

## From the Vice Chairman

# End of a busy year

**W**ell 2010 is nearly over and I have been reflecting on some of the BAB's recent achievements.

The decision to revise the membership requirements to enable more members of the wider Aikido fraternity to join the BAB has resulted in a number of new organisations coming into either full or associate membership, and there are currently 5 organisations whose probationary period is progressing well. Since re-launching the Clubmark initiative 7 clubs have achieved accreditation and a number of others are in the pipeline.

It is anticipated that the appointment of a number of specialist officers, reported in the last edition, will soon be supplemented by an officer with responsibility for vulnerable adults, a previously neglected area.

On-going reviews and initiatives are being undertaken in all areas, through the Aikido Development Plan, to ensure we remain fit for purpose, and these have already resulted in revisions to our constitution and policies, and the provision of guidelines in insurance, coaching and child protection.

To support our younger members, the successful annual National Course is to be complimented by a similar event for young people, and guidelines have been prepared to assist in the introduction of Aikido into Schools.

The long awaited Dan Grade Register is about to be piloted and a new Coaching Handbook is nearing completion, plus a Weapons Protocol.

The profile of the BAB is being raised through the work of our Media Officers and Webmaster and a number of other initiatives are progressing to improve communication with individual members.

This is in addition to maintaining our core tasks such as the provision of insurance, coaching courses and accreditation; ensuring on-going advice on compliance with current legislation etc.

Considering our reliance on voluntary effort we are making real progress -and there is more to come.

Keith Holland  
(Vice Chairman)

### Useful links and email addresses:

BAB website: <http://www.bab.org.uk/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/BritishAikidoBoard>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/BritishAikidoBd>

Media Officer: [mediaofficer@bab.org.uk](mailto:mediaofficer@bab.org.uk)

Event listing: [updatecoaches@bab.org.uk](mailto:updatecoaches@bab.org.uk)



## Vulnerable Adults

**F**ollowing the very successful work undertaken to protect children and young people practicing Aikido, work will now start on developing a policy and guidance documents on the protection of Vulnerable Adults. This is timely as the CCPR have recently identified this as a priority and Sport England are now making the existence of a Vulnerable Adults Policy a prerequisite for funding.

Because of the significant areas of overlap with child protection procedures the Board were delighted that Sue Ward, had agreed to become the lead officer for both areas and she has been appointed as the BAB Lead Safeguarding Officer. She will be assisted by Faye Stockwell, from Tenchi Ryu, who will become the Vulnerable Adults Officer and external professional support has also been identified.

# BAB National Course 2010

A personal account of the National Course by Brett Robinson who had just been graded to 1st Dan two days before.

The BAB National Course at Brunel was really fantastic in that it was the “cherry on top” to my black belt award! The day was particularly impressive because it allowed me to practice nearly all of actions used in my grading. The course at Brunel also provided a series of succinct additions to techniques that can only be experienced by interaction with experts from other clubs. These trainers always manage to add their particular “flavour” to known techniques. At this course they also provided a wealth of new methods.

Brett Robinson  
1st Dan, Aikido Development Society



Garry Masters 6th Dan, Ken Shin Kai



Bob Jones 6th Dan, British Aikido Association



Bob Spence 6th Dan, Lancashire Aikikai



Attendees.

All photos: Aikido Development Society





Ken Robson 7th Dan, Shudokan Institute of Aikido International



John Jenkin 6th Dan, UK Shinwakai Aikido



Some training during the day.



BAB chairman, Vincent Sumpter, in action.

## Black Belt grading



On Thursday 7th October 2010 The Aikido Development Society held a grading at the Chingford and Woodford Aikido Club. Brett Robinson 66 years young, Consultant at Kings College London Dental Institute took his 1st Dan Grading along with Matthew Robinson 25 (no relation), taking his 2nd Kyu. Although Brett is not as young as he once was he is one of the fittest people in the Chingford class being a fanatic in cycling, water polo, boxing as well as Tomiki Aikido so the grading was arranged accordingly.

The 7 Dan Grade panel watched Brett perform Randori No Kata (17), Ure Waza Counter Kata (10), Koryu Dia Yon (27), Koryu Dai San (24) he then went on to hand to hand, hand to knife contest against single and multiple (2-4) attackers. After approximately 90 attackers continuously it was decided that they had had enough as Brett was still standing and raring to go. During most of the kata Matthew Robinson had been used by Brett as uke but after Brett had finished it was his turn to complete the required elements of his Blue Belt Kata and contest, so his grading was doubly hard as he needed to learn most of the 1st Dan syllabus as well.

The grading panel was pleased to pass both Brett and Matthew unanimously. We all had a great time seeing two people who well deserved their new grades pass with flying colours.

The first time that Brett wore his shiny new black belt was at the BAB 2010 National Course at Brunel University just two days after his grading. I am not sure if I could have walked after what we put him through let alone go on a full day course.

Steve Billett

Chairman of the Aikido Development Society



# Towards Unity (part 2)



Photo: Ken Shin Kai

*This is part two of an article written by a senior Aikido sensei. Part one, which appeared in the July edition of the BAB newsletter, can be downloaded from:*  
[http://www.bab.org.uk/downloads/BAB\\_newsletter\\_July\\_2010.pdf](http://www.bab.org.uk/downloads/BAB_newsletter_July_2010.pdf).

I see overt movements only as movements that define a technique. In themselves, they contain no subtleties. If they did, then every technique would have a set of technique-dependent subtleties, giving aikido thousands of specific points to learn and inculcate. An impossible task. However, suppose there were just a few movements, independent of technique, to learn for all Aikido. Because they are movements, learning would be so much easier as muscle memory would be involved, freeing the brain for essential thoughts. The mechanical constructs of the first article, gave us the ability to strengthen our techniques. This set of movements, subliminal movement, give us the ability to impair and control our attacker.

## Subliminal movement

Aikido is a little like playing chess, with us being Black. White has made his move and we need to react, but because of the alternate move rule, Black finds it hard to create an attacking move. Black needs to take an extra move, but this is not possible. So Black must make a move that has within it defence and a subtle advantage. Having gained an advantage, Black must ensure that it is kept by building additional advantages with every subsequent overt movement. These advantages should be seen in two ways. Firstly, as a state of impairment in the attacker that directly relates inversely to his ability to counter-attack and

secondly, as directional changes in the attacker prior to them being required. The initiated reader will know I am referring mainly to the attacker's balance but I do not like the word, "balance". The expression, "Take his balance" is accurate but gives no indication as to how to do that. I prefer the term displacement as it implies direction as well as a shift of his centre of gravity and subliminal movements are the way we can achieve this. Perhaps it does not need stating, but mechanical constructs are essential to maximise subliminal movement.

Initially, subliminal movements will need to be accentuated, so that their advantages can be felt and learnt. However, ultimately they will become imbedded in the overt movements, so much so, that they will not be seen easily by the uninitiated, hence the set title of subliminal movement. Conceptually, they are always placed on the end of the preceding overt movement and not at the beginning of the subsequent overt movement. This time difference, although very small, is vitally important. Furthermore, contact points are now seen as dynamic as they change within a technique. The transition from a prior contact point to a new one is dependent upon subliminal movement to ensure that advantage is developed.

## Two final points to consider

Imagine an attacker grasps your lower forearm with both hands and your arm appears to be held stationary. You lock the contact point on your central plane, perform a hip rotation (feeling his centre of gravity move slightly) and push with the back foot (feeling that variable radial control of the contact point push skyward as your front foot slides along the new balance line, now directly below your central plane). The contact point



is now high in front of your forehead and you have performed a shoulder adjustment by pushing your elbow forward (feeling his body bend as his hips float and his centre of gravity pass beyond his base, as well as feeling the technical power, you have of the contact line being as straight and running through your body, as your power line is stretched). His grip changes. The power in his bottom hand has broken but the top hand remains strong. You rotate your shoulder so that your concave arm become s convex, performing a sequential joint manipulation, (feeling his elbow pull his shoulder which in turn stretches his spine and moves his hips and then his knees forward) the contact point now slides down the edge of your central plane like a sword cut (feeling the acceleration of the contact point's parabolic path), while the power of your rear foot and the height reduction takes him completely (feeling your weight being added to the contact point as weight redistribution occurs). As your front knee softly cushions your motion, you help your attacker to rotate and land correctly on his back. Happy with the technique, you ask your students to practise. Then you notice that one of your experienced students is finishing the technique with a different overt movement. Everything else is correct except for that final movement where the arm cuts, this time, from concave to concave, with a variable radial control. What would you now do?

A sensei might well correct the student to use the same overt movements as was demonstrated and in doing so, build up a culture that the way a technique is shown, is the only correct execution. However, that scenario, where the last overt movement differed, is a better reaction to the attacker's opposite hand breaking power than the technique demonstrated. How difficult it is for a sensei to observe this subtlety, yet how vital that observation is in accepting that different overt movements can be equally correct.

So here is an example of where different overt movements of the same technique could cause disagreement. Once Aikido is analysed with our eyes rather than our feelings and with our overt movements rather than mechanical constructs and subliminal movements, we loose our Aikido. To answer the question, if the technique comprises the technicalities of mechanical constructs and subliminal movements, then a variety of differing overt movements could be correct. Overt movements vary, not because there are differing opinions but because there may well be, for example, a differential in height between attacker and defender thus causing a different hand to break power. As the permutations of height, mass, strength, suppleness and physics increase, overt movement differences could tend to infinity. Alternatively, employing underlying movements will help us: keep things simple; analyse; develop and share our Aikido.

The second point to consider is that subliminal movement has an additional effect across Aikido. When visualising points, such as the contact point, axes and points of rotation, and centres of gravity, these moving points form a swirling network in three dimensional space. One might presume that each technique has its own unique form, rather like galaxies each with their own beauty. Look again, for I believe that all Aikido galaxies form a common structure and subliminal movement helps to maintain this structure.

Finally, once subliminal movements become seamless, physical strength is no longer a necessity and conceptual movements can be studied.

## Subliminal Movement Definitions

### Advantage

The primary concern of subliminal movement where displacement of the attacker lessens his control.

### Height Reduction

When one's front knee lowers one's height to produce a weight drop that is transferred directly into one's attacker, thus impairing him.

### Hip rotation

The use of one's hips to displace an attacker to initiate a directional change prior to an overt movement's angular change of direction or a rotational overt movement.

### Sequential joint manipulation

The process of controlling one's attacker by targeting a specific joint and then manipulating subsequent adjacent joints until control is acquired.

### Shoulder adjustment

The way the shoulder is used to help float an attacker.

### Sword Cut

The way the samurai moved to make their swords slice, the way their weight gave it additional power and the way the power from the lower body was transmitted to the blade, are vital insights into this subliminal movement.

### Variable radii control

The way the contact point is moved by lengthening or shortening the radius created by the arms or shoulders.

### Weight redistribution

When one's front knee is moved forward to create a displacement in the attacker's centre of gravity.



Photo: Ken Shin Kai

## Events calendar

### 2011

#### 14 January to 16 January

Extreme Winter Woodland Aikido 2, Chorley, Lancashire  
[http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub\\_course.asp?ID=%20206](http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub_course.asp?ID=%20206)

#### 11 March to 13 March

Lancashire Aikikai, Aikido Weekend, Ribby Hall  
[http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub\\_course.asp?ID=%20149](http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub_course.asp?ID=%20149)

#### 7 May to 9 May

Shinkendo / Aikibuken Seminar with Toshishiro Obata Kaiso, Milton Keynes  
[http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub\\_course.asp?ID=%20187](http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub_course.asp?ID=%20187)

#### 14 May

BAB Annual General Meeting

#### 15 May

BAB National Course for Young People, Weston Super Mare

#### 30 June to 6 August

International Aikido event and Katana competition  
[http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub\\_course.asp?ID=%20201](http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub_course.asp?ID=%20201)

#### 28 July to 31 July

Shudokan Institute of Aikido Summer School, Nottingham

#### 03 September to 04 September

Kai Shin Kai Traditional Aikido, Aylesbury  
[http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub\\_course.asp?ID=%20197](http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub_course.asp?ID=%20197)

#### 8 October

BAB National Course, Brunel University

#### 5 November to 6 November

Kai Shin Kai Traditional Aikido, Aylesbury  
[http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub\\_course.asp?ID=%20198](http://www.bab.org.uk/courses/sub_course.asp?ID=%20198)

*There are times when you may be overwhelmed by the teachings of the Way. It is important to continue with the original spirit of a beginner.*

*- Morihei Ueshiba*

## If you wish to contribute...

Any text for newsletter articles should be sent in one of the following formats: Word, .doc, .rtf, or plain text.

Any images need to be sent as either a JPEG file at as high a resolution as possible or as a high resolution PDF. But please bear in mind that most email systems have a limit of 10mb file size.

Please send your newsletter text and images to:  
[mediaofficer@bab.org.uk](mailto:mediaofficer@bab.org.uk)

## The Media Officers

### Media Officer: Mick Mercer



Mick Mercer started his martial arts experience studying judo when he first joined the RAF in 1977. After graduating as a pilot in 1981 he left martial arts behind to focus on surviving the rigours of flying in the height of the Cold War. In 1990, while serving in North Yorkshire he discovered a small Aikido school being taught by Ken

Robson Sensei through the Shudokan Institute of Aikido headed by Eddie Stratton Sensei; and his interest in martial arts was rekindled. Although his career in the RAF took him to many different places he always managed to find somewhere to train. In 2001 he was posted to Malaysia where he was lucky enough to be near Francis Ramasamy Sensei a 6th Dan Yoshinkan Aikido (now 7th Dan) and he enjoyed 2 years of regular training under the same teacher. On returning to UK he decided to finish his RAF career early and set up a full time Aikido school in Preston Lancashire, where his grown up children had settled. The dojo is now in its 7th year and Mick teaches 6 days a week and attends as many seminars as he possibly can in order to continue learning.

### Assistant Media Officer: Richard Watts



Rich runs the Shudokan Aikido school in Oxford, which is part of the Shudokan Institute of Aikido International. He has been training in Aikido for over ten years and has also trained in Kyokushinkai Karate. Rich originally comes from New Zealand and has been living in the UK for over twenty years. His background is in publishing and website design.

### Media Officer role

Our aim is to provide members with the ability to share their knowledge, stories and information about all things Aikido in the hope that this will better bring the wider Aikido community together and help us to all share information about interesting and useful events taking place in the UK.

The priority for the media officers in 2011 will be to improve the internal communication of the current membership with the focal point being the BAB website. The BAB boasts some 10,000 individual members and we feel each and every one should have the ability to hear and comment on what is happening in the BAB Aikido community. To that end we have set up Facebook and Twitter pages and will work (with the webmaster) to improve the usability of the website. This newsletter will also play a vital part in getting our message out there. We currently have nearly 200 Facebook "fans" with new fans joining everyday. Our Twitter page is also well subscribed. If you are not already a "fan" JOIN NOW. Its a great way to share information and ideas with the wider BAB community.

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/BritishAikidoBoard>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/BritishAikidoBd>