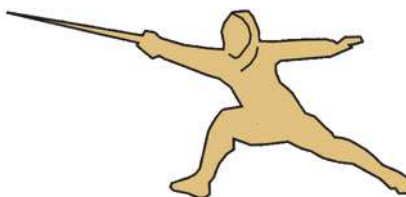


British Veterans. Fencing



Newsletter - June 2010

Women's Sabre team take Gold in European Championships!



Photo by Chris Green

Congratulations!

Women's sabre team: Caron Hale, Sue Benney, Jane Hutchison and Beth Davidson

Reports on the European Championships in this issue

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Golden girls!

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Chairman's letter

Dear Members,

Whilst I was disappointed in not being able to be in Macedonia with our teams, I was delighted to be escorting my daughter down the aisle at that time and fencing had to come second on this occasion.

Many congratulations go to our Women's Sabre Team of Sue Benney, Beth Davidson, Caron Hale and Jane Hutchison for their magnificent Gold Medal in the European Veterans Team Championships. A fantastic performance and very well done.

Our congratulations must also go to every one of our Great Britain Weapon Teams who, by all accounts, faced some of the stiffest competition yet encountered from the many countries who have stepped up their game in order to win medals.

The BVF is also very grateful indeed to Team Manager Linda Lawes who was assisted greatly in her first time in this role by David Sweeney. David must also be congratulated on being re-elected President of the EVFC for a further term of office and the excellent work he is doing for Veterans fencing in Europe.

In this Newsletter you will see an interesting letter regarding selection of fencers for international competitions, from one of our fencers who competed in Skopje, Jane Clayton. I hope that we will receive further views on this subject from members, as this will assist the committee in its deliberations. The committee discussion on this matter will start at our meeting on 13th June, and we will keep members informed accordingly as further input and debate is undertaken.

For those members who have not yet entered the Veterans Open in July, or who wish to compete in the 3rd Veterans Winton Cup, I would urge you, please, to get your entries in as soon as possible.

Finally, a "thank you" to those of you who took the time, and gave their creative talents, to send us designs for a new BVF logo. We will be looking closely at all of the submitted designs and it is hoped that you will see the results in our published communications very soon.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Mills
Chairman BVF

BVF CALENDAR 2010	
July 3-4	1st Veterans Open - Midlands - details and entry form on website
Jul 17-18	Celtic Challenge - Hosted by Truro Fencing club in Cornwall
Sep 11-12	Veterans Winton Cup, Lilleshall National Sports Centre
Sep 29 - Oct 3	World Championships, Porec, Croatia
Sep 29 - Oct 5	Commonwealth Veterans - Melbourne, Australia
Oct 9-10	Welsh Veterans Championships, Swansea (tbc) Contact Gillian Aghajan for details
Oct 31	Middlesex Epée - details to follow
Nov 27	Xmas dinner and fencing - details to follow

**"The legendary American musician Bob Dylan will come to Macedonia!
He will hold a concert as part of his current tour on June 4th in Skopje,
Macedonia."
(posters seen all around Skopje)**

We have a lot in common Bob Dylan and I, his Blonde on Blonde album was the first album I ever bought, and we share the same birthday- but I missed him by just 4 days. Bob Dylan was holding a concert in Skopje, Macedonia 4th June 2010. And it is really apt because after attending the 2010 European Masters (their name) Team Fencing tournament I was left in no doubt that the times- they are a-changing.

I knew the team manager's job would be lively and fun, I just had no idea how deep the peaks and troughs would be!

I was asked to be team manager for the team event in Skopje fairly late on. In truth Frank had a daughter to give away and Dave, being European president, could not carry out both jobs.

The deal was simple I had NO time to sort out the team this side of the water, Dave Sweeney took that job on and, as usual, carried it out fantastically well.

All the fencers arrived safe and sound - although I did lose 2 fencers (they know who they are) on the first day at the first airport change. They were following me and I turned right behind a kiosk at Budapest, panic ensued but I found them, standing just where I had left them. They may not use their brains but they are obedient.

Skopje was 35° C when we arrived hot and humid. Walking around that first day I found a full blown earthquake drill with some 150 or so Red Cross volunteers; they were on zip lines over the river, in boats, driving ambulances and being volunteer injured. Skopje was devastated in 1963 by a large earthquake- some 1000 died; they take their emergency drills very seriously.

The hotel was good and central and the travel agent provided a bus each day to take us to and from the venue. Thursday afternoon we were taken to the venue with several fencers to start accreditation. Suffice it to say slight chaos ensued, but all the fencers had weapons checked and the weekend was set fair.

The first day of fencing was Women's Sabre and Men's Epee. We had strong teams in both: to say that the other teams were tough was an understatement, these people were all out to win, and there were no easy matches.

As you know the Women's Sabre team fought through to Gold although their fate, in the end, was in the hands of the German team and we had to wait all day for the final result. - See Beth's report on page 5.

The Men's Epee field was large, and most of the teams fielded 5 fencers, often fencers were subbed in and out as required, because everyone wants to win. Ex-Olympic and World class fencers were everywhere ! The standard was as high as I have ever seen; no slouch fencers here, just very fast, fit and determined epeeists. Our team fought well- but were out in the DE.

Day two held Women's Epee and Men's Foil- again lots of determined teams, and despite their best efforts our Women's Epee team went out in the first DE after the poules.

Our Men's Foil team fenced really well - but the results didn't stack up. - See John Troiano's report on page 5.



Final day Men's Sabre and Women's Foil -

Our Men's Sabre team came 4th, they were unlucky as earlier in the day they had beaten the French team to get to the semi-finals and I was hoarse from shouting. They could not have done more, nor fenced harder.

This was the theme throughout the week, no easy teams, all out to win. The Italians were the fastest, and looked to be the fittest of all the teams, the score line in our Women's foil team against Italy belies how close it was. The standard was so high that at one point, when a young Italian jumped in the air and hit her, Gillian Worman just looked amazed, but after she said it was some of the most enjoyable fencing she had done. The Women's Foil final Italy against Russia was fantastic !!!!!

Every final was a master class. In the event we took a fantastic team – just not enough of them, other teams turned up with squads, captains could sub in or out during the day. As an example Italy held back Galvan their 3 (or is it 4?) times Men's Foil World Champion most of the day, he was then fit and ready for the final. The Germans declared that they didn't expect to win medals this year as they had 2 inexperienced, and younger, fencers in each squad to sub in. The Germans took a team coach- a full time professional (who just happened to be from Shetland- long story, wife German).

I must thank our unsung heroes - our Referees, Ian Hunter, Duncan Rowlands and Beth Davidson; they were fantastic and professional throughout the whole weekend. We could not have attended the event without them. Beth had the real honour of referring the Men's Sabre Final - high praise indeed from the DT. Beth rose to the challenge magnificently.

It is true you can only send those that choose to take up their selection, but we must strive in the next 2 years to make BVF members realise what a fantastic honour it is to fence for your country. I fully understand fencers get injuries, so we need to think of a way of ensuring our best, that year, really want to fence and attend these events. Then we can come home with medals!! We DO have the best, We CAN win medals, We NEED your support.

Would I Team Manage again? Do I want the team to win more medals? You bet I do. I was proud of each and every fencer. Not every team can win medals but if we go in the spirit of fencing and try our best that is all anyone can ask.

Linda Lawes - Team Manager

The GBR Team Manager fraternises with the French Team Manager.

The German fencer, Burkhart, has seen enough!

Photos courtesy of Jean-Pierre Mion



Skopje in Words and Pictures

Team Captains' Reports

Photos by Chris Green

See more photos: www.thephotoman.co.uk

Women's Sabre

The women's sabre team's first outing was against Germany with Jane and myself winning (I think!!) 2 fights each and Sue no fights, so narrowly losing 4-5. Not a good start to the campaign!

The next fights against Russia, Italy and France were much more going our way. Caron Hale was subbed in and, for a foilist, achieved some great fights to boost the team, with all going with convincing match wins.

Due to other teams losing matches, it went to the wire! Both GBR and Italy were equal on victories and it was only when a count back took place it was decided by only 4 hits!

Beth Davidson



Men's Foil

The men's foil team finished 7th out of 12 teams. A tough seeding pool, with Austria and Russia, saw us narrowly lose both matches and be seeded 9th. Richard Sage, at his first Championships, fenced especially well winning two fights in each match. In the Last 12 we overcame Spain easily 5-1, but then succumbed to Italy, the eventual winners, in the L8 by the score of 5-2 with John Troiano winning both fights.

John Troiano



Women's Epee

Our women's epee team of Jane Clayton, Kate Smith, Kate Morwell-Neave, Sara Spence and Caron Hale were seeded 7th, and were unlucky against Russia in the poules where they were leading 4-2 at one point only to ultimately lose 4-5. Then against the German team (seeded 1st) they lost 7-2 but this score-line belies the fact that several matches went to time and were 4-4. Coming up against the eventual winners, Italy, in the first DE put an end to this particular campaign. The team did well in maintaining their seeding in difficult matches.

Jonathan Stanbury



Men's Epee

The men's epee team event had the largest entry with 16 teams and we were perhaps unlucky in our first round poule to draw two former winners (Sweden and Russia) alongside Belgium. After a somewhat nervous start (and a loss) against Belgium the team began to pull together and we reeled off wins against both Sweden and Russia, with Jonathan Stanbury and Anton Pollard positively on fire in the latter match.

That gave us a seeding in the top half of the draw and we could therefore have hoped for a relatively easy match in our first DE. However, our efforts against Russia had given them a lower seeding than ourselves and we duly drew them again, and this time, with their former Soviet team member Ashok Karagian in from the beginning, we found ourselves unable to walk on water twice.

A creditable though disappointing performance overall but it highlighted the growing strength and depth of our opponents in this category.

Ralph Johnson



Women's Foil

It was an honour and a pleasure to be part of the women's foil team representing Great Britain at the European Team Championships in Macedonia. The women's foil event was on the final day of the event, and was seeded into a first round of poules followed by a DE. Our first match was against the able Austrians and our team of Jane Clayton, Kati Archer, Gillian Worman and Jane Hutchinson fought strongly to produce a decisive win 6/3. The second match was with the sublime Italians, where again we pushed them as hard as we could, but were defeated 7/2, a result which did not reflect the close nature of the match.

We drew the powerful French team in the DE and were defeated 5/0, fencing to a result only. The standard of fencing was extremely high, and as a team we were very pleased with our final 5th place. I would like to thank Dave Sweeney and Linda Lawes for their organisation, support and help during the competition. It was a great venue and the Macedonian Fencing Federation were most welcoming and hospitable.

Gillian Worman



Men's Sabre

4th place at a very strong European competition is no disgrace. However, having won bronze at the last two European Championships, the men's sabre team had high hopes of repeating, if not bettering, their previous performances. The team of myself, Duncan Rowlands, Chris Prevett and Peter Baron fought with great heart and courage. For a team to be successful at international level every member must be on top form. Unfortunately this was not the case on this day and I know that every member of the sabre team was disappointed with their individual performance. My own performance was spectacularly appalling. For the first time ever at an international competition I did not win a single fight, which should be a flogging offence! If we had all performed at the top of our game we would have certainly climbed the podium. I would like to thank Duncan, Chris and Peter for the sterling efforts. If team spirit and 'esprit de corps' were the only ingredients to a successful team, the men's sabre team would have won the gold medal. Next time we will be victorious!

Richard Bonehill



A letter from Jane Clayton

To: The Committee of British Veterans Fencing.

I have been a veteran fencer for approximately five years and found the whole experience undeniably enjoyable. In that time I have been fortunate enough to be selected, on a number of occasions, to fence in the National teams for both World and European Championships.

I have just returned from competing in the Veterans European Team Championships in Skopje, Macedonia where I have witnessed at first hand an incredibly high standard of fencing to which we must aspire if we are to experience the levels of success that we would like. All team members are now very aware of just how hard we have to work if we are ever to launch any realistic challenge for medals. With the exception of our women's sabre team, who deserve the highest praise for yet again winning gold against such prestigious opposition, our other teams were unable to break into medal positions.

But hard work alone will not be enough. I and a number of other team members, feel strongly that the system of selection for these events is fundamentally flawed and inadequate and is in need of immediate review because it simply does not consistently produce the strongest teams for the championships. This selection process has concerned me for some time and the European Championships have only reinforced my opinion and the opinion of other team members. It is patently obvious that World and European Championships are now being taken very seriously by fencers of the highest quality and we must respond effectively and without delay.

I would urge the British Veterans Fencing committee to seriously reconsider the selection policy and bring about change that will ensure that only the country's best with proven current form are selected.

The age group championships are held in January and from this one competition alone two guaranteed places are given for the World Championships which are held most frequently nine or ten months later in September or October. The competition is held as a pool unique and it is not impossible in such circumstances for any fencer, who has a brilliant day, to be catapulted into the British team. No account is taken of the form of the fencer in the months either leading up to or following the championship and in particular the months leading up to the World Championship. In the worst possible scenario the selected fencer could rest on their laurels and do little else for the remainder of the season, knowing that their place is secure. How can circumstances which render this possible, be justified?

A similar flaw occurs in the National Championships, held in March. Here, as you are aware, the highest placed competitor of each age category is automatically allocated a place in the team for the World Championships. No such selection process applies to the winners of the Senior National Championships. Senior fencers have to perform well at a number of ranking competitions throughout the year before being considered for a place in the national team. As stated earlier, anyone can have an unexpectedly successful run through one competition. Most of us have done precisely that at one time or another but should that one result really warrant selection to such prestigious and demanding events as the World or European Championships? These are serious competitions and it is entirely reasonable to expect a selection process, the rigour of which is commensurate with the status and demands of the event. To send anybody other than the country's best to such events is pointless and a recipe for failure.

(contd)

The process of automatic selection from just one event has the potential to be wholly inappropriate and runs the very real risk of failing to produce the country's strongest teams. Surely British Veterans Fencing must seriously review the current selection process and base selection on more indicators of form. That the age groups and national championships should always play an important part in selection is without question but not to the exclusion of other results that fencers have achieved over the preceding twelve months. I suggest that the selection process should be brought more into line with that which exists for the senior teams. Selection should be based on evidence of a significantly more sustained performance over a longer period. I feel strongly that we have now reached the stage where veteran fencers who want to gain selection must be seen to be actively competing in more than just two events in the knowledge that all of their results will be taken into consideration.

The argument which claims that such a policy will restrict selection to those fencers who are able to do lots of competitions cannot be denied in some senses. But to support this argument is to deny the very high standard that now exists at international level. These events are serious and highly competitive and the selection process must now reflect this. Things have changed and so must we. Anyone wanting to be considered for selection should be an active competitive fencer who has a record of sustained performance at a level which makes them worthy of consideration as the country's best.

There must also be an end to selection on "historical" grounds whereby a fencer can gain selection based on reputation and/or what they have achieved in the more distant past rather than their performance over the preceding twelve months. It is a simple principle – no currently proven performance; no selection. In short, selection should be earned and based on current sustained performance. This applies in almost every other sport where selection is based on current form. I respectfully suggest that British Veterans Fencing should not hesitate to fall in line.

British Veterans Fencing should consider setting up weapons squads of fencers who are fighting for places on the national teams and selectors must start to select from the best of the best.

It is time for the BVF to review this key policy. There is much that is good about veteran fencing and the jewels in the crown should remain. There should always be provision for a wide base of fencers, with organised events to cater for all abilities and ages and the wider the base the more strength in depth that will emerge. This can only be beneficial for the whole organisation and help to retain the spirit of veterans fencing that I have enjoyed over the last 5 years.

On a separate issue I would like to make the committee aware of the fantastic job that both Dave Sweeney and Linda Lawes did in getting the team to Skopje. Both before the event and during it they both did a completely professional job, enabling all of the fencers to concentrate on what they were there for - to fence to the best of their ability.

Jane Clayton

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The National Three Peaks Challenge - 23rd/24th July 2010

Moya McNamara and a walking club friend, Elizabeth Myers, are intending to complete the National 3 Peaks Challenge (Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon) in 24 hours on 23/24 July 2010.

They are raising money for Leeds Samaritans. All Samaritans are unpaid volunteers but it costs £1,000 a day to keep the Leeds Branch open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

We want to try and persuade 200 people to donate £5 each to finance one day, but any amount will be most welcome.

All sponsorship money will go to the charity. We hope you will support Moya in this venture.

Organiser: John Crouch 18 Richmondfield Lane, Barwick in Elmet, Leeds LS15 4EZ

Please send any donations as a cheque made out to Leeds Samaritans and send to John Crouch at the above address or make a bank transfer to 30-98-93, A/c no: 33249460.



www.3peakschallenges.co.uk

Caption Competition

Send your caption to:
g.aghajan@virgin.net



Photo by Richard Bonehill

Competition Results

Sheffield Open 15/05/2010



MF (79)	21	Nick Stokes	WF (34)	6	Kim De Large
				13	Kati Archer
				20	Kate Harris
				21	Cathy Heyes
ME (83)	13	Paul Cooper	WE (32)	19	Sara Spence
	22	Granville Ward			
	26	Andrew Brown	WS (28)	1	Beth Davidson
	37	Anton Pollard		9	Vivien Firth
	44	Tom Chrisp		13	Lynn Keogh
	54	Max Telfer		14	Silvia Earl
	56	Paul Drake		16	Frances Woodward
	59	Tim Pearce		17	Wednesday Jones
	63	John Morris		24	Monica Gilmore
	79	Anthony Rossiter			
MS (36)	13	Duncan Rowlands			
	20	Tim Noble			
	22	Malcolm Cawton			
	25	Michael Compton			

Inverclyde Open 30/05/2010

ME (52)	51	Julian Ghosh
MS (28)	6	Julian Ghosh

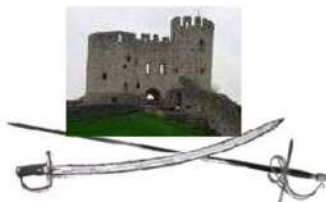
Veterans Winton Cup Competition

Team Contacts

London:	Hilary Philbin	email: hilaryphilbin@aol.com
	Hilary Arnold	email: hilary_arnold@blueyonder.co.uk
South West:	David Sweeney	email: mrdsweeney@hotmail.com
South:	Jenny Morris	email: jennyellen.morris@gmail.com
South East:	Jane Clayton	email: janeaclayton@hotmail.co.uk
	Alan Ault	Tel. 01435 830314
Midlands:	Peter Baron	email: peter@baronfencing.plus.com
North East & Norfolk:	Carole Seheult	email: c.seheult@btinternet.com
North West:	Paul Cooper	email: paul.cooper@manchester.ac.uk
	Kati Archer	email: kati@nickarchersolicitors.co.uk
Yorkshire:	Moya McNamara	email: moya.mcnamara@btinternet.com
Wales:	Mike Norfolk	email: mail@norf19fsnet.co.uk



BVF WEST MIDLANDS OPEN THE FIRST VETS OPEN COMPETITION IN THE UK



Saturday 3rd July 2010
Sunday 4th July 2010

Castle High School,
St James's Road,
DUDLEY DY1 3JE

*This new event has
been set up in response
to BVF members
requesting more Veterans
competitions*

*PLEASE support this
event and get your entry
in NOW!!*

6 Weapons: MF, WF, MS, WS Saturday ME, WE Sunday

Note
entry limited by number
& to one weapon only per day
due to time constraints

Open to all fencers of veteran age - 40+
must be British Fencing members (or other NGB)

For full details & entry see
<http://www.veteransfencing.co.uk>

or
contact:
Peter Baron, 1, Sandringham Road, Stourbridge, DY8 5HN
Phone: 01384 400242

*Details and entry form
on the website*

www.veterans-fencing.co.uk

*For accommodation at
the Village Inn, Dudley*

Phone: 0844 980 022

*(Central reservations- ask
for Corporate events at
the hotel)*

White Horse Open Teams Sunday 27th June 2010 Abingdon

Abingdon Fencing Club's **White Horse** Open is an event into which we have traditionally entered teams. The format is a mixed 3 weapon event - (1 round poules {unique} at each weapon, followed by DE in teams by relay). Although there are some volunteers already wishing to take part, there are some places vacant.

Full details of the event may be seen at :
<http://www.abingdonfencing.org.uk>

If you wish to take part contact Peter Baron stating weapon(s) you are offering to fence. Please confirm if you have already offered. Places are given a on 'first come, first served' basis.

Email: bvf@baronfencing.plus.com
subject "White Horse Open team"
or phone 01384 400242

The 2010 Celtic Challenge 17th/18th July 2010 Truro, Cornwall

Closing date soon - ENTER NOW!
Entries must be received by 1st July.
Late entries will not be accepted.

The Celtic Chieftains have sent out word to all the warriors of Brittany, Channel Islands, Cornwall, Galicia, Isle of Man, Northern Ireland, The Republic of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales to attend the gathering in The Duchy of Cornwall in July.

Warriors must be a minimum of 40 years of age and a member of their national governing body. To qualify to fight they must be a member of a club in one of the Celtic regions or have a parent or grandparent who was born in one of the regions.

[http://www.bonehill3.
freereserve.co.uk/celtic.htm](http://www.bonehill3.freereserve.co.uk/celtic.htm)



3rd Veterans Winton Cup (inaugurated by Sir Nicholas and Bobby Winton)

**Lilleshall National Sports Centre
11th and 12th September 2010**



**A 2 day
competition
between 9 teams
at all 6 weapons**

**Open to BVF members
(with BFA membership)**

**If you wish to enter please
contact your team captain
(see page 9)**



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	Treasurer Membership Secretary Webmaster	John Mason  18 Sandringham Road Trowbridge BA14 0JU Tel: 01225 761 788 BVF@jrmason.demon.co.uk
	Secretary	Hilary Arnold  17 Acorn Close Enfield EN2 8LX Tel: 020 8373 7953 BVFSecretary@veterans-fencing.co.uk
Elected Members	International Fencing Officer	Dave Sweeney  Hop Mill Cottage Painswick Road Salmon Springs Stroud GL6 6LE Tel: 01453 758 372 mrdsweeney@hotmail.com
	Domestic Fencing Officer	Pete Baron  Tel: 01384 400 242 bvf@baronfencing.plus.com
		Linda Lawes  Tel: 01235 530 090 linda.lawes1@btinternet.com
Co-opted Members	Publicity Officer	Malcolm Fare  malcolm.fare@crossword.demon.co.uk
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PLEASE NOTE

Any articles or letters for the BVF Newsletter should be sent to:-

Frank Mills
7 Audley Mead
Bradwell
Milton Keynes
MK13 9BD

Tel: 01908 310516
Email: millsfba@aol.com