



## **NEWSLETTER March 2006**

As most of you are aware, we held a Club meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this was to sort out a few issues regarding the running of the Club, to discuss the creation of a junior club and to amend the Club constitution.

Due to the number of enquiries that we receive, we would like to establish a fencing club for 12-16 year old fencers. The club will be the Dacorum Buccaneers.

To finance this we will apply for an Awards for All grant. Incorporated in this will be an application for funds to purchase general equipment for the Club, plus more electrical equipment, sabres, epees and a 3 weapon box. It is hoped that these extra facilities will increase the scope for our existing and future fencers.

The Buccaneers will be run on similar lines to those of the main club with a regular intake of new fencers, with the more experienced fencers eventually joining the main club. It seemed sensible to organise this for a Tuesday night, meaning that we would have to move on from Leverstock Green, but finding a larger hall would give the opportunity to combine the Buccaneers Club with an extra night's fencing available for all.

We would like to reiterate at this point that Tuesday night fencing is available to anyone who has their own kit. The cost at present is only £3.50 per night for 2 hours fencing and is a good opportunity to practice what you are learning on Thursdays.

We have been given the opportunity to book the Main Hall at the school on Tuesday evenings from after Easter. This is great opportunity to keep all our fencing at one venue and, with all our equipment stored at the school, would mean that Tuesday night would be available to all. The downside to this is that until we can establish the Buccaneers Club it would cost a significant amount more than the small hall at Leverstock Green. We would be interested in knowing how many of you would be willing to come along regularly on a Tuesday evening as well as Thursday, to see if this would be a financially viable proposition.

It is also our ambition to visit local schools and youth groups to encourage more youngsters to get involved in fencing.

There was a lot of discussion as to how to develop our more advanced fencers. We have decided to increase the use of the box and would look to our more experienced fencers to set it up and to make more use of it, probably after the warm up and group lesson (around 8.30-8.45). We also discussed taking a group of fencers to other local clubs, to gain experience.

It was decided that the Club would make a contribution towards the cost of sending our coaches to attain first aid qualifications, as well as towards achieving further coaching awards. An emphasis is to be placed on achieving coaching awards for sabre and epee as well as continuing with foil awards.

A question was raised regarding Club championships. We have decided to hold them twice each year; December and July. In December last year, the competition was held on a Thursday evening. Whereas we were able to complete the competition in the time available, we were unable to take the competition into 15 point knockout stages. We would have had time to do this if we were able to run the Club championships on a weekend day. We could incorporate events to make the day a more family friendly occasion, and would be interested to know how many would be interested in taking part in such an event.

The topic of grades was again raised, if anyone feels that they would like to take a grade, please feel free to approach either Pam or myself, we will try to oblige as soon as possible.

It was decided that the task of washing the Club equipment was to be shared amongst our members. Anyone interested in helping out, please let us know.

Rory very kindly offered to check out the rest of the equipment as stand-in armourer.

We would like to welcome Heather Harris on to the committee to assist Fiona with the organisation of social events. Their first task is to organise our annual dinner. A date has been set for 7.30 on Thursday April 6<sup>th</sup>, at the Three Horseshoes, Winkwell (menu attached). The cost is a set price of £20 per head (drinks extra). Please select your choice and let Fiona or Heather know asap. Cheques payable to Dacorum Fencing.

We do intend to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary (albeit a bit late!) probably with a picnic in a local park. The idea is to set a date in May/June (whenever it gets warm!), bring along your own food and drink, and basically play some silly games and have a good laugh!

Other social activities would also be great, if anyone has any ideas, please let Heather or Fiona know. Even getting together for a drink after fencing in the evening is good, it creates a better team spirit, helps everyone to know a bit more about each other and provides invaluable feedback (or beer) for the coaches.

We aim to get our application for a grant in by April, and, if it is successful, purchase the equipment during August, with the Buccaneers starting in September.

Over the last 18 months we have established a sound base to the Club. The introduction of the Buccaneers will consolidate and extend this. It is time to focus on our more experienced fencers, to maintain their interest and commitment, and give them the opportunity to improve their technical and competitive skills.

There are several points on which we need your feedback, please let one of us know your thoughts asap, and as always, if anyone has any comments, or questions regarding any of the above, please let us know.

Thanks,

The Committee