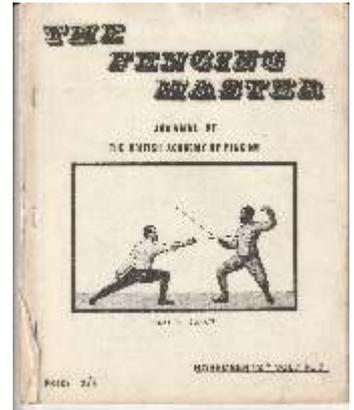


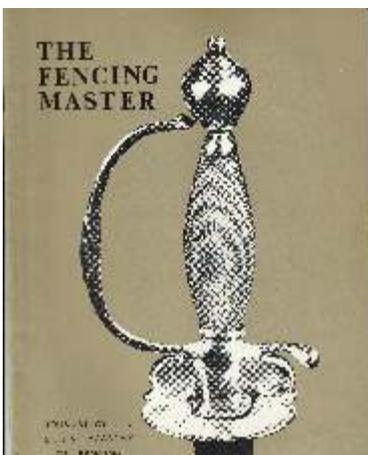
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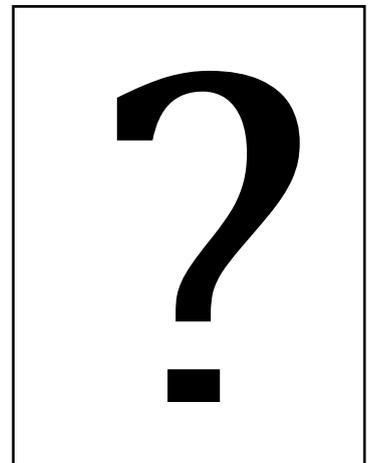
Issue 1 of “Academy News” was published in Spring 1996, previous to that there had been “Fencing”, a joint publication with the A.F.A. which included the Journal of the British Academy of Fencing, and even further back “The Fencing Master”. Issue seven, which is pictured here being only a month younger than I am. All of which show a rich tradition of coaches communicating with each other. Covering a wide range of subjects that were relevant to their day, and as you may see in future editions, have stood the test of time.



AA Academy News 100 April 2019 : Issue 100



I would like give a special thank-you to all those who have contributed to this extended edition of the Academy News, both members and non-members. It would be nice for all editions to be this length, and packed with good readable articles. Written by “coaches for coaches” to read, discuss, use and adapt. If you have any ideas, write them down, send them in, and hopefully together we can keep Academy News going for at least another 100 issues.



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

A pdf version of the Academy News can be found at www.baf-fencing.com

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Welcome to the Academy News

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NEXT ISSUE: July 2019

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Visit the Academy's new web site

www.baf-fencing.com

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The President 's Piece.....

As mentioned in the last issue of Academy News (Issue 99), a training day was held in Birmingham on 10th February, with the emphasis on 'The Individual Lesson: Technique, Timing, Tactics and Training'. Masters who turned up were Prof Peter Stewart, Prof Andy Vincent, Prof Lance Larsen, Prof Peter Cormack, Prof Louisa Miller and myself. Sixteen coaches and nineteen fencers turned up in what is an excellent venue. Coaches and fencers were kept separate, I looked after the fencers (they were mine anyway), the Master's looked after the coaches. A great benefit of coming to these sessions is to listen to how different Masters approach the same topic. I find it fascinating to hear how they deliver their material and work the group, that's where my best ideas come from, I pinch them, then I thank them very much for giving up their valuable time and expertise to train the next generation of coaches.

Before they were separated, I did a joint footwork session giving some of my thoughts on how I do it. I think one of the worst tasks of a club coach is footwork and how to make it interesting and relevant. For many years I had my fencers in a line and went through various footwork exercises. I noticed some fencers did not arrive until they thought the footwork was over! Looking through one of my fencing coaching books, I noticed fencers in a line **with sword in hand!** So I started doing footwork sessions with my fencers holding the weapon of their choice, then I developed not only footwork but asking for blade actions as well, what a difference! When I thought about it, why do footwork without a sword in hand, it doesn't make sense really, so I worked through all the simple attacks followed by single parries and ripostes then compound attacks etc. I could develop sessions on preparations of blade and foot, any attack, riposte, counter riposte, counter attacks, renewals, you name it. It was like giving individual lessons to all the fencers all at the same time! I could spot if a fencer could not execute an action, isolate it for everyone to see and then move on with a better understanding. The only caveat to doing this is safety, only have the fencers in a line facing you – never in pairs! And if you are still not happy, ask them to pop a mask on, particularly if you have several unruly/unsafe fencers.

Dave Jerry Bursary. The first recipient of the Dave Jerry Bursary is Nathan Joplin. He is a student at Birmingham University and a Sabreur. He was trained by Dave and was with him for a number of years, if you had to find a more suitable candidate, you couldn't have chosen better! His bursary went towards covering the cost of attending the training day in Birmingham and the BAF Level 1 Coaching Course at Cocks Moors Woods Fencing Club, Kings Heath. By the time you read this paragraph, he will have completed and successfully passed the Level 1 Sabre Award! He said to me that after seeing all the Master's on 10th, he wants to be one!! If you know and would like to recommend a candidate for this Bursary, please send details to Maitre Jackie Redikin, Secretary.

BAF Website. The new website went live on Friday 8th February! and not without some faults, thank you to everyone who pointed them out (it did say 'website under construction') but all is now well, and all links are working. Any suggestions of what to put on it, or take off it, are welcome, send to Maitre Jackie Redikin, Secretary. This is the most immediate way of getting in touch with what the Academy is doing and how to reach, by email, individual members of the Committee.

I very much enjoyed reading Issue 99 and was looking for extra pages! This Issue 100 is special and should have those extra pages! Enjoy!!

Prof Peter Northam, President, British Academy of Fencing



Some Extra Tools for the Fencing Coach

By David Kirby

You are reading this so are probably a member of the BAF; you have passed exams (stressful) and have been examined in technique and technical knowledge. You have probably produced some good fencers, even national champions. You may well go to coach education days and courses at Denstone or around the country because you want to get better, to have that bit of extra knowledge.

Loughborough University's Professor Chris Cushion (2019) said on Twitter the other day, "A variety of approaches should be available to coaches. No one approach represents the core of understanding coaching. An approach will be valid depending on context - how this is pursued depends on unique & complex configuration of coaching & learners position & experience." Many of you will have heard of – and some lucky enough to have been taught by – István Lukovich. He gave some wonderful master classes for the BAF, which were quite inspirational, and described by Mike Webster in a 1978 edition of *Fencing*. When Lukovich was working as a professor at the university of sport in Budapest, his fencing class was summoned one day to a lecture on training theory. Although he pointed out that there was no substitute for the practical, sword-in-hand aspect of fencing mastery, he readily agreed that much of what he had taken over 50 years to discover empirically could be distilled and the essence delivered for application by the next generation. Genuinely an illustration of Isaac Newton's point (1676), when he said, "If I have seen further it is by standing on ye sholders of Giants" [*sic*]. And aren't we all?

In recent years there has been a huge rise in coaching knowledge, skill, and development in the ways a coach can get a pupil to learn – the 'how' of learning and coaching. But as Dr Richard Bailey, of Birmingham University's School of Education, and his colleagues (2018) say, there has also been some rubbish put out there, too. (*e.g.* LTAD, Learning Styles, Neurolinguistic Programming, Brain Gym etc.).

We mustn't lose sight of the fact that fencing is essentially a skill, and however pretty your stroke may or may not be you cannot avoid the principle that you have to hit your opponent on target, in time, with the character of penetration. As Neil Brown said decades ago, all the science won't help you if you cannot do a parry-ripisote! So the giants are the ones who have the skills and the knowledge of the strokes... and we need to stand on those shoulders and try and see a little further, make our coaching better and more effective. We need to continually add to our library of knowledge.

Now, back to the idea that we have seen great strides in coaching theory recently (*e.g.* Jones & Kinston, 2013). One of the ways that's been described is to use Constraints Theory. Now the first point here is that we are looking at how we get *learning* to happen – not how well we coach. It's something obvious, but sometimes forgotten, that teaching is about what the pupil *learns* not what the instructor says or does. It's Confucius: "Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand." (c.500BC). So using a method that involves the learner helps them to understand. And when that involvement is built on the foundation of the knowledge and skills of the expert in fencing, learning and understanding are going to happen; coaching becomes more effective.

What we are suggesting is a conscious way of describing – and so being able to pass on – the manner a fencing coach gets a pupil or class to understand the practicalities of a stroke or movement – skill acquisition, if you like. When you have been coaching effectively for a while, you'll say, but that's what I do anyway! Yes, but can you define it, can you describe it, and most importantly can you pass the skill on to someone else, who is not yet as effective as you? Can you apply the common theory to different contexts? Here is a method of distilling some Lukovich and his 50+ years into your lesson! Thus a constraint here is a boundary or feature, which interacts to limit the system searching for an optimal state of organisation (Renshaw, 2011), or more plainly an organisation (the learner's intended new skill) may be influenced by a constraint (the coach's boundary or feature) to achieve a desired outcome (the learning and understanding) (Price, *et al.*, 2019). The clever bit is the design of the coach's constraint, which influences the learner's self-organisation to produce the learning outcome. Note it is the learner's self-organisation here.

A coach's thrust to chest elicits a parry of quarte – it won't take long for a new fencer to work that out, with the encouragement, help, guidance, and demonstration from coach. That concept can be generalised to other ideas – footwork for example. You want the class to balance properly: put them on lines or benches. You want the rhythm of the move: get them working together like a dance troupe, following a leader. Whatever it is, involve them; let them try it and above all, let them fail, work it out themselves and try again. Self-organisation.

From working with those constraints, the fencers learn, they understand. They have fun and want to come back. And they own the learning; it's their lesson.

Of course all that applies to coach education as well. And there's so much more to learning to coach than how to do the drills. That's the start of it, a technical foundation. Now pick up the ladder, get on the giants' shoulders and look further. Lead the next generation of coaches.

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Examination Fees

Level 1 Assessment £11.00
Level 2 to Diploma £21.00 (**£26.00**)

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

Documentation

The following documentation is available from the Course Officer Jackie Redikin.

Key Teaching Points (Weapon specific)	£7.35 (£9.4) each
Key Coaching Points (Weapon specific)	£7.35 (£9.4) each
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)
Examples of past written Papers for Advanced and Diploma examinations - FREE	
All prices include p & p. Figures in RED are for non-BAF members	

Moving to Beside the Piste

A Beginner's First Steps into Coaching
By Alex Jones



Having recently qualified as a sabre coach from a different organisation, I was eager to see what the BFA could show me in order to improve. Whilst I have had some experience with coaching through my University club and the occasional competition over the years, I had never had a complete breakdown of the technical aspects of a lesson. Always previously using my competition experience as a baseline for coaching, which didn't always stick with whoever I was teaching, whether that was in a group or individually.

I left Gloucester en-route to Birmingham on a cold, wet, oh so typically British Sunday morning. **The day started as most should do, with coffee!!** After a few introductions to some other coaches, some who I later discovered were Masters, we all piled in to the sports hall to start things off. Prof. Peter Northam then explained the timetable for the day. Having more coaches than expected both delighted and threw him a little, but after a group warm up, that also included some local students, we split up. The first half of the day was focused on the various examination sections, concentrating on giving individual lessons. After a short intro by Andy Vincent, we paired ourselves up to give a general lesson on a topic of our choice. As this was my first course, a couple of coaches David Kirby & Louisa Millar kindly came over and ran myself and the only other sabreur through the basics.



From then out, each short lecture was punctuated with a demonstration of a specific aspect of coaching alongside explanation. One example is that of timing, an aspect I admittedly am weak on. A coach was picked at 'random', and used by Andy as a training dummy. Dummy being a key term as Andy went to what seemed like a competitive rally of parry and ripostes. The theory behind this was to coach to the level/speed your pupil would experience at a competition. The theory behind this was that when and if, your pupil decided to compete, they would not be overwhelmed if for example, coaching in a club was slower and measured. It was brought up that slow and measured coaching did have its place, whether to correct, or teach a technique that could then be worked on. Throughout the rest of the day, various facets of coaching were touched upon. From teaching a specific technique, to developing certain tactics to counter that specific technique, to even the psychology to why coaching works the way it does.



To sum up, I thoroughly enjoyed my experience. Coaching I knew wasn't easy, but this course opened my eyes to the many, many different aspects to it and how they all fit together. All the coaches made me feel extremely welcome, which as a new starter, greatly put me at ease. No pressure was put on anyone throughout the day and the overall atmosphere was extremely relaxed, including a few jokes that may not have been appropriate for those underage. When another suitable course appears for me, I plan on attending to see where the BAF can take me and what more I can glean from those more experienced than myself.





Running a Level 1 FES Course Part 1

Prof Peter Northam,

A young coach has asked 'how do you run a Level 1 Coaching Course?' Good question! I decided to do exactly that so I will now explain the thoughts and actions I went through.

I felt that the Academy was not doing enough to train coaches generally, yes, Denstone was always there but nothing really at the local level. So I decided to run a Level 1 Foil, Epee and Sabre Coaches Course. First question, where? Not running an evening club (being semi-retired now), I approached the coaches of a very successful club (Cocks Moors Woods Fencing Club with Raph Aldis and Richard Burn), put my proposal to run the course on their fencing night and they agreed. Next question, how many? Not wishing to flood their night with a large course, I suggested 8 maximum. Cost, I did this for free, candidates were to pay the club night fee, agreed. Next question, how long? working for free I thought 6 weeks was enough! Richard, being a very savvy computer buff, put an application form on the club website and within 24 hours, had four applicants, as it turned out, we ended up with seven, which has turned out to be plenty, two Foilists, three Epeeists and two Sabreurs. Next we sorted out the dates, I then got the relevant Level 1 Syllabi and began to think about how to run my first session.

The first session is always tricky, new people getting used to each other, shy and slightly embarrassed. We went through the introductions, most I knew, still nice to meet new fencers. I had my register and knew who was doing what weapons, I gave out the syllabus and started to explain what the Academy is, how the coaching structure works and then began analysing the syllabus. The Syllabus is quite straightforward, basic footwork and blade actions, however, I emphasised that the quality of what they taught was very important. Being a 'first coach' was more important than a Master! If their coaching was good, that would make it much easier for the next coach. I demonstrated all the actions, which brought out some interesting variations from them, but most of it was common sense.

As an instructor of coaches, it is very important to balance the session with questions and answers, to try to draw out knowledge, to complete knowledge, to make eye contact with all the candidates, not to develop a favourite, to be gentle in speech and avoid arrogance and too much of 'this is how I do it' (all mistakes I have made). Most of the session I was explaining with sword in hand, and confirming their information, inviting comment and making them feel comfortable with me and each other. At the end of the session we looked at and began practising individual strokes and putting them into an individual lesson.

For me, you can always tell when someone is enjoying themselves, they smile!

This is a two part article, final part next Issue!!

Editors note : Stefan Leponis, Jacqueline Redikin, and John Worsley are running a 3 weapon coaching course (for levels 1 to 3) together at Sandbach on the 12th May, & Tony Middleton will be running a level 1 to 3 foil course in St. Albans. So..... you don't need to be a professor to run a coaching course.

For all the latest information on courses
go to the New Academy web site at www.baf-fencing.com



Thoughts on the Award Scheme

By Donald Walker

When Kevin asked me to do an article on the awards scheme my initial reaction was 'How do I say something new, as I've already done articles in the past?' Well after wracking what's left of my brains, I came up with a couple of points.

Everyone who gains an award is a winner. Unlike a competition, where there is only one winner, the only person competing is you. There are many kids and adults learning to fence and only a small percentage will actually take part in competition. Using the awards can give them a sense of achievement and the satisfaction of knowing that they have reached a level of competence within their sport. Let's be honest; who doesn't like getting a badge? I presented an award to one of my pupils a while back and the biggest cheer came from her granddaughter.

You can learn more about the strokes, tactics and rules by doing the awards. The study guides have an excellent glossary of fencing terms and an easily understood structure that introduces concepts gradually to the beginner. Let's face it; anything that makes it easier for the coach to explain the right of way is a godsend.



Finally, it is excellent advertising for the Academy. A lot of coaches work in schools and have pupils in this country and from all over the world. Most of the ones in this country go on to university and continue in our sport. Anything that encourages them to keep fencing is a good thing. I would be surprised if the majority of countries don't have a certificate on a wall somewhere. Who knows how many people would be encouraged to take up our sport by seeing one. I know that I have personally had pupils from South America, North America, Africa, the Far East and so many from Europe I've lost count. If even a handful keeps on fencing I'll count that as a plus.

**To all those who use the scheme; a big thank you.
To everyone else; what are you waiting for?**

For more information about the proficiency awards contact Donald : proficiencyawards@baf-fencing.com

Editorial Note : Donald has now issued over 5000 certificates as Proficiency Awards Administrator, and we are getting close to issuing certificate number 10 000.

Proficiency Awards

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

A4 Study Guides:

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

Figures in **RED** are for non-BAF members

Speaking the Same Language

When teaching kids (both young and old) they struggle to remember fencing terms from week to week as they lack a fencing vocabulary.Especially when you are working in a school with limited time. Simplifying the language helps them, so that they understand what you wish them to do. With kids a wordsearch can be a fun way of encouraging this learning. Some will answer the questions first, whereas others less literate will only look for the words. But encourage them to get help (peer to peer learning) in filling out the questions.For the older ones, set them the task of creating their own, and testing each others creations.

The act of finding and writing down will reinforce their understanding. When they do understand, and you can both speak the same language. It will cut down the number of words you have to use when training, or in that all important 1 min break on the piste. It can also be used to check the theory side of the proficiency awards, without making it a test or an examination.

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y	a	p	j	t	h	k	o	o	s	k	g	y	x	j	x
z	v	g	o	m	l	b	u	d	p	a	f	w	w	k	r
x	h	s	h	w	r	e	n	e	w	a	l	r	h	n	c
a	u	m	o	g	c	u	t	o	v	e	r	u	t	o	f
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y	p	o	i	v	r	s	i	m	p	l	e	m	l	y	m
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t	f	y	q	t	k	n	n	b	p	e	d	s	l	t	d
j	i	o	n	t	a	r	g	e	t	w	x	t	u	j	z
x	r	u	m	v	s	n	a	a	h	t	a	y	d	m	a
w	o	t	z	o	d	o	g	t	g	t	x	b	w	g	l
c	s	d	g	p	t	i	e	r	c	e	o	h	m	f	u

Word Bank

- parry
- disengage
- cutover
- counterdisengage
- sixte
- tierce
- simple
- compound
- beat
- riposte
- engagement
- renewal
- feint
- ontarget
- circular
- counter
- salute



- | | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| Attack with one blade action | _____ | How a fencer shows respect | _____ |
| Attack with more than one blade action | _____ | Block | _____ |
| Hit your opponents blade out of the way | _____ | Goes under | _____ |
| A parry with the same start and finish | _____ | Goes over | _____ |
| Touch your opponents blade with yours | _____ | Goes around | _____ |
| Have another go | _____ | On Guard | _____ |
| A make believe attack | _____ | Hit them back | _____ |
| Where you have to hit your opponent | _____ | | |



'Love' Fencing!

By Nick Chapman

So here I go again with another game, and whilst I am happy for my fencers to see it as 'this week's game' I would like you my colleagues to understand that it represents an opportunity to pursue a training objective whilst presetting an entertaining and engaging session.

I have often heard both fencers and coaches say 'you just can't recreate the stress, of a competition fight in the club' and 'sparing is just not the same as competing' well they may be right, but is that a reason to stop trying? Have we accepted this position as an absolute truth and stopped striving to simulate competition stress in club training?

I am sure you will all agree Fencing is a thrilling sport to watch... or at least it can be... sometimes. On the other hand it can often be one sided and whilst interesting from a technical point of view, it can be quite unexciting. The times when it is exciting are when it's close, when someone is catching up, when time is running out or the final score has nearly been reached, essentially when it could go either way. The excitement is in those win or lose moments. If those moments are exciting to watch they are also the moments that are stressful to fence, and surely therefore those are the ones we should aspire to replicate in training.

Unfortunately the scoring system we use represents the ultimate in simplicity, first to whatever. It is about achieving a result in order to progress a competition to a logical conclusion, it's not about creating a sporting spectacle, not about making every fight into an event within its self, every hit into a contest. Its sole purpose is divining a simple fact (on this day, in this place, this fencer is better than that fencer) it makes no attempt to capitalise on the excitement that could be generated whilst finding out.

Let's consider another sport, one with a far more sophisticated scoring system, tennis. Apart from the fact that to win the match you have to win a number of sets, which requires you to win a number of games (all of which is designed to build excitement), you also have to win each game by two clear points.

This two point lead requirement allows games that are unevenly matched to be over quickly, thus minimising the boring spectacle of a better player dominating a lesser player, yet capitalises on and draws out the closer matches. It generates multiple win lose moments, maximising the drama and with it the excitement.

Apart from the more general lessons our sport might learn from such a scoring system (let's face it tennis gets a lot more TV coverage than fencing does), how can we use it to improve our training, to better prepare our fencers for those fewer high pressure moments our sport does offer.

The game I set my fencers is simply called 'Tennis Rules'. It amounts to fighting first to four, but with the proviso that you can only win if you are two points clear (thus 4-2 is a win but 3-3 is 'deuce', 4-3 is 'advantage' etc). At epee doubles play as a 'let' (no point is scored for either fencer). Generally my older fencers find it easier to use tennis language to keep track of the score (15 love being 1 nil etc.) whereas my younger fencers, not so much.

The intention of this game is to create the maximum number of points with heightened importance. With standard fencing scoring the high pressure 'win lose point' is 4-4 or 14-14 (and arguably to a lesser degree, the 'win this point to draw level', and the 'win this point to take the lead' moments) Tennis Rules provides more high pressure moments (win this hit to have a chance at a winning hit, win this hit to win the fight, or from the other side, win this to stop them having an opportunity at a winning hit, win this hit to stop them winning the fight, back to, win this hit to stop them having an opportunity at a winning hit) thus it can sustain the pressure for longer. Using standard scoring only generates the win lose moment once, Tennis Rules can bring it about multiple times in one fight.

Whilst I am not suggesting a root and branch change of our sports scoring system (after all those of you with long memories might remember 'best of three sets of first to five' that we briefly had before we started fencing first to 15), I am suggesting that Tennis Rules is an entertaining game with a serious training purpose. I also happen to think there is scope for an entertaining social competition utilising an alternative scoring system, but that's probably a separate article.



Dave Jerry Bursary

By Nathan Jopling

As the recipient of the Dave Jerry Bursary, I would like to express my thanks to the Academy. Dave instilled me with Academy values when I was young, and I have sought to carry these through. Dave was an inspirational coach, with a wealth of knowledge, and supported me all throughout my early days as a sabreur. To have been granted a bursary to pursue more knowledge around fencing in his name, as well as the being given the opportunity to pass on that knowledge is a real privilege.

While undertaking the Level 1 Coaching course with Professor Peter Northam, I have been exposed to the many opportunities the Academy offers to its coaches. Under Peter's guidance and support, I have been able to develop myself as a coach, and provided my own take and style to conventions and approach problems in my own way. I have developed ten-fold, and (whilst coming in with certain preconceptions as to what makes a coach), will leave the course having improved, knowing that I am going to impart my competitive knowledge onto students in a thoughtful and effective manner. Additionally, I attended a training day at King Edward's School for Girls in Birmingham, led by six of the Academy's masters. These men and women are very helpful and inspirational people, and to have been exposed to their teaching and knowledge (while leaving me with a slight headache) left me inspired to take my coaching further.

Upon completion of my Level 1 Course, I aim to keep my coaching going. I am strongly considering attending the Denstone course in August to sit my Level 2 Exam and Assessment to become a coach in my own right. As I have expressed to Peter, I have always aimed to do my diploma in sabre (at the very least), and wish to join the ranks of the fencing masters. The bursary has allowed me to take the first steps towards this dream, and I wish to thank the Academy unreservedly for this amazing opportunity.

ZBIGNIEW CZAJKOWSKI 1921-2019

It was with great sadness that the death of Dr. Zbigniew Czajkowski was announced recently, shortly after his 98th birthday.

Dr. Czajkowski was an Honorary Member and great friend of the Academy. He was widely acknowledged as one of the leading fencing coaches in the world having been associated with fencing for over 80 years.



Professor Zbigniew Czajkowski, has been dubbed the 'Father of the Polish School of Fencing'.

Czajkowski's was born in post-World War I Poland in 1921 and began fencing at the age of 13 with the Lviv Cadet Corps in neighbouring Ukraine. He joined the Polish Navy at the age of 18 to fight in the Second World War.

He saw military action against Soviet invaders near Baranowicze, in Belarus. He was arrested, imprisoned and later released by the Russians in late in the first year of the war. Unfortunately, he was captured again by the Russians in 1940, whilst trying to return to France from Russian controlled territory. Czajkowski spent over a year in various Russian prisons, including the notorious Vorkuta labour camp, located beyond the polar circle. Whilst in prison he would practice fencing using a wooden spoon to replicate a sword. He was released in late 1941 and worked on rice and cotton farms in Uzbekistan.

In 1942, having fled to Great Britain, he re-joined the Polish Navy. During his service in the navy Czajkowski took part in multiple battles in the English Channel, the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean on convoy duties. At the same time, while on-board ship, he continued to train and fence with crew mates.

After the war he travelled to Edinburgh and began studying medicine. It was here that he resumed fencing at club level for the University of Edinburgh. He also started coaching for the Polish Students Association of Great Britain. Coached by French swordsman Leonard Cronie, Czajkowski won the Academic Championship of Scotland and in 1948 a bronze at the British Championships.

He was a long-time coach of the Polish national team and head of the training of the Polish Fencing Association. He also worked at the University of Physical Education in Katowice and published numerous articles and books on fencing and sports science.

On his return to Poland, together with his wife and son in 1949, he soon gave up his career in medicine to concentrate on fencing.

In 1950, he became the first post-war champion of Poland in the foil, and at the age of 32 achieved his best result, a bronze in the team sabre event at the 1953 World Championships in Brussels. From there he went on to become a coach, producing countless champions of for his country during a career that spanned more than four decades.

His list of fencers includes, but is not limited to:

Bohdan Gonsior – 1968 Olympic team épée bronze, 1963 World Championship épée bronze and four-time Olympian (1960,64,68,72)

Egon Franke – 1964 Olympic Foil Champion and team silver medallist, 1968 Olympic team foil bronze

Elżbieta Cymerman – 1968 Olympian and nine-time Polish champion in foil

Jacek Bierkowski – Two-time Olympian (1976, 80) and 1975 World Championship silver in sabre

Magdalena Jeziorowska – 1996 European Epée Champion and 1994 World Championship team épée bronze

In addition to his medical degree, in 1984 Czajkowski obtained a PhD in Physical Education and picked up multiple honorary awards for his service to the sport.

Over the years, Czajkowski, visited the UK and ran a number of coaching courses, commencing in 1970 and the last being the highly successful course held at the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds in 2004 for the Academy. Such was Czajkowski's reputation the senior curators of the museum arranged for him to have a very special, private, 'behind the scenes' tour, looking at exhibits and artefacts not normally on display or seen by members of the public. He was eager to give freely of his knowledge and experience and would sit and talk with anyone. There were no secrets withheld. He had an immense thirst for knowledge, to understand how and why fencers performed and how to make them better. However, his love of the sport was paramount – he simply enjoyed fencing and wanted others to enjoy it as much as he did.

He regularly reviewed and critiqued material produced for the Academy's coach education system and contributed articles for the Academy News.

In 2004 he was bestowed an honorary doctorate from the Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, an honorary member of the British Fencing Academy, a holder of the Knight's Cross, Commander's Cross and was awarded membership into the Order of the Rebirth of Poland.

Until his death he continued to lecture and attend training at GKS 'Piaśt' Giliwice, the club in Poland where he began to build his dynasty of champion fencers in the early 1950s.

He will be greatly missed by all within the fencing community.



Going Mental...

By Craig Jinks

There are plenty of quotes out there on how fencing is one of the most mental of all sports, so how often do you focus yourself, or your students, on the mental side of their game? Probably more than you realise, to be fair...

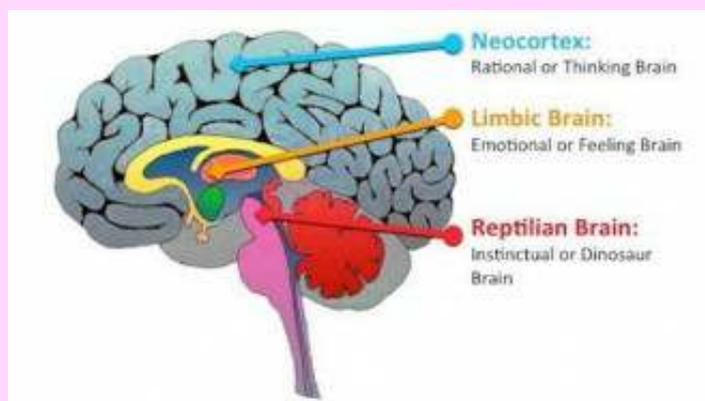
While I'm relatively new to fencing coaching, I've been in business change and leadership coaching for a while, and there are a few concepts and techniques that I've found really useful both on, and off, the piste. I'm just a layman, admittedly with an interest and with a desire to do more in the mental space, so this will only be light touch intended to get us thinking and talking about the mental game. So, if you've got other techniques that work for you, let's hear of them. If you're already an expert... can you set a course up?

Applied Neuroscience

One of the newest trends in leadership coaching is applied neuroscience. Real understanding of what happens in the brain through neuroscience has only been happening for about 15 years. It's a very young discipline, but it does have some very real implications for fencing, particularly around decision-making.

The triune brain model will have many actual neuroscientists going purple and reaching for their sabres, but it's a really simple way to understand how decision-making works and how we can use it in coaching.

Imagine the brain split into 3 parts



- **The lizard brain/ reptilian brain/ hind brain**

The bit responsible for ritual behaviour, habits and instinctive responses

- **The mammal brain/ limbic system/ emotional brain**

Emotions, social behaviours and the like

- **The human brain/ neo-cortex**

Advanced cognition and such higher reasoning functions

When you take that instinctive parry and riposte... that's happening in the lizard brain. When you try to pull off that move that you could do 20 years ago and injure yourself... same. When you go for that wide, windmilling panic parry instead of the one you know you should have used... that's the lizard brain again. When you're picking up on an opponent's favoured move and devising an answer, however... that's in the human brain.

Great... so what?

Decision-making in the human part of the brain is much more reasoned, much more likely to come up with an innovative response, but much, much slower than the lizard brain. The lizard brain, however, is much more likely to override that carefully thought out plan with a panicked fight or flight response. So use them for their strengths, and manage their unhelpful tendencies.

If you're about to face an opponent, how much do you know about them? Have you watched them in an earlier bout? Faced them before? What do they tend to do and how does it fit in with your usual style? If you're taking the time between bouts, or even between points to do that slower, more reasoned thinking you can decide which of your favourite moves to focus on, or put away for this bout... allowing the lizard brain to make those quick decisions, but from a set of options that you want. Don't forget, though... that the lizard brain can only work with what you've built in as a habit. If you only ever do the same riposte to the same area off a particular parry, then any change in that has to be made by the human brain, and it will slow you down.

One other concept that neuroscience is showing is what they call neuroplasticity... that our brains keep developing, keep creating pathways and keep learning all the way up to the point of death. Scientific proof that you can teach an old dog new tricks.
So how can you train yourself to use this? With.....Visualisation

Read next months issue for the next instalment.....Visualisation

Editors Note : Further reading will be published in the next issue

Letters

It was pleasing to see in the February edition of "Academy News" Prof. Peter Cormack acknowledge one of his mentors, Prof. Bert Bracewell's talent in tailoring his lessons to the individual. This is a skill to be practiced by coaches if they are to maximise the potential of their pupils as soon as they achieve a reasonable level of competence.

An outstanding example of such coaching is told in Johan Harmenberg's book Epee 2.0. Thanks to an innovative coach, Eric Sollee, Harmenberg, was transformed from a fencer who struggled with "classical" fencing into a World and Olympic Champion. All achieved by reprogramming the 7" between Harmenburg's ears.

Pupils develop better when lessons are directed predominantly towards their strengths, rather than their weaknesses. The challenge for the coach is to correctly identify what each individual fencer's strengths are and how to tailor the lesson accordingly. The outcome is lessons which are of real benefit to the pupil, and though challenging, more stimulating for the coach to deliver.

By Professor Peter Stewart

Training Day - St Albans

Staff - **Maitre Tony Middleton** (Other staff TBC)

Sunday 12th May : Weapon - Foil

Times - 12-6pm : Venue: - Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre, St Albans

Cost: £20 (+ examination fee if requested)

Contact : **anthonyjmiddleton@googlemail.com** for more information

Film Review – “The Duellists”

By Bob Merry

In my answers to a recent questionnaire by Stefan for his column in Academy News, I cited “The Duellists” (1977) as being among my favourite films with a swordplay theme. I am particularly attracted to this film as it combines two of my favourite topic of interest, swordplay (naturally) and the history of the Napoleonic era. For the benefit of those who may not be familiar with the film, I am presenting here a short review.

The film is adapted from a story by Joseph Conrad, called “The Duel”, and concerns a series of duels between two cavalry officers in Napoleon’s army, over a perceived slight by one of them, but which continue over decades, against the background of the wars across Europe, as their paths cross and re-cross. The two main protagonists are played by Harvey Keitel and Keith Carradine.

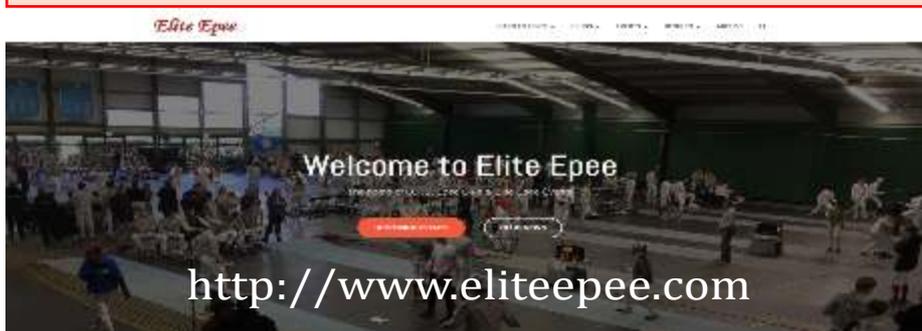


Directed by Ridley Scott, the film is remarkable to me for its attention to detail, down to such things as changes in the hair styles sported by cavalry officers, or the rigours of Napoleon’s ill-fated Russian campaign in 1812 and the subsequent “Retreat from Moscow”. The search for realism extends to the various duels, fought with smallswords, cavalry sabres and pistols. The fight director was William Hobbs and he later explained his thoughts behind the fights, recalling that, “the pauses we put into the fights were phenomenal, but we wanted to get across the awful feeling that you’ll be dead on the floor. In the end, the realism is the fear”. This was certainly achieved, in my opinion, and takes us away from the usual swashbuckling type of screen fight into a realization of what a duel could really be like.

William Hobbs worked for a time as fight director for Laurence Olivier’s National Theatre and also has many stage and film credits, including “Macbeth” (dir. Roman Polanski), “The Three Musketeers” and “The Four Musketeers” (dir. Richard Lester). For more of his many credits, see www.imdb.com and search for William Hobbs.



I recently watched the film again, having found it listed on Sky Movies, and I believe it is also available on various streaming services, including Amazon Prime. I thoroughly recommend it.



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News for Free**

Committee Snippets

The committee met for the first time this year on Sunday 21st January 2018. The following appointments were confirmed.

Committee appointments

- Chair of SSTT, Andrew Vincent
- Course officer, Jacqueline Redikin
- Proficiency Awards Administrator, Donald Walker
- Membership Secretary. John Worsley
- Exams co-ordinator, Andrew Vincent
- Disciplinary sub-committee – As required
- International Secretary. Lance Larsen
- Marketing and communication officers, Jackie Redikin and Kevin Nelson
- Child Protection Officer, Jackie Redikin
- Academy news editor, Kevin Nelson
- Film and theatre Rep. Andy Wilkinson

Amongst things we discussed and decided were :

The Academy website to be moved to our new service provider INOS.

The Compulsory Elements exercises to be renamed Masters' Skills to reflect the nature of the exercise.

Level 1 assessments may now be undertaken by a level 4 coach holding a level 4 qualification in the weapon being assessed. This removes the need for a Level 3 coach to assist in the assessment.

Future documentation – insurance policy, confirmation of membership to be emailed (where possible) to members rather than posting.

Design of t shirts and ties, minimum order of one to be looked into (web based ordering).

Pedagogy of fencing. (Learning theories). Jackie and Kevin to look at learning theories in association with the SSTT.



At Cotswold Fencing Club on the last Wednesday of every month we have what we call "box night". This is where we run weapon specific pools. The original idea of this was to give our fencers practice of competitions. As at the time very few were fencing outside of club.

It is a shock to the system to turn up to your first competition, without some preparation - signing in, finding your piste, reading & checking pool sheets, refereeing. It doubles up as our yearly club competition as we run an 11 month rolling championship. For both of these purposes it has been very effective over the years, but recently we have found that fencers from other clubs are starting to turn up, because of the competition style training session; which is good for them, and gives our fencers more experience of other fencers, which is good for us too.

In March we also had a visit from Michelle Golding of Fencing Stuff, with her original designs of fencing t-shirts & hoodies. She has recently started going to clubs with her stall. If you would like her to visit you on a club evening, contact her.

E-mail michelle@fencingstuff.org.uk

Website <https://www.fencingstuff.org.uk/>



Stefan Speaks

The thought of your Members' Rep.



Readers, friends, less than friends, enemies, critics!

Here I am at it again having to come up with yet another enthralling article for the Academy News. But this time it had to be special for the 100th issue, which led me to.....

Fundamentally, there is fear.

Everyone is afraid. Fear of water, fear of fire, fear of insects, fear of the dark. Fear of making wrong choices and ruining your life. In a state of semi-consciousness, all these fears become like the notes of a muted, tragic symphony: the hidden fears we drag behind us right through to the end, the acute fears that make us scream, the fears we make light of after the event, the fear of accident, or illness, the fear of what other people may say or think of you. As coaches we deal with our pupils fears because a good coach knows how to keep a pupil's interest and their excitement to learn; fencing needs to be fun, fear takes that fun away!

But we as coaches also have fears for example

- Fear of not understanding a pupil's motivations, pushing them too hard or not hard enough so they give up fencing
- Fear that you will unknowingly teach something incorrectly (actions or tactics)
- Fear that you cannot get your subject across and the pupil will give up in frustration
- Fear of forgetting the correct terms or the lesson half way through
- Fear of looking an idiot in front of a senior coach

Here at BAF the professors running courses this year firmly believe that fear doesn't enhance the learning experience and is not a good motivator, fear is a mental game killer. To really benefit and enjoy learning to be a fencing coach, coaches need to feel confident and safe, which we hope you will when you attend our courses this year and maybe get rid of some of your coaching fears.

Getting to Know your Professors

Name - Phil Carson

1. When and why did you start coaching - **Daughters wanted to fence**
2. As a competitive fencer what is/was your preferred weapon - **Sabre**
3. Where do you coach or are you retired - **Perth, Scotland**
4. When did you become a professor of BAF - **2009ish**
5. Which coach inspired you as either a fencer or a coach - **Derek Titherage**
6. The best advice you were given (fencing or coaching) - **Distance beats speed**
7. What is the one piece of advice you would give a beginner coach - **It's not a technical game.**
8. What do you wish you had known when you began your fencing/coaching journey - **That it's not a technical sport**
9. Favourite move/film/tv show involving sword play - **Scaramouche**

Did you know that in the 1952 film Scaramouch that Granger (our hero!), who performed most of his stunts himself, took fencing lessons with Jean Heremans (fenced foil for Belgium in the 1936 Olympics) when preparing for the role. The 8-minute-long duel in the theatre between Granger and Ferrer took eight weeks of preparation, including memorizing eighty-seven fencing passes. Filming this scene left Granger with a wrenched knee, a damaged shoulder, and an injured back.

Teaching Games for Fencing

By Prof. Phil Carson

Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) has been with us for some time now and those sports that have embraced it have benefited greatly. Fencing has been a little slow on the uptake! The evidence suggests that the learning in youngsters using this method can be accelerated by a factor of x10 compared with a traditional technique based approach. After a couple of years work up in Scotland, we've pretty much re-defined and refined the coaching process and I'd like to share the learning with you.

If you'd like to know more, I'm running a week long course for coaches. Regardless of what system you are developing under, I think you'll have a lot of fun and learn a lot. You probably won't get much instruction on how to do a particular parry or attack, but you will be challenged and invited to explore new ways of looking at how to coach.

22nd-26th July in Perth, Scotland. The cost will be £200.

In brief, the new coaching process is as follows, online link below:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/830e40_6621c191dc0b406e814bde55ec228c92.pdf

You can contact me for more details at prof.carson@yahoo.co.uk



Safeguarding & First Aid



Safeguarding: Tue 6 Aug 18:00-21:00

(Application through BF Website, Coach Zone - open from later in the year)

First Aid: Sun 11 Aug 09:00-16:30

(Application through David Kirby)

Venue: King Edward VI School, Chapel Lane, Stratford upon Avon, Warks, CV37 6BE

These courses are required for BF coach registration. There will be very limited numbers on both, but they are excellent courses and are delivered for the fencing community, rather than general consumption.

B.A.F. 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.



The British Academy of Fencing's residential course is open to all fencing coaches irrespective of whether they are members of the BAF.

British Academy of Fencing Members : £444 Non Academy Coach: £499

This fee includes full board (breakfast, lunch and evening meals), tuition and course documentation. Examination fees are extra.



For further details,
contact the Course Officer,

Jacqueline Redikin
courseofficer@baf-fencing.com



Training Day - North Midlands (Sandbach)

Staff: Jackie Redikin, John Worsley, Stefan Leponis

Sunday 12th May : All Weapons. :Cost: £25

Venue: St Mary's Church Hall, Sandbach: St Mary's Church, High Street, Sandbach CW11 1AL
Times: 9:45am-4pm

Please bring a packed lunch, tea/coffee will be provided (you will require a mug though).
For more information please contact: courseofficer@baf-fencing.com

Training Day Theme : This day will be focusing on the Levels 1-3 Examination skills.

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