

GB tops the Europeans medal table in Hénin-Beaumont!



Janet Cooksey, double gold, and silver medallist with Richard Cohen, gold medallist, on the podium at the Individual European Championships in Hénin-Beaumont

Bumper issue!

Reports and photos - Individual European Championships

BAF training weekend

White Horse Team Trophy

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Chairman's letter

Dear Members,

I returned this week from the European Individual Championships in Hénin-Beaumont, near Lille, France where a record number of 106 BVF members took part in a most memorable event.

The full report is published later in this issue, where you will see that Great Britain topped the league of 30 countries with our fencers having won 6 Gold Medals, 3 Silver Medals and 7 Bronze Medals. A truly remarkable achievement and I know that you will join me in congratulating each medallist on a fine win against very strong opposition.

It is not only our winners who should be congratulated however as our fencers participated in the true spirit of veteran fencing displaying a friendly but highly competitive spirit throughout the four days of competition. The report naturally concentrates mainly on the medal winners but it must be said that there were many in our squad for whom this competition was the first international in which they had taken part.

Without exception, having spoken with everyone participating, every new member of the squad told me how much they had enjoyed the event and the international experience it had given them.

Our next big event is the West Midlands Open organised by Peter Baron, so if you haven't entered yet, please hurry.

As you will see later in the Newsletter, Hilary Philbin and Cary Zitcer have resigned as Selectors. On behalf of the Committee and the BVF, I would like to express thanks and gratitude to them for the many years they have contributed in their roles for the Association.

The BVF Committee meets on 18th June and if you have any matters you wish to bring to our attention, please email or phone Marcia, our Hon. Secretary, or myself.

Sincerely

Frank Mills
Chairman

BVF CALENDAR 2011

Jul 2-3	Veterans West Midlands Open
July tbc	Oxford Unisex Foil and Sabre
Sep 10-11	Veterans Winton Cup, RAF Cosford, Telford
Sep 27 - Oct 2	World Championships, Poreč, Croatia
Oct 8-9	Welsh Veterans Championships, Wrexham Contact Gillian Aghajan g.aghajan@virgin.net for details
Oct 30	Middlesex Epée
Nov 26	BVF Christmas dinners

Great Britain Top Country in European Veterans Individual Championships

A record entry of 1300 fencers took part in the Championships hosted by the French Veterans Fencers Association in Hénin-Beaumont, near Lille, in the first week of June.

Every major European country fielded their largest contingent of fencers ever for this competition, and Great Britain was no exception with 153 weapon entries across all categories. The French alone, on home territory, fielded 347 weapon entries.

The competition promised to be very fierce with the usual high numbers of ex-Olympians and Champions from every country with many defending their European Veterans titles from when the competition was last held in Hungary two years ago.

Day one started with Women's Epée Cat 2 with a total of 56 entries. GB had a total of 8 fencers in the competition and creditable performances were achieved by Jenny Morris, Jane Clayton and Kate Smith who all got to the last 16.

In the Men's Foil Cat 2 a total of 76 foilists took part with GB fielding 12. Having got to the last 16, Paul Lowen went out 10-7 to Pentek of Hungary whilst Lindsay Watkiss beat Tiberi of Italy 10-7 to get to the last 8 where he was defeated by the eventual Silver medallist, Shtanin of Russia.

Later that day, GB had 7 fencers competing in the Men's Foil Cat 3 and this event was to see the first of our medals. In the last 16 Graham Paul met Jonathan Stanbury and, after a hard fight went through to the last 8 with a 10-8 victory and Steve Fox defeated Chubarov of Germany 10-6. Unfortunately Graham and Steve had to fight off in the last 4 for the medals. Graham beat Steve 10-3, going on to achieve a Gold Medal against Kachur of Germany with a fine win 10-5, and our Gold from Graham and Bronze from Steve got us off to a good start.

Next was Women's Epée Cat 3 where Kate Elvin, one of four GB fencers, fought magnificently throughout to win a Bronze medal for us. In the Men's Sabre Cat 1 with four GB fencers, Duncan Rowlands was our highest placed fencer having achieved a place in the last 16. The last event of the day was the Men's Sabre Cat 4 where we had 7 fencers taking part.

Our fourth medal of the first day was won by Alan Ault who took Bronze by beating Panz of Poland, so GB felt encouraged that the event had started so well for us.



**Graham Paul
and Steve Fox
Gold and
Bronze
MF Cat 3**



**Kate Elvin
Bronze WE
Cat 3**

On day two, in the Men's Foil Cat 4, Alan Ault achieved a place in the last 8 but was defeated by Bonnefoi of Italy 6-5 whilst the Women's Epee Cat 4 saw Janet Cooksey win the Gold with a fine win over Hempelmann of Germany 10-7, and Carol Wengraf and Connie Adam each win a Bronze medal.



**Alan Ault
Bronze MF Cat 4**

Men's Foil, Cat 1 had a total of 91 fencers taking part with 7 GB fencers participating. It was a very hard competition and our best placed fencer was Nick Fihosy who achieved a creditable 16th place.

Chris Prevett achieved 13th place in Men's Sabre Cat 2 and then it was the turn of reigning Champion Richard Cohen in Men's Sabre Cat 3. Richard was undefeated throughout the competition, although his fight for the Gold was a hard match with the final score 10-8 against Filippi of Italy.



The third day saw the Men's Epée Cat 1 with an amazing number of 225 entries. This was a very hard competition and our top placed fencer was Leslie MacDonald who put in a creditable performance in reaching 44th place overall.

Similarly, the Men's Epée Cat 4 was a difficult competition and our highest placed fencers were Rob Phelps 12th, Jim Pilkington 14th and Bill Osbaldeston 15th.

In the Women's Foil Cat 4, the competition was entirely between Great Britain and German fencers. Kristin Payne, in her first European Veterans competition met Janet Cooksey in the final to compete for the Gold and Silver medals. It was a very close fight which Janet won 10-9 after a series of strong attacks in the second period.

**Janet Cooksey
Gold
Carol Wengraf
Bronze
Connie Adam
Bronze
WE Cat 4**

The Women's Sabre Cat 2 saw 32 taking part and, of our six fencers, it was Jane Hutchison and Jane Clayton who fought through to the last 8. Jane Clayton narrowly missed a medal with a defeat to Zini of France but Jane Hutchison won her fight against Orlandini of Italy 10-2 to get her to the last 4. After a close fight with Janshen of Germany who won 10-6, Jane achieved a Bronze for GB.

The last competition of the day was Women's Sabre Cat 3, and Maggie Myers, Viv Frith and Silvia Earl all got through to the last 8. Both Maggie and Viv lost 10-4 to their German opponents, but Silvia fought hard to beat Lepeltier of France 10-8 to reach the final 4. Beating Hamann of Germany 10-5, Silvia then met the very experienced Brigitte Greunke and beat her 10-6 to take the Gold Medal.



So far, Great Britain had managed to win 4 medals each day and hopes were riding high as we went into the last day of the Championships with six more weapon events to be fought.

**Richard Cohen
Gold
MS Cat 3**

The Women's Foil Cat 2 saw Jane Clayton produce the best performance for GB in 14th place with Jenny Morris 19th.

In the Men's Epée Cat 2, Neal Mallet narrowly missed a place in the last 8, losing to Carnec of France 10-7.

Maggie Myers achieved 9th place in the Women's Foil Cat 3 and our épéeists in the Men's Epée Cat 3 fought really well with Jonathan Stanbury 6th, Graham Paul 7th, Mike Bradbury 8th and Robin Davenport 10th.

With two events to go, Great Britain was ahead in the medal tables with Russia and Italy close behind.

Beth Davidson had fought extremely well throughout the day, taking out very strong competition including a number of past champions and in a well fought final against Tanzmeister of Germany, Beth won the Silver Medal.

In the last event of the Championships, the Women's Sabre Cat 4, our GB fencers were dominant. Janet Cooksey, Carol Wengraf and Connie Adam were joined by Irina Bunn of Germany and Ksenia Tadzhieva of Russia in a fight for the medals. Connie won a Bronze Medal, her hundredth medal since joining the veterans, and it was left to Janet and Carol to fight for the Gold and Silver. Carol dominated the fight and won Gold with a score of 10-5.

It was a proud moment for us all to see three Union Flags raised at the medal presentation ceremony, but it was not quite over for Great Britain yet. The organisers then made two special presentations to two fencers who had produced outstanding results in the Championships. Both Gari Aftandilov of Russia and Janet Cooksey of Great Britain had won through to compete in three finals each, and they were each presented with a fencing statuette to mark their remarkable achievement.

The Championships had produced an excellent result for Great Britain, and our large squad participating had fought well to ensure our top place in the tables, and it is worth noting that any mention of our squad must include our team of referees who also performed to their usual high standards throughout; recognised by the organisers who invited a number of them to referee finals during the four days of competition.

As Team Manager, I could not have had a better squad of fencers and referees for this event, and it was a pleasure to work with everyone in a friendly but seriously competitive Championships.

Frank Mills
Team Manager



Kirsten Payne
Silver

Janet Cooksey
Gold

WF Cat 4



Jane Hutchison
Bronze

WS Cat 2



Silvia Earl
Gold

WS Cat 3



Beth Davidson
Silver
WS Cat 2



Janet Cooksey
Silver
Carol Wengraf
Gold
Connie Adam
Bronze
WS Cat 4

European Veterans Individual Championships - Medals Table

Placings		Gold	Silver	Bronze
1	Great Britain	6	3	7
2	Italy	4	1	9
3	France	3	5	4
4	Russia	3	2	5
5	Germany	2	11	15
6	Norway	1	1	
7	Hungary	1		1
8	Austria	1		
8	Netherlands	1		
8	Finland	1		
8	Ukraine	1		
12	Spain		1	
13	Sweden			2
14	Belarus			1
14	Belgium			1
14	Latvia			1
14	Switzerland			1
14	Luxembourg			1

Other countries competing:

Denmark, Ireland, Serbia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Poland, Macedonia, Romania, Israel, Greece, Estonia, Monaco

Photos by
Frank Mills

Happy Vets in Hénin-Beaumont (a few of many!)



And a very rare sight ! →

Photos by Editor



Letters and news from BVF Members

Letter from the Selectors

Dear Frank,

With this year's selection procedures now completed, we are both resigning as selectors with immediate effect.

As you're aware, there has been an increasing number of problems in the past few years, and we don't believe there's any benefit in cataloguing them here. However, some of the selectors' concerns raised with yourself and/or the committee remain unresolved, and neither of us see any prospect of this changing in the near future - hence our resignation.

We would like to stress that this is not in connection with the issues that prompted the recent resignation of the 3rd selector, Hilary Arnold, and the substitute selector, Geoff Silverman.

To avoid any misunderstanding we would be grateful if you would publish this resignation letter in the next newsletter.

Regards

Hilary Philbin
Cary Zitcer



Tenterden Swords Veterans in Holland

Veteran fencers who fence at the Tenterden Swords club in Kent were invited to take part in the International Dom tournament in Utrecht one weekend in March. The Saturday is a mixed team event in all 3 weapons and Alan Ault, Christine Hamilton and Jane Clayton fenced in the foil event. There were 17 teams of mixed abilities and ages from Holland, Belgium and Germany and with a combined age of over 180 between us we finished 5th after a very full day's fencing. The total age of one of the teams we fenced was less than 50!

John Hyde also a veteran fencer from Tenterden should also have been in our team but he was stolen by a Dutch sabre team who found themselves one short. On the Sunday they hold the individual events. Christine Hamilton was invited to referee the foil event and so did not fence in the competition. Alan rested his aching knees and so John Hyde and myself fenced in the epee competitions. John finished 13th in the men's event and I took the bronze in the women's event. A very enjoyable weekend for us all and we just made the ferry back home due to the superb driving of another GB vet Ian Hamilton.

Jane Clayton

An email from Scotland

I received the following email from Mike McEwan - Editor:

This is a somewhat belated message due to my health challenges from my time in hospital (note to CC list that said challenges are of course minor compared to those Mariette faced (and I hope you have all sponsored her)), but I felt a responsibility on behalf of both myself and the Scottish contingent to express our collective thanks:

I would like to say a huge Thank You to Frank and all those who helped to get the GB squad organised and over there - you did a fantastic job in both the preparation and the execution of the plan for our participation in this huge event. I know how demanding it is from my own experience both at work and in fencing (I remember this from organising the Vets 4 Nations in Edinburgh!). This was unquestionably a monumental logistical challenge, and you met it in the style of "a walk in the park".

Well done!

For me, the clear sign of successful organisation was that there were no issues that I faced at any point along the way - I was pleasantly surprised that I sailed through weapon control with no problems - so thank you for your advance info, especially the last minute advice about the national identity on breeches and jacket sleeves!

I would also invite all those copied on this to give their own perspective - our individual results are down to us, but the collective experience is down to Frank and the whole GB contingent!

This reminds me - at Weapons Control there were many people I saw from a distance in the queue that I haven't seen in decades (i.e. from under-20 days). I expected to catch up with you later, but hadn't anticipated how wiped out I would feel after fencing. I hope I'll catch up with you soon.

However for some (e.g. John Troiano) -- I'd like to know where you found the elixir of youth?

All the best, and I'll see you soon,

Mike



Frank Mills in his role as GB Team Manager

Photo courtesy of Jane Clayton

Mike McEwan



A WAG's perspective!

As a first-time spectator of the Veterans, the 2011 European Championships was a new and exciting outing for me, although a bit of a journey coming from Edinburgh to the north of France. Fortunately, on the way down we broke the journey in Ashford, Kent, staying in a really good hotel, where we had a relaxing night before taking the Channel Tunnel the next day, to find our way to Hénin-Beaumont.

On arriving in the town, we had a bit of trouble finding the hotel, and stopped in a shopping centre car park to ask directions of some of the locals. I was amazed and very impressed when the two ladies who had given directions to Mike then got in their car, thought about it, and signalled him to follow them. They drove to the hotel, making sure that we were still with them, then gave us a cheery wave as they went on their way! Perhaps they realised his French wasn't that great, or perhaps doubted his ability to follow directions - but it was amazingly friendly anyway!

On arrival, we found the hotel basic and clean, although the room we were initially given had been used by a smoker. We asked to change and were immediately moved to a non-smoking room, with no questions and no concerns. More bonus points!

We dumped our bags and set off to weapon control and registration. As I have never been to this with Mike before, the whole thing was a new experience. There was a large queue for registration, and we kept seeing people that we knew ahead or behind in the queue, and Mike saw a couple of people he hadn't seen since his Under-20 days. It was slow progress - but once inside the hall I could feel the excitement of the competition had started, from the buzz of the people all around.

I should have said earlier that we met another fencer at the hotel, and gave her a lift in to registration, and got the chance to talk to her, where we learned that she had been in Edinburgh at the Veterans' 4 Nations last year, although we hadn't actually talked to her then. One of the best things for me is that each time I accompany Mike to these events I come away richer with friends. This time it was this extraordinary lady who has had the greatest fight of her life this year - and won. She is a lady with an amazing sense of humour and a great will to fight. Her name is Mariette Mason, and I would like to take some time to think about what to write about her to do her justice, and will give an update in the next newsletter.

Irene McEwan

Car bumper stickers and pens

Let your car display a BVF sticker with pride!

Also available: BVF pens (black ink)

Prices:

Sticker and pen	£5
Sticker	£3
Pen	£2.50

(a small profit will go to BVF funds.)

If you would like an order sent to you in the post, please email or phone me for details: email: g.aghajan@virgin.net Phone: 07747 792712



Gillian Aghajan
Editor

What a way to spend the weekend!



How many of us have husbands, wives, partners, who always know best? Probably all of us! When I started fencing again last year, after a gap of 20 years, my wife said "Enjoy it, but don't become a fencing bore". Sighs..... try as I might, I can't help myself, weak creature that I am. I couldn't stop talking about the weekend I spent in Stoke on Trent (Stoke? I can hear people gasp with amazement) where the BAF laid on a coaching and performance course for Foil and Epee under the guidance of Maestro Roberto Piraino, from Italy, and our very own Professor Sue Benney. The 45 members of the course came from a range of ages and fencing experience, but all with an obvious determination to get the most out of it. A number of visiting coaches were present as observers.

Those of us in the Foil party were led by Roberto on the Saturday, whilst Sue handled the Epéeists. We came to grips not only with his teaching techniques but with some brilliant compound attacks involving Italian being translated into French, and then French into English, with a lot of gestures on the side.

On Saturday evening, many of the participants met for dinner at the Church House Restaurant and Bar, where a superb dinner was followed by, "ssshhh", more socialising in the bar and a disco! Roberto is the new John Travolta!! On Sunday, Roberto switched to the Epéeists, while the Foilists were led by Sue, who had a different approach. She had us run through a range of exercises, gradually building in complexity, to the point where I'm damned if I didn't run out of spare memory! Well, physical stamina too, if I'm honest.

Suffice to say, this was the first intensive fencing course I'd undertaken since I spent a week with Bob Anderson doing a President's (remember them?) course with the RAF in the 1960's. I'll remember it, not only for the actual experience, but for the wonderful way in which I felt welcomed and at home with new friends, gaining self-confidence on the way.

In talking to Professor Philip Bruce afterwards, we discussed the possibility of running a similar course in Oxfordshire and I'm approaching local clubs during the next week to see if there's interest. Why not contact him yourself on president@baf-fencing.org to organise a course. He'd welcome your interest, I'm sure, and you'll enjoy the experience. Yes it was a fantastic weekend and I learnt something really useful. I woke up on the Monday morning realising that this type of coaching is not quite what I need!

After nearly 60 years, most of my fencing is instinctive, purely reaction to what is happening in both attack and defence. Coaching which puts a variety of movements together complicates my mind and I find I'm spending what energy I have coping with that and not what my brain is telling me to do! Roberto said "Forget the instinct. SEE with your eyes". Just wish I could. I'm going to find a coach who will watch when I fence and comment on what I do when I'm in action. Nevertheless, overall it was a good experience and I did learn something very useful.

Bill Poynton

A request from Marcia Stretch

You may know Marcia's son, Grant. I received the following email from him via Marcia - Editor:

Hi,

Many of you who know me have heard stories of my thrills and spills on bicycles so for many people this will not come as much of a surprise but for those I haven't regaled with tales of my daring do here's what this email is about.

When I joined Capita I worked with another PM who also cycled and while swapping stories I was told about an event called La Marmotte. At the time I didn't think about it but the seed was planted, so this year I decided to have a go at it and was lucky enough to get a place.

At 174km (107 miles) and 5,000 metres (15,000 ft) of climbing La Marmotte is considered to be one of the toughest one day road races. It is a race in the French Alps, lovely and scenic you might think, however this route goes over several of the mountains used in the Tour de France, including the Col de la Croix Fer, Col du Telegraphe, Col du Galibier before returning to Bourg d'Oisans.

Needless to say rather than finishing with a gentle cruise along the valley they saved the toughest climb for the end, the finish is at the top of the 21 hairpin bend climb to the ski station of L'Alpe d'Huez.

A few months after entering the event I heard of a charity who specialise in providing adapted bicycles and tricycles for children suffering from cancer, their aim is to provide a fun and practical way to help these kids recuperate. It is a small charity run by cyclists so they are not well known and don't spend funds on admin and advertising, instead they choose to spend the funds on helping the kids. If you would like to know more about them this is the link to their website <http://cyclistsfc.org.uk/>
If I can I would like to help this charity - and hope you might encourage me to get through the race and post a good time. if you feel you could help I have set up a page where you can make a contribution to the cause <http://www.justgiving.com/grant-stretch/>

Thank you for your encouragement and generosity.

Kind regards
Grant

Grant Stretch

Mob: 07769 239237

Email: Grant.Stretch@Capita.co.uk



*Grant Stretch
in action*

Competition results (top half)

Brighton Open - 8/5/2011

MF (41)	6	Paul Lowen
	10	Brian Causton
	13	Kenny Jones
	15	Jim Whelan
	17	Paul Harden
ME (41)	5	Dale Broadbent
	6	Howard West
	9	Robin Davenport
	18	Rob Phelps
	20	Anthony Rossiter
MS (15)	7	Adrian Medhurst
WF (14)	2	Dawn Townsend
WE (12)	3	Mariette Mason

Chichester Open - 28/5/2011

MF (66)	10	Paul Lowen
	16	Nick Fihosy
ME (78)	12	Jeremy Raj
	13	Howard West
	18	Rob Phelps
	20	Alan Knowles
	23	Bill Osbaldeston
	28	Dale Broadbent
WF (23)	6	Jenny Morris
WE (32)	8	Mariette Mason

Inverclyde Open - 28/5/2011

MS (25)	12	Julian Ghosh
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Bexley Open - 11/6/2011

ME (59)	6	Howard West
	10	Robin Davenport
	13	Matthew Gibbs
	15	Philip Jordan
	27	Dale Broadbent
	28	Tom Chrisp
WE (13)	3	Silvia Earl
	6	Helen Easter

Hertfordshire Open Sabre - 12/6/2011

WS (31)	5	Jane Hutchison
	9	Jenny Morris



West Midlands Open - July 2nd/3rd - REMINDER!

Details are on the website www.veterans-fencing.co.uk.

If you have sent your entry by snail mail rather than online please check on the website that your entry has been received by clicking 'see who has entered'

Please note that there are still major road works at the junction of the A4123 and the A461, known as Burnt Tree Island. These are scheduled to be finished at by the end of June but if not there may be delays especially on the Saturday.

(Apologies to the White Eagle lady sabreur referred to by me as a gentleman in my report on The Crystal Open in the May newsletter. I was thinking of the wrong fight - short term memory loss....)

Peter Baron



Abingdon Fencing Club

White Horse Team Trophy

Mixed Teams Fencing Competition

This competition is for teams of 3 fencers of either sex consisting of:
1 Foilist, 1 Epeeist and 1 Sabreur.

There will be a round of poules fought per weapon. All teams will progress to the DE which will be by relay. No composite teams.

Date: Sunday 26^h June 2011

Time: Check-in by 9:00, Fencing starts by 09:30 prompt.

Venue: White Horse Leisure & Tennis
Centre, Audlett Drive, Abingdon
OX14 3PJ

Entries to: Abingdon Fencing Club,
c/o Andrew Banks,
2 The Granary,
Bignell Park Barns,
Chesterton,
Bicester, Oxon.
OX26 1TD

Fax: 01869 320273

Email: whitehorsetrophy@operamail.com

Entry Fee: £24 per team (Late entries £30)

Closing Date: Saturday 18^d June 2011

The organisers would be grateful for the loan of any
boxes, spools or ground leads.

www.abingdonfencing.org.uk

*Email or phone
Peter Baron if
you would like
to be in a
team. Usual
first past the
post system of
selection
(subject to
weapon
combinations).*

*Contact details
on page 16.*



MOROCCO

TRAVEL FOR REAL

Editor's Note:

The BVF newsletter is your voice: a chance for you to put forward your views, send reports, letters, photos or articles.

Please speak up!

Send to me:
g.aghajan@virgin.net

Caption Competition
June
send your entry to Editor
g.aghajan@virgin.net



Photo by Editor

Caption Competition
May

Paul does it again! - Editor

"Fencers discuss the chances of seeing a veteran on the Olympic medals podium."

Paul Brenda



Photo by Editor

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

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by 10th July 2011

Tel: 07747 792712
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g.aghajan@virgin.net

