

Aikido Times

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH AIKIDO BOARD



December 2020



Welcome to the December issue of the Aikido Times.

The Board has some important news to share in this issue - notably the election of a new Chairman and Vice-Chair who will oversee the development of the BAB during its next phase. It is undoubtedly a challenging time for anyone to step into this role, so please support Piers, Ann and the Executive. They are working incredibly hard to enable clubs and associations to return to full Aikido in 2021

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News from the Executive Committee

Piers Cooke, Chairman

On the 21st November I had the honour of being elected to the post of Chair of The British Aikido Board. I am the 7th person to hold this position and I am following in the footsteps of Vincent Sumpter and Keith Holland so I have a lot to live up to.

As some of you will know I have been the Finance officer since about 2000 but many will not know anything of my aikido background so for those who are curious or interested please read the following: if not skip the next three paragraphs.

I started training in 1981/2 and for 17 years I practiced under Sensei Ken Williams, I know he is a very controversial figure but he is one of the founders of British aikido. He was an extraordinary man and a very charismatic teacher; he still goes down in my mind as one of the best aikido practitioners I have ever experienced and he helped me lay down some pretty solid aikido foundations on which to build my knowledge and experience.

As is often the way in aikido, there came a parting of the ways and I teamed up with my brother, Quentin Cooke, and we formed a new Association, Aikido for Daily Life and subsequently we aligned ourselves with Koretoshi Maruyama, he was ex President & chief instructor of the Ki No Kenyukai, which was the organisation Tohei Sensei formed. Maruyama sensei was also one of O Sensei's third generation uchi dechi.



I joined the BAB in 2000 and have benefitted enormously from all the fantastic teachers we have at our disposal and I have been very honoured to teach three times at the BAB national courses.

So what can you do during the Covid pandemic ?

Well there is no doubt that if you love aikido, which if you are reading this article I guess you do, you will be feeling starved and frustrated because of the lack of practice.

However, as soon as the first lockdown came I immediately started online classes, I really enjoyed running them, I hooked up with friends and students from all over the world and we carried out various kata practice, a great friend Dimitra Zirou, based in Athens, taught Qigong every week for 25 minutes. I had guest appearances from fellow teachers in Germany and Poland and consequently they invited me to teach at their zoom classes.

In addition one of our teachers Sensei Dan Easton immediately set up weekly, socially distanced classes in his local recreation park, we practiced Jo and Boken kata, every Monday, all the way through spring, summer and autumn.

And my brother set up an excellent zoom discussion / interview group every Thursday evening at 19.00 (still up and running, check him out at Burwell Aikido Club) he has interviewed many of the internationally renown teachers and has had fascinating debates on many aikido topics. So at one point I was spending more time doing aikido than I did before Covid.

Where Do We Go From Here ?

I think aikido is more relevant today than it has ever been. It is an excellent way of keeping fit and healthy; regardless of your style of aikido, being thrown and getting up is a great way of maintaining fitness. It teaches you discipline and resilience and it helps you with confidence and stress management so what is not to like and all of that before you have even stepped into the pub for a little social rehydration. Of course, all of those benefits are applicable regardless of the age range that practices except of course the public house rehydration.

We need to reach out to the next generation to enthuse and encourage them to practice aikido, to do that we need to use the correct social media, whatever is in at the time, and to do that we will need your help. I don't know the ages of all the executive committee but at the risk of dropping a large xxxxxxxx I suspect there are very few below 50 maybe a couple. So if you would like to help us to use social media, and get clips on to TikTok etc please do get in touch. Aikido has been the Cinderella martial art for far too long.

There is an awful lot of work that needs to be done before we will be allowed back to enjoy full contact aikido. We have to present, as soon as possible, to the DCMS our proposals to cover safe practice, across the spectrum of aikido, for all the phases 0 – 5 and across all Tiers 1 – 3. We are incredibly lucky to have Steve Billet heading up that task because without that presentation, then there is no practice. Once presented it has to be approved by DCMS, No 10 and the Health Dept.

In addition to that we have created a sub-committee to have a look at the constitution in attempt to bring it up to date and make it fit for purpose for the digital age. Once that chunk of work has been done, it will be presented to membership for discussion and approval.

The executive committee meets 4 times a year, the full minutes will be made available to the BAB membership. In



addition we will be having 4, what we are calling Consultative forums, which will be zoom meetings open to the BAB membership to discuss and share best practice with regard to important aikido topics. The first of these will be on the 9th January 2021 and the topic will be “Coping with Covid”. Zoom details will be released nearer the date.

For Aikido to survive we have to raise its profile, that cannot be left to the executive committee alone, we do not have the time or the resources, due to the incredibly low membership fees. We need to act in unison: identify best practice, share ideas, work with government agencies and generally make more “noise”. If you have something to offer stand up and make things happen regardless of whether it is at club, association or national level.

I look forward to getting back on the mat and practicing; meeting old friends and making new ones.

babchairman@bab.org.uk

Ann Billett Ni-Dan BSc, MBA CEng MIMechE FMM RSA

Vice Chair, British Aikido Board

I am very pleased to be selected as the newly appointed role of BAB Vice Chairperson, I am a 55 year old Mechanical Engineer, with 2 children, my son is at Bristol university studying 2nd year law, and my daughter still at school is spending all my disposable income, I also have Arak a 20 week old Irish Border collie to train.

My husband Steve Billett, is the BAB Webmaster & COVID-19 liaison to the UK Government. I love singing, genealogy, swimming, sailing and of course Aikido! I am a Ni-Dan, BAB Coach Level 3 and a BAB Coach Tutor. I have practised and enjoyed the martial art of Tomiki Aikido for the last 30 years

Some of the more unusual activities I’ve been involved in are: Baton Bearer at the Queen’s Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games; Operation Raleigh 1985 Indonesia expedition participant for 4 months building schools on remote islands; Women in Science & Engineering (WISE) Ambassador for the IMECHE, working in schools to recruit more young women into an engineering career; London Youth Games (London Based Mini Olympics for School Children) Judo coach for Enfield for 5 years.

I am a strategic thinker, and customer focused manager of risk and up for a challenge! I have extensive communication and training expertise along with experience in bringing together people with may differing points of view and find innovative solutions to complex problems.

I have held positions as Secretary for the Aikido Development Society from 1999 to Present; Governor and Chairperson, Selwyn Primary School 2006 – 2010, Manufacturing Facilities Engineer & Project Manager, British Aerospace Hatfield 1985 – 1994 and currently work for Ford Motor Company 1994 – Present as After Market Development Manager; Warranty Business Office Manager; Software Business Development Manager, Global Diagnostics Procedures.

(continued on next page)



What do I want to Achieve as Vice Chair?

- To effectively enhance and grow Aikido practice in the UK, I want to listen to the needs of our Association members and their clubs, coaches and practicing Aikidoka and will work with the Associations to understand how to best support them.
- I will work with the Chair, Executive members and Association volunteers to provide a safe and appropriate pathway post Covid19 to full Aikido practice, and to then further encourage growth in active Aikido practice for all (Adults and Young Persons).
- I will work on further enhancing communications to member Associations, working with the Executive and members to provide access to key information in an informative, fun and timely manner.
- I will support restructuring of coaching qualifications to embrace on line flexibility for learning along with rigorous interactive assessment, maintaining expected standards and delivery quality.
- I will encourage Association members to volunteer and gain experience working with the BAB executive to enhance Aikido for all in the UK, and will participate in promoting events and activities to celebrate Aikido in all its wonderful forms.

Aikido can be enjoyed and practiced by young and old, fit and not so fit, each to their own level, and by doing so can improve both physical health and mental well-being. Aikido in the UK has great traditions and history, but let's also make the future of Aikido great as well!

bab-vice-chairman@bab.org.uk

Winchmore Aikido Club North London

Steve Billett

Since the first lockdown and when we found out that we could train socially distanced, we were practising in the park close to our dojo. Which was fine until it started to get darker and the park keeper was throwing us out of the park. He was a little careful as each of us had a very large stick in our hand.

Zoom sessions have also happened but they seemed to turn into a after training pub like chat. I am glad to say that we finally returned to our smaller dojo, but our main dojo remained close and as this is where we run our junior classes unfortunately they have not been able to return like the adults.

As we are Tomiki/Shodokan style aikido we have a few katas that can be practiced solo socially distance but we turned too weapons more than we normally would.

Luckily even though it not part of our syllabus I had learnt in the past the 31 Jo the Saito way. After a few weeks of this and some boken work we decided that we needed something else, so I asked Vincent Sumpter, a previous BAB Chairman, to come teach socially distanced 31 Kumi Jo (Jo to Jo for those of us that didn't know) to four of us. We are now teaching the rest of the class, But learning in one long session all I can say is I am teaching my version. I remind myself what it should be before each class using the videos, but my old brain is not what it was.

We were enjoying our training but unfortunately the second lockdown appeared and we had to close again. December the 2nd arrived so we were able to start again this Monday. Then the world started to be against us....

- 7:30 leave to teach my 8pm class.
- 7:31 400 metres later a flat tire, Phone the wife!



- 7:40 She arrives with the other car.
- 7:42 Drive like a bat out of hell, hope I don't get a speeding ticket!
- 8:00 Arrive on time, Phew!! But school gates still locked.
- 8:01 Most of the class have arrived.
- 8:15 Caretakers arrives saying sorry.
- 8:20 Gym locked, missing keys, use my spare set I should not have.
- 8:22 NO toilets
- 8:25 Infra-Red thermometer not reading well as it was too cold, gave it a long cuddle and revived it.
- 8:30 Credit Card machine decided it needed a firmware update that takes 15 minutes!
- 8:35 Caretaker advises the Gym will be refurbished next week for a month, so this is a first and last class in December.
- 8:36 Finally started the class waiting for a socially distanced accident as everything else had gone wrong.

Brilliant class that everyone enjoyed, nobody hurt but when we arrived at the pub it was closed. The plan was to try and arrange a Christmas meal, but it seems that it cannot happen this year.

Hopefully 2021 will allow us all to train again in both of our dojos.



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. Maximum article length will usually be in the region of 1000 words. It may be necessary to split some articles over more than one issue of the Newsletter.
2. No payment shall be made for items used.
3. The focus of articles must be on aikido, its impact on people and the community, or contain content which would be of interest and relevance to aikidoka
4. Contributors must be either members of the BAB or be invited to contribute. Other people may submit items for publication and approval from the Board's Executive may be required.
5. There should be no explicit criticism of individuals or other associations/organisations.
6. All material submitted must be original (i.e. not breach copyright laws). Appropriate credits and permissions should be included within the submission if relevant.
7. Articles may be edited/corrected at the Editor's discretion
8. The Editor's decision shall be final in determining the content of The Aikido Times.

Return to Contact Aikido England

Stephen Billett BAB COVID-19 Officer

I recently received information from Sport England concerning the Government's newly created Combat Sport Framework. This is a short paraphrase of the email.

We are writing to you, as the recognised NGB, and to confirm the process for recognised NGBs with regards to next steps the Combat Sport Framework.

On Tuesday, Government agreed and publish the framework which sets out guidance on how to work, operate and participate in recreational contact combat sport safely while minimising the risk of spreading COVID-19.

The Framework sets out the steps that allows contact combat sport to take place with appropriate mitigations, whilst maintaining appropriate compliance with social distancing and legal gathering limits.

NB: This is only permitted if this guidance for each sport is fully implemented by the governing body for each contact combat sport, including an action plan which takes into account risks and mitigations for the relevant sport (as follows wider government tiered restrictions)

Each individual sport must undergo a risk assessment for their sport and determine the level of risk for their sport and how they can work to mitigate it. This process is designed to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission while taking part in sport and physical activity, and enabling participants to make an informed decision about their own risk.

No matter what we may all think, 'All styles of Aikido' are considered to be Contact Combat Sport by the UK Government as part of the Covid-19 Documentation. Therefore the BAB has to prepare a 'Return to Play' document outlining our process and guidance to allow full contact Aikido for England in line with the government framework.

It was this style of framework that has allowed sports like Hockey, Football and Rugby to be closer to full contact play. This document involves an enormous amount of work and the final document needs to be with the government Department of Culture, Media and Sport with a copy to Sport England within next 2-3 weeks as it takes time for them to review the documentation.

We hope that once England is accepted then we can do the same for all of the home countries.

If you wish to read the government framework it can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-grassroots-sports-guidance-for-safe-provision-including-team-sport-contact-combat-sport-and-organised-sport-events#contact-combat-sport-framework>



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport

Iaido

Jane Holderness, Tenchi Ryu Aikido & Iaido, North Devon

Last year, before life as we know it changed, I started attending Iaido classes at Tenchi Ryu in Barnstaple, North Devon.

Iaido can be defined as “the way of mental presence and harmonious action” which does sound rather counterintuitive when one is wielding a sword, I admit. It is used as a form of mental and physical discipline, with a strong emphasis on correct technique, form and character development.

The study of Iaido encourages strength, balance, co-ordination and suppleness. The training involves learning techniques that each represent a different scenario, with different (imaginary) “enemies”. Techniques are practiced repeatedly, becoming more and more precise over time.

Through a controlled flow of movement, we seek to unite our spirit, the action, and the sword, so the sword is in essence a tool to forge the human character. We seek to cut through our worst enemies - those hiding inside us!

I did not know what to expect when I began training, I had been learning aikido for a few months already, and whilst there are some similarities, the energy of iaido training is very different.

There is a slow, steady precision that really suits me, and a performance aspect, because in order to embody the energy and moves of the techniques, we learn where our enemy would be, and how we intend to dispatch him! I remember Sensei telling me on one of my early lessons to imagine the enemy was my ego/life challenges, and I immediately become incredibly more enthusiastic about cutting him down!

Physically, the benefits have been huge - I’m left handed, so learning to have my right hand dominate and gain a whole new skill set, has been helpful to rebalance my body. We also move each hand in a different way and at different speeds, which is excellent for “organising” the two hemispheres of the brain to work better together.

The moves are practised slowly and deliberately so there is a real mind/body connection and a very meditative aspect. Over time, the sword literally becomes an extension of the person.



There is a great deal to learn in this practice about power versus force - great power rarely requires force in any path in life and that is definitely true here. This is a form of energy management, and utilisation. Controlled and flowing power, rather than stiff or rigid force.

I have found it has increasingly helped to ground me (something I have struggled with for years) and increased my overall confidence - because let's face it, the idea of going through life with a sword on one's hip ready for anything is a pretty delightful one!

Even if the sword itself is usually stashed safely at home, the *embodiment* of carrying it, can come with me into facing the challenges of daily life.

For those with an interest in the performing arts, there is something akin to both dance and acting in the performance aspect. When observing, the audience should be able to figure out what is happening - where the enemy is attacking from, and how we dispatch him, even though they are invisible. This really appeals to my performative streak.

I have found the mental benefits to be many, - it is a meditative practice, and connects mind and body - as we gain experience and begin to "set" the techniques into muscle memory. There is an aspect around increased respect, respect for self, for the lineage, the techniques and for the actual physical presence of the sword and what (in real world terms) it **could be** capable of.

The class is always entertaining as well, as Sensei explains the "story" behind each technique and how and where we are going to slice our opponent (or the negative aspects of ourselves that we'd rather be rid of!)

Each cut, can be the shedding of another layer of unwanted baggage, I mean, what's not to like?

Training Resources

As we start to return again to our dojos, clubs and associations might want to offer awareness training for instructors, volunteers and even general members.

The BAB has created our COVID-19 Hub at <https://www.bab.org.uk/covid-19-hub/> which has our socially distanced guidance documentation and supplements but does not have the same information as can be found on the resources below.

These are just a few resources (free) that you can access. You won't always get a certificate- but you can take a screenshot to prove you have done the training. It would all go towards your dojo risk assessment and risk mitigation (showing the measures you have taken to be Covid secure). Please note that the BAB is not recommending any specific courses and those listed below have been selected from a general internet search.

<https://openwho.org/courses/eprotect-acute-respiratory-infections>

<https://www.highfieldlearning.com/covid-19>.

<https://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/covid-19-course>

https://rise.articulate.com/share/bOiebd5nNsS8qqBvYouYG_Ompki_m61e#/

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/enabling-safe-and-effective-volunteering-during-coronavirus-covid-19>



This is to certify that
XXXXXXXXXX
Has completed an on line course designed
by the British Red Cross for volunteers
responding to the coronavirus outbreak



Covid-19 Hard Times

Frank Burlingham, Broadland Aikido Club

Well who would have thought 2020 would turn out the disaster it has and how a virus could destroy livelihoods and many people's way of life. The effect on all work and lives is unbelievable with many losing their jobs, shops and companies going out of business let alone the devastating effect on clubs and associations. For some time now Aikido has struggled to get and maintain club members, Covid-19 has been a big blow to Aikido all over the globe. Thankfully some countries are slowly returning to normal.

Here in the U.K. we have struggled for some time with numbers, the last thing we needed was Covid-19. On a personal level we at Broadland Aikido Club lost our beautiful dojo when the management of the centre decided to close down our permanent dojo, removing all the tatami, painting the walls cream with grey steelwork. My entire mats (some 128 Gee mats) were thrown into a building which contained an indoor football pitch, the Kamiza, posters, weapons etc. were thrown into a side room all this without any consultation with me. When I spoke to the so called manager I was told that they didn't know if or when Martial Arts would return.

I have had to not only find storage for the mats but also now trying to find a new venue for training which as I'm sure you all can appreciate, is not easy during these times. It has also meant that I now need to sell some of the mats.

So now Broadland Aikido Club in Lowestoft, Suffolk has 80 @ 2m x 1m x 40mm thick, green and red Gee mats of various conditions for sale from new to used. These mats can be used for training in Martial Arts such as Aikido, Judo, Jiu Jitsu, Karate, also Gymnastics. New these mats cost about £105 each.

Cost as follows:

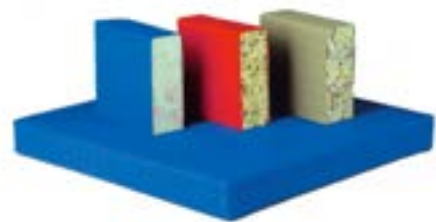
- Like new £60 each
- Slightly used £40 each
- Well used £20 each

Reasonable offers considered! collection in person. Please contact me on

Email: frank.burlingham@virgin.net

Phone: Frank on 01502 515062 land line

07949 803064 mobile



Let's hope it is not too long until we can return to normal and train in this wonderful Martial Art of aikido. In the meantime please take care, stay safe and healthy.

Upcoming Events

Covid 19: Support for Clubs and Associations

We are delighted to announce that we are running a Zoom support session

Topic: BAB Coping with Covid Zoom Meeting

Time: Jan 9, 2021 10:00 AM London

<https://zoom.us/j/4815623105?pwd=cFI0UDNVcDRLSkRFY0RwMzNOMEF2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 481 562 3105

Passcode: BAB

Any Club Coach is allowed to join, but only the first 100 will be able to connect due to the limitation of our zoom account. We will be discussing how we are running our classes and answering any question we can.

VACANCIES *****VACANCIES *****VACANCIES *****VACANCIES *****VACANCIES *****

We have the following roles available for BAB Members to volunteer for.

If you would like to help please contact the BAB via your association.

Finance Officer: [Job Specification here](#)

Legal Officer: [Job Specification here](#)

Media Officer: [Job Specification here](#)

If you have problems opening any of the Job Specification links, please visit the BAB website to access the relevant information

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