

# Huntingdonshire Fencing Club Newsletter - October 2014

## Welcome to the e-newsletter

We aim to publish this approximately 3 times a year. We hope you find it useful.

If you have any suggestions or contributions please email [tracey.coates@btinternet.com](mailto:tracey.coates@btinternet.com) using the word newsletter in the subject.

WANTED – someone to put together all the competition information for the newsletter. Please contact Tracey Coates if you can help.

## In this issue

2<sup>nd</sup> page - Articles from the secretary and the chairperson, news from the AGM

3<sup>rd</sup> page - Competition information

4<sup>th</sup> page – Refereeing tips and rule changes

5<sup>th</sup> page – Fencing photography

6<sup>th</sup> page – The fencing quiz

7<sup>th</sup> page – Referees lament & coaching tips

8<sup>th</sup> page – Armourers notes (epee)

9<sup>th</sup> page – Club officers, recent results and a word from the club captain.

# The Christmas Party

This year we are having a 70's themed party!!

So find yourselves some groovy 70s inspired outfits and either re-live or discover the decade. Be inspired by the fashion, music, films, TV etc.



Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> of December

7.30 p.m. onwards

The Coates Household

St Ives

Please bring along some food for the buffet (70's inspired if possible) and a bottle of something.

Partners and offspring welcome.

Please RSVP to [tracey.coates@btinternet.com](mailto:tracey.coates@btinternet.com)



## **A word from Shane Presland the new secretary**

Firstly, thank you to Ivan Ward for his service to the club over the last 32 years as club secretary.

I think all of you know me. I was voted in as club secretary in my absence despite instructions to Jason and Kieran to vote against me, but I did volunteer my services.

I have been fencing for 5 years, mainly foil but I have been known to dabble at sabre and épée.

I have recently passed my level 1 referee exams for foil and theory for épée.

### Registration and medical forms

A lot of members have updated their contact/emergency details thank you. Many have still to do this but are no doubt in the process of doing so. Several have slipped the net in the past and have no details registered. I will attempt to contact them and chase individually.

Once completed the forms are kept at the club in a locked box and are only used in the event of an emergency to be able to provide the emergency services details of any medical conditions that may affect their treatment. It also lists the name and contact details of your next of kin. This is to enable us to inform them in the event of an accident / emergency. If you are in doubt or if anything has changed please let me know.

## **A view from Ian Coates club chair**

Hi all here's my view of what's happening at the club.

The club seems to be in a good state of health and there have been good numbers of fencers most weeks.

The other coaches Mike and Chris are looking busy with individual lessons. As you may have noticed I have been busy with the autumn beginners' course and haven't been actually doing much in the way of fencing, but I hope to start getting a few fights in the coming weeks.

Ivan has finally managed to resign as club secretary and I would like to thank him on behalf of the club for all his support over the years and I would like to wish Shane well in his stint in the role.

### News in brief

- Tracey has been busy organising the Christmas Party I hope that many of you will be able to come along. She has also been getting your orders and monies in for the new club kit.
- Coaching – following on from the AGM we are still getting the coaches to sort out how we take coaching forward in the club. Watch this space and check out what your coaches are doing for you.
- Mike and I visited Saffron Walden Sword and gave a technical lesson on the fleche, it was good to make contact with other local clubs.

## **A view from Ian contd.**

- Competitions – I would like to see more of our fencers out and about on the open circuit and would encourage everyone that is eligible to enter the county, regional and open competitions. What better way to gain experience, meet new people and hit them (hopefully) with a sword! We have had some successes already this year with club members' national rankings - Tracey Coates 50<sup>th</sup> in the Women Senior Foil, Josh Coates 111 Men Senior Foil & George Partridge 100 in the Senior Epee.

Enjoy your fencing and be sure that if you have any suggestions to improve things at the club let the committee know.

## **News from the AGM**

Ivan retires as club secretary after 32 years.

Shane Presland takes over as secretary

Club fees remain the same for another year – the last increase was more than ten years ago.

A new risk assessment and disciplinary procedure has been adopted.

## The Captains 4 Weapon

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2015

This is a fun team event held at St Neots every year. Each team has a female foilist, a male foilist, a sabreur and an epeeist. If you are 13 or over and interested in fencing and would like to be considered for a team please let Ivan know.

## Other competitions

### Please See:

[www.cambsfa.org.uk](http://www.cambsfa.org.uk)

[www.bfaeastern.org](http://www.bfaeastern.org)

[www.englishfencing.org.uk](http://www.englishfencing.org.uk)

[www.leonpauljuniorseries.com](http://www.leonpauljuniorseries.com)



## Selected Open Competitions

Compiled by Joshua Coates

**2<sup>nd</sup> November** – 2nd Leon Paul Men's Foil Open  
<http://leonpaulfencingcentre.com/comp/1042>

**8<sup>th</sup> November** – Welsh Open  
[www.welshfencing.org](http://www.welshfencing.org)

**22<sup>nd</sup> November** – Hereford and Worcester  
<http://leonpaulfencingcentre.com/comp/hw14>

**29<sup>th</sup> November** – Leon Paul Men's Epee Open  
<http://leonpaulfencingcentre.com/comp/1049>

**30<sup>th</sup> November** – Hertfordshire Senior Mixed  
<http://www.hertsfencing.co.uk/tournaments/senior/>

**7<sup>th</sup> December** – Leon Paul Women's Epee Open  
<http://leonpaulfencingcentre.com/comp/1050>

**3<sup>rd</sup> January** – Cambridge Winter Tournament  
[www.cambsfa.org.uk/cwt.html](http://www.cambsfa.org.uk/cwt.html)

**17<sup>th</sup> January** – Lancaster Open  
<http://patrick-jennings.wix.com/lancasterfencingopen>

**21<sup>st</sup> February** – Merseyside Open  
[www.moft.co.uk](http://www.moft.co.uk)

**7<sup>th</sup> March** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Leon Paul Women's Foil Open  
<http://leonpaulfencingcentre.com/comp/1046>

Also see – [www.britishfencing.com/events/](http://www.britishfencing.com/events/)

## Cambridgeshire Fencing Association

By Dan Tozer

As you may know the club is part of the Cambridgeshire County, which runs a number of competitions throughout the year. These are a good introduction to competitions in a friendly, yet competitive environment.

There are junior competitions run approximately once a term, some individual, some team, where you will fence in your age group against fencers from other clubs. There are a number of very good junior fencers in the county so this would give you an idea of the level needed if you enter regional or national competitions.

There are also senior competitions, one for each weapon as well as team competitions, which should be used as a stepping stone for open competitions. The level of these competitions is reasonable and HFC has always had a good level of participation and success.

I would encourage all club members to enter these competitions through the year.

[www.cambsfa.org.uk](http://www.cambsfa.org.uk)

## Refereeing Tips by Mike Ellis

When announcing decisions-

Be brief trying to use only the words in the rule book (pages 26 & 27) & ensure the fencers and spectators all hear you.

Try to use the correct hand signals and be bold with them.

Try not to say "One Light" always phrase the action so you get in to the habit so when there are two lights you have that habit of phrasing, it does make it easier.

With prolonged fencing phrases, beyond 1st counter riposte, you do not have to phrase from the beginning but just taking the last couple of actions, e.g. counter riposte parried, counter riposte hit.

**There is a full Foil, Epee & Sabre Refereeing course at Hatfield on the 29/30 Nov 14.**

[http://www.britishfencing.com/uploads/files/referee\\_course\\_eastern\\_region\\_29-30.11.14.pdf](http://www.britishfencing.com/uploads/files/referee_course_eastern_region_29-30.11.14.pdf)

## Rule Changes - Sabre Gloves

Because of a number of injuries in both Britain and abroad caused by sabre blades, unbroken as well as broken, penetrating the glove, the FIE is making a new specification glove mandatory for its competitions from 1st September 2013. This new glove has to provide a minimum protection of 800 Newtons, using the specified testing regime, on all parts of the hand from the wrist forward except the front of the fingers and half the front of the thumb.

The BF Board, on the recommendation of the Safety Committee, has therefore approved the introduction of these gloves for fencers using full size sabres as follows:-

- **All BF run competitions (senior, junior, cadet, age-group) from 1st September 2014.**
- **Universal UK application from 1st September 2016.**

When both fencers are using size 0, 2 or 3 blades these gloves will be optional.

See BF Clothing Rules - appended to the revised BF Safety Guidelines.

The Board believes that this represents a proportionate reaction to the accident risk set against the impact.

There are no plans at present to extend this requirement to foil or épée.

## Rule Changes - Plastrons

**Plastrons when fencing with size 0 –3 blades (all 3 weapons) or non-electric foil blades.**

Presently fencers using these weapons do not need to wear a plastron if they are wearing an 800 Newton jacket.

From 1st September 2014 this will no longer be approved and this category will be removed from the Clothing Rules.

The reason for this change is because of some reports of the under-arm seams of 800N jackets coming apart, putting at risk this vulnerable area of the body – the area that a plastron is designed to protect.

So from 1st September 2014 the minimum level approved for those fencing with size 0–3 blades or with non-electric foil blades will be:

- either a 350 Newton jacket plus a 350 Newton plastron
- or a 350 Newton jacket which includes an integrated 350 Newtons plastron.

## Fencing Photography by Jacques Portal



Sport makes for exciting opportunities in photography and fencing due to its fast pace and dynamic action provides some fantastic creative opportunities.

So, if you are a spectating fencing widow/widower, or been knocked out early in the DE after a poor showing in the pools, here are a few pointers to help you capture that elusive moment.

Firstly, there are some issues that come under the wet blanket of Health and Safety; but in this case they are vital to ensure you are safe and that your presence causes no disturbance to the fencers, the officials or spectators.

Make sure that you have permission from the Sports Centre or Competition Organisers to take photographs. This may involve registration, or the competition organisers may have stated photographs may be taken as a condition of entry; either way, it is important and the photographer has responsibility to establish they have permission to shoot.

These days people are just as likely to use a mobile phone or a digital camera to take photos, so a hint on setting up here would be appropriate.

Switch the flash off! If you do not know how to do that read the instructions!

Sports halls are too dark for action shots without some camera adjustments so check the instructions on something called ISO. This is a number that relates to the sensitivity of the camera chip to light. Turn it up as high as you can, to at least 1000 ISO if possible. This will give you a shorter shutter speed and help 'freeze' the action.

If you cannot use your camera on a 'manual' setting (and you really should) select the 'sports' option on the camera which will set shutter speeds for you. Just so you know, a shutter speed of 1000<sup>th</sup> of a second will just about freeze the action without blur, but there will always be a bit of movement on the blade tip unless you capture the 'hit'. It will also select the 'action' focusing mode which helps the camera focus on moving objects.

Continued below.

## Photography continued

When it comes to actually taking pictures, there are a few things to think about.

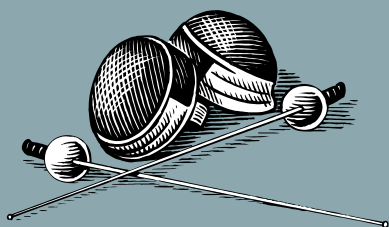
Firstly, are you somewhere sensible and out of the way of the fencers and officials.

Do not worry about the other spectators, you are a photographer!

Follow the action through the camera eyepiece, much better than using the display on the back. If you are using a mobile ..... buy a camera. Do not just take one picture and shyly slink away, anticipate the action, an attack or parry; keep shooting. If you get one good shot in 30 that is an excellent ratio.

As you can imagine successful sports photography is not easy, and to get that 'hang it on the wall' image takes skill and patience. There is lots more to say about taking better pictures but I will save that for another article if there is enough positive comments from you dear reader.

In the meantime, make your photography like your fencing..... PRACTISE PRACTISE PRACTISE!



## The Fencing Quiz

### Answers to the last quiz

- 1) If you are in Sixte and you perform a circular parry, which position are you now in? A - Sixte.
- 2) Name the 3 main types of parry. A - Lateral, circular, semi circular
- 3) What is a counter attack? A - An offensive or offensive-defensive action made during the offensive action of the opponent.

### New Questions

- 1) If in quarte you perform a semi-circular parry what position are you now in?
- 2) What is the penalty for going off the piste to avoid being hit?
- 3) If you immediately renew the attack without changing line, what is this action called?





## A referee's lament

Oh please let there be only one light  
Yes I do look for priority during the fight  
And notice when you step off the piste.  
I try to make sense of your constant renewals,  
Renewals of renewals of renewals of renewals  
And then when you parry and riposte at last  
Everything changes and happens so fast,  
Was it a parry or was it a beat,  
I really can't tell and where were your feet.  
Arms that are bent, attacks that are short,  
Time that is broken, they can all come to nought.  
Then there's the fencer who thinks, he, knows it all  
The mask is pushed up as he argues the rule.  
But it's not his opinion that matters it's mine  
So stay within the rules on priority and time  
And when the fights over don't forget to salute  
Your opponent, the referee and those in the stands  
And then finally remember that you have to shake hands.  
Win or lose, it's only a game  
And the result for the ref is always the same.

**By Ivan Ward**

## Coaching – Point Control

**By Mike Ellis**

We all know the importance of point control. How many times do we hit “off target” or just plain miss.

Finger work plus practise, more practise and even more practise is the only way.

With pistol style grips we all tend to hold the sword too tight and the manipulation of the sword then tends to come from the arm. This makes the action big and loss of accuracy follows.

Relax the hand, carry the sword, do not grip the sword.

Practise your finger work every time you come to the club as a minimum. This can be done on your own or better still with a colleague.

Practice - disengagement's - counter disengagement's - circular and semi-circular parries – cut-overs.

If you think about it the vast majority of your point/blade work is represented by certain letters;

Disengagement = V or U

Cut over = N

Counter or circular parry = O

Semi circular = C or reverse

So practise writing these letters in the air with the point of your sword, remember small controlled actions are fast actions.

## Armourer's Notes by Tim Bissell

In the last article I covered foil troubleshooting. This time I will cover épée problems and how to diagnose them. Most épéeists have graduated from other weapons and are generally more experienced, so it may be a case of teaching grandmother (or grandfather) to suck eggs, but you may learn something new – or if you have a tip to pass on let me know and I will include it in a later article!

Épées are simple devices; the button in the tip is a simple momentary 'push to make' switch. Additionally the metal parts of the weapon (apart from the very tip) are wired to earth, so that if you hit any part of your opponent's weapon you do not get a hit scored. If you hit tip to tip (or if you hit the floor) you will register a spurious hit. **So what can go wrong with épées?** The most common problems are easy to diagnose and fix. If the weapon feels 'not right' – a bit loose and rattly, the handle can sometimes loosen and will need to be tightened up with a quarter-inch allen key. If that is not the case check the tip; this can also loosen. You will need a spanner for the tip (adjustable if you do not have the correct one) and a vice or a pair of pliers. Screw the tip carefully to tighten it. If the button does not slide smoothly into the tip, one of the grub screws securing the button may be missing - check and replace if necessary. If not, épée tips respond well to a bit of TLC - take the button out and clean with a bit of methylated spirits or switch cleaner. Remove the spring from the tip barrel, and clean carefully inside with a Q-tip. Put it back together and you will most likely find the switch action a lot smoother.

**So what other problems are encountered?** Épée doesn't register a hit. Test the button manually. If it still fails, unplug the weapon and 'short' the two closest-together pins of the bodywire plug on the edge of the guard. If that registers a hit, then the problem is in your épée. If not, the problem is in the bodywire or the spool or scoring equipment – see my last article for details of how to check them.

A quick test for a shorted wire in the épée is to insert the plug again, but twisted round so the two close pins go in the close holes, but the furthest pin is not connected. If the weapon now works, you have a grounding problem in the wiring. Sometimes a wire gets pinched when the weapon is assembled, so loosen the guard, readjust the wires and their insulating sheaths, tighten it up and check again. If that does not fix it you will probably need to rewire the blade; you may ask me to do so if you do not have the means to do it yourself – at big competitions there may be armourers or equipment sellers who can rewire it during the competition – for a fee.

If your weapon fails the 'guard test' at the start of a bout, i.e. it registers a hit when pressed on your opponent's guard, then something is interrupting the circuit connection between your tip and their guard. Try on a different bit of guard and try re-seating your bodywire plug. You can even lick your bodywire pins for a better connection – if nothing else it may put your opponent off!

In competitions your weapon may fail a referee's check. There is not much you can do about this on piste. I find it a good routine to clean and test all of my épée tips before a competition, and adjust the contact spring to the very edge of legality! Finally, in a competition, if your weapon is working at the start of a bout, but you think you scored a legitimate hit which failed to register, do not check the tip yourself - immediately after the halt, ask the referee to test your point. If your weapon is not working and your opponent scored a hit, it may be annulled.

One final thing – if your blade ever needs straightening, practice doing it off the piste - straightening a blade on a grounded piste in a competition will earn you an immediate yellow card. You should ask permission first, and straighten it on normal flooring.



## Club Officers

Chairperson - Ian Coates  
Treasurer/Senior Coach - Mike Ellis  
Secretary – Shane Presland  
Captain - Chris Convine  
Armourer - Tim Bissell  
Welfare - Dan Tozer  
Public Relations - Tracey Coates  
Website - Andrew Brown

## Some recent good results

George Partridge finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in both the Bedford Open and Shropshire Open men's épée

Jacques Portal came third in the Northamptonshire County foil

Tracey Coates finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the women's foil at the Norfolk Open and the Shropshire Open

Silvia Earl made the last 8 of the Veterans World Championships at épée

Amy Lovell, Zoe Hopwell and Hannah Smyth came second in the County Under 13 age group

**Shane asks** - Please remember I am new to this and would appreciate it if you fence at competitions and events that you let me know your results, just in case I miss them.

Image left from -  
<http://edge.neocha.com/posts/graphic-design/inspiring-hypercolor-sport-themed-image-making-by-pinrui-pinzhi/>

## A word from the club captain

A new fencing season has started and for the juniors a number of County junior events are being organised. The first one of these is a team event on 22nd November 2014 at a new venue of the Sports Centre at Saffron Walden County High School, Audley End Road, CB11 4UH. Other competitions will follow. Chris will be speaking to the juniors to try to get as many teams as possible to enter. The county events are good ones to enter, particularly for those starting off in competition fencing.

On Thursday nights the beginner's course is coming to an end soon and we look forward to a number of new fencers joining the club on completion - please make them feel welcome. The coaches are trying to improve the structure of Thursday evenings by introducing set times for various activities i.e. warm up, footwork, specific exercises, achievement awards, etc. A club training programme is on the noticeboard detailing these activities.

Enjoy your fencing

Chris

Don't forget to visit the club website - [www.huntsfencingclub.co.uk](http://www.huntsfencingclub.co.uk)