

President's Report

British Veteran Fencing (BVF) AGM 2025

Introduction

What a year 2024 turned out to be! With our three qualifying events, the enjoyable Bard's Bash, and the fiercely contested Winton Cup, we certainly kept ourselves busy. Add to that our international presence at the European Teams in Ciney, Belgium, and the World Championships in Dubai, and it's safe to say BVF has had another action-packed year.

AGM & Committee Elections

As I mentioned in last year's report, to ensure continuity and maintain a wealth of experience within the committee, only three positions—including one officer role—will be up for election at this AGM. This structure allows us to keep a steady hand on the tiller while still making room for fresh ideas.

Committee Activity

- **Newsletter** – A huge thank you to Gillian and the editorial team for producing the BVF newsletters. These publications were bursting with updates, anecdotes, and tales of veteran fencing exploits. I hope you've all enjoyed reading them.
 - **Selection** – Our method for GB selection is constantly reviewed to ensure fairness and effectiveness. This year, beyond our usual discussions, we held another review meeting in Swindon. After thorough consideration, we concluded that the current system continues to be the fairest and most efficient way to select our teams. Special thanks to our Chair of Selectors, Graham Paul, and his diligent team:
 - **Epee:** Neal Mallett, Marg Oniye
 - **Foil:** Gillian Worman, Nick Mort
 - **Sabre:** Jane Hutchison, Chris Prevett
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Key Events of 2024

- **Guildford International (6th–7th January 2024)**
Kicking off the year with our first qualifying event for the World Championships, Guildford once again proved why it holds a special place in the calendar. As the only three-weapon event on the EVF circuit, it was a fantastic start to the season.
- **National Championships – Manchester (22nd–24th March 2024)**
Held in Manchester, this event was expertly run by Mike and Lyn Robinson, ensuring a smooth and competitive championship.
- **Age Groups – Nottingham (19th–21st April 2024)**
Hosted at Harvey Hadden Sports Village and skilfully managed by Naomi Donaldson, this event experimented with an additional sabre competition on Friday afternoon to accommodate multi-weapon fencers. Whilst a noble effort, the extra costs means it probably won't be repeated. This tournament was our final qualifying event, finalising our ranking lists for the World Championship selection.

- **Home Nations Veteran Quadrangular – Edinburgh (13th April 2024)**
A fiercely contested tournament held at Edinburgh Napier University, with England once again emerging victorious. The celebratory dinner that followed was, by all accounts, just as competitive! Many thanks to Scottish Fencing for hosting a fantastic event.
- **Veterans European Team Championships – Ciney, Belgium (9th–12th May 2024)**
Our GBR squad brought home four hard-earned medals, including one gold and two bronzes. A well-organized and highly enjoyable event for all involved.
 - **Gold:** WS (GV) – Brown, Frith, Hutchison, Narey, Williams
 - **Bronze:** WF (GV) – Anderson, Clayton, Morris, Uff, Worman
 - **Bronze:** WE (GV) – Clayton, Grant, Haldane, Morris, Turnbull
- **The Bard’s Bash – Stratford-upon-Avon (1st–2nd June 2024)**
Following its successful debut last year, Chris Buxton and his team at King Edward VI’s School hosted another fantastic weekend of fencing. The individual and mixed handicap team events were followed by a splendid BBQ in Graham Paul and Janet’s extensive garden. Thankfully, the weather held out, and a great time was had by all.
- **Veterans Winton Cup (21st–22nd September 2024)**
Always a highlight on the BVF calendar, this year’s event saw 10 sections competing. The dominant South East secured victory in every weapon except Men’s Foil, which was claimed by the South. The gala dinner, orchestrated by Marcia and Gillian, was a roaring success. Special thanks to:
 - Marcia for overall event organization
 - John Crouch and Phil for DT
 - Peter and Janet Huggins for their invaluable support
 - Everyone who contributed to making this event a triumph!
- **Veteran World Championships – Dubai (11th–16th October 2024)**
The highlight of the season, hosted superbly in Dubai, saw 13 countries competing. Team GBR brought home 10 medals, including golds for Georgina Usher and Sheila Anderson with a special mention to Jane Clayton getting a remarkable silver in WE. A fantastic result and a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all involved.
- **Royal Navy Match – London (24th November 2024)**
This year’s Vets vs. Navy match took place aboard HMS President on the Thames, right next to the Tower of London. A spirited contest was followed by well-earned camaraderie. Special thanks to our very own Lt Cdr Rubin Nash for organising this event.
- **Fencing Museum Visits**
Jane Hutchison led several BVF members on visits to Malcolm Fare’s fascinating Fencing Museum in the Cotswolds. A treasure trove of memorabilia, each visit concluded with a well-earned lunch at a local pub—surely the perfect way to end a day of fencing history! Many thanks to Jane for coordinating these trips and Malcolm, of course, for hosting and entertaining us with knowledge and anecdotes. With his permission we will be offering this fascinating experience again during 2025.

Final Acknowledgments

As you can see, 2024 was another busy year, and none of it would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our incredible team. While I’ve mentioned many names throughout this report, I must also extend my gratitude to:

- Gillian for coordinating international events
- Pete and Janet Huggins for their tireless work in armoury and DT
- Mike and Lyn Robinson for their seamless event management
- Graham Paul for his role as Chair of Selectors
- Marcia for organizing the Winton Cup
- Lucy Wright for keeping everyone informed throughout the year

I feel incredibly fortunate to work with such an experienced and committed team.

Finally, on behalf of the entire committee, a heartfelt thank you to our members for your continued support, participation, and enthusiasm. Here's to another fantastic year ahead!

Carl Morris
President, BVF
February 2025