

Chairmans Report 2009



Lawrence Burr

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Wellington Swords is alive and well and has continued to flourish over the past year. Our numbers have risen, our successes both at Home and Abroad have continued unabated, our reputation as a centre of fencing excellence is widening and our competitions are widely praised for being friendly, challenging and well organised – and run to time (Bristol take note!). The South West Committee see Wellington as being the location of choice for their championships and the chocolate fencing medals are very much our trademark. Our finances are much improved thanks to the hard work of our Treasurer, Tim Willson and the unceasing efforts of Jane Browne together with Peter Smith who runs the summer fencing with such enthusiasm – and profit! This is also one of the reasons why the Awards for All gave us one of the largest grants to a British Fencing Club this year - £10, 000. They have confidence in us to spend it to the betterment of fencing in the area and bring this fantastic sport to schools and clubs in the South West. Well deserved pats on the back all round.

However we would be a much poorer club if it were not for the skill and professionalism of our coach Cefi. He has continued to provide the highest quality training and support both to our aspiring nationals and to the remainder of the club fencers of all abilities. He has also been a coach educator for Ben who has fitted seamlessly into our club as an assistant coach and to Mat and Nick who carry the torch to schools in the area. All of this whilst working in the School as a PE teacher and supporting his wife working in Oxford. Cefi, thank you from us all.

I salute all of our wonderful fencing achievers at both Epee and Foil who have taken gold, silver and bronze positions across the whole of the UK in every category from Cadet to Veteran during the year. Our newsletters have resounded with their successes and it is great to see Wellington fencers appearing in the local papers so frequently. Well done to you all.

But it is important in this time of change in the fencing world to take a step back and look at where we, as a Club, fit into the world of fencing with the Olympics only 3 years away. **Within Wellington School**, the Club integrates well into School fencing, which is seen by the headmaster as a powerful corporate image where both boys and girls can achieve in the national arena. Success in the School Games and the National Public Schools championships adds to the fact that both the Club and the School are producing healthy, mature youngsters able to handle pressure in a fast moving and exciting sport. It is no coincidence that his recent Open Day press advertisement had fencers as the bannerhead.

We have a place **in the community** around Wellington as we take fencing into the various primary and secondary schools and work alongside SASP and TASS to promote sport in general around the area.

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We are still enthusiastic about providing wheelchair fencing in the area and we shall be taking this further next year now that the Sports Centre has become wheelchair friendly once again.

We have a **place in the BFA** as our fencers appear more and more on the ranking lists and are seen at championships, matches and team events. We have a good reputation for having polite yet fiercely competitive members and for providing volunteer help and support at all levels. The enthusiasm with which parents have taken on all the necessary CRB checks, training courses etc all at their own expense has been very heartening. The Third Sector is alive and well in Wellington.

So what for the future? My aim next year is to achieve Clubmark and Swordmark for the Club – we are almost there and we need just a few tweaks to provide the assessors with all the necessary paperwork. I aim to push for more sponsorship for the Club and its fencers from local businesses. I aim to continue raising our profile in all age categories within the BFA and to engage with the new British Development Manager and new Board members to improve the lot of the Cadet and Junior fencers – problems created by such events as the resignation of Nick Chapman do not help Clubs such as ours and could have been avoided. Finally I aim to have our club debt free for the first time. These are all achievable and I look forward to your support to reach these goals.

On a final note, I would like to thank all of the club members who have made being Chairman such a rewarding position, especially Jane Browne, Sue and Adrian Hay (my competition squad!), Tim Willson, Lin Townsend, all members of the Committee and our coach Cefi with his unbounded enthusiasm for our sport.

It has been a great year and I look forward to more of the same and better next year.

Thank you.

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