

Record numbers at Bletchley!



John Crouch, John Mason and Pat Casey busy behind the scenes at the Age Group Qualifiers

Photo by Editor

Age Group Qualifiers winners

Vets in Rome

Marie Chantal Demaille in London

CONTENTS

Front Page
Behind the scenes at
the AGQs

Pages 2
Letter from Chairman

Pages 3 - 6
AGQ medallists -
photos and results

Pages 7 - 9
Alice Lawrence and
Richard Sage train in
Rome

Page 9
BVF Calendar

Page 10
Marie Chantal Demaille
in London

Page 12
England Vets AGM
agenda

Page 13
Caption competition

Page 14
BVF contacts

Alice in Rome

What a great way to start the New Year and get rid of any excess calories consumed in the previous week! 6 hours a day of warm-ups, fencing, lessons, and stretching at the Club Scherma Roma.

We'd all signed up for the delightfully named 'Master's training' – not 'Master of Arms', or *maestro*. 'Master' (they seem to use the English word) refers to a Veteran in Italy. Now, to me, a 'veteran' sounds a bit old. 'Master' on the other hand, sounds much more positive; however, I have to be honest, the word does suggest a certain level of proficiency, which I certainly have not yet attained. Others in the British contingent, I'm happy to say, did merit the term.

The training consisted of 8 x 3 hour sessions over 5 days. The morning sessions involved a full hour of stretching, muscle-toning exercises and fencing related footwork with the onus on keeping fit and preventing injury. Lots of interesting exercises involving stockinged feet, hip swinging and spine stretching were then followed by jogging up and down the sports hall while kicking our own backsides and doing other leg strengthening work.

Riccardo, a professional basketball coach and PE teacher, knew just how much to push us and emphasised the importance of injury prevention - he advised us that if a movement hurt, we shouldn't do it – just what I like to hear! Afternoon warm-ups were a much lighter 30 minutes.

The rest of the time was taken up with free fencing, mostly epee, with over 30 very friendly fencers from Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Ireland and Spain, and with a wide range of levels of experience and proficiency. This meant that it was great fun, as well as a good learning environment.

Epée lessons were provided by an Argentinian coach, Carlos, who was very patient but certainly pushed us to improve our skills and performance. Foil and sabre coaching were also available.

On full days (i.e. 2 sessions), the three and a half hour lunch break was very welcome – lunch, shower, washing sweaty t-shirts and finally a siesta – bliss – before warm-up and fencing resumed. By the third day, we were pretty tired but began to gather momentum for the fourth day in preparation for the competition on the last morning.



Stephen Colover
Geraldine Dooley
Hugo Veryzer
Alice Lawrence
Richard Sage



In the evenings we were so tired we just relaxed over dinner and only once managed to go into the city centre for a meal. I was glad to have arrived a day early so that I could visit some of the main sites. Two highlights were a super evening meal just outside Rome and the competition (poule unique) in the final session, in which our very own Veteran 'new hips' Hugo Veryzer came third in the Epée. If there was a medal presentation or acknowledgement of the winners, I must've been in the changing rooms – when I came out, everyone was tucking into champagne and panettone. It was a close run thing with, if I remember correctly from the score sheet, the same number of victories and just a couple of indicators' difference.

All in all, a great venue, great fencing and friendly fencers in a great city. I for one, aim to make this a regular feature of my fencing year.

Alice Lawrence

And Richard goes too!

Another year, another New Year trip to Club Scherma Roma for the Italian Master's training camp. I flew out on the first Tuesday in Jan and joined Geraldine Dooley, Alice Lawrence, Stephen Colover, Hugo Veryzer and Mark Kent (not quite a vet but over in Rome with his family - Mark has been coaching at the Club Scherma Roma and was a very welcome addition to us oldies), all of whom had already arrived. I got there for the afternoon session which had the advantage that I missed at least one of the twice daily (tough) warm up routines!

There were about 30 fencers in total I'd guess; the GB contingent, Juan (a Spaniard) and Kerstin Palm from Sweden (with whom I trained at the same event last year).

As last year it was great fun. If anything I'd say the fencing was more intense this year. I stuck with foil and fenced with Kerstin, Fabio (a very good Italian), Elvis (a very strong Cuban) and anyone else who would give the noble weapon a go.

There were plenty of sabreurs and épéeists but I thought "why go all that way to fence a junior weapon?".

There were two senior coaches, Nicola and Carlos. Both were great although I had lessons from Carlos this year. He was first class. He worked me hard and showed me a whole new style and 'dynamic' to timing, movement and the way I work the blade and point. After over 40 years of fencing I'm still learning, in fact I think I'm learning more from Vets fencing than I learned in the 20 years running up to it. (Maybe that's because I have to think more these days as the body won't do what it used to).



**Richard Sage
with Italian
sabreur
Gianni Mauceri**

Socially it was fun as these things always are. I chose to stay on the sports campus this year, rather than in a local hotel. The sports campus covers a wide area and services a range of sports, with restaurant, bar (I'm an athlete so of course I didn't partake) and accommodation. The fencing facilities were great with a large dedicated salle serviced by numerous electric pistes. The other GB fencers stayed in a local hotel. I joined them on Thurs evening for dinner which was great (thanks for the wine Alice!).

We all went out on Weds night to a restaurant chosen by the Italians. Excellent food, wine and company. Again, with such a diverse group of people there was such a lot to talk about.

We had a competition on the Friday morning and I left to fly home Friday evening. I believe the others stayed for a day or two recovery, sorry, sightseeing.

All in all another great trip. The Italians made us all very welcome and, while the training is serious, it is fun. We thanked them heartily for their hospitality and friendship. I left hoping to see them again but secretly hoping not to meet Fabio or Elvis on the piste at any future competitions!

Richard Sage

BVF Calendar 2012

BVF CALENDAR 2012	
Feb 11-12	Hampshire Open (Veterans Tournament)
Mar 2	BVF AGM Gloucester
Mar 2-4	British Veterans Championships, Oxtalls Indoor Tennis Centre, Gloucester Friday - Sabre; Saturday - Foil, Sunday - Epée
April 14-15	Veterans West Midlands Open
April 21-22	Home International (5 Nations) - Leeds
May 16-20	European Team Championships, Kalmar, Sweden
June 23-24	Celtic Challenge, Galicia, Spain - venue tbc
Sep 27-30	Commonwealth Veterans Championships, Singapore
Oct 13-14 (tbc)	Welsh Veterans Championships, Aberystwyth Contact Gillian Aghajan (g.aghajan@virgin.net) for details
Nov 3-4 (tbc)	Veterans Winton Cup, RAF Cosford
Oct 17-20	World Championships, Krems, Austria

See BVF website home page for European competitions and events - www.veterans-fencing.co.uk