

British Academy of Fencing  
**ACADEMY NEWS**

July 2009  
Issue 51

*"Run by coaches for coaches"*



# VOLUNTEERS WANTED!



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**NEXT ISSUE: September**  
*Contributions by August 15th, please*

Arrangements for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Warwick Castle in September are well in hand, but there will be a need for a number of volunteers over the weekend of the 5th - 6th September to help to make sure the event is a great publicity boost for the Academy, as well as Fencing in general. Various merchandise will be on sale, so we need people who are able to spare a couple of hours manning the sales points. If there are enough volunteers, a shift system will be possible, so those helpers will still have plenty of free time to see all the attractions at the castle. Other jobs may well include acting as a steward at the show on Sunday evening. We also will need helpers for "Come and Try" sessions for the public.

So - if you can spare your Academy a few hours over the weekend, now is the time to make yourself known to the event producer, David Austin. He can be contacted on [austinbaf@hotmail.com](mailto:austinbaf@hotmail.com). David will be very grateful for any help, so, even if you cannot make the weekend, but would like to help in some way, contact him to see if there is ANYTHING you can do. PLEASE DO IT NOW!

One perk for volunteers will be FREE access to possibly the finest castle in the country!

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Articles and other material are welcome and should be sent to the Editor

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**BAF/BFA Liaison Officer:**

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Prof. Bob Merry

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**RECOMMENDED  
RATES OF PAY**

Level	Weekday	Weekend
Diploma	35.50	32.50
Maitre d'Escrime and Provost	28.50	26.00
Member	23.50	21.75
Associate	21.00	19.00

Travel - included for first 20 miles,  
thereafter 17p/mile

**PROFICIENCY  
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The current rates for awards are:

**BAF Members:**

1 - 4 Awards £3.70 each  
5 - 9 Awards £3.60 each  
10+ Awards £3.40 each

**Approved non-Academy Coaches:**

1 - 4 Awards **£4.70** each  
5 - 9 Awards **£4.10** each  
10+ Awards **£3.90** each

**A5 Study Guides:**

1 - 4 £2.65 (**£2.90**) each (incl. p&p)  
5+ £2.30 (**£2.65**) each

**A4 Syllabus leaflets:**

Free with Study Guide, otherwise 60p  
(**70p**) each.

**A3 Sized Wallcharts:**

65p (**75p**) each  
Figures in **RED** are for non-BAF  
members

**EXAMINATION  
FEES**

Level 1 Assessment £11.00

Level 2 to Diploma £21.00 (**£26.00**)

These are for "normal" exams - for  
Special exams, consult the Course  
Officer. Figures in **RED** are for  
non-BAF members

**DOCUMENTATION**

The following documentation is available from the Course Officer, Dave Jerry

Key Teaching Points Foil	}	.....£7.35 ( <b>£9.45</b> )
Key Teaching Points Epee		
Key Teaching Points Sabre		
Key Coaching Points Foil		
Key Coaching Points Epee		
Key Coaching Points Sabre	}	.....£7.35 ( <b>£9.45</b> )
Glossary of Terms.....		
Translation of Fencing Terms in Four Languages.....		
Teaching/ Coaching Tactics (2nd Edition).....		
CD-Rom Issue 4.0 – this contains all the syllabuses and current questions for BAF examinations, as well as other examination material.....		
Examples of past written Papers – for the Advanced and Diploma examinations -		.....£6.30 ( <b>£7.35</b> )
<b>FREE</b> - apply to Course Officer		

All prices include p & p. Figures in **RED** are for non-BAF members



## THE PRESIDENT WRITES.....



### Examinations, Candidates and the Standard

Following the Easter examinations this year, I happened to hear, from the grapevine, that a candidate who failed one of our higher-level examinations has seen fit to question the competence of those who examined him and has, indeed, gone about describing said individuals as fossils and dinosaurs. Whilst I am always cautious about hearsay statements and, indeed, sympathise with the individual for not achieving the standards required, I cannot help but feel that this reflects very badly on his own professional integrity. Further more, I regard his comments as clear evidence of a common failure to understand the requirements of our examinations.

Over the years there have been those who have claimed that the examination questions do not reflect what is happening in fencing today and that our educators and examiners are out of touch with "modern fencing". It has to be said that these comments generally come from those who either fail the examinations or struggle so much with the standard required on the course that they then choose not to submit themselves for examination. These individuals simply fail to appreciate that our examinations are a test of both the key **skills and knowledge** required to teach and coach fencing.

Whilst there is an extensive mark sheet, the essence of what is being marked is the candidate's teaching and coaching technique, and ability to instil, set and control timing and distance while teaching or coaching a stroke or strokes under a self imposed set of conditions. Put even more simply, the coach's job is to provide, set and control a series of conditions under which a pupil can practise under the coach's supervision.

I would now like to address the issue of our system of coach education and examination relative to "modern fencing". With respect to the examination questions, I am totally bemused as to how anyone can read a question and then say that is it not representative of "modern fencing". The questions are just that – they are questions. They are simply words on paper. Until the candidate gives a question a physical interpretation, it is impossible to say how it relates to "modern fencing".. The real proof is how that candidate chooses to answer the question. Candidates have the freedom to answer as they see fit within the confines of the question. It is the responsibility of the candidate alone to answer the question relative to how they see it being applied and used on a piste. It is also the responsibility of the candidate to answer the question in a way that shows his or her experience and understanding of the stroke and situation in the context of modern competitive fencing.

To say that our educators are out of touch simply betrays the ignorance, on the part of many candidates, of the achievements of our educators in mainstream fencing. To further criticise and question the judgement of our more senior examiners is again a failure on the part of the candidate to recognise the achievements of the examiners. A number of our senior examiners have, with their fencers, achieved both

national and international success over a number of decades, during which they have had to change and adapt to the changing trends and application of both stroke and tactics on a piste. I for one trust and respect their judgement.

To those who question or criticise our system of coach education and examination and subsequently struggle with the standard required, or who fail our examinations, I would suggest that they take a long, hard and truthful look at themselves. I am glad to say that those who haven't got the strength of character to accept they didn't achieve the standard or who can't accept they might have something to learn are few and far between. Sadly, these same individuals are the root cause of discrediting a system, which is increasing in popularity around the world. Our residential courses regularly attract over 30 candidates with increasing numbers from abroad. It has recently been described by one international candidate, himself a fencer of international stature, as "the best coaching course in the world".

In conclusion, let me also point out that our examination system is not only demanding but also a test of a coach's personal strength of character. Those who do not have the courage to have their abilities judged in an objective light and to learn from the experience, will very rightly fail to succeed. It is perhaps inevitable that such individuals will resort to gossip and spineless self-justification. On the other hand, we too, are willing to take a hard and honest look at ourselves as educators and examiners, so if you are able to offer constructive criticism, then please write and let me know. Your comments will be valued and I will let you know whether or not they will be acted upon

*Philip Bruce, President*



# THE COURSE OFFICER.....WHO?

## Course Officer, Dave Jerry, writes:

As Course Officer, I am responsible for all the Academy courses. What can I offer to you?

### Residential Courses

We are all familiar with the residential courses. Held each year at Easter and, this year for the first time, in the Autumn. The Summer course has moved to October because we are able to get exclusive use of the facilities at Denstone College. In the past we have always been sharing with other visitors to the site. How well the October date suits everybody, we will have to wait and see. Why Denstone? At Denstone they are able to offer the facilities that we require at a cost that is acceptable to the membership. What we need is:

25 or more beds, mixed age range and gender, single occupancy rooms, accommodation on Full Board basis, Tea and coffee facilities at morning and afternoon breaks, use of a sports hall or gym roughly the size of 3 badminton courts or larger. So far Denstone can provide all these facilities at a price where you, the candidate, pay something in the region of £355. I am always on the lookout for other options that are easily accessible, so if you know of anywhere let me know.

### Regional Courses

Both Academy News and our Web Site list the courses that are being run in places all over the country. Over the last year we are getting the feeling that these courses are becoming less well subscribed. This may be for a number of reasons. For example, have we used up the "Raw Material"? Have we trained all our coaches and have, therefore, achieved our aim - where is the new blood? Is the time taken to train on a typical one day per month course too long? Would you prefer full weekends and therefore qualify sooner?

If you want a course in your area it can be arranged for you. All we need are potential coaches with commitment, a venue and I will find the rest including a costing for you.

The other thing to bear in mind is that Level One is an assessed qualification. I am sure there are lots of fencers who have been guided in their clubs by more experienced coaches and who are helping in their clubs without qualification. I can help by putting you in touch with an

assessor who will be a Master, a Maître (weapon specific), a Provost or an Advanced coach (weapon specific and assisted by one other coach at level 3). All you have to do is ask.

### Workshops

This year we have planned five "Tactics Workshops" at Frankley in the West Midlands. There has been favourable comment about these sessions, but they have been poorly attended. I need to know why. Are we in the wrong place, at the wrong time in a very busy fencing calendar, giving nothing to show for the day's work? In industry and in the professions, Continued Professional Development (CPD) is a requirement. Certificates are awarded which record what has been done. Would that be an incentive for Fencing Coaches?

### Examination Weekends

Traditionally, we hold examination weekends a suitable time after the residential courses. The aim is to attract any candidates who may not have been successful at the end of the course to retake part or whole exams. I think that this is a valuable service, as it allows candidates to recover from what may have been a case

of exam nerves, after a very intensive week, to get back on track. These sessions are open to any fencer who wishes to try for a qualification not just ex-residential course members.

### What I want from you

In the past, most feedback that I have received is positive, but we want to see more people taking advantage of the Academy's support. Please let me know if we are going wrong, or if we have got it right. Nothing is set in stone, we can change. Your views are worth their weight in gold and rest assured that if you have a suggestion, we will not rope you in to implement your idea. I understand that kind of reluctance - I frequently open my mouth and end up with a job. It will not happen to you.

*Dave Jerry, Course Officer*



## **HARRINGTON'S HARANGUE**

**Musings from your Members' Rep.**

I finished my last article with something I picked up whilst listening to a lecture given by one of the coaches of the British Cycling team, which was basically that they tried to be a little better every day. This brings me nicely on to the theme of this article. What are we, as coaches doing to make ourselves better?

Criticising others, be they individuals or organizations, can be easy. There are plenty of examples of that sort of behaviour on the Fencing Forum. However being self critical can be difficult. Or at least being self critical, identifying an area for improvement, and then doing something about it can be difficult.

However I think that we can all try for continuous improvement in what we do, and that applies to everyone, from the most experienced fencing master to the most newly qualified level one coach. We can all review the lessons we give and think hard about ways that they could be better. We can all look at how we run our clubs, or structure our training sessions, and consider if perhaps our fencers would benefit from a slightly different approach.

If all of us coaches take time to consider what we do and try to improve ourselves, then fencing in this country will benefit. What we do to try and improve is up to us. It may be something as obvious as attending some regular coach education classes. That is, after all, what the Academy is there to provide. However, it does not have to be restricted to that.

This is something we can do as individuals - it doesn't take an initiative or programme from British Fencing or whomever, to happen. Such things can be welcome when they occur, but we do not have to place too much reliance of them. Ultimately we should all be responsible for our own personal development as coaches.

I know some of you do this sort of thing already. I can think of several notable examples of coaches who have gone to study abroad for a while, or gone to other clubs to learn from more experienced or more successful coaches.

So can I ask something of all of you between now and the next Academy News. First of all, can you think of something that you are going to do better between now and the end of the year? Secondly, can you then decide how you are going to do it? Thirdly, if you do have a good idea please can you send it in to Academy News so it can be shared with the rest of us. I'm sure Bob can be persuaded to find some space to publish the best ones (*see Comment on page 7 - Ed.*).

*Liam Harrington, Members' Representative*



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## COMMENT

### DON'T DO NOTHING THIS SUMMER!

At this time of year, many of us find our coaching workload eases up a bit and I would like to make a plea for contributions to the next edition of Academy News.

This is due out in September and will undoubtedly have a lot in it about the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Perhaps some of our elder statesmen, with longer memories than most of us concerning the history of the Academy, could find some relevant historical material to illustrate how the Academy has developed in the last sixty years.

Or maybe the newer members will suggest how they would like to see the BAF go forward in the future. Sooner or later, they may well have the opportunity to put these ideas into action.

There is always room in Academy News for articles, letters, jokes and cartoons - indeed, *anything* that you might think is likely to be of interest to other members.

So, if you find you have a little time this summer, why not make a contribution to your magazine. You can send it by post or email to the Editor, Bob Merry - details on page 3

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

The under mentioned names are published as having applied for membership of the British Academy of Fencing. If anyone wishes to raise objections or has information which he or she feels is relevant, please contact the Secretary of the BAF.

All objections will be required to be made in writing and will be treated in the strictest confidence.

**Kenneth Orton** Tunbridge Wells

**Alan West** Toft, Cambridge

**Rupert Loch**

See the Academy web site at [www.baf-fencing.org](http://www.baf-fencing.org) for details of the latest applications.

## Letters

*From Derek Evered*

On reading Chris Beadling's article (Issue 50 – Full Steam Ahead), I found myself totally in agreement. Premature fencing on the electric box inhibits full development of the basic strokes. This affects adversely both fencers and referees. With human judges, the referee (or President of a jury of judges) is forced to describe the fencing phrase. A referee's comment with electric scoring, "A hit for the left", when there are lights on both sides, does not inspire confidence in that referee's decisions.

There is a club in Otago, in the South Island of New Zealand, that practises only visual fencing rather than electric. No beginners and only French (straight) handles are allowed - no orthopaedic handles. This Salle Angelo was named after Maitre Domenico Angelo (1716-1802) fencing master at Eton College and his salle in London. His descendant Gio Angelo fences at this new Salle Angelo. As Professor Z.Czajkowski states in the same issue of Academy News, sound technique is essential for sound tactics, or, in his own words, "Tactics are closely connected with technique."

Finally I must point out an error. I have never been the Chairman at Egham Fencing Club and would not want to upset our long-serving Chairman (another Derek). However I have been coaching at that club for the past 32 years since it was founded.

Derek Evered

*Our apologies to both Dereks for any confusion - Editor*

## NEW ACADEMY TRACKSUIT



### *Don't shoot the model!*

It's been a while, but the Academy has a new modern tracksuit by **adidas**, cost **£64.99** + postage.

If you would like one or more, please send your order to [treasurer@baf-fencing.org](mailto:treasurer@baf-fencing.org).

### *Details required:*

Quantity  
Chest and waist size  
Delivery address



# COME TO WARWICK

By now members will have received the posters advertising the Diamond Jubilee Show at Warwick Castle and also their invite to the Academy Banquet in the Main Hall of the Castle on the Saturday evening.

We would ask all members to make a special effort to support these celebrations. Anniversaries such as this do not occur often and we should try to mark them appropriately. It is also an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of the Academy and our chosen sport. Academy News has spoken to the event producer, David Austin, who says, *"We need a major effort. All members should support their Academy at both the banquet and the show. They aren't just members for the title and the insurance, but should give back to the Academy something for the skill, effort, time and value that is put into their training. We need 'bums on seats' at both events to leave a legacy to the nation of the BAF's long time expertise in our sport. We are the creators of Champions - let's celebrate that!"*

Can all members please display their posters and flyers prominently. We hope to get a capacity audience for the show approaching 2500. Tickets are already on sale at the Warwick Castle web site:

<http://www.warwick-castle.com/entertainment/events-calendar.aspx?css=1>



Remember, this is a major sales promotion for the event and **YOU** can play your part in it.

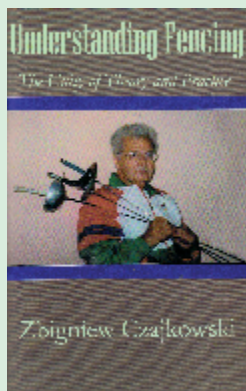
You should also make up your mind about the banquet soon. Places are limited to 130, but Academy members have until July 31st to obtain tickets for themselves and their guests at the reduced price of £75. After that date, tickets will be offered elsewhere. Please make sure that the Academy is well represented at its own celebrations. The opportunity to dine in such splendid surroundings does not arise often, so don't spend the next few years kicking yourself for having missed this opportunity. All requests for tickets for the banquet should be sent to Prof. Peter Northam - details on your invitation.

## BOOK REVIEW

**UNDERSTANDING FENCING - The Unity of Theory and Practice, by Zbigniew Czajkowski 2005.**

(SKA Swordplay Books : New York) Slimback 372 pp. £20 from Leon Paul, London. ISBN 0-9659468-8-6

*(Editor's Note: In the last edition of Academy News, we were able to publish an article by Professor Czajkowski. This article is essentially a chapter of this book. Here, **Derek Evered** gives his review of the whole book.)*



Arthur Conan Doyle, author of Sherlock Holmes, once wrote that to 'get up' a new subject, you should read a hundred books on it. I have read over a hundred books on fencing, duelling and the sword. This is the most thoughtful of them all.

Chapters of varying length include : Characteristics of Fencing, Terminology, Tactics, Timing, Motor Responses, Motivation and Arousal, Main Types of Fencer (the "Warrior" and the "Technician"), the Coach, Training the Athlete, Energy Abilities, Modern Concepts of the Individual Lesson, Just Before a Competition, and At the Competition.

The proof reading can be a bit indifferent, although the errors are not important. Some figures and tables are mis-numbered.

This text is written for coaches, or possibly those advanced competitors who read books on fencing (very few in my experience). He does not describe **HOW** to do the various moves and strokes, but we coaches know all that. So he is more concerned with **WHY** and **WHEN** to do them. I have already included some of his multiple choice exercises in my own teaching.

It is a pleasure to see the author's photograph on the front cover (above, left) clutching his foil and épée with their French (straight) handles, just like my own. Sadly most of the author's quoted publications on "szermierka" (fencing) are in their original Polish. It would be great if they could be translated into English or American and then re-published. It is an extraordinary achievement to write such a scholarly account in a language not his mother tongue. Every coach would gain something by reading this important monograph. Highly recommended.



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## COURSES

### BAF RESIDENTIAL COURSES 2009

**Autumn Course: 26th - 31st October 2009**

**Fees for the Course (provisional)**

**Residential: £355 (BAF Member) £410 (Non-member) £355 (Pupil)**

**Non-residential: £295 (BAF Member) £320 (Non-member) £295 (Pupil)**

**Course to be held at Denstone College, Staffordshire.**

**Places on this course are already being booked, so don't delay!**

**Contact Dave Jerry, the Course Officer, to ensure your place.**

***Contact details are on page 3***

Various Coach Education courses are held on a regular basis. The following contacts may be useful. Otherwise, contact Dave Jerry, the Course Officer, for the latest information.

**Yorkshire Coaches' Club:** monthly 10 am to 4 pm at Ackworth School, Pontefract. Levels 1 – 4 catered for; Level 5 by arrangement. Coach Educators of the Academy will cover the Theory and Practice of Coaching. All coaches and their pupils are welcome to attend. Please contact Provost Dave Jerry (see page 3).

**Sunday Coaches' Club, Birmingham:** normally the first Sunday in each month, from 10 pm to 4 pm at St. John's Primary School, Mortimer Road, Kenilworth, Warks. CV8 1FS. Coach educators are Prof. Peter Northam and Prof. Pete Cormack. For full details, contact Pete Cormack at [cormack@ntlworld.com](mailto:cormack@ntlworld.com) or on 01926 859881.

**Saturday Coaches' Club, Norwich:** Monthly at the University Sports Park, Norwich. Advanced Coach Andrew Sowerby invites all coaches in the Norfolk and Suffolk area wishing to prepare for Foil, Epée and Sabre (levels 1 to 4) to come along. E-mail Andrew via [www.sowerbyfencing.com](http://www.sowerbyfencing.com)

**Hemel Hempstead:** Due to problems with the venue, the courses run by Prof. Chris Norder are suspended for the time being. If you are interested in coach education in this area, please contact Prof. Liam Harrington for the latest situation.

**If you are organising a Coach Education course, please contact the Editor if you wish to have it publicised. You should also inform the Course Officer.**

**See also the Academy web site for the latest news on courses. Contact the webmaster, Isobel Combes, if you wish to publicise any events there.**

[www.baf-fencing.org](http://www.baf-fencing.org)

## IMPORTANT

**All Course organisers and potential attendees should be aware of the following condition, which applies to all BAF Courses, including "non-official" courses run by Academy members.**

**Please note the Course Officer and the Course Director reserve the right to refuse an application to attend the course.**

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