



BRITISH KENDO ASSOCIATION



Jodobu News and Update for Winter 2009

Issue 5

Jodo Bucho – Andy Watson
Grading Officer – Harry Jones
Events Officer – Al Colebourn
Squad Manager – Alan Nash
Coaching Coordinator – Patty Papageorgiou
Jodo DRC Chair – Lesley Drewe

Dear members

Well hasn't this year flown, I saw the first Xmas decorations and rubbish in a shop just last week and realised that I hadn't even booked my summer holiday for 2010! Easter Eggs should be appearing soon.

I guess I shouldn't complain, the year has gone so quickly with so many events taking place and some good changes in the BKA. Some of you will remember the interesting AGM this year with a complete change of constitution and near complete change of executive committee. I will try to stay away from those general discussions as I want to devote this update for Jodo-specific or related issues only.

In this issue we see updates from the BKA Summer Seminar, the BKA Nationals, the coaching programme and more. I hope you enjoy it.

Andy

High Grade Article by Chris Mansfield

Part 2

This continues the article started in the last issue

My thanks to Chris for his kind permission to reprint...

Competition – A Personal Perspective (Part 2)

(Does it have a place within the study of Budo?)

By Chris Mansfield

At this point I think it may be appropriate to draw a few comparisons on the way we in the west perceive sport and its role within society. Firstly I believe it can be said that westerners for the most part grew up associating sport as an educational activity and then later on as an activity outside of work - a leisure pastime or hobby.

But the question still remains what is the real role of sport in human society and how did it develop that way? The Greeks used sport as a means of testing and proving manhood and prowess in its warriors and upper classes and it can be said that much of what modern sport represents today is linked with this concept. I think most westerners now see sport as either a passive enjoyable spectator pastime or as an involved activity where for reasons like gaining increased physical ability and being part of a group are important to the individual's needs.

Historical western evidence seems to indicate that whilst sport and early forms of martial arts have been intertwined, the basis of their relationship is a connection with religion and the celebration of pagan festivals. Many rules that are observed in modern sport today come from this. However, with regard to sport in that time there was one overriding factor governing participation and that was winning. Winning was everything and this is something that has been passed down through the ages to the present day.

In terms of comparing the images between the old Olympics and the new the following might be of interest.

Modern Olympic ethics expound moral education, fair play, international understanding, brotherhood, peace, equal opportunity, joy of participation, artistic and intellectual qualities and a pursuit of excellence.

In comparison, the Old Olympics did not espouse these qualities; in fact there was no moral education in the sense of sportsmanship and character building and certainly no sense of fair play! All in all a case of only the best wins. Interestingly before it was known as the Olympic Games it was referred to as the Olympic Contests. Certainly the connotation in the change of words is suggestive.

To digress further, let us now look at something which has a closer image to Budo - Gladiatorial combat. According to historical accounts there seems to be a tenuous connection with the Olympics through the association of the Romans who were keen to watch all sports especially bloody ones.

In the first instance it is hard to relate the gladiatorial contests with sport, but even these events were controlled by rules of engagement measuring contestants' levels of skill and pitting them into categories of fairness. Also there were rules for refereeing in accordance with the other sports of the day and even these bloody contests were upheld as an example of courage, honour and skill, so the only basic difference was the fighting with a loss of life as opposed to competing to win. This seems to be vaguely familiar with the theme of this paper.

So where is the contradiction? On the one hand the essence of sport is an ennobling activity which can fit with the spirit of Budo, but how do we control the excesses of our modern times? Or should we be thinking that because Budo is a cultural art with a long tradition and history, this is

what makes it different from other sporting activities and as such retain that aspect of its image? Or further still, allow Budo to retain an element of competition to further advance those who wish to avail themselves of it, but keep on a path of traditional learning?

I believe this is for the main part what we see today, although the lines between some armed martial arts have clearly been muddied and it is not always clear whether traditional learning or sport learning training is the underlying basis of the art. For those practitioners who have practised for many years, there can still be seen a strong connection between Budo and Bujutsu and they probably feel this separates it from other more modern sporting activities which do not have a connection with tradition or were derived from an ancient art.

So what does all this mean to the average person who just likes practising in the dojo (club) with a Shinai, Sword or Jo? Well as with many things in life there is a choice in the matter. Nobody can be forced to participate in a competition if they don't want to. However, the path of Budo is generally considered amongst practitioners to enhance the collective good of humanity. This means that practitioners have to be progressive in their outlook and broaden their horizons if they are to have any chance of encompassing the truth of the spirit of Budo.

Let us now reflect on the importance of the relationship between the student and the teacher which is fundamental to the studying and learning process and which goes across all boundaries whether sport or martial arts.

The basis of this human relationship is one of trust. If this feeling cannot be reciprocated on both sides, then neither is able to progress in any positive form. The student will one day become the teacher and will need to be shown good examples of all aspects of their learning. Likewise, if a teacher's learning has a shortfall then how can they be expected to complete all of the student's education? Clearly there is a great dependency by both sides to be able to fulfil what requirements are necessary.

In my personal experience and for me to understand and broaden the scope of my knowledge, I undertook to live and study in Japan for 11 years.

This was both a happy and a difficult situation, difficult in that I became separated from regular, sustained contact with my family and I was living in a foreign land. Happy in that I could fulfil a lifelong wish to pursue research into my chosen study. Now when I look back I can say that only the sincerity of my relationship with my teacher sustained me during that period which enabled me to consolidate my learning.

Without undertaking the experience that I undertook I would not be able to confidently teach and support students in a manner that they felt they could reciprocate with like trust.

With particular regard to the many competitions I participated in whilst in Japan, I can only look back and be grateful for all the efforts I made and for my teacher's wise understanding in showing me the benefit of his own experience.

Let us accept for one moment the premise that competition has a beneficial side to its nature. We have all seen the euphoria associated with huge sporting events and the incredible lift it brings to a people's spirit. In recent years the successes brought about by the European championships has been a most welcome event in people's lives and has become an important and sustainable part of our Budo calendar. This competition event has singularly proven a testing ground for both the individual and the team player alike and has grown along the way. It has been a fine example of fulfilling the aims of propagating and fostering Budo on a large scale. Those that have attended these events share in the respect, admiration and friendship of all participants who have a genuine desire to develop and learn, despite the healthy competitiveness and rivalry. This I believe to be

of no difference on a fundamental level, to all competitive sporting events no matter where they take place.

I remember the 1st Iaido Goodwill Taikai in Kyoto in 1997 which was the first attempt to bring together people from respective countries where Iaido was being practised. Aside from the natural excitement of being in Kyoto at a special place, there was a pioneering air and a huge feeling of responsibility in that we all shared in something unique and we represented the world. This spirit I like to hope has been further developed as time has gone by with subsequent events.

I truly believe that if it were not for competition in martial arts, the limit and scope of reach of those arts would not have grown to be what it is today.

Of course we must prioritise and remember that there is a place for all things in what we do and there is always limited time, but given this shouldn't we be facilitating ourselves of what's on offer rather than saying 'no thanks it's not my scene!' I strongly believe it is the individuals' responsibility to place themselves in the best situation where they can fully take advantage of what is available to enable their maximum growth potential. How often can be heard the question "Do we really try enough?" I suspect if each and every one of us searched their hearts they would know the truth.

To be continued

Calendar 2010

This coming year should see the continued growth in Jodo events as well as some new general BKA events. Dates are still in planning but I can reveal the following:

- 16th January – Iaido and Jodo Level 1 Coaching Course in Cornwall. Interested applicants should email Patty Papageorgiou for details. The course will be led by Martin Clark and Peter West.
- 20th – 21st March – Jodo Spring Seminar and Grading. This year we are likely to be only grading up to and including 3rd dan at this event.
- 17th – 18th April – Iaido and Jodo referees seminar. This event will be attended by Ishido Sensei and is likely to be open to everyone. It is hoped that high grades in particular will get their applications in as soon as possible and secure their place...
- 22nd May – BKA AGM (venue to be decided). With all the activity now taking place across the association it is hoped that all Jodo members will be able to attend this and see the changes and improvements the Association is making. This is your chance to have a say.

While the dates have not been set yet, you can expect to see this year:

- More Level 1 Coaching courses with a hope that they will be hosted by the Regional Tutors.
- The continuation of the delivery of Level 2 Coaching courses.
- Two koryu Jodo sessions to be held in the spring and the autumn. These may be one day sessions or a weekend.
- The continuation of the Jodo high grade sessions.

European Championships Report

Once again the BKA Jodo Squad set out for ample portions of bread, ham and cheese, this year the venue being Mierlo in Holland. The entire event was held at the Sports & Health Centre Carlton De Brug which included comfortable hotel accommodation and other sports facilities.



(Above: Eindhoven and Mierlo – don't get lost in the mountains!)

Again this year, the Jodo delegation and laido delegation from the ZNKR were separated groups. This year's Jodo delegation included some old and familiar friends:

- Namitome Shigenori Sensei, Jodo Hanshi 8-Dan, Shimpanchô & Chief of the Jury
- Kurogo Sensei, Jodo Kyoshi 8-Dan, Shimpanshunin & Jury member
- Yano Taeko Sensei, Jodo Kyoshi 8-Dan, Shimpanshunin & Jury member



(Above: the UK Jodo squad and delegates. L-R: David Fanning, Aurelien Nacrou, Yano Sensei, Scott Halls, Gill Wacey (with squad mascot Harriet), Alex Wengraf-Hewitt, Lucy Earley, George Valkov, Namitome Sensei, Chris Buxton, Harry Jones, Oliver Jarvis, Kurogo Sensei, Daniel Silk, Alan Lee Nash, Andy Watson, Jo Hirst) Photo Courtesy of Jo Hirst

Representing Great Britain this year in the Jodo squad were:

Mudan

Jo Hirst
Gill Wacey

Shodan

Scott Halls
Alex Wengraf-Hewitt

Nidan

Oliver Jarvis

Sandan

Daniel Silk
Aurelien Nacrour

Yondan

Dave Fanning
Dragomir Lubomirov

Godan

Harry Jones
Andy Watson

Team

Lucy Earley
Aurelien Nacrour
Daniel Silk

Squad Manager

Alan Nash
George Valkov (relief)

The Day 1 Seminar was a very rigorous session of instruction and practice. We started at 9am and didn't wrap up until around 5:30pm with few breaks and a short lunch. The focus of teaching this year seemed to be about slowing down, reducing business and clearly showing knowledge of basic correct technique. It was great to see Namitome Sensei in the thick of it again following extensive knee surgery.



(Above: Left – The delegations prepare for the seminar. Right – Members of the UK squad prepare for the bar)

From the UK our judges included:

- Jock Hopson
- Chris Mansfield
- Chris Buxton

Day 2 saw the individual taikai and again this year saw an extremely level playing field. It was becoming difficult to determine promising medal candidates at the beginning of each taikai and I believe the judges were pushed to look for obvious mistakes on which to base their decisions, overall performance being very high.

Day 3 commenced quickly with the 3-man team taikai. This year the UK was being represented by:

Lucy Earley 3rd Dan (Sempo)
Daniel Silk 3rd Dan (Chuken)
Aurelien Nacrour 3rd Dan (Taisho)

In the opening pool our team faced France and Israel and did brilliantly losing only one flag to France. France equally performed well against Israel and went through 2nd place into the knockout. In the tournament the UK faced The Netherlands, losing one match but then being beaten by one flag against Poland in the quarter finals. This particular match was very

exciting to watch and it was felt by most that Poland's victory was by a hair's breadth although their team was very strong. Poland went onto to beat France in the semi-finals through a by in the tournament (annoying for the UK having already beaten France and then not getting into the semi-finals)

Results – JODO (GB shown in Blue)

Position	Yondan	Godan	Team
1st Gold	Kevin Groos (Netherlands)	Andy Watson (UK)	Germany
2nd Silver	Robert Voelkmann (Germany)	Hans Pegtel (Netherlands)	Poland
3rd Bronze	Bruno Lehmann (Switzerland) Katja Niklaus (Switzerland)	Harry Jones (UK) Bernhard Merkel (Germany)	France Switzerland
Fighting Spirit	Gaetano Dellisanti (Italy)	Jean-Marc Billaudeau (France)	

Position	Mudan	Shodan	Nidan	Sandan
1st Gold	Michal Szczepanżski (Poland)	Alexander Egunov (Russia)	Jonnathan Vandenbussche (Belgium)	Aurelien Nacrou (UK)
2nd Silver	Jesper Waldestal (Sweden)	Igor Chursin (Russia)	Liviu Vlad (Belgium)	Lukasz Machura (Poland)
3rd Bronze	Adam Majchrzak (Poland) Matthew Sykes-Gelder (Switzerland)	Yvonne Lauper (Switzerland) Roberto Milana (Italy)	Daniel Behrendt (Switzerland) Felix Klein (Germany)	Sida Yin (Sweden) Daniel Silk (UK)
Fighting Spirit	Zoltan Kozar (Hungary)	Carl-Johan Henriksson (Sweden)	Luc Quaglia (France)	Konstadinos Matzaras (Greece)

It is easy to see from the results that while the UK has strong upper grades, other countries in Europe have an extremely strong presence at the lower grade divisions and this is something that our squad management will be looking into in the coming year. This is not to say however that our squad didn't perform well by any means, on the contrary it was great to watch our team as nearly everyone made it out of the pools. Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Poland are definitely countries to watch carefully in the coming years as they are racing ahead and training hard.

In comparison to last year it was gratifying to see that the tendency to do "showy" Jodo had subsided and judging was based on good technique as well as an element of fighting within the embu. Fights were sharp and exciting especially as divisions made their way to the finals and I felt that everyone was learning by watching what good Jodo was being done to win taikai's.



(Above – the UK squad and judges: L-R Scott Halls, Oliver Jarvis, Alex Wengraf-Hewitt, Daniel Silk, Andy Watson, Alan Lee-Nash, Lucy Earley, Chris Buxton, Jo Hirst, Chris Mansfield, Dragomir Lubomirov, Jock Hopson, Gill Wacey, George Valkov, Dave Fanning, Harriet the Mascot, Aurelien Nacrou, Harry Jones)

The complete results can be found here...

<http://www.eic-ejc.eu/>

Jodo Bu Executive Committee Structure Update

As the new constitution goes through implementation, in the Jodobu we have been making all efforts to ensure that our EC structure is compliant with the requirements. Thankfully there have been people on hand to volunteer for co-option into these roles which provides a welcome reduction in workload. Part of these changes include realigning existing officers into more suitable roles. A significant change is around the management of the national Jodo squad.

On the agreement of the Jodobu EC at the end of the European championships I approached Alan Lee-Nash and George Valkov with a proposal for role change. This proposal considers Alan's recent promotion to 6th dan as well as the fact that the European Iaido and Jodo Championships will be separated in 2010 to two separate venues and dates. I have asked Alan to take on the role of **Squad Trainer** a role which requires a high level of Jodo technical knowhow and involves providing a more constant coaching role to the squad as well as removing a lot of the organisational work. George Valkov has agreed to take on the role of **Squad Manager** which focuses on administrative, managerial and organisational tasks around the national squad including arranging training, registration of squad, delegate selection and logistics.

Martin Chambers has also agreed to manage the Examiner Mentoring Programme for Jodo and Iaido. As some of you will know, the programme has been very popular and successfully allowed two candidates already to move to Regional Coach status.

The entire Jodobu EC and Officers are shown below:

Executive Committee

Bucho – Andy Watson
Grading Officer – Harry Jones
Events Officer – Al Colebourn

Bu Officers

Squad Manager – George Valkov
Squad Trainer – Alan Lee-Nash
Coaching Coordinator – Patty Papageorgiou
EMP Coordinator – Martin Chambers
Senior Member – Valerie Hodges
Senior Member – Peter Ellis
Senior Member – Dragomir Lubomirov

DRC Chair

Lesley Drewe

We are always on the lookout for more assistance and we are aware that we have not yet filled the roles of Bu Cashier or Public Relations Officer yet. If you are interested or know someone who might be suitable please let me know.

Coaching Update

This September in 2009 we relaunched the Level 2 Coaching Course for laido and Jodo. The attendance was very successful with some 20 people in attendance. The course was delivered by Chris Buxton and me having jointly developed the course and relying heavily on work done by Mr Ian Parker-Dodd.

The course focused away from coaching statutory requirements (which was looked at with Level 1) and turned towards performance improvement. Much of the course relied on a substantial amount of coursework and the delegate projects were extremely interesting and well researched. I hope to be able to publish some of them on the coaching network soon.

It was good to see all the delegates getting stuck into the day's activities and working with each other well. As those of you who have been on the course will know, the courses provide less input from the tutors and rely more on the delegates providing feedback to each other. This seems to be one of the best ways of understanding "how good a coach am I" – a key important stage to improving one's coaching skills!

The popularity of this course has indicated to Chris and me the need to organise the next L2 soon in 2010 so please keep your eye on the BKA website for more details.

BKA Summer Seminar 2009 Report

Some of you will remember back to summer this year, through the haze of drunkenness, to the summer seminar and the celebration of Ishido Sensei's 30th year of visiting Europe. Keeping things traditional, the seminar was held at Sussex University and made use of some of the buildings in Brighton University to deal with overflow.

A delegation of friends and supporters from Japan included:

Ishido Sensei (of course)
Morita Sensei
Oshita Sensei
Shoji Sensei
Otake Sensei
Mr Igarashi

We also saw many many people from abroad including Loi Lee Sensei who had flown all the way from Oz.

The first three days covered the laido section and included the first Ishido Sensei commemorative Koryu Taikai hosted by Seishinkan Dojo. A banner brought from Japan by Morita and Oshita Sensei was for awarded to Sandra Santos from Portugal (and sometimes the UK and France).

The following two pages show the results and with thanks to Eishinkan Dojo for compiling the results.

第一回石堂先生記念古流居合道親善大会

The 1st Ishido Sensei Commemorative Koryu Iaido Goodwill Taikai
Hosted by Seishinkan Dojo

University of Sussex, Brighton. Monday 10th August 2009.

Results:

Mudan

1st Darren LAUNCESTON (GB)
2nd John STEVENSON (GB)
3rd Andre HOFFMAN (D)
3rd Edward EMMOTT (GB)

Fighting Spirit : Danielle JORGENSON

Nidan

1st Lucy EARLEY (GB)
2nd Felipe PEREZ (Chile)
3rd Lukasz MACHURA (PL)
3rd Mike FORD (GB)

Fighting Spirit : Rianne De RIJKE (NL)

Yondan

1st Oliver BISCHOFF (D)
2nd Lee MOUNTAIN (GB)
3rd Bjorn ARIS (NL)
3rd Dominique Henry LOSSON (F)

Fighting Spirit : Dominique Anne LOSSON (F)

Rokudan

1st Alan LEE-NASH (GB)
2nd Tony DEVINE (GB)
3rd Philippe MERLIER (F)
3rd Alexander SAHLA (GB)

Fighting Spirit: Philippe MERLIER (F)

Shodan

1st Oliver JARVIS (GB)
2nd Liam MYERS (NL)
3rd Jack JAMES (GB)
3rd Mark LEUNG (GB)

Fighting Spirit : David PARKER (GB)

Sandan

1st Daniel SILK (GB)
2nd Stuart FARMER (GB)
3rd Maria ESSERS (Switz)
3rd Pavel BALVIN (Czech)

Fighting Spirit : Eiko MATSUO (JP)

Godan

1st Claudio ZANONI (I)
2nd Angharad JONES (GB)
3rd Douglas EVANS (GB)
3rd William SMART (GB)

Fighting Spirit. Peter ROEDER (D)

Nanadan

1st Jock HOPSON (GB)
Highly Commended - Victor COOK (GB)
Highly Commended - Leonard BEAN (GB)

ISHIDO FLAG Presented to Ishido Sensei by Morita Sensei & Oshita Sensei

Winner – Sandra SANTOS (P)

Results compiled by Eishinkan Dojo

石堂先生三十周年記念杖道大会

The Ishido Sensei Anniversary Jodo Taikai

Hosted by Eishinkan Dojo

University of Sussex, Brighton. Thursday 13th August 2009

Mudan

1st Hugo BOLETO (P)
2nd Gill WACEY (GB)
3rd Jo HIRST (GB)
3rd Hannah GROSS (D)

Fighting Spirit . Luc DEFRAEYE (B)

Nidan

1st Monika DIETHELM (Switz)
2nd Tom DE BOOM (B)
3rd Jac Van De LINDEN (NL)
3rd Sandra SANTOS (P)

Fighting Spirit. Lucy EARLEY (GB)

Yondan

1st William SMART (GB)
2nd Jean-Marie RIBOURDOUILLE (B)
3rd Lesley DREWE (GB)
3rd Gabor HABERMAJER (H)

Fighting Spirit: Roger BRUDENELL (GB)

Rokudan

1st Takao MOMIYAMA (Sweden/Japan)
2nd Aad Van De WIJNGAART (NL)
3rd Christopher BUXTON (GB)
3rd Jef HEUVELMANS (NL)

Fighting Spirit : Jef HEUVELMANS (NL)

"Most Promising Beginner" Hannah GROSS (D)

"Best Overall Performance" Gill WACEY (GB)

Results compiled by Eishinkan Dojo

Shodan

1st Alex Wengraf-HEWITT (GB)
2nd Joao MAIA (P)
3rd Marcel FEUSI (Switz)
3rd Dariusz LESZCZYNSKI (PL)

Fighting Spirit. Joao MAIA (P)

Sandan

1st Lukasz MACHURA (P)
2nd David FANNING (GB)
3rd Pavel BALVIN (Czech)
3rd Emanuele CORVINO (I)

Fighting Spirit. George VALKOV (GB)

Godan

1st Andy WATSON (GB)
2nd Angharad JONES (GB)
3rd Gregory DREWE (GB)
3rd Janet GRIFFITHS (Australia)

Fighting Spirit : Janet GRIFFITHS (Au)

Technical Digest - An Introduction to Warming Up

While the subject of warming up is emphasised in the BKA coaching programmes it all too often falls upon the student to warm themselves up especially should they arrive early or late for a class. While this may sound like coaches shirking their duties, warm ups are generally for the benefit of the individual just as injuries are only likely suffered by the individual who

doesn't warm up adequately thus it is far more sensible for each and every student to consider and be responsible for their own warm-up routine.

A description of a general warm up could be a bit misleading; warm-ups should be specific to:

- a) the individual's particular physical condition
- b) the temperature of the surroundings
- c) the time of day e.g. has the individual already warmed up from a day's activities or is it early in the morning
- d) the main activity about to be undertaken

Few people carry out a warm-up before say, making breakfast or getting in the car, and thus a warm-up should be sensible and relevant.

What are the aims of a Warm-up?

Generally speaking there are three main aims of the warm-up:

1. To prepare mind and body for exercise.
2. Enhance performance.
3. Decrease risk of injury.

Of the three above, it is the final two which substantially determine the nature of the warm-up.

There are many other benefits to warming up:

- To get children out of breath so they don't keep chatting.
- To gradually increase flexibility and fitness.
- To reduce the risk of physical debilitation (slightly different to injury).

Other motives for warm up tend to fall as sub-motives to the first three main aims.

What are we warming up?

The three main areas we are focussing on during warm-up are:

- The cardio-respiratory system; that is the heart, lungs and circulation
- The musculoskeletal system; that is muscles, tendon and other connective tissue
- The neuromuscular system; that is the brain-body link

How should we warm-up:

Warming up consists of two main areas of activity:

- Exercise (dynamic movement)
- Stretching (static or dynamic)

There are some general guidelines about how a warm-up should take place, these may well fly in the face of martial arts traditionalists but it should be emphasised that modern warm-up procedures are the results of research and study on actual subjects and are less to do with machismo and gung-ho approaches to treating the body.

1. Warming up should be done gradually emphasising the need to actually get joints and muscles literally warm through movement before stretching.
2. The pace of the warm-up should start slowly and gradually increase as the body becomes more warm and flexible.
3. The full comfortable range of movement of each joint and muscle should be achieved during early parts of the warm-up.
4. There should be no or minimal impact or ballistic stretching (bouncing on the extreme of joint flexibility to stretch the range of movement – see Karate videos from 1970 - 1990).
5. Focus on particular muscle groups at a time to ensure that muscles and movements don't get missed or get cold or that joints are stressed in uncomfortable ways.
6. Ensure all movements are controlled.

7. Don't injure or exhaust the body during a warm-up.
8. Take care with neck rotations and stretching – this should be restricted to natural sideways looking and gentle, controlled tilting.
9. Keep warm during the training session and consider a gentle and brief warm up when coming from an explanation or demonstration.

In terms of a routine each individual should consider what works best for them given their circumstances but the following describes a standard warm-up for a young to middle-aged person with no particular injuries.

Getting The Body Warm

- Gentle jogging on the spot without lifting the toes off the floor while moving the arms as in a running movement.
- Keeping the arms lowered and rotating the shoulders.
- Gripping and releasing the fingers gently but briskly.

Moving the Body (starting from the top)

- Rotate the head from side to side returning and holding the centre each time.
- Keeping the chin tucked in and tilting the head from side to side.
- Rotating the wrists.
- Rotating the forearms.
- Outstretch the arms and make small circles, reverse the rotation, increase to medium circles, reverse, make full circles ensuring the shoulders are dropped and relaxed at the bottom of the movement.
- Folding the arms across the chest and gently stretching the arms and hands back before returning to the front.
- Hands on hips and rotate the hips allowing the feet to move and flex.
- Gently and in a controlled fashion rotate the trunk by reaching behind you one way then another.
- Lift the knees up to the chest in a marching movement.
- Stand on one foot and rotate the ankle of the other making the toes bend back and forwards; reverse feet.
- Place hands on hips and bend the knees into a semi-squatting position – only go less than halfway down.

Stretching and Flexing

- Hold the arms out straight in front and with one hand gently pull back the fingers of the other hand, palm facing away from you. Reverse the stretch so the fingers are stretched down.
- Keeping the arms stretched rotate the hand so that the fingers point towards the outside (right hand fingers point out to the right) and gently bend the wrist back towards you.
- Interweave the fingers and stretch out in front of you starting with palms facing in then palms facing out.
- Reach the left hand over the left shoulder and bring the right hand behind the small of the back and try to reach both hands together. If they touch then try to get them to gently pull against each other.
- Hold the hands in front of you, palms together as if praying with forearms pushed to horizontal. Rotate the fingers outwards and down and stretch, now gently pulling hands upwards
- Move the feet apart about 3 shoulder widths. Reach both hands down towards the right foot, then over to the left and up to continue the movement rotating the trunk up and back and down again. Reverse the movement.
- Extend the right foot forwards one step keeping the leg straight, bend the left knee placing both hands on it and while bending the toes back of the right foot stretch the back of the leg. Reverse feet and repeat.
- Bring the feet together, take an extended lunge step forwards with the right foot. Try to keep both feet parallel. Gently push the left heel into the floor keeping the front leg bent and the back leg straight. Come up onto the toes of both feet, hold for 3 seconds then lower and continue the stretch. Gently lower the left knee to the floor and slowly and

gently stretch the top half of the body forwards endeavouring to get the chest to the floor.
Gently come back up and reverse the feet and repeat.

- Gently jump on the spot and shake the body loose.

Improving Flexibility

Martial arts training tends to restrict posture and movement to certain positions and actions as well as shocking the body with rapid high-impact movement. This in itself can lead to:

- Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)
- Postural problems
- Inflexibility
- Asymmetrical muscle development and lopsidedness

These negative outcomes can both affect your martial arts training as well as your everyday life especially as one ages and injuries take longer to heal. The conditions described above tend to be joint and tendon problems and thus can take a lot longer to recover from than muscle injury.

It is therefore of great benefit to ones martial arts level and quality of life that the student undertakes fitness, flexibility and mobility exercises:

- Before training (warming up)
- After training (warming down)
- Outside of training (other sports or physical activities)

This need not require a complete sports programme to be undertaken only that the student:

- Is aware of their level of fitness and flexibility
- Monitors their fitness/flexibility and any injuries
- Takes precautions in martial arts practice to not exacerbate injuries
- Works outside of the dojo to recover and strengthen injured or affected parts

The subject of chronic physical impediment will be examined later in the year.

Further Reading

- BKA Level 1 Coaching Documents: Section 17