



The Medway-based stickfighters - and clubmates - heading for the world championships.

Stickfighters taking on the world

FOUR Medway stickfighters will be heading for the Philippines and the biggest competition of their lives next month.

Well, for three of them it will be the biggest competition.

Their coach, Ermar Alexander, has been there and done it all before.

"There" is the World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF) Championships and apart from Alexander, his partner Diana Fauner and husband and wife pair Norman and Sarah Charles are in the six-strong team contesting the Worlds along with 1000 fighters from 30 countries from 22-25 July.

The two others accompanying Alexander are London-based Roel and Cielito Caneja, while a further three students - including former Medway kickboxer Paul Wiffen - are unable to accept an invitation to represent Britain.

Proof that Alexander has been there, done that before comes with a peek into his trophy cabinet. You'd see he's a fifth dan black belt who has won world titles in 2004 and 2006 and has umpteen gold, silver and bronze medals at national, international and world level.

Norman Charles began training in March last year and has made so much progress that he has since

then lifted five gold and seven silver medals for Sayaw (forms), single stick, double stick wearing limited and low armour.

His wife, Sarah, started at the same time and has had similar success, the highlight probably being fighter of the day award at the British Invitational in March.

She took two silvers at the British Open and a gold and silver in the Seni Eskrima Open in April.

Our picture shows Ermar Alexander, Diana Fauner, Sarah Charles, Paul Wiffen, Andrew Wan and Norman Charles after their successful national championships earlier in the year.