ENGLAND FENCING - SOUTH WEST REGION
AGM: Sunday 14 December 2014
PRSC, Wellington School. Wellington.

MINUTES

Present: Jane Browne (JB), John and Sonya Mason (JM), Ralph Mills, Tim Miles (TM), Val Morrish, Joseph Pierce, Jim Pilkington, Alex Scott, Lucy Williams.

Apologies: Gillian Aghagan, Jason Ball, Sue Benney, Mark Blackmore, Nigel Carter, Jane Hutchison, Angela Findlay, Nigel Manning, Astrid Merrick, Alan & Lucy Payne, John Rhode

Minutes: AGM 2013: accepted.

- **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – TIM MILES**

  I have had a relatively quiet year as chair. I have attended two committee meetings with Jane, Sonia and John. The majority of work at these meeting has been around the upcoming BYC qualifiers. We have been working to clarify with BF the entry fees and streamline the entry process via the SW Web site. I believe we have now achieved this.

  I also attended this year's BF AGM on behalf of the SW. Key themes of the meeting were the recovery BF financial situation and discussion of the grow part of the Green ,Gold, Grow agenda. As part of this BF are working on increasing membership and have introduced pilot projects in London and the N.E. I raised the point that some may see this as another London centric initiative and we had a strong region and would be more than happy to work with BF on these pilots in the SW. I was assured that this was appreciated but BF currently the have resources and facilities in these areas which was why they are based where they are. There are no further developments on the tiered membership cost, proposed and canvassed some time ago.

  I believe fencing in the region remains strong. I have not had anything to the contrary bought to my attention and I have met with a number of teachers, fencers and coaches fencing and running clubs I was not previously aware of. On this point however I think it would be a useful exercise for the SW to find out and record as much as possible about the activity in our region.

  I was sorry to hear about the events at Wellington this year, but am reassured that things seem to be setting down now and the club is functioning again. Thanks to Richard, Jane and Lawrence for steering it through this difficult time.

  Andy & Lynne Bornemiza made the move from Bath this year, but thankfully stayed in our region. They have passed the running of Excalibur onto Bath Sword Club, who will continue to run it on behalf of the SW.

  Many of our fencers, from cadets to juniors have taken part in various representative events. This reflects well on the strength and depth we have in the region, not just in our fencers but in our club and coaching provision.

  The region has held many competitions this year. Veteran Nationals, Senior opens, Cadet & Junior BSC events, national junior series events, regional and club competitions. My thanks go out to all the organizers and volunteers of these events who give our fencers such great opportunities in our region.

  The SW Hub continues to offer quality training opportunities, in both fencing and workforce development. Tris Parrish has submitted his report with more detail on this year's activities. My thanks go to Tris for his work in steering this from its initial conception as a BF regional academy concept to where we are now, which is a fully autonomous self-funding SW project.

  Welcome to the following clubs formed in the past year: Bristol Blades, Exeter City Fencing Club, Phoenix (Taunton) Fencing Club, Sherbourne Swords, West Devon Swords,

- **TREASURER'S REPORT -SONYA MASON**

  See attachments

We have received revenue from Excalibur, the BYC's and the South West Foil and Sabre Championships. The South West Epee championship was held but due to the small number of entries did not generate any surplus.

Excalibur has been run for a number of years by Andy and Lynne Bornemisza who generously ran the competition on behalf of the South West and gave us all the surplus. Lynne and Andy have now moved to Devon. On behalf of the committee I would like to say thank you to Andy and Lynne for all the hard work they have put in running Excalibur so successfully over the years. The competition will now be run by Bath Sword Club who will take a percentage of any surplus raised.

British Fencing raised entry fees for the British Youth Championships by a large margin this year and consequently we had to take the decision to split the fees in two. One entry fee to enter the qualifiers and one to enter the Championships. We now have an online entry system designed by John Mason and hope in time that everyone will enter this way. At the moment it is 50%. We also now have the ability for competitors to pay by PayPal as well as payment on line or by cheque.

We have purchased medals for competitions. We now have stock which can be purchased for competitions in the region which should last us for 3 years.

We bought some more fleeces as we did not have enough stock in some sizes

We have paid the Junior Winton cup entry fee. We did not enter the Senior Winton Cup due to very little interest in the region.

We have made four grants this year for a total of £300 to competitors who entered the World Junior and Cadet Championships.

The development fund will be used to assist with the costs of WORK FORCE TRAINING at Hub events.

- **REGIONAL REPORTS**
  - **Bristol - Astrid Merrick**

    Rather than a straight report I would like to offer up a few observations about the flux of fencing. The Bristol Open, for many years been one of the largest and high ranking amongst the domestic competitions, has progressively over recent times noted a decline in the number of entries and it would appear that this is also the case for other fencing Opens. It may be that the BFA appears to keep an aggressive diary that, by mandating conflicting events, obstructs those staging regionally organised competitions, however Bristol Fencing Club has noted that fewer of its members now compete regularly on the domestic circuit. This last may be attributed to the change in the demographic. The club attracts fewer new adult beginners but a constant flow of youngsters who want to learn to fence and so the organisation of the club is having to adapt to accommodate them and look at how best to use its available facilities i.e. coaches, equipment and venue. The focus has shifted from adult beginners to juniors while at the same time maintaining its offering to seniors. The club is enormously pleased to welcome youngsters as they are the life blood not only of Bristol Fencing Club but the fencing world in general. Amongst them are several who are keen and look very promising.

    Prior to the Vets Commonwealth we were pleased to have Vet fencers visit us for practise and coaching. Vets have much to offer in terms of experience evident in their superb timing, accuracy and excellent blade work and we would hope to see them at the club more often. The club is very proud of Kristen Payne who won silver at this year's Vets Commonwealth.

    Every year the club loses many junior fencers to university but it is heartening that they still want to come and fence at BFC during their holidays. Georgia Hannay, previous UK junior Commonwealth champion, still competes under the BFC banner despite demanding university commitments that leave little time for training and has some returned some excellent results.

White Eagles Club Report:
We've had a good season, with Palmy Yotsaphon 5th on the BYC U18 Girls Sabre and Sam Horne winning the Bath LPJS Sabre at boys U9. We are also supplying 5 of the seven sabre fencers to the SW Cadet Winton team. We've also had home and away friendlies with Gloucester, a joint Golden Valley team and Wessex Blades of Warminster.

- **Cornwall**
  No report received.

- **Devon County Fencing Union - Lucy Williams**
  It's been another good year for fencing in Devon with active clubs in Plymouth, Barnstaple, Newton Abbott, Tiverton, Kingswear, North Tamar, Sidmouth, both of Devon's Universities and a new club in the county's capital, Exeter.
  Devon fencers have competed at all levels and achieved good results. Many Devon clubs have participated in outreach activities in their local communities and Devon coaches have provided fencing in a number of Devon's schools
  Unfortunately our 2014 junior county championships had to be cancelled due to low entries and we were also unable to hold our senior championships: however both these events have now been rescheduled for early 2015.
  We did have two very successful Devon competitions during 2014. These were:
  - An invitation team competition which was organised by Matt & Rhi Cullen and hosted by the Royal Navy at Devonport with teams of 3 competing at Epee or Foil.
  - The Buckland Handicap competition organised by Jim Pilkington. This was a handicapped competition with mixed Epee for seniors and mixed Foil for juniors.

  Both were excellent events which were well supported by Devon Fencers: a big thank you to all those who took part and to Matt, Rhi & Jim for organising the competitions.
  We fielded a full team at Excalibur 2014 and enjoyed an excellent weekend of fencing. Thank you to Rhi our Devon captain for organising the Devon team and to Lynne and Andy for organising the event (we are delighted that you have moved to Devon!)There were also regular open club competition nights hosted by Newton Abbott and Barnstaple which gave members from Devon clubs the opportunity to meet and compete. The DCFU has a face book page and a county website www.devonfencing.co.uk where county news is posted. The DCFU AGM will be held in February 2015 so if you are a Devon fencer please come along and get involved. Next year a number of our long standing committee members will be standing down and we would like to thank them for all of their hard work and commitment over the years. Although we are very sorry to see them go we know they will continue to support fencing in Devon and we look forward to welcoming new members to the DCFU committee.

  We look forward to another positive year in 2015 with lots of fencing in Devon.

- **Dorset**
  JB to establish a representative.

- **Gloucester – Shaun Garley Joe Pierce is County Rep**
  See attachment

- **Somerset - Jane Hutchison**
  I believe Somerset is the only County in the South West that doesn't hold its own County Senior competitions. However, there is a Junior Foil competition run annually which is organised by Tim Miles and Michael Cleary.
  Somerset is a busy County and as well as hosting most of the SW Hub events at Millfield it has also hosted all the senior events and junior qualifying events.
  In February Wessex Blades hosted the Wessex Scrimmage, a new competition for Novice and Intermediate Epeeists. Hopefully this will be an annual event.

The Wellington Open for all three weapons took place in May and Sue Benney ran her ever successful Dunstan Foil and Epee at Glastonbury in June for young fencers and adults.
In March Millfield also hosted an armoury course and refereeing course over a weekend and in August Millfield hosted a South West coach education course for one week.
Millfield also hosted the Under 20 Sabre in July, a qualifying event for junior team selection. This was extremely well run with plenty of referees and set a standard.
Excalibur took place in Bath in April, run by the Bornemiszas before their departure to Devon.
Somerset was once again crowned champions by the narrowest of margins.
As we meet today, the hugely popular Cadet Winton is taking place at Millfield, organised by Norman Golding and his team attracting teams of Under 17's from all over Britain.
I think you can see that there is a lot happening in Somerset and it is truly a Hub for fencing.

- **EXCALIBUR REPORT 2014** and the future .
  Another successful competition!
  Huge thanks to Lynne and Andy Bournemiza for their dedication to running this competition for over 20 years and for their donations to the South West Fencing.
  Bath Swords club will take over the running of the competition.

- **SOUTHWEST HUB**
  As has been extensively advertised we have set the broad goals and philosophy of the south West HUB as: **Train Smart, Fence Smart**
  More workforce: Better workforce
  To that end, since January 2014 the following events have taken place:-
  - 1 x refereeing course and exam at level 1 and 2
  - 1 x introduction to armoury course.
  - 1 x adult only (16 years+) training day.
  - 1x level 1 and 2 coaching course at all three weapons - run in the summer at Millfield: 25 attendees.
  - 5 x Regional Training days: - attended by over 60 fencers from within the region and another 20 from outside the region.
    We had aimed to run at Truro as well as Millfield but unfortunately a lack of interest from local fencers meant that this day had to be cancelled. We have had interest from Plymouth about running an epee day in the Spring and hope to follow up on this enquiry.

    These sessions have also incorporated variously:-
    - Armoury skills;
    - Goal setting and an introduction to sport psychology from MindinSport;
    - video analysis and feedback;
    - analysis on what to do off the piste;
    - breathing techniques;
    - athletic development from Excelsior fitness
  - 3 x BSC events – sabre under 17 and under 20 and epee under 17

  Plans for the coming year:-
  1 Training days in January, March, June, September and November.
  2 Coaching Level 1 and 2 and hopefully elements or all of a level 3 coach development course at all weapons to be run at Millfield in summer.

  - A concerted effort was made over the summer and early autumn to try to get some more clubs and coaches involved in hub events. However, the response has been 0.
    This is therefore a request for feedback (not hearsay) and suggestions as to what we should do more of and what there is demand for within the region.

- The Hub is not geographically located at Millfield and therefore we would like to take this opportunity to help any club/county/area with their workforce development – especially with the administration of such courses and also with assistance financing them.
- **If you are interested in hosting any of the above or indeed in hosting a training day closer to home in addition to the ones we have already planned then please email** trp@millfieldschool.com **and we will do all we can to help.**
- If you would like to take over from Tristan as Regional Hub Lead Officer please let Tim Miles know.

POINTS RAISED AT MEETING:

1 COST: it was felt that the cost of the day, transport and accommodation was a limiting factor.
TM explained that the hub was no longer funded from BF so had to be self-financing and costs were kept to a minimum. The more fencers attending – the lower the cost would be.
Moving Training to different venues would allow different people to experience what was on offer and possible attract them to attend again.
2 TRAVEL: cost of and time taken in travel from say Gloucester or Plymouth were limiting..
3 PARENTS: parents travelling from a distance have little to do for the 6 hours.
Possible activities of interest to parents to be sort: weapon maintenance, referring, running competitions, beginners fencing lesson.
4 ADULT TRAINING: adult fencers are not aware that they are welcome to attend the Hub sessions. Session held in Exeter last year was poorly attended.
5 COACH INVOLVEMENT IN HUB: more coaches need to be involved so that they bring their fencers.
6 COACH TRAINING SUPPORT: There was some discussion of the coaching courses held at the Millfield International Camps - re presentation, tutors etc. It was felt that training sessions for coaches, level and 2, fast track level 1 course spread over the year would be better appreciated and would serve the regions coaches better. South West Fencing has allocated funds to support this. Safeguarding, first aid etc are offered by local CSP's.
7 Veteran's Training. There is a reuquest for Veteran training days. Session held last year not supported.
ACTIONS: All county representatives to ask which clubs in their county can host a training day and advertise that adults welcome at Hub Sessions. **JB** to email all clubs.

- **COMPETITION ISSUES**
  - **Senior Winton:**
    SW has not entered a team for a few years. The consensus of the meeting was that there was interest in participation. Interest needs to be encouraged and co-ordinated. Emphasis should be on selecting fencers living and fencing in the South West. Winners of the SW Senior Championships will have automatic selection.
    Action: JB will enquire re: dates (**4&5 July 2015, Nottingham**) and costs (**approx. £250.00/team**); approach fencers and establish teams. A captain will then be chosen from the fencers. .
  - **Veteran's Winton:**
    There is a request for assistance with costs.
    Decision: The SW will not contribute to expenses this year but will consider for next year
  - **Senior Championships:**
    All 6 weapons held. There is a need to increase participation. Communication was considered to be a limiting factor. Although forms are sent to club secretaries, perhaps they are not being passed on. The meeting felt more should be done to encourage novice and adult fencers to compete – Shaun Garley runs a novice competition alongside the Gloucester senior champs..
    Action: send entry forms out via BF to individual fencers. **JB** and **JM**: Update lists of clubs and contacts. Joe Pierce to ask Shaun for info re: novice competitions.
    SW Senior Epee Championships 15 March 2015: Wellington.
  - **South West Age Groups: BYC Qualifiers:** Foil - 25 Jan, Epee and Sabre - 22 Feb – all at Millfiled
    Action: Trophies to be returned before events to be checked and repaired. Max 6 to be replaced.

- **Purchase of pistes and recording equipment:**
  The region has been asked to consider purchasing pistes and recording equipment for use at local competitions, championships, BSC etc. A hire charge could be made to cover costs. There was some discussion regarding cost, insurance, damage repair..
  Action: The decision of the meeting is that it would be too expensive. A list of equipment held by clubs willing to loan out kit will be made.
- **Fencing Time:** a competition management programme**.** The region is hoping to hold a training session at one of the Hub training days.
- **More local and county competitions:** member contribution: Jim Pilkington. See attachment and below. More local competitions would be appreciated.

- **AOB**
  - From the grassroots: Jim Pilkington has written an open letter to the meeting - attached.
    There was some discussion about:
    BF membership options and costings: see chairman's report. The committee is willing to lobby for changes once we know what the membership figures for the region are. **Action: JB to canvass clubs re: how many fencers are BF members.**
    Encouraging more adults to compete:
    Action: those holding senior regional competitions will be asked to include a dedicated novice section.

- **Date, time and venue of next AGM.**
  TBC: try for July – October, afternoon. Hub day.

Meeting closed: 15:45