

BAF Newsletter

Merry
Christmas!
2024

From your
Member
Representatives
newsletterbaf@
gmail.com

Karolina Packo



Mark Storey



Dear Members,

I hope you are all well. With Christmas and New Year fast approaching we would like to wish you and your families a wonderful festive season! We hope it's filled with joy, laughter, great food and maybe some Aikido practice in between.

Thank you for all your support this year.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Peter Gillard - BAF Chairman

The 14th IAF Congress in Tokyo, Japan by Peter Gillard - BAF Chairman

“ To all members, hope you are all well and practicing!

David Yates and myself attended the International Aikido Federation Congress in Tokyo representing the BAF and SAF.

The Congress was held at the Yoyogi Olympic Centre, Tokyo. The approach to the Centre was by so many steps it felt you were heading up a mountain and was a good exercise before you started!

We were here for IAF the 14th Congress since its founding. It's worth mentioning the BAF under Chiba Sensei was a founder member of the IAF. And Peter Goldsbury from the UK who although living Japan and is an honorary BAF member held the post of Chair of the IAF for many years! And importantly Ken Cottier Sensei was a member of the IAF Senior Council from its founding for many years until his passing.

Only one Hombu recognised organisation per country is allowed to join the IAF under the present rules but at a meeting previously the Hombu had asked that membership of the IAF be allowed to groups of Aikikai Foundation groups in each country join under an umbrella group, like the JAC in the UK. But together with Matthew Holland Sensei we stated with our history in the UK that our position be recognised and the BAF and SAF should remain the only IAF members in our countries.

Grading Committee

- Don Morgan
- Ian McClarence
- Ken Marsden
- Peter Gillard
- Steve Parr
- Brian Smith
- David Yates

Shidoi

- Alex Megann
- Andy King
- Rob Yates
- Allen Hagan
- Despina Kyriacou
- Russell Milton
- Andrew Marginson

Fukushidoi

- Arabella Braun
- Simon Fraser
- Caroline Smith
- Nick Belshaw
- Paul Hughes
- Gudrun Rieck
- Karolina Packo

The Hombu accepted our request and the BAF and SAF remain the only members of the IAF in the UK.

The last Congress should have been in 2020 but was postponed until 2021 due to the COVID and was held via Zoom, so it has been 8 years since it has been a physical meeting! The advantage of this meant it was also possible for there to be Aikido classes to be held with senior instructors from all around the world alongside the Congress.

The first impression coming back to the physical Congress was the expansion of the IAF since we had all meet 8 years previously. The number of countries represented at the IAF now stands at 88, with 11 associate member countries, all of them will try to become full members at the next congress in 2028. The IAF has expanded worldwide. In the past the Congress was made up mostly with members from the far east (Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore etc) and the west (Europe, USA, Russia etc). But now Federations from Africa and Arabia and South America if not full members yet are applying for membership!!!

So part of the Congress is examining the applications from different countries. Of course unlike applications from the West due to religion and customs also Government attitudes vary, but the IAF and Hombu have come to agreements which means these countries can be provisionally accepted. I think I should point out if a decision is not made it can be put off to the next Congress in 4 years time!

An important part of this week was the discussion about the position of Chair of the IAF which had been held for 4 years by Wilko Vriesman Sensei from Holland who decided to step down in favour of Yoko Okamoto Sensei, who was elected to the position. So with Okamoto Sensei's election she becomes not only the first woman Chair but also the first Japanese to hold the position after all these years! We congratulate Okamoto Sensei and hope for many years of Harmony! The remainder of the positions on the IAF Directing Committee have already been published on the BAF website and social media platforms.

Before the congress David had been asked to be a member of the IAF Auditing Committee, along with Steve Kennedy from Hong Kong Aikikai and Rudolf Dekker from the Dutch Aikikai. He had to attend a meeting at Hombu dojo with the IAF accounts team a couple of hours after landing in Tokyo! David then presented the Auditing Committee report to the congress and has been asked to perform that role in 2028.

One memorable part of the second day was when the head of the IAF Senior Council, Tada Sensei gave a talk. He is 94 years old and still practicing as one of the last of O'Sensei's direct students. His lecture gave his views from talking about O'Sensei, his life and practice with and after O'Sensei, to Tada Sensei's understanding of Aikido. It is special to listen to and try to absorb his vision of Aikido, practice and life! He is a fascinating man and is hugely passionate about aikido in general after over 70 years of training.

On the other side of the Congress is the actual classes as I mentioned. As 8 years have passed since the last IAF Congress this year had a different look! The practice started on Tuesday with Kuribayashi Sensei which started off the rest of week.

Kanazawa Sensei took the Wednesday practice and there were 5 classes a day, each with a different Sensei so everyone had a choice of how much or how little and with who you wanted to practice with!

On the Friday the Embukai was held with demonstration by different member countries talking part. The BAF was represented by David Yates, ably assisted by Robert Yates, Caroline Smith and Kushan Kulatunga, a former BAF member who now lives in Sri Lanka! The demonstration was well received.

On the Sunday morning the Doshu gave a class on which over 1000 people took part, sharing a special experience even with little room to move.

A reception was held on the Sunday evening where apart from the farewell speeches the chance to meet up with not only Hombu Sensei we know but others who may be of interest in the future, heads of other Federations along with many friends from over the years and past IAF. The Doshu announced that the 15th Congress will be held in the birth place of O'Sensei in Tanabe, Wakayama.....

Not only a very important place in the history of Aikido but a beautiful place to visit and practice!"

Peter Gillard - BAF Chairman

Dave Yates - BAF Treasurer

Larissa Hall - another Junior Shodan!

Larissa started aikido at Wa Go Kan dojo Manchester in 2018 at the age of 10 and has progressed and studied regularly with great enthusiasm, she has made the effort to attend the BAF summer school with Kanazawa sensei and Umetsu sensei, she has been lucky to have attended classes with Yamashima sensei and Kumazawa sensei, as well as many of BAF senior instructors.

Larissa is the third junior Shodan at Manchester aikido club although the first two have now become 18 and have moved to the adult class, she now needs continue developing her practice and inspire other juniors to train harder and develop. Many thanks to Steve Parr Shihan for conducting the grading.

Congratulations Larissa! We wish you all success in the future.



A shout out to all BAF Juniors!

This is a message to all our Junior Members.

Firstly, congratulations to all our Juniors who took and passed their gradings this year. You may be small but you are mighty. Well done and keep up the good work!

Secondly, the BAF would not exist without you. You attend your classes week in, week out; you try your best to learn Aikido and at the same time, we are hoping, you are having fun! Your instructors love having you on the mat and love seeing you growing in confidence and improving your Aikido. So do not stop! Enjoy your practice and your Aikido. 😊

Tell us why you like Aikido. How you started, what technique you like the most. Drop us an email newsletterbaf@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you!

Upcoming events

22 - 23 March 2025 - BAF Spring National Course, Malvern. Instructors to be confirmed.

12 - 13 April 2025 - Joint Aikikai Council Spring Seminar, Cardiff. Instructor Makoto Ito 6th Dan Shihan from Hombu Dojo, Tokyo Japan

21 - 22 June 2025 - BAF National Course, Oxford. Instructors to be confirmed.

4 - 7 Aug 2025 - BAF Summer School, Chester. Visiting Instructor Umetsu Sho Sensei 6th Dan Shihan so Hombu Dojo.

4 - 5 Oct 2025 - BAF National Course, Cardiff. Instructors to be confirmed.

British Aikido Federation Safeguarding Lead

British Aikido Federation Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

We would like to inform our members/clubs that Russell Milton is now the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the BAF.

If instructors, members, parents or carers need any guidance with issues around adult safeguarding or child protection or want to report concerns, please contact him using the details below:

Email - russellmilton@hotmail.com

Mobile - 0781 2561726



Christmas thoughts from North Wales after Japan Trip

by Gudrun Rieck

Snippets from our Japan trip: get up at 4:30am, on the tatami at 6am - well, at least occasionally. You feel buzzing after the famous morning class at Hombu. We suddenly wondered what we had studied all those years of Aikido. Day by day training in Japan we realised more and more that we had no idea about Aikido. What is Aikido? Why do you study Aikido?

Over the weeks we made many friends in the Aikido world by going to different classes and dojos. And then we found our fantastic mentor and friend: Yamashima Sensei. He himself practises at Hombu dojo but also runs various classes all over Tokyo and the world. He introduced us to wonderful Aikidokas some who had met O'Sensei Morihei Ueshiba. They described his strong aura and presence which left an indelible impression on their lives and memories. All loved to share their Aikido and energy on and off the tatami. And then Doshu. He treated us as if we were part of his dojo. What a surprise when we met him on the way to Tanabe. Doshu had spotted us long before. He was on his way to the shrine for a private celebration. Tanabe is out of this world. Just by pure luck we found accommodation very close to O'Sensei's birthplace. Incredibly beautiful: sunrise from his house over Tanabe's Bay and the mountains, and in the evening, he experienced these beautiful sunsets over the sea tori. Perhaps these nature events allowed Morihei Ueshiba Sensei to feel the energy all around him resulting in his all-encompassing Aikido as reflected in his famous statue which is at Tanabe's Bay. His arms stretched out embracing the world.

Over the weeks we became fitter and Kobayashi Sensei pointed out that we had lost weight: well, this is due to all this healthy food Sensei, no fish and chips, no butter, no bread. He just laughed.

Slowly over the weeks our body changed, we practised with all those whirlwind practitioners around us, we started to feel their centres. Tori is the centre and uke flies away due to this centrifugal force - wow. No fighting, no resistance - just movement, friendship and lots of laughter and parties after training. Perhaps this is what Aikido is about: concentrated energy, friendship and peace all over the world.

Being back from Japan we would love to share our experience and thoughts. More articles will hopefully follow. Hope this encourages you to continue your Aikido practise and start to save up for a trip of your lifetime.

May peace prevail the world

National Committee 2024 - 2025

Chairman - Peter Gillard

Deputy Chairman - Russell Milton

General Secretary - Caroline Smith

Treasurer - Dave Yates

Membership Secretary - Alan Hagan

Child protection Officer - Andrew Peterson

Senior Members - Ian McClarence, Ken Marsden

Member Representatives - Mark Storey, Karolina Packo

A new BAF website coming up soon!

Watch out for our brand new website! We will be launching it soon. Thank you to all involved in creating it.

We encourage our members to get involved, be it writing an article for the next newsletter, sharing new ideas for website content etc.

Give us a shout if you want to get involved: newsletterbaf@gmail.com

