

## Piers Jones

16<sup>th</sup> March 1943 - 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Piers Jones was a modern-day Renaissance man in the wide range of his interests, abilities and achievements. He was a teacher, fencer, fencing coach, actor, violinist, organist and choirmaster, computer buff, businessman, traveller and bon-viveur, both practitioner and administrator in all of them. But it is his fencing career that concerns us here.

Piers started fencing as a student at Edinburgh University in the early 1960s, taught by Johnny Fethers, and joined the newly formed Stirling Fencing Club in 1967-8. Not content with that he started a fencing club at Denny High School where he was Principal Teacher of English and took the Basic Coaching Certificate in Foil in summer 1968, taught by the National Coach, Bert Bracewell. This bore fruit in the appearance of his pupils in the first Schools' Championships Week in 1969 and every year thereafter, winning over the years numerous titles and representation in Scottish Schools Teams. When the Scottish Schools Fencing Committee was formed later in 1969, with Neil L'Amie at the helm, to manage all activity in schools' fencing Piers was given control of the purse strings and he continued as treasurer for many years, while still finding time to take teams of school fencers to matches in Aalborg, Denmark. He was elected to the committee of Scotland's Central Section in 1974 and was its convenor 1975-82. Meanwhile fencing administration at the national level beckoned: in 1976 he acted as financial manager and armourer (he was quite technically minded as well) to the Schools Week and as arena manager for both the Schools Quadrangular Championship and the senior Quadrangular Match between the home nations in 1977.

In 1977 Piers was awarded the Sword of Merit in recognition of his services as an officer of Central Section, treasurer of the Schools Committee, arena manager at the Quad and in various other capacities. This only spurred him on to further efforts: he served on the business committee of SAFU (Scottish Amateur Fencing Union, later incorporated as Scottish Fencing Ltd) and as its treasurer 1980-88 at the same time serving as President of SAFU 1984-93. These years saw significant developments in local and national administration of fencing, from the Stirling District Development Plan to the wholesale overhaul of the sport's governance in Scotland under the Kit Campbell plan, one element of which was the awkward transformation of the Assistant National Coach, Derek Titheradge, into National Development Officer. By 1989 the constitution had been thoroughly revised and the General Council re-organised as specific committees with their own remits. At the same time the British governing body the AFA was going through similar upheavals which involved Piers' being co-opted as SAFU representative on the AFA Board. During this period Piers had moved to Wallace High School in Stirling as Assistant Rector, and promptly started a fencing club whose members achieved the same distinction as had the Denny fencers. On a higher plane his presidency of SAFU co-incided with Scotland's winning of the Quad three years in a row for the first time. His computer and printing skills enabled him to take over the initial production and typesetting of "The Point" (Scottish Fencing's magazine) revamped under a new editor.

In 1986 Piers acted as Chef d' Equipe to the Scottish team at the Commonwealth Games in Cardiff and the next year was awarded their Bronze Medal by the AFA for services to British Fencing. Commonwealth fencing opened a new door, offering a chance to indulge his passion for foreign travel and in 1990 he was elected President of the Commonwealth Fencing Federation, with his old friend Neil L'Amie as secretary, reversing their roles of twenty years before. He held this post until 2002, through three Commonwealth championships. In later years as the different problems of the travel business, in which he was a managing director, loomed ever larger he had let younger hearts and minds take over active control of Scottish fencing. He never lost his interest and remained a trustee of the Scottish Fencing Trust. Piers was quite seriously ill for the last few years of his life,

not that he let it hold him back much, but he maintained close contact with his fencing friends, old and not-so-old, to the end.

N.M.