



BRITISH AIKIDO FEDERATION

Newsletter



Welcome...

Welcome to the latest edition of the British Aikido Federation newsletter.

In this edition you will find an interview from Sho Umetsu Sensei of Hombu Dojo, articles from Junior members of Manchester Dojo and an article from John Stephens of Macclesfield Dojo.

If you wish to submit an article for the BAF newsletter, then please do so using the email address:

BAFnewsletter@outlook.com



Please direct any queries in relation to Summer school to the organizers.

Summer School 2023

This summer school our guest instructor from Japan was Umetsu Sho Sensei 5th Dan Shidojin so Hombu Dojo.

This was Umetsu Sho Sensei's first visit to the UK and the British Aikido Federation Summer School.

Umetsu Sho sensei very kindly agreed to be interviewed for the British Aikido newsletter. You can find the article on page 2. I highly recommend you have a read.

Summer school 2023 also saw the return of some junior BAF members to the mat. Though they could only attend for one day, it was great to see two young female juniors on the mat.

Both junior members have written a short piece on their experience at summer school which can be found on page 3.

If you did not already know, Aikido is good for you! Head on over to page 4 and read the article from John Stephens of Macclesfield Dojo.

Finally, introducing the new BAF T-Shirt, available at all National Courses. Details on page 5.



Congratulations again to everyone who took a grading at summer school 2023 and those recommended for gradings to be confirmed at the 2024 Kagami Biraki.

Details of those who graded and were recommended can be found on page 3.

Interview with Umetsu Sho Sensei

Hombu Dojo

On Thursday 10th August during the British Aikido Federation Summer school, Sho Umetsu Sensei of Hombu Dojo agreed to be interviewed for the British Aikido Federation Newsletter. On behalf of the British Aikido Federation, we would like to thank Umetsu Sho Sensei for his time and taking part in the BAF newsletter.

We would also like to thank Jean Pasley for translating.

Question: When did sensei start practicing Aikido?

I started practicing at 5 years old. My parents practiced at Hombu Dojo. My father still practices in Doshu's class on Sunday morning.

Question: When did sensei become an Aikido Instructor?

When I was 30 I became a Shidojin. Until that period I was working in the office at Hombu Dojo whilst training at Hombu dojo.

Question: What appealed to sensei about Aikido

Because I was training since the age of 5, it was part of my normal everyday life. I had 3 sensei's in Hombu Dojo. My training as a junior was an enjoyable time.

Question: Who were the three Sensei?

Osawa Sensei, Kuribayashi Sensei and Fujimaki Sensei.

Question: How often do you practice Aikido?

I teach in other dojos about 5 or 6 times a week. I practice in Hombu Dojo 2 or 3 times a week in Doshu, Dojo Cho and Osawa Sensei class. I also teach in the aikido gakko beginners course.

Question: Do you have a favorite Aikido technique?

Iriminage is difficult, I am doing it a lot. I am working on it.

Question: What are you working towards in your own practice?

All the techniques are difficult, so I try to understand them and practice. I am working on iriminage.

Question: Are you enjoying your visit to the UK?

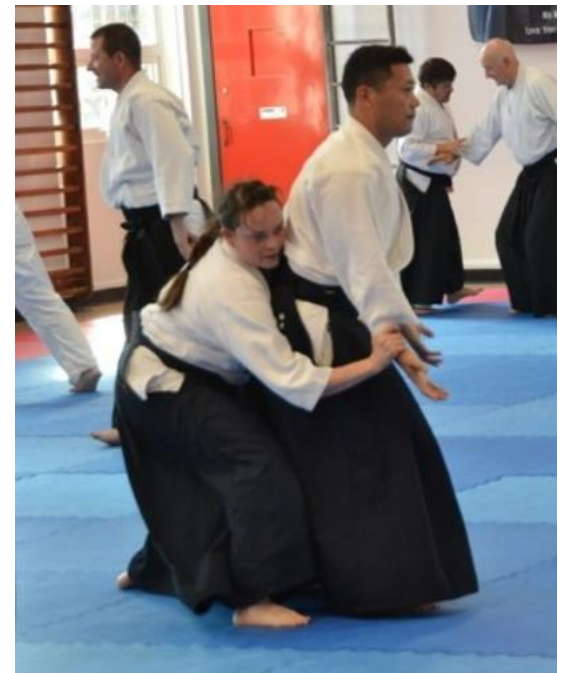
Yes of course. All the BAF Members are good people. It has been a great learning experience. The weather has been great.

I went to the Beatles Museum. I was happy to be able to touch Beatles History. I was very moved.

Liverpool is very pretty, especially the south part of the town.

Question: Do you have any advice for the students who have attended BAF Summer School this week?

There are lots of different styles of Aikido. They are all important. I would like people to approach Aikido from the point of view of creating harmony with the person you are training with. I would like people to blend more.



British Aikido Federation Summer School 2023.

When I was a child, it was very enjoyable doing Kotegaeshi with my sensei. My Sensei took ukemi for me, over and over again, flying ukemi. I learned about flow from my Sensei. My sensei was looking at two children practicing so Sensei would join in and took ukemi for us, not just watch us and tell us what to do. I feel this was very important.

I think if instructors in the BAF could create that kind of environment, it would be very enjoyable for younger people.

Question: Do you teach junior students?

I teach school kids and University students, maybe 16 or 17 years old.

Question: Do your children practice Aikido?

I have two daughters aged 7 and 2. My daughters do not practice Aikido. My 7-year-old daughter does Ballet and plays piano.

Question: Would you like to come back to BAF Summer school?

If you invite me, I will come.

Question: Is there anything you would like to say?

Before this I did not have much experience training abroad, but this has been great for me. I did a seminar in Russia, Cambodia and Korea. I have accompanied Dojo Cho on various foreign trips.



Junior Members return to Summer School!

Larissa from Manchester Dojo had the following to say about BAF Summer school 2023.

Summer School was very inclusive...

Summer school was very inclusive. It's a good learning experience for any junior / individual at Aikido or wanting to try out the martial arts.

I recommend it to anyone that would want a taster or learn with senior Dan Sensei's and see how people practice the martial art globally.

Everyone there is socially aware and friendly so it's a good environment to be in for anyone who wants to come along!



Devon from Manchester Dojo had the following to say about BAF Summer School 2023...

Hello my name is Devon...

Hello, my name is Devon and I am 12 years old. I started Aikido just over a year ago, so this was the first summer school I have been to.

When I went to summer school, I learnt so many new things. I trained with Sensei Don Morgan in the morning, someone I have been lucky to train with before. Then in the afternoon with Sensei Umetsu who was Japanese! We even had a translator!

I was a bit nervous in the beginning because there weren't many juniors on the mat, but we were well looked after by the instructors and other students on the mat, and when it was time for me to leave, I wanted to get back on!

I have always loved Aikido but this was one of the best experiences so far. I have loved every minute of the time I spent at summer school and look forward to going next year if I can, hopefully more juniors can make it to summer school next year and share my experience.



Summer School Gradings

Congratulations to everyone who took gradings at British Aikido Summer School 2023 and to those recommended!

KYU Gradings:

Arkadiusz Majdanski 6th Kyu

Eliot Layton 6th Kyu

Simon Faverio 3rd Kyu

Mark Reddish 2nd Kyu

Grzegorz Choszcz 2nd Kyu

Nick Durkin 3rd Kyu

Ken Flower 4th Kyu

Jarek Chaba 5th Kyu

1st Kyu and Yudansha:

Osian Richards 1st Kyu

Mark Reddish 1st Kyu

Kieran Hood 1st Kyu

Maxime Herbaut 1st Kyu

Mihail Petrov 1st Dan

Matthew Walters 1st Dan

Vanilla Shi 1st Dan

James Hayes 2nd Dan

Adam Blaker 2nd Dan

Rebecca Bennett 2nd Dan

Marcin Filip 3rd Dan

Nigel Kay 3rd Dan

Karolina Packo 3rd Dan

Karl Baverstock 3rd Dan

James Ladyman 4th Dan

Colin Bevan 4th Dan

Mark Storey 4th Dan

Kagami Biraki:

Ian Harris 1st Dan

Martin Beddington 1st Dan

Jeffrey Fitzpatrick 2nd Dan

Charlotte Gamble 3rd Dan

Gudrun Rieck 5th Dan

Paul Hughes 5th Dan

Ian Harrus (Chester) 5th Dan

Tony Doherty 5th Dan

Despina Kyriacou 6th Dan

Robert Yates 6th Dan

Peter Gillard 7th Dan



Upcoming British Aikido Courses

National Course

8th and 10th December – Cardiff

Local Course

8th November Greenwich Dojo Colamn Glynn

April Spring course – dates to be confirmed.

Its Official Aikido is Good for You!

You knew it all along but now science has caught up, Aikido is officially good for you, not just physically but it's good for your mental health and wellbeing.

Back in 2008 the UK Government commissioned some work to review all the studies that had ever been done looking at things we could do to help us feel better, to increase our positive feeling of wellbeing. The work identified just 5 areas where the evidence was strongest and these were dubbed 'The 5 ways to Wellbeing'. They've since been used around the world to help devise programs to support individuals and communities. The great news is they are all provided for in Aikido.

1. Connect

Being socially connected with others. Aikido provides this both on the mat and socially before and after class. Aikido strives for this at a deeper level, as O-Sensei said 'It is a way to reconcile the world and make human beings one family'. We positively search for that connection with others.

2. Be Active

There is a strong link between physical activity and both physical health and mental wellbeing. Aikido accommodates all types whether that be a dynamic young person happy to be flung around the mat or an octogenarian content with more modest physical achievements. What a range! Who said 'Aikido is for everyone'? Oh, that would be O Sensei again 😊.

3. Take notice

'Taking Notice' refers to mindfulness in its widest sense, 'Non-judgmental moment to moment awareness'. Aikido practice gives us this both through Zazen and through losing ourselves in instinctive practice. As a friend recently told me 'I tend to find it when I'm not looking for it' – deep or what.

4. Keep Learning

Human beings have an inbuilt desire to learn and to fill gaps in our knowledge. Learning can give us a sense of fulfillment and improve our wellbeing. In Aikido learning may be grasping a basic body movement or something more fundamental. As Bruce Lee once said, 'To know oneself is to study oneself in action with another person'.

5. Give

Modern technology shows that when we give to others the reward centres of our brain light up, it's a pleasure. We can give a lot in Aikido; our trust to others to look after us, our best connection to make their practice more worthwhile and sometimes advice. Be careful with the last one however as sometimes a better gift than advice is the gift of silence. (Scientifically proven!)

In summary Aikido is great for us- well what a surprise.

BAF T-Shirt and Polo



Introducing the new British Aikido Federation T-shirt and Polo Shirt.

Limited initial run! Available in a range of sizes.

T-Shirt: £10

Polo Shirt £12

Or buy one T-Shirt and one Polo Shirt for £20!

Available at all National Courses!