

President's Report for the 2022 BVF AGM

2022 was the year that we seem to be gradually getting back to some semblance of normality following the disastrous pandemic. Covid hasn't disappeared and there are an awful lot of other nasty bugs that have been laying people low but on the whole we are in a lot better position than 2021 and our usual events have and are scheduled to be run as normal. Obviously there are still political restrictions on the international scene concerning Ukraine but domestically we seem to be getting back to business as usual.

AGM

As I mentioned in last year's report, to ensure continuity of experience, only three of the committee, including one of the officers, will be up for election at this AGM and the remaining members will have been deemed to have been elected for a 3 year term in 2020 and will serve for the remainder of that tenure. If someone stands down either before or during the AGM we can co-opt a replacement who will take on the remainder of that person's tenure.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Silver Swords is an initiative headed up by our development officer Beth to introduce older people into the sport and give guidance with appropriate methods of training. The first session to train up Activators was run by Beth, Ev and Gillian in Manchester on 20th November and was very well received. This will be followed up with more sessions and specific beginner sparring sessions - the first of which is taking place on the Sunday of the Nationals.

The Committee introduced a hardship fund should it be needed for individuals to have a funded place for qualifying events. We also introduced a Car Sharing scheme via Facebook to help with the costs of competing and to go towards reducing our carbon footprint.

Newsletter – this has been compiled successfully for the last two years by Nicola. I regret that due to work commitments she has decided to stand down at this AGM. Many thanks to her for all the hard work she has put in. I'm pleased to say that Gillian has offered to take over the reins as editor, so expect to be badgered from time to time for interesting articles.

Selection – Our method for GB selection is constantly under review. In addition to several zoom discussions the committee had a day-long physical meeting in June to discuss the appropriateness of our current process and make any adjustments accordingly. We are aware that different people have different views on selection. Some favour selecting from a range of European events, some from our Senior rankings or from designated senior events. Others prefer our existing system of selecting from 3 nominated domestic events. At present this system has been scrutinised and seems fairest to most people but is under constant review and will be reassessed for the next season. The final selection event for 2023 will be in April which is a little earlier than usual given the World Championships are not till October. The reason for this is the venue for the Worlds is scheduled for Florida and we know people will need to arrange flights and accommodation in good time and at reasonable cost as soon as possible. The same arrangement is likely to be in place for Dubai 2024 for the same reasons.

I must give thanks to our Chair of Selectors **Graham Paul** and his team of selectors who are are –

Epee	- Neal Mallett	Marg Oniye
Foil	- Gillian Worman	Nick Mort
Sabre	- Jane Hutchison	Chris Prevett

EVENTS

Guildford International 8/9th January – As stated in my previous report there was huge uncertainty about this event taking place and a disproportionate amount of time was spent by the organisers to make sure all went well. I am not going to go through the list of people who deserve our thanks for making this such a success as I have already done this in a previous communication but I must give another mention to Graham, Kola and Paul who really went over and above to pull this off.

Age Groups Cardiff & LP London 6th/13th March

Unfortunately we had to split the events over two weekends and two venues with Sabre & Foil being held in Cardiff and Epee in London. Having said that both weekends were successful and it was great to see almost 200 of our fencers participating. Many thanks to **Lyn and Mike Robinson** for their organisation here.

The Home Nations Veteran Quadrangular - Bristol 9th April.

A hotly contested tournament won by England followed by a dinner much enjoyed by all who attended

Veterans European Team Championships - Hamburg 25th -29th May

The Championships held in Germany were contested by 10 teams from 20 countries (Belarus and Russia absent). The standard was incredibly high but we achieved silver medals for both Mens and Womens Foil and Bronze for Womens Sabre

BVF Nationals - Not held in 2022 for organisational and re-scheduling reasons but scheduled for April 2023 and will be held annually thereafter.

Commonwealth Fencing Championships August 2022

Whilst the Commonwealth Fencing Championships were not a BVF event, many of our members attended. It was an impressive spectacle of fencing with Cadets, Seniors, Vets and Wheelchair fencers all competing together. The Veteran events were represented by competitors across the Commonwealth, fencing at a very high standard. Full results are available on the website but congratulations to Jane Hutchison, Georgina Usher and Mo Mansoori who all achieved gold.

Veterans Winton Cup 24th/25th September

Probably the most popular event on the calendar with 10 Sections competing with South East coming out on top closely followed by Southern. The Gala dinner organised by Marcia and Gillian was well attended and held in the Mercure Hotel. Many thanks especially to Marcia as event organiser, John Crouch and Phil for DT, Peter and Janet Huggins and all who put so much time in to make this a success.

Veteran World Championships Zadar 7th-12th October

Always the highlight of the season Croatia again hosted an excellent tournament. 13 countries participated and GBR finished rather disappointingly in 10th place. But that certainly doesn't tell the story of some great performances because this was rated on gold medals only. In fact on an overall medal count of 12 we were actually equal 4th. Just one gold would have put us in 4th or 5th. So many 9-10 losses, many in the L8 - it was a story of so near but yet so far. Nevertheless it was a great event with some great performances. As usual this was a tremendous event to either participate in or attend and the full results can be seen on the website.

It's very difficult thanking individuals for the work and expertise they put in to make our organisation run smoothly because I am bound to miss someone and for that I apologise up front. It's not always smooth and to use that hackneyed example, we are often like the swan on the surface with our little legs paddling like mad underneath the surface. Although I've already mentioned some of them in all the events above we were indebted to Gillian for coordinating our international events, Pete and Janet Huggins, Mike and Lyn Robinson for the DT and organisation, Graham Paul, and Marcia, and of course Lucy who keeps us all well informed. I've been very fortunate to have such an experienced and committed team of people around to make things work.

In another challenging year my thanks go to your committee Kola Ayanwale, Gillian Aghajan, Paul Baillache, Beth Davison, Graham Paul, Lyn Robinson Lucy Wright and last but not least Nicola Hull who will be stepping down this year – many thanks to her for her past support, we are going to miss her.

And last, but not least, on behalf of all the committee thanks to the continued support of all our members in what has been a very busy year.

Carl

Carl Morris

President BVF

March 2023

