



A sign of the times!

Photo - Joanne Yeates

Committee news

Training days

Winton memories

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Chairman's letter

Dear Members,

Has it really been six months since the start of lockdown.....? Life has certainly changed for everyone, and now we are facing what looks to be a difficult autumn and winter. I hope that you and your loved ones are all safe and well.

British Fencing has been regularly updating and publishing very good information and guidelines on COVID-19 issues:

<https://www.britishfencing.com/covid-19-latest-news/>

The FIE cancelled the 2020 Veterans World Championships and has since postponed competitions until 1st January 2021:

<https://static.fie.org/uploads/24/124245-lettre%20info%208-20%20ang.pdf>

The BVF committee has continued to have Zoom meetings and we have been working behind the scenes. We have, in the last week, been giving very careful consideration on whether it is feasible to hold the BVF International in Guildford. Taking into account the latest government COVID-19 regulations, the rapidly changing situation including local lockdowns, limited opportunities for all fencers to train, and last but not least BF guidelines and the FIE announcement, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the BVF International, Guildford - January 9th/10th 2021. We know that this will be disappointing for everyone but we hope that you understand.

The BVF International should have been a selection event for the 2021 Veteran World Championships. The committee will consider whether to use results from the Veterans European Championships (May), should that event go ahead. It is quite possible that we may not be able to hold the BVF Championships and BVF Age Groups in March, but this is a decision we will have to make nearer the time. We hope that there will other opportunities to run these events or alternatives if that proves to be the case.

We had originally decided not to hold an AGM, but have since given this further consideration, and in order to comply with our constitution as closely as possible in these unprecedented circumstances we will be holding an online AGM including elections for all committee positions on Saturday 7th November. Details will be published on the BVF website and membership will be informed by email.

Caroline Clancy is officially standing down as BVF Treasurer at the AGM and the committee has co-opted Paul Baillache to take on this role starting in October. Thanks to Caroline for all her work and thanks to Paul for taking it on! As you know, we had been advertising for this role for quite some time...

I am very pleased to say Clare Halsted has accepted an ex-officio role of BVF COVID Officer. I am sure that you will agree that Clare is the ideal person for this.

We had been discussing at length how we can increase participation, and we have set up a Participation sub-committee:

Beth Davidson - Chairman
John Mason
Lucy Wright
A good team!

It is so good to see that there have been some socially distanced training camps/days and that there is some fencing happening, and brilliant that some Vets have been able to get together again! The first training was sabre at Truro, closely followed by sabre and then epee at the Leon Paul Centre. Please send in reports and photos for any other training events.

I hope that competitions can return before too long. Apart from the lack of competitive fencing for all, I am certainly missing seeing everyone and my camera is too!

Keep safe and well.

Sincerely,

Gillian Aghajan
BVF Chairman

Sabre restarts!

Truro Fencing Club - Vets Sabre training camp September 2020

The first training camp since lockdown started on the Friday evening. Vets arrived at the Salle looking very happy to see old friends and ready to start fencing.

The next two days involved plenty of footwork, social distancing, tactical training, coffee, sports psychology, antibacterial gel and sparring. The numbers footwork game certainly challenged the brain as well as technique and reactions.

Having six months away from the piste, most fencers felt a little rusty and wondered if they would survive the weekend. There was nothing to fear, as Allan said, " I especially liked being greeted by Niki with a broad smile and fresh-brewed coffee each session before he ran us ragged. I would do it all again-anytime - even without the coffee. Niki is a supreme Sabre coach".

Caroline Martin



**Niki Dinev and
vet sabreurs**

Sabre at the Leon Paul Centre September 2020

I won't lie, returning to fencing after lockdown was daunting, but it's hard to think of a better reintroduction than the veterans sabre camp held at the Leon Paul Fencing centre last weekend (26th September).

After a socially distanced footwork and conditioning session/warm-up, we split into two pods of five each with its own coach. Then we rotated through pairs exercises for a while before beginning some structured sparring (trying to employ elements from the exercises as well as playing scoring games – first hit counts double, that sort of thing) while the coaches began giving individual lessons. Mine largely centred on Beth telling me not to be so hard on myself – it was OK to be quite so sloppy and breathless the first session back. It would give me things to work on.



Ceri and Rubin take a breather
Selfie by Ceri Thomas

Throw in a chat about tactics and psychology during the tea break and some more structured sparring afterward and seven hours rocketed by (the camp ran from 1pm to 8pm). Yes, we wore face masks throughout (though I defaulted to a Leon Paul mask liner for actual fencing). Yes, there were more bottles of hand sanitiser on display than water bottles. And yes, the post-fight handshake was sadly a thing of the past. But the camp worked and it worked well. By the end of it, I felt like a fencer again. Especially when I woke the next day feeling like I'd been beaten up with a bag of spanners...

Thanks to Beth and George for handling the coaching and to Jax for organising it all. She's hoping to get a few more camps booked in before Christmas (lockdown conditions permitting). I highly recommend going along. Just don't take my place...

Ceri Thomas



Veterans Epee Training Day Sunday 27 September Leon Paul Fencing Centre

In the current environment, organising a day of training turned out to be so much more than engaging a coach, booking a venue and spreading the word so whoever wanted to join in could turn up and fence all and sundry. We had registration questionnaires, checklists, instructions and running sheets coming out of our ears! On the day it was all worth the effort though.

We specifically selected this week-end as it should have been the Winton week-end so we knew that most veteran fencers already had the date marked in the diary. We then selected the Leon Paul Fencing Centre, not just because it has all the facilities we needed but because there was a clear plan in place about how to operate in a Covid environment.



The first thing that informed our planning were pods of 6 fencers while allowing up to 30 people in the building at any one time. We settled on a maximum of 24 fencers plus two coaches and one organiser. The second thing that we had to plan around was containing the actual fencing time for fencers to 2 hours plus a warm-up session.

We weren't sure how fencers would respond to the constraints and proposed schedule for the day but we were delighted at the speed with which they registered and we were even able to accommodate those on the waiting list in the end.

At 9.30am every registrant was temperature checked, responded to the Covid inquisition from Mariette Mason and made their way upstairs to be a part of the 'wow, how great it is to be here again' and long distance air kisses session! The work started with Coach Bence Juhasz demonstrating a range of mobility exercises with particular emphasis on injury minimisation for older fencers. This was put into practice with a well distanced warm-up session followed by some directed sparring in pods managed by Bence and Sam Boyle.



Everyone left the building for lunch, although it was a bit chilly hanging around outside but it meant the venue could be cleaned down and reset for the afternoon by Peter Eames. The afternoon session started with insights from Bence on how other countries train and develop their fencing 'styles' with much discussion about how we can counter them. We also got clarity from Kola Ayanwale about the non-combativity rules and how we can start thinking about how to use them tactically in team events!



The day closed out with a fencing session practising the skills and moves to use against other styles and a brief 'free' fencing session to use up the last few minutes of permitted fencing time.

Survey feedback will be analysed but anecdotal response is positive, and most fencers have something to take back to their own clubs and coaches on which they can work. Equally importantly the day brought the epee fencers back together again to start the process of rebuilding team spirit and support. It is our intention to hold another such training day either before Christmas or early in the New Year.

Thanks and appreciation to:

- Jon Willis and the Leon Paul Fencing Centre
- Peter Eames
- Bence Jahusz
- Sam Boyle
- Kola Ayanwale
- Mariette Mason (with advice from Clare Halsted in the background)
- Caryl Oliver
- All the detailed information and guidance on the British Fencing Website

Caryl Oliver & Mariette Mason

Keeping busy in lockdown! July 2020

Working from home as a college lecturer took up rather more time than regular work hours so I perfected chocolate chip shortbread and tried to manage never-ending emails. Now we're officially on holiday, I can keep on top of work and, as the Vets Commonwealths were postponed and we're still in lockdown, I decided to learn new skills: Spanish, jogging and crochet. Two weeks in and I think I have a problem.

I'm hoping the fingerwork in crochet crosses over into fencing fingerplay a la *The Karate Kid*?!?

Lorna Smith



Winton moments - 2011-2019



Here's looking to 2021!



**Caption
Competition
Autumn 2020**

Send your entry to Editor
g.aghajan@btinternet.com

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@btinternet.com

Editor

PLEASE NOTE

Any articles or letters for the Winter newsletter should be sent to:

Gillian Aghajan

by 6th December 2020

email:

g.aghajan@btinternet.com



**Caption
Competition
Spring 2020**

Editor's choice :











"Go away. I'm not buying any more pencils from you."

Mike (Rob) Robinson



Photos - Editor

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