

New Year message to our members

Dear members and parents,

2016 was an excellent year for the clubs. As such, I wanted to take a few minutes to look back at everything we've achieved and also to take a look forward to the year ahead.

A year of achievements and growth

We now have 88 members actively training in our standard classes. We've seen average attendances in all of our classes increase and we've also had our busiest ever week in the history of the clubs.

Our Bushido Warriors programme continues to provide an excellent opportunity for youngsters to get involved in Karate and throughout the year we gave out 32 certificates to our champions of the future. Dan Salter became a lead instructor of the programme this year, ably assisted by Ian Connell and Kevin Mashford and I'd like to thank them all for their commitment.

We hosted three of our own special courses, including two kyu gradings. We commit to delivering at least this number of courses again in 2017.

In terms of rank promotions, 2016 was our busiest ever year for kyu gradings, with 76 gradings passed. With Dan gradings we saw promotions to Shodan (Archie Newbury), Nidan (Fergus Puddy) and Sandan (Ashley Hall). We introduced a new Dan Grading Guide booklet to help those wishing to take a dan grading. If you'd like to pass your dan grading in 2017 then ask for a copy at your next session.

We also hosted two very successful free events for our members: a summer barbecue and a Christmas Party, with the latter raising £1,124 for CLIC Sargent and the family of club member Hannah Nicoll, who is undergoing treatment for cancer following her diagnosis in the summer.

In October Jim Mateer qualified as a competition judge. Jim is the first judge in the clubs' long history and we were delighted to see him pass his exams.

Tournament successes

In competition, 2016 saw three of our members crowned as senior champions for the first time ever. Steven Connell won the KUGB South West kata title, Dan Salter became WTKO Ireland's Veterans' Kumite Champion and Ian Connell won the inaugural Veterans' Kumite event at the KUGB Southern Region Championships – an event that we campaigned to be included, and which proved to be a great success.

Our elite kata team built on their 2015 performances by winning three out of the four tournaments they entered in 2016 – the best we've ever done.

At the JKS England Nationals we placed in four categories – our best performance ever. At the KUGB Southern Region Championships we put in a good performance, taking three titles and have now won a team event in four out of the last five years of the tournament.

We also took our first ever competitive trip overseas, taking part in the WTKO Irish Open, bringing home two titles and a total of seven placings.

Finally, our younger members picked up eight out of nine trophies on offer at the Bill Winfield Memorial competition, for the second year running.

Looking forward to 2017

Looking forward to 2017, I am working with the instructors on a number of other improvements to help the clubs thrive and to keep standards improving.

As the clubs grow and mature we need to keep evolving in order to serve our membership as best as possible and to help everyone to meet their goals. I'm looking at our class schedules and structures in order to make sure everyone gets the training they need to be the best they possibly can be. The first improvement is an extension to our Warriors programme, but there's much more to come. We'll let you know as soon as we can.

If you've got a training goal for 2017 – whether it's to pass a grading, to learn a new Karate skill or to improve your performance at tournaments – then make sure you do three things:

- 1) Commit pen to paper and write a plan for what you'll do to achieve it.
- 2) Let our instructors know – we'll do whatever we can to help you.
- 3) Work week-in, week-out to reach your goal. Even when it seems tough. Even if you have to change your plan. You can do it.

On behalf of all of the instructors I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year. Together let's make 2017 a transformative year for you and the clubs alike.

Osu!

Tim Griffiths
Chief Instructor, Nailsea Karate & Backwell Karate

