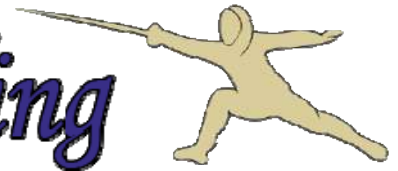




# British Veterans. Fencing



NEWS December 2008



## The Chevalier D'Eon

Secret agent, soldier, diplomat and accomplished fencer, the Chevalier D'Eon (1728-1810) was one of the most extraordinary and controversial society figures of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He spent the first 49 years of his life dressed as a man and the remaining 33 years as a woman.

Continued on page 6

## NVA Future Activities from “Over the Horizon” Report

Last year, I produced a paper entitled “Over the Horizon” containing items for discussion and development for the committee to consider. It examined the ongoing activities and events we undertake each year, including the National Championships, Age Group Competition, Newsletter, Website, Matches, Liaison with overseas vets, etc. and also added the Vets Winton Cup to the list this year.

It particularly looked at what extra activities we could bring to our members to further enable vets to enhance their fencing enjoyment through the NVA.

Members of the committee are each progressing activities, some with the assistance of NVA members who have volunteered their help and experience, (we are always looking for volunteers who can assist us), after having prioritised the list to meet the resources available, yet still enabling a growth of activities for members.

We are therefore working on the following:-

### **NVA International Open Competition**

This is being developed to allow our fencers at all levels to participate and gain international fencing experience on home ground which will save on travel/hotel costs. Venues are being explored in the Essex/Kent area, where we have members assisting with potential venues available, and which allows easy access for overseas fencers.

### **European Circuit Competitions**

Veterans in Europe are already organising a number of competitions as part of a “circuit,” and some countries are using these to assist in their selection processes. We believe that we should be participating in these competitions in a more organised way, and we are looking to organise trips to them in 2009.

### **NVA Open UK Competition**

We are planning an “Open” 1 day competition for men and women vets in June 2009 at a Midlands venue with the initial event being foil and sabre. If this is well supported, we will look to organising other vets opens with all 3 weapons.

### **Training courses**

Discussions have started about a possible training course in the West Country to enhance personal performance, and we are also looking at a “Refereeing Skills” course in 2009.

In addition to the above, we will also have an NVA presence at some of the major UK open competitions where recruitment will be the objective. (We have a membership leaflet and application form, produced by the NVA Communications Sub-Committee, available for any member who would like copies to take to the club), and a free standing banner will be used as a focal point at these events.

The NVA is seeking more sponsorship and we are producing a “glossy” Annual Report which highlights the successes and achievements of the membership, and can be used to support sponsorship approaches. Members will also be receiving a copy of this report early in the New Year.

Other areas that your committee is keeping an eye on are the possibilities of hosting one of the future championships e.g. Vets European Teams, another Vets World Championships and if there is the possibility of Vets being involved in the 2012 Olympic Games in a helping capacity.

Social activities have also been looked at, but we have got a clear message back from the members that their priorities are with actual fencing, and so this is where we are placing our resources for the moment.

We believe that with the programme of existing activities being added, NVA members will have more choice and continue to support the NVA in its endeavors to provide even greater value to fencers aged 40+ in the UK.

Frank Mills

Chairman NVA

### **Insurance for fencers over 75**

Following questions in the past your committee investigated the situation and confirmed that fencers over 75 years of age are covered for third party risks but were not covered for personal injury.

Your committee asked British Fencing and England fencing to investigate with the insurers the possibility of providing cover, even with a possible increase in premiums for those involved. The insurers rejected this enquiry.

Your committee also investigated the possibility of obtaining cover from companies offering special sports insurance. None of these companies offered policies to sports people over the age of 65 and in some cases 60 years of age.

The situation is therefore unfortunately clear. Fencers over 75 years of age are only covered for third party injury by their British Fencing membership. Personal injury is not covered. If another fencer injures you any claim that you pursue against that fencer must be at your own expense.

Dave Sweeney

## *Dates for your Diary -2009*

### **January 24th and 25th SELECTION EVENT**

National Age Group Qualifiers Luton

The Age Groups entry form, details and full timetable are on the website at

<http://www.veterans-fencing.co.uk/latest.shtml>

This year, for the first time, we **have on-line** entry!

At Category 2 and Category 3, the winner and runner up at each weapon will automatically qualify for selection for the 2009 World Championships.

At all categories, the final rankings may be taken into account in selecting for representative events in 2009 and 2010.

Hilary Arnold

NVA Secretary 0208 373 7953

### **January 30th Feb 1st LEVI OPEN ARTIC CHALLENGE**

Men and women's foil and epee event.

[www.leviopen.com](http://www.leviopen.com)

Let the ed know if you are going and I will inform others in the next newsletter.

### **March 6th NVA AGM**

Gloucester March 6th evening.

### **March 6th to 8th SELECTION EVENT**

National Championships Gloucester

Watch this space for details .

## *Dates for your Diary -2008 -2009.*

### **April 25th and 26th. Selection required**

Belfast. Home international quadrangular.  
See letter in this newsletter

### **May 19th to 24th Hungary NO selection required**

European Individual Championships  
Watch the web and newsletter for details

### **June Sunday 28th Abingdon**

White Horse Team Trophy

### **July 9th to 12th 2009 Jersey**

Veterans Commonwealth Games  
England Veterans :See letter in this newsletter

### **August 2009 Newquay**

Duel on the Beach  
Selected team event

### **September 12th and 13th Lilleshall Veterans Winton Cup**

### **October 25th**

Middlesex epee unisex event.

### **November 28th Christmas Party.**

If you are going abroad on a trip to fence — let me know  
and I will publicise it for you. Linda

## NOTABLE VETS OF THE PAST.

### The Chevalier D'Eon

Secret agent, soldier, diplomat and accomplished fencer, the Chevalier D'Eon (1728-1810) was one of the most extraordinary and controversial society figures of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He spent the first 49 years of his life dressed as a man and the remaining 33 years as a woman.

Charles D'Eon de Beaumont appears to have had a conventional French upbringing. In Paris he studied law and at the same time learnt fencing at the salle of Teillgory, where he met Domenico Angelo, later to found in London one of the most famous dynasties of fencing masters. Recommended to Louis XV as a bright young man who might perform useful service as a secret agent, D'Eon was sent to St Petersburg, apparently disguised as a woman in order to gain the confidence of the Empress Elizabeth, with the mission of making the Empress sympathetic to a French alliance. In this task he seems to have been successful, for he was rewarded with a commission in the army where, as a captain of dragoons, he fought in the Seven Years War

In 1762 he came to London as secretary to the French ambassador, but continued his secret work for the king, preparing a plan for the invasion of England. He fenced frequently at the academy of his friend Angelo. A few years later the arrival of a Russian princess, who claimed to have seen him dressed as a woman at the Russian court, started the rumour that he was female, a rumour fuelled by his plump appearance, soft voice and lack of feminine attachment. Soon major bets were being laid and, when he turned down an offer of £6000 to prove his sex, plans were made to kidnap him to settle the matter. The notoriety now thrust upon him caused him to consider seriously for the first time the advantages of declaring himself to be a woman.

On hearing that D'Eon was a woman, Louis XVI considered his continued appearance as a French dragoon an affront to public decency. If he was ever to set foot in France again and to receive a pension for his services, the king declared, he would have to dress as a woman. And so, by now deeply in debt and desperate to return home, he bowed to the inevitable and on 6 August 1777 appeared for the first time in public dressed as a woman. He was 49.

Mademoiselle D'Eon became the sensation of Paris, but he was desperately unhappy. He wrote a stream of letters to the Foreign Minister seeking ways of resuming male dress, such as rejoining the army. It was to no avail and eventually in 1785 he returned to the more congenial surroundings of London, albeit still wearing the woman's clothing on which his pension depended.

To supplement his income he gave fencing displays, of which the most celebrated was a match with the most brilliant fencer of the day, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, son of a French plantation owner and a slave girl. According to newspaper reports, D'Eon, then aged 59, defeated his opponent, 41, by seven hits to one. Supporters of Saint-Georges pointed out that, since snapping his Achilles tendon two years earlier, their man had never regained the great speed of attack that had been his hallmark.

With the coming of the French Revolution, D'Eon's pension was cut off and his situation became desperate. Now at least his female lifestyle helped for a public subscription was opened on his behalf, which would have been out of the question had he been a mere dragoon refugee. But after that he lived on the charity of his friends and his fencing matches.

**continued from the last page.**

In 1791 he again fenced before the Prince of Wales, this time with the noted female fencer Mrs Bateman. Neither wore a mask, although this form of protection was now being worn by beginners. Five years later, while giving a display in Southampton, he was wounded in the armpit by a broken foil. At the age of 68 his fencing career had ended.

He died at the age of 82 and the woman who had been his faithful companion for the past 14 years was amazed when the doctor told her that the Chevalier D'Eon had been a man. A deeply complex character, he was once believed to have been a transvestite, then to have adopted female dress only to clear his debts. But the latest research among his diaries suggests that, after becoming a fundamentalist Christian, he came to believe that men were damned to a life of sin and the only hope for moral redemption was to live one's life as a woman.

**Malcolm Fare**

## **ENGLAND VETERANS NEWS**

Your committee met at the NVA Christmas dinner to discuss selection for events in 2009. The following indicates our decisions.

### Commonwealth Veterans

This is an individual event and anyone can enter. For the team events we will select the best placed fencers in the individual events on the day. The team manager for this event will be Dave Sweeney who will finalise details and appoint team captains.

### Home Quadrangular

We would like include a wider range of fencers in this event. The intention, therefore, is to ask fencers to **put their names forward** and a balanced team will be selected at the Age Group championships. Hence, if you would like to represent England please forward your name and weapon to the team manager (John Crouch) at [johncrouch@fsmail.net](mailto:johncrouch@fsmail.net) or ring 0113 2812766 by 17<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

### **Future events:**

Home Quadrangular 25/26 April 2009 in Belfast.  
Commonwealth Veterans 9-12 July 2009 in Jersey.

The committee also discussed the suggestion raised at the AGM that there should be a strategy and development plan for England Veteran's fencing. We were not sure what members were looking for in this area and, therefore, have decided to ask the membership for ideas. If you have strong feelings about the future direction of veteran's fencing in England then please send them to me.

John Crouch

## **Christmas Party and 21st Birthday**

21st ANNIVERSARY/CHRISTMAS DINNER a personal view.

Although, as always, the Committee had done an excellent job in organising the annual Christmas Dinner - this time at the Ramada Hotel in Leicester - it was so disappointing that out of a membership of well over 400 members, only 50 people turned out. So many members - particularly the most active competitive members - did not attend even though the date is known well in advance. A great deal of time, effort and thought goes into the organisation of such an event and the Committee have tried to hard to accommodate members when booking the location so that it is convenient to a great many members yet they have received so little support.

The numbers attending the evening function after the National Championships is usually well attended but only because of a 'captive' membership in the same place to compete - again taking advantage of the massive organisation by the Committee - all volunteers - yet cannot turn out for the Christmas Dinner - most of all this year with the 21st Anniversary of the founding of the 'Vets', leaves me quite breathless at the selfishness of so many.

No doubt, if the Committee decided to cancel the annual Christmas Dinner, voices would be raised in protest! So come on Vets, the date is always published well in advance, put it in your diaries for 09 and show your appreciation of all the work and organisation your Committee does on your behalf throughout the year.

Marcia Stretch

## **Fancy Designing our new NVA winners Medal?**

We have, as a committee, thought for some time we should have our own NVA winners medals struck. But what to put on it?

Do you think you would like to try and design it for us?

Not a competition as such, but if you would like to submit any designs you may have for an NVA medal please send them to [linda.lawes1@btinternet.com](mailto:linda.lawes1@btinternet.com)

Or to my postal address on the contact page.

Sorry designing the medal is no guarantee of winning one!!!!

Linda

## **Your Chance to help the NVA committee**

**We have some great fencers in the NVA, and lots of lovely people. Lets spread the word.**

**We would like one or two members to offer to attend a local competition (where they are not fencing) and promote the NVA.**

**If you would be willing to attend ONE event and talk to fencers about the NVA, stand next to some publicity material, will you phone / email**

**Linda Lawes or Frank Mills See the contacts page**

**NVA needs your help!!!!!!!!!!**

**In 2009 lets make it 500.....**



# Christmas Caption Competition !!!!!



**Send your captions to Linda— contact on the last page**

Here is a starter .....

“ Franks idea for cheering up committee meetings had certainly worked with John and Hilary.....”

Your NVA Committee  
Wish you a Healthy and Happy  
Christmas and New Year  
See you all in January !!!

## INTERNATIONAL SCENE

This occasional column will appear from time to time to keep you informed of the international veterans fencing events. I hope that you find it a useful source of information but if you need more please contact me.

### **European Veterans Individual Fencing Championships 2009 - Balatonfured, Hungary**

These championships, which take place between 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May 2009, are open any veteran fencer but entries must be made through their national federation or national veterans association. For British veterans this means the NVA.

The organisers predict a large entry and therefore the event has been scheduled to run over 6 days. If you are unable to stay for the full programme you can tailor make you trip to suit your personal requirements.

Balatonfured is a pleasant town on the shores of Lake Balaton about one hours drive from Budapest. Transfers between Budapest airport and Balatonfured will be available. Photos of the town may be seen on the Championships website [HYPERLINK "http://www.balotonvivas.hu"](http://www.balotonvivas.hu) [www.balotonvivas.hu](http://www.balotonvivas.hu) .

The equipment regulations for the championships are as the FIE regulations with the exception that Video refereeing and wireless scoring will not be used. As far as personal equipment is concerned FIE standard equipment will be required with the exception that **transparent masks will not be mandatory** and, for 2009, **conductive mask bibs at foil will not be used**. (If you have a conductive bib, the mask wire will not be connected).

The qualifying date for each age group is the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

Entry forms and full details will be circulated with the January Newsletter but if you would like to register your interest to go to Hungary as a participant, or just for the visit, please feel free to contact me in the first instance.

### **World Veterans Individual Championships 2009 – Moscow, Russia**

These championships will be held between 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Entry is limited to 4 fencers at each of the six weapons and at each of the two age groups, Category A 50 to 59 years of age and Category B 60+ years of age. The qualifying date for each of the age categories is the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

Entries are via the national Federation and the NVA will select the members of the squad according to the selection procedures circulated in the November Newsletter.

Full details are not yet available however, **transparent masks at Sabre will be mandatory** and **conductive mask bibs at foil will be mandatory**. The situation regarding transparent masks at epee and foil is not yet clear but I will keep you informed.

### **Visits to European Veterans Competitions**

As mentioned in the Chairman's article in this newsletter it is intended to organise trips to European Veterans events. You will find a list of these competitions on the EVFC website which you can navigate to via the links on the NVA website [HYPERLINK "http://www.veterans-fencing.co.uk"](http://www.veterans-fencing.co.uk) [www.veterans-fencing.co.uk](http://www.veterans-fencing.co.uk) . If you are interested in taking part in a visit to any of the listed events please contact me and we will attempt to put a trip together.

If you have any questions about veterans international fencing please do not hesitate to get in touch using the contact details below.

Dave Sweeney  
Tel: 01453 637 847  
Mob: 07881908629  
Email: [mrdsweeney@hotmail.com](mailto:mrdsweeney@hotmail.com)



# NOTABLES November



## Welsh Open - 8/11/2008

ME (172)

22 John CHALMERS

67 Howard WEST

MS (96)

22 Rob PENTON

WF (66)

21 Jenny MORRIS

24 Gillian WORMAN

WE (91)

36 Georgina COX

WS (55)

9 Jane HUTCHISON

25 Jenny MORRIS

## Derry Open - 15/11/2008

WF (11)

2 Isabella CODD

WE (12)

3 Fiona HALDANE

5 Irene NEWTON

## Milner-Barry 2008 - 22/11/2008

WE (75)

35 Mariette MASON

## Miller-Hallett - 2/11/2008

ME (147)

12 Howard WEST

19 Neal MALLETT

48 Anton POLLARD

64 Andrew RAMSAY

# NVA Contacts

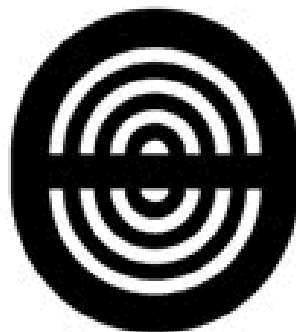
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