

President's Report

2023 was a full year for us following the pandemic years. We're back to our normal three qualifying events plus holding The German Match and a new event for us - the Bard's Bash.

Seven meetings were held with one physical meeting held in Swindon arranged to discuss normal business plus selection criteria and related issues as this is a subject that divides opinions so is always under review.

On the international scene there were, and are still, political restrictions 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

Newsletter – Many thanks to Gillian and the editorial committee for taking over the reins from Nicola and producing the newsletter for us. We've had three colourful publications bursting with the latest information of veteran exploits that I hope you've all enjoyed.

Selection – Our method for GB selection is constantly under review. As mentioned earlier apart from our normal discussions we again looked at our criteria in our Swindon Meeting. We felt that the current system still selects the best teams and is the simplest and fairest system to use.

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

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

EVENTS

Guildford International 7th/8th January – As usual our first event of the year which is not only the only three weapon event on the EVF circuit but our first qualifier for the World Championships and also counted toward European Team event selection.

Age Groups LP London 25th/26th Feb & 5th March 2023

Unfortunately we again had to split the events over two weekends. But they were successfully held at Leon Paul Fencing Centre with almost 200 of our fencers participating. Many thanks to Jon Willis and his team for their organisation here.

National Championships – Manchester 21st- 2nd April

Held at Manchester and successfully run by Mike and Lyn Robinson, this was the last of our qualifying events and allowed us to complete our Ranking lists for the selection of the World Championship Squad.

The Home Nations Veteran Quadrangular – Dublin March 25th 2023

Held at the beautiful Trinity College in Dublin it was a hotly contested tournament won by England (again) followed by a dinner much enjoyed by all who attended.

Veterans European Individual Championships - Thionville France 15th -21st May

Our GBR squad returned from Thionville with a creditable haul of 11 medals including 3 Golds and on the medals table we finished overall 4th out of 33 countries.

A well run event enjoyed by all.

15th/16th July The Bard's Bash – Stratford upon Avon

A new event (no prizes for guessing where the name came from) run by Chris Buxton and his team at King Edward's School Stratford we had both individual and mixed handicapped team events. This was followed by a barbeque in Graham Paul and Janet's extensive garden. The weather could have been a little kinder to us but everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

12/13th August – The German Match

20 vets decided they wanted to take part in this event held in Munster and hosted by the German Federation.

I believe that the Germans won overall but I recall a couple of memorable, and unusual (given it's Germany) sabre team victories

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Veterans Winton Cup 23rd/24th September

Probably the most popular event on the calendar with 10 Sections competing, with the mighty South East coming out on top. The Gala dinner organised by Marcia and Gillian was well attended. 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 Florida 11th-16th October

Always the highlight of the season Daytona hosted an excellent tournament. 13 countries participated and GBR finished 5th with 18 medals including one Gold from Georgina Usher

So it's safe to say that we had a pretty successful event and a very enjoyable one too. Watching satellites being launched from Cape Kennedy from the beach certainly helped make it a memorable trip.

Leading up to Daytona we organised a series of sports psychology seminars for the whole squad. They were very interesting and informative sessions that the attendees all appreciated.

Royal Navy Match 26th November

The annual Vets v Navy match was this year held in London on HMS President on the Thames by the Tower of London but this year it was a triangular as Royal Holloway University London were invited to take part. I believe it was a well fought and competitive match with the vets just prevailing and the Navy a close second. Many thanks to our own Lt Cdr Rubin Nash for the organisation.

As can be seen above, 2023 was a busy year with plenty of events for our members to be involved in and, as I said last year, its 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. 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 Luce 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.

Unfortunately I have to mention the passing of our founder Henry De Silva. Although he actually passed in 2024 I was made aware of his illness in late 2023. Without him we either would not be in existence or certainly not as advanced as we are in both the UK and across the world.

In another challenging year my thanks go to your committee Kola Ayanwale, Gillian Aghajan, Paul Baillache, Beth Cranston- Selby, Graham Paul, Lucy Wright, Jane Huchison and Naomi Donaldson .

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

April 2024



