then Manchester Fencing Club official, all of whom were passionate about developing fencing in the North West region. There was no fencing in Chester when Valerij's came: the once thriving and nationally successful Chester Fencing Association had closed because of the committee members' retirement from sport, so Valerij's had to start from scratch with no equipment and no knowledge of the system of sport in the UK, which was very different from that in post-soviet Latvia.

Valerij's: "I cannot thank Brian and Linda enough for the help and support they selflessly gave me with setting up the club. Looking back, I feel now the same enthusiasm and inspiration about promoting fencing in Cheshire that I did a decade ago when Dr Basil Thompson, former coach of Chester Fencing Association, and his wife invited me to their house to pass on their trust and support to the newly established Chester FC. The couple reminisced on past years of fencing and coaching in Chester and it felt surreal to look through the half-a-century-old newspaper cuttings and photographs of fencers practising in Chester cathedral refectory (before it was a refectory) using old-style equipment. I am most grateful to Dr Thompson for his numerous encouraging addresses to young fencers at school competition presentation ceremonies he attended in the following years".

After receiving a grant from the National Lottery, the club was able to buy the necessary equipment and started introducing fencing to Cheshire primary and high schools. The programme took off extremely well and Valerij's was soon delivering fencing lessons



Valerij's Scipanov's Head Coach for 10 years at Chester FC.

as before- and after-school activities in 10-15 schools weekly: every term, 200-250 pupils were introduced to this sport that was formerly considered an elite one. Those who wanted to commit to fencing joined the British-Fencing-affiliated Chester FC Salle Scipanov's and its numbers grew rapidly from just 6 members at the meagre beginning, fast developing some of the most technically gifted and talented competitors in the North West. Since 2007 the club has gone from strength to strength and is now one of the top fencing clubs in the NW region and a great example of promoting equal opportunities for children of diverse backgrounds.

Valerij's is extremely proud of the fact that the club fencers have year after year qualified to represent their region at the popular Winton Cup and the British Youth Championships in all age groups as well as winning titles at all the major junior competitions such as NW Junior Series, LPJS events, the English Youth Championships, and the British Youth Championships.

"These are fantastic results from very talented young people. They are an inspiration and a joy to work with. The success is not just down to talent and hard work. It has also come about from training in a supportive, friendly, and fun environment", says Valerij's.

BRITISH FENCING HONOURS 2017

At the end of April, a notice will be posted on the British Fencing website in 'Latest News' asking for nominations for British Fencing Honours to be sent to the British Fencing Honours Committee for adjudication, to be submitted "on line" using the links that will be provided.

The Honours Committee is responsible for making recommendations for British Fencing awards (responsibility for recommendations for Queen's or State Honours remains with British Fencing's Nominations Committee). This system focuses entirely on the membership with all nominations coming direct from members - the committee, in effect, acts as selectors. British Fencing members aged 18 and over can make nominations.

Awards are made each year and announced and presented at the British Fencing AGM.

These awards are one way in which British Fencing can recognise and thank those members across the whole spectrum of fencing activity in the UK who have worked for many years, sometimes unrecognised by the majority of members, for the benefit of our sport.

So, please think about whether you might wish to nominate someone and keep your eyes open for the posting of the notice.

Peter Jacobs
Chair, Honours Committee

The Epee Club

A Call to Arms (*continuation*)



The Epee Club – Formation of the British Epee Development Committee

In the last edition of *The Sword* (Jan 2017, pp18-20, I outlined how The Epee Club was responding to the need to support the selection and training of potential world class British epeeists outside of the WCP. My article described how the Epee Club had set up its own Charitable Fund that was separate from British Fencing and become what was, in reality, a sponsorship programme for epee.

This has progressed so well and has had so much encouragement, that we have now formed the **British Epee Development Committee** to carry forward the plans and aspirations of the GB Epee Weapons Manager (Dr Lindsay Bottoms) and the GB Epee Squad Manager (Jon Willis). The Committee consists of these two plus four experienced senior members of the Epee Club (David Partridge, Tom Cadman, Pat Casey and myself).

After two meetings, the Committee has now succeeded in approving a 5 year plan for progressing epee back into the international arena. Initially, much of the work will be aimed at bringing on a Junior Team backed by a coach to travel with them to competitions, together with a series of performance

enhancing training opportunities. A timetable of events is being put together with these Managers and a realistic budget will be provided for the team in order to ensure it can compete as a unified GB body. Further details will be published in April.

So how can you help?

As I had outlined in my last article, the Epee Club is planning further funding initiatives using the Club's business contacts to increase the funding "pot" which is in the form of a gift aided CIO called **The Epee Club Charitable Fund**. However, we would like to encourage anyone whether they are fencers, parents, and clubs, coaches etc who may have a heart to help our GBR epeeists, to donate any amount, however small, to this site which is specifically aimed at the development of epee and is overseen by epeeists. All monies raised will go directly to provide our teams with the opportunity to train, improve their performance and succeed on the international stage.

Full details are available on the Epee Club website under the CIO tab – the link is at <http://www.epeeclub.org.uk/cio/>. There is also a **Just Giving** site on the same link.

In many ways this has become even more imperative with the rejection in February of British Fencing's appeal to UK Sport for funds to support the World Class Programme into Tokyo in 2020. British Fencing's response has of necessity been to ask for funding to support the existing Foil and Sabre programmes through Crowdfunding (see link www.crowdfunder.co.uk/fundfencing) and also to help provide further funds to the British

Fencing's own CIO which was launched last year (see link <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/britishfencingcharity>).

A final word.

The Epee Club CIO has been established with only one aim in mind - the development of epee. This Fund is totally separate from the Club's own finances and is overseen by three Trustees – all of whom are impartial and yet dedicated to the placing of epee back on the world stage again. The British Epee Development Committee has the same aims. Your donations to the **Epee Club Charitable Fund** can help to turn the tide and ensure that there is a future for the "epee de combat" way into the 21st Century. As I said at the end of my article in the last *SWORD*, whatever happens, The Epee Club will continue to promote epee at every step of the way and produce an international team worthy enough to inspire others and compete on a level playing field on the international arena.

Lawrence Burr OBE
Vice President
The Epee Club



RICHARD KRUSE
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HARRY BOTELER
WILL DEARY
TEAM GB
BELIEVE EXTRAORDINARY

British Academy of Fencing Awards

By Liam Harrington, Acting President – British Academy of Fencing

Every year the British Academy of Fencing can present awards to recognise the efforts of hard working fencing coaches. Last year we were grateful to receive four worthy nominations, and presented the awards at the annual dinner following the British Academy of Fencing AGM.

Brian Pitman Trophy

After a gap of several years, the BAF received a worthy nomination for the Brian Pitman Trophy in the person of Chris Green. This was for his work at Billericay School, where he has worked for seven years, catering for all who wish to fence, including a number of autistic and special needs children. He has also established an Épée Club in Basildon, catering for young adults with learning difficulties. Chris is indeed a worthy winner of this trophy.

Awards of Merit

Two awards of merit were presented this year. The first went to Stuart Clough. Stuart has served the BAF tirelessly in the time he has been Treasurer, acting also as Membership Secretary and volunteering to administer the Examination days at the end of our residential courses. Anyone at these examinations, whether examiner or candidate, has cause to appreciate his ability to make the day run smoothly. But the main reason for the award was the enormous amount of extra work he



Liam and Dominique

undertook during the process of converting the Academy to a limited company.

The other Award of Merit went to a relatively new member of the BAF, Dominique Szokolovics. A former GB Foil Champion, simultaneously holding the Senior, Junior and Cadet titles, Dominique set up Fencers Club London from scratch and, focussing on young foilists, has achieved great success, with her pupils winning many medals and titles at a high level. Although Dominique attempted to reach the presentation on the evening, travelling from a competition, she was unable to make it in time, but the award was later presented to her at her club.

Gauthier Trophy

The final award was the Academy's most prestigious award, the Gauthier Trophy, presented to the Academy in 1973 by J Emrys Lloyd OBE, in memory of his former coach, Capitaine André Gauthier. It is presented to a Master of the Academy, who, in the words of the original donor, "greatly benefitted the sport of fencing in the United Kingdom". This year's winner was Professor Isobel Bruce Combes, who retains the Trophy until 2020. Readers of Academy News may remember the story about her work at the King's Academy in Warrington, where every pupil now learns fencing. The school was the National Winner of the Department for Education Character Awards. One of the reasons for this award was the school's decision to involve all their pupils in a range of activities which are normally outside of the curriculum, one of which was fencing.

The Compendium of the BAF documentation was edited by Isobel and she has produced a number of workbooks relating to our Proficiency scheme, initially for use at Warrington, but now in use in schools in the USA and being translated into Chinese for use in Hong Kong.

What is pleasing is that these awards showcase the breath of talented coaches involved in fencing. The recipients come from a variety of different backgrounds, from Level 1 coaches all the way to Fencing Masters. From young coaches, to those who might be tactfully describes as "less young". The reasons they received the awards vary from coaching talented young fencers, working with adults with learning difficulties, dealing with the intricacies of administering the BAF, to outstanding work in introducing fencing as a standard part of a school curriculum.

Congratulations to all concerned. It shows that no matter who you are, no matter how experienced you are, or how old or young, you can make a difference.

If I may ask one favour from you all it would be to think about coaches who might be worthy of nomination this year. I'm sure there are plenty of people out there, we just need to hear about them.



Philip and Stuart

Editor Resigns

Ed Rogers has resigned as Editor of The Sword and this is his last issue. BF will advertise for a replacement in due course. In the meantime, please send all Sword related matters to media@britishfencing.com.

West Fife Fencing Club – Our New Premises

By Lorraine Rose

West Fife Fencing Club (WFFC) is located in the historic town of Dunfermline and was founded in 2000 by club coaches Ken and Lorraine Rose. Like Martin Luther King WFFC had a dream – a permanent home for the club, not as far reaching as the one MLK had but ours nevertheless.

Over the entire history of the club money has been salted away for that very purpose – there was much excitement in 2012 when a community space was put up for sale for the princely sum of £1250 (yes you read that right!) However WFFC were unsuccessful in their bid and the building eventually went to the Salvation Army.

So, when in April 2015 a primary school was put up for sale the club went into overdrive, we totted up the available club funds and were incredibly lucky to find in our members and past members some very generous private investors that allowed us to put together enough funding to purchase the building and land outright. At first sight the school seemed too small to be useable. The longest room was the small gym, but at just 12 meters in length it wasn't big enough. Undeterred we consulted architects & surveyors about the possibility of knocking down some substantial internal walls to create a space nearly 20 meters long. To our delight we were told this was possible & initial estimates of the cost were just about affordable.

So WFFC put together a proposal to submit to Fife Council to purchase the former primary school at Wellwood, which was decommissioned in 2014 and consisted of a stone building with a small gym, a kitchen & office plus a detached 4 classroom annex building.

While WFFC were champing at the bit to get going we found that councils don't move at the dynamic pace fencers are used to! WFFC was first told they were the preferred bid in July but this wasn't confirmed till September 2015. This was followed by two months further delay till the formal legal acceptance finally came through. WFFC finally we got the keys mid December 2015.

While we were waiting on all the official bits from Fife Council one of our members told us about the One Family Foundation. This

charitable foundation makes 4 awards of £25,000 one in each of 4 categories. WFFC put in an application for the sports category. Those of you in the fencing community who know anyone in WFFC will know the award recipient was decided not by the Foundation itself but by public vote. WFFC was up against a large number of other projects from across the UK & there was nothing on offer for coming second in the voting process. We needed to win to get any money at all. So everyone involved in WFFC went on the campaign trail, we spammed our Facebook feeds (sorry!) we figured out how to use Twitter and had an amazing response on this medium. There were retweets from celebrities both within and out with fencing – and from fencing clubs and people all over the country many of whom we had no connections with. We used LinkedIn, Fraser of f68photography (one of our parents) created some great visuals with some terrible puns attached! We did leaflet drops, put up posters in local shops and even braved the cold and windy streets of Dunfermline to hand out leaflets to the local community.

After what Ken's sister described as a "knicker wettingly" exciting month checking the vote count every hour & desperately trying to think of new sources of votes WFFC finished just over 250 votes ahead in the sports category & secured £25,000 of funding to use on the renovation works. This was huge boost for the club since it removed the need for Lottery funding applications and would enable us to accelerate some of the building works.

Unfortunately the delays caused by slow moving council groups were not quite at an end. We put in for our change of use order in December 2015 and there was one objection – mainly on the grounds of the noise the club would create which could potentially impact on the residents of a rental property that is attached to the main fencing building. This resulted in much to and froing with letters

and emails – and was eventually resolved in – wait for it – August 2016!

The clubs trustees had been wary of starting the major interior building works until change of use was granted so had focused on important but less drastic improvements like making the buildings water tight, and cladding the exterior of the annex building which had suffered considerable weather damage since the school's closure.

The delay in change of use permission being granted introduced another problem because the £25,000 from the One Family Foundation had to be spent within 12 months of the award date. We had already purchased some security equipment, a fridge freezer, computers, CCTV, a 50 inch TV & laptops from the £25,000, but needed to keep the rest for knocking down walls & installing the sports floor. So we organised a few weekends of willing WFFC members, parents, siblings and partners to come in to do as much of the preparation work as possible for the building & flooring contractors.

One of our aims was to recycle and reuse as much as we could – both to be eco-friendly and to save cash. The kitchen was ripped out and industrial appliances were moved from room to room for a few months - later to be resold to a community college in the borders. Sinks were stored (and some still are) undercover in the car park. Any reusable wood, trunking or plumbing pipe & electric cable was saved too.

We ripped up the old sports floor, then we ripped up the plywood it was laid on then we all sat back and looked at the beautiful polished beech sports floor that lay underneath that – this has been saved and will eventually be used to floor our S&C gym area.

We took off doors and frames, knocked down walls, managed to save some old roller doors that had been painted/rusted into place, suspended ceilings were removed, pins boards and white boards taken down, 8 cast iron radiators removed (these are still available for sale if anyone wants them), old roller style blackboards, a few memorable weekends were spent pinging staples out of walls (teachers please I implore you think of the people who need to decorate before you go overboard on either the blue tack or the staples when decorating your classrooms).

Finally, we had done all we could in the main building & the annex building was now in reasonable condition. It was heading towards



One of the 1st working parties



One wall half down



Floor levelling

the end of June & although the change of use permission was still pending we had heard encouraging noises from the council planning department so we decided we had little choice but to call in the contractors. Builders were retained to take down two walls. It was thought this would take only a few days & two men but it turns out they made buildings to last "back in the day". Our two-brick thick non-supporting walls were covered in 15mm of concrete render plus a sand plaster mix. By then end of day one the walls had broken a sledge hammer & exhausted 4 builders who were completely hacked off as they had made only a 1 meter x 2 meter hole in one of the two walls they had to demolish. After two days the builders decided enough was enough & drove a mini digger with a jack hammer attachment into the building! Several days later the walls were finally down, but the digger had made a number of holes in the floor! All in all, this process alone took three weeks.

Although this created a 20meter long space there was a large cupboard sticking out from the wall housing high voltage electrical switches, fuses & meters. This had to be removed & with the help of SP networks the electricity supply & meters moved to a cabinet on the outside of the building.

At last we had a space that could house 4 full length pistes plus run off areas, but we had bits of wall & ceiling that needed plastered, holes in the very unlevel floor & we had heard from the council that our change of use permission was conditional upon us building a sound proofed wall at one end of the pistes. The builders quoted £4,500 for building the walls & most of the funds available were required for the flooring so there was little choice but to build the walls ourselves!

With the internal walls removed it became clear that the floor was far more uneven than we had thought. Each room had been at a different level so with the walls removed we were left with significant steps of several

centimetres. The flooring contractors were consulted & quoted between £4000 & £8000 extra to level the floor. Once again there was little choice but to try to do this ourselves.

Part of the preparation process had been the removal of heating pipe work & radiators. These had to be removed as they ran across what would be the fencing floor. Ongoing discussions with heating contractors were causing all sorts of problems & delays so it was decided to install a suspended ceiling with electric hot air blowers. A kit could be purchased for £2000 plus heaters for another £1000. Professional installation was going to cost at least the same again so it was DIY once more!

Meanwhile time to spend our One Family award was starting to run out so we had to work quickly!

Levelling the floor, building the walls & installing the ceiling started in late August & were completed by the end of October. The flooring company arrived in late November & the floor was completed just before Christmas & just in time to spend the last of the One Family award before the deadline!

As a bonus WFFC now boasts a lead coach with a greatly expanded DIY skill set. Ken has not only project managed everything but he has also done a lot of the work himself. If you need advice on how to clad the exterior of a building, fix leaky felt roofs, dig up a concrete corridor in between two wooden floors fit new joists to bridge the gap and a new plywood surface so the whole room is level Ken is your man. He can also tell you how to build a soundproof wall, fit a suspended ceiling & source sports flooring. Ken can also explain how to mark out and paint pistes (the quote for doing this professionally was £250 ... per piste!) though he did need help from one of our young sabreurs. In fact none of the things described here would have been possible without the help of many club members & friends. It has truly been a team effort.

While all this was going on we were still training three nights a week at Queen Anne High. Our athletes, coaches and families were managing to not only work on getting their new home ready but also on collecting medals at events and gaining caps for Scotland and GB squads. Notably we brought home 20 gold, 16 silver and 23 bronze medals from the Scottish Youth Development series, 8 fencers were selected for the 2016 Challenge Wratislava Scotland squad, 8 fencers were selected to represent Scotland and 1 Wales at the UK Schools Games and we took a posse of athletes to the 2016 BYC event. At the other age extreme one of our fencers represented Scotland at the Commonwealths Vets and GB at the World Vets. So far, this season we have had a further 9 athletes selected to represent Scotland in Poland and 3 who have had international selection for GB cadets. We very much hope we will continue to build and improve upon on these results and successes now that we have a 24/7 training venue.

So where are we now? Well we started using the premises for fencing in January 2017. We are still very much a work in progress with the space being upgraded daily. We still have a lot to do - there is still a gym to build, we have had lots of generous donations of equipment (a multigym weights station, rowing machines, exercise bikes, cross trainers, trampettes, steppers, a punchbag,) but they are currently languishing in a class room while we do other more pressing matters. There is an armoury room to fix up and kit out. The fencing space has a floor, fabulous lighting and heating so now we can add the fun stuff. There are lunging pads to put up on the walls and there are plans to have an epee "leg and arm" and an "arm & head" for the sabreurs. We have a storage room to fit out so the club kit can be moved from the waiting area which will allow us to build more stalls for fencing bags and we need to decorate another area where we plan to have more kit storage and a washing machine. We have finished decorating our club room which is used by parents and non- fencing siblings on club nights and will double up for video analysis use during training camps. Changing rooms are in the process of being built, the materials and labour for this has kindly been donated by one of our parents. We've also received a gift of fruit trees and bushes and these will not only give us a pleasant outdoor space but will also be used to help educate our athletes on nutrition.

We are small there are only 4 pistes available but in the 17-year club history that is the most we've ever had and with more hours and days available we know we can improve on what we have been able offer our members in the past. The eventual long term plan may be to demolish the annex buildings and build another hall with more pistes and better facilities. The real beauty of the place is that we own the property. This should allow us to operate at a significant surplus to fund future developments & we have a valuable asset that we can sell if the club chooses to change location in the future.



Fencing hall

It's been a long process with lots of frustrations along the path but it has been worth it. The club is already attracting new members & we have already had our first training weekend. It was at this weekend that one of our young athletes Brodie (aged 10) summed up why we did it and how cool it is to have our own home and why we all love our sport. While chatting to one of the other youngsters he was overheard saying:

Fencing is great! You get to hit people with swords ... what's not to like about that?!

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Reviews



INNOVATIONS AND INVENTIONS IN FENCING

By George and Shalva Kokochashvili

The pdf version of this book by brothers George and Shalva Kokochashvili was originally reviewed in the January 2016 issue of *The Sword*. On that occasion Richard Cohen was quoted as having said:

"George and Shalva Kokochashvili have produced a treasure trove of a book about fencing. It is a plum pudding of a book, full of unexpected delights and odd strands of knowledge -- I know of no other book like it. Anyone interested in the literature of fencing, or indeed in cultural history, will find items in the book to enlighten them, entertain them, or simply make them shake their heads that one sport could stretch into so many different areas."

The good news is that as part of a grant from the 'Sakpatenti', (the National Intellectual Property Center of Georgia), a limited edition of approx. 100 copies have been printed on condition that they are not for sale, but must be given away as gifts. In June, 2017, the brothers are planning to distribute most of these copies at the Seniors European Fencing Championship, in Tbilisi, Georgia. In the meantime, however, they are prepared to make a few free copies available to readers of *The Sword*, who are willing to pay for the postage. Anyone wishing to take up the Kokochashvili brothers' kind offer should contact them using the following:

George Kokochashvili (gkokochashvili@yahoo.co.uk)

Shalva Kokochashvili (skokochashvili@mdf.org.ge)

Collectors of fencing books take note.

They are also on the lookout for a sponsor/publisher who is interested in publication for sale, either in printed or/and electronic form. If you feel that you can be of any help to them then please get in touch direct.

I say 'book', but the printed form comes in two volumes (Vol. 1, 168 pp and Vol 2, 178 pp) and is by no means a short read. George and Shalva Kokochashvili, twin brothers from Georgia, are civil engineers and inventors with a passion for fencing. The cover design is by Oto Kokochashvili, and it is published by the Sakpatenti Printing Office. The scope of material here is remarkable and once you get into it, hard to put down. Reading is highly recommended.

Editor

The plan is that a translation of this piece and the previous January 2016 review will be published in *Olimpieli* (the Georgian language magazine) later this year.

FIE SWORDPLAY REVIEWS

In the October 2016 issue of *The Sword* we asked for a reviewer to cover the new FIE Swordplay game. We have fortunate in receiving two responses:

By Thomas Crowe

As a fencer I was delighted to see FIE SwordPlay get released on the app store. It was a great feeling to see my sport expand into a whole new media. This free game has had instant success with over 90,000 downloads already on the Google Play Store with over 70,000 five star reviews, but can this game impress a fencer?

FIE SwordPlay makes a great stab at incorporating fencing's intricate rules and fast paced style while simplifying it enough for

all players to enjoy. It incorporates all three weapons into one main fighting style which can feel almost too basic at times but they have counterbalanced this with the option to choose from a vast array of fighting styles as the player levels up, from aggressive to defensive moves. Each bout feels tense and exciting, and the controls feel very fluid, which can be a very challenging thing for a mobile title to incorporate.

The game is also overflowing with content including an exciting campaign which takes you across the world to eventually finish at the Olympic games in Rio. It also uses 7 different styles of bouts from a standard match of five hits to timed matches. However, I found that the campaign can lack variation with a limited number of background maps and AI enemies can often be easily taken advantage of letting the player score the same hit again and again. With this criticism we must still recognise that this is a game coming from the limited platform of a phone.

The second part to this game is multiplayer, and this can offer more play time to users who have finished the campaign.

The multiplayer is not in real time, meaning you will only be able to fight AI representing another player, but this is excusable due to the nature of the game. Latency delays and connection issues would not compliment the fast paced matches. The multiplayer also allows the player to connect to Facebook and challenge friends, which can create a relaxed local competition when fencers are off the piste. Clubs can also be created with your



friends, where quests have to be completed to gain more rewards.

To add even more content to the game a customisation system has been added where the player can purchase different designs and colour of their equipment. Each item offers different bonuses, like adding to reaction time and speed. This can make each character feel original and new and really helps add personality to the game.

The gameplay feels very smooth and fluid with the character moving seamlessly with the on screen controls. Scoring a hit feels very satisfying; you have earned the point and had to work for it most of the time. However there are still some occasional bugs with the sword sometimes going through the enemy and the game freezing occasionally.

Another element to the gameplay which adds even more depth is the concentration meter

at the top of the screen. Once full it allows the player to have a guaranteed hit against the enemy (if you are at the right distance) or dodge the next enemy attack. Overall the gameplay feel great, which can be very challenging to do on a phone and can lead to some very tense and exciting matches.

My main criticism for this game is the use of micro transactions. This can come in the form of 'energy' which essentially forces the player to either pay if they want to play for any long periods of time, or wait for the timer to tick down. You can buy in game credits to alter your appearance, and acquire new weapons to speed up your progress in the game, which can feel quite pay to win.

However this game is free and the developers do need to make money in some form, and nearly everything can be unlocked for free

if you are willing to put more time in. I feel like they could have been a bit more creative with their micro transactions since paying for energy is very off putting for a player who wants to simply enjoy the game with no setbacks.

Overall this game feels like a hidden gem on the android market, far superior to other popular sports games like FIFA17 and NBA2K17. Its abundant content and fluid controls kept me glued to the screen until completion of the campaign and then pleasantly surprised me with a few more hours of multiplayer gameplay. The micro-transactions are a drawback, but a small price to pay for the game.

As a fencer, the game did impress me, and has definitely exceeded my expectations of what can be created on the phone.



By E.R.E. Jones



2016 was always going to be a good year for fencing (Olympic years, for any sport with limited coverage outside of the Olympic programme, always are in relative terms), and in the creation of 'Swordplay', I've no doubt that the FIE's aims were to make something of a digital induction to introduce unacquainted viewers worldwide to fencing's rules and customs. Technicalities aside, however, 'Swordplay' surely has the ultimate goal of converting people with a passing interest in fencing into fencers themselves. It would be unfair, therefore, to judge an app like 'Swordplay' by its ability to recreate the experience of combat on a mobile device- even the FIE's evidently ambitious development team would understand that would be simply a bridge too far.

And what a marketing tool it is! In spite of, I suspect, being made on more the budget of an indie game than a triple-A sports simulator, the game uses the mobile interface to full effect and provides a fluid, enjoyable and fast-paced experience for the user. At the very beginning of the game, the user may 'create' their fencer (make them male or female, and choose their name and country). From here, they are thrown straight onto the virtual piste, and they are taught the basic rules of fencing from the base upwards in short lessons, though stopping short of using most

fencing jargon. For example, in the first thirty minutes of game play, we are taught how to score points, the importance of fencing distance and essential defense and combat. Though, and this is important considering the app is designed for people who have no prior experience with fencing, it doesn't feel arduous at all to learn, mostly because the time we spend learning is far less than the time we spend actually fencing. The way the user interacts with the game is simple but seamless, as we control our fencer through only five on-screen buttons. At the heart of the game, the user travels to cities around the world fencing the locals at tournaments and sophisticated black-tie events and in duels, whilst learning with the coach. The game maintains the player's interest through various kinds of progress and incentives, including moving to a new location, upgrading the player's gear and fencing style, and obtaining in-game currency: I felt the game is paced deliberately and with much thought. My only concern is that these mechanics, however, would have the potential to tire



after a while as, though progress through the game is constant, it lacks variety. Whilst moving forward, the player learns new skills and overcomes their digital opponent at a rate which is perhaps a little too steady.

There are other criticisms I have. There is a system of 'energy' which prevents users from playing for too long without spending some in-game currency, which players can top-up with actual currency to keep playing immediately or wait for a while for the energy to be restored. Game developers often implement a similar system in games designed to be profit spinners, but after about a month of playing this game in five minute intervals and with careful spending I've only really seen the system as an interruption (on which I've not had any desire to spend my money). Another flaw, exposed to me by a friend I sat next to on an airplane, is that by 'spamming' the buttons ("I'm just pressing 'em randomly!"), he says after persuading me to give him a go and before winning the bout) the player can win against the computerised opponent, a revelation which was a little disconcerting to me. The graphics, too, (and I honestly feel a little bad for saying this), are rough around the edges: it's clear that most of the effort here went into the game play, lessons and user experience instead of the finer details like the backgrounds.

But, in summary, I found it to be an enjoyable casual mobile game, which does not attempt to be something it is not. It achieves the goals I believe it sets out to accomplish, and, most importantly for you, dear reader, it's a lot of fun. I'm giving it a solid four out of five.

FIE Swordplay is available to download free of charge from the iOS App Store and Google Play.

E. R. E. Jones is a Sixth Form student from Newport, South Wales.

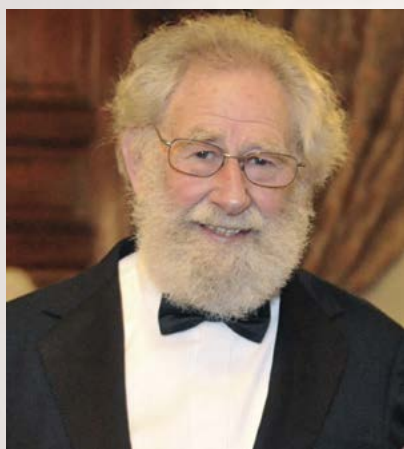
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Obituary

PROF. JOHN SANDERS (10/9/1929 – 19/1/2017)

John Sanders, one of the best coaches this country has ever produced, has died at the age of 87. Combining enthusiasm, humour and a flair for teaching, he inspired thousands of budding fencers in the west country, as well as contributing to the development of elite performers like Bill Hoskyns.

John learnt to fence during National Service when met the man who was to change his life: Quarter Master Sergeant Instructor Bill Harmer-Brown, who was to become one of the leading post-war fencing masters. Bill spotted in John a natural ability and willingness to learn that would make him the perfect assistant on a fencing course he had to run. After Bill retired from the Army and took up a 12-months' appointment helping Britain's first national coach, Roger Crosnier, he invited John to stay with him and his family and join him in establishing a circuit of clubs in and around London. This was the beginning of John's life as a freelance coach. When he wasn't teaching, he had lessons from Bill. On the Brighton



Belle they would have intense discussions using stick men drawn on steamy windows to depict various fencing movements and positions.

In 1953 John passed the diploma of the British Academy of Fencing, becoming the youngest professor in the history of that organisation. He was then offered the position of National Coach of Canada, but luckily for the sport in the south-west he chose instead to become the area's first professional regional coach. He started the hard grind of going from one school and evening institute to another with a bag full of kit and weapons, laying on demonstrations and stimulating interest among children and adults.

John's extraordinary energy and dynamism led him to run up to 25 classes each week, plus weekend coaching and personal performance courses. Often it was past midnight when he got home. He clocked up a staggering 46,000 miles a year in those pre-motorway days, to begin with on a motorbike. It was a crazy lifestyle, but he loved it because there was always someone in a class who made all the effort worthwhile.

He was able to inspire both beginners and established fencing stars, like Bill Hoskyns, who preferred to take lessons from John in Somerset rather than travel to London to train with the rest of the British team. One day in 1958, Bill gave John a lift in his Jaguar to the fencing hall. But on leaving the car, John

painfully trapped his hand in the door. There ensued a gentle argument about whether or not they should continue with the planned lesson, but John insisted that he could give him a perfectly adequate lesson left-handed. A week later Bill won the world epee championship and always put it down to that last left-handed lesson.

Because of his commitments in the south west, John was unable to attend any of Bill's international competitions. But Bill always reported back and explained any problems he was having. After one foil competition, he said the Russians were specialising in close-quarter fighting. John's innovative and elegant solution was for Bill, after parrying quarte and as his opponent rushed in closing the distance, to spin through 360 degrees and hit his opponent on the back. It was a brilliant move (sadly now illegal) and the following week at the Martini in Paris he performed it as a winning hit. The French press raved over Hoskyns and his pirouette riposte. Bill continued to receive lessons from John and reached the peak of his career at the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games when he won the individual silver medal at epee, the last British fencer to win an Olympic medal.

One of the most exciting classes John ever taught was at Elmhurst Junior School in Street, Somerset, from 1963 to 1970. He christened them the Bubbles for their effervescent enthusiasm. The star of that group was Sue Holman (now Benney), who came up with the bright idea of remembering the difference between a remise (using the *main*) and reprise (using the *pied*). She went on to become the first female three-weapon professor, her pupil Philip Marsh becoming junior world epee champion in 2011.

In the early seventies, as if his life as a coach was not busy enough, John responded to demand from his pupils for equipment by establishing a fencing equipment company, Jasco, and set about finding people to make jackets and breeches, as well as importing blades, in the face of intense opposition from Leon Paul, which had a monopoly on fencing equipment at that time.

John's fencing career was cut short in the late 70s after a bad fall which seriously damaged his back and made it too painful to continue as a full time coach. But with his analytical mind and understanding of how things work, it wasn't long before he found another outlet for his inquisitive nature: woodturning. He became a respected woodturner and, as a natural teacher, was soon running woodturning courses. He then established the forerunner of the Somerset Woodturning Club and helped start up other clubs in the area.

But, like fencing, woodturning is physically demanding and John's back was not getting any better so, at retirement age, he changed direction once more and decided to restore an old Sunbeam motorbike and sidecar. Once he started looking around the old bike scene, he met many interesting people and with one of them he restored seven or eight bikes.

The last leg of John's journey through life involved the Jaguar E-type. His cousin asked if he might house his newly acquired car in John's Nissan hut garage while he had his own garage enlarged. John couldn't resist taking it apart, finding out how it worked and then improving the design before restoring it to perfection.

John Sanders was a remarkably gifted teacher who enriched the lives of thousands of people in the worlds of fencing, woodturning, and the restoration of bikes and cars. We lesser mortals can only wonder how he found the time to do it all.

Malcolm Fare

SIR CHRISTOPHER BLAND (1938 – 2017)



(BBC)

Sir Christopher Bland died on January 28th 2017. He was a former chairman of the BBC, head of the Royal Shakespeare Company, and in later years a published writer. He was also fencer. He fenced for the Irish Olympic team at the Rome Olympics in 1960 and went on to captain the Oxford University team in 1961. A detailed obituary, prepared by the BBC, can be accessed using the following link: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38783416>.

He wrote this account of his experiences at the 1960 Olympics in Rome, which was originally published in The Sword, January 2015. On submitting the final version, he wrote to me saying: 'Here it is. I hope you like it; it's been fun to write.'

We are pleased to reprint this article in full as a tribute to a remarkable man.

Here it is. I hope you like it; it's fun to read.

Editor

THE ROME OLYMPICS 1960

"Congratulations on being selected for the Irish Olympic Fencing Team," the letter began. "Please acknowledge your acceptance by return, enclosing a cheque for £120, or £210 if you would like to stay three weeks instead of two. Your blazer and hat will cost a further £11."

The Irish Amateur Fencing Association was not awash with funds. I sold my 1937 Riley for £38 and my parents, who were not well-off, generously stumped up the rest and bought their first television set so they could watch their boy march round the Olympic Stadium. At least the flight was provided by Aer Lingus.

The Irish epeeists had qualified because we had beaten England, Ireland and Scotland in the Quadrangular Tournament, held that year in Dublin. We weren't as good as that sounds; England had entered a B team, but in that competition we all fenced well above our usual level. And I had a unique day in my otherwise modest fencing career, winning nine out of nine bouts, my epee seeming to be four inches longer than my opponents. I was a good deal less successful when we got to Rome.

The IAFF, as well as being perpetually penniless, was often controversial. In the

Helsinki Games they entered a team of four fencers against the wishes of the Irish Olympic Council, who refused to let them participate in the opening ceremony. They only found accommodation in the Olympic Village thanks to the intervention of Charles de Beaumont, captain of the British squad.

In 1960 we were legitimate, and duly marched round the magnificent Olympic Stadium with the rest of the Irish athletes. Our star was Ronnie Delaney, a brilliant, modest four-minute miler who had won gold in the 1500 metres in Melbourne four years before. In 1960 he competed only in the 800 metres, but was eliminated in the quarter-final.

Rome, and Tokyo four years later, was the last of the innocent games. Security was minimal. In the Olympic Village there were around 3,000 athletes, but the organisers found they were serving 4,000 at every sitting. They didn't seem to mind. Two Oxford friends of mine who had driven out to Rome spent a happy day inside the village, one carrying my fencing bag, the other wearing my blazer. I had the official pass. All that changed after the terrible massacre of eleven Israeli athletes by terrorists at the Munich games in 1972.

The other great difference was the opening and closing ceremonies. No vastly expensive and irrelevant cabaret, with pop stars, parachuting Queens, dancers and fireworks. We just walked round a packed stadium, and that seemed good enough at the time. Now the cost of the extravaganzas would fund five years of athletics in most Third World nations.

The fencing took place in Rome's EUR suburb in the Palazzo dei Congressi, a splendid building with 12 pistes and seating for 3,000 spectators. Rome in August was 80 degrees in the shade, and the Palazzo, while cool, was not air-conditioned. Many fencers were affected by cramp. The Irish team were not involved long enough for this to be a problem. We were all eliminated, as were 60 per cent of the fencers there, in the first round. We also went out in the first round of the team event. Our best performer, George Carpenter, was also the oldest member of the team, a spritely 52 year old from County Cork.

My only consolation was defeating, much to his and my surprise, the Swiss national champion. And beating Christian d'Oriola in the team event. D'Oriola was a dazzling four times world champion and twice Olympic gold medallist - but at foil, not epee. He was accompanied by his own chanting entourage, [D'Oriola-la-la-la-la] and was, in Allan Jay's words, "the best I ever faced ... on his own, that boy ... could have been a film star, very good-looking."

Early elimination meant I had plenty of time to watch the rest of the fencing. The British epeeists did exceptionally well, winning silver in the team and individual events. I knew them all well, and was a great admirer of their two stars, Allan Jay and Bill Hoskyns, still the most successful British fencers of the post-war era. They were both left-handers,

both former captains of Oxford, intensely competitive on the piste and very good friends off it.

Allan was solid, determined, and able to fence with his foot almost on the back line without losing his composure. In Rome I never saw him in his opponent's half of the piste. In the individual event he came agonisingly close to Gold, losing 5-4 to Delfino in a bout that would have given him Gold, and then to Delfino again 5-2 in a barrage for the title. The final took five and a half enthralling hours to complete. Delfino's bout against Achten took 25 minutes; if Achten of Belgium had won, Allan would have taken the Gold. That bout ended, in Charles de Beaumont's words, "with a devastating stop-hit from Delfino that flicked out like a viper's tongue." Still, it was a brilliant result for Allan Jay, a great competitor who said, "I didn't sleep properly for three and a half years," when he was, quite improperly, not selected for the Munich Olympics.

His close friend Bill Hoskyns was a complete contrast. An Old Etonian, Bill was an elegant and apparently languid fencer, teased by Allan as Lord Fauntleroy. An American described his style as "suave, so suave it's painful,"; at the 1958 World Championships, where he won the epee Gold medal, he brought along his own camp bed and dozed off between bouts. Or so legend has it. In Rome, although he came seventh in the foil event, he went out in the quarter finals of the epee. Off the piste he was the most modest and charming of men.

Rome 1960, over 50 years ago, still remains the pinnacle of British fencing achievement. It was an entirely amateur world then, and it seems clear that British fencing has not adapted to the organisational and funding demands of the modern, professional era.

What else do I remember? The young Cassius Clay winning Gold in the final of the light-heavyweight event, surrounded by his white entourage of Good Ol' Boys from Kentucky, whom he was to shake off when he became Muhammad Ali. Livio Berruti winning the 200 metres final wearing dark glasses. Abebe Bikila running barefoot up a torch-lit Appian way in the Roman evening to take the marathon Gold. And an audience, obligatory for an Irish team, [although my Protestant forebears would not have approved] with the Pope. Great days, great days.

Scottish Fencing have advised us of the death of Dr D.R.B. Mends, some details of which are mentioned on the Scottish Fencing website <http://scottish-fencing.co.uk/news/2017/03/10/dr-david-mends-obituary>

The British Academy of Fencing have advised us of the death of Istvan Lukovich, details of which are mentioned on the BAF website: <http://www.baf-fencing.com/latest-news>.

Results

The up-to-date 2016–2017 Season Latest Results are now listed on line and can be accessed using the following link:*



Photo: Augusto Bizzi

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

THE NORFOLK OPEN – 15th/16th July 2017

Venue: Sportspark, University of East Anglia, Earlham Road, Norwich, NR4 7TJ.

EVENTS

Saturday 15 th July	Latest Report Time	Sunday 16 th July	Latest Report Time
Men's Foil	10.00	Men's Epee	10:00
Women's Foil	11:00	Women's Epee	10:30
		Men's Sabre	11:00
		Women's Sabre	11:00

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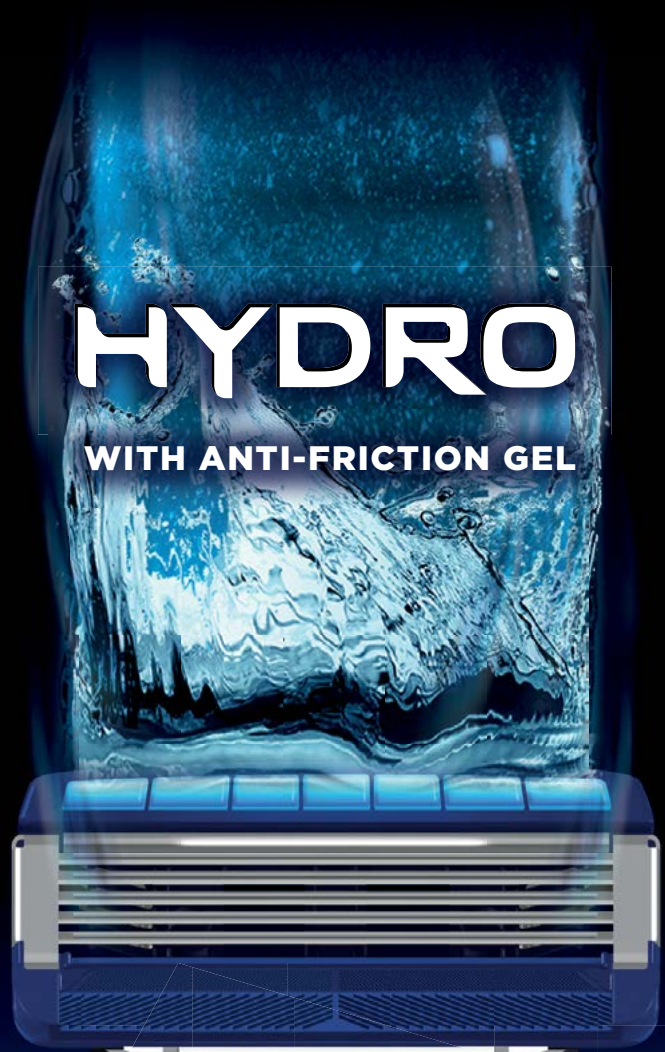


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