

KDS™

2012 NEWSLETTER

FORWARD FROM CHAIR

BY PETER JACKSON

May I take this opportunity to wish all KDS members a Happy New Year.

In addition I should like to extend my thanks to the Technical Executive for the development of our practice during 2011, and to the Management Committee for its sterling work during the past year. May I also offer a special thank you to Arnold Rothwell for his work for the KDS whilst dealing with a difficult personal tragedy.

We have made great strides in many area of our organisation in spite of our small numbers and, in particular, we have developed a greater understanding of the correct way forward within our 4th Dan group.

The good profit made from Summer School, which has boosted our bank balance, was due in the main to the good work of Drew Hamill. I should like to thank him for that and to wish him good luck in his new direction.

The work done by our Treasurer, Tom Butts, after only a short time in post, has stream-lined our cash-flow and made a tremendous difference to our financial stability.

I should like to take this opportunity to welcome our new Summer School organiser, Phil Halsall who, I am sure, will make an excellent replacement for Drew.

There was a tremendous attendance of members at Winter School and the event made a healthy profit. Congratulations to all those members whose grades were confirmed. Well done!

On a sad note, we lost the Scottish KDS who decided to follow their own development path.

Last, but by no means least, I should like to extend my personal thanks and those of the whole organisation to our Principal, Mitsusuke Harada MBE, for his unfailing help and guidance throughout another year. Long may it continue.

In closing, much has been achieved during the past year, but there is still much to do for all of us. Always remember, it is your organisation and your hard work reflects on how we develop.

Good luck in the New Year. I hope you achieve all your goals.

KDS: ITS HISTORY AND FUTURE

BY TONY LIMA

For the 2012 KDS Newsletter I was asked to write an article about the KDS history and its future. Much has already been published about Harada Sensei and the history of the KDS, and to do it justice would mean me writing a book about it (which I have no intention of doing at this point in time since I spend all my available time practicing and researching karate).

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AND ALSO IN THE NEWS...

**DREADED
BUNNY HOPS
RETURN!**

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Instead I have approached the subject by describing key events that I believe caused major impacts and inspirations in Harada Sensei's life as these have shaped the existence, culture, approach and hence the evolution of our way of karate and no doubt form the corner stone and point the way to the future.

As a young boy whilst living in Manchuria, Sensei saw Chinese martial arts (tai chi chuan), but it was later when he returned with his family to Tokyo that he became interested and made inquiries about karate. His original idea being that he wanted to be good at fighting! Along with a friend (who knew where the Shotokan dojo was located) they called in late one afternoon and were given an application form and some pamphlets about karate. On these there was a photo of a man, with his gi top off, who had a great physique. (It was a photo of Shigeru Egami who was later to be one of Sensei's mentors and have a tremendous impact on his approach to karate). This was in November 1943 and Sensei started practising at the Shotokan Dojo in January 1944.

At the Shotokan dojo he was privileged to see Yoshitaka Sensei both accepting black belts in jyu-kumite and also practicing with the makiwara. Yoshitaka, as we know, was the real innovator of Gichin Funakoshi Sensei's Shotokan and the main influence in both Egami's and Okuyama's karate.

The above events (Egami's physique, the power that Yoshitaka generated whilst striking the makiwara and the breath-taking technique and impact with which he dispatched his opponents) were truly etched in this young boy's mind and are still there today.

Later Sensei, as a young student, entered Waseda University and joined its prestigious karate club. It was there that he came under the influence of Tadao Okuyama and Shigeru Egami, both of whom had been personal practice partners of Yoshitaka Sensei and it is also of importance that all three of them had taught karate at the Nakano School. He knew that these individuals were special: what he wanted to know was how to make himself special too!

Both Egami and Okuyama had a tremendous impact on Sensei's karate, the former by changing his physique through one to one practice and the latter by his tremendous impact power and lateral thinking. Okuyama was to set Sensei a physical koan (riddle - hanging paper practice) that was to take him over thirty years to resolve. They also researched the use of the bokken to develop sharp penetrating focus, but it was their desire to project that took their karate beyond purely physical realms. It was also during this time at University (1951)

that he first saw Morihei Ueshiba and this was to cause another great impact in his life, which was to be repeated in January 1969 when Sensei saw Ueshiba again in Tokyo. It is worthy to note that both Egami and Okuyama were also influenced by Inoue Hokken who was the nephew of Ueshiba and whose technical level is equated to that of his uncle's.

Sensei's target of practice after he saw Ueshiba (as suggested to him by Egami) was "*You must endeavour to produce this effect with karate techniques - this is true Karate-Do*". To this day this remains his life ambition (The search for Hakkei).

After graduation, he left for Brazil in 1955 to work for a Japanese bank. There he was the first to introduce karate to South America and had many precious experiences that were to have further impacts on his karate both physically and also on his approach to teaching. This included how to create practice partners for he introduced karate alone, meeting Eder Jofre the Bantamanweight boxing world champion, whose smoothness in movement greatly impressed Sensei, and the value of mobility in accepting challenges from all-comers including Capoeira.

Sensei taught karate in Brazil as he had practised it with Egami and Okuyama, for it had given him so much. His aim was firstly to create the correct physical condition and then teach the karate techniques and katas as opposed to teaching the karate techniques and hope that the student would acquire the correct physique through repetitions. Also the notion that in jyu-kumite the attacker has the advantage of split second timing and location of technique. Under these conditions defence is quite difficult but escape/avoidance is possible.

Later Sensei was to travel to Europe (1963), initially his idea was to return to Brazil within two years, but as we all know events took place in France that prevented his return (much to our good fortune!).

Sensei, after travelling and teaching karate throughout Europe settled in the UK, originally as part of the International Budo Council, and subsequently he founded the KDS on 1st June 1966.

It was in the UK that Sensei had an interesting experience whilst choreographing some fighting sequences with dancers from the Royal Ballet where he again experienced the effects of Hakkei. He also researched Bio-mechanics, Transactional Analysis, Super-Learning and other topics relating to the mind set in sports and physical performance.

The above, I believe, depict the key stages that have influenced Sensei's karate the most and thus form the culture that underpins KDS's approach (physical, emotional, psychological and mental) to karate for there are many who gain considerable knowledge of techniques (karate movements), but in reality, change very little physically.

The creation of KDS with its unique approach to practising karate has come about as a result of the above events coupled with Sensei's passion for technical development and his quest for Hakkei. This has been instilled into his senior students through many years of personal practice. It means challenging "The Established Shotokan Main Stream Karate" just as Yoshitaka, Egami and Okuyama did before him. It is achieved through careful study, analysis, research, hard physical practice, experimentation, testing, questioning everything objectively and open mindedness.

To quote Sensei *"So, Shotokan has stood still in my opinion. Not to develop, not to find what is one's own, denies fulfilment. It is like saying that all great art has been painted, the finest book written, the best films directed. It is a very negative approach. It is incorrect. It is an approach that means quiet acceptance and that one cannot make a contribution. It denies the opportunity to discover what is unique to each of us. This is not art"*.

Thus, the future of KDS rests on us, the next generation, to continue Sensei's research/development and in doing so create our own karate both individually and collectively as an organisation. This can, and is being achieved through working hard together, creating good practice partners, open-mindedness, research, analysis and sharing practice experiences. If we continue to do so then our future has possibilities (albeit that there will be many challenges ahead).

However, if we stagnate and cease to develop, we will lose our precious heritage and our karate will disappear. The ball is truly in our court!

ADMINISTRATION NOTE

BY ARNOLD ROTHWELL

I am expecting to be very busy this year as each and every member tries to introduce at least one new member to their club in the KDS. One very good approach to potential members is to suggest that they should bring along a friend or work colleague to be their practice partner. The perfect KDS bog-off situation; you can enhance this by saying if two people start together they can learn from each other and perfect their moves at a uniform rate and achieve maximum fitness.

I see no reason to increase any KDS fees this year as we are progressing steadily with a useful positive balance in the membership account. To the people who want to reduce fees I should say that the KDS charges are middle of the road compared with other Karate Organisations. So the people who can't afford our charges would not be able to get to any of the regional meetings which are such a big part of our coming together to practice and keep a uniform style. Summer School numbers held up well in 2011 and I expect that 2012 will be as successful under our new organiser Phil Halsall from the University of Hertfordshire KDS. Phil has shown on a number of occasions his marketing ability and strongly supported by the Admin team should ensure a successful SS2012. Details will be out soon. This year our First Aid Course for Appointed Persons will be held at Summer School which is a mandatory course required by all First Aid practitioners, so get your people lined up in good time for this new member and refresher course.

TRIBUTE TO AUDREY ROTHWELL

You do not realise how much you are going to miss a partner until they are no longer there. Then the void created is never filled and you ask yourself if you could have done more or been a more observant doctor than the doctor.

Any companion always gives help and advice, as did Audrey in many things connected with the KDS, like a call over of names and payments for Summer School. Checking through a pithy letter to see if the point I was making was best explained or making sure I wasn't being too acerbic in what I had to say.

I miss her very much.

Arnold



Happier Times

A KARATE QUESTION

BY STEVE HOPE

If we look up into the night sky at all the stars, it is hard to believe that we are only looking at about 5% of what is out there. There is in fact a whole lot more “stuff” that we cannot see. They call it dark matter. Also there are some strange forces at work out there; in fact, the cosmos is a very exotic place indeed. These strange forces are called dark energy and dark flow. They know this by the way the stars and galaxies interact with each other.

In the Beginning there was a big bang and things were pretty hot, and there was a lot of stuff rushing around which had no mass. Then came the big inflation or expansion and things started to cool down and gel together, the stars and galaxies were thus born. They call it the Big Bang Theory, or the Standard Model, which has more holes in it than a Swiss cheese but it is a starting point, and to date it holds together pretty well mathematically.

Now what has all this got to do with Karate? Well let us call Karate the Standard Model, and when I say Karate I am talking about Karate in general - all the different methods out there that diligently proclaim their 1000 year heritage.

So what do we know? Well there was this old Gentleman from Okinawa who went to Japan and caused a bang, not a big bang but an impression with this idea he had. Some let us say ‘special people’, who practiced very arduously and seriously with this idea laid the beginning of a foundation for something very special, or potentially so. Then the great inflation happened and what did we get? Did things gel and were stars born? Well we know for a fact that in the great inflation one star was born, who now resides in Wales.

Now if we look around at Karate in general there is no doubt we only see 5% of what is possible. We see a lot of people in most cases very seriously and diligently practising methods in groups and as partners, endeavouring to out shout, hiss and make ugly faces at each other with a view to what is a matter of conjecture.

Now this star who resides in Wales, let us call him Sensei, practiced with these early special Gentlemen of the pre-inflation era.

Now this young Sensei without a doubt was very serious, diligent and sincere in his practice of Karate and also had a mind that could think laterally.



Sensei: Summer School 2011 (picture: J. Cordier)

So off he set, as part of the great inflation, practising with different partners in different countries with a sincere passion to find and pass Karate on, whatever that was.

In his endeavours to develop this thing call Karate he had some interesting experiences, which the standard model of the day did not fit. So he began to look for some answers, and thus the KDS was born.

Sensei then began to re-shape the Standard Model, realising that there was dark matter and dark energy which could not be seen with the standard approach of endless repetition of mindless action. He began to demand that we think about what we were doing and the repercussions of our actions upon our partner and ourselves, so things started to gel and maybe more stars will be born and a galaxy will evolve as a result.

But of course there is a catch, as always, once caught there is no going back. The cosmos is ever expanding until the day its existence stops.

THE ATTITUDE TO PRACTICE

BY ADRIAN QUICK

Following our club course in Essex in Harlow in October 2011, Julie has asked me to write about ‘the attitude to practice’. Those black belts who came will recall Steve’s wake up call to [sic] “stop pretending and do karate. If you are going to turn up give it 100% otherwise don’t bother!” Steve certainly got everyone’s attention quickly and the atmosphere became alive and intense.

With Steve's motivation, more was given and gained by all. But Steve's message should be carried over into our club practice.

So what are you looking for when you turn up for a weekend course? Are you waiting to be taught the next technique or the next kata? If so, you may be missing out on the real opportunities. A technique/idea/method or correction of an existing poor technique or bad habit cannot be embedded with just a few repetitions in a couple of hours. No, the learning comes through the practices that follow in your own club. Courses show the possibilities in practice, to be developed through personal research and practice.

Make sure your practice partner (you do have one don't you?) is on the same course, sharing the same practices. Trust your partner to give you an honest practice and valuable feedback, so you both push and pull each other forward. Grab every opportunity to practice with a senior grade, but don't neglect your responsibility to those junior to yourself.



Adrian Quick and Ian Mackenzie: Winter School 2011
(picture:Edd Beale)

Learn how to steal from the experience of a senior partner or instructor. Be brave, ask that question (that's the one that when answered moves your practice up to another level); don't wait for the answers to someone else's question. Whilst others might nod sagely, only the person who asks the physical question gets the physical answer. A Japanese proverb reads 'to ask may be a moment's shame, but not to ask and remain ignorant is a lifelong shame'. Remember, so much of what we strive to achieve is a feeling. What you think you see in a demo may be far from the feeling the demo partners are giving and receiving from each other.

Look for the links in your practice of kata and kumite. How does your standing ready posture before the first move in all kata connect to how you stand to accept an attack in Ten no Kata or Sanbon Kumite? Is irimi an escape or an entry? While you are so busy concentrating on yourself, looking at your shape and the floor that you're standing on, who's concentrating on your partner? It helps to be watching him before you get hit!

In addition I would encourage you to keep your own Practice Journal, recording the practices that make a difference to how you practice personally or teach others. When I look back at some of my early notes I realise the naivety of some of my ideas. Nonetheless, this was and still is part of the essential path to self discovery, learning, not waiting to be taught. Take a chance; expose yourself to the risk of learning more by giving more in your practice.

Whoever you partner you have an opportunity to learn. Sometimes it's daunting and occasionally painful, but it's a reasonable price for the experience. At Winter School Ian's attacks got through my defence several times, which forces me to improve my timing and response for the next time I face him, or you. Ian wasn't playing; his objective in the demo was to show good karate - to hit me, in which he had considerable success.

Karate is learnt through physical practice, not verbal dialogue.... 'I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand'. Although stamina and strength are necessary it's not how long you can stay in that posture or chase your partner across the hall with a barrage of technically perfect techniques that measures success, it's your attitude to practice, co-operation and partnerships. Your progress is your responsibility, so take ownership.

BUNNY HOPS ARE BACK!

BY ROY MARGETTS

Firstly, let me start by wishing you all a very happy New Year. Hopefully most of you would have got at least one training session under your belt so you should be starting to burn off some of the excesses of the Christmas holidays.

Last year was another busy one with plenty of courses both here and abroad and the year was rounded off by a really good Winter School with around 120 attendees, only a handful of whom were from overseas.

I have been asked to write a few paragraphs about my observations and experiences from summer schools past and present.

Summer School is the pinnacle event of the KDS calendar. As I get older, it seems to come round every couple of months now. I have attended many such camps and have never failed to enjoy any of them and this year was no exception. Back in 'the old days' it was a common sight to see students bouncing around doing multiple kicks, myself included (though I know most of you will find that very hard to believe). These practices were very tiring but in a strange way really good fun. For self-defense purposes, they may be not so practical, but as one guy said at the time, if someone was to attack him he could bunny hop over the attackers head and bound off in the distance.

This brings me to last year's camp. Although I was mainly involved with senior side, I did on a couple of occasions go and help Steve Hope out with the junior grades.

Steve had taken the initiative with this group and had them all doing some of the stuff we used to do in the past tied in with what we currently do.

The atmosphere in the group was excellent, with everyone trying really hard. There were also some good results from individuals within the group showing that the method was working well.

I think Steve hit on an area of practice we have been neglecting which is of great value that being the area of plyometric training.

I mentioned when I started we used to a lot of bunny hops and double kicks etc. but the main driver for doing those exercises was to get really tired so we would relax more, the by-product was that we benefitted from this plyometric method. These types of exercises are very useful for practice if you consider the scenario of escaping then counter attacking for example, or any form of sudden dynamic movement. In addition, as I previously mentioned, they can be a good motivational tool.

Before you all start bunny hopping off into the distance, a word of caution. Bunny hops are a good plyometric exercise. We all became very good at doing them so consequently we started doing more and more the down side of that is there is a tremendous loading on the knee joints, that is why you'll see most of the more senior guys grimace at the thought of them. Steve only got the students to do three or four hops with good form then perform the required task. There are many safer plyometric exercises out there, also with our experience, it is relatively easy to incorporate a plyometric element the practice methods we currently do.



*Bunny hopping all over the place... Summer School 2011
(picture: Emma Wester)*

FIRST AID TRAINING

There is an urgent need for more members to have the qualification First Aid at Work. Would any KDS members who have the opportunity to do this Four Day Course at their place of work please take up the opportunity because it is a HSE requirement that at larger gatherings we should have One FAW plus One Appointed Person for every 50 members attending or part of fifty members attending. So at Summer School for instance we should have three of each with our average attendance being 122 members.

STARTING A CLUB FROM SCRATCH

BY THOMAS BUTTS

In July 2009 I embarked upon proper, grown-up, income tax-paying, adult life. It was a daunting experience, and one that has involved a number of personal milestones (my long-suffering girlfriend Kat has now graduated into a married karate widow). In the time between then and now, I have (just about) successfully established the Twickenham Karate club, a new member of the UK KDS family and the London KDS 'federation'.

The London club over the last few years has undergone something of a metamorphosis. It has moved from a small group of mates (all with black belts) meeting up a couple of times a week to trying and knock each other's heads off into a professionally-run Karate club with a great collection of seniors and a thriving beginners' programme. This is largely the result of one megalomaniac 2nd dan with an addiction to diet Coke. As part of Pete 'the Godfather' HW's grand plan, those of us who can have set up new clubs out in the South (Vicky 'the Boss' Simms), east (Willam 'the Pecks' Black) and West (me) of the capital.



Twickenham course 2011 (Picture: Edd Beale)



Twickenham course 2011 (Picture: Edd Beale)

I started out in Twickenham with all manner of grand schemes before being swiftly brought down to earth. To be serious for a moment, the only piece of advice I will offer on setting up a club is that the single most important thing is to keep the faith. Turning up every week to train alone in an expensive hall can be soul-destroying. Eventually though, after an add campaign on Google, people started to trickle through the door.

Then, the club received a massive fillet: my old training partner from Durham, Andrew (...Egan - the skinny brown belt who looks a bit like Blackadder and never, ever gives up), started to train with the club.

I cannot overstate how important this has been to Twickenham KDS - it has meant that the beginners have actually had some constructive criticism that goes beyond my 'you need to put more effort in!' approach.

The club now has an established membership of six of us, and we typically have four at each session, meaning the club is no longer making a huge loss. In November, we hosted our first course, which, concrete floor and broken feet apart, was a great success. As well as Andy's help, we couldn't have got off the ground without the support of the central London club. All the gradings across London are co-ordinated through the central London club and overseen by our esteemed leader, Nic 'heavy elbows, yeah?!' Stewart (with Pete's help). This has meant that our club members have had a regular chance to get stuck into people from outside their own club, and that we have been able to reign in grade inflation. Hopefully as time goes on, the club will continue to grow and prosper, as will the other new clubs across London.

Of course, there are still considerable obstacles to overcome; we are only just breaking even, we are still too small, we only train once a week, there are technical holes in our Karate (largely my fault), and the teaching style does generally need improving in regard to the softer and less aggressive bits of our art (my fault again). However, two years in, we have a firm foundation for the future. And that is all I could have asked. A huge thanks to everyone for coming to our course, and to the London and Twickers clubs (especially Andrew) for all your efforts.

★ GRADING RESULTS 2011 ★

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

FROM 1ST KYU TO 1ST DAN

Rowan Davies

Phil Hallsall

Mark Ebbage

Minder Mudhar

Staffordshire Uni

Hertfordshire Uni

East of England

Essex

FROM 1ST DAN TO 2ND DAN

Christopher Gidlow

James Barry

Staffordshire Uni

Hertfordshire Uni

EDITOR'S NOTE

I would like to thank Arnold Rothwell, Peter Jackson, Steve Hope, Tony Lima, Thomas Butts, Roy Margetts and Adrian Quick for contributing to this issue. If you want to get involved in the next Newsletter please send me an e-mail at j.c.n.cordier@gmail.com.