



November 2018
Issue 98

"Run by coaches for coaches"

AN INVITATION FOR YOU

On January 5th 2019, the Academy will hold its Annual General meeting and all members of the Academy are invited to attend.

Throughout the year, your committee have been responsible for the day-to-day running of the BAF. At the AGM, various reports will be presented, concerning what they have been up to for the previous twelve months. This is your chance to hold them to account, to ask questions, or make suggestions for possible improvements in the future.

Later in the meeting, there will be elections to the committee. Although

most of the Directors of the BAF are not due for reelection at this meeting, the post of Secretary will fall vacant and other posts on the committee may need to be filled.

Another important decision will be how to calculate subscriptions for the 2019/2020 period. Although we do not know at this time, there may also be other resolutions to be voted upon. It should be noted that, under our Articles, the only vote where a proxy is allowed is that for the post of President (not held this year); all other matters are decided solely by those attending the AGM. They could affect you, so, if you want to have a say, you should be there.

So much for the business part of the weekend. The weekend is a great opportunity to meet with other coaches in a social setting. There is a Dinner in the evening, which will include the presentation of certificates and awards, whilst the conversations in the bar afterwards can be long and lively.

If you haven't experienced an AGM before, why not make this the year you find out what it's all about. See how the Academy is run and then enjoy the social side of the rest of the evening. Partners are also more than welcome.

You will find full details of the AGM and the Dinner menu on page 9. There are rooms available at the venue hotel (quite reasonable rates through online booking firms), whilst a few alternatives are given on page 12.



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Contributions by Jan 10th, please.

FADING INTO THE BACKGROUND

A Farewell Editorial from Bob Merry

Elsewhere in this issue of Academy News (page 9), you will find the formal notice of the 2019 AGM and you will see there that the post of Secretary will be up for election. As I foresaw in the November issue last year, I have completed my current two year term of office and now I am stepping down. I will also be relinquishing the position of Editor of Academy News, which will now pass to Kevin Nelson, who has written a few articles in previous issues, as he familiarises himself with the publishing program. I wish him all the best for the future of the magazine.

I was persuaded to take on the job of Secretary at the 2006 AGM at Leamington Spa and, a little over a year later, volunteered to edit Academy News. Both jobs have given me a great deal of satisfaction, mixed with a modicum of frustration. In the case of Academy News, it has often seemed to be an uphill struggle to fill the pages. When I took over, we were able to move into full colour printing and expand to twelve pages, but this can be a mixed blessing. On a number of occasions, I have had to cajole people to contribute and I would like to place on record my thanks to all those who have answered my pleas over the years. Of course, there were times when there were still blanks to be filled and I have had to resort to writing material myself, usually openly, but, on occasion, anonymously.

Over the years, I have received quite a bit of feedback about Academy News, sometimes critical, but usually quite positive. I have taken note of the former and tried to improve things, but am very grateful for the latter. Perhaps the most pleasing feedback I received was when I encountered the former long-term Editor, Roy Goodall, at an AGM (I seem to remember it was in the Gents!) and he was very complimentary about my efforts. Coming from the person who had had the job for decades, this was very gratifying. I can only hope that, at some future AGM, I can be equally complimentary to my successor (but not, hopefully, in the loo!).

In the first issue of Academy News that I edited, in May 2007, I was able to report on a major win by a British fencer and the support and training he had received from an Academy coach, Prof. Andy Vincent, over a number of years. In the nearly twelve years since then, there has been a wide range of topics covered, from coaching to films, book reviews to terrible jokes. The variety continues in this issue and includes a trip to the ballet! I hope that we can look forward to a similar eclectic range of topics in the future.

In deciding on a title for this piece, I have eschewed words like “oblivion”, or “obscurity”, and settled on “background”. I may no longer be directly involved in the running of the BAF, but I will continue to support it in any way that I can. I hope to be attending AGMs and other Academy events for some time to come. I originally took on these jobs because I wished to pay something back for all the effort other Academy members had put into my development as a coach. I hope I have nearly settled this “debt” and would again like to thank everyone who originally helped me, or have since made my life as Secretary and Editor a little easier.



Academy News - May 2007

Bob Merry

And, hopefully, we will also see less from my regular contributor, Phil Space (here giving a typical lesson).

Please keep the contributions coming to your new Editor!



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are:

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p&p)
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Figures in **RED** are for non-BAF
members

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation is available from Jackie Redikin (for contact details, see left)

Key Teaching Points Foil	} £7.35 (£9.45) each
Key Teaching Points Épée		
Key Teaching Points Sabre		
Key Coaching Points Foil		
Key Coaching Points Épée		
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

**

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THE PRESIDENT WRITES.....



Years ago, when a Fencing Master went outside his area and into another Fencing Master's area, there would be a phone call, one to the other, asking for permission! It was more a matter of courtesy really and I never heard of a refusal. Another situation which can become awkward is when a good fencer moves from one coach to another. The coach whom the fencer left may well feel aggrieved that his fencer was 'poached' or 'stolen'. It may well be that it will be a good move for that fencer. The receiving coach would be well advised to chat to the other coach and discuss why the fencer has moved. No coach can prevent a fencer going where they want or who coaches them, so it helps to have a three-cornered conversation.

I went to the British Fencing AGM on the 29th Sept. Now that I am a member and was invited (as was every member, I'm not that special), I thought I would go. British Fencing was presenting the financial accounts to be voted and agreed on. A very detailed explanation of the finances of BF was given after which the accounts were accepted. There is much that we, as an Academy can do to support BF. First, if you haven't already, join the BF Coach Register; next, affiliate your School or Club to BF; then, get as many fencers as you can to become members. British Fencing is going to have a tough time trying to do all it wants, so it now needs us all to fully support it.

It was very pleasing to see an Academy member receiving an award at the BF AGM. Steven Morley was awarded a Certificate of Merit for Long Service and his work at his fencing club. Well done him and well deserved.

On the 30th Sept, I supported the training sessions run by Prof Andy Vincent. Not only was the content relevant and interesting, most of the coaches who were there were aiming at Diploma level. Three university students training for Level 1 had an amazing time. I highly recommend going to this event if you can; it was friendly, fun, and rewarding. Andy will be running these sessions monthly.

On the 7th Oct, I went to another training session run by Prof Liam Harrington in Rickmansworth, London. Professors Peter Stewart and Chris Nordon were also on the team. David Kirby came with a couple of his coaches. Quite a mix of coaches turned up, with a couple of young fencers to boot. It was nice to see returning and new faces. Liam's topic was Tactics, a difficult but very interesting topic to deliver and I feel that we only scratched the surface, we must do more! Again, a very enjoyable session. Liam has agreed to run more, so watch out for details

This will be the last issue of Academy News that Prof Bob Merry will produce as Editor! He will also be standing down as Secretary at our AGM 2019, a double blow!! Thank you, Bob, for all the time, effort and hard work you have put in for the Academy, we are extremely grateful and will miss you, although your kind offer to support those who will take up the reins, is gratefully accepted. I wonder what you will do with all the spare time?

To finish I want to ask you some questions,

What will it take for you to come to the AGM and Dinner? What will it take for you to come to the training sessions and Denstone? What do you want the Academy to do for you? Answers by email to me at the usual address.

Have a wonderful seasonal break, make next year the best year of your coaching, ever.

Prof Peter Northam, President, British Academy of Fencing



CONGRATULATIONS!

Steven Morley is pictured after having received a well-deserved Certificate of Merit from British Fencing, recognising his long service to our sport.

Steven has also been a long time member of the BAF and has served on the committee in the past.

FENCING GOES TO THE BALLET

By John Crouch

It all started with an email from Northern Ballet which is based in Leeds. They are doing a new version of The Three Musketeers and wanted their dancers trained in fencing. This seemed like an interesting challenge so I arranged to meet with the Director of the Company, David Nixon.

I started by explaining that I was a fencing coach and taught people to fence competitively and that it might be better for him to approach The Royal Armouries as they demonstrated fighting. He explained that they had shown this ballet on two previous occasions and he was unhappy with the duelling as it looked staged and unrealistic. He wanted his dancers to look like fencers. As I had been trained from my school days as a classic fencer, this seemed right down my street.

We agreed that I could have the group of male dancers, twenty-two in total, for a week at the beginning of the rehearsal period (the women do not get the opportunity to fight with swords). We would split them into two groups and we would have each group twice during the day. Their working hours are 11:30 to 14:30 and 15:30 to 18:30 with the hour off for a late lunch. Therefore we had two one and a half hour sessions each day with each group for six days. At this point, I should say that I have been retired for some years and have not put in this sort of time commitment since I completed my Diploma course. The time commitment and pressure of having to put on a professional course with no previous experience training ballet dancers was quite daunting.

But there was no way I was going to turn down the chance to be involved in a project this different. Then David asked me how much I would charge! I still cannot believe that my first response was to say that I would do it for nothing as I saw it as an interesting challenge. After some thought I agreed that they would make a donation to Leeds Fencing Club.

Over the next few weeks I talked Tim Noble, an assistant coach at the fencing club, to help out, mainly because he is younger and fitter than me and my ability to lunge or move quickly is much reduced. I thought he would make a good stooge and it would be good experience for him. Together we planned a programme that followed the traditional elements of a fencing course:

	Session 1	Session 2
Mon	Introduction Safety Weapons	Footwork -step -lunge -reprise
		Balestra?
Tue	Grip Hit Lines Parries	Attacks -Direct -Disengage -Cutover
	Circles Deception Beats	with preparation
Wed	Ripostes -Direct -Disengage	Compound attacks (1-2, doublé, low high) Successive parries
Thu	Counter ripostes -Direct -Disengage 2 nd and 3 rd	Renewals of attack (Remise and redouble) Prise-de-fer Ceding parries
Fri	Sequences	Sequences
Sat	Sequences	Sequences

This looked like a sound plan, but with the flexibility to change things dependant on the ability of the dancers. We had agreed with the choreographer that the outcome would be six short fencing sequences that he could adapt into the dance routines.

There were two other issues that needed sorting out. The first was what weapons they were going to use. I met the stage manager and he showed me the swords they had used in the past. They were typical, heavy stage swords with Italian grips. We agreed that they would purchase a set of steam epees as being more realistic for musketeers. The other issue was safety! Obviously, the dancers were not going to be wearing masks on stage, but what about when they were being trained? We decided that the initial training would be in proper fencing kit and we would move to no kit once they were reasonably competent with the weapons.

The training

I had been quite apprehensive about how the week would go, but also excited by the challenge. The first morning arrived and we had been told that the first session would be taken up with routine administration as this was the first day back after their summer break. Instead we were straight in with the first group. That meant that we covered what had been planned in half the session and had to progress with footwork. Being young, fit, motivated and well coordinated they were soon looking



like fencers. The choreographer was adamant that they maintained a standard shape so we had lots of games and exercises whilst emphasising the classic en garde and lunge positions. Progressing to weapons, again there was an emphasis on basic blade work. At the end of the day we felt that we had the basis for moving on to letting them face each other weapons in hand.

At the start of day two we provided plastrons, jackets, masks and gloves and let them have a go at fighting each other. It was remarkable to see how their different characters came to the fore. Some were very aggressive and at the other extreme some shied away from their opponent. The next two days were spent going through the

basics as described in the above programme although we cut the final session. By the end of Wednesday we were ready to develop the sequences that they would use in the show.

I had planned six sequences that I felt were sufficiently different and with the flexibility to be used and adapted by the choreographer. These were:

1. The standard coaching exercise – quarte riposte direct, quarte riposte indirect, quarte riposte by 1-2 with a lunge.
2. Attach by doublé, reprise with doublé, parry octave, riposte by disengage.
3. Attack direct, parry quarte riposte direct, parry octave riposte high, parry sixte riposte low, parry octave riposte high, parry quarte riposte low. All done with lunge and recover.
4. Step and draw extension, attempt to take in octave with step back twice, parry in quarte, direct riposte with lunge, repeat in reverse.
5. Attack by doublé, reprise doublé, reprise 1-2 and repeat, defender parries counter sixte twice and then quarte, sixte and repeats.
6. Attack by doublé, parried counter sixte quarte riposte direct, parry quarte riposte by disengage, parry counter quarte riposte direct, parry octave riposte high.

Each sequence was demonstrated and then broken down and practised a step at a time. Every pair had to learn the sequence from both sides. Each session we would revise the sequences that had been learned and then introduce a new one. The dancers found these a real challenge, but took great pride in being able to complete them to our satisfaction. There continued to be an emphasis on style and position. As dancers they were used to learning dance positions and by Friday afternoon they could all get through the six sequences. There was even some competition as to which pair could go through all six one after another with no mistakes. (You have to start with 4, then do 1,2,3,6 and finish with 5)



Saturday morning allowed further practice and refining of technique before the Director came down to see what we had achieved. Each pair demonstrated one of the sequences and then one pair did the whole lot. He thanked Tim and I

for what we had achieved and said that it was the outcome he was looking for. We finished the morning session by putting some of the sequences into actual parts of the ballet and taking videos of the performances. Here one dancer went straight into a sequence that required him to use his left and right hand at the same time.

I have since been back to see a rehearsal of the main fight scene. It was brilliant! Seeing the fight sequences adapted into the ballet made me realise how much work the dancers had put in with the satisfaction of seeing Musketeers looking like fencers.

The show is being put on in Newcastle (we have tickets), Nottingham, Sheffield and Canterbury.

(A trailer for Northern Ballet's production of The Three Musketeers can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kG4XaR85GM>)

SIMPLE COACHING - TACTICS

By Prof. Liam Harrington

For me, one of the joys of fencing is the tactical side. The rich range of tactical options available is one of the things that keeps me interested in the sport after so many years. The most succinct description of tactics I've heard recently is "*Tactics are what to do and when to do it*". That being the case, successful tactics involve the fencer picking the correct action to perform, out of all the ones in their repertoire, and also picking the correct moment to perform said action. Tactics is a very broad subject, so I'm not even going to attempt to cover everything in this article, instead I'm just going to focus a couple of ideas for lessons.

As a coach one of the common situations I face is a pupil coming up to me and saying something along the lines of: "Every time I try to do x I get hit with y, how do I stop that happening?"

This means that, instead of starting with a particular stroke in mind, the lesson starts with a particular situation and then develops based on things that could have happened from that point. Or in other words the basis of the lesson is a tactical problem or situation, rather than a stroke or collection of strokes.

To illustrate what I mean I'll use a simple example.

Example 1

Fencer A Simple attack with a lunge

Fencer B Parry and riposte indirect (Hits)

If Fencer A wants to become the fencer who scores the point as opposed to the fencer who gets hit, then there are several options open to them including:

1. Compound attack, thus drawing and deceiving the parry.
2. First counter-riposte: Let the opponent parry, then parry their riposte.
3. Renew: Let the opponent parry, then immediately renew, possibly with evasion and/or opposition
4. Use variations in distance, timing, footwork and blade work to surprise their opponent with the simple attack so they don't have time to parry in the first place.

Building some of the available options into a simple lesson would result in something like this:

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Pupil	Starts attack with a feint	Simple attack	Simple Attack
Coach	Attempts to parry	Parry and riposte indirect	Parry and riposte indirect
Pupil	Deceives the parry and finishes the compound attack	Parries and hits with a first-counter riposte	Immediately renew (perhaps using opposition or evasion)

If the coach lets the pupil vary the action they perform, then the pupil is learning to become both versatile, in that they have a range of options at their disposal which they can employ in a given situation, and unpredictable, which will make it harder for their opponents to adapt to them.

For example, if the exercise was repeated five times the pupil, either on their own, or under instruction for the coach, could choose options in any order such as:

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Option B | 1. Option B | 1. Option A |
| 2. Option A | 2. Option C | 2. Option B |
| 3. Option B | 3. Option A | 3. Option B |
| 4. Option C | 4. Option A | 4. Option C |
| 5. Option A | 5. Option B | 5. Option A |

Another way to build a tactical lesson can be to simulate the progress of a fight where the fencers attempt to each other's tactics as the fight progresses. For example, imagine a lesson where the pupil is parrying and scoring with a riposte. While the pupil is successful with that action they carry on doing it. The coach then, without announcing it first, changes what they do to make the pupil's action fail. Taking two obvious options, the coach could either make the parry fail by switching to a compound attack, or they could make the riposte fail by performing a counter riposte. In the first situation the pupil adapts by taking successive parries and in the second situation they adapt by performing a compound riposte instead of a simple riposte.

	Starting Point <i>Repeat several times so the pupil get comfortable with it</i>	First Progression <i>Unannounced change of tactics from the coach</i>	Second Progression <i>Pupil changes tactics in response to the first progression</i>
Pupil	Makes a preparation to draw an attack		
Coach	Simple Attack	Starts attack with a feint	Starts attack with a feint
Pupil	Single parry, ripostes and hits	Pupil attempts to parry	Pupil attempts to parry
Coach		Deceives parry and hits with the compound attack	Deceives the parry and finishes a compound attack
Pupil			Takes a second parry, (successive parries) ripostes and hits.

At a recent BAF coach education day in Rickmansworth, we looked at using these methods in practice. So rather than the participants being told to give a lesson on a particular stroke, or strokes, instead they were given a number of tactical situations, asked to think about possible solutions to them, and then give lessons incorporating those solutions. Personally, I found the day very enjoyable and it was interesting to see the wide variety of solutions the participants came up with. I also thought that the lessons the trainee coaches gave were generally more realistic than what is sometimes produced on coach education days, because one learning point that a lot of people took away was that the coach needs to have the technical skills to accurately create the tactical situation they lesson is focusing on. Even apparently small variations in blade presentation, distance, and footwork can create a different situation to what was intended.

I'll finish with how above applies to coaches preparing to take BAF exams. Typically, the exam questions list the actions to be include in the lesson (e.g. Simple and compound attacks). They might contain a tactical situation but often they don't. However even at Level 1 and 2, which focus on the technique of teaching actions for the first time, we encourage candidates to set up the tactical situation for whatever action is being taught. For example, candidates on Denstone courses are always advised to "show a problem, then teach the solution" as part of their class lesson demonstrations. If you think about the different tactical applications of the actions listed in the exam question and included those in the lesson, then you'll be taking an important step towards passing an exam.

Letters

From Prof. Phil Carson

In reply to letters in the September Academy News, there are many classical fencing schools, particularly in the USA that focus on technique and not the modern competitive game. For example, broken-time in sabre will still be practised in a technical club, but has been obsolete since the FIE 2003 rule change that defined the end of the sabre attack. The reference to learning styles was surprising: the theory was largely oversold and now debunked by many recent studies. Is this another good argument for why we should review our teaching standards? As a starting point, we could look at the "International Coach Developer Framework" produced by the International Council for Coaching Excellence and Association of Summer Olympic International Federations.

It is, at times, a struggle to look at things differently. We know what we know and perhaps the real challenge is to seek what we don't know. If teaching is about getting someone up to a level of technical competency and coaching is about improving them, then the BAF does the former, but steps back from the latter, consistently stating that it is for the coach to develop their own style after they qualify. That is true - all coaches develop their own style, but style and content are two different things.

I've looked in detail at the diploma sabre examination for evidence of tactical coaching questions. For there to be a tactical element, there must be present a valid tactical problem to be solved. Otherwise we end up with solutions looking for a problem. There are none.

There is one that nearly works, the simultaneous situation is a tactical one, but one that is solved through tactical intent, distance and timing; whether the actions are direct, indirect or compound, as required by the question, is irrelevant. An attack will always be given against a counter attack!

Often the term "competitive" lesson is used or the "underlying theme" is to be distance and timing. I'd like to pose the question "is there any other kind of lesson?" If the answer to that question is "yes", that a lesson, whether in a class, pairs or individual and whether beginner, recreation or competitive fencers, can in some way be non-competitive, with technique taught outside of the context of the distance and timing, then this is not coaching the modern game.

And is it not significant that the word "improve" does not feature in any diploma exam question. What else is the purpose of coaching but to improve the fencer?

Looking at the diploma questions as a whole, if we shifted the "grammar" away from technique to the fundamental pillars of tactics, distance and timing, then we could present a fresh and more relevant experience about how fencing can be coached.

I hope you will continue to take my comments as having nothing but the Academy's best interests at heart and driven by an overwhelming passion for coaching and the never ending journey towards mastery.

Phil Carson

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the British Academy of Fencing will take place on Saturday 5th January 2019 at 11.00 am at the:

**Hilton Hotel, Warwick **
Junction 15, M40 , A429
Stratford Road Warwick
CV34 6RE
Telephone: 01926 499555**

All members of the Academy are urged to attend.

The meeting of Maîtres d'Escrime, Provosts and Members to commence at 9.30 am.

The position of Secretary will be voted on this year. Those of President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer are not due for re-election, but other posts on the Committee will be confirmed at the AGM. Please note that only members attending the AGM will be able to vote; there is no proxy vote for any item on the Agenda.

Proposals for alteration or addition to the articles are required, in writing to the Secretary, at least 21 days before the meeting (by 15th December). Other proposals to be tabled at the AGM should be submitted to the Secretary 10 days before the AGM (by 26th December).

Apologies for absence may be forwarded via any Committee Member.

Professor Bob Merry, Secretary

**** This is a correction to the address published in the September Academy News**

AGM DINNER

There will be a Dinner held on the evening of the AGM at a cost of £22.50, not including drinks.

Menu

Starters

- Roasted red pepper and tomato soup with lemon and thyme pesto (V)
- Carrot and Coriander soup with parsnip crisps (V)
- Leek and potato soup flavoured with Tarragon (V)
- Crescents of honey melon with seasonal fruits and raspberry coulis (V)

Main courses

- Grilled pork loin steak with Fondant potato, green beans, baton carrots, apple and raisin compote and cider sauce
- Roast breast of chicken, gratin potato, roasted root vegetables, green beans and wild mushroom sauce
- Roast loin of pork with creamy mash potato, braised cabbage and baton vegetables and apple brandy sauce
- Grilled chipotle Salmon with crushed new potatoes, green vegetables and roasted cherry tomatoes
- Baked spinach and wild mushroom filo parcel with cheddar cheese sauce (V)
- Spinach and butternut squash wellington with chive cream sauce (V)
- Grilled vegetable tower with Moroccan style couscous and spice tomato sauce (V)
- Roast vegetable strudel with polenta chips and crisp garden salad. (V)
- Mushroom risotto served with porcini oil and crisp garden salad. (V)
- Four cheese ravioli with rocket pesto, asparagus and pine nuts. (V)
- Red onion marmalade and goats cheese tartlet with sun blush tomato dressing (V)
- Quorn and bean chilli con carne with savoury rice, sour cream and jalapenos (V)
- Mushroom, vegetable and cheese nut roast with tomato basil sauce (V)
- Baked flat mushrooms filled with vegetable ratatouille topped with mozzarella cheese (V)

Desserts

- Chocolate tart with fudge pieces and cognac cream sauce
- Strawberry cheesecake with English cream sauce
- Warm apple tart with vanilla ice cream
- Glazed lemon tart with fruits of the forest jam

Tea and coffee served afterwards

Please contact Jacqueline Redikin if you are attending the dinner on email. courseofficer@baf-fencing.com

STEFAN SPEAKS

The thought of your Members' Rep.



Snow is falling gently on the streets and people are hurrying home, their arms filled with gaily wrapped boxes and paper parcels from toy stores, sweet shops, and bakeries. For it is Christmas Eve, and everyone is looking forward to the festivities and over indulgence, and a gentle sprinkling of snow makes the evening seem perfect and hushed. Yet every BAF member in the dark recesses at the back of their brain is hoping the snow will clear in time for them to be able to travel with ease to the BAF AGM on 5th January 2019.

For BAF members know that, although we are out of the dark woods and everything is tickerty-boo, and back on an even keel, we still need active participation from as many members as possible in order to maintain the positive momentum and make sure we are still heading in the right direction.

Plus you get

- ~ A chance to barrack the Members' Rep
- ~ To choose the committee members that you want and those that reflect your ideals
- ~ Have a relaxing post new year motorway drive
- ~ To enjoy the excellent sandwiches and coffee
- ~ To discover all the latest gossip
- ~ To be able to talk fencing knowing that the person you are talking to is just as interested as you
- ~ To directly express your views and talk things over with the new committee members
- ~ A chance to not recognise your fellow coaches out of their tracksuits. (Perhaps you might pass comment on their sartorial elegance)

So I hope to see many of you at the AGM, wielding your vote instead of your customary sword.

Can I remind folk that have yet to renew their membership to do so soon by filling out and returning the form I sent you, plus sending the relevant payment by either cheque or BACS. (if you have lost the form drop me a line and I will post you a new one)

In other news, Congratulations are sent to two BAF members Laura Jamieson and Bjarne Höglund who tied the knot on Saturday 29th September 2018 at Mannofield Parish Church in Aberdeen and are now Mr and Mrs Jamieson (yes – they are taking her surname)..



*Married in style
The happy couple step out*



I intended to write this introduction wearing my scholar's cloak, with an academically freighted de-construction utilizing references to Conan Doyle, Sir Walter Scott, the chivalric code and inevitably, Freud. The erudition of my arguments and analyses would not only elucidate the psycho-ontological motivations behind this edition's professor, but make me look pretty damn smart as well.

However, things happen and all of a sudden, the article was required asap. So, I shall just copy and paste the answers to my questionnaire from our BAF Secretary and illustrious Academy News editor.

PART 3 OF GETTING TO KNOW THE B.A.F. PROFESSORS

1. Name? – Bob Merry
2. When and why did you start coaching? – I started teaching a year after I started fencing, in 1959. In the RAF Apprentices, it was common practice for people to teach the next generation of entrants and I continued this throughout my RAF career. My jobs in the RAF and Granada TV restricted my ability to compete regularly, so I became more involved in administration and coaching. First formal qualification (Basic Foil) gained in 1982 (North West Region course run by Prof. Leon Hill).
3. As a competitive fencer what is/was your preferred weapon? - Epée
4. Where do you coach or are you retired? – Bramhall Sword Club
5. When did you become a professor of BAF? – April 2002
6. Which coach inspired you as either a fencer or a coach? – I have been lucky enough to have received advice and coaching from a number of coaches, but I would mention my first coach, Prof. John Sanders, for inspiring me to love the sport, and Prof. Tom Etchells for coaching me as a competitor and being my mentor and driving force through my Advanced and Diploma exams.
7. The best advice you were given (fencing or coaching)? – “Never give up”, or “Noli illegitimi carborundum” (“Don’t let the bastards grind you down”)
8. What is the one piece of advice you would give a beginner coach? – If you are lucky, you will receive advice from a number of different sources, some good, some contradictory, some with which you disagree. Accept all with gratitude, but develop a “filter” to select the bits you find that suit you. In this way, you can build your own style and not just become a “clone” of someone else. Realize also that you never stop learning (and that’s not just for beginner coaches).
9. What do you wish you had known when you began your fencing/coaching journey? – How rewarding it could become when your pupils gain enjoyment from the sport and, possibly, show their appreciation.
10. Favourite move/film/tv show involving sword play? – Anything in which the great Bob Anderson had a hand must be high on any list, but I would also like to mention “The Duellists” (fight director William Hobbs) for a series of duels during the years of the Napoleonic Wars.

By this point Bob is breathing a sigh of relief, no doubt he thought I had a cunning plan to mention how he struggled over question 1 or the old standby of Bob short for Kate joke (oops!)

Stefan Leponis, Members' Representative

MORE USEFUL BITS.....

FURTHER USEFUL INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS ATTENDING THE AGM

The address for the venue is given in the notice of the meeting on page 9 and accommodation can be booked there. For those seeking other, possibly cheaper, hotels, the following may be of interest.

Holiday Inn Express (directly opposite Hilton Warwick)
Junction 15, M40
Stratford Road
Warwick
CV34 6TW
<https://www.hiexpress.com> and search for Warwick

Warwick Arms Hotel
High Street
Warwick
CV34 4AT
<http://warwickarmshotel.com>

The Lord Leycester Hotel
Jury Street
Warwick
CV34 4EJ
<http://www.lord-leycester.co.uk>

The Globe Hotel
10 Theatre Street
Warwick
CV34 4DP
<https://www.theglobewarwick.co.uk>

Deals for these and other Warwick hotels may also be found on internet booking sites (e.g. Booking.com, Hotels.com, etc.)

BAF RESIDENTIAL COURSE 2019

12th August to 17th August 2019



The next residential course will be held at Denstone College and bookings are already being taken.

*For further details, contact the Course Officer, Jacqueline Redikin at
courseofficer@baf-fencing.com*

Manchester Coaching Courses

Courses are being held in the Manchester area, on a monthly basis. The course is for all three weapons from levels 1 to 5.
For further information, please contact Jacqueline Redikin via courseofficer@baf-fencing.com