

# British Academy of Fencing **ACADEMY NEWS**

**May 2016  
Issue 85**

***"Run by coaches for coaches"***



## QUALITY AT EASTER

The numbers attending the Easter Course may have been slightly lower than is usual, but there was no doubting the overall quality of the course, both in its delivery and in the results obtained.

As will be seen in the results listed on page 11, a total of fourteen full passes and two part passes were achieved in examinations ranging from Level 1 to Advanced.

Harry Gulliver put up a strong performance to obtain his Advanced Foil, impressing the board with his skill. A good pass was obtained by Carina Vicente at Level 3 Epée and, as you can read on page 5, she is putting her new found skills to good use in her club in Maidenhead.



*Harry Gulliver on the way to a good pass in his Advanced Foil examination (Photo: Isobel Combes)*

There were a trio of strong passes at Level 3 Sabre for William Gallimore-Tallen, Sam Smith and Lewis McIntyre, who showed the benefits of good pre-course preparation.

Sabre was also well represented at Level 2, again with three passes, this time from Carl Morris, Nick Wynn and Robin Stevens. Owen Birch gained his Level 2 Foil, whilst Edward Beaumont achieved the same level at Epée. Carl, Nick and Edward also added Level 1 passes in their respective weapons, together with Lucy Wright, who gained a Level 1 Sabre award.

Tony Middleton (Advanced Foil) and Anna Hills (Level 2 Foil) both gained passes in the Class section of their examinations, but need to try again at the Individual part to complete their pass.

All the members of the course, whatever their level of success, should be grateful to the coach educators, who included the two latest full Diploma Masters, Andrew Norris and Scott McMenemy, alongside Philip Bruce and Isobel Bruce Combes. Their hard work, as described by Andrew on page 9, undoubtedly added to the quality of the course.

The two examination boards on the Saturday were kept busy, but they too will have appreciated the high standard and taken no small pleasure in being able to award so many passes, together with many high grades.

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***NEXT ISSUE: July 2016***  
***Contributions by June 10th,***  
***please.***

Last month we repriced lots of our junior fencing equipment making them even better value. Here are just a few items that have now been reduced:



Club Junior Jacket - Ref: 002J

The Spartan range is crafted with a strong 400 Newton material making it very protective and durable, yet quick to dry and simple to maintain. The perfect range for clubs or to get you started.

Retail Price Was £59.99  
**NOW 49.99**



Spartan Junior Jacket - Ref: 001J

The Spartan range is crafted with a strong 400 Newton material making it very protective and durable, yet quick to dry and simple to maintain. The perfect range for clubs or to get you started.

Retail Price Was £58.26  
**NOW £48.55**



Spartan Junior Breeches - Ref: 001BJ

The Spartan breeches are crafted with a strong 400 Newton material making it very protective and durable, yet quick to dry and simple to maintain. The perfect range for clubs or to get you started.

Retail Price Was £41.62  
**NOW £34.68**



Spartan Junior Stretch Breeches - Ref: 001BJS

Two full stretch panels in the breeches allows for a closer fitting garment and gives greater freedom of movement. The perfect range for fencers just getting started.

Retail Price Was £58.26  
**NOW £48.55**



Standard Junior Plastron - 53J

The 350 Newton club plastron is for non-electric fencing and aimed at clubs and activity centres running introductory fencing beginner courses.

Retail Price Was £21.16  
**NOW £20.13**



Economy FIE Junior Plastron - 404J

Designed to reduce the impact of fencing hits. The dual layer helps to absorb energy and the material is treated with anti-microbial Nano technology to help you stay fresh. It is ambidextrous so it can be reversed to suit left and right handed fencers makes it ideal for serious fencing clubs.

Retail Price Was £41.50  
**NOW £34.85**



Foil Lame Junior - Ref: F60J

We have used the same ultra-high quality metallic lame material from the same supplier for the last 40 years and this is why our lames last longer than any other on the market. Don't waste money buying a new lame every season just buy one that stands the test of time.

Retail Price Was £87.29  
**NOW £72.74**



Sabre Lame Junior - S30J

We have used the same ultra-high quality metallic lame material from the same supplier for the last 40 years and this is why our lames last longer than any other on the market. Don't waste money buying a new lame every season just buy one that stands the test of time.

Retail Price Was £152.24  
**NOW £126.87**

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**USEFUL INFORMATION****ACADEMY  
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**FOR ALL THE LATEST  
INFORMATION AND  
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THE ACADEMY WEB SITE  
AT**

**[WWW.BAF-FENCING.COM](http://WWW.BAF-FENCING.COM)**

**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

**PROFICIENCY  
AWARDS**

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

**DOCUMENTATION**

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

Key Teaching Points Foil	}	..... <b>£7.35 (£9.45)</b> each
Key Teaching Points Epée		
Key Teaching Points Sabre		
Key Coaching Points Foil		
Key Coaching Points Epée		
Key Coaching Points Sabre		

Glossary of Terms (including Translation of Fencing Terms).....**£7.35 (£9.45)**

Employment Guidelines.....**£7.35 (£9.45)**

Teaching/ Coaching Tactics (2nd Edition).....**£16.80 (£21)**

CD-Rom Issue 6.1 – this contains all the syllabuses and current questions for BAF  
examinations, as well as other examination material.....**£10.00 \*\***

Examples of past written Papers – for the Advanced and Diploma examinations - **FREE** -  
apply to Course Officer

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

\*\* Price of CD-ROM includes lifetime replacement guarantee - only buy once!

A Compendium containing all major Documentation, including the ones above, plus more  
relating to examinations, is now available. For full details see Issue 64 of Academy News  
or contact Professor Isobel Bruce Combes ([iacombes@btinternet.com](mailto:iacombes@btinternet.com))

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## THE PRESIDENT WRITES.....



### *Denstone*

First of all I would like to thank everyone who participated in our latest Denstone Course and congratulate all those who achieved success in our exams. Thank you in particular to all those who attended on Saturday as examiners.

Every course is unique but this one felt particularly special in that we had not one but two brand new fencing masters on the staff. It is always good to have new ideas and perspectives on the course and they contributed admirably. It was also unique in being a course where three of the course tutors had received all their BAF training on this very course at Denstone, giving them all a great insight into what it is like to be at the receiving end, and a great empathy with candidates as a result.

As this was not a very large course, candidates had a very limited number of options when it came to selecting partners to train with. Fortunately, we were once again able to encourage a number of fencers to join us during the day and this was very well received by the candidates, especially as it provided greater flexibility in choosing suitable stooges for the exams at the end of the week. We were also able to provide full classes for every exam, without having to call on candidates to stand in for these. Candidates were able, as a result, to give their full attention preparing for their own exams. This was reflected in some quite remarkable exam passes on the day with many credits and distinctions and with two candidates who passed with the highest marks ever recorded for BAF exams at that level. Well done to them all.

The Denstone drill hall is a place of fond, and sometimes life changing, memories for many, but it can be a dull looking hall and one of our challenges at the start of the week is to change it into an inspiring context for fencing. On this occasion, the Academy would like to thank Serge Timacheff, the official FIE photographer, who responded to our request for permission to use his photos in posters by sending us a file of high resolution copies of photos which he plans to use as part of a wall montage at the Rio Olympics this summer. They were certainly inspiring and we thank him for this.

### *Manchester Fencing Centre*

On the subject of transforming a venue into a home for fencing, I recently visited the new Manchester Fencing Centre. I would like to congratulate Stuart Marshall and his team for their considerable commitment and courage in converting an old mill into a fencing centre – mainly funded out of their own pockets. It takes a great deal of vision and determination to do such a thing and I congratulate them and wish them every success.

I was, however, saddened to hear from them of the amount of discouragement and backbiting they appeared to have endured from various individuals, including some Academy members. It is very disappointing to hear of such things. We are a small sport and cannot afford to undermine those who are willing to put such an ambitious effort into improving fencing provision. I am the first to say that it is entirely up to individual coaches whether they choose to work in collaboration with others or alone, and that we don't always have to play nicely with each other! I certainly don't! However, there is no place for jealousy in this sport, especially between clubs. The success of one venture or club should serve as an inspiration to all others to see how they can improve their provision or their standards. Choice will improve our sport and it should be embraced.

### *A New Low?*

It cannot be denied that fencing is going through a difficult stage. The catastrophic decline in competitions has claimed its latest victim with the Bristol Open and I am sure that will not be the last. Moreover, those competitions that are being run seem to be prone to ever greater chaos with refereeing becoming more of a lottery every day. It is one thing grumbling when referees do not see things the way we do, it is quite another when referees clearly have no idea at all of the rules. I have never heard so much nonsense as I have come across in the last year, with the below being only a small sample.

“You can't have a point-in-line going backwards” - Foil

“You can't score a hit once your opponent has gone past you” – Foil and Epee

“The attack on preparation is not valid because a point-in-line had not been established” - Foil

Not to mention the number of times when hits have been awarded via an impromptu committee of the referee and any of his mates who happen to be standing around, sometimes including one of the fencers!

*Continued on page 5...*

***Coaches, this is your sport!***

The undercurrent of contempt that has existed for some years now against all authority in fencing, especially coaches, is coming home to roost. Coaches have always been the guardians of the sport and the rules, but those participating in fencing seem less and less interested in listening to them. Coaches are now conspicuous by their absence at competitions and many of those that do turn up seem to be more interested in gossiping and backbiting with as many people as they can find standing around at a competition than putting a sword in their hand and helping their pupils or even recruiting and bringing in the numbers to help competitions stay afloat. And who can blame them, when they are treated so badly by so many fencers and organisers (not all, I hasten to add, with Merseyside being a shining example of liasing with coaches to encourage fencers to compete). When I was a fencer, coaches played an important role in protecting the rules of the game and raising standards. Now they are pretty much expected to be seen and not heard and any coach who speaks up over rules or safety risks being accused of interfering. It is easy to moan about this, but coaches must also remember that they help to bring this upon themselves when they go about talking each other down in this way or take the easy option of being absent. Coaching is almost the easiest part of being a coach. Standing up for the sport and its standards and rules is the hard part.

So, in the midst of all this, I am very cheered by our new fencing masters and their determination to make a difference, and our candidates who work so hard during our Denstone week to improve what they can give back to the sport. I hope they are the light on the horizon for Fencing!

*Philip Bruce*

## FROM PORTUGAL TO MAIDENHEAD: A NEW VENTURE

*by Carina Vicente*



I come from Portugal where Modern Pentathlon got me introduced to Fencing (épée) at the age of fifteen. Unfortunately, there are not many clubs in Portugal, so I didn't get to learn how to fence. My first five years of fencing were just a question of doing as best I could for competitions and, as you can guess, I was not very good at it. When I arrived in England to do my Sports Coaching degree internship in Modern Pentathlon, my main goal was to learn the sport of Fencing, so I could offer others the opportunity I didn't get to have myself.

Once again I didn't succeed in this as no one seemed to be interested in teaching it to me and that's when I looked for fencing courses and joined a BF Level 2 Epée course which gave me a few tools to get started. By then I had moved to Maidenhead and there were no fencing clubs for children with which I could get involved. That's when I considered starting my own club. What a better way to learn than getting yourself out there? That's when, two years ago, Luso Fencing Academy was born. A project that aimed to offer the sport of Fencing in Maidenhead, Berkshire, quickly has grown into a 65 members fencing club and has challenged me in many ways.

The first year of the club was very difficult, not just because it was something started from scratch, but also because of my lack of fencing experience and qualifications. That's when I got involved with BAF coaching education in April 2015 and October 2015. Even though I didn't manage to pass my exams at first, I've learnt a whole new approach in how to teach and coach fencing. Since then, I have used mostly class lessons to teach the strokes and introduced a Graded Award programme, which aims to achieve the standards for BAF Awards. I have also started to offer individual lessons as extra practice for fencers as well as part of my coaching development. Apart from the weekly regular sessions, club fencers are invited to join the termly friendly competition, as well as a couple of fencing camps organized over school holidays. These changes have raised children's interest and involvement with the club and the sport itself.

All improvement made over the last year started to be rewarded with a good competition results at LPJS and Southern Fencing competitions where for the first time we qualified two fencers to the British Youth Championships.

From January I've been travelling to Four of Clubs in Leek every week and come to their training days. I can proudly say it has been worth it as I managed to pass my Level 3 Epée Award in April.

Now I feel ready to set up a competition squad at the club, while I keep working with the club fencers, as well as Leek sessions, towards better fencing results and my Advanced Epée Award. This is all because they deserve the best I can possibly be.



# DEN OF VICE

## *Contributions from the Academy's two Vice-Presidents*



About a year ago I started thinking about a system for improving my class lessons. I'd just started running an extra training session for some of my fencers. I'd be on my own for an hour, with a group of about 12 fencers. The fencers had a wide range of ages and abilities and there wasn't going to be time to give them all an individual lesson. I decided I wanted to come up with pairs exercises that they would all be able to do, but would hold the interest of the best fencers in the group

I also decided that I wanted to be ambitious with the lesson content and get the class to be able to do higher level pairs exercises. The kind of thing I had in mind were extended continuity hitting exercises, or competitive exercises involving multiple actions.

What can happen when something like that is tried is that instead of the beautiful exercise the coach had in mind, they end up with a bit of a mess. This leads to frustration of both the coach and the fencers, who can come to regard class lessons as too much like hard work and not fun. I really didn't want that to happen in this case.

The problem is that advanced class lessons require careful management; all the fencers need to be able to do both halves of the exercise, so the potential for something going wrong is greater. In an individual lesson the coach can obviously do their half of the exercise, so there's less to go wrong. However, if handled correctly, even less gifted fencers can be taught to handle and enjoy more advanced class lessons.

Firstly, decide what the whole exercise is, then work out if you are realistically going to be able to do it in the time you have for one training session. Speaking personally, I've found splitting something like this over about three training sessions, with 30-40 minutes for each class lesson worked best for me.

I start with part of the exercise. Something that the fencers will be able to get right most, but not all of, the time. An 80% success rate was about right. That way the fencers are engaged right from the start, but didn't get frustrated because they can't do it. In other words, I try to start with success. When possible I make the first part of the exercise into a game.

I let them practice the first part for a few minutes, give them a chance to get used to it, then add in the next part and let them practice that. My preference is to start off with the last action of the whole exercise then gradually add things in front of it. I try to finish class lesson at point where the fencers are getting a good success rate at what they've done. In other words, finish with success.

At the next session pick up where you left off and let the class practice the exercise so far so they can remind themselves how it goes. Then carry on with the process gradually adding or changing actions, until you've introduced the whole exercise.

I've found taking same approach works well with all kinds of fencers; youngster, adults, casual fencers, serious competitive fencers and beginners. Most importantly the fencers tell me they enjoy it.

*Liam Harrington, Vice President*



March 2016 saw the return of Sport Relief. Organised by the charity Comic Relief every two years. The initiative is designed to get more people raising money for charity through physical activity.

Most people take part by running the Sport Relief Mile, and I am proud to say that two young fencers from my club took up the challenge and did their Mile in fencing kit. Other participants did their bit by swimming, cycling, or raising money through other active events across the country.

The Sport Relief 2016 telethon on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March ended with a total of over £55M. Sponsorship money and donations are still coming in. 50% of the money raised is spent right here in the UK and 50% is spent on projects abroad. Congratulations to everyone who got involved in Sport Relief this year!

Why not share your own Sport Relief stories and photos with Academy News?

*Andrew Norris, Vice President*





# **THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY**

*By Bob Merry*

It has been known in the past for a senior coach, possibly an examiner on a board, to comment about another coach's lesson, "Well, I wouldn't have done it that way", as if this was a bad thing and the lesson was, therefore, to be criticised. Hopefully, this attitude is now a thing of the past, as our current crop of examiners realise that there are many ways to answer our examination questions and judge what they see on the basis of it being a valid answer and not on their own personal preference.

I have to admit that I have been the "victim" in the past of this blinkered attitude. On a BAF course at Cheltenham, many years ago, I was asked on the Friday before the exam to give a class lesson on broken time attacks at sabre. The lesson I had prepared, with the help of a very senior coach educator from my region, concentrated on their use against an opponent who took very late parries, making progressive actions more difficult. However, at the conclusion of the lesson, the coach educator on the course (now no longer a BAF member) was highly critical of the lesson, basically saying the concept was wrong and I should have given a lesson on how broken time gives changes of rhythm that confuse the opponent. At the time, I was quite upset at this, especially being the day before the exam, as was another coach, whose own lessons on the topic were broadly similar to mine. Fortunately, the topic did not arise in either of our exams the next day. When I had time to think about it later, I came to the conclusion that both concepts were valid and, indeed, teach and coach broken time using both today. The point here is that we all, whether examiners, educators, trainee coaches, or pupils need to recognise that any problem in fencing that we are trying to answer can be done so in several ways.

Let us take a very simple problem. A fencer attacks, but his attack is parried by the opponent, with possibly a riposte. You are the attacker's coach. Just stop for a moment and consider how many different ways you can think of, which result in your fencer getting a hit. When you are ready, read on.

Firstly, the attacker could make a better preparation to get within reaction-time distance before launching the attack. Or, if the opponent tends to use the same parry, they can switch to a compound action. They might use angulation to go around the parry, or attack to a different part of the target. If the opponent ripostes, then a second intention counter-riposte is effective, whilst, if they are content just to parry, an immediate renewal is in order. And so on... Surely, you can think of a few more?

But now consider how you might present this to a class, or even individual fencers. Of course, each answer would come up as you taught the various subjects; simple attacks, compound attacks, counter-ripestes, etc. But it can also be effective to show all the various answers together. Or why not let the class "discover" them for themselves. Show them the basic problem and then let them work in pairs to find answers, combining their brain power. Enough time should be left at the end of the lesson to let a number of pairs demonstrate their answers. But, even with this exercise you have a choice of when to use it with a group. I have used it with reasonably experienced fencers who should already know most of the answers, having been taught all the topics. I have also used it on a taster session with complete beginners in only their second hour of fencing; they managed to successfully "invent" compound attacks, counter-ripestes and renewals. I feel it is a good way to illustrate how fencing is a sport that relies very much on the brain as well as the body and, by letting the fencers work things out for themselves, it is a good way to develop their ability to think about their fencing for themselves.

When I was an instructor in the RAF, I was recruited to a team to write a Programmed Learning course to train electrical and instrument fitters in the mysteries of electronics. We started by going on a course ourselves to learn how Programmed Learning worked as a system of teaching. During this, we were introduced to a maxim, often attributed to the famous language teacher, Michel Thomas, which said, "There's no such thing as a bad pupil, only bad teachers", meaning that, if a pupil is not learning, it is because the teacher has not found the right way to present the subject. There is a lot of truth in this; we should always be ready to experiment with different approaches to effectively teach a subject. Take, for example, a compound attack, such as a one-two. We should aim for the pupil to make the second disengage as small as possible; a small vertical movement evading a horizontally moving parry, rather than the action of someone conducting an orchestra. The key to this is good timing, with the blade dropping at precisely the moment the opponent's parry crosses its path. Many pupils have difficulty in achieving this timing. As a coach, you might start by asking the pupil to do a disengage attack, without trying to evade the parry, but, rather, letting it happen. Make sure your pupil is making a good attack, directed towards the target and not "aiming off", as they anticipate the parry. From this they can learn the timing of the parry, which you, as the coach, must make consistent. Once they feel confident that they can predict the exact moment of blade contact they can attempt to avoid it, with a small vertical movement; both before and after this disengage, their point should be aimed at where they intend to hit. But this method may not work with some pupils, who lack a sense of timing. In that case, we can try another method. The pupil is instructed to do a slow, lazy disengage lunge, to the coach's count of one to five. This time the coach parries to contact the pupil's blade at "three" and the coach points this out to the pupil. Now the instruction becomes, "Drop the blade on 'three', raise it on 'four' and hit on 'five'". After a while, the coach stops counting out loud, allowing the pupil to do it himself in his mind and then the pace is gradually increased. These are but two methods which I have learnt from other coaches and have found to work for the majority of pupils, but, if I come across a pupil that doesn't respond to these methods, it will be my job to find another method that will work. So-called "Problem" pupils are not really something to be avoided, but to be welcomed as challenges that can improve your range of skills as a coach.

Whether it is answering questions for an examination board, mentoring another more junior coach, or getting our pupils to improve their fencing, we should always remember that **THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY!**

## LETTERS FROM LEWIS

Correspondence from your Members' Rep.



What do razors, whisky, and alcohol wipes have in common? Denstone.

The above are but a few of the many and varied items I procured for candidates on the most recent course. Acting as Course Rep, I kept an eye and ear out for any way to make life easier (except the fencing; you're on your own for that). I like to think I was up to the task, even going so far as to organise a social event to relax on the Wednesday. Many thanks to all candidates who contributed with their presence or funding.

A fair proportion of candidates attending the course I had not met before, others had not attended for a number of courses, and more still were experiencing this type of coach education for the first time. All made huge efforts to develop during the week, with there being a fantastic work ethic throughout the week and across the board. The average level of work was higher than I've seen for most of the courses I've attended. I hope to see many return to continue their development.

The sheer effort was by no means limited to the candidates. All staffing members delivered the course to an exceedingly high standard, with a considerable amount of patience and good humour. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our most recent Masters of the Academy Prof. Scott McMenemy and Prof. Andrew Norris; not just because they have become valued friends of mine over recent years, but in recognition of their achievements and aptitude at stepping up to the daunting plate that is coach education. Each brought their own style and unique experiences, adding greatly to the Academy's armoury of capable coach educators, and I hope to see them return to staff future courses.

At risk of sounding like a fanatic of the Academy I will say one last thing on Denstone. The Academy's coach education courses are a vehicle for excellence. By excellence I do not mean the dictionary definition of "the quality of being outstanding or extremely good"; I would go much farther than this. I mean excellence as in the context of moral virtue; the act of living up to one's full potential. I take pride in being part of an organisation which runs courses designed to drive individuals to achieve, push and ultimately exceed their limits. This process is essential to the training of effective fencing coaches, and I can think of no other sport to which this applies more. A fencer needs to realise their potential in every single elimination bout to proceed, a coach no less so (their job starts long before).

For all their merit, our courses are too short to provide training beyond technical coaching proficiency and instilling various approaches to giving lessons. These skills are of little use until you have a pupil in front of you. Getting them through the door in the first place is a task which can require a great many other skills. Some of these abilities it would be inappropriate to attempt to train at Denstone. Professionalism, organisational skills, and determination to name a few. The importance of these other abilities, however, by no means devalue the technical fencing skills. I believe technical proficiency to be of paramount importance as a pre-requisite of becoming a competent fencing coach.

In a similar vein to being successful fencing coaches I have yet to receive nominations for any of our awards. We are left with approximately 6 months before nominations close. I sincerely wish to see nominations as I have not witnessed any awards given during my years in the Academy. If you have any nominations, just email me.

A final note to all of the membership; come find me at any competition we both happen to be at. Competitions can be hectic but it'd be great to have a chat, however short. I will be at the BYCs and also plan to be at the EYCs, along with others throughout the year.

*Lewis McIntyre, Members' Representative*



# THE DENSTONE COURSE

## IMPRESSIONS FROM A FIRST TIME STAFF MEMBER

*by Andrew Norris*



Having passed my last diploma examinations in the autumn of 2015, I was excited to get the opportunity to staff a Denstone course in the spring. As this was my first time staffing the course I didn't know exactly what to expect. All I knew was that it would be very different to being on the course as a candidate.

One of the things I tried to do in the run up to the course was talk to people I knew who had been on the courses recently and encourage them to attend again. As a staff member, it seems even more important to encourage people to take part in the courses, since every candidate needs somebody of a similar level and the same weapon to work with during the week. The more people attending, the easier this is to achieve.

As March drew nearer I also looked over the updated questions. Many candidates, only considering one weapon and level at a time, sometimes feeling swamped by the amount of material they have to cover. Staff members spend the week juggling all three weapons from Level 1 to Diploma, and I didn't want to be caught out. Having question numbers that are loosely linked by topic across all three weapons, different levels and different parts of the exam is a phenomenal tool for coach educators. Those who have only recently started coming on courses may not know that this was not always the case, and is just one example of the hard work that goes on behind the scenes.

As a candidate you are focused on managing the material, but it is the staff's job to manage the candidates. During the course the hall is full of different personalities. Candidates are all different ages, have different levels of experience, different backgrounds, different nationalities... the list is endless. And I was meeting many of them for the first time at the beginning of the week! Staff members try to anticipate problems and head them off early, but even with four pairs of eyes in the room this is a monumental task. Staff meetings at the end of the day were spent discussing what sort of help or encouragement was needed where and we were often talking much longer than expected.

The timetable has evolved a lot, even in the few short years I have been involved in courses. There is a staggering amount of material to cover. However, evening sessions often provide an opportunity for candidates to rest their legs a little while they watch lecture demonstrations from the course director. As a candidate at the shallow end, I remember seeing these demonstrations as a source of inspiration. I knew that if I persevered then somewhere down the line my own coaching might not look so different from what I was seeing. When I was a diploma candidate I remember being able to pick out the individual elements of those demonstrations and relate them to the training I had been doing. It was a great boost to know that the hard work was starting to pay off. To me, this brings home what a responsibility it is to be a coach educator. Though it is a tough job that often involves having to dole out criticism (always constructive, of course!), staff members are also in a position to motivate developing coaches to stretch themselves and keep coming back.

It was very gratifying, as a first time staff member, to occasionally get a little positive feedback from candidates. Whether it was a few words of thanks at the end of a particularly useful session, or even just someone's willingness to take on board some of my advice and then see their coaching improve, it was enough to make me want to do the job again.

On Saturday I was sitting in on exam boards. Sometimes I was just an observer, sometimes marking for real. It was probably one of the most stressful days of the whole course for me. When you have been working with a candidate all week you have a strong desire to see them pass. As a new examiner, I was also trying to mark as fairly as possible, hoping my marks would closely match those of the other board members. This was all going on in the back of my mind, as I tried to concentrate intensely on how well the lesson in front of me at the time was fulfilling the different marking criteria. A full day of examining is just as tough as any other day on the course!

My colleagues deserve a big thank-you. Philip, Isobel and Scott were a great team to work with. Congratulations as well to everyone who took part in the course this time round. I hope you enjoyed it and will be back again in October.



# NEXT STOP RIO



Following the British Fencing Olympic Selection Panel meeting and in line with the 'Detailed Selection Procedure for the Rio Olympic Games 2016 the following fencers have been selected to be nominated to the BOA for the Men's Foil at the Rio Olympics in August 2016:

**James Davis** – Individual and Team

**Laurence Halsted** – Individual and Team

**Richard Kruse** – Individual and Team

**Marcus Mepstead** – Reserve for the Team event

Please note - British Fencing is only responsible for the nomination to the BOA and they are responsible for the selection of the final team. Therefore, subject to the BOA confirming selection, I would like to offer the Academy's congratulations to each of our fencers and the coaching support staff and wish them every success at the Games

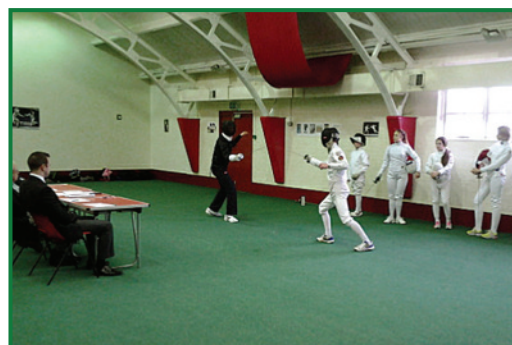
In addition, we would like to congratulate Prof. Ziemek Wojciechowski who has made a major contribution to the success of these fencers, most notably in having been Richard Kruse's coach since his days as a beginner.

On a personal note, I remember that the first time James Davis came to my notice was at the Bristol Open, when, as a 15 year old, he was causing absolute consternation among senior fencers. It makes it especially poignant that this year the Bristol Open has been cancelled due to lack of interest. The part that such competitions can play in the development of our next generation of champions must not be underestimated and I sincerely hope that efforts will be made to invigorate them again.

*Philip Bruce, President*

## MOMENTS AT DENSTONE

*Photos by Isobel Combes*



## EXAMINATION SUCCESS

The following candidates achieved passes in their exams at the end of the Easter Course.

### *Level 4 Foil*

Harry Gulliver  
Tony Middleton – part pass (Class)

### *Level 3 Epée*

Carina Vicente

### *Level 3 Sabre*

William Gallimore-Tallen  
Sam Smith  
Lewis McIntyre

### *Level 2 Foil*

Owen Birch

### *Level 2 Epée*

Edward Beaumont  
Anna Hills – part pass (Class)

### *Level 2 Sabre*

Robin Stevens  
Nick Wynn  
Carl Morris

### *Level 1 Epée*

Edward Beaumont

### *Level 1 Sabre*

Lucy Wright  
Carl Morris  
Nick Wynn

### **In other recent examinations:**

### *Level 3 Foil*

Kenan Ali

We send our congratulations to all these successful candidates and wish them well in their future coaching.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Academy News sends congratulations to two of our members in Scotland, who have received awards recently.

The first is Professor Bert Bracewell, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the inaugural British Fencing Awards, held at the University of East London on April 16th. This recognition of a long career as a first class fencing coach is well deserved.

The second recipient of our congratulations is Professor Phil Carson, who actually received two awards within a week of each other. The first was the Roger Crosnier Award from Scottish Fencing for his work on their coach education system.

Phil's second achievement was to be named Coach of the Year in the Perth and Kinross Sports Awards. It is always good to see exponents of our sport receiving recognition in the wider field of sport in general.



## CD-ROM ISSUE 6.1

The latest issue (6.1) of the CD-ROM, which contains all the syllabuses, exam questions and other documents, is now available. Anyone who has an older version can return it for exchange, under the lifetime replacement scheme.

However, a few of the early copies of this CD-ROM contain the wrong information. If you already have version 6.1, you should check that you don't have one of these rogue copies. The easiest way to do this is to look at the bottom right hand corner of any page of questions, where you should find the following: *Published by the SSTT Issue 6.1 – Dec 2015*. If it refers to Issue 6.0, you have one of the faulty discs and you should return this for exchange.



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# BAF RESIDENTIAL COURSE

## Autumn Course

**24th October to 29th October 2016**

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

**Fees: £440 (members) £492 (non-members)**

*Please contact our Course Officer, Dave Jerry, for more information*

**Contact details on page 3**

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