

Kent Individual and Mixed Team Foil

Sunday 7th April 2013

Soon after dawn (or so it felt) on a recent April Sunday morning fencers from across Kent converged on Blackheath on a day threatening to turn sunny after unseasonably wintry weather. They were not there to celebrate Wat Tyler's peasant's revolt of 1381 nor Jack Cade's Kentish rebellion of 1450 nor even the defeat of the Cornish rebels at the Battle of Blackheath in 1497 but to take part in another historic event: the first contemporary combined Kent Individual and Mixed Team Foil competitions!

There was still a battle royal nonetheless as 11 guys and 6 gals fought in 3 mixed pools before separating for Men and Women's DEs.

With Jane Clayton and Dominique Kennett, both of Mallard, keeping on top of the scores with foils close to hand, it was clear from the indicators that the ladies finalé would be between independents Nicola Hull and the aptly named and equally charming Luisa De Sordi. As the mens' and womens' finals converged at high noon Luisa did indeed take the gold 15/10, Nicola the silver, with Jane Clayton and Cassie Pritchard taking honourable bronzes.

In the mens' event the tall and fast Mark Sutton of Bexley beat the cool and calculating Corsini King of Shortlands House 15/7 in the semis as did solid technician Peter Barwell beat the lithe and youthful Ben Andrews both of Gravesham also 15/7

The tense final went to sword point with Mark Sutton leading most of the way but Pete Barwell taking a decisive fifteenth point much to Mark's chagrin.

There was a brief respite for lunch while the team event was organised. The U14 Kent foil gold and silver medallists, Heather Goodchild and Anna Nealy arrived to reinforce Mark Sutton to make up the Bexley contingent while an East Kent Brigade (going by their preferred title of 'Odds & Ends') was assembled from Nicola Hull (from ?), Luisa De Sordi of Swanley and Ali Wylie of Ramsgate. They joined teams from Gravesham, Shortlands House, Mallard and Blackheath for a six way team event in the afternoon.

With a prospect of six hours or more of fencing in a pool of six, lots were drawn for a first round to decide a winners competition and a 'plate' competition. Gravesham beat The Odds & Ends 45/42, Bexley bt Shortlands House, 45/37 and Blackheath bt Mallard 42/37 after an able but lengthy ten point fight back by Keith Silk of Mallard.

The two 'pools' of three fought out a full combination of team fights to give a lively four hours of fencing. As the final battles drew to a close at 5pm Gravesham were clearly the winners for at least the 3rd year in a row and it was the battle between Bexley and Blackheath that took the spotlight. Mark Sutton fought to close the 36/40 gap against Blackheath's less experienced but determined Callum Nisbet. Drawing to swordpoint Mark spat nails once again that day as Callum took the 45th point with a well timed riposte and seconds to spare confirming Blackheath's silver placing for the 2nd year running and Bexley's young pretenders helping to achieving an honourable bronze.

In the 'plate' it was the strong Odds & Ends brigade that won all their battles to take 4th place, Shortlands House 5th and Mallard the honourable 6th.

Many thanks to Jane and Dominique for their masterful DT work, Corsini King who didn't know if he was reffing or fencing from one minute to the next, Stephan Munn, a Blackheath coach, for being a dedicated referee for the day, Owen and Karen of Bexley for assisting with team reffing and moral support for the Bexley contingent and to Blackheath for hosting the event and providing coffee, biscuits and varied sustenance for competitors and spectators.

A good days fencing for all and a positive result for KCAFU funds!

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