

British Academy of Fencing **ACADEMY NEWS**

September 2011
Issue 62

"Run by coaches for coaches"



LOOKING FORWARD

During August, when Academy News is being prepared, it can be a quiet time for coaches. There are few competitions to worry about, clubs are quiet, with many people on holiday, and it can be a time to reflect on the past and plan for the future.

One of the first things we all have to expect is a letter from our Treasurer, Liam Harrington (pictured on the right), concerning our membership renewals. These are due on the 1st October and, to ensure continuity of insurance cover, you should deal with your renewal promptly. If for any reason you have decided not to renew or wish to change your category of membership, please have the courtesy to let Liam know as soon as possible. This will save him the time and cost involved in sending out numerous reminders.

Then you can start to plan for the next major event on the BAF calendar, namely the AGM. Details of time

and place will be confirmed soon. Come along to have your say in the governance of the Academy, meet old friends and make new ones.

Of course, 2012 will see the Olympic Games being held in London. If you tried in vain to get tickets for the Fencing events, do not despair entirely. Once various factors, such as security, television camera placement, etc., have been sorted out, it is expected that more tickets will be made available. This should happen in late 2011 or early 2012. You can also apply for tickets for the Paralympic Games, for a period from the 9th to the 26th September. If you have been lucky enough to get Games tickets, it is not too early to think about travel arrangements. It is already possible to book your train tickets at <http://www.nationalrailgamestravel.co.uk>. Perhaps surprisingly, the prices are generally lower than the equivalent journey taken at other times and certainly lower than they will be after recently announced rises take effect, so it may be a good move to book early. The Games' main web site (<http://www.london2012.com>) will also give you more information about alternative travel options.

Shortly after the finish of the Olympics, we have further interest in the Stage Fencing World Championships in Estoril, Portugal (August 16th – 19th). The BAF are the body in the UK through whom any British entry has to be made and it is hoped that we will be represented. Our Film & Theatre Representative, Andy Wilkinson, is working hard to this end. Details of the rules for the event can be found on the BAF web site.

All in all, there is quite a lot for us to anticipate keenly. Time to get out the diary (or smart-phone) and fill in a few dates.



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NEXT ISSUE: November

Contributions by October
10th, please

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THE PRESIDENT WRITES.....



Fencing and Video

There are a lot of things happening in today's fencing scene which seem to conspire to make our sport more and more inaccessible to almost all involved. As a coach it can be particularly depressing to watch dreams shattered and my heart goes out to those who are coping with the depressing news concerning the forthcoming World Championships, Olympic selection and funding. Seeing some of our most talented and dedicated fencers (and let us not forget the coaches who have worked so hard to get them there) denied their moment on the world stage. Such devastating news is demoralising and filters down to all levels and leads to our up and coming talent to wonder if it is all worth it. Being number 1 on the British rankings doesn't seem to count for anything anymore.

However, one thing that may make a huge contribution to increasing enthusiasm among all fencers is the great improvement in both the quality and accessibility of videos of fencing competitions. Not so long ago, it was almost impossible for a fencer not on the international circuit to see what world-class fencing looked like. Now anyone who has access to a computer can easily find examples of the very best fencing online. I hope all our coaches are encouraging their fencers to take advantage of this and are guiding them as to who and what to watch. The downside is, as with everything on the internet, that there is a lot of dross available too, and I would urge every coach to educate themselves as to what is available so as to provide appropriate guidance.

The Technique of Winning

Two competitions in particular have stood out for me recently - the 2010 World Championships in Paris and the recent European Championships in Sheffield. The quality of video available for both of these has been superb - especially the videos from <https://www.247.tv/fencing/european-fencing-championships-2011/> which provides high quality downloads for a small fee.

It is an odd experience for a British fencer to watch the final few fights of such competitions in such detail. Watch an Italy vs France sabre final at world level and you are watching something which looks like a whole different sport from what passes for fencing at some of our domestic competitions. It is a reminder to all coaches of how important the complete grasp of basic technique, timing and distance is to those at the top. Forget all the hot air and over-complexity so beloved of some - what we see here is absolute mastery of what is often the most basic techniques.

So often I am told that the kind of skills we demand that coaches master - counter ripostes in épée, etc - are "not used in competition". I wish I had the opportunity to sit these people down in front of some of these videos and make them see what is happening on the world stage.

So what do we see in the winners of these fights? Superb control and application of technique, distance and timing - something all coaches need to develop the ability to coach. Also, as ever, we are being shown up by an inability to match the excellent footwork of the top-flight fencers (which is surprising, given the emphasis and the amount of time some coaches seem to devote to footwork drills). One notable exception to that was Cassara (ITA), who made up for apparently clumsy footwork with his extraordinary sense of timing and assessment of distance.

In summary, at the Europeans I saw:

- **False attacks:** apparently and effectively used to get within an opponent's reaction time and as a means of assessment and evaluation. Quite often used as the means from which to counter-

attack, renew the attack or defend and riposte

- **False counter-attacks:** used to cause a momentary delay during the execution of an opponent's real or false attack - used also to get within an opponent's reaction time, from which to attack or parry riposte.

- **False parries:** used to draw an opponent into a known final line or restrict the lines available into which an attack can be delivered. From the false parry, it wasn't uncommon to see a counter-attack in opposition. False parries were also being used to cause doubt and/or create a momentary delay in the opponent's actions.

- **Dramatic changes in the cadence of preparations relative to attacks and vice-versa** -- that is, slow, almost clumsy preparations followed by blistering quick attacks and quick aggressive preparations followed by slow preparations followed by superbly timed and speedy executed attacks.

Too Many Referees on the Piste

Video is not all good - video refereeing is giving fencers the opportunity to slow things down and break up the continuity and momentum of an opponent, and of introducing doubt in the mind of referees. Ultimately, this appears to be leading to referees becoming even weaker in their ability to control what is happening on the piste. We now appear to be in a situation where it takes two referees to referee a bout - that is, the nominated referee and the video referee. Gamesmanship has always been a big part of fencing and video refereeing is providing another opportunity - we need stronger referees to keep this under control

Spies!

To be a spectator at the Europeans, not just of the fights but also of the warm-ups, was a real privilege - the vantage points were superb. It was fascinating, as a trained observer, to see the coaches and support staff of some of the principal fencers. Whilst there was usually a coach close to (and indeed sometime almost on!) the piste trying to help the fencer, there were other coaches watching warm-up lessons and fights of prospective opponents. As one

very senior Italian fencing master once told me, fencing is no longer an individual sport, it's more of a team effort. It's essential that when a fencer steps onto a piste, little or nothing is left to chance and that as much as possible is known about the opponent - in particular how they are fencing on the day of competition. Indeed, during my observations, more than one coach was seen to be videoing prospective opponents. The obvious question - was this for use at the Europeans or to take away, analyse and possibly adjust a pupil's training accordingly, ready for the next time, which could be a World Cup event, the World Championships or even the Olympic Games?

During the European Championships it was refreshing to see some top coaches giving lessons, which were characterised by simplicity, accuracy in timing, technique and distance. The coach never seemed to ask for anything to be executed with great speed. In the main, the lessons I observed were in very stark contrast to those seen given at our domestic competitions, where the emphasis appears to be either on 'look how clever I (the coach) am', or chasing a pupil up and down the piste and requiring the pupil to execute actions at high speed.

In my view, at international level we are no longer playing the same game as those at the top of world class fencing. In the main, and with the exception of a principal coach, our international fencers lack the fencing technical/tactical support staff, which their foreign counterparts enjoy. How many coaches in Britain can honestly analyse a fight beyond the strokes being used to score hits (some can't even do that). How many British coaches would recognise:

- footwork traps,
- the preparation prior to, for example:
 - an attack
 - a riposte or counter-attack
 - a renewed offensive action
- patterns and changes of cadence during preparatory actions
- when second-intention is being used in conjunction with first-intention or with open-eyes actions?

The list can and does go on an on. Our international fencers need more and better-trained technical/tactical support staff, not the usual one principal coach.

Any coach who aspires to improve the competitive ability of his or her pupils would benefit greatly from taking the time to grasp any opportunity to watch what goes on in the warm-up hall of any major international. At the Barcelona Women's World Cup a few years ago I had a couple of very interesting hours sitting with a cup of coffee, watching the activities in the warm-up hall. After that, it was hardly necessary to stay for the finals at the end of the day. It was obvious whose fencers were going to win!

It is no longer an excuse to say you cannot attend world-class competitions. It is all there for the taking on video and the internet and I would urge everyone to take advantage of it.

Philip Bruce

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

by Bob Merry

With the popularity of such programmes as "Who Do You Think You Are?", researching one's family history is a popular hobby. I first became interested in this over fifty years ago, when my maternal grandmother showed me a piece of paper, detailing a family line stretching back to the early seventeenth century. This formed the basis of much later research and I managed to extend this line back to show a connection to the Plantagenet royal house, of which more later.

Tracing my father's line was slightly more complicated, as he had been adopted and I discovered that the family name was not Merry, but Forster. After a while I traced this line back to a ladies' shoemaker in London in around 1845, but then the trail went cold. It was only some fifteen years later, when more information became available, that I connected the shoemaker to a prominent family in King's Lynn in Norfolk and eventually to an Isaac Forster (1715-1774). He was a master Sailmaker, but it was when I found his burial record in the Parish register that I came across an interesting fact - the words "Sword Bearer" were appended to his name.

I found out that the "Sword Bearer" was paid by the town to carry a ceremonial sword in front of the Mayor's procession, along with an escort of eight pikemen. All the main churches in King's Lynn still have resting places for the sword and pikes, for when the Mayor attends services. The sword used is known as "King John's Sword" and is a mediaeval two-handed sword, which, although it is thought to have no real connection to the infamous monarch, does have a kind of connection elsewhere in my tree.

I mentioned that I had found links back to the Plantagenets, including the said King John, who is an ancestor. His father, Henry II, as well as producing legitimate heirs in Richard I and John, had many affairs and several illegitimate offspring. One of these, in spite of what we may consider a dubious start in life, became Earl of Salisbury and was a witness to Magna Carta. He was called William Longespée (Longsword), a soubriquet, incidentally, shared with a Viking ancestor of William the Conqueror, and in contrast to one of his half-brother John's nicknames, "Shortsword". Size could be important!

Whether these "sword" related facts from my family history have had any genetic effect on my own choices in life, or not, is a matter of conjecture, but does show how this fascinating hobby can throw up many interesting coincidences.

DIRECTING THE PROCESS OF TRAINING - PART 2

By Zbigniew Czajkowski

In fencing and other complicated sports where the number of factors influencing the results is even difficult to estimate – although there are certain similar traits among top athletes – the conception of an ideal model of champion cannot be upheld. Conducting training both in the club and with the national squad and careful observation and analysis of innumerable international competitions, including Olympic Games and World Championships, as well as various tests and research, enabled me to draw the following conclusions:

1) In fencing one ideal champion profile does not exist. World class results are achieved by various types of fencers – fencers of differing ages, fencers of different schools, tall and short, lean and plump, athletes of various temperaments (apart from melancholics), very offensive and rather defensive types, fencers with different techniques, fencers applying foreseen actions and fencers relying on lightning speed improvisation, competitors with very good simple reaction and competitors with short choice reaction, extraverts and introverts, etc. It is enough to compare the famous Polish and Hungarian sabreurs who some years ago were winning medals in Olympic Games and world championships: Aladar Gerevich, Rudolf Karpathy, Paul Kovacs, Jerzy Pawłowski, Wojciech Zabłocki, Emil Ochyra to note how different they were.

2) The top fencers win, not because they have not got weak points, not because their assets are ideally balanced, not because they have an ideal champion's profile, but because they manage to develop their potential possibilities, their strong points to the highest degree.

3) In fencing so many factors (inherited and acquired) play an important part in determining results that a low level or even lack of one factor may be compensated for by another, for example:

- a) a certain lack of mobility of nervous processes, typical for a phlegmatic type may be compensated by good tactics, careful observation of the opponent and foreseen second intention actions;
- b) even such an important factor as speed of movement may be compensated by fast reaction;
- c) rather poor co-ordination of movement may be compensated by great speed and mobility, etc.

The important thing is speed of reaction – fencers with fast simple reaction base their tactics on premeditated, fast and energetic actions while their colleagues with good choice reaction apply more complicated tactics (e.g., “open-eyes” attacks).

Thus, we must admit that the model of champion is of little practical use in fencing as a main element of directing and controlling of training. The fencer's training and it's control ought to be based on a model of competition, taking into account the concrete individual traits of a given athlete.

This means that in selection, developing physical fitness, teaching technique and tactics, developing psychological processes, building up individual style of fencing, and preparing for competitions the coach must take into account the following:

- Careful observation of competitions (visual observation, film, video), analysis of technique and tactics, range of application and efficacy of various fencing actions, practical differentiation of various tactico-psychological types of fencers, recognition of modern trends of development in fencing as a whole and of each different weapon.
- The level of transfer of skills and abilities acquired in training to training bouts and, above all, from training bouts to bouts in competition.
- Individual characteristics of a given fencer, dimensions of his personality, traits of temperament, his individual style, of fencing, range and efficacy of his fencing actions, his favourite strokes, ways of solving tactical problems in a bout, level of his perception, correctness and speed of his reactions, self-control and resistance to stress, level of his specific fitness, the range of his technical repertoire, etc., etc.
- Recognising the strong points, assets and potential possibilities of each individual pupil as well as his weak points. The coach and pupil should develop in the first place the strong points, they should work on perfecting the actions and abilities which bring the pupil success and which are consistent with the modern style of fencing. Weak points should be considered mainly when they interfere with the possibility of displaying his assets. For example: an active, offensive fencer should perfect and, in competition, mainly rely on offensive action. He should, however, learn defensive actions to increase the efficacy of his attacks as the psychological and technical base of offensive style of fencing is confidence in unforeseen defensive actions.
- Apart from the coach's own observation he should take into consideration the pupil's self-assessment (pupil's own assessment of his specific fitness, his technique, his favourite actions, etc.).
- It is very important to realize that energy and coordination abilities, technical and tactical skills, psychological processes (perception, various aspects of attention, sensory-motor responses, achievement motivation) undergo salient changes in consecutive stages of fencer's training (Table 1).

Phases of mastering and applying of technique and tactics	Characteristic properties of applying fencing actions in competition
Introductory (cognitive) stage of technique (first phase of training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - numerous errors, - errors of perception, choice of action and execution, - very changeable, not stable results, - a competitor does not notice and does not evaluate his errors and mistakes, - advice and assistance of a coach in spotting and eliminating errors is necessary, - a competitor focuses his attention on how to execute an action (conscious visual control), and not – or to much less extent – on evaluation of fighting situation and choice of proper action, - the improvement of speed occurs gradually as a result of elimination of by-movements and unnecessary muscle contractions, - small range and low level of preparatory actions, - offensive actions mainly foreseen, executed as a first intention action, - low level and poor applying of psychomotor capabilities (perception, different traits of attention, reactions etc.)
Intermediate (associative) technique and tactics phase (at second, basic training stage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic actions better mastered, better execution of selected actions, - errors less numerous, better – faster and more appropriate perception, greater and more changeable scope of attention, better choice of action, better quality of actions execution, - errors less serious, - stress to more an more efficient and faster execution of actions, - a competitor begins to notice some of his errors, - a competitor attempts to eliminate noticed errors, - results more stable, - gradually more and more attention pays to what to do, and not how the chosen action has to be performed (visual control of performance gradually diminishes while evaluation of tactical situation becomes more important; execution more and more relies upon proprioceptive senses), - the improvement of speed results mainly from acceleration of movement execution (fencing actions), i.e. shortening of executory (final) stage of a sensory-motor response, - greater variety and higher level of preparatory actions, - enriching the tactics by applying foreseen second intention actions, - gradual increase of importance and application of psychomotor abilities (more accurate and fast perception, sense of surprise, different versions of sensory-motor responses, different ways of choosing an action).
Third technique phase, or many-sided and purposeful actions (occurs in third, competitor, and fourth, champion stage of training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sensory-motor skills and technical-tactical capabilities, based on sensory-motor responses, as well as tactical capabilities basing on observation, perception and thinking more and more mastered, - a competitor focuses his attention on proper and fast perception of fighting situation, selection of a proper action, on how to fake the rival, and not on how to execute a chosen action, - more rich and variable range of applied actions, - various methods of choosing and applying of actions; actions foreseen as a first intention and second intention ones, actions not foreseen, actions with not known result, actions with change during its course, - better quality, precision and speed of execution of chosen action, - much less errors of perception, selection and execution, - a competitor employs many different actions according to situation, - a competitor discovers his errors and tries to eliminate them, - results more and more stable, - improvement of speed of action results mainly of shortening the latent period of a motor response (from appearing the essential stimulus to beginning of the movement), and – gradually more and more often - as a result of reaction to pre-signal of a proper movement, - bigger range and variety of preparatory actions and their increased efficacy (identifying the movements unveiling the intentions of a rival, hiding own intentions, faking the rival, drawing from the opponent actions in order to score a hit, timing, fast situation evaluation etc.) - employing various versions of action choices, i.e. actions foreseen (as first and second intention ones), action with unknown ending (“open eyes”), actions with change during their execution, - very high (especially in the fourth phase) level of psychomotor abilities and their skilful employment

TABLE 1

Every fencer should be treated by the coach in a different way. The fencing master should avoid trying to push the pupil into an artificial model of champion but should help him to develop his specific, individual style of fencing, his specific reactions, technique and tactics. Speaking generally, in training and its control the coach must take into account: what is actually happening in competition, what actions are used by top fencers, actions used by a given pupil and his individual characteristics.

The general trends of development of modern fencing can be assessed by careful observation and analysis of competitions (the way of manoeuvring on the piste, range of application of various fencing strokes, their efficacy, various ways of preparing an attack, area of target most frequently hit, the methods of judging, influence of rules on tactics, new elements in technique and tactics, etc., etc.). For example, many observations of sabre in the fifties and sixties showed the hits given were the result of: attacks of various kinds – 50%; parry-ripostes – 30%; counter – attacks – 20%. That was a very general picture of sabre fencing in that period. In training and its control, a coach should have taken this into account plus the individual characteristics of each given fencer, which often differs from the average considerably.

Table 2 shows hits scored, by attacks, ripostes and counter-attacks by all fencers together in the final of individual men's foil, World Championships in Melbourne in 1979.

Type of action	Number of successful hits	Percentage of successful hits
Various kinds of attacks	63	48
Parry-ripostes	40	31
Counter-attacks	24	21
Total	127	100

TABLE 2

Table 3 shows the individual differences in the successful application of various strokes by competitors in this final.

Efficacy of offensive and defensive actions of finalists, men's foil, World Championships, Melbourne, 1979.

Competitor	A/a	R/r	C/c	Hits	IO	ID
1. Romankow (USSR)	11/8	10/3	4/2	25/13	2.2	1.75
2. Jolyot (France)	7/9	7/5	7/3	21/17	0.87	1.55
3. Dal Zotto (Italy)	19/8	5/5	4/6	19/19	0.90	1.12
4. Behr (West Germany)	5/7	7/9	6/2	18/18	0.45	1.85
5. Flament (France)	15/9	7/7	2/7	19/23	1.07	1.44
6. Cervi (Italy)	6/13	1/5	4/5	11/23	0.60	0.38

A – hits scored by attacks, a – hits received by opponent's attacks

R – hits scored by ripostes, r – hits received by opponent's ripostes,

C – hits scored by counter-attacks, c – hits received by opponent's counter-attacks

IO – index of efficacy of offensive actions (attacks of all kinds and counter-time)

ID – index of efficacy of defensive actions (parry-ripostes and counter-attacks)

$$IO = \frac{\sum A}{\sum r + \sum c} \quad ID = \frac{\sum R + \sum C}{\sum a}$$

TABLE 3

Even a superficial glimpse at Table 2 shows the great diversity of actions displayed by the finalists. In the limited framework of this article it is quite impossible to present dozens of similar tables compiled over a period of many years. Tables 2 and 3 give only a tiny example.

Careful analysis of the range and efficacy of various actions in national and international competitions (and I have been involved in fencing for 75 years) has allowed me to make objective observations on the development of fencing generally and the style of fencing of individual competitors. These observations comprise, among others: big changes in fencing in recent years, increased differentiation between different weapons, marked influence of new rules on technique and tactics, etc. The general conclusions from these observations are that planning, directing and control of

training ought to be based on objective observation of competitions, on the competitor's individual characteristics and the manner in which he utilises his skills and abilities in competition. To put it shortly, training ought to be modelled on competitions and the pupil's performance in them.

In programming and directing the process of training and developing the individual style of fencing for each pupil, the coach must take into account:

- 1) Objective observation and analysis of competition,
- 2) Pupil's performance in competition (his style, range and efficacy of various fencing actions),
- 3) The ways in which he solves tactical problems (psychological basis of taking decisions and motivation in the fight),
- 4) Individual characteristics of his pupil (personality, temperament, psycho-motor abilities, achievement motivation etc.).

The ways of analysing competitions and single competitions performance has already been briefly touched upon.

In order to ascertain the pupil's main and most frequently used ways of taking decisions in a bout we may use the following procedure:

A fencer, for a certain period (e.g., a fortnight), during every training bout notes down the following successful actions:

- a) foreseen first intention attacks,
- b) foreseen second intention attacks,
- c) attacks with unknown final,
- d) attacks with change of decision.

This, combined with the results of various objective tests, will allow us to make the right choice of exercises in lessons.

The individual characteristics of a fencer, the level of his specific fitness and his technical abilities can be assessed, by: the coach's observations, questionnaires, psychological laboratory tests, fitness and technical trials, etc.

All these – especially analysing the pupil's performance and behaviour in competition – give a thinking coach plenty of information, e.g.:

- What are the competitor's favourite strokes?
- What are his most successful strokes?
- How does he react when taken by surprise?
- How he behaves in extreme situations?
- Does he prefer foreseen or unforeseen actions?
- How wide is the repertoire of strokes actually used in a competition (compared to the amount of motor skills learned in a lesson)?
- Can he change easily from one action to another?
- Can he keep up high concentration for a long period of time?
- Does he rely mainly on simple or compound reaction or both?
- Can he easily shift attention from narrow to wide and vice versa, from external to internal and vice versa?
- What is his optimal level of arousal?
- What is his main attitude toward training and competitions (ego-involvement or task-involvement?)
- What are the main components of his achieving motivation (motive of success, rivalry, aggressive attitude, emphasis on extreme effort, motive of avoiding failure, emphasis on self-efficacy, independence)?
- Etc., etc.

How to deal with a given competitor after finding out the answers to these and to many more questions is described in more detail in many of my articles and books. Here, in this short paper, I only endeavoured to stress the usefulness and importance of a model of competition, combined with individualisation of training and tactics as a main guiding line for programming, conducting, directing and controlling the fencer's training.

Too rigid selection may lead to rejection of really talented people. Attempt to squash everybody into an abstract, universal, stereotyped model of champion may be harmful. **Programmes that are based on competition and individualisation allow the best athletes to rise to the top in due time and for all to find enjoyment and their right place in fencing.** This is my firm conviction and the results of my pupils over many years appear to confirm it. Various tests and research work conducted in the Fencing Department, Academy of Physical Education, Katowice, also strongly confirm it.

STUART'S SCRIBBLINGS

Musings from your Members' Rep.



Hello again. Unlike last time, it's been a busy few months on most fronts since my last column. I've recently combined my role of Members' Rep with that of Membership Secretary. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Sarah Paveley for all her hard work in that role and for all the work she's done for the Academy. You might get me writing to you now asking for references, if your name has been given by an applicant. If I do write to you for references etc, I would like to ask, as a favour to me, that you could return them as soon as possible. It would be very much appreciated and the membership application process will not stall.

On other notes, it's that time of year again, when I have to ask for nominations for the Brian Pitman award. Full details of the award are on the BAF website, but here is a quick summary. The award is presented at the AGM to a coach who has shown particular skill in the promotion and development of the sport of Fencing for groups of young people under the age of 18.

Members who have shown innovation in the teaching and coaching of young people from one or more of the following groups would be strong contenders for this award:

- Young people with learning difficulties
- Physically handicapped young people
- Young people from deprived areas
- Work in state schools
- Work with voluntary organisations

Nominations should be sent to the Secretary (Prof Bob Merry), whose details can be found on page 3 of this newsletter. Your nomination should include a summary of the work done, which would qualify the nominee for the award. To start with, this could just be a few bullet points or a couple of short paragraphs. If more information is needed, the committee will be in touch.

Stuart Clough, Members' Representative



Once again "Porthos" sends us a photo of a sword from his collection. He writes:

This one is of a rapier, probably English, from around 1580. The blade is 36" (91 cm), with a wide shallow fuller (groove), making it lighter. On one side the blade is inscribed **NO ME SALVES SIN RASON** and on the other **NO ME ENTRENES SIN HONOR** - "*Do not draw me without reason - sheath me not without honour*"

There has been some restoration to the guard, with the pierced plates being replaced a few years ago - on rapiers of this type they are often missing.

The grip is finely bound with various thicknesses of wire and it has Turk's Head finials.

The rapier is in excellent condition. The overall length is 44" (112 cm) and it weighs 2lb 11oz (1.2 kg). Whilst the

fuller lightens the blade quite a bit and the balance is quite good, compared to a modern fencing weapon it would be tiring to use and movements of the blade would be slow by our standards. I feel that, using this against a modern épée, I wouldn't stand a chance.

Porthos

COURSES

BAF RESIDENTIAL COURSE

Autumn Course - 24th to 29th October 2011

Fees for the Course

£400 for Members and £460 for non-Members

Course to be held at Denstone College, Staffordshire.

Contact Dave Jerry, the Course Officer for full details.

Contact details are on page 3 and further details can be found on our web site.

BAF RESIDENTIAL COURSE

Easter Course - 2nd to 7th April 2012

(Provisional Dates)

Contact Dave Jerry, the Course Officer for full details.

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.

Scott MacMenemy

Aberdeen

Ben Waldon

Ruislip

Jame Dicker

Watford

Chris Gregory

Rickmansworth

Elizabeth Hill

Lewes

See the Academy web site at www.baf-fencing.org for details of the latest applications.

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.

The word "Duellist" is written in a gold, cursive script. A horizontal gold foil is positioned behind the letters, extending from the left edge of the frame and passing through the word.The word "SALE" is written in large, bold, white capital letters. The top and bottom edges of the letters are engulfed in a realistic, orange and yellow flame effect.

Details about Duellist's biggest ever sale, new management, new home and new products are all available on our brand new website

WWW.DUELLISTFENCING.COM

T: 0208-543-0937

enquiries@duellistfencing.com