

# British Academy of Fencing **ACADEMY NEWS**

**February 2017**  
**Issue 89**

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



## **SHOCK RETIREMENT**

All was progressing normally at the Academy's AGM. The committee had delivered their reports, which had been discussed, questions answered, and then accepted by the meeting. Then the agenda moved on to the election of Officers and Committee members. If the meeting was dozing off after lunch, they were about to be made to sit up and pay attention. Professor Philip Bruce opened this item by making a statement, which explained why he, after much soul-searching, had decided to retire from the Presidency with immediate effect. He has also sent a contribution to Academy News, on the same topic, which you can read on page 8.



*Philip Bruce and Acting President, Liam Harrington, present the awards at the AGM Dinner*

What would happen next?

Philip had made his final decision quite late in the day, but the Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer, who are the other Directors of British Academy of Fencing Ltd, had been given advance notice of Philip's decision late on Thursday evening. They decided to have a meeting amongst themselves on the Saturday morning prior to the AGM, to decide on their course of action. Under the Articles of the Academy, it would not be possible to elect a new President at this meeting, as there is a procedure laid down, which gives all members a chance to vote, including a postal option. Instead, the Articles state that the presidency should be assumed by the "longest serving Vice President until the next General Meeting". This, in itself presented a slight problem, as our current VPs were both elected in 2016 in the same block resolution as the rest of the committee members being elected, so neither could be said to have served longer in the post. Other factors were considered and it was decided that Professor Liam Harrington would become the Acting President.

The Directors felt that attempting to hold an EGM, purely for a Presidential election, could prove problematic, taking into account such factors as finding a suitable date in a crowded calendar, the expense of hiring a venue, and persuading sufficient members to forego the option of a postal vote to travel to an EGM in person,

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***NEXT ISSUE: May 2017***  
***Contributions by April 10th,***  
***please.***

Academy News is edited by Bob Merry, 6 Birkdale Close, Bramhall, Stockport, Cheshire SK7 2LN.

Tel: 0161 440 9613 or 07836 764026. Email: bobmerrybaf@aol.com.

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

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**YOUR COMMITTEE****Acting President:**

Prof. Liam Harrington  
54 Laureate Way  
Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 3RU  
Tel: 07712 633106  
Email: [harringtonliam@hotmail.com](mailto:harringtonliam@hotmail.com)

**Vice-President:**

Prof. Andrew Norris  
96 Pinegrove Road  
Southampton SO19 2PR  
Tel: 07714 201129  
Email: [andrew@southampton-epée.co.uk](mailto:andrew@southampton-epée.co.uk)

**Secretary:**

Prof. Bob Merry  
6 Birkdale Close, Bramhall  
Stockport, Cheshire SK7 2LN  
Tel: 0161 440 9613  
Email: [bobmerrybaf@aol.com](mailto:bobmerrybaf@aol.com)

**Treasurer:**

Stuart Clough  
29 Hogarth Road  
Ipswich IP3 0EY  
Tel: 07886 708392  
Email: [scloughbaf@gmail.com](mailto:scloughbaf@gmail.com)

**Assistant Secretary and Course Officer:**

Provost Dave Jerry  
Orchard Rise, Churchtown  
Belton, Doncaster DN9 1PE  
Tel: 01427 874109  
Email: [davejerry@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:davejerry@hotmail.co.uk)

**Members' Representative:**

Maitre Lewis McIntyre  
Flat 9, Summerfield Village Court  
Wilmslow SK9 2TG  
Tel: 07866 898762  
Email: [lewismcintyre365@gmail.com](mailto:lewismcintyre365@gmail.com)

**Committee Member:**

Maitre Sam Smith  
17 Buxton Old Road  
Macclesfield, Ches. SK11 7EL  
Tel: 07521 648860  
Email: [samuelsmith01@gmail.com](mailto:samuelsmith01@gmail.com)

**Additional Appointments:****Chairman, SSTT:**

Prof. Tom Etchells  
24 Honeysuckle Drive, Stalybridge  
Ches. SK15 2PS  
Tel: 0161 338 3262  
Email: [T\\_ETCHELLS@sky.com](mailto:T_ETCHELLS@sky.com)

**International Secretary:**

Prof. Liam Harrington

**Proficiency Awards Administrator:**

Maitre Donald Walker  
4 The Aviaris  
Castle Howard  
York YO60 7BU  
Email: [maitredwalker@aol.com](mailto:maitredwalker@aol.com)

**Child Protection Officer, Welfare Officer,  
Chairman, Disciplinary Sub-Committee**  
Prof. Andrew Norris

**Editor - Academy News, Insurance,  
Examination Results Coordinator:**  
Prof. Bob Merry

**Membership Secretary:**  
Lewis McIntyre

**Film & Theatre Representative:**

Andy Wilkinson  
The Cottage, The Common  
Kinsbourne Green  
Harpenden, Herts. AL5 3NT  
Tel: 01582 713052  
Email: [andywilkinsonbaf@hotmail.com](mailto:andywilkinsonbaf@hotmail.com)

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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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Registered Office:

Talpa Hall  
Station Road  
Old Newton  
Stowmarket  
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## THE PRESIDENT WRITES.....



### *About me*

This is my first Academy News Article as Acting President of the BAF. I'll explain how I ended up with this job later.

I realise many of you won't know very much about me. So hopefully you'll be kind enough to indulge me while I introduce myself.

I started fencing in the early 1990s, long enough ago that I can't remember the exact year. I started coaching in 2004. To start with all I wanted to do was pass my level 2 foil so I could run beginners' courses at the fencing club I attended, but somehow I ended up as a fencing master. I think that at some point I decided that if I was going to coach fencing, I owed it to my pupils to be the best coach I could be. I'm still working on that part.

I currently do my coaching at Fencers Club London, where I'm fortunate enough to be part of a great team of coaches. I also do regular training days for the Eastern Region. I'm an amateur coach, with a "proper" day job as a computer programmer for a large multinational corporation. Sometimes my day job feels like I'm living in a Dilbert cartoon, so going fencing in the evening is a blessed relief. Basically I love it

### *AGM*

Thank you to everyone who came along to the AGM this year. Attendance was a little down on normal, however I suspect many people thought it was just going to be a business as usual AGM, so didn't make the effort to go.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. Very sadly, Prof. Philip Bruce announced that he was resigning as President of the Academy. This was two years into his latest four year term. I'll say some more about Philip at the end of my article, in the mean time I'll explain what happened next.

There was only a few days' notice of Philip's intention to resign, so there was not time to arrange for the election of a new President. We would have had to collect nominations, send out voting papers, allow for postal votes etc. According to the Articles of the Academy, in this situation, the longest serving Vice President should step into the role until a new President can be elected. Myself and Andrew Norris were both elected at the same time during the 2016 AGM. However, because I've been a BAF member for longest, and have served on the committee before, it was decided that I was the longest serving Vice-President.

Therefore, I'll be assuming the role of Acting President for an interim period of one year until a new President can be elected at the next AGM on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2018.

We did ask for volunteers to step into the Vice President's role that I vacated; unfortunately there weren't any at the time, which isn't surprising considering the lack of notice, so the BAF currently has a vacant Vice President position.

The other main topic of conversation at the AGM was the current state of fencing in the UK. The discussion covered a whole range of subjects, from the perceived high cost of fencing, to the dropping of fencing from the national school curriculum, to the reduction in sources of income for professional coaches, and obviously, the loss of UK Sport investment in the British Fencing World Class Programme.

However while those are very real problems, I don't think it's all doom and gloom. The past few years coaching have been some of the most enjoyable and rewarding I've ever had. I coach in a very active Region that's got a number of great clubs in it. My personal experience of fencing is that many things are going well.

### *Awards*

Which leads me on nicely to the Awards that were presented at the AGM Dinner this year. Not only were Sam Smith, William Gallimore-Tallen, and Lewis McIntyre presented with their Diploma Epée coaching awards, but we handed out BAF Awards to four Academy members:

**Gauthier Trophy – Prof. Isobel Bruce-Combes** (nominated by Prof. Tom Etchells). For the exemplary work Isobel has done at the King's Leadership Academy

**Brian Pitman Memorial Award – Chris Green** (nominated by Sarah Pallier). For work Chris has done in state schools and with adults with learning difficulties,

**Award of Merit – Stuart Clough** (nominated by Prof. Isobel Bruce Combes). For running exam days and managing the challenging task of turning the BAF into a limited company

**Award of Merit – Dominique Szokolovics** (nominated by Sian Hughes Pollitt). For coaching and developing successful young fencers.

What is pleasing to me is that these awards showcase the breadth of talented people in the Academy. The recipients come from a variety of different backgrounds, from Level 1 coaches all the way to Fencing Masters, from young coaches, to those who might be tactfully describes as “less young”. The reasons they received the awards vary from coaching talented young fencers, working with adults with learning difficulties, dealing with the intricacies of administering the BAF, to outstanding work in introducing fencing as a standard part of a school curriculum.

Congratulations to all concerned. It shows that no matter who you are, no matter how experienced you are, or how old or young, you can make a difference.

If I may ask one favour from you all it would be to think about coaches who might be worthy of nomination this year. I'm sure there are plenty of people out there, we just need to hear about them.

### ***Philip Bruce***

Finally I'd like to write a few words about Prof. Philip Bruce. I'd have preferred Philip to stay on as President for as long as he wanted. However, I was aware he was growing increasingly unhappy and after 14 years as President, he can't be blamed for wanting to step down.

I once heard Philip describe himself, as “Arrogant, Argumentative, Self Opinionated, and Objectionable.” I've never got very far by disagreeing with him, so I'm not going to start now. So, instead, let me share someone else's opinion of Philip with you. This is what they say whenever I mention Philip to them:

“Oh! He's lovely. Such a supportive person”.

They then proceed to tell a story about how Philip helped their “no hope” épée team mix it up against some GB Fencers at a competition.

For my part I count Philip as a great friend. When I started staffing the Denstone courses again after a few years' break, one of the first thing that popped into my head was how much I enjoyed working with him, and how much I'd missed it. Watching him coach on the first BAF course I went to was one of the things that inspired me to become a Fencing Master. So in a way, me being here today is his fault.

He's been incredibly supportive of me over the years, and I've tried my best to do the same for him. Philip has dedicated a large portion of his life to fencing; those of you who know him will have noticed it's something he's passionate about. He's done more for the BAF than I could ever begin to mention, and we'll be forever grateful. Philip – thank you for everything you have done, yours will be big shoes to fill.

*Liam Harrington*

*(Editor's Note: Although, technically, Liam has taken on the role of Acting President, this column will continue to be headed as “The President Writes...”)*

# Professor Vic Cassapi



It is with a profound sadness that I must inform our members that Prof. Vic Cassapi passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family on Monday the 19th of December.

Vic was a life member of the Academy and a highly respected colleague to many of the elder statesmen of the Academy.

Vic Cassapi, from Nottingham, achieved his Diploma in 1976, putting a new Master into a provincial area of Great Britain where there was not one previously.

Vic's career in fencing started in 1944 while serving in the RAF at St Athans in South Wales, and, apart from a short break (1947-52), he continued to be active until about 1988. During WW2, Flt Sgt Cassapi served as a navigator in 550 Squadron in Lancasters. He used to tell the story of how, in taking his pilot's test, he took off from one airfield, got lost in the fog and landed at a completely different one. So he failed the pilot's test and the RAF made him a navigator!

Vic used to describe his early fencing training as somewhat basic, though, on reflection, coaching, as we know it today was virtually non-existent. He openly admitted that the real training didn't really begin until 1952, when he became involved in a factory works' fencing club in Newark. Vic used to fondly talk about the training he received under the then National fencing training scheme, directed by Bob Anderson. Courses took the form of personal performance and coach education combined, some held over a weekend and some over the course of a week or longer. I'm not sure when Vic became a professional coach, though he described it as the most difficult decision of his career, and found acting the part even harder. On



*Vic explains the intricacies of fencing to HM the Queen*

passing his Diploma, he said the only change it would make to his coaching was that it he would have to work even harder to improve his own standard. Indeed the first words Vic said to me after I passed my Diploma were "now the work really starts - this is the minimum standard you must accept of yourself".

Vic was no ordinary coach. In fact he was quite unique. His enthusiasm was remarkable, particularly when the pupil 'got it right'. In a gym he was larger than life and had immense respect from his pupils. Vic's pupils could be characterised by having a wide vocabulary of strokes, which they used to great effect whilst maintaining superb technique. The most notable of these I remember as being Richard Berry (sabre) and Julian Tyson (foil and épée). Many of Vic's pupils fenced in the then Home International (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)

In 1987 Vic was granted a PhD from the University of Nottingham for his work on 'Application of rock hardness and abrasive indexing to rock excavating equipment selection'.

I feel privileged to have known Vic and I am particularly grateful for the help I received during my épée Diploma training. His passing is a sad loss to the fencing community and the Academy, and I'm sure I echo the feelings of all my senior colleagues in the Academy when I say my thoughts and condolences are with his family at this saddest of times.

*Philip Bruce*

# DEN OF VICE

## *Contributions from the Academy's Vice-President*



Happy New Year to all of you!

2017 marks five years since my club first opened its doors to the public. It has evolved a lot since those early days. I started out with one session a week for adults only and now operate two nights a week for juniors and adults, and I hope to add another new club evening in the not too distant future. The activity going on inside the club has changed a lot, too. So what is driving the evolution of my club?

As a professional coach my eye is always on the financial side of things. However, even a coach who generously gives their time for free to run a fencing club needs to at least break even on the cost of the venue, purchase and maintenance of club equipment, etc. Sometimes new clubs are lucky enough to get off the ground with a grant from a local authority or other funding body. Some schemes, for example Sportivate, even help subsidise fees to help clubs keep ticking over in the longer term. This is all very well, but funding streams have been known to dry up; look at what has recently happened to British Fencing's UK Sport funding. From my personal point of view, any organisation is better off in control of its own destiny (fencing clubs included), and that means being financially self-sufficient.

The second driver is what I want to achieve. After all, I am the one putting the effort into running the club, so I might as well get some personal satisfaction out of it too!

I started out looking at myself as a coach. What sort of lessons did I want to be able to give? What methods did I want to use? I didn't know the answer, but I wanted to find out. This was why I joined the BAF in the first place. The path to my Diploma was hard work, but well worth it because it opened my eyes to the possibilities, as well as giving me the skills I needed to pursue them.

Another aspect of a coach's personal goals is what they want their fencers to be able to achieve. I spoke to one coach at the AGM this year who said there was nothing more satisfying than helping a fencer qualify for the national team. Another coach might just as well say their passion is running taster sessions for youngsters and inspiring first time fencers to join a club. Don't forget that there are many other skills in fencing – armoury, running competitions, refereeing – in which somebody might achieve success.

I started off discussing the financial security of clubs. This is inseparable from what you (and your fencers) want to achieve. Make fencing the vehicle through which they can achieve success and they will keep coming back. With customers coming back again and again the club will become healthy and self-sufficient. A self-sufficient club is free to evolve to help more fencers succeed, and so on.

*Andrew Norris, Vice President*

## **SHOCK RESIGNATION (...from front page)**

in order to make the meeting quorate. Therefore, the election of our next President will be held at the 2018 AGM. When this was explained to the AGM itself, this course of action was endorsed by the meeting.

Now the AGM could move on to the committee elections. With Liam now moved to the post of President, there was a vacancy for a Vice President, but no suitable candidate was forthcoming from the meeting, so this post has been left vacant. The Secretary, Bob Merry, and Treasurer, Stuart Clough, who were due for re-election at the end of their two-year term, were confirmed in their posts for the next two years. Dave Jerry was re-elected as Assistant Secretary and Course Officer. Lewis McIntyre had been elected earlier as the Members' Representative and he has also agreed to take over the role of Membership Secretary from Stuart. Donald Walker stood down from the Committee, although he will continue to deal with and issue the Proficiency Awards. In his place, Sam Smith has been elected as a committee member. As usual, you will find details of your Committee members, their responsibilities and contact details, on page 3 of every edition of Academy News.

Philip has been President since 2002 and during this time much has changed in the Academy. We now have a transparent and consistent examination system, backed up by an unequalled range of written material. Our courses have attracted coaches from around the world. Philip has devoted his life to our sport and has worked tirelessly to achieve what he sees as the things that are in the best interest of the sport. The reforms that have taken place may not have been universally welcomed and the strong leadership supplied by Philip is not necessarily the path to popularity. However, a great part of his legacy can be seen in the number of new Masters that have come through the system during his Presidency, as well as the ones that are on the brink of achieving our highest award. These members represent the future of the Academy; in the years to come, they will be the ones running the Academy and delivering its primary function of good coach education. It is to be hoped that Philip can look on and take pride in their achievements.



# A STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR PHILIP BRUCE

Over the last few years, I have become increasingly conscious of the very long time I have held this office and of the enormous demands it has made on my time and my physical and mental well-being. A president has the impossible task of trying to please everyone all of the time while also providing effective leadership. However, for me it's got to the point where the ever increasing work coupled with the ever increasing criticism and resistance from some of those I once looked to for support has now made my life intolerable. Sadly the amount of bitching and backstabbing that goes on is total disproportionate to the size of our organisation and our position in the sport we are all supposed to support and love. I have attempted on several occasions over these years to resign but on every occasion some new crisis has reared its head and I have been talked into staying until it is resolved.

The recent death of my friend Vic Cassapi, brought back many happy memories of him and of the Academy as it was in my earlier days. It was he and others of that generation, including Mike Joseph and Akos Moldovani, also now deceased, who, all those years ago locked themselves with me and a bottle of whisky in a hotel room and would not let me out until I agreed to become President! His loss has made me re-evaluate how I want to spend what time is left to me as an active fencing master and made me realize I now need to move on.

The role of a President isn't for everyone, nor is the position an easy one. I firmly believe that it is the bounden duty of the President to protect the sport, its participants, its rules and its standards. This means often speaking the truth, however hard, to those who may not want to hear it and may hate you for it. No one could survive this role without the support of friends and colleagues and I am very grateful to those who have offered it. There are fencing masters, they know who they are, and who have offered me unstinted support and encouragement over the years and often kept me sane in bad times with something as simple as sitting down for a drink and long reminiscences about past glories! In more recent years, there are young fencing masters who have realised that the Diploma is only a starting point and have come back to me wanting guidance in moving their skills onwards. I admire their strength of character in knowing there is more to learn, and feel deeply honoured that they asked me to help them do so.

I thank all of you who have supported me with your hard work, wisdom and friendship over the years. I started with the ambition of leaving the Academy with a transparent and comprehensive system of coach education, which would hold its own against any other in the world. With the help of the SSTT, the Academy now has the best documentation in the world, job done! I feel privileged to have been allowed to fulfil my ambitions and to have been able to exercise my passion for the sport and its coaching. In my time as President, I have represented the Academy on the international stage, staffed 31 coach education courses at Denstone and numerous other courses, most notably, international courses with coaches such as Zbigniew Czajkowski, Swen Strittmatter, Roberto Piranio, and Franco Cerutti attending as lead coach. I have also travelled about, including to Finland, to run an Academy course. I have been privileged to help with the training of coaches from all over the world, most notably Franco Cerutti, who came to us for his coaching qualifications and is now the National Coach (Junior) for Switzerland.

In the early days, my Presidency would have been a failure had it not been for Mike Joseph who taught me how to be President and much of the Academy's history and inner workings. Equally indispensable to me have been Leon Hill, Tom Etchells and Andrew Vincent who for much of the time were the SSTT and who collectively are the co-authors of all the coach education study material and all the examination documents and procedural documentation.

Finally, I would like to mention my greatest supporter of the last eight years: my wife and recent Gauthier Trophy recipient, Isobel. No one will ever really appreciate her contribution to the Academy. She does anything and everything for the Academy, from proof reading my contributions to the Academy News to editing the Coaching Compendium, from sweeping the floor at one venue to running a weekend international coaching course at another. She is unique in the BAF, a couple of weeks after she qualified as a full master, Leon invited her to join the SSTT and subsequently co-wrote 'The Standard' and helped rationalise and improve the consistency across the levels and weapons of the practical examination questions. There is hardly a piece of documentation she hasn't reviewed and or edited at some time or other. Quite simply without her I couldn't have gone on for so long.

*Philip Bruce, President 2002 -17*



## LETTERS FROM LEWIS

Correspondence from your Members' Rep.



Many thanks to all who attended the AGM. Those of you who couldn't make it have a bit of catching up to do in terms of who is now doing what in the Academy, for another year at least.

One thing hasn't changed, I'm still Members' Rep, so you'll have to put up with me for another year. As my end of year report discussed, I am more than happy to continue in this role and looking to achieve more this year. Last year I ran a course; this year I intend to do something similar (or perhaps entirely different). Given how poorly attended courses were across the board (from various bodies, not just the BAF) it may not be such a great idea to run another course. I've thought about the idea of running a BAF competition (I think we have some rather nice trophies knocking about somewhere), but it would need help from some who have a lot more experience with that kind of thing.

I'm not sure I could rely on a good enough turnout either, a couple of competitions didn't run last year too.

The course we ran in 2016 required the help of every committee member at some point along the way (along with a few others), and I was hoping to get some feedback in person at the members' meeting. Unfortunately there weren't many individuals who had attended the course at the AGM, so I asked for feedback on courses and coach education in general. The consensus from the meeting seemed to be that it was a good idea and had the right kind of interesting content, but that it wasn't convenient enough, for lack of a better phrase. The timing and/or location were the issue. The latter points also applied to a discussion on coach education.

A popular idea was to have a number of coach education courses, in various parts of the country, throughout the year. The idea being that coach educators are invited, coaxed or otherwise plied (whisky seems to be a good one for this) to a venue to deliver the material. I'm not sure what I think of the idea, it could come across a bit apathetic or unenthusiastic on the part of those wanting to be trained. Regardless, to my mind we already seem to have a network of a number of fencing masters, in various parts of the country, delivering training throughout the year. Also with an incredibly detailed syllabus on hand from the BAF. The 'questions' are designed in such a way that they are actually useful in coaching fencing. It sounds like, though in a not so organised way, what people are asking for is being delivered.

I would like opinions (letters for Academy News etc.) from those engaging in coach education (holding sessions, attending sessions or otherwise involved with hosting courses) for their take on the situation.

Enough about that. It was a bit disheartening to see such a low turnout at the members' meeting, but I was relieved and quite a bit happier when I saw the sizeable number that had turned up for the AGM proper. This year we had a more open format to the meeting, allowing for discussion between reports and more talk in general. It was also good to have a catch up with members I don't see very often.

What was heartening was to see encouragement from the older generations to the youngest attendees to participate in the academy. Quite a few members were glad to see involvement from some of our youngest coaches. I would like to welcome our youngest committee member, Sam Smith, who was put forward from the floor with the backing of many from other generations. I don't think they'd have taken no for an answer.

Prof. Philip Bruce is no longer president of the BAF. I am sad to see such an experienced fencing master leave this position within the BAF after so many years of service. The devotion with which he speaks of fencing will be missed from our meetings. I have never known a man so passionate. It's a pleasure to have served on the Committee with him, if only for one year, and I wish him well in the future. I also wish Prof. Liam Harrington every success in his new role and offer what support my positions offers. I've heard it's a lot of work!

I'm keen to see what the future will bring for the BAF. It's promising that new blood getting involved yet sad that times must change. Fencing is far from doing well in this country, that's a change it wouldn't be so sad to see.

Thank you for the nominations for our awards. It was a pleasure to be able recognise some of the individuals within the Academy for their contributions towards our sport. We could do with more of that sort of thing. (It also made the dinner more lively). This was the first occasion that I'd seen the Gauthier Trophy awarded and I can't think of anyone more fitting. Congratulations to all of those who received awards. Keep the nominations coming in this coming year so we can celebrate more coaches at the next AGM.

*Lewis McIntyre, Members' Representative*

# AGM DINNER

One of the highlights of any AGM weekend is the BAF Dinner that occurs on the Saturday evening. It provides a good opportunity to meet and socialise with other coaches and their guests. This year was no exception, providing light relief after the drama earlier in the day.

After a pleasant meal came the equally pleasant prospect of honouring members who had done well during the year, either in gaining coaching awards, or in being nominated for one of the Academy's range of awards and trophies. The task of handing out the trophies was shared on this occasion by the outgoing President, Philip Bruce, and the new Acting President, Liam Harrington.

William Gallimore-Tallen, Lewis McIntyre and Sam Smith collected a handful of certificates for their successes at both the residential courses this year, highlighted by each achieving a Diploma Epée award. As well as the Academy's own certificates, they also received certificates from the International Fencing Coaches Association.



After a gap of several years, the BAF received a worthy nomination for the Brian Pitman Trophy in the person of Chris Green (below). This was for his work at Billericay School, where he has worked for seven years, catering for all who wish to fence, including a number of autistic and special needs children. He has also established an Epée Club in Basildon, catering for young adults with learning difficulties. Chris is indeed a worthy winner of this trophy.



Then came two Awards of Merit. The first went to Stuart Clough (below). Stuart has served the Academy tirelessly in the time he has been Treasurer, acting also as Membership Secretary and volunteering to administer the Examination days at the end of our residential courses. Everyone at these examinations, whether examiner or candidate, has cause to appreciate his ability to make the day run smoothly. But the main reason for the award was the enormous amount of extra work he undertook during the process of converting the Academy to a limited company.



The other Award of Merit went to a relatively new member of the BAF, Dominique Szokolovics. A former GB Foil Champion, simultaneously holding the Senior, Junior and Cadet titles, Dominique set up the Fencing Club London from scratch and, focusing on young foilists, has achieved great success, with her pupils winning many medals and titles at a high level. Although Dominique attempted to reach the presentation on the evening, travelling from a competition, she was unable to make it in time, but the award was later presented to her at her club by Liam (below, left).



The final award of the evening was the Academy's most prestigious award, the Gauthier Trophy, presented to the Academy in 1973 by J Emrys Lloyd OBE, in memory of his former coach, Capitaine André Gauthier. It is presented to a Master of the Academy, who, in the words of the original donor, "greatly benefited the sport of fencing in the United Kingdom". This year's winner was Professor Isobel Bruce Combes (above, right), who retains the Trophy until 2020. Readers of Academy News may remember the front page story about her work at the King's Leadership Academy in Warrington, where every pupil now learns fencing. The Compendium of our coaching documentation was edited by Isobel and she has produced a number of workbooks relating to our Proficiency scheme, initially for use at Warrington, but now in use in schools in the USA and being translated into Chinese for use in Hong Kong.

Of course, the socialising continued long after the meeting; in some cases until the early hours of Sunday. Fencing is a sport where coaches often work in isolation, occasionally meeting fellow coaches at competition, where, as "rivals", they must concentrate on the needs of their pupils. The AGM and Dinner offer a chance to meet socially and talk about fencing, coaching, and, perhaps, many other things. If you haven't attended an AGM yet, or have got out of the habit, why not put January 6<sup>th</sup> 2018 in your diary (or smartphone) now.

## A Footnote from the Editor

This edition of Academy News is a milestone for me, as it completes ten years as the Editor. Over the years, I have tried to make this magazine an interesting and varied read, trying various ideas and approaches along the way. One immediate change on taking over, thanks to a local printer, was to be able to produce a twelve page magazine in full colour. After a very short while, it was possible to increase the frequency of publication from four to five editions per year.

This, of course, presented its own problems, as there were more pages that needed filling. I am very grateful to all those who have helped to solve this problem in different ways. There are the regular contributions from the President, the Vice Presidents and the Members' Representative, for which I am grateful. I know how difficult it can be to come up with something interesting for each issue. Sometimes, these columns have the effect of prompting members to send in letters, sometimes in praise, but also along the lines of "Angry of Tunbridge Wells". Whichever it is, they are always welcome.

A special word of praise should go to my "emergency" space filler, Andy Wilkinson, who at times has been asked to provide me with a page or two, with illustrations, at very short notice. He has always managed to come up with the goods! I am also very grateful to those members whose achievements give me an upbeat story to feature on the front page. And recently, more members have made contributions through the "Briefs" feature. I have some material in hand for a future edition, but will always need and welcome more. As a last resort, I am always able to fill the odd blank page with something of my own, but much prefer to let others have their say.

Over the years, I have received quite a bit of feedback about Academy News, including some constructive criticism, but also some kind words as well. The praise I most value is that I received in the gents at an AGM some years ago from the late Roy Goodall, who had been the editor of the Academy's magazine for many years before me and appreciated what went into the production. I was very happy to feel that Roy thought I was doing a good job. But I can't continue to do it without the help of you, the reader; keep those contributions rolling in, please. Thank you and here's to the next ten years!.

*Bob Merry, Editor, Academy News*



**MORE USEFUL BITS.....****BAF RESIDENTIAL COURSE****Easter Course****10th April to 15th April 2017****Course to be held at Denstone College, Staffordshire.****Fees: £470 (members)     £525 (non-members)*****Please contact our Course Officer, Dave Jerry, for more information*****Contact details on page 3****COACH EDUCATION****A COURSE IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND****Dates: 25th/26th February****Venue: Olympic Hall, Mountbatten School, Whitenap Lane, Romsey, SO51 5SY****Cost: £45 per person for the whole weekend or £30 per person for a single day  
(discounts available for coach/pupil partnerships, see website)****Training and assessments for candidates working towards Level 1.  
Training for candidates working towards higher levels, or coaches who  
simply want to refresh their skills.****See website for full details:****<http://www.southampton-eppee.co.uk/feb17coachingcourse.html>****Contact Prof. Andrew Norris with any questions: [andrew@southampton-eppee.co.uk](mailto:andrew@southampton-eppee.co.uk)****ADVERTISE HERE FOR FREE!****Academy News is a service to our members and we offer the chance to advertise on its pages, whether it be for an event, a course, your club, or indeed anything. There is no charge to members and you don't even have to supply any artwork. Simply give Bob Merry the details and he'll see you get a mention.**