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Newsletter of the London Aikido Club, (founded 1977)  
60A Windus Road, Stoke Newington, N16 6UP

December 1992  
No. 3

"In China there was once a man who liked pictures of dragons, and his clothing and furnishings were all designed accordingly. His deep affection for dragons was brought to the attention of the dragon god, and one day a real dragon appeared before his window. It is said that he died of fright. He was probably a man who always spoke big words but acted differently when facing the real thing."

from "Hagakure"  
Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1716)  
translated by William Scott Wilson

## THE NEW YEAR

So, we walk into the New Year without even closing for a day - a club tradition.

If we do the orthodox thing, and reflect on the old year while planning for the new, what comes out?

The last year was an excellent time of training. Time to say a big "Thank you" to all our training partners - in Japanese of course "Domo arigato kosai mashita". Our individual Aikido can only develop as fast as the group.

And the next year, of course, should follow the same pattern, but in looking forward, let's look back. Saito Sensei often says: "When we are lost, it's time to return to basics." Therefore, perhaps the biggest commitment of all should be to look with fresh eyes at all the 'old' things. The

secret of Aikido is in the basic building blocks, with which martial miracles can be created.

A.H.

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From: "Hagakure"  
Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1716)  
translated by William Scott Wilson

"It is not good to settle into a set of opinions. It is a mistake to put forth great effort and obtain some understanding and then stop at that. At first putting forth great effort to be sure that you have grasped the basics, then practising so that they may come to fruition is something that will never stop for your whole lifetime. Do not rely on following the degree of understanding that you have discovered, but simply think, "This is not enough". One should search throughout his whole life how best to

follow the Way. And he should study, setting his mind to work without putting things off. Within this is the Way."

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## GRADINGS

It is my definite impression that we have a large number of students who are ready for their next promotions. Perhaps this is true even to the extent that every kyu grade should go up a notch early in the New Year, so here is the plan:

1. DAN GRADING :  
Saturday, March  
27th, 6.30pm
2. 1ST KYU GRADING :  
Saturday, January  
30th, 6.30pm
3. ALL OTHER RANKS:  
Saturday, February

27th, 6.30pm

If you cannot make the day, or to reduce the crowds, please ask your most regular instructor to make special arrangements.

Gradings themselves, in the sense of pass or fail are not very important - hence the quotation in the club membership book:

"If you can meet with  
Triumph and Disaster,  
And treat those two  
imposters just the same"

However, what happens with a change of rank is that there is a change of emphasis in the training. Orange belts focus on one collection of problems, green belts on another set, brown belts on another set, and so on. These problem areas reflect the natural course of the training process. What is remarkable is that we all train together doing the same techniques, but focusing on different concepts and qualities at different times in our respective Aikido careers.

Our special point for the less experienced: Seniors are there to help - approach them and ask! There's a lot to be learned in the changing room as well as on the mat.

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At the last Open Grading in September the following were successful:

1st Kyu (brown belt)  
Richard Frith  
Julian Russell  
Robert Thilthorpe

2nd Kyu (blue belt)  
Jannis Labelle  
Noreen Weiss

3rd Kyu (green belt)  
Derek Adler

Congratulations to all of you!

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From Alan Wooding:

"Form is not the essence of Aikido"

This means that you use the form to express that essence rather than simply repeating the form and looking no further, saying "This is Aikido". It does not mean that any old form will do. You use the form to discover that essence, to explore that essence. It is a continuous process.

The correct forms of the techniques passed down from O'Sensei are like stepping stones to understanding Aikido. So it is important to try to do the correct form in training. Do this knowing that to train with a full spirit is even more important. Use the form to grasp the essence.

All this is paradoxical because as your understanding improves, your form changes; but then if it wasn't paradoxical, life wouldn't be paradoxical either. Someone would have written down all the answers years ago and we would all be dead.

A.W.

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## VIDEO LIBRARY

Our video library has now been in operation for some time and is working very well. A full list of the available videos is kept in a book behind the reception desk. There is now quite a selection of instructional videos made by Andy to improve (hopefully) the quality of training in the club:

### KOKYU NAGE:

Over 2 hours detailed explanation of a host of techniques which form the heart of Aikido.

### YOKOMEN UCHI:

A broad range of techniques, from basic to advanced. This video encompasses all of the basic techniques in detail.

### KOSHI NAGE:

The hip throws. The price includes a copy of a booklet by Saito Sensei on koshi nage.

### TANTO TORI:

knife taking.

### Basic Techniques:

### IKKYO

### SHIHO NAGE

### IRIMI NAGE

### NIKYO, SANKYO, YONKYO

### KOTE GAESHI

### KAITEN NAGE, JUJI NAGE, TENCHI NAGE

### BEGINNERS COURSE:

Andy describing our beginners course to club instructors.

## INTRODUCTION TO AIKIDO:

A sample of Aikido techniques and principles designed for prospective students. Attempts to capture the essence of the demonstration given at the start of the beginners course.

Date of next meeting will be in next April and arranged nearer the time. It is hoped more members will come, including junior grades. In order to encourage this, it will probably be held at 8.15pm on a Wednesday evening. Any other suggestions welcome - to Mark, Lyn, Yvonne or Andy.

### GRADING SYLLABUS:

All the techniques from the grading syllabus from 6th to 2nd kyu.

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From Dave Nichol:

I would like to add to AH's important article "Aikido and Spiritual Training".

Reading AH's article reminded me of thoughts written by two philosophers and teachers, these being Lao Tzu and Jalau'd-Din Rumi. I copy these for you to ponder.

"When actions are performed without unnecessary speech, people say "We did it"."

Lao Tzu

There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired as a child in school memorises facts and concepts from books and from what the teacher says, collecting information from traditional

sciences as well as from the new sciences.

With such intelligence you rise in the world. You get ranked ahead or behind others in regard to your competence in retaining information. You stroll with this intelligence in and out of fields of knowledge, getting marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one already completed and preserved inside you. A spring overflowing its spring box. A freshness in the centre of the chest. This other intelligence does not turn yellow or stagnate. It is fluid and it does not move from outside to inside through conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is a fountainhead from within you, moving out.

Rumi

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## GENERAL MATTERS:

Congratulations to Maurice Dodd and his wife on the birth of their child.

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## PRIVATE LESSONS

Individual private tuition can be valuable in solving particular problems and focusing training. Private tuition is now the responsibility of Clare Cooney (081-888-6973), a long standing second dan of LAC.

Andy also takes private students by appointment.

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Don't forget we need contributions from everyone. Any scandal, gossip, jokes, opinions, new aikido definitions, thoughts on training, or Aikido generally should be left on the front desk (with your name on it please) or given direct to Janice Hemmings.

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## DETAILS OF COURSES

Do not worry if the course you wish to attend has already started. Late starting is not a problem, especially for the weapons courses.

Sunday 10-12am (Andy):  
RESTARTS 10TH  
JANUARY

This course specialises in sword suburi, kumitachi (paired sword), and the relationships of these concepts to unarmed practice. This is also the time we study striking principles and the ways of adapting basic training to combat.

This course is very basic, very general and appropriate for all students. Newcomers welcome on new course.

Sunday 12-2pm (Eamon):  
STARTS 31ST JANUARY  
New Beginners Course.

Sunday 2-4pm (Alan):  
RESTARTS 31ST  
JANUARY  
Careful study of weapons suburi (basic exercises for

ken and jo) and their relationships to unarmed practice. Some paired weapons practice will be included. Suitable for those new to weapons as well as those with some experience.

Sunday 4-6pm (Janice):  
STARTS 31ST JANUARY  
New Beginners Course.

Tuesday 8-10pm (Andy):  
RESTARTS 26TH JANUARY  
This is a special course on weapon and unarmed relationships, similar to Sunday morning except that the weapon is the jo. We are working especially with the 31 kata and its response (the "31 kumi jo"). General development for all students.

Thursday 6-8pm (Dave):  
STARTS 28TH JANUARY  
New Beginners Course.

Thursday 8-10pm (Paddy):  
RESTARTS 28TH JANUARY  
A basic techniques course suitable for all 6th kyu and above. Well settled group needing new members, and an excellent restart point for those whose training has been interrupted.

Friday 8-10pm (Claire):  
STARTS 8TH JANUARY  
New Beginners Course.

Saturday 12-2pm (Claire):  
RESTARTS 16TH JANUARY  
The 2nd level "KIHON", basic techniques course. This is primarily for those who have just completed the beginners course, but is suitable for anybody who would like to have a good look at the basic techniques. An excellent restart point for lapsed students.

Saturday 2-4pm (Clive):  
RESTARTS 16TH JANUARY  
General training for orange belts preparing for green, though the mix of basic weapons and basic techniques (including some emphasis on break falling) makes it suitable for anybody of 6th kyu and above.

Saturday 4-6pm (Tony):  
STARTS 16TH JANUARY  
New Beginners Course.

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Contributors: *Dave Nichol, Alan Wooding, Yvonne Tabailou, Andy Hathaway, Janice Hemmings.*

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**BUSINESS CARDS:**  
(free insertion!!)

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Julian Russell

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