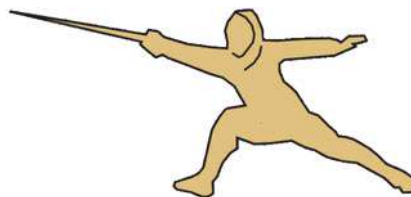


# British Veterans. Fencing



## Newsletter - May 2010

***Congratulations to all those selected for the World Championships!***

### **MF 50-59**

John Troiano  
Tony Bartlett  
Lindsay Watkiss  
Richard Sage

### **MF 60-69**

Graham Paul  
Brian Causton  
Steve Fox  
Malcolm Fare

### **MF 70+**

Alan Ault  
Jim Pilkington  
Edmund Gray  
Austen Moore

### **WF 50-59**

Linda McMahon  
Jenny Morris  
Gillian Worman  
Hilary Philbin

### **WF 60-69**

Maggie Myers  
Clare Halsted  
Lynda Norrie  
Silvia Earl

### **WF 70+**

Janet Cooksey  
Sylvia Brown  
Ann Cornwall  
Diane Austin

### **ME 50-59**

Neal Mallett  
Anton Pollard  
Hugo Veryzer  
Stephen Steinberg

### **ME 60-69**

Howard West  
Robin Davenport  
Ralph Johnson  
Lawrence Burr

### **ME 70+**

Jim Pilkington  
Peter Jacobs  
Robert Phelps  
Nigel Hinchliff

### **WE 50-59**

Jane Clayton  
Jenny Morris  
Caron Hale  
Kate Smith

### **WE 60-69**

Fiona Haldane  
Kate Elvin  
Silvia Earl  
Marish Silverman

### **WE 70+**

Janet Cooksey  
Sylvia Brown  
Ann Cornwall  
Connie Adam

### **MS 50-59**

Carl Morris  
Barry Coulter  
Chris Prevett  
Cary Zitcer

### **MS 60-69**

Richard Cohen  
Andy Bornemisza  
Malcolm Cawton  
Richard Bonehill

### **MS 70+**

Mark Cwynarski  
Alan Ault  
Jim Pilkington  
Bob Perry

### **WS 50-59**

Caron Hale  
Jane Hutchison  
Sue Benney  
Jenny Morris

### **WS 60-69**

Silvia Earl  
Vivien Frith  
Maggie Myers  
Pat Shepherd-Foster

### **WS 70+**

Carol Wengraf  
Sylvia Brown  
Connie Adam  
Janet Cooksey

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## Chairman's Letter

Dear Members,

Since the highly successful British Veterans Championships we have undertaken to organise those events in 2010, that our 2009 membership survey indicated you wanted.

The Unisex Foil and Sabre in April, whilst giving the organisers a few headaches due to "eleventh hour" entries, was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone taking part and you can read for yourselves just how much as the report contained in this edition of the Newsletter is largely composed by the participants themselves.

The next event for your diaries is the Veterans West Midlands Open in July, and we would ask you please to enter as soon as possible as this is planned to be an annual event and we would like an early indication that it will be well supported from the start.

As you know, I have been temporary Newsletter editor for the past few issues, having taken on the reins from a very busy Linda Lawes. The BVF committee unanimously co-opted Gillian Aghajan in April, and her first duty is to assist with the compilation of the Newsletter. Welcome aboard Gillian and we are very pleased to have your skills and experience to help us in our endeavours.

A new logo is being designed following the name change. If any member is interested in contributing, please see the attached brief, and we look forward to your contribution.

Later this month, our BVF Great Britain Squad takes part in the 10<sup>th</sup> European Team Championships in Skopje and I'm sure you will join me in wishing them, and Team Manager Linda Lawes, every success.

**Frank Mills**

**Chairman, British Veterans Fencing**

### BFA Honours

The BFA Honours Committee will meet in June. If you would like to nominate anyone who has made a significant contribution to fencing in any capacity, then please send a nomination giving details of their contribution and activities, to BFA HQ by May 31st.

British Fencing is eager to thank and recognise those who help fencing.

**Keith Smith**

British Fencing  
1 Baron's Gate  
33 Rothschild Road  
London W4 5HT

### April's Puzzle

Did you identify the two notable fencers in the photo?



Jane Clayton is in the 2nd row from the top, 2nd from the left with the long, dark hair. Neal Mallett is in the front row, 1st on the right, sitting down. The photo was taken circa 1970 at Folkestone Fencing Club and Professor Alf Mallard, who started both Jane and Neal on their path to fencing success, is seated in the second row, 2nd from left with the moustache.

*Photo courtesy of Jane Clayton*

## Unisex Foil & Sabre

The membership said that they want more friendly matches, and the 2009 Unisex Epée had a record entry. Five years after the demise of the Bath Unisex Foil and Sabre, we thought it was worth trying for resuscitation.

With less than a week to the closing date there were two entries at foil and three at sabre.

We decided to hang on in, and an email reminder did the trick, bringing up the entry to a respectable 34 in total.

### *Four participants describe their day:*

A small band of Veteran Fencers made their way to the inaugural event, on a sunny Saturday, at Radley College, Oxford. A suitably posh venue for fencers of a certain age; a classy gymnasium with modern facilities attached. Unusually, the sabreurs outnumbered the foilists; there were only 11 foilists, but a more respectable 21 sabreurs. Foil was fenced as a poule unique. We foilists voted to fence each fight to 10 hits. Brian Causton won the foil, with Caron Hale being the highest placed lady, in second place, having beaten all the men except Brian. Its a shame that there were not enough entries for it to be run as pools, with or without DE, as the poule unique format does not provide a final, except where there is a tied number of victories, which happened in the Sabre, John Norrie beating Keith Rogerson. The Ladies' prize went to Nickola Beck.

The facilities were really first class, the showers the best I've ever used, with individual cubicles, each with its own drying off area. Afterwards, a few of us finished off the day at a nearby country pub.



*Brian and Fred  
stop for lunch*

### *Brian Causton*

A beautiful, sunny, Saturday morning driving to Abingdon wondering what I was doing. I hadn't picked up a sabre for some time and had not been able to stand up straight all week, but a double dose of ibuprofen and a stick-on heat pad on my back and I was going to give it a go. Surreal to see a sign on the M4 'Heathrow Airport closed' and with such a blue and cloudless sky, hard to imagine the thick mass of ash up there somewhere.

Great to see familiar and new faces at the venue, Radley College, and with 21 sabreurs, 3 rounds of poules were to follow. The foilists were doing their own thing at one end of the hall and the sabreurs got to it at the other end. Notes to self – do not test sabre on foot, counter attacking is not a good tactic. My goal was to remain standing up straight by the end of the day and to have a good time. Both goals achieved... (an overtight sabre lamé has the same effect as a back corset.)

Fred and Brian came up with a very good suggestion part way through the day. Punting on the Thames with a glass of champagne in hand was very tempting but I had started the sabre and I was going to finish. Shame that I only got my brain in gear in the last bout. Nevertheless a good day was had by all. Thanks to Hilary Arnold for her superb organisation and to her, Frank Mills and helpers for laying out the pistes.

A few of us made our way to a country pub and sitting outside soaking up the warmth of the sun with friends, enjoying drinks après piste, was an idyllic way to finish another good Vets' day out before a leisurely drive home in the evening sun.

### *Gillian Aghajan*



I have always wondered why, when I go to fencing competitions, they are always held on glorious days and I am stuck inside a sports hall. The Veteran Unisex Foil and Sabre was no exception but the sports hall did have windows and the doors were flung wide open to allow as much air in as possible. The turn out for the foil was quite low, a total of 11 fencers but the standard was high and the decision to fence to ten hits in five minutes was enthusiastically embraced, although someone's suggestion of fencing to fifteen hits was rightfully ignored. I had hoped to also fence a little bit at sabre after the foil, but after fencing ten fights against such strong fencers I had no energy left for any more fencing, nor could I bear the thought of putting on a long sleeve baco-foil jacket for some more roasting. The whole day was thoroughly enjoyable, with loads of extremely good fencing, everybody friendly and the men who lost to me were very gracious in defeat. What more can a dedicated fencer ask for?

***Caron Hale and Brian Causton  
Foil winners***

***Caron Hale***

I always enjoyed the unisex sabre event when it was held in Bath, so was very pleased to hear that it was being re-introduced. Oxford, for me, is nearer than Bath and it was a beautiful day. The gymnasium at Radley College was such that we didn't get that "we're all stuck in here while the sun is shining outside" feeling. However, the sun streaming through the wall bars did produce some interesting effects on one of the pistes.



It was encouraging to see the sabre entry virtually twice that of the foil with some faces that were new to me – particularly among the 8 women who entered. In fact, the leading woman – Nickola Beck - was 40 two hours before the competition began. (OK it was two weeks but I thought two hours made a better story).

Although the result doesn't count towards any kind of qualification, it was no less competitive than any other Vets event, but still with that friendly, supportive feel that is the hallmark of the British Vets. Coupled with the "steely grip in the velvet glove" organisation of Hilary Arnold, we had a really enjoyable day's fencing.

***John Norrie***

***Nickola Beck and John Norrie  
Sabre winners***

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*photos by Gillian Aghajan*



## 4 Nations - Edinburgh

### A Scottish View

Just over a year ago, in the glowing aftermath of the fantastic event that was the Belfast 4 Nations, I went with the flow of the moment and the enjoyment of the weekend, and agreed to host the next event. Since I'd been good at arithmetic at school, and 3 events of a 4 Nations tournament had already been hosted by the other nations, unassailable logic told me that it was time for the 4th event to be held in Scotland - and this, plus said glowing aftermath, succeeded in masking the internal alarm that was frantically trying to tell me that I've never organised any competitions in the past, and didn't have a clue what questions to ask, let alone know what I had to organise!

As an example, I didn't know the measurements for the various lines on a piste - there's always someone else who has already organised that (and I still don't know them - Bob and Paul from Allstar gave me a loan of a couple of conducting pistes for the weekend, so I used the lines on that as a template!). This made me understand and appreciate just how much people do to prepare for competitions - something I used to take for granted, but from now on, I'll be extremely grateful.

The internal alarm started to register a few months later - however, I'll skip past the intervening months since then, where there was a growing list of more and more examples of just how much I didn't know! Thankfully, I shared these with the organisers for the other nations - who mercifully offered advice, guidance, help and documentation (and many thanks to Gillian, Mike, John and Fiona for this) and I'll bring the story up to the weekend of 24/25 April, when a welcome host of fencers descended - despite volcanic ash - onto St Thomas of Aquin's School in Edinburgh, where we had an extremely enjoyable weekend of fencing and socialising, in particular at a well-subscribed dinner on the Saturday night. Traditionally we bring gifts from each nation to present to the others at the dinner. This year we agreed to hold a raffle for these gifts, with the proceeds going to charity.

To draw the raffle, I was very pleased to have Bert Bracewell - the man who taught me fencing - as the guest of honour. Many of you will know Bert, and it will be no surprise to you that he had many suggestions for me to include in my own speech - so many, in fact, that I volunteered him to give his own speech, which was well received! I'm not going to dwell on the speeches, but there were some fine words from Mike Norfolk, John Crouch and Sheila Anderson (and apologies if memory is a bit fuzzy and there were other speeches - I did have one or two drinks!), preceded by a fine chorus of "Happy Birthday to you" for England's Moya, who must have turned 40 something. I assume this age, since she was at a Veteran's event (and looking pretty spry from what I remember from refereeing the first match!).



*photo by  
Gillian Aghajan*

(continued next page)

The drawing of the raffle was fairly brisk, and - unusually - saw the prizes going to the right people - e.g. Welsh Whisky going to a Scot (Brian - our national heritage means he should be able to appreciate this tippie); a monumental slab of chocolate going to a self-confessed chocaholic (Fiona); our own 2nd (i.e. daft) prize of a Nessie hat (including the instruction to wear it when leaving) going to a Scotsman. In all, well-deserved prizes - plus we raised £206 for the charity Missing People, and I'm scouting around for further donations - so if you have any, please let me know, as if I can get it up to £250, my employer will donate another £250, meaning the charity will get £500 - a pretty good result for the first time we've tried this!

We went into the Sunday knowing that England were heading for victory (unlike last year in Belfast, where Scotland and England were neck and neck at the end of Saturday). However, this didn't detract from the competitive spirit, and everyone fought it out to the last hit. For me, it was a great weekend, epitomised by the nail-biting final match of the event - Wales-Ireland Men's Epee. I'm sure the Welsh and Irish will remember the detailed sequence of hits, and my apologies that I didn't catch all of it. All I remember is hearing it was 39-38 with not a lot of time on the clock, then equalised at 39-39 with somewhere between 10 and 20 seconds on the clock, then going from there to a 42-40 victory for Wales. Epic stuff!

***Mike McEwan***

## English Thoughts

England travelled to Edinburgh with the strongest team it could muster, expecting to be run very close by Scotland. Our fears were confirmed when Scotland finished unbeaten in the men's sabre. However, our women's foil team redressed the balance to leave both teams with 5 victories at the end of the morning. The afternoon proved decisive with both our teams winning all their matches and the Scots losing out to Ireland at men's foil and Wales at women's sabre. This left us with a 4 victory margin and the opportunity to enjoy the evening function in the knowledge that our epeeists should be able to complete the match victory on Sunday morning.

An excellent dinner was enjoyed by over 80 people with a raffle to raise money for the Missing People charity; an idea that will almost certainly be carried on to future events.

Our confidence was tested on Sunday morning when Wales won a close fought victory over our men's epee team. Meanwhile, Scotland's men's epee team was sweeping all before them, as was the Irish women's epee team. It was now up to our women to show their mettle and they duly delivered the goods with victories over Wales and Scotland.

Finishing with a 3 victory margin this was one better than last year. The reality is that with a couple of absent fencers Scotland could well have overturned the outcome. Also, looking at some of the fencers available to Ireland, it is not inconceivable they also could be in the hunt next year.

This event goes from strength to strength and we look with interest to Wrexham in 2011.

***John Crouch***



***The victorious England Team***

*photo courtesy of Moya McNamara*

## Competition Results

### Elite Epee - 20/4/2010

#### 4 Nations - Team (Edinburgh)

1	England	14 victories
2	Scotland	11
3	Ireland*	7
4	Wales	4

\* Northern Ireland and Eire combined team

#### ME (89)

44	Anton Pollard
46	Ian Briggs
65	Keith Barnett
79	David Karlin
81	Roger Nickless
84	Mark Richardson
85	Simon White
88	Robert Streeter

#### Glasgow Open - 11/4/2010

ME (58)	6	Brian McMiken
MS (24)	3	Richard Cohen
WF (29)	9	Cathy Heyes
WE (21)	19	Lyn Robinson



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## Veterans Winton Cup Competition Team Contacts

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<b>Yorkshire:</b>	Moya McNamara	email: <a href="mailto:moya.mcnamara@btinternet.com">moya.mcnamara@btinternet.com</a>
<b>Wales:</b>	Mike Norfolk	email: <a href="mailto:mail@norf19fsnet.co.uk">mail@norf19fsnet.co.uk</a>



## White Horse Open Teams (organised by Abingdon Fencing Club)

Date: Sunday 27th June 2010

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>

Those wishing to take part should contact Peter Baron **soon** stating weapon(s) you are offering to fence.

Email: [bvf@baronfencing.plus.com](mailto:bvf@baronfencing.plus.com) - Please use the subject "White Horse Open team"  
or  
phone 01384 400242

Whilst we could put in a couple or even three teams, if enough people wish to fence, places in the team(s) are based on first come first served. Actual team composition will be decided when all "applications" have been received, with regard to weapons offered and the gender of the applicants. The Captain for the event may change those teams on the day to cope with any last minute changes in personnel.



**White Horse Teams 2009**

## 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

**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

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

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.freeserve.co.uk/celtic.htm>





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[linda.lawes1@btinternet.com](mailto:linda.lawes1@btinternet.com)  
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**If you wish to enter please contact your  
team captain  
(List on Page 7)**

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### BVF CALENDAR 2010

May 27-30	European Team Championships, Skopje, Macedonia - (Selection event)
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 <a href="#">Gillian Aghajian</a> for details
Oct 31	Middlesex Epée - details to follow
Nov 27	Xmas dinner and fencing - details to follow

## Fencing's Royal Connection

Every year at British Fencing's AGM the President reads out a ritual exchange of messages whereby, on behalf of the membership, he sends loyal greetings to the Association's patron, Her Majesty the Queen, and she in reply returns good wishes for an enjoyable and successful meeting. This has long been an empty gesture by a monarch who has no interest in fencing. It was not always so.

Henry VIII encouraged displays of swordplay and in 1540 gave the London Masters of Defence a monopoly of teaching arms. Fencing became the passion of high and low. A "prize" fight, or public examination of candidates by the Masters, halted business in the City of London for the day. During the three reigns that followed there are many references to prizes fought before royalty. In 1606 James I commanded a display for Christian IV of Denmark at the Palace of Greenwich and on a second visit, eight years later, Christian saw feats of arms performed by the most skillful fencers in London.

However, the Monopolies Act of 1624 put an end to the teaching privileges of the Masters of Defence and with the Civil War the guild was disbanded (not to be officially reformed until 1931). Although there was an attempt to revive trials of skill following the Restoration, fencing displays in the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century degenerated into gladiatorial combats.

Royal interest in fencing only revived in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century when the leading fencing master of the day, Domenico Angelo, was appointed to teach the Prince of Wales (later George III) and his brother the Duke of York in 1758. The following year two younger brothers, the Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland, also started to fence. In a letter dated 5th May 1776 Angelo wrote: "Their Royal Highnesses [Gloucester and Cumberland] having signified to me that a Treatise of Fencing; with engravings [*L'Ecole des Armes*], would contribute much to their amusement, I instantly applied myself to the undertaking. I engaged that gentleman [James Gwyn] to draw all the positions of fencing, for the model of which I myself had the patience to stand and afterwards got executed by the first artists. As the Princes had given occasion to my treatise, I thought it my duty to ask their permission to dedicate it to them, which they granted in the most flattering manner. Some time after this, I was informed by the Duke of Queensbury that his Majesty would be very glad to see the original designs. I ordered them to be arranged with all possible expedition, and every one to be adorned with an elegant border, and the book to be bound in the most superb manner. The king was so good as to examine it, and conversed with me some time on the subject of the book with considerable knowledge. In the year 1771 I had the honour to be appointed fencing master to their Royal Highnesses, the Prince of Wales [later George IV] and Prince Frederick."



The special presentation copy of the original drawings for Angelo's great work. *L'Ecole des Armes*, published in 1763, is now in the Mellon collection at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, USA. The Royal Library at Windsor has a proof set of reduced plates commissioned in 1765 for Diderot's encyclopedia. Hand-coloured, mounted and bound in red morocco with a cusped yellow leather border, the plates are prefaced by a manuscript dedication by Angelo to the Prince of Wales.

***The Prince of Wales watches a match between the Chevalier D'Eon (right) and the Chevalier de Saint-Georges in 1787***

The Prince Regent's active participation in fencing is well documented. An engraving by James Gillray shows him and Mrs. Fitzberherth attending a match at Carlton House in 1787 between the two most famous fencers of their time, both veterans – the enigmatic transvestite Chevalier D'Eon, 58, and the part West Indian Chevalier de Saint-Georges, 41. By all accounts D'Eon completely vanquished his formidable opponent, hitting him seven times without being touched himself. The *Morning Herald* of 9th April 1787 reported in traditional sycophantic style that "the Prince did *Monsieur* St. George the honour to thrust with him in carte and tierce, and astonished every beholder with his amazing grace; whenever his Highness put himself on his guard, his attitudes were highly elegant and easy."

In 1789 another exhibition of fencing, this time between the master Joseph Roland and Saint-Georges, was held before the Prince of Wales at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton. Afterwards the Prince asked for a set of foils, masks and gloves, for which Roland was suitably rewarded. These objects are no longer in the Royal collection and have vanished without trace.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a fresh impetus was given to the sport with the arrival of Prince Albert. In 1838 while at Bonn University, he received a certificate for fencing and his fellow student Prince William of Lowenstein later recalled, "In fencing and the practice of the broadsword he was very skillful. ... he excelled so much that once in a fencing match he carried off the prize from all his competitors". This interest was passed on to his children, the Prince of Wales [later Edward VII] and Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, who were members of the London Fencing Club from 1865 until the end of the century. In the LFC's 1866 ledger of members' vital statistics, the Duke of Edinburgh, then aged 22, is recorded as weighing 10½ stone and having a 38 inch chest, 12 1/8 inch upper arm and 10½ inch forearm. His elder brother does not appear to have submitted to measurement.

The princes were taught fencing by Pierre Prevost until his death in 1869 and then by Baptiste Bertrand, the first of three generations of fencing masters, who later taught the three daughters of the Prince of Wales, Louise, Victoria and Maud. Their example was followed by many younger members of the Court circle and made fencing for women fashionable.

In 1903, when a British epee team fenced at an international match in Paris for the first time, Edward VII sent a telegram expressing his interest in the occasion. At the Athens Olympics of 1906 he and Queen Alexandra watched the British epee team beat Germany 9-2 and rumour had it that the king won a substantial bet on the outcome from the king of Greece. *The Field* recorded that he seemed much pleased with the result. After the Games Edward VII announced his pleasure to become the patron of the Amateur Fencing Association and, in memory of the Tudor Masters of Defence, permitted the Association to adopt the Tudor rose. Ever since, the reigning monarch has been patron of the Association. But since Edward VII's time no member of the Royal Family has been interested in fencing, although Prince William was taught it at prep school and, who knows, may one day show a renewed interest in the sport.



***Edgar Seligman (right) takes on one of the German team at the Athens Olympics of 1906***

***Malcolm Fare***



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