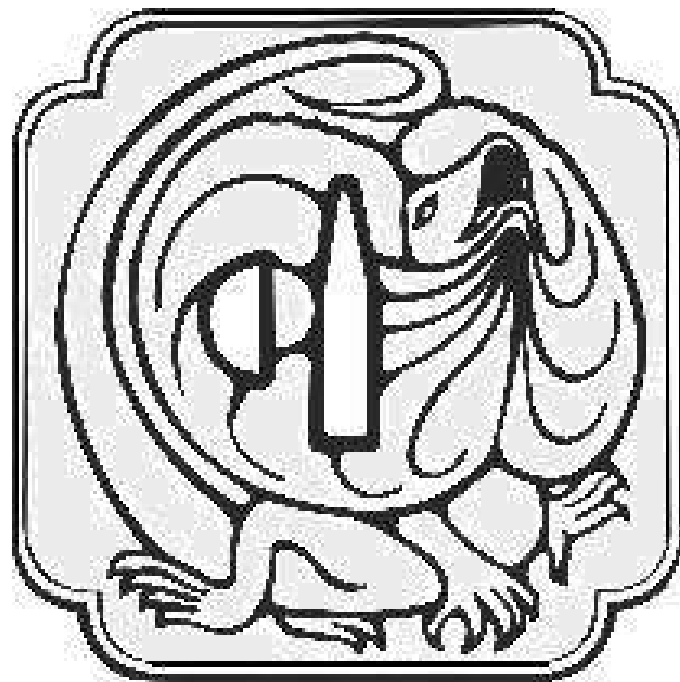


The Progress of Kendo, Iaido and Jodo in Australia

A History of the Australian Kendo Renmei



by

Ron Bennett

with

Bob Brown (PhD)

Dedication

This history is dedicated to the memory of Mr Rex Lawley and the members, Australian and international, who were responsible for the founding of the Australian Kendo Renmei.



The late Rex Kenneth LAWLEY
The Australian Founder of Kendo
(9th November 1931 – 27th March 2007)

Foreword by Richard Ward, President of the Australian Kendo Renmei

Ron Bennett was one of the founders of the Australian Kendo Renmei in the 1960's. At the time of writing this in 2012, Ron is still active in our midst. Of course, over the years, Ron has amassed numerous stories related to his and others Kendo experiences. Ron had a dream to one day to record the stories and experiences for the benefit of those who follow. So a few years ago he commenced the onerous task to achieve his dream and create a history of the AKR.

It is written in the preface *"To relate a history for such a multi-threaded and organic thing as the Australian Kendo Renmei is no easy task."* That is indeed so.

Ron called on many members to provide a contribution of content and help to clarify events that may have become a little clouded over the years.

The Progress of Kendo, Iaido and Jodo in Australia. A History of the Australian Kendo Renmei, is a valuable work and will become part of a cherished collection to remind us of our tradition and those who went before us.

I commend the History of the Australian Kendo Renmei and thank both Ron Bennett, who with the help of Robert Brown has produced this important work.



Richard Ward,
President



Preface

Much like the European colonisation of Australia itself, Australian Kendo, Iaido and Judo were established as a series of geographically separate and largely disconnected events. There were early hesitant starts, several near extinctions, mutual discoveries and of course, many notable personalities – pioneers, teachers, mentors, champions, heroes, rogues and warriors - all budoka.

To relate a history for such a multi-threaded and organic thing as the Australian Kendo Renmei is no easy task. Memory fades and traditions grow, and each of us carries a fiercely loyal localised version of events within us. To find the common ground and a version that aligns with everyone's convictions is, as always in the writing of any history, simply impossible. The authors have spent a great deal of time inviting and eliciting submissions and memories from as many people as possible, with varying degrees of success. Every effort has been made to give full credit to those whose efforts have contributed to the healthy and vigorous organisation we have today.

As in any group or family, the AKR has its frictions and factions, its black sheep and its white knights; and no consensus as to who were which! Doubtless, we all recall points of disagreement, dispute or contention. Any organisation which promotes the fighting arts attracts people with strong wills, firm convictions and competitive streak a mile wide; we wouldn't have it any other way. Even decades later, a warrior spirit often tends to recall slights and disputes more easily than anything else.

In accordance with the AKR's mission to promote and grow the arts, the purpose of this book is to document the PROGRESS of Kendo, Iaido and Judo in Australia under the AKR. It is hoped that documenting the efforts and achievements of the AKR in its first 50 years will provide a basis for future growth and development of our three arts. The authors have, therefore, decidedly and unashamedly concentrated on and highlighted the many positives, at the expense of recording all the negatives. The vital diversity of the membership and history of the AKR has been its great strength. We invite you to discover through this history that from the melting pot of our differences has emerged a single unity of purpose and a dedication towards mutually supportive growth and a joint pursuit of excellence that is uniquely Australian in flavour. As our AKR motto says, we are:

In Spirit United - In Skill Opposed

On the use of titles

In keeping with the egalitarian Australian spirit, it has been decided to refer to AKR members simply by their names, without martial title. This decision was not taken lightly. Whilst all due acknowledgement of the achievements, titles and ranks achieved by AKR members is given in full to the best of our abilities, it must be remembered that we were all beginners at the start. To avoid the complications of having to track exactly when any individual should start being addressed as "Sensei" (when they first taught another, when they first lead a dojo, when they achieved Godan, when they achieved a Shogo rank etc.) the authors have reserved the regular use of the title "Sensei" only for visiting Masters, who were indisputably "Sensei" before they even met us. We recognise that many of the great names in our own history are properly and justly revered and that their students would never dream of leaving off the title "Sensei". To those who vigorously defend

the traditions of their clubs and venerate their great home-grown teachers, we crave indulgence and offer the assurance that no disrespect was intended by this editorial decision.

On the gaps in this text

This is not the first time a history of Australian Kendo, laido or Jodo has been attempted, and certainly won't be the last (if only because new history is being made every day!).

Rex Lawley recorded many of his thoughts on the origins of Kendo, and John Butler wrote an excellent history of the early Victorian experience, Gary Oliver compiled an exhaustive history of the VKR (much of which he has kindly contributed to this volume to make up almost all of the Victorian content), Dale Gould compiled a near complete history which sadly was consumed in fire before it could be published, Aden Steinke's eidetic memory helped him record many NSW events through the 80's and 90's, John Bear and Neil Phillips compiled an excellent history of the first decade of laido. Dr Yahiko Kodono Sensei's text "*My Thoughts on laido*" also provided some excellent historical insights. Numerous other members have assembled club and organisational histories as well, including Joachim Semmler and Ramon Lawrence.

All these sources have been invaluable in compiling this work, but sadly a great many primary documents, championship records, photographs and other materials were lost when Dale 'Weary' Gould's farmhouse in Golspie was destroyed in a terrible fire in 1999. Weary had been entrusted by Ron Bennett with these irreplaceable primary sources so he could compose a history of Kendo, but all his work (which was plagued by member's persistent reluctance to contribute or participate) was consumed, along with the original source documents.

The same lack of contribution, which so frustrated Weary's history, was visited upon this volume as well. Of course a great many members past and present *did* see fit to contribute photographs, memories, personal histories and documents and we have used every shred we could get. All these people are owed a huge debt of gratitude and we thank them all. Many other people chose to adopt an air of Budo humility and declare themselves to be 'unimportant' – but the reality could not be further from the truth; the AKR is not a great stone building, a natural landmark nor some great monument, it is *no more and no less* than a group of like-minded people who share a love for the Japanese Sword Arts, and it exists purely in their minds. Each member carries just a little of the whole story within them, and if they won't share, then not only will it never be recorded, it will *cease to have ever existed at all*. We cannot allow such a tragedy. Dig in! Speak up!

We know there are whole chapters more to the story. This volume is, in truth, but the first edition of "*The Progress of Kendo, laido and Jodo in Australia*". Perhaps the compilers of subsequent editions will find that *this* volume (particularly its gaping omissions) will have prompted members to be more forthcoming. Our readers may feel moved to *correct* what we have written here, or to add to it; and we welcome that (almost as much as we would wish they had done so *this time around!*).

We can only apologise for the many gaps and assure the reader we have done our best with very sparse resources. We strongly encourage those readers with something to say, to add or to correct to speak up before they forget. Any addition, correction or contribution (however small – a date, a name, a photograph, an anecdote etc.), should be forwarded it to the AKR Secretary for inclusion by future historians. We hope it happens while memories still reach back so far!

We wish the compilers of future editions of this history the very best of luck, and hope that our efforts prove to be of some use in their labours.

Special thanks to earlier chroniclers

Special thanks are offered to all those chroniclers who have recorded histories of the AKR arts in the past. We are sure there are many more than we have found, but we should like to give very particular thanks and acknowledgement to the following authors and texts (in approximate chronological order):

Rex & Steve Lawley	The History of Australian Kendo 1958-1981 (Self-published, 1981)
John Butler	A Personal History of the Melbourne Kendo Club (Self-published, 1984)
Dr Yahiko Kodono	My Thoughts on Iaido (Fast Books Australia, 1994)
John Bear & Neil Phillips	Australian Iaido Championships (1991-99) The first decade - a brief retrospective (Limited edition; Publications and Research Division IJJA Pty Ltd. 1999)
Dale 'Weary' Gould	The Unwritten History of Australian Kendo (Unpublished. Draft lost in the Golspie fire of 1999)
Aden Steinke	Tournament Results (online: http://Kendo-wollongong.com/res1999.htm , 2000)
Gary & Ryan Oliver & Eion Cannon	The Ballarat Kendo Club - the first ten years (self-published, 2005)
Gary Oliver	The History of the Victorian Kendo Renmei (online: http://www.Kendovictoria.asn.au , 2007)
Christopher Wallace	The South Aussie Kendo Association History Project (online blog, c.2011)

Special thanks to Gary Oliver

Though we drew upon all the sources we could find, Gary Oliver's extensive work in chronicling the history of the VKR (often drawing on his earlier history of the Ballarat Club, co-written with Ryan Oliver) constituted a sizable amount of the content of this volume.

His efforts in reconciling conflicting entries from multiple sources was of the highest standard and his generosity in allowing full use of his work in this text was astounding. Much of the text you will see in the large Victorian sections of this history are drawn almost *verbatim* from Gary's work. We only wish we could have had equally deep resources to draw upon for all the other states.

Truly, Gary is the third author of this history, and has our deepest thanks for his contribution.



Left to Right: Ryan Oliver, Katsumi Kuramochi and Gary Oliver at the Ballarat Kendo Club



Gary Oliver performing *tameshigiri*

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Pre History

PROFILE

剣道

Kendo
the way of
the sword

Origins

Metal swords, imported from China, began to appear in Japan in the fourth and fifth century (AD). When the capital was moved to Kyoto (then called Heian), subsequent power struggles led to a demand for improved weapons.

The first known Japanese sword was made in Yamato around 700AD. Distinctively Japanese swords began to emerge between 794 and 1191. Until 1868, the Japanese sword was part of all aspects of Japanese culture.

Although basically a weapon of war, the sword was also a beautiful work of art and was believed to have a spirit of its own. It became a symbol of national spirit, clan status, and personal strength.

From the tenth to the end of the fifteenth century, martial skills and codes of conduct began to develop in Japan. Internal war existed from 1467 to the late 1500's, with many famous battles and the emergence of heroic swordsmen.

Between 1600 and 1868, Japan remained unified under the Tokugawa shogunate. During over 250 years of peace and isolation, Japanese culture and traditions flourished evolving at an amazing rate. The military government moved from the old capital of Kyoto to the Shogun's city of Edo (Tokyo).

Under the Shogunate Bakufu, every aspect of society was refined and codified - none more so than the military arts (bujutsu). Sword practice remained in the domain of the military and upper classes. The wearing of swords was recognised as a symbol of status. Sword appointments and dress became more and more ornate, with armour being worn for fashion rather than practicality.

Master swordsmen set up structured schools, called ryu, to develop their fighting skills. Dojo (places for practice) began to emerge to cater for a deepening interest in the perfection of skill and moral codes (bushido) associated with the military arts.

The popular name for the art of the sword was kenjutsu. Within many of the ryu, practitioners became familiar with a wide variety of different weapons and also learned unarmed martial arts. However, kenjutsu formed the basis and focus for all practice. Many hundreds of kenjutsu ryu are known to have existed prior to 1900. It was also during the Edo period that Kendo, a modern way of sword practice involving the use of wooden and later bamboo swords, began to emerge as a popular pastime.

Almost 700 years of military rule came to an end with the enthronement of Emperor Meiji in 1868. External pressure, particularly from the merchant classes, led to a change in emphasis away from the military class structure. The samurai class was abolished and the wearing of swords banned. Rapid modernisation saw a decline in the relevance and practice of kenjutsu.

Pre-War

By the end of the 19th century, a new nationalist policy based on national wealth and military strength developed in Japan. The sword and martial arts were revived as part of physical training for both the militia and youth education.

Between 1900 and the end of World War II in 1945, the old martial arts, particularly kenjutsu and jujutsu (unarmed arts), were practiced to reinforce nationalist policies and fervour. The terms Kendo and Judo were adopted to accompany this change in emphasis.

Post-War

Following the War, throughout the occupation period, a ban on all militaristic activities was imposed on Japan by allied occupation forces.

Rebirth

In 1952, the Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei (ZNKR) was formed to focus on the positive physical benefits of Kendo, without emphasis on combat and military aspects.

Kendo developed rapidly, but older practitioners were concerned that it did not focus enough on authentic sword drawing and cutting. Modern Kendo players were losing the true meaning of their sword technique.

Development of Nihon Kendo Kata went part of the way to introduce Kendo players to the actions of actual sword drawing not seen in normal Kendo practice. These kata were developed around 1912, revised in 1933 and updated in 1981. Nihon Kendo Kata are practiced with wooden bokken (long sword) and shoto (short) sword.

19th Century

The Japanese martial art of Kendo found its way into Australia at a number of locations and at different times. Further, it goes without saying that a number of persons contributed to its development and progression in their varying capacities at a time when little was known of this martial art, with the skill level of its proponents being understandably very basic. Nevertheless introductions were made and contributions, whether for personal gain or thirst for knowledge, established Kendo in its infancy in this country.

The first mention of Kendo or Kenjutsu in the Australian Colony appeared in an edition of *'The Evening Post'*, a newspaper published in Ballarat, Victoria on April 28th, 1881. It records a visit by the Japanese Imperial Navy flagship the Ruijo, who had earlier called at Sydney on a training and diplomatic voyage down the east coast of Australia. While "Kendo" was not formalised at the time of that historic writing, the description of the demonstration that took place that year is undoubtedly that of Japanese Swordsmanship as it was evolving in the early Meiji Restoration period (1868 - 1912). It is reproduced here in part so that its historical context can be gleaned and a feeling for what took place appreciated;

"Visit to the Ruijio"

Accepting the cordial invitation of Captain Fukushima, a number of Ballarat residents yesterday paid a visit to the Japanese war ship Ruijio, now lying in Hobson's Bay. The company comprised the Mayor of Ballarat City and town, several councillors, the town clerks of both municipalities, representatives of the Ballarat Yacht Club, private citizens, and a number of ladies, the majority of whom proceeded to Melbourne by the first train.

The invitation was given as an acknowledgement of the manner in which the officers were treated on their recent visit to Ballarat, and the reception and entertainment given by Captain Fukushima and his officers was genuine and kindly as could be wished..... Arrived at Sandridge the party was met by a number of officers of the ship, and conducted to the railway pier, where well-manned boats were waiting to take the visitors on board.

The Ruijio is an Aberdeen wooden-built frigate of 1500 tons, and is most completely fitted out with all the European appliances of war of recent manufacture. The crew and officers number 365, among whom are a large number of cadets – the vessel being used as a training ship.....

...A number of very nice presents were given to the lady visitor, and the party were afterwards treated to a display of fireworks....This was followed by a series of grand passages of arms in the form of two handed long sword exercises, the weapon being represented by bamboos. The combatants were fitted with masks, head coverings, breastplates, and pads, and the skill and agility displayed was remarkably good. Judging by the manner in which the several combatants used the weapons, and inexperienced man would speedily be placed hors de combat in such an encounter – the blows and thrusts being given with a skill and force that more than once brought one or other of those engaged to their knees....."

(The Evening Post - April 28th 1881)

Clearly the above description is of a Kendo or Kenjutsu encounter although neither discipline was named in the article. The fact that it was through friendly contact with a Japanese Naval visit that Kendo first reached our shores is of note, for subsequent visits by Japanese Naval Forces and seafarers were to bring further contacts and training opportunities with skilled Kendoka up to the present day.

Ruijo in Tasmania

A month after her visits to New South Wales and Victoria, the Ruijo visited Hobart in Tasmania. Newspaper articles at the time suggest that the government of the day enjoyed the same grand exchanges of culture and gifts that the mainland officials did. Indeed, the seeds for further visitors and “sporting” competition were sown during this visit.

“His Imperial Japanese Majesty’s Ship Ruijio. H.I.J.M.S. Ruijio, (sometimes spelt Ryujo) was a state of the art, ironclad, steam and sail powered battleship. The Ruijio was originally named the ‘Jo Sho Maru’, and built in Scotland in 1869 for the private navy of the Daimyo (Lord) of Kumamoto. It was however surrendered to the new Imperial Japanese Navy on the 8th of May 1870, renamed, and became the flagship of the fleet. With its heavy armament of two 6.5 inch and ten 5.5 inch guns it was the most powerful ship in the Japanese navy.

In March of 1881, the Ruijio arrived in Sydney on a tour of Australia. It was effectively a diplomatic visit as well as a training exercise, the ship having a crew of 356 men including 35 cadets on board, and English artillery officers to help with their gunnery training. After leaving Sydney the Ruijio went on to visit Melbourne and Hobart, before circumnavigating Tasmania and heading home.

The Ruijio arrived in Hobart amidst great excitement on Tuesday the 17th of May, having been piloted up the river Derwent, and then anchored out in the river off the Castray Esplanade. She was the first Japanese ship ever to visit Hobart, and a lot had already been heard of the magnificent fireworks display she had put on for the citizens of Melbourne during her stay there. Much comment was made about how much, (not surprisingly) she resembled a British man-o’war, and when the crew were given shore leave, it was also noted how their uniforms were cut in the British manner. Many of the officers were fluent in English, and all seemed courteous and friendly. On the Thursday, Captain Fukushima, Commander Kunitomo, and several others of the Ruijio’s officers paid an official visit to the Governor of Tasmania. They came ashore at the Powder jetty, and at 1 o’clock the Queen’s battery on the Domain under the command of Captain Evans exchanged a 21 gun salute with the Ruijio; the Ruijio’s response being made with great alacrity, thus demonstrating to the locals her crew’s efficiency at gunnery.

On Friday the 20th of May, His Excellency Sir John Henry Lefroy K.C.M.G., the Governor of Tasmania, accompanied by his aide-de-camp Captain Hussey, reciprocated by visiting the Ruijio, arriving at 2 pm. whereupon they were formally received and shown over the ship. Whilst there, they were most interested and impressed by a display of Japanese fencing, (Kendo) from several members of the crew. After their

departure, several other Tasmanian gentlemen of significance, including the Chief of Police and the Solicitor-General, arrived and were also shown over the ship.

During the next few days there was much coming and going from the ship, with various officers and crew from the Riujo visiting the Colonial Office, the Hospital, the Gaol, and the Shore batteries, to name just a few of the places they were taken to. Wherever they went they were welcomed, and the Tasmanians proudly showed them the workings of the various institutions they visited. On the Sunday the ship was thrown open to the general public, and over 1,000 Tasmanians took advantage of the opportunity and visited the Riujo.

Tuesday the 24th of May was Queen Victoria's birthday, and the Riujo's Commander announced that the ship would be dressed that morning and a royal salute fired at noon.

The main event of the day onshore was a review of the Southern Tasmanian Volunteer forces. The Rifle Regiment was mustered and paraded at Anglesea Barracks, and the Volunteer Artillery were mustered and paraded at their own drill-yards in Lower Macquarie street. After that all the troops were marched over to the parade ground at the Queen's Battery on the Domain. A very large crowd had assembled there to watch the review, and amongst them were a company of 200 or so crew from the Riujo who impressed everyone present with their discipline and martial manner. When the Governor's party, including Captain Fukushima, had taken the stand, the 21 gun salutes were exchanged, the troops were reviewed, and manoeuvres were demonstrated, including a gunnery competition that involved firing at targets moored 1,400 yards offshore in the river. Presumably well away from the Riujo.

The whole event was considered a great success, and the evening finished up with the traditional annual Artillery ball at the Town hall, which was attended by most of the Japanese officers.

On the following day, Wednesday the 25th, a rifle match at the Sandy Bay range was arranged between a team of 10 from the Riujo and a team of 10 from the Southern Tasmanian Rifle Association. The match started at 10.30 am. and didn't finish until 4 pm. due to the inclement weather. It was attended by the Tasmanian Governor, the Japanese Captain Fukushima with many of his officers, and various other dignitaries. The match generated a lot of interest and much discussion about distances and performances of particular weapons. The Japanese were using modern Martini-Henry and Westley Richards rifles, whereas with the exception of one team member, the Tasmanians were all using much older Snider rifles. In Japan, the normal distance for a shooting match was a set 300 yards, whereas the Sandy Bay match was shot at 200, 400, and 600 yards.

The outcome was that the Tasmanian team won by a good margin, with the highest scorer being a young Tasmanian soldier by the name of Edwin Thomas Watchorn. At the conclusion of the match, refreshments were served, speeches were made, and a small ceremony was held in a tent, at which Captain Fukushima presented Watchorn, the

highest scorer, with a handsome Japanese dirk, and the Tasmanian Rifle Association presented Midshipman Iwasaki, as the highest Japanese scorer, with a silver cup.

'The Mercury' of May the 26th described the dirk as – 'a most handsome and neatly finished piece of workmanship, being finished in native gold and having the mountings carved with much taste. Attached to the sword scabbard were two small daggers.' 'The Mercury' went on to recount that this type of dirk is used in 'the happy despatch', (properly known as Seppuku) where a person of rank who commits a serious offense, instead of being executed for it, is politely requested to do the right thing and save everyone else the trouble by despatching themselves. After the presentation, a cadet from the Riujo, having first assured people that the custom had now fallen into disuse, gave a very vivid and effective pantomime of the whole process, to the general interest of the onlookers.

[researched by Andrew Sherperdson]

The dirk (tanto) that the young soldier won is today displayed in the Hobart museum. The shooting match became somewhat of a tradition, a second naval visit in 1902 saw a similar competition. The photo below was taken of that event.



Japanese Naval Visit to Tasmania in 1902

1954

Whilst visiting Japanese navy ship & practicing Judo with them, Ron Bennett witnessed a Kenjutsu performance with wooden sword (Bokken) and no armour.

Then a Judo player, Ron considered this art very interesting and very much wanted to learn it. Though he hadn't yet met Rex Lawley personally, he had seen him in action at Judo tournaments.

1958

In Sydney, Rex Lawley, who was studying at the Kano Judo Jujitsu Club chanced to attend a training session with a visiting team from the Japanese Navy. A squadron of three small Japanese war ships were visiting Sydney in to promote goodwill between Japan and Australia. While the Sydney Judo Club engaged in competition with the Navy team, they also witnessed a demonstration of Karate and Kendo. This demonstration sparked his interest in Kendo.

Rex contacted the Japanese Consul General for help in finding a Kendo teacher. Mr Hori from the Consul General's office said that if a teacher were to be found he would arrange a meeting with Rex and the teacher. Rex acknowledged Mr Hori as *"a great supporter of Kendo in the early days and was instrumental in assisting Kendo to get a start in Australia"*.

The 1960's

New South Wales – 1960's

1960

In 1960, while waiting for word from Mr Hori from the Consul General's office (who was trying to locate a Kendo teacher), Rex Lawley found a book on Kendo written by an Englishman, Squadron Commander R.A. Lidstone (illustrated with line drawings by another of the founders of Kendo in the UK, Roald Knutsen.) Using this early work, Rex began trying to teach himself.

Rex Lawley had no armour and no one to practice with, so as it seemed rather pointless he put it off for another day & he continued with Judo.

1962

Interviewed by Jim

Late in 1962 Rex Lawley and Ron Bennett (who were both studying Judo and Jujitsu at the time) met with Jim Patterson (a skilled Aikido player) who advised he was going to add Kendo to his school in Sydney where he practiced Karate, Judo and other arts. Jim claimed to have been trained in Japan and to be proficient at the art.



Jim Patterson and his daughter Lesley (mid 1970's)

Jim interviewed each applicant to his Kendo school and advised that they had to be of good character and social standing. After the interview he informed them they'd be advised if they'd met the requirements. There is no record of how many people were interviewed, but Rex Lawley, Serge Dobrovich (a student of Jujitsu) and Ron Bennett were all deemed suitable.

1963

The Very Beginning

Rex Lawley, Ron Bennett, Serge Dobrovich and Jim Patterson started training in Kendo on the 16th August 1963. They found a hall to practice in, used by the Swords Club (a fencing group) in Dulwich Hill, Sydney. Rex, Ron and Serge had neither armour nor shinai. Jim Patterson had the only set of *bogu* (armour), so the others were instructed to attack him. Jim said he'd teach them to eventually become proficient.

For about eighteen months they practiced diligently, acquiring a great many bruises along the way. Ron once remarked to Rex that *"these Japanese blokes must be very tough!"*

Shortly later, Ron acquired some western fencing masks & boxing gloves which provided a little more protection, but really not very much as it happened. Improvising with whatever was available (as ever) Ron built some *Do* (chest plates) from corrugated iron and they enthusiastically hung them on. Unfortunately they didn't help one bit; in fact, the iron armour plates just made the blows even more potent!

The group gave many demonstrations of Kendo (often without *bogu*) at Jujitsu clubs and elsewhere for the public.



● Highlight of the Spring Fair at St. Ives High School on Saturday was this demonstration of Japanese swordsmanship. Kendo, as it is called, is practised by the Samurai warriors.

Jim Patterson (centre background) overseeing a Kendo demonstration in the 1960's

1965

Shintaro the Samurai

The small Kendo group were approached by some theatrical promoters to perform as Ninja for the Shintaro live action show, which was scheduled to support the popular dubbed Japanese-made 'Samurai' television show.

As it would be an acted part, with no 'real' fighting, the kendoka considered it to be an easy role. They were supplied with two sets of very light grade 'stage' armour - still better than anything they'd had previously!

Jim Patterson, Rex Lawley, Ron Bennett, Basil Smee, Serge Dobrovich, Alex Vail and George Lowe then became the Ninja in the live action Shintaro show.

Jim was cast as the personal bodyguard for a Princess, Rex as the fighting champion of the 'good' Ninja and Ron as the fighting champion of the 'evil' Ninja. As Kendo players, it was assumed that they already had fighting skills, so aside from some instruction on sword drawing, most of the preparation consisted of lessons on how to pull faces and act through the classic Ninja masks. There were also several acrobats and other actors in the show, hired for their various skills, but the Kendo players were there to fight. Mike Hannigan, a Jujitsu exponent known to Rex and Ron, played an evil witch character.

Rex and Ron took the opportunity to really belt into each other, showing off their very best wood-chopping Kendo. Ron recalls the enthusiasm of the crowd, with small children attacking any Ninja who strayed too close with cardboard swords and, of course, the classic throwing star-knives. On one memorable occasion, Ron was sliding down a flying fox rig into the stage (all part of the show) but the rig hadn't been tensioned properly, so he slid to a stop halfway down and was left dangling over the crowd. Numerous kids immediately grabbed their plastic swords and took mighty swings at the 'Ninja' who was just overhead.

To imitate the skills of the Ninja as seen on television, the Kendo players often had to be launched onto the stage with small trampolines. The general sequence was that they'd start in Bogu and have a ferocious fight, take off their helmets and be revealed as Ninja! The hero Shintaro (played by renowned Japanese actor Koichi Ose) would of course dispose of them all with a flourish. The 'dead' Ninja would fall off the sides of the boxing ring (stage) and crawl underneath to pop up on the other side as 'new' Ninja opponents, just to be killed all over again!

The show played for several record-breaking sell-out sessions at the Rushcutters Bay boxing stadium in Sydney and then toured to the Melbourne Festival Hall (Dec 1965 – Jan 1966). It was remembered and featured in an SBS:TV special which aired in Australia in 2010.

PROFILE



Koichi Ose

-

*Shintaro
The Samurai*

Koichi Ose – The Samurai

One of the most famous cultural imports in Australian history, was the TCN-Nine Network's extraordinary decision to show a dubbed Japanese historical drama series, "*The Samurai*".

The long running show (128 episodes over ten seasons) proved a smash hit, and anyone alive at the time cannot fail to recall images of Ninjas jumping backwards up into the rafters, flinging star knives at the hero.

In the show, the hero Akikusa Shintaro was really an heir to the Shogunate, operating as an *Onmitsu* (secret agent) to learn about his realm and fight for truth and justice. As the show progressed, Shintaro's true mission became less important, and it became a tale of endless encounters with nefarious Ninja groups.

School kids across Australia took to shouting "*hai yah!*" at each other, swinging home-made swords and throwing cardboard star-knives. Previously 'very white and British' Australians came to grips with a genuinely alien culture and it opened their minds as never before.

Many older Australian martial artists can trace their initial interest in the Japanese Sword Arts to the Samurai TV Show! In 2010, SBS Television aired a special documentary on the show and its cross-cultural impact.

Sydney Live Show

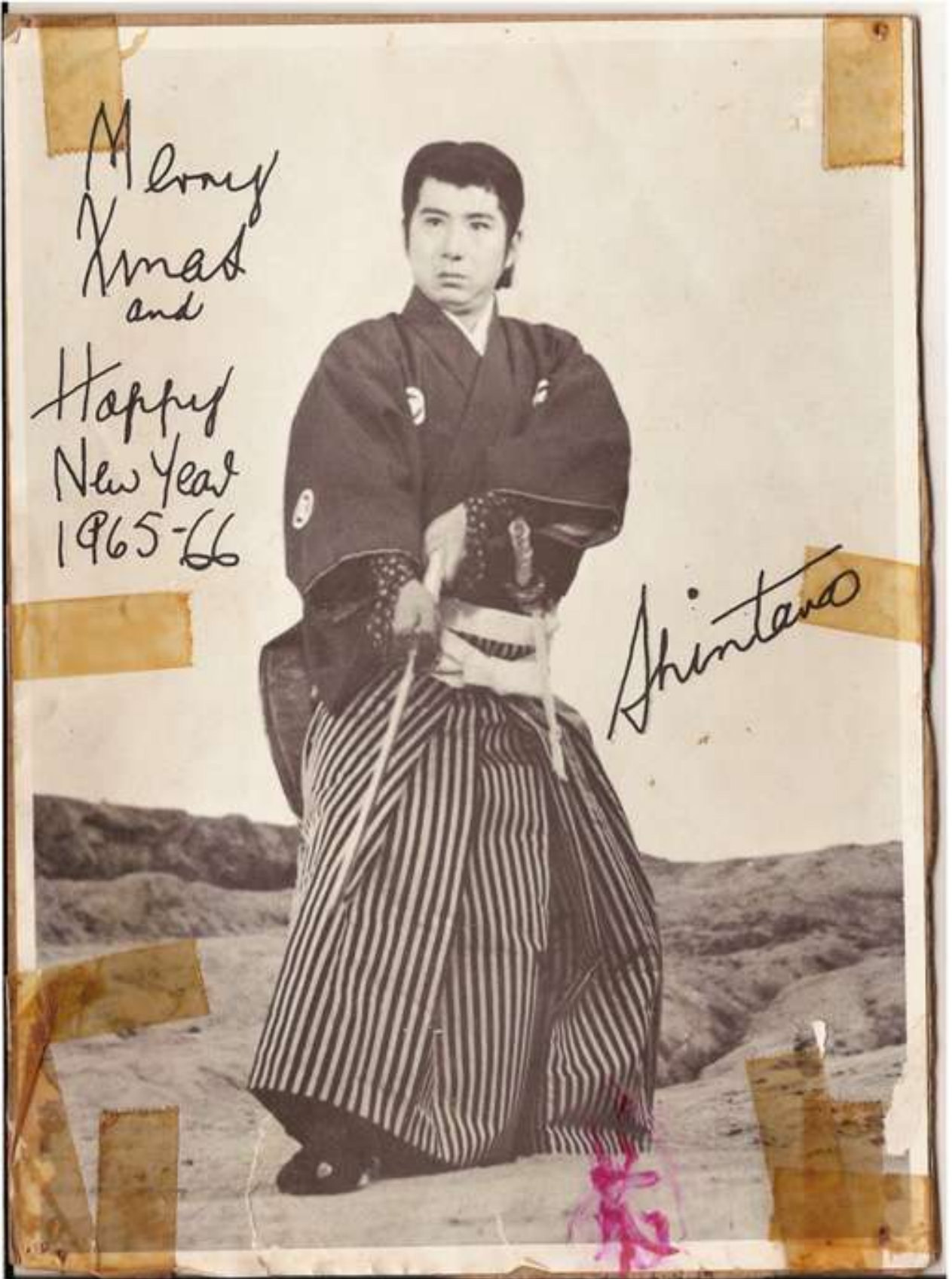
In the summer of 1965-66 Australian promoters brought Koichi Ose to Australia for a series of live-action 'Samurai Shows'. The shows were record sell-outs and Ose san was mobbed at airports and hotels like a rock star. He was, reportedly, confused and amazed, but thrilled.

Famously, members of Jim Patterson's Kendo school (including Rex Lawley and Ron Bennett) were invited to play the part of Ninja assassins in the live-action fight scenes.

Hordes of screaming fanatic kids, dressed in *faux* kimono (usually dressing gowns!) wielded their cardboard weapons, keen to join in the action. On one occasion, Jim fell into the audience from a flying fox and was immediately attacked!

Onmitsu Kenshi – Secret Agent Swordsman

Satisfying the fantasy those who grew up in the 60's, the entire ten seasons of "*The Samurai*" (Onmitsu Kenshi) have finally been released on DVD in Australia. They are most entertaining!



An autographed Christmas Greeting to the Australian 'Ninja' - from **Shintaro the Samurai**.

Okura Sensei Appears

One day late in 1965, Okura Sensei - an extremely high ranking executive with Mitsubishi Corporation and a famous Kendo instructor of noble birth and lineage - attended the dojo to see what was happening. He introduced himself as someone who knew about Kendo. Always keen to learn, Rex and Ron asked if he could teach them. Sensei left without making any commitment.

PROFILE



Okura Sensei

(on his 77th birthday in 1985)

October 5th 1908 – August 8th 1989

Sometimes referred to as Baron Okura, Okura Sensei was descended from a noble Japanese line and held a very high rank with the Mitsubishi Corporation. Rex Lawley reported that Sensei was brought to the dojo in a chauffeured Rolls Royce!

Rex and Ron both greatly admired Okura Sensei, and Ron often said to Rex *“wouldn’t it be wonderful to be able to do Kendo as good as this bloke!”* Rex’s reply was *“I don’t think we’ll ever get that good mate!”*

Okura Sensei’s method of teaching, while very strict, was very understanding of the fact that they were not Japanese. Sensei often remarked that their thirst for Kendo could only be quenched by many years of training. This only became more apparent as time passed. Many years later, Rex once remarked, *“you know Ron, I think I’m just getting the hang of this”*. At the time of this writing, now aged 75, Ron muses, *“it’s only just happening now.”*

Ron maintains that he could not have seen the path except for the patience of Okura Sensei. *“On behalf of Rex and myself, I thank you, dear Sensei”*.

Trying to teaching proper Kendo to the Australians must have been very frustrating for him. Sensei always said to them *“chopping trees is not Kendo”* but they truly tried their best to cut correctly.

Okura Sensei was honoured in the 1980’s with the Okura Shield, a perpetual trophy in his name being given by the Australian Kendo Renmei for the highest levels of service and promotion of Kendo in Australia.

Fittingly, the first recipient honoured with this award was Rex Lawley, for having founded Kendo in Australia.

1966

Okura Sensei

Okura Sensei visited the Kendo group again and when Rex and Ron asked the Sensei what he thought of their Kendo he had an extremely pained look on his face and in a guttural tone said “*that is the worst Kendo I have ever seen!*” Ron and Rex wondered “*I wonder if this bloke knows what he’s talking about?*” Of course he did! This was the start of real Kendo training in Australia.

With this auspicious and fateful meeting, Okura Sensei became the founder of Kendo in Australia.

Jim departs

By this time, Jim Patterson was not always available for training due to outside commitments, so Rex and Ron ran the sessions to the best of their abilities. Shortly after this, Jim Patterson had to go away on business and not much was ever seen of him after that.

1968

A Gift of Bogu, the First Grading and Okura Sensei’s Departure

Early in 1968 Okura Sensei was kind enough to donate sets of Kendo bogu to Rex Lawley and Ron Bennett. He assessed they were now ready to start wearing bogu and this marked a milestone in Sensei’s appreciation of their commitment to Kendo. The fencing masks and boxing gloves were never used again!

In about September, Okura Sensei said he’d grade the members of the Sydney group. Heading a panel with three other Japanese Kendo teachers, Okura Sensei presided as Rex Lawley, Serge Dobrovich, Basil Smee and Ron Bennett were all graded to *Shodan* (1st Dan) at the Masonic Temple in Turramurra.

Later in 1968, Darryl Morris from England arrived to join the group. He proved to be a very dedicated Kendo student and formed a firm friendship with Rex. The pair of them would put on public demonstrations of Kendo and of ribbon cutting with live blades and the like. In the same year Rex’s son Steve (who was to become a dominant figure in Australian Kendo) and his brother Glen began training.

In December of 1968 Okura Sensei unfortunately returned to Japan. His guidance was very greatly missed.

PROFILE



Okura Sensei's Great Gift

...

Emblem of the Presidency of the AKR



Ron Bennett presenting the
AKR Presidential Emblem
to AKR President, Richard Ward
(2010)

In 1973 a famous Japanese potter, Yoshikuni Shibayama, was commissioned to craft a men-and-kote statuette that was to be presented by the members of the Mitsubishi dojo to Okura Sensei upon his becoming a director of Mitsubishi and in recognition of his contribution to Kendo.

Some time after his passing in 1989, Okura Sensei's daughter, Mrs Haruyo Ito and her husband Masaru, invited Ron Bennett to a luncheon at Doyle's Seafood Restaurant in Sydney. At this luncheon they presented the statuette to Ron Bennett. As Ron recollects, it was quite a moving moment when the statuette was given into his care.

After receiving the presentation, Ron Bennett spoke to Rex Lawley, John Butler and Paul Guerillot regarding how best to honour this most important gift. All four decided to think on the matter and resolve it within six months, this of course never happened and on further prompting by Ron Bennett a further six months was allowed, because of the importance of the gift to Australian Kendo.

Time got away and in May 1994 John Butler passed away, several weeks later Paul Guerillot also passed away. This was a very sad time in Australian Kendo and nothing else seemed to matter because of these deep losses. In early 2000, Rex Lawley said he would leave the matter to Ron.

Unfortunately in 2007 Rex Lawley also passed away and left a mighty hole in Ron Bennett's heart, for he was now the only remaining custodian of the statuette. After a time of grieving, he decided to present it to the current President of the AKR to be passed on as the perpetual symbol of the Office of the Presidency, and also of the spirit of its founder, Okura Sensei.

The first presentation of the statuette – to AKR President Richard Ward - took place in Melbourne at the Australian Kendo Championships Dinner on Saturday 3rd April 2010.

Ron Bennett is continuing his efforts to contact the artist, Mr Shibayama, and thank him for his wonderful piece which has become a spiritual and historical symbol of Australian Kendo.

Ron says that the office of the President of the Renmei is most important, and whoever is in that role should be accorded every respect, as our leader and international representative.



At Doyle's restaurant
Okura Sensei's daughter, granddaughter and son-in-law with Ron Bennett



At Doyle's restaurant
Okura Sensei's daughter and granddaughter with Ron Bennett

1969

Early in 1969 Ron Bennett left Kendo for almost two years. The dojo was relocated a number of times as Rex tried to keep the rent costs down. They briefly settled at a venue in Canley Vale.

Yoshida Sensei Arrives

Mr Hori from the Japanese Consul General's office wrote to Rex with news that a suitable Kendo teacher had been found. In a meeting in Mr Hori's office Rex met Akira Yoshida Sensei, Principal of a Japanese school at Frenches Forest in Sydney.

Together with another teacher - Mr Masami Shoji - they began teaching at Rex's dojo in Canley Vale before moving to another at Macquarie Boys' High School in North Parramatta. The Sydney Kendo Renmei had been established.



Staff and Students of the Japanese School at Frenches Forest
Yoshida Sensei seated centre front row,
Mr Shoji is standing halfway up the stairs, to the left of centre among the students.

When Yoshida Sensei (6th Dan) first visited and looked at the standard of Kendo, he unfortunately wore the same pained expression that Okura Sensei had shown earlier. Yoshida Sensei advised that it would be a very long, hard, difficult road to learn Kendo properly, but they decided they could walk that road.

Ron believes that teaching Kendo to these early students must have required great patience and for Yoshida Sensei and Mr Shoji. It must have been one of the hardest tasks they ever faced.



Akira Yoshida Sensei

First Attempts to Gain Recognition from Japan

Later in 1969, Rex Lawley twice wrote to Japan to gain recognition of the Kendo group in Australia, and twice had no response. Rex asked Yoshida Sensei if he could write on their behalf. Yoshida Sensei kindly consented to write to Japan and titled himself as President of the new Australian Kendo Renmei with Mr Rex Lawley as Vice President and Peter Heinrich as Secretary-Treasurer.

This strategy worked and a body to be called the Australian Kendo Renmei (AKR) was recognised by the Japanese. There was not yet any international association for Kendo.

PROFILE



*Akira Yoshida
Sensei*



Yoshida Sensei, in 1969 a 6th Dan and the Principal of the Japanese School at Frenches Forest, was most certainly the catalyst for the formation and progress of Australian Kendo. His legacy is deeply felt to this day.

In late 1971 he moved back to Japan.

Prior to the Founders Tournament in 2009, Ron Bennett wrote to Yoshida Sensei inviting him to visit Australia once more. Unfortunately, Yoshida Sensei's health would not permit him to travel but he generously offered a gift to the Founders Tournament. Yoshida Sensei advised Ron that he was teaching calligraphy to elderly people in his prefecture and at Ron's request he kindly donated his talent and wrote a magnificent piece.

The gift was framed and has now become symbol held by the dojo hosting each upcoming Founders Tournament. At the conclusion of each tournament, the calligraphy is passed to the next hosting dojo.



Yoshida Sensei in 2009, at the age of 81

Victoria - 1960's

In Melbourne in the mid 1960's, Judo was very much the major martial art, having enjoyed much publicity from the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. Karate was in its infancy with a young Tino Ceberano, a 3rd Dan in GojuKai beginning to introduce his style in the eastern suburbs. Kendo was relatively unheard of but interest in Japanese swordsmanship began to grow with the English dubbed children's television show, "The Samurai" appearing on the Nine television network around 1964/65.

1966

John Butler, Bill Freeman and Donn Draeger

Into this Melbourne scene came John Butler. On May 4th 1966 John landed in Melbourne as a new immigrant from Great Britain. Born in London in 1936, John's interest in Kendo began in 1959 when he played host to Saburo Matsushita, a visiting Judo champion from Tokyo. From Matsushita's discussions about Kendo, John and a few other Judo players became interested and a small group of Kendo enthusiasts began training at the South London Judo Society. Members in this group included Roald Knutsen and Jock Hocking.

John's first instructor was Squadron Leader R.A. Lidstone who had achieved Shodan in the 1920's when he was part of the British Delegation in Japan. Consequently, John's first Kendo experiences included the throwing and combat *waza* (techniques) that have today been "refined" out of typical modern Kendo training. Coincidentally, Mr Lidstone authored the book on Kendo used by Rex Lawley in 1960 and which was illustrated by Roald Knutsen!

By the time of his arrival in Melbourne, John had played a role in establishing London's Shinto Ryu Kendo Club and the British Kendo Association. He held at that time the rank of Ikkyu. Unfortunately, John had left all his shinai and bogu behind, believing he could not bring bamboo items into the country. Despite an intensive search on arrival he found no established Kendo clubs and no interest from the various martial arts clubs in Melbourne in trying his "new" martial art.

For John, a short reward in his quest came in the return to Melbourne by former US Marine Don Draeger, early in 1967 for about 4 months (reported as 1966 in Kadono Sensei's book). Regarded as the western world's foremost scholar of Japanese martial arts, Draeger Sensei at that time had authored numerous books in his pursuit of a doctorate in *hopology* (the science of weapons) and held the ranks of 6th Dan in Shotokan Karate, 5th Dan in Judo and 5th Dan in Kendo, among others. He had visited Melbourne in 1965 and given instruction for 4 to 6 months. On this occasion Draeger Sensei was brought to Melbourne by Paul Anderson who ran a Karate dojo in Elizabeth Street.

Being the only Kendo student of many who wanted the benefit of Draeger's instruction, John had to settle for tuition in Kenjutsu and Judo during this time as neither he nor Draeger had bogu with them. Another important person to emerge at this time was Bill Freeman, who studied laido and Kenjutsu under Draeger Sensei with John during this period. Bill and John formed a great friendship and worked together in their mutual interest in learning and promoting interest in Japanese sword arts. Although Draeger had visited Melbourne in 1965 and may have given some instruction then,

this was the first laido instruction in Victoria and probably the first significant event in the establishment of Japanese laido in Australia.

1967

Paul Guerillot arrives in Australia

In February 1967 Paul Guerillot emigrated from France and settled in Melbourne. Paul was a Karate student with a passion for Kendo. He was to later establish Victoria's first Kendo club.

Paul's invaluable contribution to Australian Kendo is beyond doubt, and he features at length in later sections of this history.

1968

Some equipment

In 1968 John Butler went to Japan and purchased two sets of bogu plus six shinai and two sets of keikogi and hakama. On his return he, to use his own words,

"prostituted himself around all the various martial art Dojos, trying to give one man demonstrations of Kendo which resulted in six broken shinai and a figure of ridicule with no genuine interest whatsoever. Adverts in a range of newspapers elicited a zero response."

As the 1960s came to a close, Kendo in Victoria essentially existed only in the minds of a few with no real following or medium to germinate the seeds of interest.

The next decade was to prove more interesting and satisfying in terms of growth for Victoria, but the road was to be long and slow.

PROFILE



John Butler

February 15th 1936 – May 15th 1994

On 4th May 1966 John Vincent Butler arrived to take up permanent residence in Melbourne. Back in his native UK, John Butler received training in Kendo under R.A. Lidstone (often considered a founder of British Kendo) and was an instrumental member of the Shinto Ryu Kendo Club in London.

He established a Kendo Dojo in Little Bourke St, Melbourne with Jun Takeuchi in 1976, teaching Kendo and introducing Iaido along with Bill Freeman.

John moved the Melbourne Kendo Club to the YWCA in Elizabeth Street in October 1980 with Sumitaka Nagae Sensei.

John attended the first Kendo Summer School for Foreigners at Katsu-Ura, Chiba, Japan in 1975 as well as a number of World Kendo Championships including the 5th WKC in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1982 where he was the only Australian competitor.

He liaised closely with NSW pioneers, Rex Lawley and Ron Bennett and helped establish the Australian Kendo Championships.

John was as a true pioneer of both Kendo and Iaido in this country and was given plaques by both the AKR and VKR acknowledging this.

His untimely death due to cancer in 1994 was a sad occasion for all who knew him.



John Butler

The 1970's

PROFILE

居合道

Iaido
the way of
appropriate
response

For more than two hundred and fifty years, during the peace and isolation following the Tokugawa unification, Japanese culture and traditions flourished. Master swordsmen and weapons exponents, set up structured schools, called *Ryu*, to develop their fighting skills. *Dojo* (places for practice) began to emerge to cater for the military arts. Methods of wielding the sword (*kenjutsu*), were systematised and studied in great depth, and these formed the basis and focus for all martial practice. Many hundreds of Kenjutsu Ryu are known to have existed prior to 1900.

The earlier *tachi* form of the sword was worn suspended from the belt for a ground-to-sky draw, and some schools (notably the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu) developed dynamic forms of Tachi Kenjutsu. When the sword evolved into the slightly shorter *katana* form, worn edge-up through the belt, some systems existed for drawing and striking in one move. These included Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu, Tatsumi Ryu and Takenouchi Ryu.

The semi mystical, now deified, figure Jinsuke Shigenobu (?c. 1546-1621) is credited with inventing (or perhaps synthesising) a deeply spiritual form of *batto-jutsu* commonly referred to as Shimmei Muso Ryu or Shin Muso Hayashizaki Ryu. Jinsuke was never knowingly seen after he wandered out into the provinces as a 'knight errant' to test his new combat system.

The "Jinsuke line" continued under a further ten generations of headmasters (starting with Tamiya Heibei Shigemasa, founder of both Tamiya Ryu and Mugai Ryu). Thereafter two main lines were established, the Shimomura line and the Tanimura line (itself since divided again). Aside from the earlier schools such as Katori Ryu, almost all extant forms of *lai* (under many various names) can trace their lineage to the Jinsuke heritage.

The 16th headmaster of the Shimomura line was the great teacher Nakayama Hadudo Hiromichi, in whose dojo Kiyoshi Nakakura Sensei himself trained as a young man.

Hakudo's legacy is immeasurably important in *laido* (the word *he* himself coined for the art), Kendo and Jodo. We owe much of our modern arts to his genius and dedication.

Hakudo, last universally recognised head of the Shimamura "main line" direct from Jinsuke, himself formulated the Muso Shinden Ryu (MSR) by rationalising and synthesising Omori Ryu with techniques from the Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu. The history of the arts becomes complex and contested in this period, but undoubtedly MSR emerged alongside Eishin

Jikiden Ryu as among the best known forms of the Jinsuke sword.

Hakudo's philosophy of the life-preserving sword (*katsujin-no-ken*) rather than the life-taking sword (*satsujin-no-ken*), whereby the study of the sword promotes peace and universal harmony; takes long years of dedicated study to grasp. Iaido is not a fighting art, but you would never dare engage an Iaidoka in combat. It shouldn't even occur to you to try.

Development of Nihon Kendo Kata went part of the way to introduce Kendo players to the actions of actual sword use, not seen in normal Kendo practice. These kata were developed around 1912, revised in 1933 and updated in 1981. Typically practiced with wooden weapons, it was recognised that the five actions of Iai: *nukitsuke* (drawing), *kiritsuke* (cutting), *sayabiki* (action of the scabbard), *chiburi* (blood cleansing) and *noto* (resheathing) had not been retained and might be lost.

Around 1966 the ZNKR, concerned by the limitations of *sport* Kendo, resolved to formulate a set of Iaido techniques for Kendo, alongside its Kata. A committee formed in 1967, included eleven of the greatest extant masters of Jinsuke-family Ryuha. They created the original ZNKR 1968 set of seven Kata; three from the *seiza* position (adopted from tea ceremony), one from *tate hiza*, and three from standing. In 1977 a second committee was formed, and in 1980 the set was officially expanded to ten kata. Two further standing kata were added in 2000, creating the set of twelve currently studied as the ZNKR *seitei gata* (standard curriculum of forms)

Meaning of the characters I, AI, DO ... 居合道

The term 'Do' (way, path, road) forms the basis of eastern philosophy.

Master of Suio Ryu, Dr. Yahiko Kadono Sensei defined "iai" as follows: *"'I' is a Japanese word which means 'To Stay'. Then, in Iaido, 'I' means the place where one is situated and where one's soul stays. In other words, 'I' means the existence of body and soul at any one time. 'Ai' means body action to take measures suited to the occasion, like a bell ringing when struck, or like a person responding when called."*

Donn Draeger Sensei's analysis was long and complex, but he suggests Iaido may mean something like: *"The Way of Flexible Unity"*.

For this book, we adopt the shortest, most succinct definition we can synthesize, which suggests that the sword is peacefully at one with the universe, but will instantly act, without any malice, to restore harmony:

"The Way of Appropriate Response"

New South Wales – 1970's

1970

Rex Lawley Obtains Charter Membership of the IKF for Australia

The first World Kendo Championships were held in Kyoto, Japan. After a year of rigorous training in preparation under Yoshida Sensei, Rex Lawley and Daryl Morris attended as the representatives for the Australian Kendo Renmei. Rex only competed in the Goodwill Tournament but won his division. At the grading he achieved 4th Dan.

There were numerous other countries' Renmei and Associations present, but no formal international group existed at the time. It was during this momentous event that a general vote was taken to create an International Kendo Federation (IKF). The motion, of course, passed. The first Secretary General of the IKF was Kasahara Sensei of Japan.

One by one, each country's delegation was considered for membership and those present voted on admission by raising a red or white flag (in the manner of a shinpan, a practice continued to this day). Australia was admitted and is now on the record as a founding charter member of the IKF.

1971

Ron Bennett came back to Kendo, infrequently at first as he was often away working in remote areas.



Serge Dobrovich with Peter Heinrich with Bill Freeman, visiting from Melbourne



Yoshida Sensei and Mrs Yoshida with their daughter Reiko in Ourimbah (1971)



Yoshida Sensei, Mrs Yoshida and their daughter Reiko (1971) visiting the "Australian Village" theme park at Ourimbah

1972

Takeuchi Sensei Arrives

In mid-1972 Jun Takeuchi Sensei of the Mitsubishi Corporation, then a 4th Dan, arrived in Sydney and become the new Kendo teacher. Ron Bennett found it very easy to learn from him because Takeuchi Sensei understood the difficulties westerners encountered when relating to the truth of budo.

To this day Ron still feels a great friendship and admiration for Takeuchi Sensei, mainly based on the years of advice and understanding he showed. Ron feels this made him the better person he is today.



Takeuchi Sensei with a sword presented to him by Ron Bennet in appreciation for all his hard efforts in training the Sydney Kendo Club members.

1973

Epping Dojo

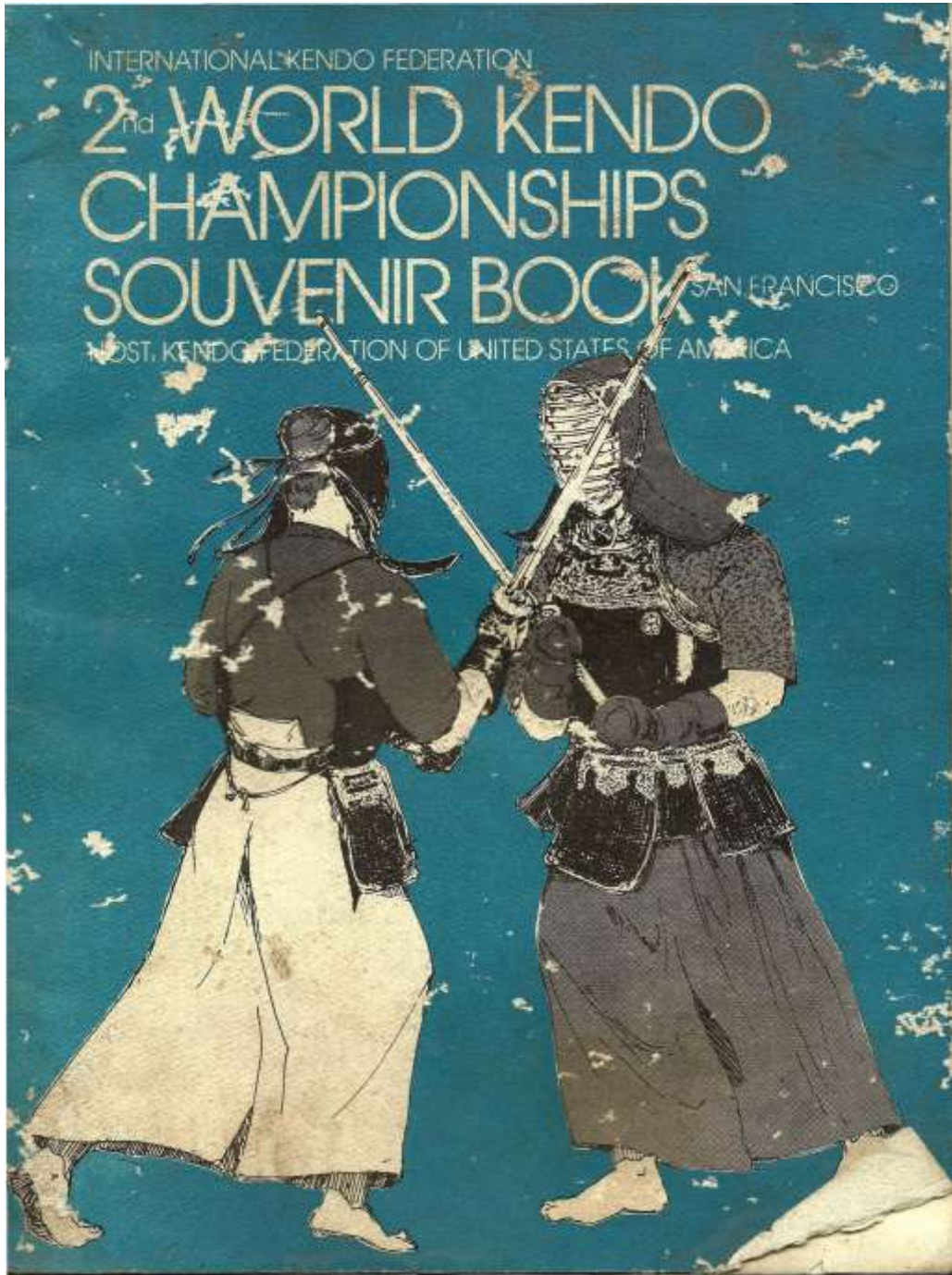
By 1973, the Sydney Kendo Club moved operations to the Epping YMCA. Lessons were given by Jun Takeuchi Sensei and Akira Tajima Sensei.



Akira Tajima Sensei

2nd World Kendo Championships, Los Angeles and San Francisco, USA

Ron and his daughter Bronwyn went to the United States where Ron represented Australia at the 2nd International Kendo Championships. The team championships were held in Los Angeles and the individual championships were held in San Francisco on April 15th. Ron won his match in the Goodwill Tournament. On his return, Ron took up the role of dojo steward, assisting the Sensei in teaching Kendo.



Front cover of the 1973 San Francisco tournament programme

A Terrible Accident

On Friday 30th September 1973, while driving to Newcastle pick up some steaks for his son Steven's 21st birthday the next day (October 1st), Rex Lawley suffered a horrific motor car accident. He suffered extensive leg injuries and there was doubt he would ever walk again. Sadly this put an end to any regular training for Rex which was a great loss for Australian Kendo. Out of duty, it fell to Ron Bennett to try to carry on Rex's work in growing the art.

Through incredible determination and effort, Rex made great progress in not only walking, but even training for short bursts. In an interview in 1975 for AKJ Martial Arts magazine, Rex attributed much of this recovery to Kendo. Sadly though for Australian Kendo, his injuries prevented him from reaching his full potential and whilst he remained a leader, wonderful teacher and inspirational figure to the end, regular training and the full practice of Kendo was denied him.

Ron feels it was very unfair that Rex should have had this happen in the prime of his Kendo ability and the peak of his fighting spirit. Throughout the years, Ron has realised that he could never equal this man who was undoubtedly the person responsible for the foundation of Kendo in Australia.



Rex Lawley at the height of his powers

Some New Members at Epping

In December 1973 Mike Payne began his study of Kendo at Epping on a Tuesday. He was joined later that week (Friday) by Doug Milton. Doug recalls Ron Bennett being referred to as “the beast”, and the rather tall Mike Payne regularly breaking fluorescent tubes with his shinai when training in their section of the “Y” (YMCA) which was where Judo mats were usually stored and thus had a lower ceiling than is best for Kendo!

PROFILE

Michael Payne

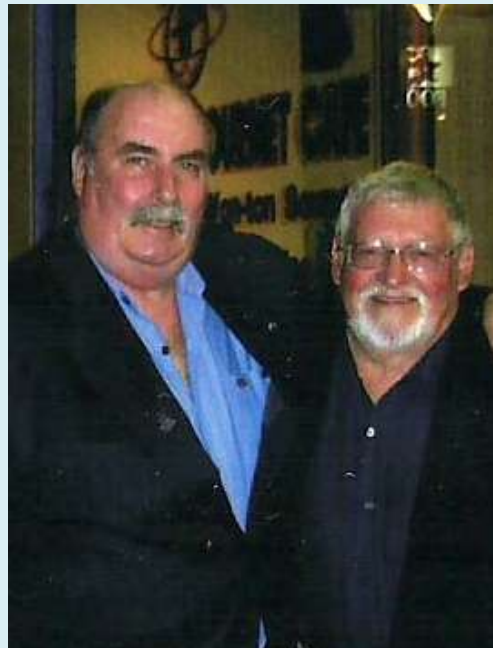
Mike Payne and Doug Milton joined Kendo in December 1973 at Epping dojo (Sydney). Ron was Michael’s first teacher and they became very close personal friends.

Michael was always a strong and diligent competitor. This was amply demonstrated when he won the second Australian Kendo Championships in Canberra.

Throughout the years he has given great service to Australian Kendo in one form or another. He has attained 6th Dan and is endeavouring to pass his 7th Dan examination at the time of this writing.

Ron always enjoyed fighting both Paul Guerillot and Michael Payne, it made the loss of skin and hair very worthwhile. So for Ron to have a friend like Mike lets him reminisce with joy.

Thank you Michael.



Mike Payne and Ron Bennett



Paul Maloney, Takeuchi Sensei and Peter Heinrich in 1973

1974

Takeuchi Sensei Goes South and Furukawa Sensei Arrives

In 1974 Jun Takeuchi Sensei was transferred to Mitsubishi in Melbourne where he was introduced to Paul Guerillot's Kendo group and became their Sensei. The Epping club suffered a great loss when Takeuchi Sensei moved to Victoria, but they were fortunate that Tajima Sensei became available to teach, which filled the gap when he left.

That same year, John Anderson started a Kendo club at Muirfield. Prominent students in that dojo were Greg Unwin, Danny Strenger and Phillip Ingram.

Ron Bennett's work out in the bush had called him away from the Epping dojo for a period and a fall off in numbers down to only eight or ten meant that the Epping dojo faced near extinction.

Epping shrank to being just Doug Milton and Mike Payne on many nights, training under Goro Furukawa Sensei (5th Dan). For about two months though, they had very intensive training under Furukawa Sensei and made good progress.



Goru Furukawa Sensei

The AKJ Martial Arts Magazine (1975 Vol 2 No 1) described Furukawa Sensei as 5th Dan and Champion of his district in Japan. He was trained from the age of nine by his father (7th Dan) and then through the training program of the Japanese Kendo Federation. Selected for the Japanese National Team, he was sent to Australia as a representative for a trading company and was thus unavailable. To Australia's benefit he joined the AKR and became the chief instructor at Epping. AKJ Martial Arts magazine quoted Furukawa Sensei as saying that in Kendo, if you "*combine perfect footwork with a strong determined movement of body and arm you have an opponent that is difficult to beat*". He was deeply taken with the enthusiasm of the Australians but noted they had a long way to go.

At that time Doug Milton first met Rex Lawley who visited the dojo, on what was perhaps one of his first visits back to a Kendo dojo after his terrible car accident.

Despite his injuries, the urge was too strong, and one evening Rex donned his bogu and trained and played *keiko* (free sparring). Doug Milton recalls that Rex's formidable force was too much for him to withstand. Rex would continue to indulge in occasional bouts over the years, though he certainly

wasn't supposed to! Those few current players who can recall bouts with Rex (even in his later years) will have had a special experience indeed.

Doug clearly recalls that on those occasions when Steve Lawley came to the dojo, his height and speed made him nearly impossible to score against. Steve's natural talent (not to mention his height and enormous reach) would see him go on to dominate Australian Kendo competitions for many years.

About this time the Sydney Kendo Club (who thought they had been all alone in Australia) first heard of Paul Guerillot's Melbourne dojo, where Takeuchi Sensei was then actively teaching.

1975

1st Australian Kendo Championship

Takeuchi Sensei, now based in Melbourne, suggested a meeting between the Sydney Kendo Club and Paul Guerillot's Martial Arts Academy. The third International Kendo Federation Championship was scheduled for April of 1976 in London and Takeuchi Sensei wanted to get Australia's Kendoka together to pick a team. This set the scene for a truly epic encounter which is still spoken of in awe by the few left who still remember it.

During Easter 1975 the Sydney Kendo Club delegation, led by Rex Lawley, drove their private cars the long 17 hour trip to Paul Guerillot's dojo. Included in their group were Ron Bennett, Rex and Steven Lawley, Michael Payne, Doug Milton, and others.

The trip itself was an ordeal of historic proportions. Ron Bennett had carefully prepared his Toyota Dyna for the journey, having it fully serviced. Unfortunately due to a dirty 44 gallon drum used by a dodgy mechanic, there was water in the fuel and they promptly broke down some miles out of Goulburn. Ron, an experienced mechanic himself, started to clear the fuel lines when, in the freezing cold he dropped and shattered the glass bowl from the fuel pump. After waving down a semi-trailer Ron headed off to get spares. The others kept themselves warm with a fire in a 44 gallon drum (having broken up a road-side fence post with one of Ron's axes). Ron somehow obtained a replacement bowl for \$5 from an old engine at a garage but, after thumbing a lift back, had to spend some hours carefully grinding it down on the bitumen to fit! When they finally reached Melbourne and contacted Paul Guerillot, after finding they'd misplaced some directions and details, the Frenchman promptly taunted them saying *"I thought perhaps you were frightened of me!"*

Once in the dojo, being familiar with the styles of both groups, Takeuchi Sensei made a point of telling Ron to play *"good straight Kendo."* Ron started out playing as correctly as he could, but after receiving a rather nasty misplaced do-cut across cut across the forearm from Paul Guerillot, all bets were off. It wasn't long before Takeuchi Sensei felt he had to intervene and pull them apart! It is said that the air was thick with bamboo splinters that danced in the sunbeams coming through the windows, it was like something out of an Akira Kurosawa movie! And this was just the opening *jigeiko* (free sparring session) which started within minutes of the NSW group's arrival!

One of Paul Guerillot's *Do* cuts somehow painfully whacked Ron Bennett around the knees. Ron thought *"you French so-and-so!"* and promptly laid into him with everything he had. Takeuchi Sensei

quickly intervened, pulled them apart and said *"Now now Ron, no rough Kendo"*; but Ron cut in and said *"Just a minute mate, I just about got this bloke beat!"*


After some demonstrations, discussions and watching some film of Kendo techniques, a formal knock-out competition was held. This is recorded as being the first Australian Championship. A report appeared in Volume 2, number 1 of the AKJ Martial Arts Magazine, which records that Steven Lawley was the winner and thus the first ever Australian Champion. Afterwards, everyone staggered to the local pub to recover. That evening a special dinner was held at the Taj Mahal restaurant where Ron threw his arms around Paul Guerillot and proclaimed *"geez you're a great bloke, mate!"* Forever more, Paul and Ron were the best of mates.

The next morning saw another two hours of furious training before the NSW contingent headed back home. The return journey proved almost as fateful as the first. The top of the Toyota's gearbox came adrift, draining its oil and prompting another lengthy roadside emergency repair. They even had to re-heat the gearbox oil over an improvised campfire just to get it running again. It should be noted that there is a long and glorious tradition of eventful Kendo 'road trips' (we're sure every club, from every state has a few to tell of) but, this was the first and perhaps most famously eventful of them all!

Though he didn't participate in the tournament itself (no longer being associated with Paul's dojo at that time), John Butler did appear at the social events that followed and made a very deep and lasting impression on the New South Welshmen, especially Doug Milton. John's own memoirs of this events record that, *"Takeuchi Sensei very nearly joined a monastery after witnessing the brutality of the first battle. Almost all the combatants finished the day with red and purple welts across arms, torsos and legs down to the ankles from poorly placed Do cuts."*

ANCIENT KENDO IN AUSTRALIA

Swords clashed, perfect strikes were made in lightning succession, and attack followed counter attack in rapid procession. The air was charged with electricity, the atmosphere full of fire and fury as the competitors struck for their winning points.

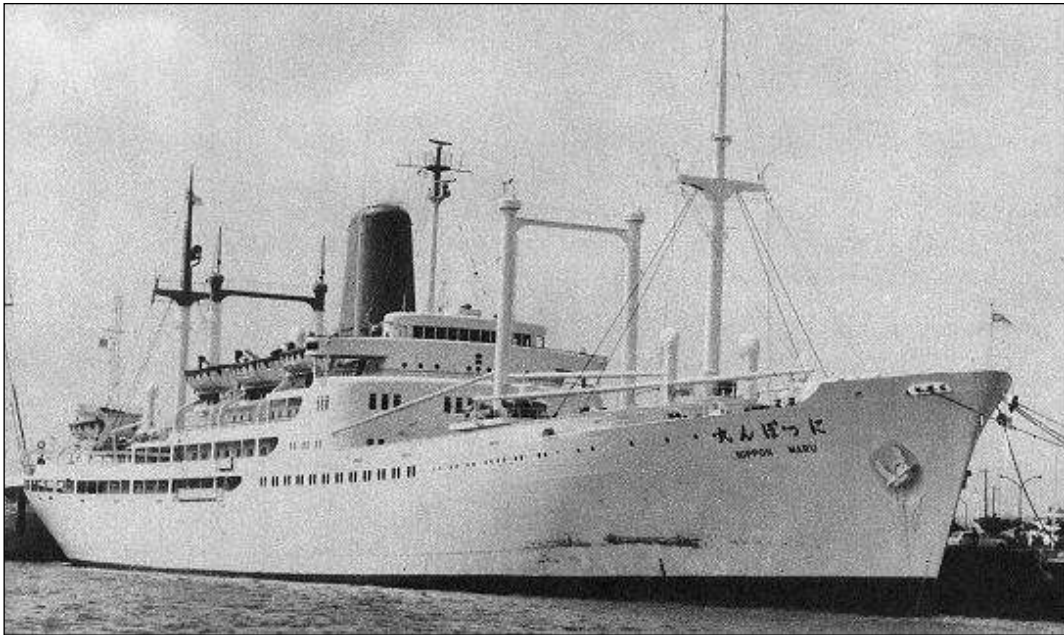


The 1st AKC was well reported in the AJK Martial Arts magazine, Vol 2 No 1

The Nippon Maru

The Nippon Maru was a Japanese naval training vessel which often visited Australia on goodwill tours. They were extremely friendly and possessed of a good sense of humour. There were many such visits by Japanese vessels over the years and Kendo players often made a point of watching

displays or training with Kendo-playing officers and crew. The following series of photos record one such visit In 1975, when members of the Sydney Kendo Club and families spent an enjoyable day, and evening on board.



Japanese Naval Training ship the Nippon Maru



A welcome party given by the Captain of the Nippon Maru for Australian Kendo members and their families

Left to Right: 3rd Ron Bennett, 6th Peter Heinrich, 8th Rex Lawley,
9th Steve Lawley, 10th Christine Lawley, 11th Bronwyn Bennett, 12th June Bennet



Sydney Kendo members preparing for jigeiko on board the Nippon Maru
Left to Right: Doug Milton, Ross Kendricks, Ron Bennett & 5th Peter Heinrich



On board the Nippon Maru
Back Row, Left to Right: Ross Kendricks, Doug Milton, Ron Bennett, Peter Heinrich



On Board the Nippon Maru
 Back Row, Left to Right: 2nd Ross Kendricks, Sue Kendricks, Peter Heinrich, Carmel Heinrich,
 June Bennett, Ron Bennett, Doug Milton
 Front Row from the left: Simone Bennett and Bronwyn Bennett



Commemorative Plaques gifted to the AKR by the Japanese Training Squadron (1981, 1988)

The First International Foreign Seminar in Katsu-Ura, Chiba, Japan

Later in 1975, the IKF invited the Sydney Kendo Club to attend the first International Foreign Seminar in August at the Budokan Annex in Katsu-Ura, Chiba Prefecture with four places available to Australia. Michael Payne, Ron Bennett and Peter Heinrich accepted for Sydney and Ron Bennett invited John Butler to make up the fourth position.

The 25 foreign students who attended that inaugural Summer School included Terry Holt from Great Britain. The attending Sensei included Nakakura, Matsuwa, Sugo, Matsunaga and Shioiri. What followed was two extremely torturous weeks of hard Kendo the likes of which the Australians had never seen.



At Chiba: back row, from the left: Terry Holt (UK), 3rd from left, Michael Payne, 4th from left, John Butler

Though Ron Bennett had been granted a Shodan by Okura Sensei in 1968, the Japanese were unable to find documentary verification of it. The other Australians had not yet had an opportunity to grade. At the grading on the final Saturday Ron Bennett said he was more than prepared to fight for his Shodan again. Consequently, Ron and Mike Payne gained Shodan rank while John Butler and Peter Heinrich achieved Ikkyu in Kendo. John Butler also earned a Sankyu in Iaido

(NB: Kadono Sensei's book records John's Iaido rank as Ikkyu; awarded by Nakakura Sensei himself. As to the rank, there may be some confusion between John's Iaido and Kendo grades).

Doug Milton Finds the Willoughby Dojo

Whilst the more senior members of the Sydney dojo were away at the Katsu-ura seminar, Doug Milton received an invitation from the Japan Information Service, through Jodo instructor Paul Maloney. Mr Ray Lloyd, a Judo instructor at the Willoughby Centre, was requesting Kendo lessons for his Judo students. Doug was hesitant to make such a big decision without the seniors present, but used his initiative and decided the opportunity was too good to miss. He was concerned that he might be criticised for *daring* to undertake to teach Kendo in his own dojo. The senior members

upon their return however, fully approved Doug's decision and so he began to teach Kendo to the few interested Judo players.

Sadly, as is so often the case, interest began to wane (Kendo is, after all, not an activity to be undertaken lightly, requiring hard work!) and student numbers dropped off. The new dojo was at risk of collapse.

One Saturday, Doug decided to call it off and shut it down if no-one came to training that day. The one regular Judo member left to him failed to attend and Doug made ready to leave Willoughby for good. Just then, two figures appeared in the doorway, one with a shinai and bogu bag over his shoulder. It was Fred Read and his son Stewart, come to play some Kendo and, though they certainly didn't know it at the time, save Willoughby Dojo!

Doug counts the foundation of the Willoughby Dojo, and of the Sydney Kendo Club in its current form, from that date. Fred Read would be one of the first members of Doug Milton's laido group.



Willoughby Dojo: founded in August of 1975 by Doug Milton and still the spiritual *Hombu Dojo* of Kendo in NSW

The Willoughby Dojo also serves as the main weekly training venue for Paul Maloney's *koryu* (old school) SMR Jodo club, who have maintained close and cordial ties with the Sydney Kendo community and members of the AKR (some of whom train in both styles) from the early 1970's.

The Sydney Kendo Club honoured Doug Milton with a plaque as the 'Founder of the Sydney Kendo Club'. With typical humility, Doug protests that he didn't start the club as such, though he most certainly was founder of the Willoughby Dojo. On the back of the plaque it says "in 1974" due to a slight miscalculation of the date. It was Ray Lloyd's Judo group which had use of the hall then (probably the first martial artists in that structure) and Gay Popovitch's records may have erred in recording *that* as the start date for Kendo. Doug holds the start date to be the return of the seniors from Chiba and their approval of his decision to start lessons in Willoughby. First order documentary evidence confirms, that was in August of 1975.



Presentation plaque given to Doug Milton by the Sydney Kendo Club in 1987 to commemorate his founding of the Willoughby Dojo

Nagashima Sensei Visit

Just a week or two after returning from the Katsu-Ura Seminar, the IKF sent a powerful delegation of three sensei to Sydney and Melbourne. In Sydney on Saturday 30th August 1975, the Japanese Consul-General Mr Yoshida opened the event at the Maddox Street basketball Centre in Alexandria.

Kiyotsugi Iho Sensei (8th Dan) Suekichi Nagashima Sensei (8th Dan) and Takeji Kiyono Sensei (7th Dan) conducted lessons in Kendo kata, basic techniques, suburi and jigeiko. There were also demonstrations of Shindo Muso Ryu Jodo by Paul Maloney and the members of the Australian Jodo Renmei. Doug Milton recalls a spectacular demonstration of laido by Kiyono Sensei which kindled his interest in laido.

Ron Bennett and Doug Milton accompanied the sensei to the airport, and Ron decided then and there on yet another epic Sydney Kendo Club road trip to Melbourne to meet up with them again down there. The Sensei reportedly had looks of utter amazement when the Sydney contingent staggered into the Melbourne dojo the next morning!



Peter Heinrich and Nagashima Sensei on the day of the Sensei Seminar in Sydney (August 30th 1975)



The IKF delegation, visiting New Zealand ahead of their arrival in Australia
Left to Right: Nagashima Sensei, Iho Sensei and Kiyono Sensei

1976

In April 1976 the Willoughby dojo hosted an inter club Kendo tournament (Sydney versus Muirfield), but this did not constitute an official championships.

Nomasa Sensei



Nomasa Sensei

From their first experience with the Mitsubishi dojo in 1976 and on many occasions after that, Nomasa Sensei generously hosted the Australian touring groups, and ensured that everyone was comfortable and eating well. His generosity was unsurpassed and every Kendo player that met him could only have the fondest of memories of this caring man.

Iaido Club launches at Willoughby

Bob Burton records (in Dr Yahiko Kadono Sensei's text "My Thoughts on Iaido") that in 1976 Doug Milton returned to Australia from Japan after a year of working and training in Iaido, and started a small Iaido club.

Doug Milton insists that he never intended to 'found' anything, but rather, that he simply didn't want to forget his lessons in Iaido. To do so, it would be necessary to keep his practice up ahead of the next opportunity to get proper instruction, so Doug initially started teaching Iaido at Willoughby to Fred Read, Danny Strenger, Greg Unwin and David Armstrong. The next year, Warren Hughes, Dianne Hughes, Ted Rixon and Michael Peters would all join as well.



Outside the Willoughby Dojo, c1976.

Front Row: Mike Payne Back Row: Jenny, Akira Tajima, Doug Milton

1977

Summer Camp & First Iaido Dan Grades

Rod Prince, Mark Denovam, Mike Payne, John Butler, Eric Jeffrey, Doug Milton and Valmei Rodgers attended the 1977 Summer Seminar camp at the Gedatsukai Renshinkan Dojo in Kitamoto-shi, about an hour out of Tokyo. This was to prove both an epic journey and a beginning for Iaido in Australia.

Departing Melbourne in a tiny 54 seat Air Nauru Fokker F28, they stopped for fuel in Brisbane before stopping once again for fuel and an overnight stay in Nauru. Mike Payne seized the bed and relegated Doug Milton to the sofa in the small room they shared. With a typically wry sense of humour, Doug recalled being woken in the night by hideous shrieks as a small lizard emerged from the bamboo bed head and crawled across Mike's face.

The next day saw further fuel stops at a WW2 coral airstrip on Ponape, then another at Guam, Okinawa and finally arriving at Kagoshima, Kyushu. A few days spent in Kagoshima saw training at the local Police Dojo, where the delegation was honoured to meet Nakakura Sensei for the first time. The view from the small hostel where they stayed featured a fine view of the Mount Sakarujima volcano which was putting out clouds of fine sandy grit which dirties any clothes left drying outside.

The party made its way to Miyazaki and crossed overnight by ferry to Osaka where they spent a few days. Travelling up to Tokyo they were thrilled to meet up again with Akira Tajima and his wonderful mother. Takeuchi Sensei and Furakawa Sensei of Mitsubishi met up with them also.

In Tokyo they trained at the Metropolitan Police Dojo where Nagashima Sensei presented Doug Milton and Mike Payne with magnums of sake.

At the Seminar proper in Kitamoto, each days training ran from 6am to 9pm. In the humidity of Japanese mid-summer it was quite an ordeal (as any summer camp attendee can probably attest). Doug and Mike's huge sake bottles lasted only a few days (and several lengthy nights), but this never prevented either of them from appearing on the dojo floor at 6am, well ahead of younger players.

Kiyono Sensei (who had visited Australia in 1975) visited the Australian group and took them to an exclusive restaurant and in a private room gave them a fascinating demonstration of how the katana had been used in ancient times.

During this seminar, Doug Milton and John Butler especially, received a thorough grounding in laido and were thoroughly enthused to pursue this beautiful and demanding art. John and Doug were honoured with gradings to Shodan in laido, the first recorded Australian Dan grades in seitei laido.

The Nippon Maru Returns

The Nippon Maru training ship berthed in Sydney once again (she was a semi regular visitor to Australian waters). Greg Unwin and Doug Milton hosted members of the crew on a fishing trip on the Hawksbury river.



Greg Unwin and Doug Milton at the Nippon Maru



Greg Unwin with members of the Nippon Maru crew



Doug Milton taking three Nippon Maru crewmembers on a fishing trip on the Hawksbury River

In another of his spectacularly memorable mechanical breakdowns, both engines of Ron Bennett's fishing cruiser failed. Ron immediately jumped into the dinghy and single handed, towed the 27' vessel (with about eight people on board) the last three miles to the jetty.



Ron Bennett's mighty effort, rowing his broken-down fishing cruiser 3 miles back to dock.

Enter the Rixon Clan

Late in 1977 a young Ted Rixon, his sister Dianne and her then husband Warren Hughes joined the Willoughby dojo and studied both Kendo and laido.



laido lessons at Willoughby in 1978
Left to Right: Ted Rixon and Warren Hughes



Hiriko's Express at the height of its glory

PROFILE



Hiroko's Express

Always a fan of heavy work vehicles, Ron Bennett added a 1952 3-ton Austin campervan-bus to his collection of trucks, Dodge pickups (and the odd boat) somewhere around 1977. It was of blunt nosed design with the front wheels forward of the driver, making it rather tricky to handle.

To offset the travelling costs of hiring busses for constant Kendo trips interstate, Ron started using the bus for ferrying the Kendo team about. Sometimes they even contributed to the petrol costs ... a bit.

It had a sink and a double bed in the back, but the rest was an empty space filled with beanbags. Ron had a tin of orange paint to hand, so it promptly became a bright orange bus!

One of the students at Yoshida Sensei's Japanese School painted the words "Australian Kendo Renmei" along the side in Katakana and Kanji.

In honour of three of the lady teachers at Yoshida Sensei's school, Yukiko San, Masako San (later Masako Strenger) and Hiroko San, who were a great support to the early days of Kendo, the bus was proudly christened the "Hiroko's Express" and this was proudly painted above the windscreen.

There were many NSW Kendo road trips and holidays taken in this vehicle and the Rixon Clan (Ted, Dianne and Warren Hughes) among others probably spent more time in the bus than they care to remember!



On one memorable and lengthy trip to Melbourne, Ron was driving and the crew were being rather rowdy in the back, constantly asking to stop for 'relief' because a little too much amber fluid was being consumed *enroute*. A motorbike traffic policeman pulled up alongside and (worried about the legalities of a bus with bean bags for seats) Ron advised everyone to stay low and be quiet. The policeman recognised the Japanese writing and, being a Karate player himself, was very interested in hearing about Kendo.

When asked what he was carrying in the back, Ron (jokingly) said "*animals*". "*All the way to Melbourne?*" asked the policeman. "*Well, ask the animals to stop laughing will ya?*" ... and rode off with a wave.

The bus did sterling service for the NSW group for 5~6 years but finally running costs became untenable and Ron reluctantly sold the then 25+ year old bus to a New Zealander who was travelling around Australia and swore it was just perfect for his needs!

Some years later Eric Jeffreys saw it, still in its orange colours, driving the highways up north. June Bennet (Ron's wife) swears she saw the unmistakable old beast rattling along southwards out of Tamworth in the October school holidays of 1988!

Overseas visitors to our shores (especially Japanese) are often astonished at the extreme distances Australians will travel to "*have a bash*" ... and even in these days of six lane freeways and almost-affordable air travel many Kendoka can relate to tales of long road trips (such as the dangerously fatiguing 14 hour drive to Cowra and back in 1987 in a flimsy and dangerously unstable campervan by the Wollongong crew).

Many modern members however may not realise that the proud tradition of the "Kendo road trip" started with the epic drive to Paul Guerillot's dojo for the first championship in 1975.

The abiding symbol of this travelling budo culture will always be that orange rocket, the Hiroko's Express!



The horrors of long slow Kendo road trips with Ted Rixon, recorded in this modified "Wizard of id" cartoon
 – from the club publication 'Kendo News" 1985



Yukiko, Hiroko, Ron Bennett and Masato

1978

Okumoto Sensei Arrives at Willoughby and Teaches Iaido

Around twelve months after returning from the 1977 Summer Camp and starting the Willoughby Iaido group, Doug Milton's crew were visited one night by Mr Katashi Okamoto. He worked for the NYK Shipping Line and was in Sydney regularly every six weeks or so, and had asked the Japan Information Centre for details of any Kendo or Iaido clubs.

As soon as Omamoto Sensei's skills was apparent, Doug Milton immediately asked if he would train them, and he kindly agreed. Okamoto Sensei was able to assist the fledgling Sydney Iaido group for about 12 months, teaching them whenever his work brought him to Sydney.



Katashi Okamoto Sensei in 1978 - A founder of Iaido in Australia.



Willoughby Iaido Group 1978

Left to Right: Danny Strenger, Fred Read, Okamoto Sensei and David Armstrong

In 1978 Akira Tajima Sensei suffered a car accident and had to return to Japan for facial reconstruction surgery.

1979

Ron Bennett graded to 2nd Dan in Iaido at the 1979 Summer Camp in Japan.

4th Australian Kendo Championships at Willoughby

These were held in Sydney on the 4th of April at the Willoughby Dojo. It was at these Nationals that the first emblem of the AKR appeared.

4th AKC - Sydney

1st

2nd

3rd

OPEN INDIVIDUAL

Steven LAWLEY

Rod PRINCE

Eric JEFFREY

OPEN TEAMS

NSW

VIC

QLD



Willoughby Dojo hosts the 4th AKC in 1979



The new AKR emblem proudly displayed at the 4th AKC, Willoughby Dojo in 1979.
Left to Right: John Butler, Rod Prince, Ron Bennett, David Prince, Danny Strenger, Eric Jeffries,
Max 'the axe' Gardner, Rex Lawley, Ron Jones (?), Mike Payne and Mr Nagae.



Proud Champion Steven Lawley and family standing by the new AKR emblem,
holding the Snow Brand trophy.

World Kendo Championships, Sapporo

The Australian Team at the Worlds at Sapporo in 1979 (reported in the Victoria section below) were accompanied by a Goodwill Group consisting of Danny and Masako Strenger, Andrew Melito, Max 'the Axe' Gardner and Mark Denovan. There they met with Yoshida Sensei.



Danny Strenger, Yoshida Sensei, Steve Lawley and Masako Strenger in Sapporo in 1979

Sato Sensei Brings a Dose of Discipline



Back Row left to right:

David Armstrong Steve Lawley Warren Hughes Danny Strenger Colin Noble

Front Row left to right :

Miyasaka Sensei Nagae Sensei Hiroko Otsuka Sato Sensei Diane Hughes Andrew Melito

Sato Sensei's influence in Sydney at Willoughby Dojo was important for its future status.

Sato Sensei was a rigorous disciplinarian and always reinforced the 'martial' aspects of the martial arts. Under his no-nonsense instruction, floors were cleaner than before, and shinai etiquette was paramount. Sensei's maxim was always to *"regard this as a Katana"*. Issues of smoking, personal hygiene, care for the equipment and clothing all received his careful scrutiny.

Ron Bennett reports that his own general attitude was vastly improved due to Sato Sensei's influence. Kendo players all through the 80's lived in fear of Ron turning up to training sessions and seminars as they knew that no breach of martial etiquette would be tolerated – this was entirely the legacy of Sato Sensei's time at Willoughby.

Sato Sensei went on to become Secretary General of the International Kendo Federation.

PROFILE



Nakakura Sensei

Kiyoshi Nakakura Sensei (Kendo and Iaido 9th Dan Hanshi).

September 24th 1910 - February 9th 2000.

Nakakura Sensei was a great teacher, a fearsome warrior, an Imperial bodyguard, and a constant friend to Australian Kendo and Iaido.

He famously headed the Australian Kendo Championships at Cowra in 1987, mingling openly with members of all ranks (a privilege rarely accorded to junior ranks in Japan), and was the Guest of Honour at the Opening of the Kenshikan Dojo in 1990. The last of his many visits to Australia was the Social Club visit of February 1996, aged 85.

Originally from Kagoshima, Sensei moved to Tokyo to train at the Yushinkan dojo of the great Nakayama Hakudo Sensei in 1930.

Sensei joined the Imperial Palace Police (Imperial Guard) in April 1931. In June of that year he won the All Metropolitan Police Board vs. Imperial Guards Championships.

Obtaining his Kyoshi rank at the age of 28, Sensei was a dominant figure in Kendo both before and after WWII. In 1947 he left the Guard to return to Kagoshima, where he was Technical Officer for the Prefecture Police.

Nakakura Sensei was famed for his performance in the post-war Kendo Tournaments between Eastern and Western Japan (he fought for the West) between the years Showa 29 and Showa 38, where his powerful technique earned him the fighting nickname "Oni" (The Demon!).

He was awarded Kendo 8th Dan in 1959, Hanshi in 1962, Kendo 9th Dan and Iaido Hanshi in 1978 and Iaido 9th Dan in 1983.

Ron fondly remembers Sensei's open friendship towards Australian Kendoka. His advice to them was to always pay attention to details and to be devoted to the correct spirit of Kendo.

Sensei once kindly remarked once that if Ron trained diligently, he would be an excellent Kendoka in his older age. Ron maintains that unfortunately this has not happened yet!

Ron had a great fondness for Nakakura Sensei and was always in awe of his sheer presence. It was a great privilege for anyone to have even stood beside this great man whose guidance is sorely missed.



Left to Right: Rex Lawley, Nakakura Sensei and Ron Bennett

PROFILE

The AKC Teams and Individual Victory Flags

At Cowra in 1987, Nakakura Sensei asked Ron if he could present a gift to the AKR. Ron said *"Thank you, Sensei. What kind of gift would you like to present?"* but with a very stern look, Nakakura Sensei said that it wasn't for him to decide and required an answer quickly. Ron asked if he might have an hour to think on it.

Ron returned and said *"Sensei, a victory banner with your name on it would be absolutely wonderful for the teams to fight for."* Sensei said *"Yes, you may have that."*

About six months later Brent Gazzaniga of Victoria was in Japan when the banner was finished and was asked to bring it back to Australia and hand it over to Ron. Ron had no idea that the gift would be such an expensive and intricately designed banner and nearly fell over backwards when he realised what it must have cost. The princely gift certainly inspires State teams fight hard to win it!

Shortly afterwards the leader of the Zen Nihon Kore Kenukai (Japanese Senior Grades Kendo Group), Matsushima Sensei, asked Ron if may have the privilege of presenting a similar banner for the individual championship. Once again Ron almost fell over at what it would mean for Australian Kendo to have two such magnificent banners from two magnificent men. Of course he humbly said *"yes"*.

The Zen Nihon Kore Kenukai is a dedicated group dedicated to spreading Kendo knowledge to any who have a thirst for it. When they see a need, they're known for sparing no effort to help. On the occasion of their gift of the Individual Championship banner, Ron was brought to tears by their immense generosity. Matsushima Sensei's character lent great strength to the AKR's spirit. He and his entire group will always carry Ron's deepest admiration.

Now everybody can see these magnificent gifts to Australian Kendo, proudly displayed at each Australian Kendo Championship.



Yakov Macak and Ron Bennett at the 1986 AKC in Canberra
Left is the Teams Flag, a gift to the AKR from Nakakura Sensei
Right is the Individuals Flag, a gift to the AKR from Matsushima Sensei



The Nakakura Sensei Teams Victory Flag



The Victory Flags being presented at the AKC Canberra

Left to Right: Mark Wild, Jamie Fennessey, Laurie Woodman (Federal Government Arts Council), Rex Lawley, Yakov Macak



Ron Bennet with the Matsushima Sensei Flag



Rex Lawley with the Matsushima Sensei Flag

Laurie Woodman suggested the creation of the Martial Arts Council of Australia (MACA) representing all martial arts. NSW became members when these historic victory flags were gifted from Sensei's Nakakura and Matsushima. Mr Laurie Woodman was asked to formally present them to the AKR - Canberra at the AKC. The president of Kendo at the time was Mr Yakov Macak and he delegated the honour of carrying the flags to Mark Wild and Rex Lawley.

Victoria – 1970's

1973

The Two Johns

Down south, John Butler had a surprise in the form of John Moore, a fellow Englishman who had trained at London's Budokai and who had attained Shodan in Kendo. Living on other sides of the city they would meet alternatively on Brighton Beach or Warrigal Park in Rosanna for Sunday trainings. This went on regularly throughout the summer and autumn of 1973.

The two Johns (Butler and Moore) gave some demonstrations of Kendo during this time, an important one being at Tino Ceberano's North Balwyn Dojo. As a result of this exposure John Butler became the face of Kendo to many local Melbourne martial arts groups and was elected onto the Steering Committee for the Martial Arts Council of Australia (MACA) in 1973. This Federal Government initiative was designed to represent martial arts in Australia, advise governments on funding and provide some controls on the proliferation of different groups. John was elected to represent Kendo and Bill Freeman was elected to represent Iaido.

Paul Guerillot and the Auburn Road Dojo

In 1973 Paul Guerillot, a Shotokan Karate Instructor who had emigrated from France in 1967, began teaching Kendo at his Auburn Road Dojo in Hawthorn, Melbourne. This was the first Kendo Club in Victoria. John Moore was regularly teaching Paul and his students until he suddenly left.

Paul Guerillot invited John Butler to replace John Moore at his Kendo Club but their initial meetings proved a clash of philosophies and personalities. It should be remembered that both men came from different cultures and martial arts backgrounds and both were pioneers in a new land. John summed up their relationship in his personal history;

*"It was simple, I didn't like Paul and Paul didn't like me. He was French, I was English and that was the bottom line. But years later Paul and I buried our differences and became like brothers. We discovered a genuine love and respect for each other."
(Butler 1994 page 23)*

Needless to say, John did not continue instructing at Paul's dojo.

1974

Takeuchi Sensei moves to Melbourne

In 1974 Jun Takeuchi Sensei transferred to Mitsubishi in Melbourne. On his arrival he checked with the Japanese Consul and was given John Butler's name. Contact was made and John informed him that Paul Guerillot's Kendo Club was the only dojo in town. Arrangements were made for Takeuchi San to visit the dojo the following Friday evening.

According to John Butler, Takeuchi was “*horrified by what he saw. Rough, crude stick fighting. Men in kendogi trying to beat each other into the ground*”. Despite his efforts Takeuchi found it difficult to move these dedicated students away from their hard contact fighting ways. In an effort to demonstrate the advances and correctness of Kendo he arranged for the Sydney Kendo Club, where he had trained earlier, to visit Paul’s Dojo the following year. This was to become the first Australian Kendo Championships and marked the initial beginnings of a truly national AKR.



Paul Guerillot, his wife Giselle and baby Marika

A Great Loss

Bill Freeman, who had trained in laido with John Butler under Donn Drager in 1966-67 and beyond, unfortunately had a lung removed in an operation in 1974. This, combined with an accident in 1979 that severely damaged his knee, saw Bill discontinue his laido training. He went on, however, to be one of Australia’s foremost experts in the study of the Japanese Sword.

PROFILE



Paul Guerillot



Paul Guerillot came to Australia from France in February 1967 after seeing service in the Korean War.

He founded Paul Guerillot Martial Arts Academy where he taught his system of Foot and Fist Boxing (based on the French system *Savaté*, Shotokan Karate and other elements).

He had the First Kendo club in Victoria operating by 1974 under the guidance of Takeuchi Sensei of Mitsubishi, and hosted what has come to be called the First Australian Championships in 1975 when the Sydney Club famously visited.

The practice of Kendo in the Academy dropped off somewhat, sometime after the visit in August 1975 by the IKF delegation (Nagashima Sensei, Iho Sensei and Kiyono Sensei) and the young Peter Szwarcbord (who joined in 1973 at the age of 15) was not aware that Kendo had been in the syllabus until later when he saw a photo of Paul in bogu.

In 1980, at the prompting of Peter Szwarcbord (now his son-in-law, having married Marika Guerillot), Paul got one of his old students Rod Moran, who had been training in Karate, Foot and Fist boxing and Kendo in the old days (he was in fact an amazing martial artist) to teach Kendo.

Rod and Peter re-opened the Kendo part of the Academy on the first floor in front of the Beatty Ave, Toorak squash courts. For the first year they trained a concrete floor covered with lino, which any Kendo player will tell you is brutally painful. During that first year a young Jamie Fennessy visited. They famously trained 6 days a week and even on holidays.

In May 1994 Paul passed away (only a few weeks after John Butler) and Victorian Kendo took a double blow. Fortunately his great legacy was continued by his students and his contribution to the development of Australian Kendo will never be forgotten.

Ron Bennett says Paul was such a tough bloke that it was worth the 14 hour drive from Sydney to Melbourne to have a fight with him. Through this fierce contact between them there developed a deep and ongoing friendship. His passing had a really deep sorrow for Ron who had lost a great friend.

At one time there was a Paul Guerillot Shield (appropriately awarded for Fighting Spirit) which was awarded at the Founders Tournaments. Sadly, one year it was never returned and has been lost. If any reader is able to locate it, it would be deeply appreciated. It would be a fitting tribute if he was remembered in this way again, even with some new shield or trophy.



Marika Guerillot (later married to Peter Szwarcbord) training in her father's Academy.



Peter Szwarcbord training at the Guerillot Academy

1975

1st Australian Championship

As mentioned above, Takeuchi Sensei and Rex Lawley arranged, with Ron Bennett, for the Sydney Club to visit to the Paul Guerillot Martial Arts Academy. The famous fight that eventuated has become known as the 1st Australian Championships, won by Steve Lawley. This legendary encounter was reported in AKJ Martial Arts magazine (Vol2No1).

During Easter 1975 a Sydney Kendo Club delegation led by Rex Lawley (4th Dan) drove the long 17 hour trip to Paul's Dojo. Included in their group were Ron Bennett, Rex's son Steven Lawley, Michael Payne, Doug Milton, Peter Heinrich and several others. Arriving at 1.00 p.m. what follows is again captured by John Butler's vivid description;

"The Victorians and New South Welshmen lined up on opposite sides of the long, narrow Dojo, staring across at their respective alter egos. Someone shouted, 'Hajime!'. It was hot and cold running blood. The air was thick with slivers of bamboo. The strangest blood curdling kiais of insults and invective filled the tiny Dojo. Takeuchi Sensei very nearly joined a monastery after witnessing the brutality of the first battle. Almost all the combatants finished the day with red and purple welts across arms, torsos and legs down to the ankles from poorly placed Do cuts.

At the end of Saturday training they all limped their way to the local pub for a meal and litres of amber fluid. It wasn't all bad though. From that first meeting the Australian Kendo Renmei was founded and many life-long friendships developed.”
(Butler 1994 page 13)



Paul Guerillot's mob: 4th from the left is Paul Guerillot; 2nd from the right is John Butler



1975 at Paul Guerillot's dojo
Rex Lawley watching from the doorway as Mike Payne (right) tries for a kote cut.



1975 at Paul Guerillot's dojo



1st Australian Kendo Championships in 1975. Takeuchi Sensei lays down the law - "no axe chopping!"



... followed closely by Paul Guerillot '*seeking clarification*'



“A very tough man”

Paul Geurillot, founder of the first Kendo group in Victoria
Paul was Rex Lawley and Ron Bennett's favourite fighting partner.

IKF Visit – Nagashima Sensei, Iho Sensei and Kiyono Sensei

Soon after the return to of Michael Payne, Ron Bennett, Peter Heinrich and John Butler from the Katsu-Ura Seminar in 1975, Takeuchi Sensei received word that three high ranking Japanese sensei from the IKF would be visiting Sydney and Melbourne. Paul Guerillot's Dojo was used in the planning for the visit. Nagashima Sensei and Iho Sensei, who had met the Australians at Katsu-Ura, attended in August 1975, together with Kiyono Sensei.

Takeuchi Sensei was berated for the standard of Australian Kendo, which didn't impress the three visiting dignitaries who *"arrived and took us apart"* according to John Butler. Indeed, Takeuchi describes how the Melbourne students, *"jumped at the Senseis as savage dogs to get IPPON, but all students had been completely knocked down. Finally they realized how great the real Kendo was"*. (Takeuchi 2007). The practice of Kendo became less frequent at Paul's Academy for a few years after the IKF visit as they concentrated more on their other arts.



The

Three visiting Sensei in Melbourne
with some notable visitors from Sydney who drove down for a second dose.
Back Row: centre: Ross Kendricks Far right (wearing a suit) Bill Freeman.
Second back row: Doug Milton, John Butler, Paul Guerillot and Ron Bennett.
Second row: Rex Lawley, Nagashima Sensei, Iho Sensei, Kiyono Sensei and Takeuchi Sensei.

The Arrival of Nagae Sensei.

In 1975 Sumitaka Nagae Sensei (5th Dan) and his wife Reiko arrived in Australia. Snow Brand, the largest Japanese dairy produce company, had bought into the Murray Goulburn Corporation and Nagae Sensei had been appointed to a position with them, based at Cobram in central north Victoria.

Apart from the requirement to oversee and develop this co-operative venture, Nagae Sensei was also asked by Mitsugi Saito Sensei, Company Director and Vice President of the AJKF to introduce and further develop Kendo in Australia.



Nakakura Sensei and Takeuchi Sensei
(this photograph was presented to Ron Bennett by Takeuchi Sensei)

PROFILE



*Jun Takeuchi
Sensei*

In mid-1972 Jun Takeuchi Sensei of the Mitsubishi Corporation then a 4th Dan, arrived in Sydney and become the new Kendo teacher, assisted by Akira Tajima

In 1974 He was transferred to Melbourne. 1974 he and Rex Lawley arranged for Sydney to visit.

In 1975 Takeuchi Sensei oversaw the first Australian Championship at Paul Guerillot's dojo. He hosted the visit of the IKF delegation ...

Together with John Butler he founded the Melbourne Kendo Club in Little Bourke Street.

In 1976 he was recalled to Japan.

Takeuchi Sensei became Secretary General of the IKF.

In 2000 he returned to visit Australia for the Founder's Cup.

He was unswerving in his efforts to promote Kendo in Australia. As for his character, Ron says that he was such a gentle soul that it was impossible not to involve yourself with his methods of teaching. Many times Ron would ask him *"why can't I beat you?"* and he would say, *"because you are not concentrating on the correct methods of cutting with the spirit of Kendo in mind. All you are doing is chopping down trees which, I presume you do very well! So we will start again, you and I".*

As yet, Ron finds he still cannot defeat Takeuchi Sensei, but this has become a very unimportant factor in their long friendship. Ron still tries to think correctly.

1976

Little Bourke Street

The IKF visit seems to have inspired Takeuchi Sensei to establish a proper Kendo Dojo, so he and John Butler spent much time looking for a suitable place. Tino Ceberano offered to help but Takeuchi Sensei was firm in his resolve to stand alone. Similarly he rejected the Melbourne University Gymnasium saying, *"we will not be a part of a school of any kind."* (Butler 1988 page 23). Ron Bennett recalls that Takeuchi Sensei was concerned with not confusing Kendo with the schooling programs of other established martial arts, such as Judo.

Eventually a solution came in February thanks to Bill Freeman's association with the Excalibur Fencing Club. This European Fencing group had moved into a 1st floor warehouse in Little Bourke Street (now the Welcome Motel). Although lacking showers and with a somewhat splintery floor, it was available on Sunday mornings and Monday evenings. Yakov Macak recalls that training times were on Sunday mornings and Monday evenings were sub-let from Tino Ceberano (a good friend of

John Butler's), who conducted Karate classes there. The room was also used for ballet classes, and judging by the pattern of cigarette burns on the floor it had once been used as a bar of some sort. Takeuchi Sensei agreed and together he, John Butler and Bill Freeman prepared to begin their Kendo Club the following year.

John Butler recalled pasting many advertisements in and around the city under the cloak of darkness to advertise the new premises. Bill Freeman concentrated on Iaido and Kenjitsu as a medical condition inhibited any vigorous training in Kendo on his part, consequently, most Sunday morning trainings consisted of Takeuchi Sensei and John Butler.

Enter the Macak Clan

Few prospective pupils started or stayed, the first notable being Eric Jeffrey. Eric's background was in Aikido and he was to become a major competitor for both Victoria and Australia. John relates that on one of his long trips home to Wallan he picked up a young hitchhiker who became interested in Kendo following their travelling discussion. This man was Paul Macak, who eventually interested his brother, Yakov and sister, Halinka. The Macak Kendo Dynasty thus began.

Establishing the VKR

The Melbourne Club remained rather small, but early members included Bob Collins, Ron Jones, Margaret Irwin and Michael Lind. A visit to Sydney saw Rex Lawley invite John Butler and Paul Guerillot to join the AKR. Takeuchi agreed although Paul was reluctant at the time. Back in Melbourne, John Butler registered the Melbourne Kendo Club and the Victorian Kendo Renmei as a defence in case some other group should do so in the future. This proved to be a wise move.

Takeuchi Sensei is recalled to Tokyo, Okamoto Sensei visits

Devastating news came with the recall of Takeuchi Sensei to Tokyo. For a time, another Mitsubishi employee by the name of Hirano Sensei (4th Dan) was coerced into occasional training, but this was not regular and the club members were again left to their own devices.

John Butler relates how they made a valuable contact from a most unexpected source;

"We started watching the 'shipping news' in the papers and spent many visits to the Port of Melbourne Docks seeking Japanese ships. One day we were successful. The NYK Line's First Officer. Mr Okamoto, admitted he was a 5th Dan and agreed to be taken to the Club."

Okamoto Sensei's work took him between Japan and Australia frequently and he was able to provide Sydney's Willoughby Dojo with valuable Iaido instruction. On other trips however, he was able to visit Melbourne. He returned to Melbourne about every six weeks and brought much needed Kendo gear purchased in Yokohama. John relates how bogu bags filled with paper would be replaced with the new Kendo equipment to ease past the Customs officers. Remarkably, training sometimes took place on the deck of the ship, in parks and once even in the Commonwealth Car Pool garage, as Okamoto Sensei's visits didn't always coincide with Sunday training. Okamoto Sensei was eventually transferred to a different run and once again the Melbourne Kendo Club and Sydney Iaido Club were without a Sensei.

PROFILE



*Yakov
Macak*

Yakov was 33 and keenly involved in baseball when he took up Kendo. He had no prior interest in the 'martial arts' and had never heard of Kendo, although he did have some small knowledge of Japanese culture via an interest in pottery and in the cultivation of bonsai.

His brother Paul had taken up Kendo a few months earlier in early 1977, and a Japanese Self Defence force ship visited Melbourne. This was when Yakov first saw Kendo, and his interest was aroused.

In March 1978 he started at the Melbourne Kendo Club dojo in Little Bourke St on a Sunday morning, which had a floating membership of 12 to 15 at that time with about 8 to 10 attending each training session, under Mr Hirano (4th Dan at the time).

Mr Nagae (5th Dan at that time) was living in northern Victoria and he would come down to Melbourne every month or so. Later a young James Fennessey returned to Melbourne to study at Monash University providing some exciting new blood to the Club. Jamie was a strong early influence on Yakov's Kendo.

Mr Okamoto was a ship's engineer on the car transport between Australia and Japan and he would train with us whenever his schedule permitted and bring in hard-to-obtain Kendo supplies when he could. Yakov trained in football shorts and a windcheater for close to a year before he was able to acquire a *hakama* and *keikogi*; a strange sight!

Six months in, Yakov met interstate players at the Octoberfest, scored some points, got graded and returned to baseball. The next autumn he returned to Kendo training and after another year or so retired from baseball and continued with year round Kendo training. He was hooked!

Yakov served as AKR president for nine years and Ron Bennett recalls that the AKR never had any money until Yakov's Presidency, as he was the first to enforce regular payment of membership fees! In its strength, organisational rigour and enthusiasm, AKR has much to thank Macak Sensei for.

Yakov has since earned his 6th Dan in Kendo and on the 10th June 2007 was awarded a SPECIAL COMMENDATION from the AKR in recognition and appreciation of many years of dedicated hard work toward improving the administration of the AKR and the technical skills of its members.

Cobram and Shepparton

In 1976 Nagae Sensei introduced Kendo to classes in Cobram and Shepparton, where his first students were Max *'the axe'* Gardner and Rex Yorgensen. He settled in Cobram and worked for the Murray Goulburn Snow Company, a subsidiary of the Snow Brand Milk Company of Japan. In 1978 the Snow Brand Milk Company donated the trophy for the Individual Australian Champion.



Rex Yorgensen



Max *'the axe'* Gardner

Through the grapevine John Butler heard of Nagae Sensei's arrival and eventually made contact by driving to Cobram. On this first occasion John was shattered to find that Nagae Sensei had gone to Melbourne for a Lions meeting. Despite heavy work commitments, Nagae Sensei undertook to visit the Melbourne Dojo whenever he was in Melbourne.

1st Oktoberfest

In October 1976 Melbourne hosted the first Oktoberfest. According to John Butler:

"we had agreed with Sydney that Sydney should host the Australian Team and Individual Championships each Easter and Melbourne would host the Kyu Grades Team and Individual Championships, plus the Women's Championships, Children's Championships and Shinpan training every October."

(Butler page 26)

When this agreement actually took place is uncertain but the annual Oktoberfest weekend with the Kyu grade competitions were held regularly until 1985 when the Kyu Grade events became part of the Australian National Taikai.

Yakov Macak, a beginner of 6 months at the time, recalls:

"Saturday's training and competition was held at Preston Institute of technology at Bundoora and it was here that I must have met for the first time such Kendo luminaries

as Ron Bennet, Rex, Betty and Steve Lawley, Paul and Ted Rixon, Warren and Dianne Hughes (nee Rixon).

I entered my first competition, and my only clear memory is of scoring a nuki-Do in response to an attempted Men by my opponent – the only time I really remember performing this technique effectively in competition!

On the Sunday it was out to Tino Cerebrano's dojo in Balwyn where we trained, and then we had the grading examination – all on tatami matting! I was graded to 3rd Kyu (that was the way it was done back then) and that was the end of my first 6 months of Kendo. The new baseball season had begun!"

1977

2nd Summer School at Kitamoto

Michael Payne phoned John Butler with news of a second Summer School, this time at the Gedatsu Kai in Kitamoto, Saitama. John Butler, Eric Jeffrey and newcomer, Valmei Rodgers joined the Sydney group together with Rod Prince from Brisbane at this new venue. On the journey the group trained in Kagoshima under the guidance of Nakakura Sensei before a stay in Tokyo with Takeuchi Sensei and Akira Tajima, a former Rotary Exchange student who had lived in Shepparton, Victoria.

The Summer School was vastly different from the previous one at Katsur-ura. The program concentrated on future Instructors. During this visit the group was first introduced to Haga Sensei. All returned wiser and much more skilful. John Butler received his laido 1st Dan from Haga Sensei.

Enter Jamie Fennessy

After returning from a year in Japan as an exchange student with the Rotary Exchange Program to Waseda University, a 17 year old Jamie Fennessy began training at the Melbourne Kendo Club. He already held the rank of Shodan and was also fluent in the Japanese language.

Richmond High School

Eric Jeffery began a Kendo Club at Richmond High School which Peter Szwarcbord regularly attended.

1978

Dr Kawamura

In February the son of Dr Kawamura (7th Dan OmoriRyu) studied at the University of Melbourne and contacted the Kendo group. Later that year John Butler visited Dr Kawamura in Japan.

3rd Oktoberfest

Held at Preston Institute of Technology at Bundoora – it is decided to hold Kyu individual and team championships plus shinpan training at these events, with Dan and open teams at the Nationals.



Left to Right: Ikeda Sensei, Nagae Sensei, Okamoto Sensei and Hirano Sensei

1979

Cobram Show

Members of the Melbourne Kendo Club travelled demonstrated Kendo at the Cobram Show. The group included John Butler, Eric Jeffery, Mr Hirano, Bob Collins, Ron Jones, Michael Lind and Nagae Sensei.

4th World Kendo Championships, Sapporo Japan

At the completion of the 3rd AKC in Brisbane, the Australian Team for the World Championships was chosen:

Team Leader	R. Lawley
Coach	S. Nagae
Captain	S. Lawley
Members.	J. Fennessy, M. Payne, J. Butler, R. Bennett, R. Prince and E. Jeffrey



The first stop was Tokyo, staying at the YMCA

Left to right: David Prince, Danny Strenger, Mike Payne, Max 'the axe' Gardner, Andrew Melito, John Butler, Rex Lawley, Eric Jeffries, Steven Lawley, their Japanese YMCA Host, rod Prince, other Japanese Hosts, Jamie Fennessey, another Japanese Host, Nagae Sensei

For the first time Australia was able to send a full team to the World Championships. While Rex Lawley and Darrel Morris had represented Australia at the first World Championships in 1970, Ron Bennett had been to the second World Championships in Los Angeles and the third in Milton Keynes, England in 1976, the group sent to Japan in July 1979 contained 14 Kendo Players, all eager to learn and that's what they did.

In Melbourne the Victorian team members all trained hard and worked at fund raising to help pay for their trip to Sapporo. John Butler remembers the efforts of club members such as Margaret Irwin, who tried to organize Japanese film nights to raise money.

Nagae Sensei organized much of the itinerary, including training on arrival in Tokyo. While the group stayed at the Tokyo YMCA, training was in nearby Kendo dojo. A specially chartered Boeing 747 took competitors from all competing nations to Sapporo on the northern island of Hokkaido for the 4th World Kendo Championships.

The opening ceremony was a truly magnificent occasion, the huge crowd waiting for the entry of each team, which were lined up alphabetically. To the sound of "*Entry of the Gladiators*" played by a full military brass band the teams began to enter the stadium, first Argentina followed by Australia.

The team's performance wasn't as good as hoped, the Australians going down in rapid succession in the teams to Britain 3 –1 and Hawaii 5 – nil. The individuals the following day resulted in a similar result. But good results were obtained in the Goodwill Tournaments the next day, Eric Jeffrey coming second in his grade and Steven Lawley coming 5th in his. It was a great experience and many new friends were made. The group met with many old friends too, such as Mr Okura, Mr Yoshida, Mr Takeuchi, Mr Tajima, Mr Fukushima, Mr Iho, Mr Kiyono, and Mr Nagashima.

It must be recorded that John Butler was asked to respond on behalf of all the foreign competitors during the closing ceremony, a high honour and one which reflects the standing which John had in the Kendo community. It was the end of the decade and the start of a new era for Kendo in Australia.



Steve Lawley proudly carrying the Australian Flag at the Sapporo games.
Following: Rex Lawley, Nagae Sensei, Jamie Fennessy, Mike Payne, Eric Jeffreys, John Butler,
Ron Bennett and Rod Prince.



All teams lined up before Crown Prince Akahito (now Emperor of Japan) for the opening address.



Left to Right: standing: Rex Lawley, Steven Lawley, Nagae Sensei, Eric Jeffery, Jamie Fennesy, Michael Payne, Ron Bennett.
Kneeling: Rod Prince and John Butler.



All members participated at the 5th Summer school again held at the Gedatsu Kai in Kitamoto, Saitama.

PROFILE



**Peter
Szwarcbord**

Peter began martial arts study in 1966 when only 9 years old. He was first introduced to Judo, which he did for a couple of years. He then took up Karate in 1973 when 15 at the Paul Guerillot Martial Arts Academy and by the end of that year he received a yellow Belt.

Paul continued Karate training as well as Foot and Fist Boxing - a style developed by Paul Guerillot - up until 1981. Whilst training with Guerillot Sensei he also trained with Paul's son and daughters; in fact Marika, one of Paul's daughters, was also teaching students. Peter got to know Marika very well and they enjoyed training and going on runs together.

Peter joined the Guerillot clan in 1980 when he married Marika. They now have two lovely daughters.

Always keen for hard training, Peter even went to Kendo training (which he'd been practicing for only 6 months at that stage) on his honeymoon in Paris, "you can imagine how that went down!" he mused, with a his typical wry grin.

He recalls:

"I was visiting Marika at home a lot (for meals, before we were married) I would often look at a photo board displayed in their shop window and one day asked Paul about this photo of someone dressed up in a weird outfit that looked like it was all black and had a strange helmet. It was Paul in Kendo armour I was told.

That's when I started asking all sorts of question about what is Kendo, when did you do it, why don't we still do it at the Dojo etc., etc. After a little while I think he must of got sick of my asking about Kendo and said would you like to do it, I said yes."

In 1980 Paul Guerillot got one of his old students Rod Moran, who had trained in Karate, Foot and Fist Boxing and Kendo in the old days (he was in fact an amazing martial artist) to come and teach Kendo to Peter and they re-opened the Kendo part of the Academy. When they commenced, the Academy had to relocate to the first floor in front of the Beatty Ave Toorak squash courts.

Peter has since achieved 6th Dan grades in both Kendo and Iaido, and now holds Renshi rank in Kendo. At the Kenshikan Dojo he has famously trained a number of Australia's most powerful Iaidoka, notably Claire Chan – multiple winner of the Australian Iaido Championship.

PROFILE



Jamie Fennessey

Australia's first 7th Dan in Kendo

At the age of 16 Jamie was a Rotary Exchange student in Japan where he first learned Kendo and the Japanese language. It is often said that Jamie's spoken Japanese is perfect. This skill advanced him to an extremely high level in the business world.

He worked for Macquarie Bank and this enabled to travel regularly back to Japan where he was able to get top level training.

Responsible for advancing Kendo in Victoria, New South Wales, the ACT and Tasmania (founding the Tasmanian Kendo Renmei), Jamie was appointed as an IKF board member in the auditing section.

His ability in shiai was unsurpassed for many years. The fights between Jamie and Mark Wild in particular, were really exciting to watch.

The Willoughby Dojo featured an old upright piano, by the kitchen door, in the corner nearest the stage (on the 'junior side'). During jigeiko, whoever was fighting Jamie (the senior-most instructor available on any normal day) would have the piano to their rear. Jamie delighted in driving weaker players across the room with peerless control of 'centre'. Inevitably, almost any opponent would find themselves sitting on the keyboard at some stage! It was always said that you hadn't played Kendo till you'd be "pianoed" by Jamie Fennessey!

Due to recurring health issues Jamie discontinued regular physical training.

A GREAT LOSS

On the 22nd of January 2012, Jamie passed away after a brief battle with cancer. His loss came as a great shock to the Australian Kendo community that he helped to build.

The tribute to him by the AKR President Richard Ward is presented in full at the end of this book.

Queensland – 1970's

1977

Brisbane Kendo Club is established.

John Isaacs records that the early days of Kendo in Queensland are obscure, and only involved a few people. Sadly much of their early efforts seem to have gone unrecorded. Certainly Rod Prince was there from the outset.

News of a new Club in Brisbane organized by Howard Lister and Rod Prince under Ikeda Sensei caused much excitement down south. Rod led a team including Howard Lister, Sandra Knowles and Joe Elkenhans to the 2nd Australian Kendo Championships in Canberra, where Sandra was the first woman to compete in any Australian Kendo Championship. To their great credit the Queenslanders scored third place in the teams event. This signalled the great impact Queenslanders were to have in Australian Kendo.

They practiced in the YMCA on Ann Street, Brisbane. Early members included David Prince, Satoru Chamberlain and John Asprey. The Kenshinkai, as it became known, remained there for about 15 years.

In 1977 Rod Prince attended the 2nd Summer School at the Gedatsu Kai in Kitamoto, Saitama, Japan.

1978

3rd Australian Kendo Championships, Brisbane QLD

In recognition of their new club, the 3rd AKC was held in Queensland to raise the profile of the art and include them in the growing 'Kendo family'. They were held in Brisbane under the control of Ikeda Sensei of Brisbane, Rex Lawley, Hirano Sensei and Nagae Sensei.

The Queensland team was made up of Rod Prince, Howard Lister, Joe Elkenhans, Sandra Knowles, Yuji Sano and Ted Chamberlain (Satoru's brother).

The Snow Brand trophy for the individual championship was first awarded at this Championship, to Steve Lawley. Ron recalls being unable to beat the then 14 year old Yuji Sano from Queensland, and claims he is still trying!

These championships showed that Queensland would soon become quite a force to be reckoned with due to the fighting spirit of Rod Prince, their leader. This also marked the inaugural journey of the famous "Hiroko's Express" bus (carrying the NSW team) which, of course, broke down and had to get some of that famous Ron Bennett road-side service.

3rd AKC - Brisbane

1st

2nd

3rd

OPEN INDIVIDUAL

Steven LAWLEY

Michael PAYNE

John BUTLER
Rod PRINCE

OPEN TEAMS

NSW

QLD

VIC



Steven Lawley with the Snow Brand Cup in 1978

Australian Capital Territory – 1970's

1977

2nd Australian Kendo Championship

Though there was no Kendo presence in Canberra at the time, Easter 1977 saw the 2nd Australian Kendo Championships held there, as it was a good middle-ground. John Anderson (founder of the Muirfield dojo) organised the 2nd AKC which was held in a rowing club on the shores of Lake Burleigh-Griffin in Canberra (ACT). Accommodation was at a caravan-holiday camp in Queanbeyan.

This event saw the first ever Australian teams event, which was won by Victoria. Mike Payne of NSW won the trophy as the 2nd ever Australian Individual Champion. John Anderson of NSW came second.

Teams came from the newly formed Queensland group under Rod Prince, New South Wales (Sydney and Muirfield), and Victoria. It was a wonderful sight to see the art spreading so widely.

2nd AKC - Canberra	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Michael PAYNE	John ANDERSON	
OPEN TEAMS	VIC	NSW	QLD



Mike Payne, Akira Tajima and Doug Milton (1977)

1978

A New Start

The ANU Kendo Club was formed in 1978 by Dr Masayuki Miyasaka, Fritz Guldner and Paul Harrison and has been affiliated with the Australian National University Sports Union since. Approximately 15 members joined the club in that first year. However, as the club was new with no financial assistance, possessed only one set of bogu and just a few shinai (bought by a club member,) membership steadily decreased.

Dr Masayuki Miyasaki, Fritz Guldner (a research student at ANU, and as of 2007 the Professor of Anatomy at the University of the West Indies) and Paul Harrison (a PhD student from New Zealand) all had a long association with the Australian National University (ANU).

There were about 15 members in 1978, with just one set of bogu and a handful of shinai between them.

They received a great deal of assistance and encouragement from Jamie Fennessey, Mike Payne and Ron Bennett among others.

Some Welcome Funding

In November the ANU made its first grant to the club to purchase 2 sets of bogu and some shinai.



Front Row includes: Ted Rixon, Marge Irwin, Diane Hughes, David Armstrong, Ivan Rowbotham, Ron Bennett
Second Row includes: Stylianos Polichroniadis (Stilts), Miyasaki Sensei, Mr Nagae, Fritz Guldner,
Paul Harrison, Steve Lawley, Rex Lawley, Colin Noble, Eric Jeffries, Mike Payne

PROFILE



*Dr Masayuki
Miyasaka*

Dr Miyasaka arrived in Australia on June 2nd 1977.

Together with Fritz Guldner and Paul Harrison, he founded the ANU Kendo Club in 1979.

He was recognised with an ANU BLUE in 1980 for his outstanding achievement in Kendo, as displayed at the Australian Kendo Championships.

To recognise his contribution, Dr Miyasaka was presented with a Pewter Mug, commemorating his Life Membership in the AKR.

Sadly, Dr Miyasaka returned to Japan in 1981, leaving a great void in the fledgling ACT group.

1979

The First Inter-State Training Weekend

In March of 1979 the Sydney Kendo Club visited for the first of many training weekends. Over the years, many such visits were made by Kendo players from Melbourne and Sydney, which were greatly appreciated.

Myasaka Sensei commented about Ron's bus, the famous "Hiroko's Express", his enthusiasm and his (then trademark) use of strength over technique.



Front row: Stylianos Polichroniadis (Stilts)
The back row includes: Shizawa Sensei, Jamie Fennessey and Peter Szwarcbord



Nagashima Sensei and Stylianos Polichroniadis (Stilts) in Japan

Western Australia -1970's

1978

Prior to the formation of the WAKR

David Daga, a student at Curtin University, told Brian Brestovac that there was a Japanese exchange high school student living next door to him and that he was a nidán in Kendo.

Brian Brestovac was doing Karate at the time and expressed interest in learning Kendo. Brian told his brother Dennis and his friend Robert Mateljan about this Japanese student and they decided to approach him for Kendo lessons. They met with Owada Tsukasa and he agreed to teach them Kendo.

Owada Tsukasa, a 2nd Dan high school student, was the first person to teach Kendo in Western Australia. The first Kendo training session was conducted at the back yard of the Brestovac family back yard (519 Main Street, Balcatta, Perth WA).

Training continued there for a couple of months, then moved to Robert Mateljan's parents' back yard, and on to the Balcatta senior high school canteen area (on a concrete floor).



Owada Tsukasa (right) with Brian Brestovac (centre kneeling) and Dennis Brestovac (left) 1978

Kendo bogu was extremely difficult to source at the time, however Owada San managed to borrow a set from a Japanese teacher living in WA (teaching at the Japanese school), Mr Maeda Juichi. They also ordered two sets from a local martial arts supplier. One set arrived, which Dennis bought. Over thirty years later, Brian Brestovac is still waiting for his set. They had to swap around with the bogu so that they all could practice.

They trained with Owada Tsukasa for approximately nine months, before he returned to Japan in November 1978.

1979

Maeda Sensei

Robert Mateljan made contact with Maeda Sensei (5th Dan Kendo), from who they had borrowed the bogu, and he had started teaching Kendo in early 1979. Robert and Brian decided to continue training under Maeda sensei, however Dennis decided not to continue, so Brian actually bought his first set of bogu from him. They trained for most of the year at the Mount Lawley Teachers' college gym.

The most senior member with Maeda Sensei was Graham Hutchinson.



Maeda Sensei (centre) with Kendo group (Brian Brestovac & Robert Matljan to his left, Graham Hutchinson to his far left), 1979.

Maeda sensei conducted a grading examination in which Robert Mateljan, Graham Hutchinson and Brian Brestovac were awarded first Kyu.

While training with Maeda sensei they competed with the crew members of the ice breaker "Fuji", who were on stopover in Fremantle. They also attended a Japanese community dinner and competed with Japanese maritime students in exhibition matches.

Towards the end of 1979 Maeda Sensei also left to go back to Japan. He remained the highest ranked resident Kendo instructor to teach Kendo in WA until Brian received 5th Dan in 2000.

The West Australian kendoka contacted the Australian Kendo Renmei to find out if they knew of any Kendo instructors in WA that could assist. They received a letter of support, however the AKR did not know of any Kendo instructors in WA.

They tried to keep the club going themselves, however it was too difficult without a teacher and the club broke up soon after. They did not train in Kendo again for several years.

PROFILE



***Brian
Brestovac***

Brian started playing Kendo in 1978 and joined the WAKR upon its foundation in 1988.

In 1991 he came 3rd at the AKC, and later 2nd in 1997.

He won the WA State championships in 1988, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1999 and also won the 2005 University Games.

Brian not only played an important role in starting Kendo in WA, but was State Kendo Coach 1997-98, 2001-02 and 2005-07, and also served on the AKR Kendo Board from 2000-2007.

Brian was selected to play for Australian in the 1997 Kyoto World Championships and was Vice Captain for the USA in 2000.

He achieved his 6th Dan in 2006.

Brian remains one of the core figures in WA Kendo and the whole state can draw inspiration from his example.

The 1980's

New South Wales – 1980's

1980

Arrival of Shizawa Sensei

A request was made to the IKF to have a Sensei (especially in NSW) because there had been a fall off in membership, and the senior members feared the spirit of Kendo was being lost since the departure of Takeuchi Sensei.

The request to the IKF was successful and in late 1980 the Japanese Ministry of Education sent out Professor Kunio Shizawa of the prestigious Nippon Taiku Daigaku (Nittaidai University).

Ron Bennett clearly states that if ever two people held a major place in his mind and heart it is Takeuchi Sensei and Shizawa Sensei. Their personalities are the reason for this statement.

Shizawa Sensei didn't just visit, he actually moved to Sydney with his family and stayed and trained for just over a year. His visitations to various states on the East Coast had the same impact there as they had in NSW.



Shizawa Sensei and Ron Bennett on the 27th March 1981

PROFILE



*Kunio Shizawa
Sensei*



Mon (crest)
of the
Nittaidai University

Shizawa Sensei was the Professor of Kendo at the prestigious *Nippon Taiku Daigaku* (Japanese Sport University).

He was sent by the Japanese Ministry of Education in 1980 to investigate, support and promote Kendo in New South Wales over a 12 month period.

Shizawa Sensei had a powerful impact on Yoichi Yano, inspiring him to ever greater heights in his technique and training.

Ted Rixon's technique was greatly inspired by the Sensei's style. Bob Brown recalls that the Wollongong students could never untangle Ted's 'tricky' close-fighting skills, and were astonished to see Shizawa Sensei perform exactly the same technique, but faster and with greater accuracy. Any time Ted sparred with Shizawa Sensei a crowd would quickly gather.

He returned to Japan in 1982, but frequently returns as a visitor to Australia with his wife and groups of his Kendo students from the Nittaidai.

These many Nittaidai visits in themselves have greatly advanced Kendo in Australia as each time the Australians are astonished to see just how well it can be played! These visits became known as "the Old Boys Club".





Shizawa Sensei at Willoughby Dojo (1980). Photo includes: Shingo Sensei, Betty Lawley, Michael Peters, John Butler, Dianne Hughes, Rex Lawley, Ron Bennett, Doug Milton, Michael Payne, Ted Rixon, Motoko Indo.

1st NSW Championship

The first NSW State Championships were held in Willoughby in February.

Indiv comp: Shinozuka, 2nd Otsuka
 Teams: NSW, VIC, QLD, ACT
 Goodwill: NSW defeated ACT 4-1

Enter the Two Bobs to Iaido at Willoughby

By 1980 the Iaido club started by Doug Milton at Willoughby in 1976 was virtually extinct, with Doug training solo. A new lease on life came with the joining of Bill Temm, Noel Lai, Govan Oliver and most notably, Bob Burton and Bob McCarron. The 'two Bobs' played a huge part in the history of Iaido.



Bob Burton, Bob McCarron and Dr Yahiko Kadono Sensei

5th Australian Kendo Championship, Sydney

5th AKC - Sydney	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	James Fennessy	Steven Lawley		
OPEN TEAMS	NSW	VIC	QLD	ACT

Rex Lawley Presented with the Okura Shield

At the 5th Australian Kendo Championships, Rex Lawley was made the first recipient of the Okura Shield in recognition of his part in the founding of Kendo in Australia.

1982

Doug Milton earned his 2nd Dan in laido.

7th Australian Kendo Championships, Sydney

7th AKC - Sydney	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	J Fennessey	Warren Hughes	Steven Lawley	
OPEN TEAMS	VIC	NSW	QLD	ACT

Founding of the Buxton Kendo Club

Having moved from Sydney and launched a printing business in Picton, Ted Rixon founded a Kendo club in his small southern-highlands hometown of Buxton (10 minutes out of Picton) south west of Sydney. It was quite well attended by several keen members from southern Sydney and surrounds, notably Peter Caddick and Bob Broughton as well as Ted's daughter Melany. Training could be bitterly cold in the biting winter nights (the wind blew up through the gaps between the floor boards) so if a half hour of running laps couldn't warm them up, a quick retreat to watch Kendo videos in front of the pot belly stove in Ted's house was called for!

The Buxton Club was the seed for the Wollongong University Club which Ted founded the following year, and numerous Wollongong members would train at both venues. Only Bob Brown, Peter Caddick and Ted himself were ever simultaneously members of both clubs.

In later years, Ted moved the Buxton club 10 or so miles down the road to the Masonic Lodge in Picton, where he hosted the mid-week 'seniors training' for Wollongong members. There the cold nights could be offset with Pork Pies and boutique-brewed Burraborang Bock beer at the George IV pub.

The tradition of the Buxton Club continues (in spirit) in the annual 'Picton Bash' event, a key training event on the NSW Kendo calendar.



Shizawa Sensei and Ron Bennet visit Tom Slavin's dojo in Kingswood NSW (1982)

1983

Shingo Sensei

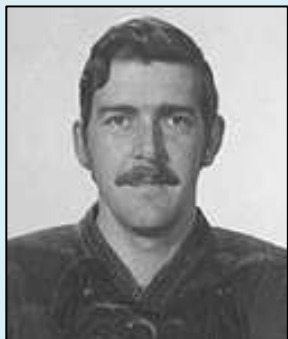
After Shizawa Sensei, the Sydney club was lucky to have instruction under Shingo Sensei for about a year.

3rd NSW State Championships

Held in July, 1983.

Indiv comp: Steve Lawley, 2nd Colin Noble, 3rd R. Bennett, 4th W. Hughes

PROFILE



Steve Lawley

Steve Lawley, son of Rex and Betty Lawley, was one of the pivotal figures in the history of Australian Kendo. His giant stature and powerful technique made him a force to be reckoned with.

Steve served as president of the AKR on three occasions, and most notably, was Australian Kendo Champion an unequalled seven times!

Ron Bennett recalls that over twelve years of competition against Steve, he only ever managed to score one single point!

Other players could (sometimes) manage to overcome Steve in Kendo competition (*shiai*) but even in defeat he was always the model player, gracious in defeat as in victory.

Steve co-authored an early history of Australian Kendo with his father Rex, and has represented Rex at Founders Events in recent years.

Steve Lawley will always be The Champion of Australian Kendo.

8th Australian Kendo Championships, Sydney

8th AKC - Sydney

1st

2nd

3rd

OPEN INDIVIDUAL

Jamie Fennessey

Paul Macak

Satagi Kikuchi

OPEN TEAMS

NSW

VIC

QLD

Enter Yoichi Yano

A mighty figure in Australian Kendo, Yoichi Yano played for a year in Japan at the age of 13 in 1963, then didn't play again until he took up the shinai with the Sydney Kendo Club in 1983. Yoichi recalls that, as a Japanese in a strange land, he sought out his cultural identity and found it in the way of the sword. Oddly, without having moved to a foreign land, he'd probably never have returned to Kendo.

Founding of the Sydney Iaido Club

In 1983 Doug Milton moved from NSW to Queensland and the Willoughby Iaido group lost their leader. Several members left the art, but the survivors, notably Noel Lai, Bob Burton and Bob McCarren continued. They relied heavily on the excellent English language text "*Japanese Swordsmanship*" by Donn Draeger and David Warner, rare copies of which had become available in Australia that year.

The two Bobs and Noel held a meeting, and the three of them reformed the club as the Sydney Iaido Club. This group (curiously recognised in the AKR outside any state body) though often secretive and famously insular (due largely to the strong *koryu* traditions it would later align itself to), would

remain a major force in Australian laido for over 15 years when, after yet another rupture and a lengthy hiatus, it would be reborn under long-time senior member Dean Hawthorne, who made the reformed group an inclusive and nurturing club, finally under the umbrella of the NSWKA.

Founding of the Wollongong University Kendo Club

Ted Rixon, having established the flourishing little local club at Buxton, made the trip 'down the hill' to the University of Wollongong to stir up interest in Kendo there.

Having purchased Donn Draeger and David Warner's excellent book "*Japanese Swordsmanship*" on laido a few months earlier (the same great text which had kept the Willoughby laido members going), and while searching through local martial arts stores for more information about the Japanese Sword, Bob Brown found a very small flyer advertising Ted Rixon's introductory lessons in something called Kendo. It seemed the nearest thing to laido he could find, so it had to be worth a try!

Aden Steinke and Bob Brown both remember trudging through a muddy sports oval to get into the side door of the University Sports Annexe where they encountered a strange fellow wearing a blue dress, who issued broom handles and a few shinai and made them 'walk correctly' up and down the hall all night. Aden Steinke (who was then studying at Sydney University, commuting daily and had commitments to the Army Reserve) decided to give the Sydney University fencing club a try instead, as it was more convenient.

Ted was kind enough to share his earlier laido knowledge (from the original Willoughby group) on occasion, and made a point of introducing Bob Brown to the founder of laido in NSW, Doug Milton.

Bob Brown decided to join both the fledgling UOW Kendo Club and the Buxton Kendo Club and started travelling each week 'back up the hill' to train with Ted. Other notable members of Buxton at the time were Peter Caddick and Bob Broughton.



Ted Rixon's infamous "Australian Hakka" (1984)

"ONE can of Coca-Cola, TWO can of Coca-Cola, THREE can of Coca-Cola ... ONE WITH ICE!"

PROFILE



Yoichi Yano

Australia's Second 7th Dan – a 'home grown' Japanese Master!

Yoichi Yano conducted a spectacularly successful personal journey in his native culture's signature martial art of Kendo, almost entirely in Australia!

Searching for his cultural identity in a foreign land, he was fortunate to come to the Sydney Kendo Club during the time of Shizawa Sensei's tenure there. Shizawa Sensei, Professor of Kendo at the prestigious Nittaidai University of Japan, was perhaps the world's foremost Kendo instructor and Yano San flourished under his guidance.

Ron Bennett recalls that it was Shizawa Sensei who was key to triggering Yoichi's interest in Kendo. Ron is of the firm conviction that it was the instruction of this great man, Shizawa Sensei, in all facets of the Kendo spirit, that gave us all the powerful leader we now have in Yoichi Yano.

Yoichi vividly recalls the difficulties of training on unsuitable floors in the early days, concrete, rough church halls, carpet, even gravel carparks!

Yoichi has strong feelings about the fraternity of Kendo, and he wrote:

"There is no boundary in Kendo. With exception of very few people, my thought about Kenshi is that there is no need to

raise your guard against them. You would feel immediate friendship towards these people and this is very different from my association with non Kendo people.”

Ron Bennett says of Yano san:

“Undoubtedly his sheer personality, alone, is the major part of this man’s manner. It shows us all the spirit of Kendo.”

1985

10th Australian Kendo Championships, Gosford NSW

10th AKC – Gosford	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Y. Yano	Paul Macak	T. Harada
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Tony Kay	Ian Peel	K. Benbow
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	Jennene Greenhill	Maria Liondis	
JUNIORS INDIVIDUAL	M James	B. Black	
OPEN TEAM	NSW	VIC	QLD

1986

In August 1986 a friendly inter-university competition was held in Wollongong between ANU, Wollongong University and Newcastle University. The ANU team was successful in winning this first competition. The event progressed until it became an official intervarsity competition in 1996 known as the Australian University Kendo Championships, which continues to this day.

Takita Sensei

Takita Sensei was based in Sydney for about a year on a fact-finding mission from the Nittaidai. He travelled extensively throughout Australia. He and Ron Bennett went on a good will mission to New Zealand. The three day seminar was chaired by Graham Sawer, 4th Dan and New Zealand President, at the Shakespeare Lodge, 50 minutes’ drive north of Auckland. It included jigeiko, kata, videos and explanations, kihon waza and kakarigeiko. There was open jigeiko in the mornings for grading candidates then an official grading was held on the 3rd afternoon.



Takita Sensei

The picturesque site featured many peacocks which sounded the alarm to get up at 4:30 each morning! This was the fore-runner to the Tasman Goodwill events. Takita Sensei stayed until the 1987 Cowra Goodwill Tournament and departed soon afterwards.

Towards the end of his stay, Ron Bennett assisted him to fill in survey forms (part of his 'fact-finding' mission). Ron clearly recalls one question asked the respondent about their 'Motor Skills'; of course with wry cheek, he promptly wrote "*able to service and repair most normally aspirated engines*".

1987

Developments in Sydney Iaido

Noel Lai, Bob Burton and Bob McCarren were graded to ikkyu. Unfortunately, due to unavoidable work commitments, Noel Lai left the Sydney Iaido Club shortly afterwards and official Iaido in NSW faced yet another crisis. The two Bobs stepped up to the mark and by adopting the role of acting teachers, began actively recruiting new members.

12th Australian Kendo Championships, Cowra NSW

A particularly memorable event in the Kendo and Iaido history of Australia occurred at Cowra, NSW with the 12th AKC and the visit of the most senior Japanese delegation imaginable! In 1986 Doug Milton had made a private visit to Japan and had the privilege of personally delivering an invitation from the AKR to Nakakura Sensei and Nagashima Sensei.

Cowra was the site of the infamous and tragic outbreak of Japanese Prisoners of War during WWII and the AKC coincided with the anniversary of that day and the dedication of a beautiful Japanese garden complex. To have such notable budo legends mingling freely with the general Australian membership was simply astonishing for most of the kendoka present.

There had been a spate of terrible and violent crimes in Cowra just days before the event, and numerous police were bussed in from across NSW to seek the offender. Those present saw more policemen than townsfolk. Who knows what they thought when scores of sword-wielding people arrived!

The Sensei participated in evening meals around camp fires, trying marshmallows and other barbaric things. Jonathon Cross engaged Nagashima Sensei in the ancient Japanese board game of *Go*, and suddenly we could see just how huge and powerful Sensei's hands were! Songs were sung, jokes told (Ted Rixon's infamous *coca cola haka* was performed) and a hilarious mock Sumo match!

Nakakura Sensei and Nagashima Sensei gave an astonishing display of Kendo Kata and Nakakura Sensei performed a memorable laido embu. The event features an laido grading and Doug Milton received his long overdue laido 2nd Dan certificate. Bob Brown, after four years of largely unassisted study in laido chose not to contest a grading, and regretted it for years to come! (The regular annual gradings at the Sydney laido Club Blue Leaf Dojo were not openly advertised, and the club itself was a closed shop, available by prior invitation only)

There was a smaller, somewhat ramshackle hall just down the hill from the main dojo where people warmed-up and prepared for competitions. One of the New Zealand competitors, performing a particularly powerful *fumikomi* (stomping action), snapped a floorboard and promptly sank up to his knee through the floor! Fortunately no serious injury was sustained, but it was a nasty sight.

At one point during a general Kendo training session, an announcement boomed out: "*Sensei will now take on all comers!*" The entire contingent of Australia and New Zealand's best Kendo players lined up to try their hand, for one point each, against the great Sensei! No one stood a ghost of a chance.

The then-Secretary of the Wollongong Club, Bob Brown, was stuck in a Board Meeting upstairs at the time, but recalls that the meeting stopped cold and everyone watched through the windows in awe. Nakakura Sensei seemed to grow to about 7" tall as he put on his helmet (*Men*) and assumed the Chudan no Kamae position. One by one the competitors screamed their *kiai* and charged – and one by one Sensei dealt with them effortlessly, seemingly using no power at all. Sensei seemed to know what attack each would try before they did, and already had the best counter ready for each. It was a truly special sight to behold as Sensei effortlessly divided the whole room into two piles of defeated enemies to his left and right. It was a moment of pure magic, best viewed from above!

In the competition finals, Paul Rixon (NSW) landed a *kote* on (then) five times Australian Champion, Steve Lawley (NSW), and (in his own words) "*proceeded to run away from him for the rest of the match*" to take the title. His sister Dianne Rixon (Hughes) won the Women's Competition in less than two minutes, making Paul and Dianne the first brother-and-sister to hold simultaneous national sporting titles since the Conrad twins' swimming titles in the 1950's. The three Rixons (Ted, Paul & Dianne) with Dianne's then husband Warren Hughes and Steve Lawley went on to take the teams title also. Cowra was truly a 'Rixon event'!

Paul and Dianne were presented with the latest in Kendo technology, two carbon fibre shinai with Nakakura Sensei's personal signature printed on one of the slats and enough photos with the great man to put any dinner party guests to sleep for at least the next twelve months.

The competitions were all fiercely contested, and the results are recorded as follows:

12th AKC - Cowra

1st

2nd

3rd

OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Paul Rixon	Steve Lawley	
KYU INDIVIDUAL	D. Stevens	Bob Boughton	Steve Kelly
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	Diane Hughes	Grace Prince	
SENIORS INDIVIDUAL	Yakov Macak	Mike Payne	Doug Milton
JUNIORS INDIVIDUAL	Brett Smith	Marcus James	S . Kowal
		NSW	VIC
		(incl. ACT, TAS, WA)	

OPEN TEAM The scores were equal, so the team captains played off:
Mark Wild (VIC) vs. Steve Lawley (NSW) – NSW won

TASMAN GOODWILL Aust “A” beat NZ “A” and Aust “B” beat NZ “B”



Cowra 1987: Nakakura Sensei and Nagashima Sensei performing Kendo Kata



Cowra 1987: Nakakura Sensei performing Seitei Iaido. A few people have a better view from the upstairs meeting room.



Cowra 1987: Doug Milton receiving his long overdue Nidan Iaido certificate from Nakakura Sensei



Cowra 1987: Everyone tried their best!

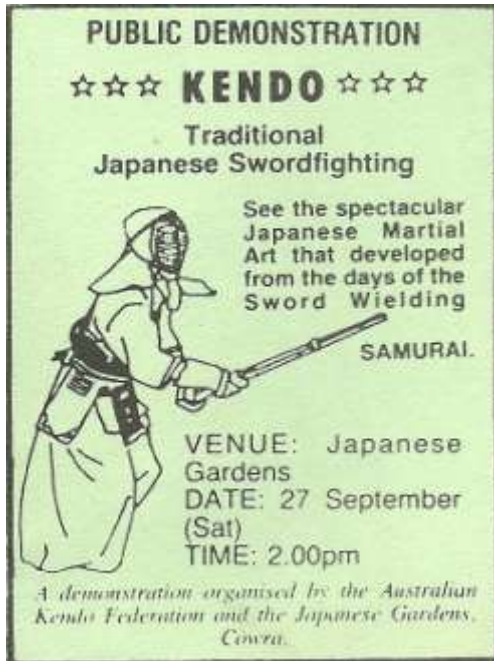


The NSW team to Cowra (1987)

rear row: Jamie Fennessey, Betty, Rex and Steve Lawley

middle row includes: Nagashima Sensei, Nakalura Sensei, Yoichi Yano, Michael Peters, Warren Hughes

front row: Ted (with teams shield), Paul and Dianne Rixon (Hughes) holding the signed carbon fibre shinai gifts.



"Iron Chef" Satagi Kikuchi

At the Cowra championships, a young Bob Brown realised that he didn't have a proper *tare* cover with nice Japanese calligraphy like everyone else. His instructor, Ted Rixon introduced him to Satagi Kikuchi, a Kendo player from Sydney, who owned and ran a fine Japanese restaurant. Bob asked for a kanji translation of 'Robert'. Satagi and his wife struggled long and hard then presented two kanji characters. Bob proudly wore these characters for many years, never really understanding why every Japanese Sensei he met was highly amused. Satagi had chosen *Michi* (road) and *Tori* (bird) hoping that 'Road Bird' sounded a bit like 'Robert' (a sort of bilingual pun). The ever irreverent Aden Steinke called him '*Road Kill*' for a decade. Fortunately, Wollongong player Erica Hewitt persuaded her Japanese grandmother to prepare superb new personalised *Kanji* calligraphy for everyone in the Wollongong Club some years later and 'Road Bird' was never seen again.



Shizawa Sensei, Ron Bennett, Satagi Kikuschi and Dianne Rixon (and friends) at Satagi's restaurant

On the August 3rd 1987 in Japan, Ron Bennett and Jamie Fennessey were awarded 5th Dan in Kendo.

NSW State Championships

These were held on the 7th November 1987.

Indiv Dan comp: Y.Yano, 2nd Mike Peters, 3rd Steve Lawley, 4th David Hopkins
Indiv Kyu comp: Dave Hopkins, 2nd Stephen Avery, 3rd G. Daniels, 4th D. Marie
Teams: Central Coast, Sydney

1988

Steve Lawley was the instructor at the Central Coast club.

Sydney Iaido Club Grows

The two Bobs (Burton and McCarron) were graded to 1st Dan in Iaido and, thanks to their great efforts, the Sydney Iaido Club had grown to have about ten regular members. Later that year they were visited by Nakakura Sensei.

13th Australian Kendo Championships, Rockdale NSW

Over 100 competitors attended the 13th AKC, and the event was reported in the Central Coast Express and the Gosford Star, who were excited at Steve Lawley's 6th AKC title.

13th AKC - Rockdale	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Steve Lawley	Y Yano	Y Macak
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Stephen Avery	E Fujihara	I Scott
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	Maria Liondis	Diane Hughes	
SENIORS INDIVIDUAL	Mike Payne	Yakov Macak	
JUNIORS INDIVIDUAL	Phillip Baker	Steve Rose	
OPEN TEAM		VIC	NSW
KYU TEAM		VIC	NSW

1989

NSW State Championship, Picton NSW

Indiv Dan comp: Keiko Nakada, 2nd Steve Lawley, 3rd M. Peters, 4th D. Gould
 Indic Kyu comp: Gregg Jones, 2nd David Thomas, 3rd C. Roberts, 4th J. Smart
 Teams: Newcastle, Sydney

Australian captain

CENTRAL Coast Youth Club Kendo instructor, Steven Lawley, has been named captain of the Australian team to contest the world championships in Korea next month.

The captaincy follows his sixth Australian individual title won at the 13th Australian Kendo Championships in Sydney.

A total of over 100 competitors representing Queensland, NSW, ACT, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia attended the event.

Lawley was one of six Central Coast Youth Club members included in the NSW team.

They attained the best result of any single club in the country.

Their results were: Steven Lawley — Australian Individual Champion; Stephen Avery — Below Black Belt (KYU grade) Australian Individual Champion; and Stuart Rose — Runner-up Australian Junior Championship.

GOSFORD STAR, Tuesday APRIL 26, 1988

Steve's sixth kendo title

STEVEN Lawley, the kendo instructor at the Central Coast Youth Club, has won the Australian individual championship for a record sixth time.

Competing at the national titles in Sydney, Lawley, who captained the NSW team, was one of six Central Coast Youth Club members who participated with all recording outstanding individual performances.

Lawley's other national titles were recorded in 1975-78-79-81-86 and his latest success has confirmed his rating as captain of the Australian team to contest the world championships in Korea in May.

His Central Coast clubmate, Stephen Avery was named the 1988 below black belt (KYU grade) individual champion at the Australian carnival, while Stuart Rose was placed second in the junior division.

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Steve Lawley's achievements at the 13th AKC in 1988 were a big hit with the Central Coast press, even if they couldn't spell "Kendo"!

Punishment!

Sydney members were recruited to appear as “fight extras” in a Kendo scene for Dolph Lundgren’s feature film “*The Punisher*”, filmed in French’s Forest, Sydney. They were required to perform some *kirikaeshi* warm-up exercises and light sparring in ranks as the camera tracked through the group.

Dolph Lundgren’s character was supposed to be a Kendo expert. The actual Kendo fighting by “*The Punisher*” was performed by a Sydney member. After a ‘cut’, Mr Lundgren was inserted into the scene, to be revealed as he slid his helmet off. As it takes practice to quickly untie and smoothly remove a Kendo helmet (*men*), a special prop *men*, whose face grill opened out *on a hinge* like a door, was made for the star to wear! Later in the story, the Punisher gunned down the ‘evil’ swordsmen and the Sydney Kendo members were required to ‘die’ convincingly as Dolph Lundgren systematically mowed them down with a machine gun!

The club received some money for its efforts, which helped repay steadily mounting debts.

Introduction to Dr Yahiko Kodono Sensei

Following a visit by Inoue Sensei, the Sydney Iaido club was contacted by Hiro Kodono, son of Dr Yahiko Kodono, a master of the koryu style SuioRyu, a secretive and famously *complete* budo system, comprising Iaido forms, Kenjutsu, Naginata, a Jodo form and other weapons.

Kadono Sensei became the sensei for the Sydney Iaido Club, and the standard of practice improved rapidly. He was the pivotal figure in Australian Iaido through the 1990’s, particularly in NSW, and served as the inaugural Australian Iaido Technical Advisor from 1991-1999.



Dr Yahiko Kodono Sensei performing kata from the Suio Ryu, of which he was a Master

Victoria – 1980's

1980

Many Developments

On the 28th July Sensei Nagae shifted permanently to Melbourne.

On the 17th August Nagae Sensei began instruction at the Little Bourke Street dojo. Regular students included Jamie Fennessy, John Butler, Paul Macak, Eric Jeffries, Yakov Macak, Mark Wild, Bob Collins, Margaret Irwin, Sophie Macak, Michael Lind, Ron Jones and Gary Oliver.

On the 24th August Tadashi Harada joined the Melbourne Club.

John Butler attended the Summer School in Saitama.

Oktoberfest was held at the Footscray Institute of Technology.

1981

Elizabeth Street

On the 30th September, the Melbourne Kendo Club shifted its training headquarters to the YWCA in Elizabeth Street.

Paul Guerillot retires

After making an invaluable contribution to the establishment of Kendo in Australia, Paul Guerillot retired from Kendo instruction and donated bogu to the Melbourne Kendo Club. Paul's top student, Peter Szwarcbord, began training with the Melbourne Kendo Club.

1st Japan – Australia Kendo Goodwill Mission

In March the Goodwill Mission sent by the All Japan Kendo Dojo Federation (supported by the Japan Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs) arrived. The group was led by Sensei Saburo Ogasawara, Hanshi 8th Dan. They gave demonstrations in Sydney, Goulburn and Melbourne. A highlight was a demonstration at Woodville Primary School in front of nearly 1000 students and an appearance on the television program, "Hey Hey Its Saturday Morning!"

7th Summer School in Saitama

In September the Japan Naval Defence Force Fleet visited Sydney and Melbourne and exchanged Kendo skills with Australian students. In Melbourne this took place at Nunawading in a display with other Melbourne martial arts groups.

In November, Kendo joined the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme and Nagae Sensei was nominated as coaching director for Kendo. Investigation of a system for Kendo coaching began.

The same month, Brent Gazzaniga - then 2nd Dan - immigrated to Australia from Great Britain.

7th Getatsukai Renshinkan Summer School

The 1981 summer school was attended by John Butler, Peter Szwarcbord and Mark Wild. Afterwards they went to Shizuoka for a few days with Haga Sensei, where John stayed, whilst Peter and Mark travelled to Okayama for a few days of extra laido training with Yamashibu Sensei.

1982

5th World Kendo Championships in Sao Paulo, Brazil

John Butler was the only Australian representative to this event.

1982 saw John receive his laido 3rd Dan from Nakakura Sensei.

1983

A Kendo club for juniors commenced at Deer Park North Primary School as part of that school's physical education program.

Haga Sensei visited Melbourne giving daily instruction in Kendo and laido.

1984

In March a group of Japanese students from the Nittaidai visited. The *keiko* was fierce and instructive. It was a most enjoyable and productive event, as always.

1985

In January the Melbourne Kendo Club was incorporated.

The AKR sent a team to the 6th World Kendo championships in Paris, France.



1987

Frankston, Richmond, Shepparton and Trinity College

Following the 1986 Octoberfest, Peter Day and Tony Kay started training at the Frankston Leisure Centre where the Octoberfest was held. They began the Frankston Kendo Club early in 1987. Regular participants included Julian Richardson and Barbara Cronin.

Also active at that time was a group at the Richmond High School led by Eric Jeffrey and an intermittent group still in Shepparton led by Max Gardam. Similarly, Mark Wild began taking an afternoon class at Trinity college on Tuesdays from 3.45 to 5.00 pm.

Ballarat Kendo Club begins in February.

In February, Gary Oliver began the Ballarat Kendo Club in a shared dojo in Lydiard St North, Ballarat. As a Shodan he was reluctant to open his own club and presume to be an instructor but work commitments and a young family saw him in Ballarat more often than he was able to make it to Melbourne.

From the start his membership knew that the club was a branch of the Melbourne Kendo Club, Sensei Nagae always to be their Sensei.



The first Ballarat group. Centre Front: Gary Oliver and Mark Wild.

Vale Les Watson

The death of Les Watson on Wednesday 22nd July during training at the YWCA class left them all deeply disturbed and shocked. A heart attack took this great Kendo personality away from the group and his lovely wife, Honey, and their daughter, Amy.

Les worked hard for the Melbourne Kendo Club organizing flights for students heading interstate and overseas and catering for the Octoberfest seminars. His sense of humour and down to earth attitude in helped steer the growing Victorian Renmei as it began to grow substantially during this period.

His contribution was commemorated with the Les Watson Memorial shield for the VKR championships.



The Late Les Watson (passed away on the dojo floor – 1987)

1988

From January to April Mark Wild trained at Nittaidai as a live-in student. He returned with honed skills that would see him perform exceptionally well in future national competitions. Paul Macak and Chris Deering returned from Nittaidai in March. Chris began training but Paul took time off to ponder his Kendo future. He has never returned to full time training following his year in Japan.

Shizawa Sensei & Nittaidai students visit in February

Shizawa Sensei and some Nittaidai students visited during February and a grading opportunity for Dan ranks was made available. Opportunities for Dan gradings were still restricted largely to Nationals and visiting sensei.

7th World Kendo Championships, Seoul, Korea

May 28th saw the 7th World Championships held in Seoul, South Korea. Shizawa Sensei organized a preliminary training in Tokyo. Brent Gazzaniga, Peter Riordan and Peter Day were billeted together when they travelled to Seinan University in Fukuoka for lead up training. John Butler also accompanied them as part of the Australian team, but Peter Day was the only member of the fighting team itself. Eventually they found themselves in Shiminoseki to catch the ferry to Korea.

Brent Gazzaniga was elected Team Manager and achieved 4th Dan at the grading.

At the championships, Peter Day won the only match for Australia against France with two decisive *men* cuts. Unfortunately, Australia lost 4 – 1 in their next match against Hawaii, putting the team out of the competition. In the individuals Peter was the only Australian to get through to the second round, making him our most successful competitor.



General Secretary of the IKF, Oshima Sensei (centre) at the 7th WKC (1988)

Asia Day at Trinity College.

On the 2nd of June, Damian Carmody -Stephens organized some hands on demonstrations during an Asian Day at Trinity College. Assistants on this great day included Mark Wild (fresh from his time in Japan), Christian Patton and Sophie Macak. Laurie Scott also attended for their regular afternoon club session.

Frankston Club Shuts

In August the Frankston Club formally closed due to work commitments on the parts of Peter and Tony Pickering. It was a sad blow for Kendo in the area.

Ballarat developments

In Ballarat however, the local television station, BTV 6 (now WIN TV) hosted Gary Oliver in their “Morning Show” which featured both an interview and basic demonstration. The show was seen throughout the Western district and Mallee region as well as greater Ballarat.

The following year Tony Pickering's thirst for laido led him to Gary Oliver who began helping him on his way with some advice on training. Formal laido classes in Ballarat were still more than a decade away.

Mrs Nagae donated a beautiful hand written *shoji*, which served as their *joseki*. It was framed by Bob Cartledge who donated his efforts.



"Kendo" – calligraphy donated for use as the Ballarat club joseki, by Mrs Nagae.

Sometime during 1988 a documentary made by Tokai Television about Japanese people living in Australia was shown on a Japanese network. The Melbourne Kendo Club - with Nagae Sensei at the YWCA - was featured and the footage caught the eye of retired businessman, Mr Kenshiro Otsuka. A keen Kendo player himself, the 94 year old organized to meet with Sensei Nagae in Japan in October.

At that only meeting, Mr Otsuka expressed his desire to help Australian Kendo and asked Nagae Sensei to look for a suitable premise in Melbourne to house a Kendo Dojo. A four million dollar pledge was made. In February 1989 Mr Otsuka passed away.

1989

Through the help of Mr Otsuka's son, Kenshiro Otsuka and his grandson, Hiroshi Otsuka who lived in Sydney, the search for a suitable venue began. A disused mechanical repair factory was found at 91 Rosslyn St, West Melbourne. At an auction held on 26th April we were successful in purchasing the premises. Much work would be needed but the first permanent Kendo Dojo was about to be built as a centre for Kendo in Australia.

Founding of the Melbourne University Kendo Club (MUKEN)



On Monday, 15th May the first official training of the Melbourne University Kendo Club was held. Julian Richardson had found out through Dave D'Aprano that the PE gymnasium was available in the evenings. After a number of trainings, the formality of opening the club was inevitable.

Yakov Macak became chief instructor with his daughter Sophie, who also served as MUKEN's first President, as assistant. In its first year MUKEN attracted about seven members, not reflective of the landslide of members that was to follow.

The Ballarat Kendo Club changed venues, moving into the Eastwood Leisure Complex with the Ballarat Karate Club. Both Clubs retained their autonomy and separated their respective disciplines should any confusion be had.

Enter Richard Ward

Richard Ward (AKR President at the time of this writing) started Kendo in 1989 at the MKC at the YMCA gym on Elizabeth Street, and enrolled in the April beginner's course under Mark Wild. He quickly spotted people waving 'real swords' off to one side and immediately took an interest in laido. He didn't act on the impulse 'til 1996, but just as well, as he has become an excellent exponent, and well respected instructor of that art and has since founded his own club, Seishin laido in 2003.

1st Melbourne vs. Ballarat "Ashes" Tournament.

A tournament was organized by the Ballarat Club against all VKR members. Teams of three were invited, to be made up of Kyu grades only, with the help of some Yudansha taking on the role of team coaches. A group from Melbourne Kendo Club entered teams and overall it was a promising start in what was hoped would be some positive and useful interclub shiai. Notables on the day from Melbourne were Nagae Sensei, Mark Wild and Julian Richardson.

Anticipating a Melbourne victory, Gary Oliver had burned an old shinai and placed the ashes in a small container – 'The Ashes' of course.

Octoberfest

47 Kendo players attended this successful event. The venue was to be the last such event at the YWCA. Interestingly, a BBQ was held at the Kenshikan building site, making this the first official occasion at the soon to be built dojo.

Founding of the Mumeishi Kendo Club, Berwick

During this year Brent Gazzaniga established the Mumeishi Kendo Club in Berwick. It was a new Kendo Club for Victoria and based on his original Club in London which was founded by Sensei Terry Holt 7th Dan.

A number of prominent Kendo demonstrations took place during 1989 and included Melbourne University, the Melbourne Motor Show at the Exhibition Buildings, Strathmore Lions Club Fete, Japan Seminar House, the Japanese School at Brighton, Montmorency High School, Honda Motorcycle Seminar at Camberwell Civic Centre and two demonstrations in Ballarat.

In October, long time member Tony Kay transferred to Sydney for work and Tadashi Harada returned to Japan. Both would be missed for their presence on the Dojo floor and their contribution to Kendo.

Kenshikan On The Way

A steering committee to oversee the Kenshikan had been made the previous year and included Peter Szwarcbord, Nagae Sensei, Yakov Macak and Ivan Robotham together with Mr Futagawa who was an advisor for Mr Otsuka.



The Rosslyn Street factory, destined to become the Kenshikan. (Sept. 1989)

Queensland – 1980's

For much of the 1980's in Queensland there was only one club, the Queensland Kendo Renmei, practising out of the YMCA in Ann Street in Brisbane. A handful of practitioners trained regularly at this venue, including David Prince, Satoru Chamberlain and John Asprey among others.

1980

1st Queensland Championship, QLD

The first Queensland state competition was held as a goodwill tournament against invited NSW members.

Indiv comp: Steve Lawley, 2nd Hiroko Otsuka
Fighting spirit: Simon Gidley
Teams: QLD NSW

1982

2nd Queensland State Championship, QLD

Indiv comp: Andrew Melito, 2nd Steve Lawley, 3rd Rod Prince, 4th Warren Hughes
Teams: NSW



Left to Right: Kim Benbow, John Isaacs, John Asprey, Satoru Chamberlain, David Prince, Ro Osuwa, Rod Prince



The Queensland crew – mid 80's.
Satoru Chamberlain (extreme left) Grace Prince (in overalls),
John Isaacs (with flag) and Jennene Greenhill (extreme right)



Kim Benbow and Rod Prince (John Isaacs in support from behind)
10th AKC in Gosford NSW (1985)



Nakakura and Nagashima Sensei visit Queensland (c.1986)

Photo also includes: Rod Prince, Janine Greenhill, John Isaacs, Nagae Sensei, David Prince, John Aspey, Ro Asawa, Grace Prince, Kim Benbow

1987

Founding of the Gold Coast Dojo

Doug Milton moved from Sydney to Queensland in 1987 and about six months later saw an advertisement in the local paper seeking anyone who could give instruction in Kendo.

The advertisement had been placed by Alan Simpson. He received contacts from Doug and also Toshi and Hiroko Tsukadaira and Mitsuri Mitani. Together they founded the Gold Coast Dojo and trained initially in a hall beside the Pindara hospital at Benowa. Sometime later they moved to the Nerang Community Hall. Doug's business commitments forced him to retire from Kendo the following year.



Doug Milton instructing at the Nerang dojo

1988

Enter Catherine Hallgath

In 1988, a 19 year old law student, Catherine Hallgath took a recreational Kendo course run at the University of Queensland, taught by then 3rd Dan, Francis Bond a student of Engineering and Japanese. Francis invited her, afraid there'd be no attendees, but in fact there were so many she had to force her way in! In the second week of the course, the 6'3" John Isaacs attended and demonstrated powerful *shiaigeiko* with the equally formidable Francis. At that time there were two clubs: the Ann Street group, and a largely Japanese-national group on the Gold Coast.

She then joined the Kendo group in Brisbane (now the KenShinKai). Catherine stayed there for about five years, until she moved to Sydney. Her *men* cuts were known to prompt instructor John Isaacs to jump up and down singing '*Skippy the Bush Kangaroo*'!

Catherine was to play a pivotal role in both the Australian Kendo Renmei Executive, and in Women's Kendo in Australia.

PROFILE



**Catherine
Hallgath**

Catherine Hallgath was Vice President to Ron Bennett for six years. She always came up to solve problems in a proper and legal manner.

Ron says he has too often asked Cath *“can’t we just say to them ‘you did that’ and leave it at that?”* Catherine’s reply always was *“things aren’t done that way in this day and age.”*

Catherine was the Women’s’ Team Captain in 2000 at Santa Clara World Championships.

Her strong moral character always shows through when decisions have to be made.

Ron is very pleased to be a friend of this remarkable lady.

PROFILE



Yuji Sano

Yuji Sano was originally from Queensland, but made his name playing in NSW for the Willoughby Club.

Ron Bennett recalls Yuji fighting at the 2nd Australian Championship in Queensland when Yuji was only 14 years old. The teenager defeated Ron in the *shiai* and put Ron out of the competition!

Ron has never had the opportunity to find out if he could defeat Yuji now. As Ron has been ill for the last 10 years or so, he is hoping to get better and fit enough and solve this puzzle!

Aden Steinke always maintained that Yuji was the strongest Kendo player he’d ever met, declaring frequently that he had *“with arms like legs!”* and yet was the kindest, most humble man. A great teacher, powerful player and an inspiration to all that were lucky enough to grow up in through training at the Willoughby Dojo.

“With great respect” – Rob Bennett



Catherine Hallgath joins the KenShinKai

World Expo, Brisbane – the ZenNihonKoraiKenyuKai

At the World Expo in Brisbane the ZenNihonKoraiKenyuKai group led by Matsushina Sensei gave an excellent demonstration of Japanese martial arts. The KenyuKai group paid for a number of Australian Kendo players, including Ron Bennett, Dianne Hughes and Doug Milton, to attend.

The link between the KenyuKai and the AKR has become very close over the years thanks to the efforts of this senior group of Japanese Kendo experts. They made a lasting impression in Australian Kendo, and Matsushima Sensei presented the AKR with the superb Individual Champions Victory Flag recorded elsewhere in this history.



At a goodwill dinner afterwards in Sydney, Matsushima Sensei awarded Ron with a goodwill badge,
- having first made a new hole in his suit lapel using a dinner fork !



Horonuchi Sensei, Saito Sensei, Bob Boughton, Doug Milton and Ron Bennett at Expo (1988)



Doug Milton, Bob Boughton, Ron Bennett, Jennene Greenhill and Horonuchi Sensei at Expo (1988)

Doug Milton Retires

In 1988, business concerns finally brought Doug Milton's budo career to a close. It was a great loss for Queensland laido, but he remained living in the Gold Coast area and retains the fondest memories of his time in Kendo and laido. It was the end of an era but we will never forget his role in the founding of laido, the founding of Willoughby dojo and the founding of Gold Coast Kendo.

"Thanks a million, Monster – we all owe you."

Australian Capital Territory – 1980's

1980

Dr Miyasaka was awarded an ANU BLUE for outstanding achievements in Kendo.

1st Canberra Open Championship

These were held on the 31st of August.

Indiv comp: M. Miyasaka, 2nd S Kikuchi
Fighting spirit: Rex Lawley

1981

Miyasaka Sensei leaves

Although membership had increased steadily since 1979, with the return of Dr Miyasaka to Japan in 1981, there were no qualified instructors, and membership decreased considerably. The club only survived thanks to the efforts of Chris Denton and Alan Grier.

6th Australian Kendo Championship, Canberra ACT

6 th AKC - Canberra	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Steve Lawley	Rod Prince	Bob Collins	
OPEN TEAMS	VIC	NSW	QLD	ACT
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	S. Lorrie			

1982-83

The club only continued due to the efforts Mr Chris Denton and Mr Alan Geier. Fortunately Mr James Fennessy, who had won the Australian Kendo Championships the previous year and relocated to Canberra for studies, joined the club in 1982.

James had a profound influence on the ANUKC and his approach to physically demanding trainings remains with the club to this day. He went on to win two more Australian titles and establish Kendo clubs in Hobart and Newcastle.

Being geographically located between Melbourne and Sydney proved to be extremely beneficial for the club, particularly in the developing years. Kendo leaders such as Rex Lawley, Ron Bennett, John Butler and Sensei Nagae provided much needed support through training weekends and competitions that involved ANUKC members.

A good-cop/bad cop routine appeared to have been developed between John Butler, Rex Lawley and Ron Bennett, where John and Rex would invite the keen junior grades to sit and relax near the competition area and Ron would round on them, insisting they all sat upright in seiza for the matches – which everyone hastily did after a quick blast from Ron. Like James, Ron would become, and still is, a strong influence on the ANUKC’s development.

Nagae Sensei’s visits from Melbourne to the ACT always attracted a large gathering of Kendo players. His ability to work a player to the edge of their limitations, and then demand just that little bit more became notorious. “*You’ve just been Nagae-ed*” was a favourite expression the Victorians would say to ACT members that were trying desperately to keep their lunch down!

In November 1982 the ACT club hosted the first National Kendo Seminar with over 40 members attending. Although seminars involving numerous clubs had been held previously, this one was regarded as a national seminar, including as it did members from the Brisbane Kendo club.

One of the more memorable moments for the ACT crew was at the 8th AKC held in Willoughby (NSW) in 1983. They were introduced to the infamous Kendo warm-up exercise *kirikaeshi* by Rex Lawley and Stylianos Polichroniadis (Stilts) during this event. Stilts looked like he’d come off second best after a run in with the local biker gang, sporting a bandage covering his right eye. Together with his bushy beard and long hair gave him a fearsome appearance. Rex reassured them that Kendo was indeed a very safe pastime, but they found that his slight smile wasn’t really convincing.

1984

9th Australian Kendo Championship, Canberra ACT

The ACT club hosted the 9th Australian Kendo Championships with over 70 competitors attending from NSW, Victoria and Queensland, and ACT. James Fennessey had returned to Japan for his studies, and to (successfully) try for his 4th Dan. Chris and Alan had the task of organizing the event. This was to be the first use of their Mon (club symbol/logo) the Wattle; it has remained their Mon since then and changed only slightly.

9th AKC - Canberra	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Colin Noble	Peter Szwarcbord	Yoichi Yano	
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	Diane Hughes	Sharlene Crompton (QLD)		
JUNIORS INDIVIDUAL	S. Hare	A. Florance		
OPEN TEAMS	VIC	NSW	QLD	ACT
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	Grace Prince (QLD), Marcus James			

1986

11th Australian Kendo Championship, Canberra ACT

The Nationals were held in Canberra and Steven Lawley again took out the open individuals over Peter Szwarcbord. Victoria won the open teams and a young Paul Rixon and Joe Semmler came first and second respectively in the Kyu individuals. In the women's, Chris Deering from Victoria came second.

11th AKC - Canberra	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Steve Lawley	Peter Szwarcbord	T. Morikawa
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Paul Rixon	Joe Semmler	Chee Nung Wong
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	Maria Liondis	Christine Deering	
JUNIORS INDIVIDUAL	Brett Smith	Marcus James	



Left to Right; Paul Macak , Mark Wild, Peter Szwarcbord, Yakov Macak, Eric Jeffery, Peter Day and Tony Kay

In 1986 the ACT instructor was Maria Liondis (1986 AKC Women's Champion) until 1988. She was also the first editor of the famous ACT Kendo newsletter, the *TENUGUI RAG*.



Maria Liondis

Success in the Steel City

The ACT team were successful at the Intervarsity “*Steel City Challenge*” Competition held in Wollongong, and won! The event would later evolve into the regular Australian University Kendo Championships.

1987

First Beginners’ Course

A Kendo beginners’ class was held as part of the ANUSRA (Australian National University Sport and Recreation Association) recreation program. 12 started, 6 finished. As with all University clubs, later years would see 30 or 40 starters and a bare handful stay.

Nakakura Sensei Visit

The ACT were honoured with a visit by Nakakura Sensei (9th Dan Hanshi) and Nagashima Sensei (8th Dan Hanshi) ahead of the Cowra Nationals. The visit made front page news in the *Canberra Times*.

In those days the ACT members trained in lightweight *hakama* and *gi* which “*didn’t need*” folding. Imagine their horror when Ron Bennett said “*Guys!, fold the Senseis’ gi will you?*” Stilts (Stylianos Polichroniadis) sweated blood all afternoon.

Later the Sensei enjoyed the hours-long drive to Cowra in Stilts' *'limousine'* whilst the rest of the crew suffered in a cheap rental van (yet another of those famous Kendo *'road trips'*). The door, however, popped open and spilled the Sensei's gear (and everyone else's' too) all over the busy Hume Highway! Life and limb were risked to retrieve it all intact. That rental company was never used again!

1989

Establishment of the Belconnen Kendo Club

A second Kendo club opened in the North West of Canberra and the first ever inter-club competitions were held in December.

14th Australian Kendo Championship, Canberra ACT

14th AKC - Canberra	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Mark Wild	Mike Peters	Steve Lawley	James Fennessy
SENIORS INDIVIDUAL	Teddy Adler	Mike Payne	Ivan Robotham	
JUNIORS INDIVIDUAL	Steve Rose	K. Omuma	Phil Baker	
OPEN TEAMS	VIC	NSW	(determined by a taisho fight)	
KYU TEAMS	NSW	VIC		
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	David Thomas			

Western Australia – 1980's

1980

Uno Sensei - Koryu Iaido

Though the Kendo club was inactive from 1979, Robert Mateljan trained in Iaido from 1980 to 1985 at the Yosekan Dojo under Yoshiaki Uno Sensei in the *koryu* (old school) style 'Tenshin Shodan Katori Shinto Ryu' achieving Shodan.

1984

Adrian Byrd Passes through

Adrian Baird, a shodan Kendoka from England came to Perth on his way to Japan. He was visiting his sister in WA and made extensive attempts to contact anyone that was practicing Kendo. He eventually contacted Robert and Brian and they hired a hall and trained with him for about three weeks.

After this Adrian left to continue his trip to Japan, however before he left he suggested that WA kendoka start a Kendo club in Perth. Those in WA were reluctant due to our low grade, but Adrian made a comment that they needed to start somewhere.



Adrian Baird, Brian Brestovac, Robert Mateljan and Adrian's brother
Kings Park Perth 1984

1985

Although some Kendo had been practised in WA prior to the formation of the WAKR, it was largely on an individual basis associated through other martial arts styles and/or visiting Japanese exchange students that was not connected with the original formation of the WAKR.

Founding of the WA Budo Club

Robert Mateljan and Brian Brestovac started the WA Budo club where they trained in Kendo and Karate. They started training at the Balcatta high school gym and then moved to the Innaloo community hall.



Robert Mateljan with state trophy 1989.

Enter Ramon Lawrence and Michael Parsonage

Some time later, the WA Budo Club made contact with another Kendo group training in Fremantle including Ramon Lawrence and Michael Parsonage.

The Fremantle group was training under Kuzu Uchino, 2nd Dan Kendo. This group had already made contact with the Australian Kendo Renmei (AKR) and were well on the way to formalising the WAKR.

1986

Foundation of the WAKR

The WAKR was officially commenced on 21st September, 1986, after being founded jointly by Ramon Lawrence and Michael Parsonage, (and later incorporated in 1988). The first President was Andrew Bennison in 1986, with Ramon Lawrence as Development Officer, Mike Parsonage as Secretary and Russell Lawrence as Treasurer.

The original premises used by the WAKR were the Dojo above the garage of Ramon Lawrence's house at 59 Acanthus Road, Willetton. On fine days members used the Willetton Reserve lawn, adjacent to the dojo, for training.

Shortly afterwards, the club moved to the Lesmurdie Hall in the hills area overlooking Perth due to the need to have a larger area to practise Kendo. Lesmurdie was too remote to the populated areas and the Club later shifted to the Hilton Police & Citizens Youth Club at Hilton Park near Fremantle.

It was at this club that the WAKR had its first visit of Japanese Kendo Masters when the Cultural Exchange Programme '*Japanese Origins*' put on demonstrations of many martial arts at the Perth Entertainment Centre.

Three of the visiting masters visited the Hilton Club for training. The Hilton Club was used as a temporary dojo whilst waiting to move into the new specifically designed martial arts dojo '*Budokan Academy*' at Canning Vale which was agreed by the members to be adopted as the permanent Headquarters for the WAKR. It was about this time (1988) that the WA Budo Club at Innaloo requested to join as a new Kendo Club and become the second Kendo Club in the WAKR.

1988

WA Budo Club Joins WAKR

WA Budo (Robert Mateljan and Brian Brestovac) was the second club to join the WAKR. The president at the time was Ramon Lawrence (who continued as president till 2011) and Michael Parsonage was the secretary. They were joined by Paul Norman, Ken Terauchi, Chiharu Fukumoto (still continuing Kendo in WA) and many visiting students and sensei from Japan.



WA team training in the Blue Mountains at Chris Trash's dojo before the Nationals in Sydney 1988.

Back row from left includes: Ramon Lawrence, Mike Parsonage, Russell Lawrence.

Front row: Chris Trash, Brian Brestovac, Kuzu Uchino, Tyra White, Ron Bennett, Jeff White (just behind Ron Bennett)

PROFILE



*Ramon
Lawrence*

Raised on his father's wheat and sheep property, Ramon joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1961. During the next few years he was involved in all sports and excelled in them, winning many trophies and titles. He was a well-respected Judo exponent, representing the Commonwealth Navy, the Scottish Judo Union and several national trophies in Australia after his return there in 1970. He narrowly missed Olympic selection and went on to represent Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

In 1975 Ramon joined the Submarine Arm of the RAN. In 1977 he visited Yokosuka, Japan for his first direct introduction to Japanese culture. In 1978 he began training with Jishukan Ryu Australia (Kempo, Jujitsu and Jojitsu) in Sydney.

In 1981 he was transferred to Western Australia where he established a flourishing branch of Jishukan Ryu Australia. In January he resigned from the RAN.

Ramon Lawrence co-founded the West Australian Kendo Renmei with Michael Parsonage 1986, and co-founded Seitei Gata Ryu Iaido in 1990 with Jerry Yee. In 1987 he built the Budokan Academy at Canning Vale, Perth, officially opening the dojo on 17 January 1988.

In 1991 he hosted 14 Sensei from Iaido, Naginata and Kendo in Perth, to conduct one of Australia's most successful Martial Arts seminars and arguably the most successful AKC to date.

In 1993 he was elected to the Kendo Board and assisted Derek Woodhouse in the starting of the WA Jodo club at Budokan Academy. In 1995 he was elected chairman of the Australian Kendo Board, and both he and Jerry Yee were awarded their sandan in Kendo at the national grading examinations.

Since 1981 Ramon Lawrence has been recognised by the Western Australian Parliament three times for his outstanding service to the community through the martial arts training of local youth.

At one time in Australian Kendo there were no standard rules on the organisational conduct of gradings, seminars or competitions. Only the procedures for holding an AGM were described in any detail. AGM meetings themselves were traditionally very sparsely attended and little of importance was ever decided. Ramon suggested that a *'Manual of Documents'* (MoD) was needed and volunteered to draft it.

After an immense amount of work, Ramon presented the first MoD to the AKR in 1991. They have been much amended and updated since then (still largely under the inspiration and guidance of Ramon). They have been extended to cover each of the AKR's three arts in specific detail. Ron Bennett says that the AKR owes Ramon a huge debt of gratitude for this important work and for his tireless efforts to promote and grow the arts nationwide.

Ramon also compiled an laido teaching text which assisted many students in their studies and was noted worldwide.

He was awarded a *menjo* by the late Grandmaster Seirin Soke (last surviving member of the 2nd Grand Seitei Council which created and defined modern laido), to head the venerable *koryu* (old school) style TamiyaRyu IaiJutsu in Australia

At the time of this writing, Ramon is stepping aside from many of his administrative duties, having served a combined 79 years in various positions to all three arts on their respective AKR Boards and on the National Council. This also includes 26 years as the WAKR President.

He chaired the laido Board for twelve years and the Jodo Board for nine years.

In his last AGM report (January 2012), Ramon declared that he was looking forward to his retirement from all of these positions.

His powerful legacy of growth through enthusiastic, competent and supportive instruction will live on.



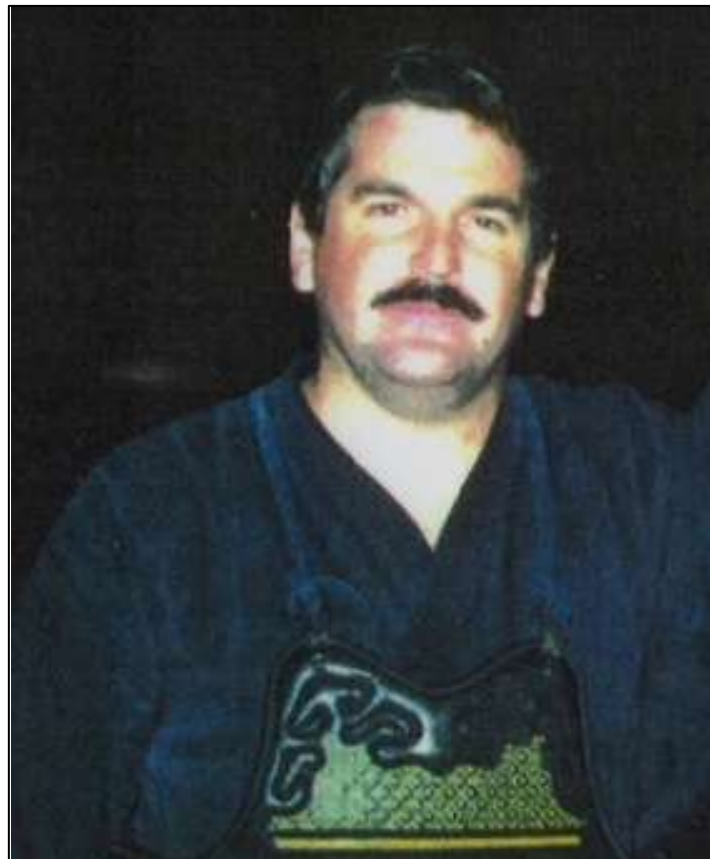
Tasmania – 1980's

Although Tasmania may have seemed late in its development of Kendo and related disciplines, the island State was visited by the Ruijio in 1881 during the same voyage that saw the vessel visit NSW and the Victorian Colony a month earlier. (see the 'Pre-History' chapter).

1985

Kendo Established in Hobart by Jamie Fennessy

Modern Kendo was introduced into Tasmania by Jamie Fennessy (4th Dan at the time) who was lecturing in the Japanese Language at the University of Tasmania. Word spread throughout the University and at the first training session approximately 30 students attended.



Jamie Fennessy

The club had little or nothing in the way of equipment. Chris Smith (Karate student at the time) was approached by Jamie to take them through exercises for approximately an hour and a half. Jamie asked Chris to make the training as gruelling as possible so as to reduce the number of participants for the next session. The reason for this was that the venue was extremely small and could not comfortably accommodate more than 20. Unfortunately Jamie's plan backfired as the next training session saw some 40 students attend. After a few weeks this dwindled to approximately 20.

WAY OF THE SWORD



■ Members of the Tasmanian Kendo Club in full armour before the second championship titles.



■ Members of the club watch visiting 3rd Dan, Kazu Hiro Furuyama, right, and "Master" Jamie Fennessy, left, demonstrate their Kendo skills.



■ Jamie Fennessy, right, 4th Dan Kendo, opposes one of his students

Jamie became involved in the sport while on a Rotary exchange scholarship in the 1970s.

He has returned to study on a number of occasions to study and develop his skills.

He remembers that when he started the club, he had to use broomstick handles as swords because of the overwhelming response to his advertisement.

However, such is Jamie's reputation that Japan's Kokushikan University heard of the situation and generously donated \$25,000 worth of equipment to the club.

From an original group of about 53, Jamie now teaches Kendo to a class of

about 30 which includes women, teenagers and children.

Kazu Hiro Furuyama, 27, of Japan, who gave a demonstration with Jamie at last week's tournament and also opposed him in a match, is visiting Tasmania on a scholarship until October.

He said that to practice Kendo, a person needed a lot of discipline. His 10-year association with the sport and his 3rd Dan is proof that he and the other members of the club are extremely committed. Kazu is the first Japanese instructor to teach in Tasmania.

Josephine Lam, 20, is only doing basic training, having just joined the group. She believes that because the sport is so strenuous, it puts girls off.

"But it's pretty satisfying afterwards. I am really looking forward to doing the real stuff," she said.

Brian has always been interested in the idea of Japanese culture, "combining discipline with beauty".

"It was fairly hard at first and I was not fit by any means," he said.

He has been with the club since before Easter, but has already become skilled, believing Kendo to be good for stress and tension.

Unlike other martial art sports, Kendo appears to epitomise the image of the Samurai and an era filled with mystery which today is still responsible for teaching many disciples the old ways of respect and honour.

Shinai were not heard of - let alone available - in Tasmania at this time, so they improvised by using wooden garden poles. Once Shinai became available they borrowed Police riot armour to train more effectively. Jamie's dojo in Japan donated sets of used armour which were brought to Australia as personal luggage by a touring group of Kempo Karate practitioners.

Master Soong Arrives in Australia

Master Soong (later, founder of the Daehan Moo Do Kwan Kumdo club in Burwood NSW in 1996) arrived in Australia and taught Tae Kwon Do in Tasmania for eleven years. Master Soong is keen to acknowledge and thank his Tasmanian students who sponsored him and generously made a house available for his personal use during all that time!

1987

Jamie leaves, new Dojo

Hobart Kendo was based at the University until around 1987. Jamie unfortunately left the University and the club went into a bit of decline. The remaining 8 to 10 members moved to a school hall in Princes Street, Sandy Bay. At this time they had no instructor and the highest ranked student was only graded to 3rd Kyu.

Jamie kept in touch and arranged a weekend grading and seminar in Launceston. Jamie, Yakov Macak and the late John Butler (both from Melbourne) all attended.

Decline

The Club then lost more members and was left with only four regulars. Eventually there was only one, Steve Foster, who had been with the club since its inception (approximately five years).

Due to the costs involved with hiring venues and there being only one member still training, Steve did his training at home, on the beach, squash courts and in the parks; anywhere there was headroom.

A Fresh Start, Moving Around

New members soon started training regularly and a new venue was obtained at the Police & Citizens Youth Club in Hobart and then Bridgewater where they remained for approximately four years.

Kingston Sports Centre was the next venue for training. Here they trained on carpet flooring, which is a particular challenge, as anyone who has tried it can tell you.

The club then moved to a church hall in Battery Point, Hobart. This was a very run down building and splinters were inevitable for everyone training. In a sight familiar to any Kendo player, many rolls of tape were used to repair holes in the floor!

The 1990's

PROFILE

杖道

Jodo
the way the
stick

Jodo literally means ‘the way of the stick,’ more particularly a stick between 90 and 150 cm in length. Originally sticks were made to a length that suited individual users, but the “modern” ZenKenRen Jo (which grew out of Shinto Muso Ryu Jojutsu the “Divine Dream Tradition Stick Art”) is now a standard length, sometimes called the *yon shaku jo* (“four foot stick”).

In medieval Japan, many classical schools practiced some form of “four foot” stick, including the Suoi Ryu (as famously practiced by Dr Kadono Sensei, more famously known for its devastating sword techniques), the Muhi-Muteki Ryu and others. The source of Kendo Federation (ZenKenRen) Jodo was the Shinto Muso Ryu (SMR) that evolved in the castle town of Fukuoka, in the north west of the main southern island of Kyushu.

SMR is a 17th Century art that matches a practitioner equipped with a 4-shaku 2-sun 1-bu (128 cm) long stick against a swordsman. In its complete “old school” (*koryu*) form SMR comprises seven sets of jo kata, and several ancillary weapon sets including kenjutsu, walking stick (*tanjo*), sickle and chain (*kasuigama*), war fan (*tessen*) and other sets besides.

It was founded by Musō Gonnosuke Katsuyoshi, a master swordsman of the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu who embarked on a warrior's quest (*musa shugyo*) throughout Japan, looking for opponents to duel.

SMR tradition relates that he met Miyamoto Musashi (possibly in Edo) suffering his only defeat to the two sword (*Nito*) technique. Following this he travelled seeking answers to the juji-dome block.

At Mount Homan in Kyushu, above the castle town of Fukuoka he spent 37 days meditating and training – and received a revelation from the *Tengu* (long-nosed winged demons, famous as the source of several martial traditions) to take the round pole and place it on the water of the moon (Water Moon, or *Suigetsu*, is the Japanese word used in budo to indicate the solar plexus on the human body).

Following this “divine dream” (*Shinto Muso*) he cut down the longer Katori staff (*bo*) to 4 shaku, and developed the first set of kata of what would become SMR. Tradition says he then sought out Miyamoto Musashi again and defeated him, but this is not reported by non-SMR sources. Regardless, he then settled at Fukuoka teaching for the rest of his career.

For the next 250 years the school remained based in Fukuoka, with up to five different dojo in the town, as a (mainly lower ranked) samurai art of the Kuroda domain. To quote from Don Draeger's *Modern Bujitsu and Budo* “*The stick is used to strike, thrust, sweep, block parry or cover the aggressors attack and neutralise it; both unarmed and armed assailants are readily subdued.*” Draeger was amongst the first of the western students of SMR.

The art was brought from Fukuoka to Tokyo at least twice after the overthrow of the Shogunate and abolishment of the Samurai class, first in the late 19th Century by Uchida Sensei who taught amongst others

Nakayama Hadudo Hiromichi, the great Kendo and Iaido master (later known as the 3-art man), and then again by Shimizu Takaji Katsuyasu Sensei, the 25th Head of SMR, who was sent from Fukuoka to Tokyo in the 1920s to spread the art of Jodo.

Jodo, as practiced by the ZenNihon Kendo Renmei and federations affiliated with the FIK (such as the AKR), is widely known as Seitei Jodo. This was created in the 1960s by a group headed by Shimizu Sensei and Otofujii Sensei, the senior practitioner from Fukuoka dojo at the time.

Jodo was incorporated as an art under the ZNKR in 1956, but until 1968 promotion exams were conducted using koryu kata. The Seitei ZenKenRen (ZNKR) Jodo kata were first demonstrated in March 1968. The Seitei set consists of twelve basic forms (*kihon*) and twelve kata. Ten of the kata are drawn directly from the SMR curriculum, and two drawn from the *Keijo Jutsu* (Police Jo curriculum), itself developed in the 1930s by Shimizu Sensei. Shimizu Sensei also developed a Jodo set for the Kodokan, home of Judo, that was known as Kodokan Bojutsu in the 1920/30's that appears to have influenced the development of the *kihon*. His experience teaching mass groups of troops in Manchuria may also have influenced this.



Ohara Sensei (left) and Nagayama Sensei (right) demonstrate the complex Jodo kata No.12 – Ranai (“order from chaos”)

The Seitei ZenKen kata all consist of Jo versus Ken, with the sword side being equipped with a bokken, and they teach many valuable lessons relating to timing and distance. Jodo is a valuable addition to a swordsman's training as well as an introduction to the surprisingly technical art of the stick.

In Australia, a small but dedicated *koryu* group under Paul Maloney had already studied SMR for many years when Hans Barkmeyer and Russell Lawrence gave a *koryu Jodo* demonstration at the 1996 AKC in Perth.

Seitei ZenKen Jodo was taught by Katsumi Kuramochi in Ballarat, and by Derek Woodhouse in Perth (assisted by Ramon Lawrence), who thus have strong claims to be considered the Australian Founders of Seitei Jodo.

The first AKR Jodo grading was held at the 9th Iaido Championships in Melbourne (2000). National Jodo events have accompanied the Australian Iaido Championship ever since.

New South Wales – 1990's



Ron Bennett with Sugo Sensei "so you reckon you're a tough man Ron San?"1111



Ron Bennett with Sugo Sensei's Assistant

1990

15th Australian Kendo Championship, Sydney NSW

These championships featured a goodwill match between Australia and New Caledonia. Australia defeated New Caledonia 4-0. The Australian team consisted of K. Benbow, K. Mita, S. Druce and N. Ardenwood.

Across the whole event, the scoring points were: Kote: 205, Men: 191, Do: 18

15th AKC - Sydney	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	M. Wild	J. Isaacs	B. Gazzaniga
KYU INDIVIDUAL	K. Mita	J. Smart	N. Ardenwood
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	Keiko Nakada (Jones)	Jennene Greenhill	N. Tsukadaira
SENIORS INDIVIDUAL	Ted Alder	Yakov Macak	Toshi Tsukadaira
JUNIORS INDIVIDUAL	Steve Rose	H Sato	N. Tsukadaira
OPEN TEAMS	NSW		VIC
KYU TEAMS	NSW		VIC
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	K. Mita		

NSW Championships, Sydney NSW

Open indiv: Y. Yano P. Rixon
Kyu indiv: N. Ardenwood, D. Heymann
Team: Central Coast, Newcastle
Juniors: D. Marshall, M. Yasunga

Sydney Iaido Club Acquires a Koryu Affiliation

Kadono Sensei petitioned Katsuse Sensei - the headmaster of SuioRyu - for permission to commence a SuioRyui dojo in Australia. Permission was refused.

Kadono Sensei then encouraged the two Bobs - Burton and McCarren - to visit Japan and attempt their 2nd Dan grading. They were both successful and were awarded 2nd Dan at Shizuoka by Inoue Sensei.

The two Bobs were introduced to Katsuse Sensei by Kadono Sensei, and trained at his Shizuoka dojo. Impressed with the keen interest and commitment they showed, permission was granted for the installation of a SuioRyui dojo in Sydney later that year. This would become the famous '*Blue Leaf Dojo*'.

1991

Establishment of the Korean Kumdo Association of Australia

The Korean Kumdo Association of Australia was established by Ho Yong (Peter) Choi who established the Han Rim Kak dojo. Dedicated to fostering individual growth through the study of “right Kendo”, Mr. Choi believes strongly that “Kendo practitioners must have their own, unique identity of Kendo” and nurtures a healthy respect for both Japanese Kendo and Korean Kumdo.

Later, Mr. Choi would found the University of NSW Club (UNSWKC), the Wagga club (a branch dojo run initially by Cameron LeMatre) and the Narooma club on the NSW south coast.



Ho Yong (Peter) Choi Sensei

Inaugural Iaido Championship at Sydney

The AKR encouraged the formation of an Iaido steering committee consisting of Bob Burton, Doug Milton and Greg Mapstone. They were tasked with establishing a regular Australian Iaido Seminar and Championship and to work with the AKR towards the election of an Australian Iaido Board.

Following an Iaido Development Seminar held in Canberra in January of 1991, the inaugural Iaido Championships were held from November 30th to December 1st at the NSW Federation of Soccer Clubs State Headquarters. The event was hosted by the two Bobs on behalf of the Sydney Iaido Club.

Kadono Sensei conducted highly instructive seminar sessions in the kata as well as in judging competitions and conducting gradings.

1st Place: Keiko Jones
2nd Place: Dean Hawthorne
3rd Place: Bob Burton



Inaugural Iaido Championships, Sydney (1991)
Left to Right: Bob Burton, Gregg Jones, Kadono Sensei, Keiko Jones, Dean Hawthorne



The First AKR Iaido Board (1993)
Left to Right: Nagae Sensei, Peter Szwarcbord, Gregg Jones, Bob Burton, Bob McCarron,
Kadono Sensei, Dean Hawthorne

1992

Takita Sensei Visit

In February, Takita Sensei from Fukuoka University visited with a party of 10 students. They trained in Sydney and then travelled to Melbourne and Brisbane.

Founding of the UNSW Kendo Club

Ho Young Choi founded the University of NSW Kendo Club (UNSWKC). Yuji Sano reports that had it not been for the extraordinary efforts of Paula Obeid and Rick Kingsland during the early years in both their Kendo training and in dealing with UNSW Administration, the club would have disappeared.

UNSW Club is remarkable for its cross cultural base. Drawing on a wide range of instructors and the international students attending the University, it has strong mix of Korean, Taiwanese, Japanese and Australian flavours in its style and character, very much to its credit. It has a unique and important character.

N.E.C. Visit

Shortly after the Easter AKC in Melbourne, Sydney was visited by members of the N.E.C. Umeda Senior Women's Kendo Club. A popular training session was attended by contingents of many NSW clubs outside of Sydney.

The Return of Jamie Fennessey

In the mid-year, after an 18 month sojourn, Jamie Fennessey returned to NSW and filled a void in the Willoughby Hombu Dojo. He presided over a grading in July and declared that the technical standard of both Kyu and Dan grades in NSW had improved considerably.

Muswellbrook Kendo Club

In December, Muswellbrook hosted the state championships for the first time, hosted by Chris Roberts. Their new member Trevor Boyd won the Kyu individuals and Newcastle won the kyu team event.

Chris and family shortly later moved to Newcastle, leaving Trevor to hold Muswellbrook together with his occasional visits for support.

International Life Memberships

In 1992 Masako Strenger (Yoshida), Yukiko Suzuki, Hiroko Otsuka were made international Life members of the AKR for their involvement in the progress of Australian Kendo.

Intersarsity

The Intersarsity competition was hosted by the Newcastle University kendo Club.

PROFILE



***Danny
Strenger***

One of the quietest of the major characters in the history of Sydney Kendo is Daniel Strenger (or Danny as he is universally known). He watched a Kendo exhibition at the Sydney Opera House at the age of 17 (c. 1974) and was hooked! Although interested in numerous martial arts, Japanese weaponry was to be his primary interest.

Danny was featured at the age of 25 in "*Pacific Friend*" magazine (1982) during his time at the Nippon College of Health and Physical Education. They observed how this reserved man's demeanour totally transformed once he strapped on his *men*. Many Kendo players can relate this this!

Danny was lucky to forge the closest of ties with the incomparable Professor Shizawa Sensei of the Nittaidai. His style shows the unmistakable hallmarks of Shizawa Sensei's influence.

Danny joined the ranks of Australian Kendo royalty when he married Masato, and they have been inseparable ever since.

Danny and Masato also trained in the related art of *Naginata* (Japanese halberd) which superficially looks much like Kendo, with both a 'shinai' fighting form and accompanying kata. Though the AKR and the ZNKR do not include Naginata, they are closely related and compatible arts which often spar together. Danny and Masato have both reached 5th Dan in that art (as high as it goes) and are recognised as true masters. They continue to train a small but dedicated band of Naginata members from their beautiful home dojo in Sydney's leafy



northern suburbs.

Under Danny and Masato's calm but masterful tutelage, Sydney Naginata members have acquitted themselves astonishingly well at the highest international levels.

A quiet centred, calm but astonishingly powerful player, he has the rare gift for teaching without words – simply by the movements of his sword and a glance with his eyes. Danny always took his budo study incredibly seriously, yet sometimes he might reveal a wickedly playful side to his game. It's a *dangerous* playfulness however, as too many of us can attest!



Danny with Shizawa Sensei and family with 'Koro' the dog!

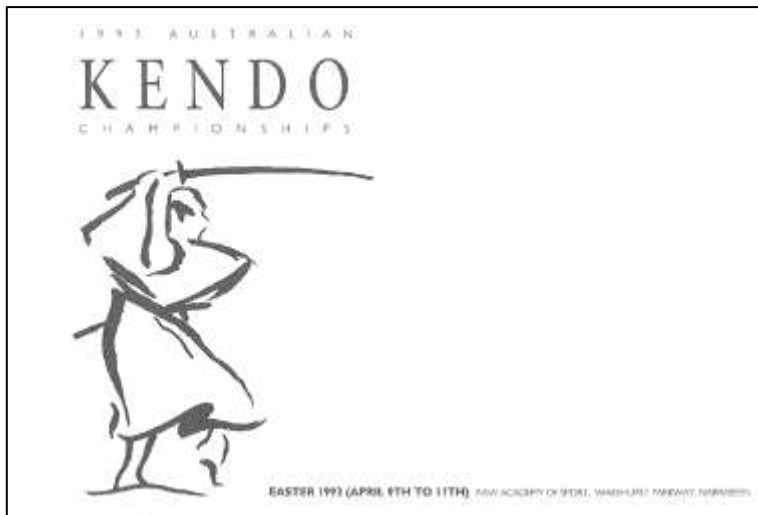
1993

18th Australian Kendo Championships, Sydney NSW

These were held at the NSW State Sports centre at Narrabeen, Sydney. The events ran so smoothly that they finished ahead of time, and thus disrupted the broadcast schedule of SBS:TV !

18th AKC – Sydney	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Yoichi Yano (NSW)	Paul Rixon (NSW)	
SENIORS COMP	Yoichi Yano (NSW)	Colin Minter (NSW)	
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Alastair Bennett		
WOMENS	Keiko Jones (NSW)		
DAN TEAM	NSW		

No other records survive.



Program cover for the 18th AKC, hosted by the Sydney Kendo Club (1994)

2nd Australian Iaido Championship and the first AKR Iaido Board

From 23rd to the 24th of January, the 2nd Iaido Championships were hosted by the Sydney Iaido Club at Parklea, Sydney. Kadono Sensei supervised the event and again provided detailed technical instruction.

1st: Keiko Jones 2nd: Gregg Jones 3rd: Dean Hawthorn

Prior to the championship, the first AKR Iaido Board was elected:

Chairman:	Bob Burton
Vice Chairman:	Bob McCarron
Secretary:	Gregg Jones
Member:	Peter Szwarcbord
Member:	Dean Hawthorn
Technical Advisor:	Kadono Sensei

State Championships

These were held at the Musswellbrook Club and featured Mark Wild defeating Jamie Fennessey in the final – one of their famously titanic battles that Ron Bennett recalls so fondly.

Newcastle University Kendo Club

Due to changes at the Newcastle University, the club underwent structural changes and Ann Eggington became President, Stuart Burke became Treasurer and Rachael Hutchinson became Secretary.

Stuart achieved his Shodan that year (at the Sydney gradings).

Central Coast Kendo Club

Dale Gould's Gosford based group had a mixed year, with students leaving and new beginners coming. Dale travelled to WA and competed in the WAKR state competition, placing 2nd.

In April they hosted a Kendo Seminar (Dale was always one the best teachers and had an acute eye for technical details!) where Rob Bennett and Mike Payne provided excellent instruction to a well-attended event.



The Famous "Surfing Kendoka" logo of the Central Coast Kendo Club

Gosford was also well represented at the Brisbane Bash and performed very well.

UNSWKC

At the UNSW Kendo Club, classes were being taught by Daniel Hargraves and Bruce Mills.

An email from Robert Urghart to Aden Steinke in 1994 reveals that they considered themselves a *Kumdo* club, without a regular Korean teacher, but receiving help from Willoughby's Mike Payne.

1994

UNSWKC

Early in the year UNSW was being taught by Brule Mills, Rick Kingsland and Jimmy Kwo.

Around May, Yukiko Sawada took over the teaching role for about 12 months.

New Clubs

In this period, the NSWKA received application from no less than four clubs to join, including Master Song's "Taehan Mou Do Kwan" [sic], and Mr Ho-Young Choi's "Wah Rang" [sic]. The NSW President Gregg Jones reported that the membership enthusiastically anticipated the opportunity to learn from these powerful martial artists!

By December of 1995 the NSWKA membership had more than doubled in a year!

Nittaidai Visit

Shizawa Sensei brought out his Nittaidai group and taught everyone a lesson in humility once again as his teenage students ran rings around the best NSW had to offer. Aden Steinke recalls struggling into his expensive first set of bogu armour at this event, and he squealed in fright as one of the Sensei reached down with one huge powerful hand and squeezed his new *men* tight around the back of his head from behind. It has fitted like a glove ever since!

1995

Haga Sensei Visit

In January, Haga Sensei (8th Dan Hanshi) and Hoshino Sensei (8th Dan) visited the Sydney Kendo Club. Though they were in their 80's at the time, these master swordsmen were an honour and a royal treat to train with, even if for just one evening.

Iaido Advancement

Bob Burton attained his Iaido 4th Dan in Japan in August.

University Games includes Kendo

The University Games were held in Wollongong and for the first time included Kendo. Representatives from 12 universities competed in four events. The Wollongong club result was spectacular, earning two of its members, Keiko Hirota and Chee Wai Lee, membership in the Australian University Team.

The highlight of the championship was the Individual Dan final match. Stuart Burke, easily one of the finest Australian Kendo players of all time, has been in blistering good form throughout. Aden Steinke was quoted in the local newspaper as saying that, "*Stuart was the most elegant player throughout the first few rounds and was expected to win the tournament but Keiko wasn't intimidated, she was simply great on the day.*"

Standing at least a head and a half shorter than Stuart, Keiko had to work hard to get under his devastatingly subtle 'long game'. It was a gruelling match to see and one of the best ever fought in this country. To this day the match is used as a teaching example for beginners, that anyone can excel in Kendo regardless of size or gender; that good technique and timing are the deciding factors.

Wollongong's Chee Wai Lee came 3rd behind Stuart and together with Wollongong's Steve Crane, took 2nd in the Kata competition. The Team comp was won by Adelaide Uni, under Jonathon Cross.

As a result of there being no Kendo at the Darwin 1995 Schweppes Sports Plus Universities Games in September, the University of Wollongong has sought approval to host the Kendo component.

Due to difficulties in obtaining Australian Kendo Renmei judges in September the tournament will be held at the University of Wollongong on the weekend of the 8th and 9th of July.

SPORT:	Kendo
DATE:	8th & 9th of July 1995
LOCATION:	University of Wollongong
EXPECTED CHARGE:	\$40
COMPETITIONS:	Teams, Kyu Grade Individuals, Open Individuals, Kata

It is being moved from September due to a clash with seminars related to the Masters competition conducted by the Australian Kendo Renmei, we would have moved it to early December, after the uni year ends, but that would clash with the NSW state Kendo titles.

Please inform your Kendo/Kumdo/Japanese Fencing clubs of this event. As many Universities do not have Kendo/Kumdo/Japanese Fencing Clubs, individual representatives of those Universities are welcome to compete in the individual titles.

Tiny Keiko routs kendo's 'Goliath'



1995 University Games at Wollongong, reported in the local newspaper, *The Illawarra Mercury*

PROFILE



Stuart Burke

Perhaps Newcastle University Kendo Club's most famous member.

Ron Bennett clearly remembers a very young Stuart Burke winning the kyu grade individual championships.

His stature was much the same as Steven Lawley's and watching those kyu matches, Ron predicted he would become a great champion.

This insight was not unfounded, for Stuart went on to acquit himself admirably at the highest level of competition and carried the most important factor within him, the spirit of Kendo.

Ever an elegant player, with a powerful centre a mesmerizing *seme* technique, no one beaten by Stuart can fail to have been left wondering quite how he moved so fast when, seemingly, moving so slowly.

1996

Kendo Social Club Touring Party

In February there was a visit by the Kendo Social Club Touring Party, led by Nakakura Sensei (9th Dan Kendo, 9th Dan laido). He was accompanied by no less than three other 9th Dans and several 8th Dans as well. It was almost certainly the most powerful group of Kendo Sensei ever to set foot in Australia.

Seminar and *keiko* was held at the North Sydney Municipal Chambers over two days. The event featured an astounding display of Kendo kata by a 9th Dan paired with an 8th Dan (using bladed swords) and a masterful standing-form demonstration of Seitei laido by Nakakura Sensei.

Jamie Fennessey warned the junior Australian Kendo players that the 9th Dans were extremely senior, and several were quite elderly. It was made clear that only "*good straight Kendo, played on the centre*" would be tolerated, no rough stuff or showing off.

One of the 9th Dans was One Sensei, a powerful swordsman who had suffered considerable scoliosis in his later years. He was unable to tie his *men* fully due to the curvature of his spine, and yet dominated the floor with his presence and spirit. The Australians were invited to form lines and play *keiko* with the Sensei, a few minutes each, with bouts divided by the beat of a drum. Bob Brown from Wollongong found himself faced with One Sensei. Remembering Jamie Fennessey's stern warnings, he was determined to hold centre for a few moments first, to feel the raw unbeatable stillness that only a 9th Dan can display, before trying a few straight *men cuts*. An impatient Colin Minter however, next in line behind Bob, shouted "*get on with it*" and gave him an almighty shove in the small of his back. Bob was thrown forward and the tip of his shinai went straight through the ties (*himo*) of One Sensei's helmet – which of course then came straight off. Deathly silence ensued. There was much profuse apologising to be done, and the Sensei graciously forgave the terrible breach of etiquette. Jamie was certainly less than impressed however.

5th Australian Iaido Championships

On the Australia Day long weekend the De La Salle College in Bankstown, Sydney, was the venue for the 5th Australian Iaido Championships. Seminar instruction was provided by Kadono Sensei, Peter Szwarcbord and Bob Burton. The results of the competition were:

1 st Place:	Dean Hawthorn	NSW
2 nd Place:	Han Barkmeyer	NSW
3 rd Place:	Ruth Franklin	NSW

UNSW

In June Osamu Kataoka took over the class, and continued in that role for about a year.

Foundation of the Daehan Moo Do Kwan Club

After eleven years teaching TaeKwanDo in Tasmania, Master Soong moved to Sydney and founded the Daehan Moo Do Kwan club in Burwood, Sydney.



Master Soong at the Burwood Daehan Moo Do Kwan. Behind him is the drum built by Ron Bennett



Construction of the Daehan Moo Do Kwan drum, supervised by Ron Bennett.

Foundation of the Charles Sturt University Kendo Club, Bathurst

In the mid 1990's the Charles Sturt University Kendo Club at Bathurst was founded by Kirby Smith, easily one of the most naturally talented Kendo players in Australia. Other notable members were Isaac Bober, Anthony Bourke, Chris Dickson, Duncan Attridge and Nathan Soden.

The club's first competition was the 1996 Uni games in Canberra where they first met the Wollongong "Wookies", a group with whom they'd always feel strong kinship.

Only Kirby, Isaac and Rick remain in Kendo to this day. The others disappeared over the next few years. Isaac Bober is currently a member of Adelaide.

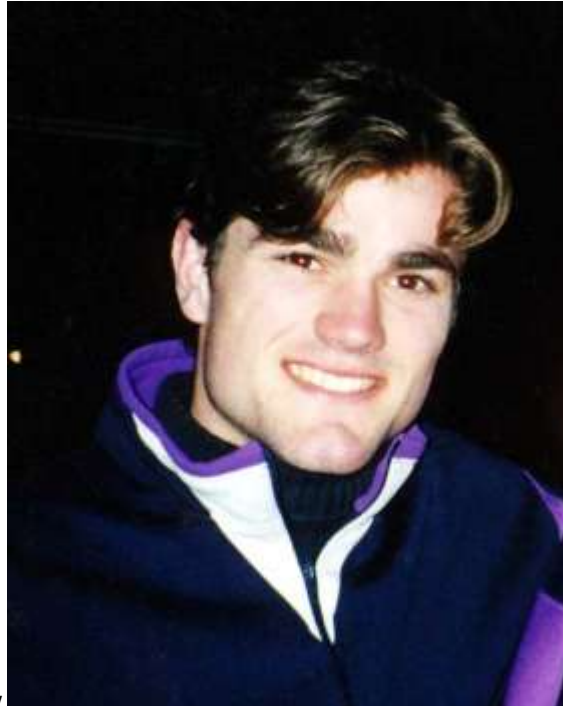
Enter Rick Peddley-Smith

One of the real characters, and 'hardest' fighters in NSW Kendo, Rick Peddley-Smith (a High School PE Teacher) commenced the study of Kendo under Kirby Smith at Bathurst's Charles Sturt University Kendo Club in 1996.

His work saw him move to western Sydney in 1997 (a long way from the main Willoughby dojo in the eastern suburbs). Remembering his friends in the south, he came to the Wollongong club at the start of 1997 and graded to Nidan under Ted Rixon's instruction, assisted by David Bunder.

While training in Wollongong he also studied Kenjutsu under Andrew Melito (Ron's self-declared "adopted son"), and shared the tameshigiri aspects of that training with the Wollongong dojo. Rick continues to train with Andrew to this day.

Rick left in 2002 on a working trip to England and North America and has travelled extensively since. Though his time in Kendo was all too brief, his dedication to training and quick friendship will never be forgotten.



w
Kirby Smith, founder of the Bathurst Dojo and a onetime Wollongong member
... more natural talent than anyone should have a right to!

5th Steel Cities Challenge

In May, Wollongong hosted the 5th Steel Cities Challenge. Ostensibly held between themselves and Newcastle (NSW's two great steel industry centres), the event was famously open to any group able to field a Kendo team. The previous comp featured no less than 20 groups in battle! Funds raised went to charity groups.

1997

UNSWKC

Makiko Tani started teaching at UNSW and remained in that role till late 1999. She wrote the calligraphy for the club motto.

February Sensei Visit

Wollongong hosted a powerful group of 6 Sensei, the highest ranked touring party in all 3 arts yet to visit Australia. They were: Nakanishi Sensei (Kendo 8th Dan Hanshi, Iaido 8th Dan Hanshi, Jodo 8th Dan

Kyoshi), Ishido Sensei (Kendo 7th Dan Kyoshi, Iaido 7th Dan Kyoshi, Jodo 7th Dan Kyoshi), Nagayama Sensei (Kendo 6th Dan Kyoshi, Iaido 6th Dan Renshi, Jodo 7th Dan Kyoshi – later to become the AKR Jodo Technical Advisor), Horiyama Sensei (Kendo 7th Dan Kyoshi), Ito Sensei (7th Dan Kyoshi) and Kamezawa Sensei (Kendo, 7th Dan Renshi).

In this first trip to Australia, Nagayama Sensei (who has a famously good memory) acted as bodyguard for the more senior Sensei. To this day Nagayama Sensei remembers Aden Steinke's early struggle with the stick, and (usually in good humour) taunts him mercilessly "FOURTEEN YEARS ?!" (which sometimes sounds like "FORTY"!) – counting Aden's Jodo study as starting from that day.

1st World Iaido Congress, Kyoto Japan

The 1st World Iaido Congress was held as a precursor to the 10th World Kendo Championships. Bob Burton led an Australian delegation, including Peter Szwarcbord and Dean Hawthorne.

Kadono Sensei was awarded high praise for a masterful demonstration (*embu*) of *koryu* (old school) SuioRyu two-sword (*nito*) kata.

An Iaido seminar and gradings saw Peter Szwarcbord awarded his 5th Dan.

The event was crowned with a demonstration of kata by the newly appointed Hanshi 9th Dan, Tadatoshi Haga Sensei.

6th Australian Iaido Championships

De La Salle College in Bankstown, Sydney, was again venue for the Australian Iaido Championships.

1st Bob Shersby (NSW) 2nd Andrew Duell (NSW) 3rd Ramon Lawrence (WA)

A new Australian Iaido Board was elected at the time:

Chairman:	Bob Burton
Vice Chairman:	Dean Hawthorn
Secretary:	Ramon Lawrence
Member:	Bob Shersby
Member:	Neil Phillips
Technical Advisor:	Kadono Sensei

1st Founders Tournament Coaldale (near Grafton) NSW

The inaugural Founders Tournament and seminar was held in the memorial hall in Coaldale, near Ron Bennett's property in Grafton. The conditions were deliberately rough, with early rises and endless hard training. Ron guided each participant in hand carving their own heavy wooden training sword (*suburito*) which they used for the rest of the seminar. This was one of the last training sessions Rex Lawley could participate in.

Aden Steinke collected his future wife Shihoko (a Nursing student at the University of Wollongong, returning to Australia from summer break in Japan) and her friends Tomoyo, Reiko and Naoko (all former members of her Japanese University Kendo team) directly from Sydney airport on his way up

from Wollongong. Shihoko's friends had come to Australia for a shopping holiday in Sydney, and did not expect to spend their time at a bush Kendo retreat! He drove directly from the airport many hours into the distant bush. Not knowing how far the airport was from the city, it was quite some time before the penny dropped! They spent most of their holiday at the Grafton event and then flew home to Japan almost immediately afterwards. Their reaction to this is unrecorded, but they never had their shopping time in the city!



Home-made *suburito* (training swords)



At the Coaldale-Barretts Creek memorial Community Centre
Steve & Rex Lawley, Ron Bennett, Dale Gould, various "Wookies" plus Shihoko and her friends !



All mod-cons were laid on - improvised hot water showers!

From: Aden Steinke
Date: Thu, 18 Sep 1997 11:45 AM
Subject: Grafton Weekend Details
To: Shihoko Kaneko

Shihoko-Chan

Details of the NSW special training weekend to terrify your friends. As the event does not start until the Saturday we can take all day Friday to get to Grafton....

Special Training Weekend Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th October Grafton
Intense stamina & waza training conducted by Sensei Ron Bennet and Sensei Rex Lawley. The founders of Australian Kendo are holding a training camp at Grafton in northern NSW over the weekend 4th/5th/6th of October. The camp is in honour of Okura Sensei, founder of the AKR. This is the first time in several years that both of these outstanding gentlemen have been available at the same time. The program is aimed at kyu grades though responsible dan grades will be a great asset.

Programme

Friday 3rd October - Dojo will be open from 12 noon.

Saturday 4th October
On arrival you will make a training boken. This will take you approx. 1 hr. You will train with it throughout the weekend.

11.30am-12.30pm lunch

DOJO ETIQUETTE WILL BE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE

12.20pm Wash dojo floor
1.00 pm Boken training
3.00 pm Break
3.15 pm Instruction by motodachi
5.00 pm Shower
5.30 pm Prepare dinner and eat
7.00 pm Party - all will participate, maybe a demonstration

Sunday 5th October
6.00 am Wash dojo floor
6.15 am Upgrade of waza training, stamina training
8.00 am Prepare and eat breakfast
9.30 am Nidan Sandan waza, Uchi komi keiko
11.30 am Lunch
1.00 pm Swim until 3.00 pm
3.30 pm INTENSE TRAINING until 5.30 pm

BYO sleeping bag

The email Aden Steinke sent to Shihoko Kaneko,
"to terrify your friends ..."
which resulted in him sweeping her and her friends away to the Grafton seminar

... they were married within the year ...

The Wollongong Way - NSWKA Executive

In the 1997 NSWKA AGM elections, Wollongong members were elected to positions as President (Ted Rixon), Secretary (Aden Steinke), and Treasurer (David Bunder). They retained these positions until 2000. Ted Rixon remained state Kendo Board Chairman until 2003. At the time of this writing, Bob Brown is chair of the NSW Iaido Board (and outgoing Vice Chair of the AKR Jodo Board), and Aden Steinke chair of the NSW Jodo Board (and outgoing Secretary AKR Jodo Board). The influence of NSW's only three-art club always belied its modest size and regional-city location.

The Rixon-Steinke-Bunder State Executive provided something of a golden age of growth and inclusiveness for NSW Kendo. The Association expanded to welcome the Korean and Taiwanese clubs of Masters Choi, Soong and Song. Records of the time list no fewer than 13 extant clubs. In no particular order they were: Willoughby, University of Sydney, Wollongong, UNSWKC, Newcastle, Byron Bay, Han Rim Kak, Mu Do Kwan, Wen Wu, Wagga, Narooma, Central Coast and Bathurst.

Bathurst Summer Camp

This excellent event was organized by Kirby Smith.



Wollongong "Wookies" posing with the best at the Bathurst Summer Camp.
Left to Right: David Bunder, Jonathon Cross, Dom Holloway, Erica Hewitt, O. Kataoka, Aden Steinke



Virtual first prize trophy – awarded by fax to the “Wollongong Wookies” by Marianne Whybrow (ACT)



The three Mon of the University of Wollongong Kendo Club in the traditional red and white colours of the city's sporting teams.



... and the Mon they *almost* had ...



Recruitment the "Wollongong Way" – publicity artwork from the late 90's by Bob Brown

1998

23rd Australian Kendo Championships, Wollongong NSW

The picturesque, but thoroughly *rustic* Mount Keira Girl Guide Camp (on the mountain overlooking Wollongong City) was the venue for the AKC from 9th to the 13th of April. The AJKF sent two sensei, Kojima Sensei (Hanshi) and Goto Sensei (Hanshi). Over 130 participants played!

Wollongong is located in the picturesque Illawarra area, an Aboriginal word meaning "*land between the mountains and the sea*". Accordingly, the club Mon, designed by Bob Brown for those championships and used ever since (with variations for each of the club's three arts), is an abstract representation of the rainforest escarpment that runs from that strange flat-topped mountain, down to the sea.

Unable to afford the trips to Japan that were sustaining laido members from other states, Bob Brown was again frustrated in his laido career when Chairman of the Australian laido Board, Bob Burton, kept changing his mind about holding a grading or not. Unable to obtain a straight answer in time to organise a day off work, Brown returned that night to discovered it *had* been held after all! Perhaps understandably less than happy, especially after 15 years of laido study without any chance to grade, it was at this event that Bob finally learned that there had indeed been regular laido gradings conducted under the auspices of the (then invitation-only) Blue Leaf Dojo for the last several years (they stopped shortly later of course). Claire Chan of Victoria graded to laido shodan.

Aden Steinke, deeply impressed by the Jodo he had been exposed to the previous year in the Perth Championship, tried to organise a repeat of the daily Jodo lessons held at the preceding Perth AKC, but the membership (despite being deliberately trapped on a rainy mountainside) were more interested in taking day trips to the bright lights of Sydney.

23rd AKC - Wollongong	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Brett Smith (VIC)		
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Craig Law (NSW)		
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	Claire Chan (VIC)	Keiko Jones (NSW)	Hayami Aboutaleb (VIC)
SENIORS INDIVIDUAL	Yoichi Yano (NSW)	Ted Rixon (NSW)	
JUNIORS INDIVIDUAL	Shone Toyoike (QLD)	K. Shin (NSW)	Tom Hsu (NSW)
OPEN TEAM	VIC		NSW
KYU TEAM	VIC		NSW
TASMAN NAKAKURA CUP	Australia defeated New Zealand (4:1)		

Official records lost, along with most of the 90's – these results assembled from newspaper reports



Local media reports a *"telling blow"* by Bathurst's Isaac Bober on Queenslander Richard Sly at the 23rd AKC in Wollongong

Uni team excels in martial arts

By GLYNISS PATTERSON

A Wollongong University team of martial arts exponents took silver in two events at the weekend at the 23rd Australian Kendo Championships which attracted more than 130 competitors at the Easter weekend.

The University of Wollongong Kendo Club team instructor Ted Rixon was second in the veterans event, while Aden Steinke fought in the second-placed NSW Kyu grade team — which is below the Dan grade, equivalent to a black-belt.

More than 130 people suited up and armed themselves for conquest in the battle of wit and weaponry, which attracted competitors from Australian states, Japan, the USA and New Zealand.

Exponents armed with protective wear clashed in battle in kendo, the way of the sword developed out of classical kenjutsu schools in Japan about 200 years ago.

Competitors fought with the jo, a stick about 128cm long and 2.5cm thick, crafted from white oak grown slowly in the Japanese highlands and made heavy by the cold and wet climate.

Victorian kendo fighter Brett Smith won the individual division while Sydneysider Craig Law won the Kyu title.

Another Sydney fighter Yoicho Yano won the veterans competition.

NSW and Victoria dominated the team events.

Australia defeated New Zealand four matches to one for the Nakakura Cup.

In the women's individuals, Victoria's Claire Chan was first place, Keiko Jones from NSW won the silver medal and Haomi Aboutaleb from Victoria the bronze.

Shone Toyoike from Queensland won the junior individuals gold, K Shin from NSW the silver and Tom Hsu from NSW the bronze.



Hee Youl Jang, of Sydney, set for kendo action. Photo by GREG TOTMAN.

Hooray for Fox Studios

In May the new Fox Studios opened in Sydney NSW. They had been converted out of the old Royal Easter Showgrounds, near Randwick. A mysterious call went out through the NSWKA, calling for Kendo players to appear in a "Fox Movie Studio production" and numerous members from Sydney and Wollongong Kendo clubs attended, many them secretly hoping that perhaps they were being recruited for the upcoming 'Star Wars' prequel movies (though that was to come later).

It was a bitter disappointment for the Sci-Fi fans to discover that they were to spend two days huddled in a rain soaked tent, waiting for breaks in the clouds, to film a big song and dance number! There were a few quick 'practice sessions' where the members were asked to rehearse static *men* cuts performed together to a regular beat (something *any* bunch of Kendo players can do in their sleep!). They met the other performers; a Royal Australian Navy band, Vegas showgirls, clowns,

Bondi lifeguards (who suffered in the cold, wearing only their speedos and surf caps) and the like; and at about that point Yoichi Yano (always a serious advocate for the deep Japanese cultural values that Kendo embodies) grumpily announced that “*I am not a circus performer!*” and promptly left.

As the sun set on the second day, the clouds parted and all the performers were lined up under the Fox Studio archway. Guest celebrity performers David Campbell and Cate Ceberano were lifted up onto the archway with a crane and spotlights were lit. For the next few hours the Kendo players suffered through take after take to the blaring anthem ‘*Hooray for Hollywood!*’, all the time trying hard not to hit the Naval band members who were standing just in front of them!

The end result, seen on the TV a few days later, was just a tiny glimpse of some blue people waving sticks, for a fraction of a second! But it was an unforgettable experience.

7th Australian Iaido Championships

For the third consecutive year, De La Salle College in Bankstown, Sydney, was the venue for the Australian Iaido Championships over the Australia Day long weekend.

1st Dean Hawthorne (NSW) 2nd Ramon Lawrence (WA) 3rd Chris McGuirk (NSW)

2nd Founders Tournament

This was held in Newcastle. Sadly no further records have survived.

Grading Success

Andrew Duell, Ben Kelly and Kirby Smith all earned 2nd Dan in Kendo.

1999

UNSWKC

Late in 1999 Takashi Yamada started teaching at UNSW, remaining in that role for about a year.

First Ulladulla Games

Held in Ulladulla as part of a wider festival, this was the first Kendo tournament hosted by Sakura Bana Budo Ryu of Milton.

A very enjoyable tournament with participants from dojos in Gosford, Wollongong, Sydney, Bathurst, Milton and Canberra.

Indiv Kyu: Simon Larsen(Syd), 2nd Melanie Smith(ANU)
 3rd Isaac Bober (CSU Bathurst), 4th Rob Chambers (Milton)
Indiv Dan: Cameron LeMaitre (ANU) 2nd Dale Gould(Central Coast) 3rd Ted
Rixon(Wgong)

2nd NSW State Championships

Held at the Westfield Sports High School in Fairfield West on the 4th December. The event opened with Ted Rixon, President of the NSWKA, making a presentation of subsidy cheques for the 2000 World Kendo Championship to NSWKA members of the Australian team and support staff.

Junior's:	J. Kim - Han Rim Kak,	2 nd Y. Tateno(Syd),	3 rd L. Crowe(Wgong)
Indiv Kyu:	J. Lim - Han Rim Kak,	2 nd T. Otsuka(UNSW),	3 rd P. Obeid(UNSW)
Veteran:	P. Carey(Milton)	2 nd P. Peart(Byron Bay),	3 rd P. Hayden(Milton)
Women's:	C. Hallgath(Syd),	2 nd P. Obeid(UNSW),	3 rd M. Smith(ANU)
Indiv Open:	S. Burke(Syd),	2 nd T. Kim(Han Rim Kak)	3 rd Y. Shimomoto(UNSW)
Kyu team:	Sydney (Larsen, Bober, Tateno, Killick) 2 nd Milton (Chambers, Hayden, Carey P, Carey M, Burns M)		
Open Team:	UNSW (Baker, Otsuka, Yamada, Clarke, Shimomoto) 2 nd Sydney (Burke, Hallgath, Sano, Okamoto, Itakura)		

7th Dan !

In 1999 Jamie Fennessey achieved his 7th Dan in Kendo – a supreme achievement and a hugely important moment in the growth of Australian Kendo.

Fennessey kendo it with finesse

By RAY KERSHLER

MORE than six million people practise kendo. James Fennessey is one of them.

But he is better than most, having just successfully completed his elevation to 7th dan in a sport which is best described as Japanese fencing.

Last week Fennessey attended the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo for his 7th dan examinations. There were more than 1900 applicants.

After examination in direct combat, form work and a written examination just 116 passed.

Fennessey's elevation to seventh dan takes him increasingly higher in the sport.

He already has the highest ranking outside Japan. In a sport which has more than six million exponents, there are as few as 50 8th dans and only three or four 9th dans, the latter now in their 70s.

Fennessey says kendo is a combination of the sword fighting skills of the Samurai and the study of Zen.

"It is almost like meditation with sweat," says Fennessey.

Although the metal sword is used in form work, one on one combat is undertaken with a shinai, a bamboo stick, instead of the medieval sword.

If that sounds a bit wimpish, Fennessey points out the shinai moves at a top speed of 180km/h aimed at four scoring areas (the head, throat, waist and chest).

"There would not be many participants left if we used the real sword in combat. Those 70-year-olds would certainly be a worry," he says with a laugh.


In Japan where kendo is the most popular of the martial arts, the Japanese say kendo is the way of the sword – both a sport and an art combining the excitement of one-on-one competition with the development of the mind, body and spirit.

In one-on-one combat a match may take as little as five minutes but practice has taken 25 years of Fennessey's life.

While he is Australia's best qualified kendo exponent, there is an Australian team, of which Fennessey is captain, currently ranked eighth out of the 46 countries in the world which participate.

But why kendo?

In Fennessey's case, a fascination with Japanese history led to a school scholarship in Japan which, in turn, led to his interest in the sport, maintained on return to Australia.



Dan good ... James Fennessey (left/front) practising after returning from Japan. Picture: GREGG PORTEOUS

Jamie Fennessey made headlines in *The Daily Telegraph* (1998)

8th Australian Iaido Championships, Sydney NSW

For the fourth consecutive year (in the absence of any other clubs expressing any interest in hosting the event), De La Salle College in Bankstown, Sydney, was the venue for the Australian Iaido Championships over the Australia Day long weekend. Kadono Sensei consented to visit once again and attend the event. This was the last time the event was held in exactly this format and the Sydney Iaido Club sadly shut its doors just a year or two later.

In 2000 however, the Melbourne Kenshikan hosted a joint Australian Iaido and Jodo Seminar and Championship. That event launched the new series of two-art championships which have continued each year and grown to include over 100 participants.

The new series of seminars and championships inspired Bob Brown and Aden Steinke to formalise the practice of both Iaido and Jodo at Wollongong (creating UOW-Iaido and UOW-Jodo under the banner of the UOWKC), and for a brief time Wollongong was the only registered NSW dojo conducting all three arts under the AKR. It remains the only three-art dojo in NSW, and one of a very few in Australia.



NSW Dan Team for the 24th AKC in Tallebudgera QLD.
Right to Left: Jamie Fennessy, Scott Hardy, David Bunder,
Stuart Burke, Kirby Smith, Ho Young Choi, Yuji Sano and Philip Baker

The Milton Summer Camp



A superb example of synchronised sitting - at the Milton Summer Camp
Back row: left to right includes: David Bunder, Rick Peddley-Smith, Martino Ellero, Stuart Burke
Front row: left to right includes: Melanie Smith, Jonathon Cross



The Milton Summer camp was famed for its hard training.
David Bunder (foreground) and Rick Peddley-Smith sleeping in the brewery – err - kitchen

Code of Ethics

The AKR introduced a Code of Ethics for the conduct of Kendo for the first time. The MoD was updated and codes of conduct for coaching were adopted.

Entering the new world of professionalism and accountability in sports administration was not the easiest of transitions, but the AKR took it in its stride.

Copping some stick



Kendo warrior Stephen Crane with Year 6 Japanese student Dante Lucato and his Japanese teacher Robina Bourke. Picture: ORLANDO CHIODO

Wollongong member Stephen Crane
doing his bit to spread the word to local schools

Victoria – 1990's

1990

The Kenshikan Dojo

As recorded in the 1980's section, Mr Otsuka had kindly pledged four million dollars towards a permanent Kendo dojo in Melbourne.

On 10th March, Sensei Y. Inoue (8th Dan Hanshi) and Sensei M. Kon (7th Dan Kyoshi) from the AJKF conducted three days of Kendo instruction at the YWCA.

Work on the pivotal project for new dojo, The Kenshikan, dominated much of that year. Despite the best intentions of all there would be some detractors, some toes stepped on and a few frustrations vented. Nevertheless the new dojo took shape quickly and the opening date of July 1990 approached quickly

Work on the project included working bees following training. Sanding the floor, hand painting walls - all the needed to bond club members together.



The Kenshikan under construction

A most impressive dojo emerged from the toil of the many; a meeting and lecture room, a huge dojo floor, store room, kitchen, male and female changing rooms, showers, an eight person spa and a private business office for Nagae Sensei.

In addition a ceremonial drum was donated by the Otsuka family together with a large stone Japanese lantern for the front garden. Engraved calligraphy for the front door and the kamiza were donated by Nakakura Sensei. Office furniture came from Murray Goulburn and the National Australia Bank, courtesy of Nagae Sensei.



The Kenshikan under construction

Grand Opening of the Kenshikan - 15th July 1990

This was a uniquely grand occasion in the history of Australian Kendo.



Opening of the Kenshikan – one of Ron's favourite photos



MELBOURNE BUDOKAI
THE KENSHIKAN DOJO

Gary Oliver recalls:

“As a Ballarat member, I was invited like many other AKR members to attend the opening of the Kenshikan on 15th July 1990. I doubt if any of us had been to such a Kendo happening as this. Everything was catered for thanks to the organizing committee. This included a commemorative tenegue.

To begin with, a special delegation from Japan arrived on 14th July. The following list indicates the calibre of the guests;

<i>Kiyoshi Nakakura</i>	<i>Kendo & Iaido Hanshi 9th Dan</i>
<i>Mrs Nakakura</i>	
<i>Tadatoshi Haga</i>	<i>Kendo & Iaido Hanshi 8th Dan</i>
<i>Makoto Miyaji</i>	<i>Kendo Hanshi 8th Dan</i>
<i>Mrs Miyaji</i>	
<i>Mr Koichiro Ikenaga</i>	<i>Kendo Hanshi 8th Dan</i>
<i>Shosuke Tsujimura</i>	<i>Kendo Kyoshi 8th Dan</i>
<i>Kazuma Hashimoto</i>	<i>Kendo Kyoshi 8th Dan</i>
<i>Mrs Mitsuko Tsujimura</i>	<i>Naginata Kyoshi 8th Dan</i>
<i>Tokuichi Kozuka</i>	<i>Kendo Kyoshi 7th Dan</i>
<i>Kunio Shizawa</i>	<i>Kendo Kyoshi 7th Dan</i>
<i>Tadahiro Ajiro</i>	<i>Kendo Kyoshi 7th Dan</i>

Plus a few 4th and 5th Dans!

A grading was held for Kendo and Iaido in the early morning for prospective candidates followed by demonstrations beginning at 11.00 a.m. I recall Damian Carmody Stephens and a few of us getting changed when an impromptu tour of the change rooms was made by Nakakura Sensei and some Japanese ladies.

One poor Aussie was caught in nothing but his Kendogi but to his credit he kept his composure and held the door open for the guests despite the redness on his face.

John Butler recalled that our visitors asked which part of their one million dollar donation was used in the construction of the dojo. They were stunned when he replied, “all of it”. Tokyo prices suggested a tiny part of the dojo could be afforded but our construction and refurbishment came in under \$700,000.

Highlights included a large marquee in the car park where meals were served. A barrel of sake specially brought over was broken with Japanese hammers and everyone drank a toast in traditional square wooden cups. Demonstrations included Iaido with Nakakura Sensei and Haga Sensei, Naginata versus Kendo with Tsujimura Sensei and Shizawa Sensei plus high ranking shiai with the Kendo Hanshi. It was a memorable and highly successful day.”



Nakakura Sensei opens the sake barrel.



Unveiling the bust of the late Kenshiro Otsuka – patron the Kenshikan.



Haga Sensei performing laido in the newly opened Kenshikan



Peter Szwarcbord and Mark Wild performing Kendo kata at the Kenshikan opening



A Naginata bout at the Kenshikan opening

There were a number special dinners and outings held during the weekend of the opening. The delegation travelled to the Gold Coast and made the most of this landmark occasion.

Haga Sensei stayed on for the week and visited Ballarat the following Thursday. He visited the Wildlife Park, Sovereign Hill and took training at the local Club.

Founding of the Goshin Kendo Club

In late November Mark Wild, Peter Riordan, Julian Richardson and Laurie Scott began the Goshin Kendo Club. Venue for the group was Melbourne University High School with training on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

7th VKR Championships

In December Tony Pickering took first place in the Kyu Individual championship, historically the first time the competition had been won by a non Melbourne Kendo Club member.

1991

Tsurumaru Ashizawa Sensei conducted a seminar from March 20th to March 23rd. The seminar as usual was well attended with students coming from interstate. By coincidence Yagisawa Sensei also visited Melbourne from 17th – 19th March, the occasion being his honeymoon trip.

Member clubs were Melbourne Kendo Club, Melbourne University Club, Mumeishi Kendo Club, Goshin Kendo Club, Ballarat Kendo Club, Bendigo Kendo Club (tenuously formed by Peter Day) and a newly formed Monash University Kendo Club. This was a rise from four to seven clubs in two years.

World Kendo Championships, Toronto Canada

These were held in Toronto, Canada. Once again, Brent Gazzaniga was elected as Team Leader. Notable Victorians in the team were Jamie Fennessy, Mark Wild, Peter Day and Sofie Macak. Team Manager was John Butler. Importantly, Sofie Macak led the Team in the opening ceremony. According to John Butler: *"For the first time it was organized professionally. The duties and responsibilities of the Manager, coach and team Leader were set out in detail"*. (Butler page 42).



Sophie Macak proudly leads the Australian team onto the floor at the 1991 Worlds.

Kenshikan Anniversary, and Burglary

A new event was inaugurated on 15th July to celebrate the opening of the Kenshikan. This Taikai event saw the pooling of three mixed Kendoka, one beginner, one middle range and one Yudansha being drawn together from different Dojo. A team led by Kenichi Ishihara took first place.

The Kenshikan was burgled on two occasions during the year with a number of valuable items being stolen. Sadly Nagae Sensei and Mrs Nagae's bogu were stolen and Ballarat Ashes trophy scattered and broken.

Ballarat hosted the second Ashes title in December but only ten competitors registered, including Sofie Macak. Sadly, the enthusiasm waned from the organiser's point of view and it wasn't offered the following year.

Founding of Monash University Club

In August, Stylianos Polichroniadis (Stilts) launched the Monash University Club. In the words of Khay-Lin Teoh, *“Stilts was the coach of the Club and to his credit, over the course of the next few months, lay down what would become a solid foundation of footwork and posture”*.

Arpad Maksay recalls:

“My time with Monash University Kendo Club began when I entered the university as a student in 1996. In 1999 I became the club leader and continued in this role until 2004. From this perspective I will outline the club’s roots, the time I was there and finally where the club is going now.

Monash University Kendo Club was founded by Stylianos Polichroniadis (Stilts) in 1991. Stilts brought together a motivated group of students and the club soon found recognition and gained momentum. I can recall as a young member of the Ballarat Kendo Club an impression of the Monash guys being new on the block, but playing beyond expectations.

At some point the leadership of the club was transferred to Julian Richardson. How exactly this took place, or when, is a part of the club history that I never found out about, or knew once but have forgotten. When I entered the club in 1996, Julian was our instructor. Matthew Osborne, who was in his second or third year, was the captain.

For University clubs the highlight of the year is the Intervarsity Games. That year they were held in Canberra and from memory we were defeated in the final by the guys from Adelaide. This rivalry with Adelaide was to continue for the next few years and formed the basis for creating friendships with people like Hayami Aboutaleb, Melanie Smith and Jonathon Cross.”

Mr Nakasone Visit

In December the Kenshikan had a surprise visit by former Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Nakasone. Mr Futagawa was the son-in-law of Mr Nakasone. It was quite a prestigious visit and one that signified the growing International stature of the Kenshikan.

1992

A visit from Katsumi Kuramochi (5th Dan Kendo, 4th Dan Iaido and 3rd Dan Jodo) to Melbourne and Ballarat courtesy of an introduction from Stylianos Polichroniadis (Stilts) started the year off well. A student of Sensei Kubo’s Kyumeikan Dojo, Katsumi was quite taken by the hospitality of Victorian Kendo.

17th Australian Kendo Championships, Melbourne VIC

Held at the Carlton Community Centre in Rathdowne Street, Carlton. Jamie Fennessy, recently graded to 6th Dan, was a guest at the seminar, returning from Japan where he had been living and working. In the Open Individual Peter Day came second to Yoichi Yano of NSW, who also won the

Veterans and fought in the teams. Indeed, a trifecta. NSW won five of the eight competitions. Victoria's Kyu team won the Kyu teams and the Kata competition. Mark Wild, then living in Sydney fought in the NSW Dan team.

Due to the collapse of "Compass Airlines" the WAKR team were left short of team members. Ramon Lawrence, Brian Brestovac, Paul Norman and John Moane were the only members to attend and went close to causing a great upset in the National Teams Event by drawing two-all and having to concede the fifth position due to the lack of a fifth team member. A seminar was held at the new Kenshikan Dojo on completion of the championships with Sensei's Sato and Itoh.

17th AKC – Melbourne	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Yoichi Yano	Peter Day	
SENIORS INDIVIDUAL	Yoichi Yano	Colin Minter	
OPEN TEAM	NSW		
KYU TEAM	VIC		
KATA TEAM	VIC		
WOMENS OPEN	Keiko Jones		

Kenshikan Iaido

Active at the Kenshikan at this time was George Boghikian who taught Iaido and Jodo to a small group of enthusiasts. Training was Saturday afternoons following which a pot of Japanese tea was usually made by George for everyone. Active in this group were Tony Margi and Tony Pickering.

1993

10th VKR Championships

Katsumi Kuramochi had returned to Ballarat to seek permanent residence and become the Ballarat Club's first Sensei. Enrolling in Ballarat's Catholic University, Katsumi taught all three disciplines to the local Club members. In the final of the Kyu Individual Kendo Championship Ballarat took three of the first four placings with Tony Pickering 1st, Arpad Maksay in his first adult competition 2nd and Jason Widdy 4th.

Similarly in the three person Open Team competition, Ballarat came first over Melbourne Kendo Club, the team consisting of Gary Oliver, Tony Pickering and Jason Widdy. It was the first win to a non MKC team in the 10 year history of VKR tournaments.

“Faito”

Peter Riordan & Paul Flintoff of Goshin Kendo Club began producing a new VKR magazine called “Faito”, the first edition appearing in August. It was a refreshing look at the magazine with some fairly sharp criticisms about how Kendo was developing in Victoria. Nevertheless it helped make the membership aware of what was coming up and some issues that needed addressing.

The Goshin Club members were honoured when they received two scrolls painted by Aikawa Manabu Sensei of Kumamoto. The club invited all VKR clubs to a special training and unveiling of the scrolls on the evening of June 1st.



Back, Left to Right: Arpad Maksay, David Tannard, Mark Woodford, Tony Pickering.
Front, left to Right: Gary Oliver, Katsumi Kuramochi & Jason Widdy - with the Les Watson Memorial Shield

Intersivity Kendo

There was an intersivity Kendo tournament between University teams, held at the same time as the University games (though Kendo was not a University Games event at that time). At the Intersivity Championships held at Melbourne University, Monash proved too strong, defeating Adelaide in all five bouts in the Teams. Matthew Osborn won the individual competition by narrowly defeating Khay-Lin Teoh.

Indiv comp: Matthew Osborn, 2nd Khay-Lin Teoh
Teams: Monash University, VIC def Adelaide University 5-0

Japanese Week and other developments

In May Ballarat City conducted a “Japanese Week”, with schools and the broader community invited to cultural exhibitions and demonstrations held over four days. Mrs Nagae brought her Naginata students and joined in on one day together with the Ballarat Kendo Club. The week was a tremendous success.

On 19th June the first Japan Australia Sports Exchange festival was held at the Melbourne Sports & Entertainment Centre. Visiting groups consisted of students of Kendo, Naginata, Shorinji Kempo, Kyudo, Juken Jutsu, Aikido, Judo, Nihon Kenpo and Rhythm Kendo. It was a large group and was led by Kendo Sensei and Hiroyuki Shioiri.

Ben Sheppard went to the Summer School in Saitama and received the Kenshikan scholarship which went towards some of his travel costs.



Yakov Macak takes the Rei at the 1993 Interschool Kendo Tournament

Octoberfest

Held following a three day seminar at the Carlton Baths. The IKF sent three Sensei to conduct the seminar, Muto Sensei 8th Dan, Chiba Sensei 8th Dan and Yamazaki Sensei 8th Dan who lead the laido. Attending the seminar were Jean Paul Belhomme from New Caledonia, a contingent from New Zealand which included former Melbournite, Kirk Doran and two Yudansha from Taiwan.

An embarrassment came at the opening ceremony when one of the Taiwanese Sensei informed John Butler that the flag attributed to his country, elegantly displayed with the other attendees’ flags out front, was in fact the flag of Communist Mainland China. Another international incident courtesy of Mr Butler!

1994

Sad Loss of John Butler

On February 15th, Kendo and Iaido pioneer, John Butler 4th Dan, passed away following a long battle with prostate cancer. Always the optimist, he will be remembered for his quick wit and the personal support he gave. Ever organized, he wrote his own obituary and sent personal farewells and gifts to the very people he had mentored. The Age Obituary of February 25th published John's own words which summed up his sense of humour;

“Remember him how he was; young, handsome, vibrant, sexy with a teeny weeny hint of modesty”.

In a letter that Gary Oliver received a few weeks following his death, John had indicated his acceptance of the inevitable. He wrote in part, *“I leave this life content. There is an insignificant legacy, but a legacy none the less. Build on my humble beginnings and prosper”.*



John Butler

In 2008 the Australian Iaido Board recognised John as a Founder of Australian Iaido, and issued a new National Trophy in his name, the Butler Cup. Then VKR President, Gary Oliver, accepted a special commemorative plaque from the Board, on behalf of John's family.

Sad Loss of Paul Guerillot

On the 25th February Paul Guerillot, a giant in the early history of Australian Kendo, host of the inaugural Australian Kendo Championships, Sensei to Peter Szwarcbord (and father to his wife, Marika) passed away.

He was a pioneer of martial arts and did much to establish Kendo in its early years. He should be remembered as the person who established the first Kendo classes in Victoria.

Though, by that time, Paul had not been active in Kendo for many years, he cast a long shadow indeed and left very large shoes to fill.

None who met him could fail to be impressed by that *“very tough man”*.



Paul Guerillot

Sad Loss of Sophie Macak

When Yakov Macak started learning Kendo in 1978, his daughters Sofie and Phoebe were 9 and 7 years old, respectively. Like most children they wanted to try what Dad was doing, so he found some small keikogis, and made up a hakama for each of them. They commenced training at the Melbourne Kendo Club in Little Bourke St in 1980. Phoebe soon decided that Kendo was not for her, but Sofie got the bug. She trained regularly over the next few years, achieving 2nd Dan in October '87.

Sofie competed regularly in the Australian Kendo Championships, winning the Junior championship in 1983 at Gosford, being a member of the winning Victorian Dan Grade Team in 1988 at Sydney, and taking 3rd place in the Women's Championship in Canberra in 1989.

By this time she was studying at Melbourne University, and when the Melbourne University Kendo Club was founded, Sofie was one of the original members. She was the first Club President, the most senior Kendo student and the assistant instructor. She obtained the Level 1 Kendo Instructor qualification in December '87. Sofie also served as VKR Treasurer that year.



Sophie Macak

On completion of her course in 1990, Sofie obtained a six-month research position at Berkeley University and she moved to California in February 1991. While there she trained at the Berkeley Dojo and also in nearby Oakland.

The 8th WKC was held in Toronto that year and Sofie was drafted into the Australian team. She carried the Australian flag in the Opening Ceremony, competed in the individual tournament, and was available as a team reserve in case of any injuries.

On returning from the USA in 1992, Sofie began a Master of Science degree at Adelaide University. She joined the fledgling Kendo Club there and made a significant contribution to the development of the Club in a formative period for South Australian Kendo.

Sofie passed away in May 1994 after a short illness. In her time in Kendo she continually strove to improve her skills in all areas, achieving 3rd Dan and contributing to the wider cause by always being available as a shinpan, instructor, administrator, and most of all as an example to all Kendoka.

Establishment of the Fudoshin Dojo

Damian Carmody-Stephens and Brett Smith, both 4th Dan at the time, founded Fudoshin Kendo in 1994. James Saretta, a 2nd Dan, and eight brand new beginners were also there from the start. An arduous search for a suitable training venue turned up the Sullivan Sport Centre which, due to the unique colour scheme of the hall, it is still to this day fondly remembered as 'The Pink Room'.



Fudoshin - the immovable mind.

The members of Fudoshin Kendo constantly remind themselves that the reason for the club's existence is Kendo. While other aspects of their friendships are important, it is the Kendo which is paramount. As a group of individuals brought together by a mutual passion, they strive to be committed to the process of improvement, and the importance of details: punctuality, regular attendance and a committed spirit. Throughout their glorious history, the word 'Fudoshin' has served to remind them that whatever challenge lies in their path, they should approach it with a steady spirit.

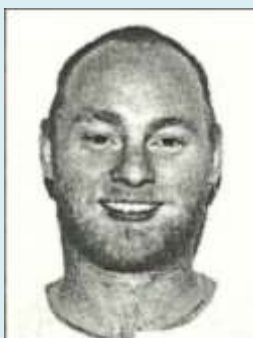


Damien Carmody-Stevens and the Fudoshin crew



Early Fudoshin days under Damien Carmody-Stevens and Brett Smith

PROFILE



**Damian
Carmody-
Stevens**

There is no doubt in Ron's mind that the efforts of Coach Damian have furthered the ability of Australian practitioners at World Championship level. His efforts in training have shown that he was definitely on the right track and we all should be very grateful that somebody finally picked up the baton and carried it with honour.

His loss to us when he moved to Singapore was significant. Fortunately, another person has taken up the challenge, this of course being Brett Smith.

While Brett Smith has now continued the process that Coach Damian initially put in place, and the success has become manifest, Ron personally takes his hat off to Damian's endeavours.

Ron is so pleased that he has witnessed such professionalism and commitment.

"Thank you very much for all your efforts" - Ron Bennett.

9th World Kendo Championship. Paris, France.

The Australian team that presented in Paris was very much a Victorian one. Or, at least, they all had Victorian origins. The team consisted of Jamie Fennessey (Captain), Peter Szwarcbord, Mark Wild, Peter Day and Brett Smith. Dale Gould also assisted with the team.

An IKF Assembly and Board Meeting was held at the time of the World Championships.



Right to Left: Dale Gould, Jamie Fennessey, Peter Szwarcbord, Peter Day, Mark Wild and Brett Smith



Nagae Sensei (2nd right, front row) attended the IKF Board Meeting

Saitama

In August Tony Pickering attended the Summer school at Saitama as a 2nd Dan. He returned with new skills and an unquenchable appetite to learn.

Octoberfest

The Octoberfest was held on 4th and 5th of that month but was not well attended.

Hoshino Sensei's reunion

Following the Australian Iaido Championships in Canberra, Haga Sensei visited on 30th January with his friend, Hoshino Sensei. He instructed in Kendo and Iaido until February 4th.

What made that visit so memorable was Hoshino Sensei's special reason in making the trip. Hano Sensei was in town to meet up with Captain B Kilpatrick. Captain Kilpatrick was the Commander of the Australian Prisoner of War Camp in New Guinea during World War Two where Hoshino Sensei was held. Because Hoshino Sensei could speak English he translated for the Captain and the two developed a respect for each other during those difficult times.

The remarkable story of how they made contact after more than 30 years is captured by Richard Ward's wife, Janet;

"Bill Kilpatrick, a retired rice farmer from Deniliquin was an old acquaintance of my employer and he would travel to Melbourne a couple of times a year with his wife.

Aged 80 plus years, they would catch the bus down in the morning and return home in the afternoon, but usually made the time to call and say hello.

One day he brought a book with him and asked me if I knew anyone who could help with the translation from Japanese. He had tried unsuccessfully to have it translated in Deniliquin and thought he would get it done professionally in Melbourne.

Bill and the book's author Kazuo Hoshino had an extraordinary history.

They had met under less than ideal circumstances in a prisoner of war camp in New Guinea. Bill had been the camp's commanding Officer and Hoshino had been the commanding officer of the Japanese prisoners. During their time in New Guinea they had developed and deep respect and true friendship for each other.

After the war they had kept in touch for a time, but the years passed and Bill sincerely regretted that he had lost contact with his old friend. He had no idea how to get in touch with him or what had happened to him.

Hoshino had similar regrets and had asked Japanese, now living in Australia to try to locate Bill, but despite efforts, no trace was found.

My husband, Richard, is a Kendo player and I asked him if he knew anyone who could help. He in turn rang his Kendo teacher, Nagae Sensei, who said he knew Hoshino and had been looking for Bill for years! Nagae Sensei was Hoshino's Australian contact! When I told Bill, he was stunned, because he did not expect to have any contact with his old friend ever again.

Nagae Sensei made enquiries and a few weeks later we were able to give Bill, Hoshino's Tokyo phone number, but advised him to wait for a couple of hours before ringing as he was not home - he was still at Mitsubishi Dojo training, as he did every Saturday afternoon!

As a result of Bill's call, Hoshino came to Australia and stayed with Bill in Deniliquin for a week and some time later Bill and his wife went to Japan to visit Hoshino and his family.

In his book, Hoshino wrote how that his regular Kendo suburi practice helped him to deal with the mental impact of the war and with his subsequent internment. He also wrote of the respect and friendship that developed between himself and Captain Kilpatrick, despite the circumstances."

Ref: HOSHINO Kazuo, 1982, Nyûginia sen tsuiokuki - sensô to hyûmanizumu (Reminiscences of the war in New Guinea: war and humanism), Tokyo: Senshi Kankôkai

1995

December 1995 saw the arrival of New Zealander, Gerard Egerton in Melbourne. He joined the Fudoshin group in 1996.

1996

Brett Smith's Feet - New Venues for Fudoshin

Gerard Egerton's enthusiasm was a great boost for the new group, however Brett Smith broke the floor of The Pink Room (for the second time!) and training was relocated to the 1st Kew Scout Hall.

This new venue had a very Kendo-friendly floor and provided an excellent base for the club for most of '96. However, late in the year, the unrelenting feet of Brett Smith struck again and training was moved to Macleay Park Scout Hall in North Balwyn. This venue was only available once a week on

Saturday mornings. This latest move was ill-timed because Brett, Damian and Gerard were in the middle of their preparation leading up to the 1997 World Kendo Championships in Kyoto. In order to train regularly during the week, they rented various spaces on a night-by-night basis.

Nakakura Sensei visit

On 3rd February an aging Nakakura Sensei visited Melbourne with members of his International Kendo Club. The group held training over two days at the Kenshikan. To this date, this was probably by far the most distinguished and impressive group of Kendo Masters ever to have visited Melbourne.

In addition to Nakakura Sensei, there were two other 9th Dans; Sensei Abe and Sensei Narasaki. Four 8th Dans, seven 7th Dans and five 5th & 6th Dans (plus their wives) made up the 30 plus delegation.

Many demonstration bouts were given, as well as an laido demonstration from Nakakura himself. On the Saturday evening, leaders of VKR Clubs attended a dinner at the Consul General's home. Mr Takashi Ato, Consul General was a magnificent host who flew fresh fish in from Japan for the occasion.

Haga Sensei visit

Haga Sensei visited Melbourne from 22nd April until April 30th and conducted laido and Kendo training. He took a day to visit friends in Ballarat and renewed friendships at the local Wildlife Park.

Master of the sword returns

Japanese master swordsman Tadatoshi Haga, 81, made an impressive visit to Ballarat on Saturday.

He impressed local Kendo players with his knowledge and fitness and in turn was impressed by their enthusiasm.

Haga attended a 7am training session at Eastwood Leisure Centre, and showed his ability with the sword and his ability which won him an eighth dan black belt.

After lunch, he returned to Melbourne to supervise a large squad training at 3pm.



Other visits, but Katsumi Kuramochi moves to Wollongong

Later in May a Japanese Naval Defence force team visited the Kenshikan and, after joint training, a friendly shiai was held. The Victorian team won 3 – 2.

Twenty one Nittaidai students visited from 8th - 12th August and held a two day training in Melbourne. As usual, Shizawa Sensei and Hakadama Sensei led the group. A *shiai* saw Nittaidai win all bouts with the exception of 2 draws.

Brent Gazzaniga attended training in Japan and achieved his 5th Dan in Kendo.

In December Katsumi Kuramochi left Victoria and moved to NSW. It was a sad loss for Ballarat in losing their first fully ranked resident Sensei, but not a loss to Australian Kendo as a whole.

The lucky members of the Wollongong Club however, suddenly had regular access to perhaps Australia's most powerful and graceful Kendo teacher. Bob Brown and Aden Steinke finally had regular laido lessons from a qualified Sensei, for the first time ever! In their time however, they too would be saddened to lose Kuramochi when he moved on to Queensland two years later.

1997

Jodo hits Melbourne

Following the laido and Jodo Championships in Perth, a delegation of Sensei - including Nakanishi Sensei, Ono Sensei, Nagayama Sensei, Ito Sensei, Horiyama Sensei & Kanezawa Sensei - arrived in Melbourne on February 3rd. They gave wonderful Kendo, laido and Jodo instruction until the 6th February. This was the first time Jodo was officially instructed by the AJKF in Melbourne.

World Kendo Championships, Kyoto Japan

The World Kendo Championships were held in Kyoto during the Japanese Spring. A contingent of Australian laidoka was invited to attend and perform an embu at the Heian Jingu and at the Butokuden Dojo.

laido players from Victoria included Peter Szwarcbord, Gary Oliver, Claire Chan, Anthony Margi and Yvette Black. At the Butokuden Dojo, performances began with Shodan laidoka and progressed through to the 8th Dan and above Masters. This was probably the first time that Budoka below the rank of 6th Dan had ever performed in such an important place. Participants received tenegue & specially printed certificates commemorating the event. A three day seminar followed. Peter Szwarcbord achieved 5th Dan and Gary Oliver was graded to 3rd Dan, in laido.

PROFILE



Brett Smith

Brett started Kendo in February 1985 at the Melbourne Kendo Club. There, he met Damian Carmody-Stephens - who began the same year - and Nittaidai's Shizawa Sensei and Yagisawa Sensei.

In 1986, his astonishing collection of trophies was started with the Victorian Junior Kendo title. In 1987 he won the Australian Junior Kendo title in the presence of Nakakura and Nagashima Senseis. He won the Australia/Japan Society of Victoria's 12 month exchange student scholarship for the following year, and achieved his shodan rank that October.

1988 he spent in Nagoya, Aichi, training with the Seijoh High School Kendo Club under the instruction of Hatanaka Sensei. His rapid rise in technical ability under such high level instruction saw him achieve Sandan in 1990.

In 1993 he returned to Tokyo to live and train at Nittaidai for almost 3 months. October saw his successful Yondan grading.

His stellar championship career saw much success at state and national level. In 1997 he was appointed vice captain of the Australian Kendo Team at the Kyoto World Kendo Championships.

1998 saw the first of his five AKC titles, won in Wollongong.

In 2000 he became captain of the Australian Kendo Team and at Santa Clara led them to their best ever performance, placing 'Best 8'. He achieved his 5th Dan at that same event.

In 2003 he again captained the Australian team to Glasgow. And in 2004 was named as National Team Coach.

2006 saw his 6th Dan rank and another term as Captain/Coach in Taipei.

Brett is now five times Australian Champion, getting close to Steven Lawley's seven titles. He certainly has the same ability. His clear focus on progress is a great asset to Australian Kendo. His efforts as National Coach to take up where Damian Carmody-Stevens left off have shown great determination, energy and resolve.

He is a young man Ron admires greatly – *"keep up the good work!"*



The Australian Team's Do decal. Very rare and highly prized!

22nd Australian Kendo Championships, Melbourne VIC



Sumi Sensei and Ajiro Sensei visited Melbourne from June 6th and attended the Australian Championships which were held over the next two days at the Melbourne University High School Gymnasium. The week prior to the taikai, Kuramochi Katsumi returned to Ballarat to train with his old club.

22nd AKC - Melbourne

1st

2nd

3rd

OPEN INDIVIDUAL

Brian Brestovac (WA)

No other results are recorded

Fudoshin Successes and Other Events

In 1997 at the Kyoto WKC, Fudoshin's Damian Carmody-Stevens and Brett Smith represented Australia and Gerard represented New Zealand. Gerard's performance won him a fighting spirit award. Upon returning from Kyoto, Damian won the Australian Open Individual Title at the 1997 Australian Championships held in Melbourne.

In late 1997, Fudoshin moved to its current location in the upstairs gymnasium at University High School in Parkville. From this point on the club has slowly, but steadily, grown. This period in time saw the addition to the club of two new Kendoka - Hayami Aboutaleb from Flinders University Kendo and Lockie Jackson from Monash University.

Over the 29th and 30th of September, the University Games were held at the Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre. Senior members of the VKR assisted as Kendo Shinpan.

The Octoberfest was held on 4th and 5th of that month. Again, this was not well attended.

1998



In May the Ballarat Kendo Club held a special training one Sunday morning to celebrate its 10th year (actually its 11th). VKR members from all clubs attended and Nagae Sensei presented the club with a sword rack suitably inscribed.



10 years of Ballarat Kendo

Members of Fudoshin performed a Kendo demonstration and Mrs Nagae led a Naginata demonstration before a spirited jigeiko ended the day.

Shizawa Sensei again brought students to Melbourne for a shared training on 5th August. This time they bussed to Ballarat for a BBQ at the Wildlife Park before taking in Sovereign Hill.



Shizawa Sensei and his touring party

Other clubs enjoying growth that year included Fudoshin, who had a group training in Balwyn as well as University High School.

During September, members of Fudoshin Kendo Club travelled to Ballarat for their first weekend Gasshuku. Hosted at the Eastwood Leisure Centre, Gerard Everton from New Zealand also attended this first of many such annual visits.

University Games and Octoberfest

The University Games were again held at the end of September with Kendo firmly established as a regular sport. The Octoberfest continued on the first week in October.

Naginata Embu

On the 29th November a Kendo and Naginata demonstration was carried out at the Moonee Ponds Race Course.

The following day the sales contract for the Kenshikan was signed between Mr H. Otsuka and the Kenshikan trustees. On the 15th December the final contract of Kenshikan Trust was carried at the Fetta Gdanski Office in Melbourne.

1999

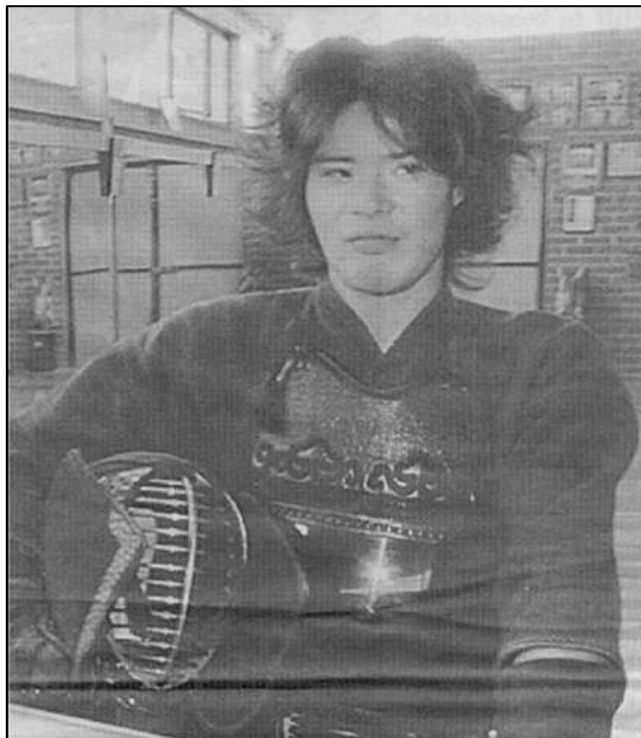
Enter Satoru Takada

Early in January Satoru Takada arrived in Melbourne with long-time friends of the Ballarat Kendo Club, Noriko and Minoru Toya (5th Dan). The Toyas stayed a week with the Olivers in Carisbrook, where they were thrilled to see koalas and a platypus in the wild. Fortunately, Satoru stayed much longer.

Jason Widdy played host to Satoru, who became Ballarat's resident instructor. A graduate of Hakodate University in Hokkaido, Satoru was his University Champion for two consecutive years. In the Japan National University Championships he made the final 16.

During the 12 months he stayed he won the Victorian State Individual Championship, the Canberra Kendo Club tournament and the Otsuka Memorial taikai.

Satoru also stayed with Arpad Maksay at Monash but still continued to train in Ballarat each Thursday night. The entire VKR benefited from his presence and enthusiasm for Kendo.



Satoru Takada

Kendo Summer School in Japan

Three of Victoria's most dedicated Kendoka went to Saitama at the annual Summer School for Foreign Kendo Students.

Peter Szwarcbord, Damian Carmody-Stevens and Claire Chan were all selected to attend the seminar and training. Also joining them from far north Queensland was Katsumi Kuramochi. He and Peter Szwarcbord achieved 6th Dan at the seminar and Damian Carmody Stevens achieved 5th Dan.

VKR State Championships

The Victorian Kendo Championships were held prior to the Nationals on March 21st. This was the Individual Championships, the team events were to be later in the year.



A special match between a visiting team (which included Eiga Sensei) and an Australian Team resulted in Australia losing 4:1.

During the year Sensei Okamoto, who had trained in Australia in the 1970's, visited the Kenshikan Dojo for a memorable training.



Claire Chan and Peter Szwarcbord

Oktoberfest - Eiga Sensei Visit

On 1st October Hideyuki Eiga Sensei, former All Japan Kendo Champion, visited Melbourne for a day's training. This drew an appreciative crowd from NSW and Canberra. This marked a most successful Oktoberfest, an event which has been scaled down in recent years.



Right: Jason Widdy and Hideyuki Eiga Sensei

First Mumeishi 3's tournament in Australia

In November 1999 the Mumeishi Kendo Club celebrated its 10th Anniversary. Terry Holt Sensei (Kendo 7th Dan) from the Mumeishi Kendo Club in the UK flew to Australia to help celebrate the occasion. A joint training was held at the Kenshikan with Fudoshin, Monash Uni, Mumeishi and the Melbourne Kendo Club attending.



As part of their celebration, Mumeishi held the first Australian Mumeishi 3's Kendo tournament at the Kenshikan Dojo on 4th December. The London Mumeishi 3's began some 30 years ago as a club tournament and grew to become an International event in Europe with some 400 Kendoka taking part in 1998.



The 1999 Mumeishi medal



Front row, Left to right: Satoru Takada, Gary Oliver and Ryan Oliver
inaugural winners of the Mumeishi 3's

VKR State Championships

On the 27th November the Victorian Team Championships were held at Melbourne University. Ballarat won the Kyu Team Championship while Fudoshin won the Dan competition.

To mark the end of the year, a BBQ and auction was held for the Kenshikan Trust on the 12th December.

Queensland – 1990's



Queensland members promoting Kendo through public demonstrations in the early 1990's



John Isaacs and John Asprey
Seated in *seiza* and performing *mokuso* - preparing for a public demonstration bout

1990

John Isaacs was runner up to his good friend Mark Wild at the 15th AKC in Sydney.

1991

John Isaacs represented Australia at the 8th World Kendo Championships in Toronto, Canada.

Formation of the QKR

Around this time it became clear that Kendo activities in Queensland were no longer limited to Brisbane and the Queensland Kendo Renmei thus became truly a state representative body. The Brisbane club sought the advice of a respected Buddhist Priest and Kyudo Sensei in Brisbane, Mishima Sensei, to come up with a name for the Kendo group in Brisbane. After much discussion with Mishima Sensei, the name Ken Shin Kai was settled on, meaning to “Manifest a True Mind”. It was with this spirit that Kendo further developed in Brisbane.

Dojos soon sprang up in regional centres including Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns. Kuromochi Sensei moved to Cairns where a thriving dojo now exists.

Kenshinkai moved from the YMCA in Ann Street, where it had been based for some 15 years to a succession of halls. One of the reasons for this nomadic life was that the club was particularly savage on wooden floors. It had become very difficult to find suitable training facilities at reasonable prices.

In some cities the University clubs flourished. In Brisbane however, this was never the case. For 14 years John organised recreational classes in Kendo at the University of Queensland during which at least 30 people each year were introduced to Kendo. Of these, only Dr Kevin Humphrey and Catherine Hallgath are still practising. As of 2010, membership is 114 and still growing.

1992

Sad Loss of Mike Walton

A good friend and training partner, the sudden loss of Mike Walton crushed the spirit of the QKR for a time. Jennene Greenhill reported that they had all been enriched by his time with them, and were better Kendo players for having known him.

Departure of Ro Osawa

A dedicated core member of the QKR kendo community, Ro Osawa returned to Japan with his family to take up a new career in academia. His tireless efforts as a translator for Sensei visits, as well as his dedicated approach to his Kendo, have been greatly missed.

Brisbane Bash

The infamous ‘Brisbane Bash’ events, focused on intermediate grade Kendo players, have never failed to attract players from the QKR and interstate.

PROFILE

**Toshiaki
"Toshi"
Tsukadaira**

In 1987 an advertisement placed by Alan Simpson brought Toshiaki Tsukadaira, his wife Hiroko, Mitsuri Mitani and Doug Milton together. The result was the formation of the Gold Coast Kendo Club called Shubu Kai.

Toshi counts his Australian Kendo career as starting in 1989 when he judged at an AKR event in Brisbane.

His Shubu Kai dojo is still highly active and has always been a great centre for youth training, with the largest number of children learning Kendo of any club in Australia.

He has attained his 6th Dan in Kendo and has made a phenomenal contribution over the last 2 decades to Kendo in Southern Queensland and elsewhere.

1994

19th Australian Kendo Championships, Brisbane QLD

Alastair Bennett (by then, with WA) was subsidized to travel to the AKR Championships in Brisbane over the Easter weekend to defend his Kyu grade title and to be graded to Shodan.

19th AKC - Brisbane

1st

2nd

3rd

KYU INDIVIDUAL

Alastair Bennett

No other results are recorded



At the 19th AKC: the singing executive. Left to Right: Ivan Roboitham (Secretary), Brian Smith (Treasurer), Yakov Macak (President), John Butler (Vice President)

"Our best and most successful AKR Executive ever" – Ron Bennett



The Queensland Team at the 19th AKC (1994)
 Photo includes Peter Szwarcbord, Jamie Fennessey, John Isaacs, Jennene Greenhill, Rod and Grace Prince



The Ken Shin Kai – *manifest a pure mind*

PROFILE

John Isaacs

Developing the Clear Mind

After the departure of Rod Prince, the leadership of the QKR was left to John Isaacs who, with Kevin Humphries and Greg Nicholas over a period of many years, furthered the renmei's development.

For many years, John was practising kendo five sessions per week. This included three in Brisbane at the YMCA and two on the Gold Coast on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. In those days the Brisbane club was very tightly knitted and close. The small group of around 8-10 members met each week and worked hard to improve their skills.

In 1990 John was runner up at the 15th AKC to his good friend, Mark Wild. In 1991, John represented Australia at the world championships in Toronto, Canada.

In 2002 Shigeoka Sensei arrived and provided an incredible wealth of knowledge and experience. John has been heavily influenced by two other great Sensei - these are Nakakura Sensei and Shizawa Sensei; both of whom made regular visits to Queensland. John was particularly mindful of absorbing as much as possible in these short exposures. He always tried to maintain a clear image in his mind as to what constituted correct Kendo so that after these Sensei had departed their lessons lived on until the next visit. This is a skill that he has developed and relies on. In the absence of continuous instruction at this level, there is no other way. Doubtless, these influences and this approach inspired his founding and naming of the Ken Shin Kai.

Queensland Kendo and Iaido has flourished under John's influence. Support of Kevin and Greg and it is now a successful budo state.



John Isaacs and Yakov Macak (2004)

PROFILE

Katsumi Kuramochi

A Founder of Seitei Jodo in Australia

Katsumi Kuramochi is undoubtedly Australia's *Travelling Kendoka*.

An excellent exponent of Kendo, Iaido and Jodo, he was first the instructor at Ballarat, where he introduced Seitei Jodo to Australians.

In 1996 he moved from Victoria to Wollongong, where a fledgling Iaido group were astonished to learn they suddenly had a real Japanese Sensei for the first time. Katsumi's deep influence over Wollongong Kendo is still visible to this day.

A few years later he moved to Mackay in Queensland where he taught beginners to such a standard that they won the National *kata* competition!

He has settled in Cairns now, where students of his *Goshu Shobykan Dojo* are lucky to be able to study all three arts at the highest level.

Katsumi is, and has always been, a deeply gifted teacher, and his calm and efficient lessons never fail to leave students with new skills and much to think about.

Lessons from him are gifts that keep on giving – just thinking back over them lifts technique. Each club and member that has been fortunate enough to have had lessons from Kuramochi Sensei never forgets them.

Ron Bennett maintains to this day that he wishes that he'd also had the chance to study Kendo from Katsumi.



Katsumi Kuramochi performing Seitei Iaido

1999

24th Australian Kendo Championships, Tallebudgera, QLD

Kevin Humphrey and John Isaacs organised an excellent competition held at the Tallebudgera Recreation Centre on the Gold Coast, which provided both accommodation and the competition venue.

Due to the distance and cost involved the numbers were down on the previous year, but there were still around 32 competitors in each of the open and kyu individuals, as well as kyu teams from four states and Dan teams from six (only the ACT did not have a Dan squad) participating.

24th AKC -

Tallebudgera

	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Gerard Egerton (VIC)	Brian Brestovac (WA)	Stuart Burke (NSW)
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Marcus Clark (NSW)	Chi (QLD)	Vince Caltabiano (VIC)
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	Claire Chan (VIC)	Kate Sylvester (VIC)	Hayami Aboutaleb (VIC)
SENIORS INDIVIDUAL	Yoichi Yano (NSW)	Teruaki Kokubun (TAS)	Kazutaka Uchino (WA)
JUNIORS INDIVIDUAL	Ryan Oliver(VIC)	Shuji Maruyama(NSW)	Go Ato (QLD)
OPEN TEAM	VIC	NSW	WA
KYU TEAM	WA	QLD	VIC
WOMENS TEAM	VIC	Australia "A"	NSW
JOHN BUTLER AWARD	Chris Graham (WA)		
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	Kate Sylvester (VIC), Hayami Aboutaleb (VIC), Sean Yoshiura (QLD)		



Australian Capital Territory – 1990's

1990

Shinpan Seminar

The geographic location of Canberra, midway between Sydney and Melbourne, meant it could benefit from hosting many inter-state seminars and competitions. ACT members regularly trekked south to Melbourne's 'Octoberfest' or north to the 'Brisbane Bash.'

Camp Birrigai hosted Kendo *shinpan* (judging) seminars, led by Nagae Sensei, in 1990 and 1991. The latter resulted in the destruction of the newly installed floor!

1991

Iaido Development Seminar

On January 27th, an iaido development seminar was held at the Australian National University Sports Union in Canberra, ACT. It was conducted by Kadono Sensei and well attended by AKR members from NSW, Victoria and the ACT.



The first AKR Iaido Seminar, Canberra, ACT (1991).

Kenshikan Delegation

The high powered Sensei delegation (headed by Nakakura Sensei 9th Dan) which officiated at the grand opening of Melbourne's Kenshikan Dojo conducted a two day seminar at ANU and Belconnen Clubs. This delegation was hosted at a morning tea by His Excellency, Mr Hiroumo Fukada, the then Japanese Ambassador.

Departures

The national capital Canberra, as an administrative centre, was always made up of a largely 'drifting' population. 1991 ACT saw too many departures. Maria Liondis, Stylianos Polichroniadis (Stilts) and Helen Rigney all moved on. Michael "Spike" Barlow moved to Wollongong where (teamed with Wollongong's own Gabriel "Kid" Medin) he made a whole new name for himself as a powerful fighting Nidan. Fortunately, ACT retained the services of senior members Greg Wyncol, Michael McIntyre and Tony Pollock.

1992

1st Australian Coaching Workshop

In January, ACT hosted the first Australian Coaching Workshop for senior members, marking the biggest assemblage of Nidan and above players outside of a national championship.

Successful Competitors

ACT members filled 8 out of 12 kyu places at the national competition, with Philip Baker placing 4th overall. Lisa O'Conner placed 3rd in the Women's Competition, narrowly losing to the eventual winner of the event. Lisa and Michael McIntyre were awarded two of the four 'fighting spirit' awards, a testament to the spirit of the ACT group.

Joachim Semmler (then (and often) President of the ANU Kendo Club) attended the 'Brisbane Bash' in June and was disappointed that more clubs didn't attend that valuable learning opportunity.

ANU platers were well represented at the July Intervarsity event and also at the NSW Training Seminar in August (thirteen ACT members made up the largest single contingent!)

Katsumi Kuramochi (Kendo 6th Dan) visited Canberra for a six week training program.

1994

3rd Australian Iaido Championships, Canberra ACT

In January, across the Australia day long weekend, the ANU Kendo Club hosted the 3rd Australian Iaido Championships. 34 participants attended, representing Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT itself.

Returning from his home in Chiba, Japan, Kadono Sensei again provided technical instruction of the highest calibre and gave a now famous talk entitled '*Budo from my heart*'. Kadono Sensei was writing his Iaido text '*My Thoughts on Iaido*' during 1994, and seminar attendees benefitted greatly from his thoughts, expressed in excellent English.

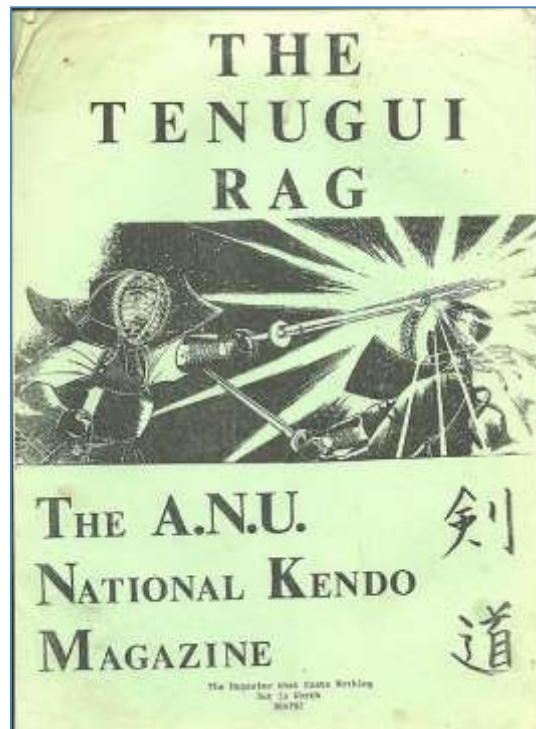
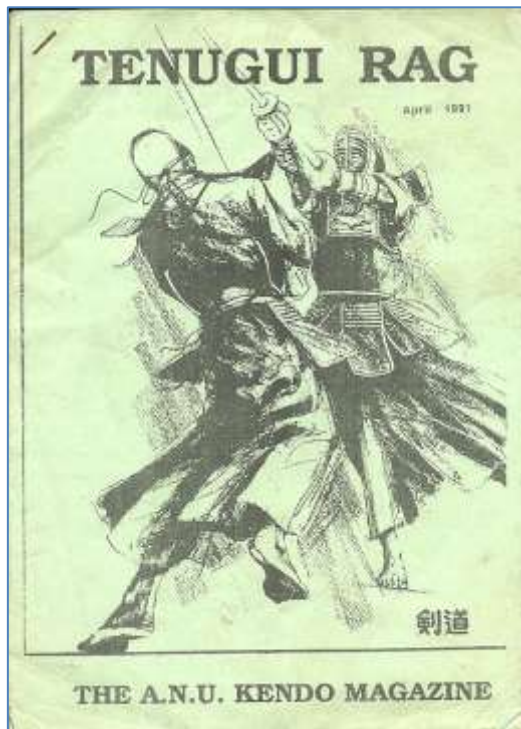
During the event, Peter Szwarcbord and Nagae Sensei delivered the first draft of the Australian Iaido Manual with instructions for coaching and for the running of competitions.

- 1st Place: Antonio Young NSW
- 2nd Place: Dean Hawthorn NSW
- 3rd Place: Jae McCarron NSW

Australian Team

Michael McIntyre was selected for the Australian squad to attend the 9th WKC in Paris.

<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; color: #0056b3;">PROFILE</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; color: #0056b3;">The Tenugui Rag</p>	<p>The Australian Kendo community is not lacking for enthusiastic attempts to launch semi-regular publications. The AKR itself, the Victorians (featuring regular cheeky contributions from John Butler) and numerous others have produced various brochures that have all come ... and gone.</p> <p>From mid-1983 however, a strange (usually green) item emerged from Canberra which caught the imagination. Its publication run wasn't vastly longer than any of the others, but it had a <i>character</i> and <i>presence</i> that was quite unique.</p> <p>The "TENUGUI RAG" (named for the cloth wrap that Kendo players wear under their helmets) was edited originally by Maria Leonidis.</p> <p>Unlike every preceding Kendo paper, and despite being a uniquely ACT production, the <i>Tenugui Rag</i> became the conduit for communication between Kendo clubs from all over Australia and even New Zealand.</p> <p>Sadly only a handful of examples are known to exist and we are not aware of anyone owning a complete set.</p>
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Rare TENUGUI RAG editions - from the early 1990's

1995

4th Australian Iaido Championships, Canberra ACT

32 people attended the 4th Australian Iaido Championships on the Australia day long weekend at the ANU Kendo Club.

The event was highlighted by the visit of a senior delegation from Japan, Tadaoshi Haga Sensei (8th Dan Hanshi), Kazuo Hoshino Sensei (8th Dan Hanshi), together with another visit from Kadono Sensei and Nagae Sensei from Melbourne.

Kadono Sensei demonstrated spectacular *koryu* (old school) Suio Ryu techniques with the Japanese *Naginata* (halberd) whilst wearing traditional *getta* (Japanese elevated wooden footwear).

Ramon Lawrence, Jerry Yee and Russell Lawrence made the journey from Perth to attend the seminar, and Russell was graded to nikyu.



Kadono Sensei demonstrating SuioRyu Naginata kata wearing *getta* (1995)

1 st place:	Bob Burton	NSW
2 nd Place:	Gregg Jones	NSW
3 rd Place:	Ramon Lawrence	WA

A new Iaido Board was also elected at that event, comprising: Chairman: Bob Burton, Vice Chairman: Dean Hawthorn, Secretary: Ruth Franklin, Member: Peter Szwarcbord, Member: Bob McCarron, Technical Advisor: Kadono Sensei



THE
AUSTRALIAN IAIDO CHAMPIONSHIPS
ZEN-KEN-REN IAIDO
TRAINING SEMINAR AND GRADING

THE ART OF DRAWING AND CUTTING WITH THE JAPANESE SAMURAI
SWORD

28TH & 29TH OF JANUARY 1995

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There was a time when costs were low, all styles were welcome ...
and there were DOOR PRIZES!

20th Australian Kendo Championship, Canberra ACT

Well, we know they happened! Sadly these results, as with too many others, are lost.

20th AKC - Canberra

1st

2nd

3rd

no results recorded

20TH AUSTRALIAN KENDO CHAMPIONSHIPS



14 - 16 APRIL 1995
ANU SPORTS UNION
CANBERRA

HOSTED BY ANU KENDO CLUB
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE
AUSTRALIAN KENDO RENMEI

1996

Joe Semmler led an ACT contingent to the 21st AKC in Perth, where he also displayed his laido skills.



Joe Semmler at the 21st AKC, Perth WA



Australian Team Selection

The ANUKC hosted the selection trials for the Australian Team to attend the 10th World Championships in Kyoto 1997. From among 40 participants hopefuls, Philip Baker and Jenny Hawksworth were selected in the squad.

Nomasa Sensei (7th Dan Kyoshi), from the famous Mitsubishi Dojo, attended the selections and drove home the lesson of maintaining a powerful *kamae* (posture/attitude). Many Kendo players returned home with a selection of reminder “love bites” – caused by Sensei’s shinai tip as they fruitlessly ran their attacks onto his impenetrable well-centred *chudan* (middle level) defence.

1997

Intersarsity

In September, four ACT members travelled to the 4th Intersarsity Games and the 8th AKC in Melbourne. The then-Kennet State Government in Victoria supported these events generously and they rivalled the Melbourne Commonwealth Games in attendance!

Grafton Founders

Joachim Semmler and Alan Spencer made the journey to Coaldale (near Grafton) to attend the inaugural Founders Cup event (reported more fully in the NSW section).

In those rustic conditions, they well recall Ron Bennett introducing them to bush tucker, bush entertainment, bush showers and home-made bokken.

1998 -1999

ANUKC rounded out the millennium by continuing their great tradition of travelling in support of kendo events all over Australia, attending: the Summer camp in Sommers (Victoria), the Founders Cup in Picton (NSW), Winter training at the Kenshikan (Melbourne) and innumerable events, including Nittaidai visits at Willoughby Dojo (Sydney), the Women's Weekend Seminar and the NSW State Championships.

Truly ACT are a national group!

Western Australia – 1990's

1990

There were no State Championships in WA in 1990, but a team did manage to attend the AKC in Brisbane. Representing the WAKR were Brian Brestovac, Ramon Lawrence, Jerry Yee, Paul Norman, Jeff White and Tyra White. Ron Bennett hosted the team for training at his property near Grafton as a preparation for the tournament.

Ramon Lawrence recalls that it was at this National tournament that the team from WA first started to make an impression on the event, winning individual matches against more seasoned competitors from the other States.

Seitei Iaido Begins

In September the Seitei Gata was formally introduced in WA at Ramon Lawrence's Budokan Academy. The initial instruction came by way of Keith Gibbons (ikkyu) who was visiting from Victoria.

1991

On 1st February, 1991, the WAKR appointed and sponsored Sensei Tsukasa Owada, 5th Dan Iaido and 4th Dan Kendo, as the WAKR Sensei responsible for further development of all members in Iai and Kendo techniques and the coaching of the WA Kendo Team for the National Championships. During the above period the WAKR produced a Five Year Development Program, at the request of the Department for Youth, Sport & Recreation, which was instrumental in identifying tasks and targets for the WAKR. The WAKR had developed to the stage where senior Sensei from Japan were required to take the Instructors to higher levels of knowledge and coaching expertise. The arrival of Owada Sensei was timely for this purpose.

Ibisu Sensei (6th Dan Renshi) arrived in Perth and spent three months training the Budokan Academy Club before having to return to Japan.

A seminar was held at the Budokan Academy for all members of the WAKR during February. Sensei Ron Bennett and Dale Gould (Nidan) from NSW conducted the training of members towards a team for the AKR National Championships.

3rd WAKR State Championships:

Held at the Budokan Academy Dojo.

Indiv Dan comp:	Brian Brestovac	2 nd Paul Norman
Indiv Kyu comp:	Rob Carless,	2 nd Sharon Smith
Women's comp:	Sharon Smith	2 nd Tyra White
Teams:	WA Budo Club	
Open Event:	Brian Brestovac	2 nd Paul Norman

16th Australian Kendo Championship, Perth WA

In March 1991 the WAKR hosted the AKC for the first time at the Sacred Hearts College, Sorrento.



A team of fourteen very senior Japanese Sensei under Matsushima Sensei visited Perth to conduct seminars in Iaido, Kendo and Naginata. During the visit, they also carried out demonstrations for the public during to further mainstream understanding of what is behind the arts.

The Japanese Masters assisted in the running of the Australian Championships and acted as referees for the competitions. The first week was principally for the WAKR, at the Budokan Academy, to prepare for the National Championships and the second week seminar was open for the AKR and held at the Ern Halliday Recreational Camp, Sorrento. They also conducted Kyu and Dan Grading examinations on completion of the Championships.



"Kendo grove" plaque, dedicated in the grounds of the Budokan Academy 1991 – since stolen

16th AKC - Perth

1st

2nd

OPEN INDIVIDUAL	S. Chamberlain (QLD)	A. Menagh (VIC)
KYU INDIVIDUAL	R. Mateljan (WA)	T Pickering (VIC)
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	N. Tsukadaira (QLD)	Jennene Greenhill (QLD)
SENIORS INDIVIDUAL	Yakov Macak (VIC)	Ramon Lawrence (WA)
OPEN TEAM	VIC	NSW
KYU TEAM	WA	ACT
KATA TEAM	WA	QLD
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	T. Pickering (VIC), M. Whybrow (ACT)	

The 1991 AKR Championships saw the WAKR's finest performance results to date, and a healthy performance from the Queensland contingent. Rob Mateljan won the Kyu Grade Individuals; the WAKR Kyu Grade Team won their event. Brian Brestovac and Paul Norman won the Kata Event and Ramon Lawrence was placed second in the Senior Individual event. Brian Brestovac was placed third in the Open Dan Grade Individuals.

A grading was held in Iaido by Sensei Hiraga and the WAKR saw its first shodans in Seita Gata Ryu Iaido, they being Ramon Lawrence, Jerry Yee, Keith Gibbons, and two others.

In August Shinichi Yamagami (6th Dan Renshi) visited Perth for the World Biomechanics conference and attended training at the Budokan Academy Dojo with WAKR members. This was shortly followed by a visit from Kuramuchi Sensei (5th Dan Kendo, 4th Dan Iaido).

1992

Ramon was again elected as President of the WAKR and has held this position ever since.

4th WAKR State Championships:

Held at the Budokan Academy Dojo. The results were:

Indiv Kyu:	Patrick Kelly,	2 nd Peter Sadler
Indiv Dan:	Brian Brestovac,	2 nd Paul Norman
Open comp:	Tsukasa Owada,	2 nd Victor Stuart

Ray and Jerry go to Japan

Ramon Lawrence and Jerry Yee spent two weeks in Yamato being trained by Matsushima Sensei and Hiraga Sensei (Iaido and Kendo 7th Dan Kyoshi). They received instruction in seitei Iaido and also the *koryu* (old school) form Omori Ryu.

Ray was lucky enough to visit the Edo Castle Palace and tour the Emperor's Bonsai collection under the guidance of the Director of the Imperial Guard.

He and Jerry also visited Matsushima Sensei's seniors group and met with Hiraga Sensei, Higa Sensei, Horinuchi Sensei, Sazuki Sensei and Kinashita San, themselves all previous visitors to Perth.

Winter Competition

The Karaingup Community Centre was the venue for the Winter Competition in July, which was well attended and greatly enjoyed by all who participated.

4th ASEAN Kendo Championships - Singapore

At the request of the Singapore Kendo Club, the WAKR entered two six man teams in the "Pesta Sukan Invitational Goodwill Championships" as part of the 4th ASEAN Kendo Championships held in Singapore, 8th to 10th August.

This was the first time a West Australian Team fought in an International Competition. The teams acquitted themselves extremely well and the Dan Grade Individual Event was won by a WAKR member - Ken Terauchi.

Other members Ramon Lawrence, Brian Brestovac and Jerry Yee were placed in the top eight positions of this event. The competing nations included Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia and Australia.

Nagae Sensei Visit

Nagae Sensei conducted a week-long NCAS Level 1 training seminar in September. Four members completed the course, two others were unable to attend due to work commitments.



Brian Brestovac and Paul Norman at the WA Budo Kendo club early 1990s..

1993

Visitors

In February 1993 Ron Bennett and Dale Gould visited as guests of the WAKR to assist Owada Sensei in running a training seminar for all members attending the 1993 WAKR Championships.

They conducted a Kyu and Dan Grading for fourteen members and also assisted in refereeing the Fifth WAKR State championships at the Budokan Academy dojo, which attracted 17 participants – the largest number thus far.

5th WAKR State Championships:

Results:	Junior Individuals:	First:	James Wang
		Second:	Junji Moriai
	Kyu Grade Individuals:	First:	Junji Moriai
		Second:	Alastair Bennett
	Dan Grade Individuals:	First:	Ramon Lawrence
		Second:	Jerry Yee
	Open Event:	First:	Alastair Bennett
		Second:	Dale Gould

Jodo commences at the Budokan Academy

In March the first members of WAKR commenced Jodo training at Budokan Academy under Derek Woodhouse, 4th Dan. Although the style taught was the koryu form Shinden Muso Ryu, four members were recorded as Jodo members under the AKR Seitei Jodo - Ramon Lawrence, Jerry Yee, Russell Lawrence and Wei Chin.

Matsushima Sensei and Hiraga Sensei visit

In August, Matsushima and Hiraga Senseis visited Budokan Academy with 31 members of the Tsukimino Kenyu Kai. Three days of training in Iaido and Kendo were conducted at the Academy. The group visited the Lord Mayor of Perth (Reg Withers) and presented a letter from the Mayor of Yamato. In November Ramon Lawrence presented a proposal to the Kendo Board and AKR National Committee for the implementation of a Referee Grading System. On 20th November the Budokan Academy presented a demonstration in Iaido and Kendo at the PICA on the invitation of the Japanese Consul General as part of the 1993 Japanese Festival.

Brian Brestovac notes that Takeshi Matsushima Sensei is patron for the WAKR and honorary president of the Go Shin Kai Kendo Club. In addition, Ado Ogawa Sensei 7th Dan Kyoshi is honorary coach for the Go Shin Kai club.



Kendo in W.A. has been kept alive, for many years now, by a dedicated band of Martial Artists. This 1980 photo, taken at the Mt Lawley dojo, features Jurichi Maeda Sensei, 6th Dan (centre, now back in Japan) and (fourth from right) Brian Brestovac, now 3rd Dan, who was instrumental in persuading Owada Sensei to return to Australia, from Japan.

KENDO IN THE WEST

By MIKE CLARKE

UNLIKE KARATE, Kendo has been relatively unaffected by the migration from East to West. Whereas Karate has been diluted to suit the western ego Kendo has, for the most part, managed to hold on to its original purpose. With Kendo the stamp of the Eastern psyche is still intact, an element that is clearly missing in much of the Karate we see around us today.

Kendo in Australia was pioneered by a hardy few who, with a love for their art, endured many difficulties. Over the years many of those Australians have made the pilgrimage to Japan for training and, on their return, contributed to the growth of this dynamic Martial Art.

As time moved on a few Japanese teachers of Kendo came to Australia



"Kendo is very good for building character — it teaches also how to defend yourself and how to have a strong spirit", believes Perth-based Owada Sensei (above).

and made it their home. One such man is Tsukasa Owada Sensei who has, for the past three years, lived and taught in Perth. He is a likeable man who has an obvious love for Kendo. It has, by his own admission, changed his life for the better.

I visited him at the West Australian Budokan Academy in the south-eastern suburbs of Perth. This purpose-built dojo is a wonderful home for a number of Japanese Martial Arts, and is one of the locations where Owada Sensei teaches Kendo.

I watched him teach and later he granted me the following interview. It gave me a small insight into this talented Budoka's life. I hope you like it...

• continued next page

AUSTRALASIAN FIGHTING ARTS PAGE 37

Owada Sensei

Owada Sensei was instrumental in the development of new members into the WAKR since his arrival in 1991. The standard of the WA State Team rapidly improved when compared with other states and Asian countries. He co-ordinated the training of several members during their visits to Japan by ensuring they were made welcome at strong Kendo clubs in the Yamato area. His connection with Matsushima Sensei resulted in two members, Ramon Lawrence and Jerry Yee, being accepted as honorary members of the *Tsukimino Kenyu Kai* - a group of Kendo and Iaido Clubs in the Yamato prefecture where the very first known Japanese Sword was created.

Owada Sensei co-ordinated a visit of about 30 members and family from the Tsukimono Kenyu Kai on behalf of the WAKR. The visit combined Kendo and Iaido training at the Budokan Academy club. Younger members of the group were billeted by Budokan Academy members and their families for a one day home stay to demonstrate the Australian culture and home life. The visit took place from 7th to 13th August, 1993.

Owada Sensei was tasked with the continuation of training of all members of the WAKR in general terms but specifically the development of key personnel into coaching and instructing roles in preparation for his return to Japan in early 1994. Owada had already achieved a significant number of goals for the WAKR in his short time there. The WAKR had members and competitions for the first time in all groups - Juniors, Women's, Kyu and Dan Grades, Veterans, Kata and teams, however the level of skill in some areas needed improving to reach the necessary standard for entering in the National Competition.

1994

On 6th March, 1994, Ramon Lawrence and Jerry Yee successfully passed the 2nd Dan grading for Iaido at the Tokyo District Examinations after two weeks of special training in Japan with Wakabayashi and Hiraga Senseis.



Jerry Yee with Ron Bennett

6th WAKR State Championships:

The WAKR State Championships were held at the Budokan Academy on 20th March.
The results were:

Dan Grade:	First:	Brian Brestovac
	Second:	Jeff White
Kyu Grade:	First	Alastair Bennett
	Second:	Eddie Lim
Open Grade:	First:	Kohei Iwami
	Second:	Shun Murakami

End of the WA Budo Club and Start of the UWA Kendo Club

The WA Budo Club broke up around this time due to low numbers. Alistair Bennett, one of the students from this group, had just started the University of Western Australia Kendo Club.

Brian Brestovac moved to train with this group in Kendo. Unfortunately Robert Matlejan was unable to continue due to business commitments. The club's first instructor was Kohei Iwami Sensei. Iwami Sensei was an exchange and soon returned to Japan, leaving Brian Brestovac as the club's instructor.

The Winter Competition

Held at the University of Western Australia Gymnasium, the Winter Taikai had a good attendance.

September Visitors

Jamie Fennessy (7th Dan) and Ron Bennett (5th Dan) visited the Budokan Academy to hold a training seminar and Kyu Grading for WAKR members.

Enter Susan Bonar

In March of 1994 Susan Bonar joined the UWA Kendo club, under the instruction of Alistair Bennett and Kohei Iwami. She was to become a major force in Australian Women's Kendo.

Susan placed third in the Women's Open at the AKC in 1995 after just one year's training! She achieved her 1st Dan in 1997, and quickly rose to 4th Dan by 2006.

Susan has twice represented Australia three times at the World Championships, in Santa Clara (2000), Edinburgh (2003), and Sao Paulo (2009.)



Susan Bonar.

1995

State of the State Address

This fax, received by Aden Steinke (as UOWKC Secretary) from Ramon Lawrence (then WAKR President) in March 1995 neatly summarises the Kendo and Iaido situation around Perth in 1995.

Thankyou very much for your fax today. We have three clubs in Western Australia - all in the Perth area. I am the President of the WA Kendo Renmei and our headquarters is situated at Budokan Academy which is just south of the city and sited on 3.54 hectares of Japanese gardens etc. We train on Sunday mornings with Iaido at 0800 and Kendo at 0900 and finish at 1100. We also train on Tuesday evenings between 1900 and 2030 for those wishing a second training night.

We also have a club at the University of WA which trains on Monday and Thursday evenings between 1900 and 2100. The third club has commenced this week in the northern suburbs on a Monday evening (at present) and I am awaiting the details.

Mr Gendzwill is most welcome to attend my dojo during his visit and I would be very happy to arrange his attendance at the other clubs if he can give me his itinery and availability during his stay. However we will be attending the Australian Kendo Championships in Canberra from 14 to 16 April so all the senior grades will be outside WA at that time and the clubs will not be functioning.

The Budokan Academy has seven Iaido members (three Dan grade members) and fourteen Kendo members (not all regular trainers unfortunately) - three Dan grade members. The UWA Club has about nine members (one Shodan member) and the new club should have about five members with three being Dan grades.

I hope this information will assist you. As I have travelled many countries (including part of Canada) and have done many martial arts around the world I would be most honoured to assist Mr Gendzwill with some of the West Australian hospitality we are supposed to be known for in return for that given to me by others over the years.

1996

21st Australian Kendo Championship, Perth WA

Held in Perth for only the second time, these championships were highly notable for the large contingent of extremely high grade Japanese contingent, and the practice of three arts. The late Hiraga Sensei conducted laido lessons every morning. At the end of the week, Jerry Yee was terrified to learn that the ungraded Bob Brown from NSW had been training behind him each morning with a live bladed sword (*shinken*)!

Russell Lawrence, then studying *koryu* (old school) Jodo, was leading daily Jodo lessons (avidly attended by Aden Steinke from NSW). A great highlight and curiosity for all was a *koryu* Jodo demonstration by Russel Lawrence and Han Barkmeyer, conducted with great vigour and spirit, though the two had never worked together in kata before.

The entire event was held in a remote camp in the hills outside of Perth and there was only one pay-phone and no transport for interstate people without cars. Stacked up in multi-bunk student rooms directly overlooking the dojo, the members took to sweltering on the balcony through the balmy WA evenings. Aden Steinke fondly remembers discovering the terrifyingly powerful 'Bishops Finger' beer, and the unfortunate mess Andrew Duell made of his *men* as a result of over indulgence.

Fortunately, since the 21st AKC event and the launch of the combined laido and Jodo Championship in 2000, both arts have opened up considerably and flourished, largely thanks to the tireless efforts of senior laido members, notably Ramon Lawrence.

21st AKC - Perth

1st

2nd

3rd

OPEN INDIVIDUAL

Katsumi Kuramochi

No other results recorded.

Visit from the ZenNihonKoreiKenyuKai

In April, 11 Sensei from the ZNKKK Senior Group under the direction of Matsushima Sensei conducted a Seminar and International Goodwill Championship

Manual of Documents

Ramon Lawrence, having proposed the need for an AKR Manual of Documents, had worked long and hard on their first draft. This mighty effort resulted in the first version being presented before the AKR National Council in October.

The MoD, as it became known, detailed and systematised the conduct of gradings and competitions across the AKR and signalled the start of the modern era.

PROFILE

Chris Graham

Chris starting Kendo in Japan in 1988 He returned to Australia and continued training with the ANU club, which helped him develop a knowledge and passion for Kendo. Later he continued Kendo training in Sydney and attended the Summer school in Japan in 1994, achieving 3rd Dan.

Chris established the Murdoch University Kendo Club in 1996 in Perth and was the senior instructor for many years. He was graded to 5th Dan in 2006 at the National Championships.

Over the years he trained in many dojos across Australia and in parts of Europe and America. This has given him the opportunity to train with a variety of talented Kendoka and also help promote Australian Kendo. He has represented ACT, NSW and WA and participated in many national Kendo championships since 1989.

Ron says

It was 18 years ago that I met Chris Graham and he was always a vibrant young man. He was always requiring a positive answer to any question he asked and this I found to be of great advantage for the progress on Kendo in Australia.

His coming to Western Australia from the Eastern States was most certainly a significant step in the development of Kendo in WA.

The Murdoch University dojo was always conducted under very strict discipline and this was very pleasing to me.

I saw in him a teacher who required no more of his students than the thinking of the true path. His contributions to New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia are as important as the progress we seek. I am most grateful to you Chris.

Thank you

1997

Elected President was Ramon Lawrence. Brian Brestovac was State Kendo Coach.



Brian Brestovac with Ado Ogawa Sensei in 1997.

Budokan Academy and the WAKR had a visit by a group of Japanese Sensei (1st Feb - 3rd Feb 1997) to assist in the formation of Jodo on an official basis in Australia under the AKR. During their visit training was received in all three arts of Jodo, Iaido & Kendo.

Nakanishi Yasushi	Kendo Hanshi 8 th Dan, Iaido Hanshi 8 th Dan, Jodo Kyoshi 8 th Dan
Ito Tsugio	Kendo Kyoshi 7 th Dan
Horiyama Kenji	Kendo Kyoshi 7 th Dan
Kamezawa Masaru	Kendo Renshi 7 th Dan
Ono Masanori	Kendo Kyoshi 7 th Dan
Nagayama Kuniaki	Jodo Kyoshi 7 th Dan, Kendo 6 th Dan, Iaido Kyoshi 6 th Dan

Brian Brestovac was selected to represent Australia at the World Kendo Championships in the Individuals and Team events at Kyoto, Japan.

Murdoch University Kendo Club (MUKC)

The Murdoch University Kendo Club was founded by Chris Graham and began in March 6, 1997 with the support of members of the WAKR. The senior instructor was Chris Graham, who was assisted by Kazu Uchino. Initially the club trained once a week at the Murdoch Sports Centre, but after a number of years began training twice a week.

MUKC helped accelerate the growth of Kendo in WA. Beginner's courses were run twice a year based on the model at the ANU Kendo club and soon the club had a strong membership base. The

club helped WA Kendo at a national level, because suddenly WA was able to send full Dan and kyu grade teams to all national events.

Over the years a number of events have been created by MUKC to help promote Kendo in WA.

The first is the unique Kata & Komp, a kata seminar followed by individual shiai with the winners of the kyu and Dan playing off in the final. This event, usually run in February, helped focus kendoka for the state and national championships after the New Year break from training.

The second event was the Western Derby, a team's event that is run in December and is the final event on the Kendo calendar. It brings all the WA Kendoka together and gives them an opportunity to show how their shiai has improved over the year.

Both events help the small but strong WA Kendo community compete and socialise together.

1999

In 1999, a kyu grade team made up of 5 members from Murdoch won the kyu grade national championships in Queensland. It put MUKC on the Kendo map. Josh Forrester, who won the final match to secure the win, has continued and is today a respected instructor at MUKC.

Australian University Games, Perth WA

These were sponsored by Fuji Xerox, and held in Perth at the Perry Lakes Basketball Stadium on Tuesday 28th of September.

Many thanks for organising and running a fine tournament go to Susan Bonar (Sports Coordinator), Ramon Lawrence (Technical Coordinator), Erin Forrester and all their helpers from the Western Australian Kendo Renmei and elsewhere.

Sadly travel expenses discouraged some, however the standard of competition could not be questioned.

Indiv Dan:	Takashi Kuriyama (UWA)	2 nd Brian Brestovac (UWA),	3 rd Paul Smith (AdelU)
Indiv Kyu:	Kenji Sujimoto (MU)	2 nd Erin Forrester (Murdoch)	3 rd Patrick Tam (Monash)
Open Team:	UWA	2 nd Monash	3 rd Melbourne Uni

Arrival of Chiharu Fukumoto

In Japan, Chiharu studied Kendo from the age of five, using his Kendo-instructor father's shinai in the back yard. He joined a local club at the age of 11 and passed his 3rd Dan just after graduating from High School. His Kendo career then stalled for some time as he explored other arts.

Twelve years later, in 1999, Chiharu and his wife moved to Perth where they discovered the University of Western Australia's Kendo Club. At the urging of his wife, Chiharu contacted them and restarted his Kendo career. He won the WA state championship and was three times runner up. He has been an active senior member ever since, now holding his 5th Dan.

Tasmania – 1990's

The club moved to Guilford Young College in Glenorchy in 1999. The College has a sister-city relationship with a college in Sapporo, Japan. The Japanese college brought armour to Australia and also trained the Guilford Young students. Hobart Kendo Club was approached to assist at the initial demonstration and, in return, have used the College Hall and continue to have Grade 9-12 students attend training.

The club was always keen to train with Kendo students from Japan and Korea who were studying at the University of Tasmania. Steve Foster on occasion travelled to the north of the state to train with Korean Kumdo practitioners, a practice which continued until the northern club disbanded.

Over the years the club had expert instruction from Nagae Sensei, Haga Sensei, Oda Sensei and Nagayama Sensei as well as valuable guidance from Yakov Macak, Ray Lawrence and John Butler.

Special Mentions

Sean Killen provided motivation when things were not going well for the club in the early days. He is now retired from Kendo to pursue his pottery business interstate. Teru Kokabon was a pivotal figure but is now currently living and training in Queensland. Mark Woodland, a steadfast member for well over a decade and the assistant instructor also deserves a special mention, as does Roger Gascoigne, who still trains in Tasmania, and Craig Gascoigne, who moved to Queensland where he still maintains his Kendo training.

Over the years the club has been asked to give many demonstrations. These include school groups, Karate championships, Police & Citizen Club days and University Asian weeks.

In 1999 Eiga Sensei visited Tasmania.

<p><i>PROFILE</i></p> <p><i>Steve Foster</i></p>	<p>Unfortunately we have no photograph of Steve Foster</p> <p>Ron Bennett steadfastly maintains that Steve Foster is a diligent and true Kendoka. His mighty efforts in Tasmania kept it flowing along smooth waters.</p> <p>His Jodan stance was favourably comparable to many other people using this technique and is a hallmark of his Kendo.</p> <p>It is without doubt that Tasmania will only prosper by his efforts.</p> <p><i>“Thank you Steve” – Ron Bennett</i></p>
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South Australia – 1990's

Pre-History of South Australian Kendo and Iaido

The first known teacher of Kendo in South Australia was ex-policeman and *sashimi* chef, Shojiro Ito, who immigrated to Adelaide in 1979 and subsequently opened a number of Dojo for Karate (his first and principal art since university), but also later offering Kendo as a sideline. There was also a Kumdo class at Master Lee's Tae Kwan Do school. In Adelaide, Craig Ellis had maintained an interest in *koryu* (old school) Iaido (*Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu*) from around 1985. In 1987 his Iaido instructor sent him to Japan where he encountered Kendo.

The same year, a 16 year old Jonathon Cross went to Japan on a one year student exchange program. During his senior High School years, Jonathon had trained at Master Lee's Taekwondo in Adelaide.

In 1988, Craig Ellis and Chris Bleby (both Law students at the time) created the Kendo Club at Adelaide University. They were joined by Jonathan Cross and became affiliated to the Adelaide University Sports Association 1989.

They persevered on a concrete-linoleum floor until moving a few years later to the sprung splendour of the Upper Gymnasium at the University's Centre for Physical Health.



Craig Ellis, a founder of Kendo and Iaido in SA, in Japan, 1987. He and Jonathon Cross both earned their Kendo Shodan there in Yokahama.



Craig Ellis presented with a set of Bogu in Japan (1988)



A young Jonathon Cross (1988)

1990

Adelaide University Kendo Club joins the AKR

As recorded above, Craig Ellis and Chris Bleby had created a Kendo Club at Adelaide University in 1988, outside of the AKR till 1990 and sadly not well recorded. About that time, Jonathon Cross, a first year student, signed up. Craig introduced Jonathon to laido as well, but that art continued as a fragmented series of private interests (largely in *koryu* styles) in South Australia until the new millennium.



Kendo recruitment at Adelaide University Open Day 1990

Craig Ellis, Chris Bleby and Jonathan Cross all visited the great Kenshikan opening in Melbourne. Several of the photographs of that event, presented here in the Victoria 1990s section, were taken by these South Australian visitors.

1992

Arrival of Sophie Macak

Sophie Macak moved to Adelaide to study towards a research degree. There she joined the Kendo club and contributed greatly to their development, in that last year of her life.

In the AKR annual report, the ACT reports that with the arrival of Hayami Aboutaleb, Simon Merry and three beginners (John, Peter and Matthew) membership jumped to eight, a significant achievement!

A Team!

The first ever South Australian Kendo team attended the 17th AKC in Melbourne (April), consisting of Chris Bleby, Jonathan Cross, Simon Merry, Hayami Aboutaleb and Sophie Macak. At that event, Jonathan Cross passed his 2nd Dan and Simon Merry passed 1st Dan.



The first ever SAKA team, at the 17th AKC in Melbourne.
Left to Right: Chris Belby, Jonathon Cross, Sophie Macak, Simon Merry and Hayami Aboutaleb

1993

Intervarsity Kendo in Melbourne

Adelaide University sent its first team to the Intervarsity Kendo Tournament in Melbourne.



Adelaide University Intervarsity Team, 1993

1994

Intervarsity Kendo

There was an intervarsity Kendo tournament between University teams, held at the same time as the University games (though Kendo was not a University Games event at that time).

Indiv comp:	Simon Merry	2 nd Jonathon Cross
Teams:	Monash University (VIC)	2 nd Adelaide University (SA)

1995

University Games Victory!

At the Official University Games in Wollongong NSW (the first time Kendo was included as an official event), the Adelaide University Kendo team came first and broke the Monash winning streak.



The Adelaide University team at Sydney Central station, *enroute* to destiny at Wollongong!

While in NSW, there was a visit to Newcastle and Sydney for training.

Founding of the Flinders University Kendo Club

Around 1995, Flinders University students established a Kendo Club (initially, something of a spin-off from the Adelaide university club). A prominent early member was Melanie Smith, originally from the Adelaide University Club. Membership was somewhat fluid between the two at first, as many university students had associations with both campuses. Jonathon Cross moved into the Flinders club in 1996 when his Post Graduate studies took him to that campus.

1996

At the 21st AKC in Perth WA, Jonathan passed his 3rd Dan in Kendo.

At the University Games in Canberra, Flinders University came first.

Jonathan attended the Kitamoto Summer Camp.



Jonathon Cross and Takashi Sensei at the 21st AKC, Perth WA



Adelaide University team – lead by Chris Wallace



Flinders University Team – lead by Jonathon Cross

1997

Summer Camp, AKC & the Worlds

Jonathon attended the Bathurst (NSW) Summer Camp organized by Kirby Smith, the 22nd AKC in Melbourne and the University Games, also held in Melbourne.

At the World Championships in Kyoto, Jonathon did his state proud playing in the Australian team.



Flinders University team 1997. Left to Right: Isao Haseoka, Alastair Bennett, Melanie Smith



South Australian team at the Kenshikan in 1997.
Left to Right: Isao Haseoka, Cho, Smith, Chris Wallace, Jonathon Cross, Hayami Aboutaleb

1998

Adelaide Hosts the Summer Camp

In 1998 the Summer Camp was held in Adelaide, attracting curious Kendo players from all over the country.



Did you hear there's a Summer Camp in Adelaide? Must be time for a Road Trip Guarded by a fierce Dom Holloway, David Bunder clutches vital training supplies



"Da Boyz" Left to Right includes:
Jonathon Cross, Stuart Burke, David Bunder, A Bathurst member, Dom Holloway
Notes the background signage: "Always – Women"



Adelaide Summer Camp 1998.
Kata training on the beach – where else?

Nittaidai Visit

Later that year Shizawa Sensei brought his Nittaidai group to Adelaide.



Shizawa Sensei and his Nittaidai team visit Adelaide – they've been known for their *drums*, but errr...

More Tournaments

South Australia continued to stamp its presence on the national Kendo scene, with representatives at the 23rd AKC in Wollongong, NSW and also at the University Games in Melbourne.



"Strike a Pose" The awe inspiring Flinders Choreography Crew, including Melanie Smith, and Alastair Bennett, led by Jonathon Cross. Isao Haseoka wisely sits this one out.

1999

Jonathon - around, over and out

Jonathon attended the Milton (NSW) Summer Camp and the 24th AKC in Queensland.

In a great loss for Adelaide Kendo, Jonathan moved to Tokyo, Japan, where he passed his 4th Dan in Kendo in November.

One to Remember!

In about July, at the Central Games held at Flinders University, James Lee scored a spectacular flying (backwards) *kote* (wrist) against Sasha Sawyer's charging attack, which is still spoken of in awe!

The 2000's

New South Wales – 2000's

2000

11th World Kendo Championships, Santa Clara, USA



Australian Team to the WKC in Santa Clara (2000).

Left to Right: Claire Chan, Arpad Maksay, Kate Sylvester, Kirby Smith, Susan Bonar, Brett Smith, Stuart Burke, Damien Carmody-Stephens, Sharyn Wragg, Melanie Smith, Hayami Aboutaleb, Yuji Sano, Dave Deprano

Vale Nakakura O-Sensei



Nakakura Sensei – at the Cowra championship in 1987

We were all saddened to hear of the passing of the great Nakakura Sensei 9th Dan. His funeral was held on 26th March 2000 in Tokyo.

This great man did much to spread the word about Kendo worldwide and to improve the standard of Kendo and Iaido in Australia specifically. It was a privilege to meet, let alone be instructed by, this legendary swordmaster. There will never be another like him.



Left to Right: Shizawa Sensei, Jamie Fennessey, Yuji Sano, Ron Bennett and the late Nakakura Sensei

PROFILE



David Bunder

In the early days at Wollongong, few people could have failed to notice a gangly teenage youth towering over Ted Rixon and moving like a giraffe in armour. *“I hope he never learns to use that reach”* commented Aden.

Well, he did. David Bunder is the rock on which Wollongong Kendo is built. He has trained hard, played hard and always with an infection grin and a playful competitiveness that leaves you wondering *“where did THAT strike come from?”*

As with all tall players (such as Stuart Burke or Steve Lawley) his chief weapon is a ‘long bomb’ – in his case, typically a one-handed *katate men*. We tried to get under him, to close rapidly, to trigger the bomb early ... but he just kept getting better. There’s no stopping him now!

David, Ted Rixon and Aden Steinke rebuilt a shattered NSWKA in the late 90s and are responsible for a renaissance in east coast Kendo. Together with his wife Shoko (5th Dan, also a tireless worker in the cause of training juniors and supporting women’s Kendo), he is a constant figure – always there, always ready, always teaching, always learning, always smiling. Whatever life threw at him, he never stopped training. Now he brings his three children Andrew, Alice & Matthew each week as well.

Bob Brown commented that: *“David Bunder exemplifies Australian Kendo – enthusiastic, dedicated, larrikin, selfless and dangerously competitive. It has been a joy and a privilege to watch him grow from a raw beginner to Dojo Leader and the true heir of Ted Rixon’s legacy”*

Kendo: it's not exactly Nintendo

By MIKE GANDON

Ask most people – including me: “What is kendo?” And the would be: “That’s the latest video game kids play.”

Incisive. Knowing. Crystal clear answer.

Until last week I had no idea. Straight up, fair dinkum. Not the slightest clue. Maybe something like a meccano set, or perhaps the mikado? That’s a lot closer.

After learning that it is a form of Japanese martial art “way of the sword”, one looks knowingly and sighs: “Yep. Right. Thought I was on the right track.”

Nowhere near right.

Follow all sorts of sports. Absolute blank when it comes to kendo. Something crucial missing in one’s development.

Well, kendo really is a heavy duty scene.

We all remember the Samurai. Who could ever forget the ninjas? Tricky little critters. Why, they even turned up as turtles some way down the track.

And kendo is one of 30 organisations represented in the annual Steel Cities Challenge between Illawarra and Newcastle this weekend. Kendo will be contested at Wollongong University at 11 am on Sunday.

Don’t ask me to explain it. Better to find out from an expert, David Bunder of the Wollongong Kendo Club.

“Kendo is a fighting style based on the form of the Japanese Samurai,” David said.

“What we use is a large bamboo sword which represents the katana.

“It has been adjusted from a Samurai fighting style into a sport form which we strike with the sword to set locations on the opponent’s body, like to the top of the head, across the wrist or across the gut.”

Obviously some form of protection is required.

Is it?

“You wear lots of armour,” David said.

“Mainly made out of thickened cloth, a chest plate made of fibreglass, a steel faceplate.

“So it’s probably the safest form of martial art.”

You bet, David. Anything you say.

Now, what is that video game the kids play?



4. Sept. 2006

Dear Ron

I send you photos having been taken with you during the Founders Tournament. One of these, which I like best, has been enlarged to a bigger size. I name it "2 Old Buddy Boys"

Good luck for your future

From your bloody mate Jun

"2 Old Buddy Boys"

Takeuchi Sensei and Ron Bennett at the AKC in Canberra in 2000, with a letter written by the Sensei in 2006

4th Founders Tournament, Picton NSW

At the 2000 AKC in Canberra, a number of the founding personalities of Australian Kendo were gathered in one room. It was an opportunity for Ron to catch up with Takeuchi Sensei.

The NSW association, then under the control of Wollongong's Ted Rixon and Aden Steinke, conducted an inaugural Founders Tournament on 5th and 6th of February at Picton High School.

Held under the supervision of Founders Rex Lawley and Ron Bennett, supported by Michael Payne, James Fennessy, Yoichi Yano, Damian Carmody-Stephens In addition to shields for each event dedicated to the founders of Australian Kendo, the tournament also featured three magnificent trophies from the Korean Kumdo Association, in the care of Mr Choi, for: Most Outstanding Player,

dedicated by Young Dal Kim, Vice President, Korean Kumdo Association - presented to Hayami Aboutaleb; Best Player, dedicated by Jae Wook Lee, President, Korean Kumdo Association - presented to Takashi Itakura; and Fighting Spirit, dedicated by Jong Rim Rhee, Korea Kumdo Sun Saeng - presented to T. H. Kim.



Right to Left: Founder Ron Bennett, Founder Rex Lawley, Ted Rixon, T.H. Kim, Hayami Aboutaleb, Michael Payne, Takashi Itakura, Ho Young (Peter) Choi.

Results were as follows:

Open Individual: Takashi Itakura (Sydney), 2nd T.H. Kim (Han Rim Won), 3rd 3: Brett Smith (Fudoshin)

The final lasted over 9 minutes of high quality Kendo and Takashi Itakura was presented with the Yoshida Sensei Shield.

Kyu Individual Tajima Sensei Shield:

Martino Ellero (ANU) 2nd David Dingelstad (Wollongong) 3rd Phil Hayden (Milton)

Women's Individual Ron Bennett Sensei Shield:

Hayami Aboutaleb (Fudoshin) 2nd Kate Sylvester (MKC)

Open Team Okura Sensei Shield: Han Rim Won 2nd Fudoshin

Kyu Team Lawley Sensei Shield: ANU

Women's Pairs (held over from the December 1999 NSW Championships): Sydney 2nd UNSW

In addition, an Australian team exhibition match was held between Brett Smith and Yuji Sano.

Other Awards:

Sharyn Wragg was presented with the John Butler Sensei Shield for fighting spirit.

Aden Steinke was presented with the Geurillot Sensei Shield for spirit of Kendo.



Han Rim Won were presented with the Okura Sensei Shield



Aden Steinke receives the Geurillot Sensei Shield for "the Spirit of Kendo" from Founder Ron Bennett.

PROFILE



Aden Steinke

Aden Steinke is a fearsome competitor, powerful strategist, consummate organiser and an utterly dependable ally.

When Aden sets his sights on a goal, it rarely escapes him because he commits 110%. As was observed in speeches at his 1998 wedding to Shihoko, Aden had bought the most expensive Kendo *bogu* (armour) he could find when he first started, knowing he would have to work hard at his training if only to justify the investment!

His famously sneaky retreating *kote* (wrist) cuts have left many Kendo players with a valuable lesson to ponder, and have even changed the shape of the Australian National Team!

Without his driving efforts and relentless energy, laido, Jodo and even Kendo in NSW could have died out. Aden played a pivotal role in bringing the Kumdo clubs into the NSW Association and thus revitalising the art there. Together with David Bunder and Ted Rixon he totally reformed the state Renmei and saw its membership grows to its greatest extent.

Aden served as Wollongong Club Treasurer and Secretary for many years, and is now the club's Jodo instructor. His love for the *koryu* (old school) form of that art sees him regularly visiting Japan.

He also served as the AKR Jodo Board Secretary and is the Foundation Chair of the NSWKA Jodo Technical Board.

Aden Steinke represents what the AKR is all about – fierce in competition yet always working for the betterment of all.



Aden Steinke (right) training with Andrew Whitehead (left) – Jodo

Founding of Suigetsu Iaido Club

During the early 2000s no one was training Iaido in Sydney except for Hans Fricke, and so Ruth Franklin continued to train (with invited friends) in a little dojo in Kenthurst. In 2000, the Sydney Kendo Club requested that she teach Iaido in Bob McCarrons's old time slot. Later the club (by then named "Suigetsu Kan") moved to Macquarie University and later found itself at the beautiful West Pymble Community Hall, nestled among peaceful gum trees.

Suigetsu translates as 'Water (of the) Moon' and has a couple of meanings, firstly Henry Kendall's beautiful poem Bellbirds where he says:

*Then is the time when the water-moons splendid
Break with their gold, and are scattered or blended
Over the creeks, till the woodlands have warning
Of songs of the bell-bird and wings of the Morning.*

The term is also common in writings on the ideals of swordsmanship. Sometimes, Suigetsu Kan members simply sit and meditate whilst the full moon comes up through the gum trees.

Notable Suigetsu members include Lyma Balderama, Malcom and Richard Martin, Stuart Owens, Klara Lantay, Mejan Hillier and Peter Dodd. Ruth ensures all are imbued with proper budo spirit.

PROFILE



Ruth Franklin

After being intimidated in a carpark in 1973, Ruth took up martial arts study including Goju Karate and Tai Chi sword. Ruth holds a 5th Dan in Tameshigiri (cutting). After much research, and at least partially inspired by *Shintaro* (as were so many of us), Ruth Franklin commenced Iaido training under Bob McCarron and Bob Burton at the Sydney Iaido Club in January 1993, greatly aided by Dr Kadono Sensei's frequent visits.

Ruth travelled to Japan with the two Bobs and others, and survived Bob McCarron's departure from the club. She stayed a loyal member till the club's shut down in 1997.

Training by herself, and later at the Sydney Kendo Club, Ruth decided to go to England and meet up with Ramon Lawrence at the 2005 seminar in Brighton. There she discovered a need for a structured return to the serious study of Seitei Iaido. The Suigetsu Dojo benefitted greatly.

In a career disrupted by injury, life's complications and (sadly) budo politics, she achieved 3rd Dan in 2008, 11 years after her 2nd.

Ruth's deeply spiritual and philosophical approach to her Iaido created a group of players with deep knowledge of their art and deeper commitment.



Stuart Owens and Klara Lantay
Kendo, Iaido & Jodo at Suigetsu, Willoughby and Wollongong
... few travel so far and so often for their arts!

2001

UNSWKC

Early in 2001 Damien Carmody-Stephens started teaching classes at the UNSW Club.

Attack of the Clowns

In 2001 a number of Kendo players from Sydney and Wollongong Clubs, plus unaffiliated players recruited from Byron Bay (after a recreational visit there by the Fight Director), were engaged to act as fight extras in the feature film "Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones", filmed at the Fox Studios in Randwick, Sydney. Individuals were not credited, but the Sydney Kendo Club was cited in the film credits and a photo of many of the participants appeared among the "bonus materials" on a DVD release of the film.

During three bizarre days of running about and dying on a sandy floor surrounded by huge green-screens, the members were exposed to some of the interesting details of behind the scenes feature film making. A number of the members were made up as aliens, so had the surrounds of their eyes 'blacked out' with make-up and performed wearing claustrophobic and incredibly hot rubber masks.

The film-makers and fight director had some rather curious ideas about what constituted swordsmanship, but the Second Unit Director, Oscar award winner Ben Burt, proved to be a true gentleman to meet, speak with and work for.



Numerous Sydney and Wollongong Kendo-playing “Jedi” relaxing between scenes
(image from DVD release of “Star Wars Episode II”)

2002

Early in 2002 Yuji Sano took over the teaching role at the UNSW Club. The improvement in training rigour and the standard of technical was immediately noticeable.

2003

28th Australian Kendo Championships, Sydney NSW

These were held from the 15th to the 20th of April at the Olympic Games arena, Sydney.

Day one training was conducted by veteran Michael Payne and Jamie Fennessy. On day two the guest instructors arrived; being: Sensei Saiji Iizuka, 8th Dan Hanshi (Director of the All Japan Kendo Federation, a Company Director and Vice president of the Shizuoka Prefecture Kendo Renmei), Sensei Ishida, 8th Dan of “Kendo’s Gruelling Challenge” fame (a National Geographic documentary), Mr Satoru KANAKI, 8th Dan Kyoshi, 52, a Professor at Tokai University, a liaison officer of the Dan Grading and Shogo Committee of the AJKF and Mr Hideaki TAKAHASHI, 7th Dan Kyoshi, 38, who has won the All Japan Kendo Individual Championship and is a two times runner-up. He was also a member of the winning men’s team in the World Kendo Championships on two occasions.

At the 28th AKC, Rex Lawley was awarded a special AJKF Commendation by Izuuka Sensei in recognition for his role as the Founder of Australian Kendo. It was a worthy honour for the man we all owe so much to.

28th AKC - Sydney**1st****2nd****3rd****OPEN INDIVIDUAL**

Kirby Smith (NSW)

Hong Soo Kim (NSW)

Stuart Burke (NSW)
Yuji Sano (NSW)**KYU INDIVIDUAL**

James Yu (NSW)

Andrew McGrath
(VIC)Nick Bartlett (SA)
Alvin Chen (VIC)**WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL**Hayami Aboutaleb
(VIC)

Kate Sylvester (VIC)

Claire Chan (VIC)
Melanie Smith (NSW)**SENIOR'S INDIVIDUAL**

Hong Soo Kim (NSW)

Paul Rixon (NSW)

Peter Day (VIC)
Greg Nicholas (QLD)**JUNIOR'S INDIVIDUAL**

Kenji Hashimoto (NSW)

Matthew Kang (NSW)

CHILDREN'S INDIVIDUAL

Owen Wynne (NSW)

Ryuta Hashimoto (QLD)

OPEN TEAM

NSW

QLD

KYU TEAM

NSW

VIC

WOMEN'S TEAM

VIC

NSW

KATA TEAM

VIC

NSW

FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARDNicholas Bartlett (SA), Sarah Cranswick (ACT), Daniel Kim (NSW),
Mark Woodland (TAS)



Rex Lawley receiving an AJKF special commendation from Saiji Izuuka Sensei, Hanshi 8th Dan



Ishida Sensei correcting Arpad Maksay's technique.

12th World Kendo Championships – Glasgow UK



Our Australian Team again did us proud at the World's in Glasgow. Arpad, Brett, Claire, Hayami and Kate Sylvester (now an Aussie) gave their all. Team manager was Dave D'Aprano. Ron Bennett was Team Leader.

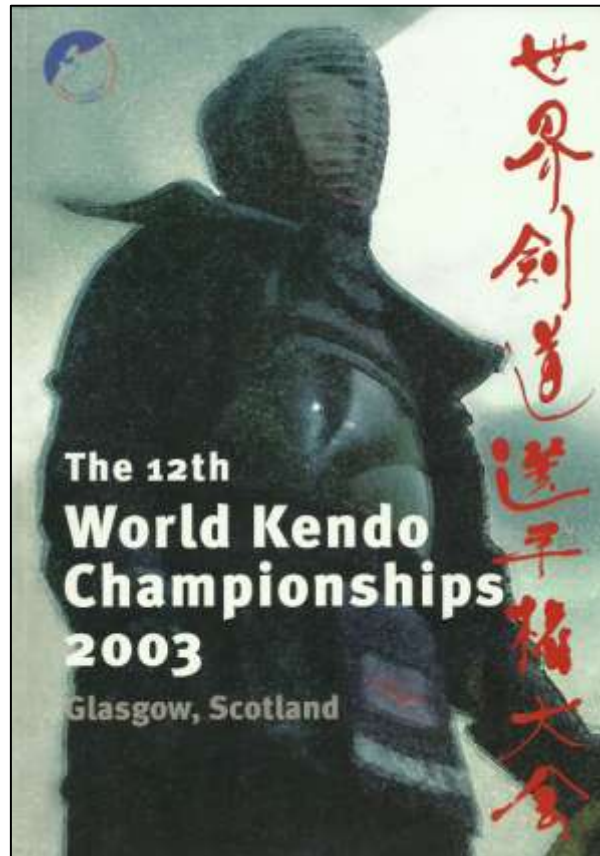
The Australians had the honour of being presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Hayami Aboutaleb was scheduled to be in competition at the same time and was threatened with disqualification if she did not appear at the *shiai*. Fortunately, the President of the British Kendo Association at the time, John Howe intervened and instructed the tournament officials to delay the match or he would report the matter directly to Her Majesty! The issue was promptly resolved!



Ron Bennett presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



Hayami Aboutaleb and Brett Smith were also presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II





Sydney Kendo Club Seniors – 2004

Back Row, left to right: Doug Stoufers, Andrew Van Hammond

Front Row, left to Right: Yuji Sano, Yoichi Yano, Jamie Fennessey, Mike Payne, Hong Soo Kim

Sei Do Kan Dojo, Dundas

From 2003 to 2008 the Sei Do Kan Dojo at Dundas, under the leadership Hans Fricke an expert exponent and teacher of Nakamura Ryu Battodo, was an active member of the NSWKA laido community. Several NSWKA laido gradings were conducted at Hans' dojo, which was well placed geographically between Wollongong and the other clubs in Sydney's leafy northern suburbs.

Hans visited the Wollongong dojo several times and held seminars on his style of swordsmanship. In recent years Hans has renewed his membership of the AKR and his interest in ZNKR laido.

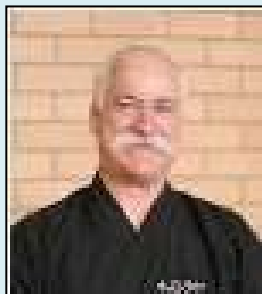


Hans Fricke performing *tameshigiri*



Bob Brown, Bob Burton and Ruth Franklin judging an laido Grading at the Sei Do Kan Dojo in 2004.

PROFILE



*Dean
Hawthorne*

Dean Hawthorne was one of the earliest students of the famous Blue Leaf Dojo established by Dr Kadono Sensei, where he was taught by Bob Burton and Bob McCarron. A keen collector of Japanese swords and *objet d'art*, Dean has a valuable and detailed knowledge of these beautiful swords.

When the Blue Leaf Dojo went into its hiatus, it was Dean who reinvigorated the Sydney Iaido Club and brought it back to life. Importantly, in this second life (third really, if you count its pre-Kadono Sensei origins under Doug Milton), the group was included within the NSWKA and was no longer a direct member group of the AKR.

Dean's skills as a teacher and Iaidoka, coupled with the force of his personality, made him a rallying point for a renaissance of Iaido in NSW where, but for the small Wollongong group, it had all but died out. Together with the new Suigetsu Club (formed by Ruth Franklin) and later the ShiraSagi Club (founded by Chris Trevillion) NSW Iaido was back on its feet!

Dean achieved his Godan in Iaido (after Bob Brown physically pushed him out onto the floor to be tested!) and served as a worthy leader in NSW as Foundation Chair of the newly formed NSW Iaido Technical Panel. Dean went on to serve as AKR Vice President (the first ever Iaido-only National Executive member) and performed the role with honour.

After a series of unfortunate medical issues involving both himself and members his family, Dean handed the Sydney Iaido Club to Doug and Chris Trevillion who strive to maintain the high standard he set.

At the time of this writing, Dean is in semi-retirement and is standing aside as Vice President, but will always be one of the great figures in Australian Iaido.

2005

Godo Keiko

On the 9th April, Dean Hawthorn of the Sydney Iaido Club's Blue Leaf Dojo hosted a *Godo Keiko* (joint training) at the Gilroy College Castle Hill (Sydney). This unusual event was an opportunity for the AKR arts in NSW to touch base with the related *koryu* (old school) and other sword arts studied around the greater Sydney area. The event was inspired by Kawai Sensei, 22nd Headmaster of the Tosa Eishin Ryu Yamauchi School who was teaching in Sydney at the time.

There were *embu* (demonstrations) of 5 kata from each style given, as follows:

Kawai Sensei Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu (Tosa Eishin Ryu Yamauchi School)
Hans Fricke Toyama Ryu (Nakamura Ha)
Bob Brown (UOW Dojo) Tamiya Ryu Iaijutsu
Wayne Hanley Kokoro Ryu
Jonathon Tow Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu (Sekiguchi Ha)
Dean Hawthorn (Blue Leaf Dojo) Suio Ryu
Paul Maloney (Sei Ryu Kai Dojo) Shinto Muso Ryu Jojutsu (four foot stick)
Paul Maloney (Sei Ryu Kai Dojo) Shito Ryu Kenjutsu, Uchida Ryu Tanjojutsu (short stick)
Paul Maloney (Sei Ryu Kai Dojo) Isshin Ryu Kusarigamajutsu (sickle and chain)

These fascinating demonstrations were followed by free training and a seminar on *ZenKenRen Seitei Iaido* (the style used by the AKR). There was much goodwill and mutual interest generated by the event and it was hoped that an annual *Godo Keiko* might result.



Bob Brown performing Tamiya Ryu and Dean Hawthorne performing Suio Ryu at the *Godo Keiko*, organised and hosted by Dean in Sydney (2005)

2006

15th Iaido and 6th Jodo Australian Seminar and Championships, Wollongong, NSW

Despite its small size, and the concerns of some seniors as to capacity, the University of Wollongong Kendo Club hosted the 2006 seminar and championship. Still one of the largest ever held, with over 100 participants, the event is still regarded as a high point.

All participants were gifted with commemorative laser-cut steel tsubas (shaped after the Wollongong Mon). Several members even had their tsubas fitted to their swords! Special polished versions were gifted to the Sensei and the event trophies sported these as well.

2006 AIJSC – Wollongong

	1st	2nd
15th IAIDO		
3+ Dan UENO CUP	Claire Chan (VIC)	Bob Brown (NSW)
1-2 Dan BLUE LEAF CUP	Brendon Frost (VIC)	Chris Goletsos (VIC)
1-3 Kyu HAGA CUP	Matthew Deane (VIC)	Sue Rogers (VIC)
6-4 Kyu JAMES CUP	Matthew Carmody (VIC)	Lusita Wong (VIC)
TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP	VIC "A"	NSW "A"
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Ian Cracknell (NSW), Brendan Kee (WA)	
6th JODO		
Dan Pair LAWRENCE CUP	Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC) Tony Pickering (VIC)	Russell Lawrence (WA) Hans Groesslinger (WA)
Kyu Pair NAGAYAMA CUP	Matthew Dean (VIC) Chiot Sarraniyathan (VIC)	Kristian Zirnsak (SA) August Boehm (SA)
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Andrea Juresko (VIC), August Boehm (SA)	

Founders Cup

This was held in Sydney and featured a visit by Takeuchi Sensei.



The Rixon boys – true blue (2004)



Takeuchi Sensei, Rex Lawley and Steve Lawley at the 2006 Founders Cup



Back Row, Left to Right: Takashi Itakura, Vivian Yung, Yuji Sano, Andrew Van Hammond, Maki, Mike Payne, Richard Ward, Doug Stoufers, Dean Hawthorne, Paul Rixon
 Front Row, Left to Right: Ron Bennett, Tanaka Sensei, Takeuchi Sensei, Tajima Sensei, Peter Heinrich

13th World Kendo Championship, Taipei, Taiwan

In November national coach Damian Carmody-Stevens chose Ballarat as the venue for selections for the Australian teams. The two day selection ran from 23rd – 24th November.

The selection was conducted by Sensei Damian Carmody- Stevens and included the Selection Panel made up of Peter Szwarcbord, Joe Semmler, Yoichi Yano, Ron Bennett, Ted Rixon and Nagae Sensei.

Finally the 5 men and 5 women heading to Glasgow and the world championships were named after a tense weekend;

Men's - B Smith, A Maksay, S Burke, Y Sano and K Smith.

Women's – H Aboutaleb, M Smith, C Chan, S Bonar and K Sylvester.

Australian Men's Kendo Team – Kirby Smith (NSWKA) – Brett Smith (VKR) – Arpad Maksay (VKR) – Ben Kelly (VKR) – Stuart Burke (NSWKA)

Australian Women's Kendo Team – Hayami Aboutaleb (VKR) – Vivian Yung (NSWKA) – Kate Sylvester (VKR) – Chiaki Kobayashi (VKR) – Claire Chan (VKR)



smorgasbord Dinner for the Australian team, courtesy of Ron's friend Beatrice Hyung, and her Auntie and Uncle
Left to Right: Hayami Aboutaleb, ???, Arpad Maksay, Brett Smith, Kate Sylvester, Kirby Smith, Beatrice's Uncle,
Yuji Sano, Vivian Yung, Stuart Burke, Chiaki Kobayashi, Beatrice's Auntie, Ben Kelly, Beatrice Hyung, Ron
Bennett, Claire Chan, ???, Beatrice's cousin Rex, Sharmain???

2007

Vale Rex Lawley

On Tuesday the 27th of March, we lost our great founder. There are not sufficient words to express our gratitude for the work of Rex Lawley in founding Australian Kendo, nor to express our sadness at his passing.

The AKR website recorded the following official announcement

The Australian Kendo Renmei is saddened that a founding member of the AKR, Mr Rex Lawley, died peacefully in hospital on the evening of Tuesday 27th of March.

On behalf of AKR members we have extended condolences to all the Lawley family.

Rex was a much loved and respected founding member of the AKR and for many years was a leader amongst Kendoka. We will remember and be forever grateful for his efforts in establishing Kendo in Australia.

In 1970 Rex represented Australian Kendo at the First World Kendo Championships and also at the associated meeting that first established the International Kendo Federation.

Rex was a Life Member of the AKR. This award acknowledged his valued and significant contribution to our federation.

In 2003, to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the All Japan Kendo Federation, Rex was awarded a special commendation for his contribution to Kendo and the development of Kendo in Australia.



Rex Lawley will always stand tallest among the founders of the AKR

2008

33rd Australian Kendo Championships, Sydney NSW

These were held on the 22nd and 23rd of March at the University of New South Wales Lifestyle Centre, Kensington, NSW.

33rd AKC - Sydney	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	B Smith (VIC)	M Ellero (ACT)	K Sylvester (VIC) A Tilbury (WA)
KYU INDIVIDUAL	L Lee (NSW)	T Kim(NSW)	I Matane (SA) N Sordon (NSW)
WOMENS INDIVIDUAL	K Sylvester (VIC)	C Chan (VIC)	C Homsey (VIC) V Yung (NSW)
SENIORS INDIVIDUAL	Y Sano (NSW)	N Tamura(QLD)	B Brestovac (WA) J Semmler (ACT)
OPEN TEAM	QLD		NSW
KYU TEAM	NSW		VIC
WOMEN'S TEAM	NSW		VIC
KATA TEAM	VIC		NSW
JOHN BUTLER AWARD	Brian Balshaw (SA)		
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	K Huang (VIC), C Lim (VIC), I Matane (SA), W Yoo (WA)		

2010

Vale Tadatoshi Haga Sensei

Tadatoshi HAGA, Hanshi Kendo 8th Dan; Hanshi Iaido 8th Dan, passed away on the 7th March 2010.

He was a strong supporter of Australian Kendo and Iaido, and was the Sensei of the AKR's National Iaido Technical Advisor, Oda Sensei. The funeral for Haga sensei was held in Shizuoka. The AKR website announced an official tribute:

All the members of the Australian Kendo Renmei are saddened at the loss of Tadatoshi HAGA sensei on 7 March 2010.

While he will be sadly missed, we will remember the great generosity of his teaching with a very high level of respect and much fondness. Haga sensei's contribution to the development of Kendo and Iaido in Australia is of the highest value and will last forever.

Haga sensei visited Australia many times over three decades. He made many friends on his visits while greatly assisting our Kendo and Iaido development.

Haga sensei was renowned for his ability to provide the highest challenge in Kendo Keiko and to teach both Kendo and Iaido with great understanding, compassion and good humour.

Our condolences to the family and friends of Haga sensei.



The late Haga Sensei performing lido kata.

Victoria – 2000s

2000

9th Iaido Australian Seminar and Championships, Melbourne VIC

Melbourne hosted 10 Japanese masters in Iaido, Kendo and Jodo including Haga Sensei, Oda Sensei, Namitome Sensei and Ohta Sensei, all 8th Dan in Iaido, plus Nagayama Sensei 7th Dan Iaido and Jodo.

Oda Sensei was elected Technical Advisor for Iaido and Kuniaki Nagayama Sensei was elected Technical Advisor for Jodo at that event.

The occasion was the first time that the AKR could sponsor a ZNKR Jodo grading and consequently Jodo members from across the country came for the chance to be graded. Bob Brown and Aden Steinke from NSW earned their ikkyu grades.

2000 AIJSC Melbourne

1st

2nd

3rd

9th IAIDO

Dan INDIVIDUAL

Bob Burton (NSW)

Geordie
Thompson(WA)

Ramon
Lawrence(WA)

TEAMS NAKANISHSI CUP

WA "A"

VIC "B"



In addition Ben Shepherd achieved his 4th Dan in Kendo and Arpad Maksay, Jason Widdy, Richard Ward and Lachlan Jackson all achieved 3rd Dan. A great start to the year.



Haga Sensei and Oda Sensei made the obligatory trip to Main Street, Sovereign Hill.



Bob Burton, Ron Bennett and Rex Lawley at the 9th Iaido Seminar at the Kenshikan



Bob Burton – Australian Iaido Champion 2000

Victorian Kendo Championships

These were held on the 1st April at the Kenshikan.

12th World Kendo Championships, Santa Clara, USA

Leading up to the 2000 WKC at Santa Clara, Damian Carmody-Stevens was selected as Australian Coach. Brett Smith was selected as captain for the Australian men's team and Hayami Aboutaleb was selected for the women's team. Under Damian, the men's team placed in the best eight, narrowly missing out on the best four after drawing with, but losing to Brazil by one point on a points count back. Furthermore, both Brett and Hayami's performances won them fighting spirit awards. In the most recent World Kendo Championships, six of the seven representative players were members of Fudoshin Kendo, with Brett continuing Damian's legacy of coaching the Australian Team.



Kate Sylvester & Ben Kelly

Otsuka Memorial Tournament and Visitors

July as always was the month to host the Otsuka Memorial tournament, it being held this year on 17th. This popular tournament which mixes teams of three from different clubs saw Kate Sylvester, Ryan Oliver and Lee Harvison take the first place.

Shizawa Sensei and Hakamada Sensei made their biennial visit with their students and as always there was much to learn. They stayed from 3rd – 6th August.

University Games Ballarat

The University Games were scheduled for Ballarat University in September but for some reason Kendo was not on the official list for the first time since its inception. The Ballarat Kendo Club countered this by hosting a Ballarat Invitational Kendo Tournament for University Students (BIKTUS). Students from Melbourne Uni, Monash, Newcastle (NSW) and South Australia attended this one off taikai to keep the annual tournament alive. Yakov Macak and Brent Gazzaniga officiated as shinpan with assistance from Ben Kelly and Arpad Maksay.



Yakov Macak talking to the Newcastle leaders

Octoberfest

Octoberfest piggy backed onto the BIKTUS event and was held at the Ballarat venue following the BIKTUS tournament on the Friday. Some notables in attendance were Yakov Macak, Tony Pickering, Jason Widdy, Gary Oliver, Ryan Oliver, Ben Sheppherd, Vince Caltabiano, Chris Patton, Chris Wallace from South Australia and Nagae Sensei.



2nd Mumeishi 3's

Melbourne Budokai defeated Ballarat in the final to take first place.

State Championships

Held in November this year, Arpad Maksay won the Open Individual Championship with Locky Jackson coming in second and Tony Pickering third. Ryan Oliver won the Kyu Individual. Ballarat won the Kyu team event for the second year in succession and Melbourne Budokai took out the Open Team competition. Ben Sheppard and Richard Ward won the Kata event.

Website

Richard Ward also brought Victoria into the new millennium by constructing the first VKR website. Unbeknown to the cynics, this new media put them on the advertising map and, to the benefit of all clubs, attracted new members and media attention.

2001

The Japanese Ambassador Mr Takahashi and his wife visited the Kenshikan on 14th February to start the year.

Chiba Sensei, 8th Dan and All Japan Individual Champion, came to Melbourne for a seminar which was held from 14th - 17th June. It was an excellent and well attended occasion. Gary Oliver and Gerard Everton went to the Saitama Summer School and caught up with Arpad Maksay who was staying at Nittaidai University under the sponsorship of Shizawa Sensei.

The Otsuka Memorial tournament was held on 14th July. Prior to the tournament demonstrations of laido, Jodo, Naginata and Isshu Jiai were conducted.

State Championships

25th August Brett Smith maintained his winning ways by taking first place in the Open Individual by defeating Ryan Oliver. These State Championships were becoming very well run affairs.

In August a national squad training was held in Ballarat under the direction of Sensei Damian Carmody-Stevens. In attendance were Brett Smith and Peter Szwarcbord.

Ryan Oliver left for 10 months to study at University in Hakodate. While there he met and trained with former NSW Kendo player, Don Miller 5th Dan.

3rd Mumeishi 3's

Terry Holt Sensei, 7th Dan Kendo from Mumeishi Kendo Club in London, flew to Melbourne for the third Mumeishi 3's tournament. He spent a week training at Melbourne and Ballarat leading up to the tournament which saw 13 teams enter the competition. A team from Melbourne University defeated Ballarat in the final.

2002

27th Australian Kendo Championships - Melbourne

The Nationals were to be held in Melbourne at Easter and Yakov Macak wanted to really lift the high jump bar in terms of organization and public spectacle. The venue was the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre. Melbourne University Kendo students all wore jackets and ties in carry out their respective roles as tournament stewards, announcers and the like.

In addition to three sensei sent to the Championships by the IKF, about twenty senior Sensei from the Koreishikan Kendo Club in Japan attended.



**27th AKC –
Melbourne**

	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Brett Smith (VIC)	Stewart Burke (NSW)	A Martin (VIC) Kirby Smith (NSW)
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Jason Anderson (VIC)	Robbie Henare (VIC)	D. Cunningham (ACT) M. Cowan (QLD)
WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL	Hayami Aboutelab (VIC)	Kate Sylvester (VIC)	C Chan (VIC) M Smith (NSW)
SENIORS' INDIVIDUAL	Yoichi Yano (NSW)	G Nicholas (QLD)	K Uchino (WA) K Kuramochi (QLD)
OPEN TEAM	NSW		VIC
KYU TEAM	VIC		NSW
WOMEN'S TEAM	VIC		NSW
KATA TEAM	NSW		VIC
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	Robbie Henare (VIC)		

Toda Sensei visit and Otsuka Memorial Tournament

Toda Sensei was able to visit Melbourne from 18th – 23rd June for a number of intensive trainings. Interstate Kendo players came to learn from this *Nito* (two sword) specialist although anticipated numbers were down somewhat.

At the Otsuka Memorial tournament in July, eventual winners were the team of Paul Bserani, Robbie Henare and Kotsue Umetsu who was visiting this year from Japan.

The Otsuka Memorial Tournament was held on 19th July. Again demonstrations of various disciplines set the scene for an entertaining tournament.

On 26th October Sensei Usami, President of Sugunami Kendo Renmei in Tokyo and Hoshino Sensei from Kyoto visited and instructed at the Kenshikan.

Professors Takeda and Nagai from Yamagata University in Japan, together with Mr Yazaki, visited Kenshikan on 14 December and joined training to finish an exceptional year.

Recognition for Nagae Sensei



In August Nagae Sensei was awarded the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation Award in a ceremony conducted by Consul General of Japan, Mr Masaaki Miyashita at the Consulate in Melbourne.

Kenshikan Open Day

On 1st December an Open Day was held at the Kenshikan. It became a big event and many guests including Mr Nishiyama, Vice Consul and Executive Member of JCV attended. Workshops for each martial art were carried out and many guests joined in, enjoying the experience.

Melbourne Budokai Kangeiko

The MBK held their winter training weekend at Anglesea over the weekend of June 21st. The weekend included training in Iaido, Kendo and Jodo and was an exhausting bonding opportunity.

Melbourne Uni Ballarat Bash

Yakov took his students over the weekend of June 28th to Ballarat. The Ballarat venue had proven very popular with other clubs over recent years and this weekend was also a great chance for students to gain further insights into Kendo.

Ballarat Sponsorship

The BKC landed a unique sponsorship deal with local Japanese noodle company, Hakubaku. This Japanese company, which produced organic dried noodles from Australian primary produce was exporting their product to Japan but was also moving into our local markets. The company promoted and supported a number of ventures involving Kendo over the next two years.

Founding Seishin Iaido Dojo

In October 2002, Richard Ward, Sue Rogers and her son Vaughn Rogers, who all trained at Fudoshin Kendo, decided to formalise their training in Iaido and formed the Seishin Iaido Dojo in North Balwyn. Shortly after, Hsiang (Steve) Chen joined for a while.

The group searched for a name, with the assistance of Takashi Itakura, Hayami Aboutaleb and Megumi Mizukami. Eventually the name "Seishin" was suggested by Hayami's mother. While "Seishin" is used as a noun in the name (quiet-mind), in Japanese it is a concept, so after the advice of Nagayama sensei, who helped design the zekken, it was decided to include the additional character "kai" (association) for the Japanese version of the dojo name.



The Seishin Kai logo reflects a dragonfly's wings in flight, the image of Mount Fuji and the shape formed by the motion of hands as they first grasp a sword. The very talented Sue Rogers performed the brushwork.

There was some considerable discussion required, but the VKR finally accepted the new club in February 2004.

In 2004 Seishin Iaido was joined by George Bonicelli, Sandra Cerrato, Tristan and Fiona Powell, Carl Schaller, Wayne Hessel, Greg Harada-Davis and Lusita Wong.



Richard Ward and Takashi Itakura (NSW)

PROFILE



Richard Ward

Richard "discovered" Kendo in the late 1980's but took some time to eventually make it to the Melbourne Kendo Club at the YWCA in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. The hook was watching a dojo full of people doing Kendo with great spirit. He joined the April 1989 beginner's course under the instruction of then 4th Dan, Mark Wild (assisted by Damian Carmody-Stephens, Julian Richardson and John Butler, among others).

Before each Sunday Kendo session started, Richard spotted a group of people doing something with what looked like 'real' swords in a nearby room. He was fascinated, but thought it a bit weird.

Richard remembers weekends cleaning bricks, using a pneumatic hammer to break up concrete plinths that arose from the floor, cleaning windows with teneguis and the occasional BBQ during the Kenshikan Dojo project.

Richard clearly recalls the Kenshikan opening event:

My highlight was keiko with Kyoshi Nakakura, 9th Dan. I thought afterwards that I must have been the luckiest 5th kyu in the world. My mother was most concerned and asked someone to tell "that old man to stop" hitting her son! I'm glad he didn't hear, as I was enjoying every moment.

Around 1996 he spotted a picture of Nakanishi Sensei in Kendo Jidai Magazine, performing the laido 'chiburi' action with such spirit that it seemed to project from the page. He realised laido was an important element of Japanese swordsmanship and was hooked. In 2002 he founded the Seishin Kai laido Club, sharing his love of that art with others.

Richard's prominent role as a budo administrator started in 1993 when he was recruited by Peter Hocking, the then President, to help out as MBK Secretary. From 1995-2000 he served as MBK President, then Treasurer of the VKR. He was persuaded to take up the Secretary role of the AKR executive for two terms (under Ron Bennett's Presidency), followed by three terms as AKR President.

Richard has proven an able and stable administrator, providing a voice of calm diplomacy in the often troubled waters of budo politics.

The AKR has much to thank Richard for, as he helped guide us all into the new millennium.

2003

Sawagiri Visit

On January 29th, the Japanese Marine defence force ship, "Sawagiri" sent a Kendo Team to the Kenshikan. A match between their team and the VKR was conducted. The visiting team won.

Hong Kong Invitational Kendo Tournament

Feb 23rd Ben Kelly (Capt), Arpad Maksay, Tony Pickering and Ryan Oliver made up a team to the Hong Kong Invitational Kendo tournament. This was Victoria's first such entry to this tournament and the lads finished in the final eight.



Nittaidai Taiko demonstration March 12 /13

Shizawa Sensei prepared Nittaidai's first free public demonstration at MSAC. A group training on the Friday followed by an excellent demonstration in all the martial arts taught at the university made for a spectacular weekend. In all about 140 students from Nittaidai attended. For their part in the organization Hakamada Sensei presented the VKR with a large bundle of quality shinai.

Victorian Kendo Championships

This year's event saw another significant rise in skill level. Ben Kelly and his team organized the day, coping with a minor glitch when the venue was double booked! To everyone's credit the move to the other venue was completed in about 40 minutes with limited distraction.



The march in and traditional opening

Held over two days for the first time this is a reflection of how much Kendo has grown and developed since the 1970's.



Open Dan Individual championship won by Brett Smith,
Ben Kelly 2nd and Gary Oliver and Arpad Maksay 3rd

Women's Individual Championship won by Yoshida San.



A new event this year saw Kata competition for the first time. First place this year went to the team of Claire Chan and Vui Tung Mau.

Inaugural Ballarat versus Inagawa Challenge

In November a team of six from Ballarat flew to Inagawa Cho in Hyogo Ken to contest the inaugural Ballarat versus Inagawa Challenge. These two sister cities were celebrating their 15 year friendship. The team of Gary Oliver, Ryan Oliver, Tony Pickering, Tarl O'Mara, David Tannard and Walter Butler spent a week training in Japan with local clubs and the Hyogo Ken Police Club.



Walter Butler, Tony Pickering, Tarl O'Mara, Gary Oliver, Ryan Oliver and David Tannard.

2004

Soon after the 2004 AKC in Queensland, Arpad left for Japan and a new career. Importantly for Victoria, Ben Sheppard achieved his 5th Dan at this event.

National Iaido and Jodo Championship, Melbourne VIC

Tony Pickering and Marcus Lee-Steere worked long and hard to make the week long seminar and National Iaido and Jodo Championship a great success. The venue was the State Netball and Hockey Centre in Melbourne from 19th – 25th January.

The Blue Leaf Cup was elevated to represent higher Dan champions, and the 1st to 2nd Dan champions competed for the Ueno Cup. Records show Jason Flockton competed at both levels!

A good attendance saw a large contingent attend from Western Australia, where Iaido students outnumber Kendoka. Other friends who made the journey included Kuramochi Sensei from Cairns and David Kolb and wife from Brisbane. An extremely talented group of Japanese Sensei included Haga Sensei 8th Dan, Oda Sensei 8th Dan, Ohta Sensei 8th Dan, Ueno Sensei 8th Dan and Nagayama Sensei 7th Dan among others.

This event saw the inaugural 6th - 4th Kyu Iaido competition won by Susanna Goletsos of Victoria.

2004 AIJSC - Melbourne	1st	2nd
13th IAIDO		
3+ Dan BLUE LEAF CUP	Claire Chan (VIC)	Jason Flockton (WA)
1-2 Dan UENO CUP	Brendon Frost (VIC)	Jason Flockton (WA)
1-3 Kyu HAGA CUP	Chris Goletsos (VIC)	Dave Puzey (WA)
6-4 Kyu INDIVIDUAL	Susanna Goletsos (VIC)	Luis Pires (VIC)
TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP	VIC "A"	WA "A"
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Susanna Goletsos (VIC), Jeremy Nemeh (VIC) Hans Groesslinger (WA), Brendan Frost (VIC)	
4th JODO		
Dan Pair LAWRENCE CUP	Tony Pickering (VIC) Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)	Mark Hird (WA) Russell Lawrence (WA)
Kyu Pair NAGAYAMA CUP	Andrea Juresko (VIC) Vui Tung Mau (VIC)	Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC) Luis Pires (VIC)
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Denichi Jacob (WA), Bob Brown (NSW) Vui Tang Mau (VIC), Luis Pires (VIC)	

Hokutomaru and Nittaidai Visits

On 9th February a Kendo Team from the Japanese training ship, “Hokutomaru” visited Kenshikan. Comprising three men and two women they fought a friendly match which Victoria won 3:1. they presented the VKR with a beautifully framed photo of their ship as a memento of their visit.

Nittaidai Students visited again on 12th March at the University High School for cultural exchange. They again presented a huge demonstration at MSAC before departing for the Gold coast on 15th March.



“Hokutomaru” Visit

University of Melbourne Kendo Club Training Camp 2004, Ballarat

From the 7th to the 9th May, the University of Melbourne Kendo Club (UMKC) held its annual training camp in Ballarat. That year saw the largest number of camp attendees (44 members in total), bolstered by an unprecedented number of beginners.

Training sessions were held in the Eastwood Leisure Complex over the course of Saturday (8th) and Sunday (9th). Highlights of the training included visits from Ballarat Kendo Club members such as Ryan Oliver, David Tannard, Tarl O’Mara and former member Arpad Maksay (now of Fudoshin KC).

Another highlight of the training session was the introduction of the new Kendo bokkuto exercises that were first introduced to Australian shores at the 2004 National Championships. Additionally, many of the beginner players started to wear bogu for the first time.

The camp concluded with a kirikaeshi competition for the beginners and a friendly intra-club shiai amongst the other players. Overall, this camp was extremely enjoyable, and afforded members with an excellent opportunity to foster relationships and develop stronger fundamentals in the practice of Kendo.



The Act Kendo Championships & Shinpan seminar was held at Canberra university from 13th – 14th June.

The Otsuka Memorial Tournament took place on 17th July at the Kenshikan.

Chiba Sensei and Sato Sensei visited Melbourne on August 3rd and held a Kendo and Iaido seminar through until 8th August. Both Sensei further developed the new training methods using the bokuto.

The Victorian Kendo Championships were held at Melbourne University High School Gymnasium on August 28th – 29th.

The Mumeishi 3's were well represented as usual. A strong team from Fudoshin led by Ben Kelly defeated Ballarat in the final. Guest at the tournament was again Holt Sensei from London.

10th Anniversary of Fudoshin

In the second weekend in December a goodly sized group of Fudoshin members celebrated their milestone with a gasshuku in Ballarat. Damian Carmody Stevens came down from Singapore and Gerard Sensei came from New Zealand for the two days of training. A BBQ was put on on the Saturday evening thanks to the help of Walter Butler of the Ballarat Kendo Club.

An open training in mid afternoon for non Fudoshin members was attended by some representatives of VKR clubs including Brent Gazanigga, who drove up from Gembrook to take part.

Saitama Summer School

Richard Ward was selected to attend the annual Summer School for Foreign Kendo Leaders in Saitama in late July.

Membership had finally reached 500 in Victoria. A long way from the half dozen in Little Bourke Street back in the late 1970's.



Richard Ward at the Saitama Summer School (2004)

Nittaidai Visit

Another successful visit from 140 Budo students from Nittaidai University. Shizawa Sensei again put together a special group who came to Melbourne in March for a cultural exchange and demonstration. The Tuesday night training at University High School was not long but all had the opportunity to do jigeiko with some very fit and polished Kendo players.



A Sovereign Hill souvenir

Wednesday's demonstration at the Melbourne sports and aquatic centre was again well received by the public and was a good chance to see other disciplines that collectively make up Japanese budo.

Thursday was a rushed visit to Ballarat for some sightseeing and souveniring before a farewell party and BBQ courtesy of Kate Sylvester and friends. In all it was a great chance to meet up with old friends, make new ones and enjoy good Kendo.

Chiba Sensei's Visit 5th August - 9th August.

Chiba Sensei and two female Sensei, Hoshina Sensei (6th Dan) and Suzuki Sensei (5th Dan) were sponsored by members of the MBK to visit Australia. To have two high ranked and experienced female Kendo exponents in Australia was truly a first.



Chiba Sensei in Ballarat

PROFILE



*Marcus
Lee-Steere*

Marcus Lee-Steere has been training in Iaido since 1999 and Jodo since around 2002. He began his training at the Melbourne Kendo Club and then in 2004 founded the successful and well regarded Chikushinkai Iaido and Jodo Club.

He travels to Japan regularly and has attended a number of ZenKenRen Iaido Seminars over several years. He has also trained in Japan with Oda Sensei and Nagayama Sensei on a number of occasions, and with Yoshimura Sensei in 2011.

Marcus works tirelessly for the budo community, not the least of which through his top class web design skills. He was a member of the Organising Committee for the AKR Iaido and Jodo Seminar & Championships in both 2004 and 2011 and built the website for 2012 as well.

He has been very successful in National Iaido and Jodo competitions over a number of years in the 3 Dan and 4 Dan Iaido Individual competitions, for the VKR team, in the International Iaido Goodwill competition and the Kyu and Dan Grade Jodo Pairs competitions.

A past Secretary and Treasurer of the VKR, and a member of the VKR Iaido and Jodo grading panels, he has also served repeatedly on the AKR Iaido Board, most recently as Secretary and, as of 2012, is the Vice Chair of that body, where he ably serves the members' best interests.



Marcus winning the National Iaido Championship

Founding of Chikushinkai Iaido and Jodo Club



Marcus Lee-Steere started the Chikushinkai Iaido and Jodo Club in Melbourne's Eastern Suburbs, whose name was suggested by Nagayama Sensei. The club is true centre of technical excellence with a collection of champions and trophies that belies its youth. This success a tribute to the hard work and dedication of Marcus and Rebecca, who very much lead from the front.



Members of the Chikushinkai Dojo frequently excel in National Championships

Founding of the Tojinkai Iaido and Jodo Club



Anthony (Tony) Pickering founded the Tojinkai dojo in 2004. Based in West Brunswick and North Coburg in Melbourne's inner west, it practices the seitei forms of both Jodo and Iaido. The name and kanji were suggested by Nagayama Sensei, with whom Tony and Andrea have trained (in Australia and Japan) regularly.

TJK members are well exceptionally regarded across the country and are known for the wry sense of humour they have learned from their founder.

Tojinkai is home of the most serious and powerful Jodo study in Victoria and, arguably, in Australia. Tony frequently visits Japan to continue his studies and maintain the highest standards and latest teachings.

More experienced Iaido students may also learn the *koryu* (old school) style Muso Shinden Ryu Iaijutsu.

PROFILE



*Anthony
(Tony)
Pickering*

In budo there are people who demand respect and people who earn respect. Tony Pickering (5th Dan Iaido, 4th Dan Jodo and 2nd Dan Kendo) is most definitely the latter.

Since marrying Andrea Juresco and becoming a devoted family man, Tony projects a calm and quiet energy that simply cannot be ignored. His serious dedication to all his martial studies has given him a powerful presence on the dojo floor.

Tony began this Martial Arts journey in Ballarat in Kendo in 1987. The Ballarat Kendo Club had commenced training earlier in that year so Tony was very much a founding member.

He took naturally to Kendo and was part of the first Ballarat team to win an Open Team Championship. Tony was an ikkyu at the time and took out the Kyu Individual Championship at the same event.

In the early 1990's he began Iaido and Jodo under Kuramochi Sensei who had moved to Ballarat. This was an intense four year period. Under Kuramochi's leadership, Tony was selected to attend the Summer School for Foreign Kendoka in Japan and made the trip to this prestigious event over two consecutive years.

Tony moved to Melbourne in the mid-1990s and continued his study of Iaido under Sensei Oda and Jodo under Sensei Nagayama.

In 2004 He established the Tojinkai Club in 2004 with the help of his wife, Andrea (3rd Dan Jodo).



"Ant" Pickering training with Nagayama Sensei (Jodo)

Nagayama Sensei visit

Nagayama Sensei arrived on 31st May and immediately set a fast pace, teaching both Iaido and Jodo at a number of locations. The schedule saw him take classes at the Kenshikan, at Seishin and at the newly formed TojinKai and ChikushinKai clubs.

Attendance at these seminars was good and culminated on the Sunday with a grading in the afternoon. Marcus and Tony again took up the task of planning to the benefit of all those who managed to attend Nagayama Sensei's visit.



Participants include Andrea Pickering, Marcus Lee-Steere, Nagayama Sensei, Richard Ward

2005

Asian Shinpan Seminar – Seoul South Korea.

In October Yakov Macak, Ben Sheppard and Gary Oliver joined Greg Nichols and Peter Choi in travelling to Seoul for this two day event. Wonderfully hosted by the Koreans and led by a contingent from Japan it proved an insightful seminar, although translation from Japanese to Korean then into Chinese and English made for some long discussions.



Ben, Yakov, Peter, Gary and Greg.

15th Otsuka Memorial

Melbourne Budokai put on an exceptional Takai in this, the 15th Anniversary of the Otsuka Memorial. Special guests at the Tournament were Mr Kaku, Consul General of Japan and Mr McGregor, AJS President.

Over 60 competitors registered for this annual event with teams made up on the day from mixed clubs. As always, each team had a senior Yudansha, a beginning Mudansha and a more advanced Kyu rank shiai sha.

Some great moments were witnessed during the competition, one being Claire Chan and Edwin Chen fighting from the Jodan no Kamae.



Nagae Sensei & Mr Kaku.



Gary Oliver, Russell Tran and Thomas Mendelovitis

“Body and Soul” – Kendo documentary

In November the Ballarat Kendo Club made a documentary for pay television. The 10 minute documentary was professionally shot and is currently being shown in over 20 countries on a show called “Body and Soul”.



Screenshot from the TV Documentary “Body and Soul”
featuring the Ballarat Kendo Club

Junior Taikai

Thanks to the urging of Ben Sheppard (founder of Nanseikan Kendo) a competition for junior Kendo players was held.



2006

During the year Iaido and Jodo gradings were held at Ballarat, Kenshikan and Tojinkai Dojos to help alleviate the travel constraints put on our country members.

The annual visit by Nittaidai students shifted to Ballarat that year. The Ballarat Kendo Club hosted the group who performed to a full house at Ballarat's Minerdome stadium. Television coverage was excellent and following the performance a spit roast was organized.



16th Otsuka Memorial

This event was well attended and equally well organised. It remains a highlight and jumping off point for the second semester.



State Championships

The venue for this year's States was the Darebin Community Centre. This proved a great venue for what was a very busy and long day. The usual high standard performances came out on the day, the only upset being a trip to hospital by Akemi Drohan upon tearing her achilles in the women's final.

Mumeishi 3's

Gazzaniga Sensei's tournament culminated a week of special trainings with Sumi Sensei 8th Dan and Terry Holt 7th Dan, who flew in for the occasion. The week before the tournament saw a number of training opportunities, utilizing the vast knowledge and experience of Sumi Sensei and Holt Sensei. Trainings were held at Kenshikan, Mumeishi and Ballarat.





Left to Right: Sumi Sensei, Terry Holt, Jamie Fennessy, Brent Gazzaniga & Gary Oliver

2007

32nd Australian Kendo Championships, Melbourne, VIC

These were held on the 9-10th June, 2007 at the Darebin Community Sports Stadium in Reservoir, Victoria.

32nd AKC – Melbourne

	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Nick Bartlett (QLD)	Kirby Smith (NSW)	Takashi Itakura (NSW) Brett Smith (VIC)
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Paris Davey (QLD)	Nathan Hill (ACT)	Andy Cheng (ACT) John Larkings (ACT)
WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL	Sue Bonar (WA)	Kate Sylvester (VIC)	Claire Chan (VIC) Sharyn Wragg (ACT)
SENIORS' INDIVIDUAL	Ron Walker (VIC)	Toshio Nishimoto (QLD)	Gary Oliver (VIC) Greg Nicholas (QLD)
OPEN TEAM		NSW	VIC
KYU TEAM		ACT	NSW
WOMEN'S TEAM		VIC	ACT
KATA TEAM		QLD	VIC
JOHN BUTLER AWARD	Vivian Yung		
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	Alvin Chen, Michael Henstock, Elaine Chan, Rebecca Marshall		
SPECIAL COMMENDATION	for service to Australian Kendo: Yakov Macak		

2008

University Games, Melbourne

The universities of Melbourne hosted the University Games. The Kendo tournament results were as follows:

Gold	University of Melbourne (VIC)
Silver	Monash University (VIC)
Bronze	University of Technology Sydney (NSW)
4th	University of New South Wales (NSW)



AUSTRALIAN KENDO RENMEI
INCORPORATED

SPECIAL COMMENDATION

Awarded to

Yakov Macak

Kendo Renshi 6 dan

in recognition and appreciation
of many years of dedicated, hard work
toward improving the administration of the AKR
and the kendo technical skills of members.

signed

President

10 June 2007

Queensland – 2000's

2003

12th Iaido and 3rd Jodo Australian Seminar and Championships, Tallebudgera QLD

2003 AIJSC – Gold Coast	1st	2nd	3rd
12th IAIDO			
Dan BLUE LEAF CUP	Geordie Thompson (WA)	Claire Chan (VIC)	David Kolb (QLD)
Kyu HAGA CUP	Les Elliott (TAS)	Nial Muecke (VIC)	Brendon Frost (VIC)
6-4 Kyu JAMES CUP			
TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP	VIC "A"	QLD "A"	VIC "C"
INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL	Australia defeated New Zealand 3-2		
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Christine Cash (TAS), Hans Groesslinger (WA) Kevin Humphrey (QLD), Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)		
3rd JODO			
Dan Pair LAWRENCE CUP	Geordie Thompson (WA) Mark Hird (WA)	Glen Henry (QLD) David Kolb (QLD)	Ramon Lawrence (WA) Russell Lawrence (WA)
Kyu Pair NAGAYAMA CUP	Hans Groesslinger (WA) Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)	Andrea Juresko(Vic) Vui Tung Mau (VIC)	Mark Woodland (TAS) Christine Cash (TAS)
INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL	Australia defeated New Zealand 3-0		
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Andrea Juresko (VIC), Luis Pires (VIC), Vern Jacob (WA), Les Elliott (TAS)		

2004

29th Australian Kendo Championships, Tallebudgera QLD

The 29th AKC were held from April 8th to 12th, at the Tallebudgera Sports Centre. Kevin Humphries and his team ensured that the seminar and competitions were a resounding success.

Sensei Taguchi, Sueno and Hiyagira - all 8th Dan Hanshi - represented the AJKF.

Hayami Aboutaleb won a record fourth Open Women's Individual Championship.

29th AKC - Tallebudgera	1st	2nd	3rd	
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Kirby Smith (NSW)	Brett Smith (VIC)	Hong Soo Kim (NSW) Daniel Kim (NSW)	
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Michael Henstock	Andrew Van Hammond (NSW)	Anthony Tilbury Kai Huang	
WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL	Hayami Aboutaleb (VIC)	Kate Sylvester (VIC)	Claire Chan (VIC) Melanie Smith (NSW)	
SENIORS' INDIVIDUAL	Greg Nicholas (QLD)	Hong Soo Kim (NSW)	Ken Okamoto (QLD) Yoichi Yano (NSW)	
OPEN TEAM		QLD	NSW	
KYU TEAM		NSW	VIC	
WOMEN'S TEAM		VIC	NSW	
KATA TEAM	NSW	VIC	WA	SA
JOHN BUTLER AWARD	Susan Bonar (WA)			
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	Chiaki Kobayashi (VIC), Nicholas Bartlett (QLD), Daniel Kim (NSW), Peter Strauss (QLD)			

2007

University Games, Gold Coast

The Gold Coast hosted the University Games. The Kendo tournament results were as follows:

Gold	University of Sydney (NSW)
Silver	University of Melbourne (VIC)
Bronze	Monash University (VIC)
4 th	Macquarie University (NSW)

Championship Breakthrough



John Isaacs, Nick Bartlett & Greg Nicholls, celebrating Nick's victory at the 32nd AKC in Melbourne (2007)

Ron recalls that without John Isaacs, Kevin Humphries and Greg Nichols' (the "three amigos") contribution, Kendo in Queensland would have disappeared off the map.

It is due to their diligence and determination that Queensland Kendo retains the vision to carry on.

For 27 years Queensland suffered through a championship drought, but in 2007, at the 32nd AKC in Melbourne, thanks to the efforts of Shigeoka Sensei and hard work by the Queensland players, they broke through and took the trophy at last!



Shigeoka Sensei

2008

17th Iaido and 8th Jodo Australian Seminar and Championships, Tallebudgera QLD

This championship was particularly notable for making official and long overdue recognition of the Australian Founders of Iaido. Presentation plaques officially recognising their status as founders were given to Doug Milton, and to the family of the late John Butler (received by Gary Oliver, then President of the VKR). The presentation had been kept a deep secret within the Iaido Board, and it was a very touching moment when Doug (casually visiting the event because it was very close to his Gold Coast home) was called forward.

Two new Iaido trophies were introduced at this event; the Milton Cup (3rd Dan Individual) and the Butler Cup (2nd Dan Individual), to commemorate the founding of Iaido in Australia by these two worthy gentlemen.

It was a wonderful thing to be able to give thanks and recognition to those whose efforts gave us the many opportunities we have now.

2008 AIJSC – Gold Coast

1st

2nd

17th IAIDO

4th Dan BLUE LEAF CUP

Claire Chan (VIC)

Jeri James (WA)

3rd Dan MILTON CUP

Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)

Brendan Frost (VIC)

2nd Dan BUTLER CUP

Sugio Takenori (QLD)

Matt Deane (VIC)

1st Dan UENO CUP

Ben Jackson (VIC)

Brendan Kee (ACT)

1-3 Kyu HAGA CUP

Paul D'Intino (VIC)

Peter Lee (VIC)

6-4 Kyu JAMES CUP

Vincent Sia (WA)

Tim Wilson (VIC)

TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP

VIC "A"

VIC "B"

ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD

Steven Boulais (NSW), Chris Smith (TAS)

8th JODO

Dan Pair LAWRENCE CUP

Russell Lawrence (WA)
Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)

Andrea Pickering (VIC)
Brendan Frost (VIC)

Kyu Pair NAGAYAMA CUP

Chris Smith (TAS)
Dylan Labeschagne (TAS)

Rishi Ratnam (ACT)
Stephen Spencer (ACT)

ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD

Stephen Spencer (ACT), Ben Sawers (VIC)



Doug Milton receiving long overdue official recognition as one of the Founders of Iaido in Australia, from Ramon Lawrence (then chair of the AKR Iaido Board) at the 2008 National Iaido and Jodo Championships in Tallebudgera QLD. President of the VKR, Gary Oliver, accepted a similar plaque on behalf of the family of the late John Butler. From left: Richard Ward, Doug Milton, John Isaacs and Ramon Lawrence



Official AKR Plaques, presented to Doug Milton and the family of the late John Butler, acknowledging their role as the Australian Founders of Iaido

2009

University Games, Gold Coast

The Gold Coast again hosted the University Games. The Kendo tournament results were as follows:

Gold	University of Technology Sydney (NSW)
Silver	University of Melbourne (VIC)
Bronze	Macquarie University (NSW)
4th	University of Sydney (NSW)

Australian Capital Territory – 2000's

2000

Establishment of Queanbeyan Kumdo Club

Though geographically Queanbeyan is part of NSW, this new club established by Cameron Le Mert was supported by ACT players four nights a week and joined the ACT Kendo Renmei.

25th Australian Kendo Championships, Canberra ACT

The AJKF sent three outstanding Sensei to the event, they being Matsunaga, Yoneya and Takeuchi Sensei. They visited Melbourne before departing on 25th April.

The event was attended by His Excellency Mr Masaji Takahashi, the then Japanese Ambassador and his wife Katie Swann, who provided a much appreciated service as translator.

The Japanese Embassy have proved a valuable and supportive ally of ACT Kendo from that time forward.

25th AKC - Canberra	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Arpad Maksay (VIC)	Ben Sheppherd (VIC)	Takashi Itakura (NSW)
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Kenji Sugimoto (VIC)	Kang Lim (VIC)	Ryan Oliver (QLD)
WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL	Claire Chan (VIC)	Kate Sylvester (VIC)	Catherine Hallgath (NSW)
SENIORS' INDIVIDUAL	G. Nicholas (QLD)	Katsumi Kuramochi (QLD)	Yoichi Yano (NSW)
OPEN TEAM	NSW	QLD	VIC
KYU TEAM	NSW	QLD	VIC
WOMEN'S TEAM	VIC	NSW	WA
KATA TEAM	QLD	NSW	
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Adam Harrigan Emma Howard		
JOHN BUTLER AWARD	Anthony Pickering		



Wellington

In November, Joe Semmler was invited to *shinpan* (judge) a competition at the Pneke Challenge at the Wellington Kendo Club, New Zealand.

PROFILE



**Damon
Shearer**

Damon has been a member of the Australian Kendo Renmei since 1999 and has been the ACT delegate to the National Council since 2010. He is currently laido Yondan (Japan 2011) and Jodo Sandan (Australia 2009).

In 1996 he briefly studied laido under the private guidance of Greg Mapstone in Queensland.

He returned to laido training under the instruction of David Kolb at the Brisbane Aiki Kai in 1999 and commenced Jodo in 2000.

He trained in Japan in laido with Obayashi Tadashi Sensei, 8th Dan Kyoshi, of the Dai Ken Kyo laido club in Osaka, the Miyagi Prefecture ZNKR, and in Jodo privately with Kuniaki Nagayama 7th Dan Hanshi in Sendai.

He has attended the annual AKR laido Jodo Seminars in 2003 (Qld), 2004 (Vic), 2006 (NSW), 2007 (Tas), 2008 (Qld), 2009 (ACT), 2010 (WA), 2011 (Vic); laido seminars in Australia by Oda Shihan in 2010 (NSW), and Jodo/laido seminars in Australia by Nagayama Shihan in 2005 (Vic) and ACT (2009, 2010 & 2011). He was responsible for managing the ACT Nagayama Shihan seminars.

In 2007 he moved to Canberra where he was instrumental in formalising a dedicated training environment for laido & Jodo and promoting both arts, which by 2011 had seen a membership growth in laido of 55% and Jodo of 45%, and a solid building of the Yudansha group.

He organised promotional demonstrations at Floriart (2008), Canberra Nara Candle Festival (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011), Canberra Multicultural Festival (2009) and as part of ACT local schools programme to promote Japanese Culture (2011).

In 2008 he was a significant contributor to organising the laido Jodo Seminar & Championships on the Gold Coast (initiated before he moved) and in 2009 he organised the Seminar & Championships in Canberra.

2001

ACT Open Re-Boot

The ACT Open Competition was reintroduced in 2001 on the June long weekend. It included separate events for shodan, nidan, sandan and yondan+. The event in this new format survived until 2004.

2002

Sensei Visit

A delegation of seven Sensei, invited for the Founders' Cup, visited the ANUKC. They included some great names from the history of the AKR:

Tajima Sensei (6th Dan), Sukurai Sensei (7th Dan), Hasegawa Sensei (7th Dan), Iwatsubo Sensei (6th Dan), Mrs Maki Sensei (5th Dan), Ms Takahashi (3rd Dan) and Ms Takeishi (2nd Dan).

2005

30th Australian Kendo Championships, Canberra ACT

These were held on the 26th and 27th of March.

30th AKC - Canberra	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Kirby Smith (NSW)	Stuart Burke (NSW)	Peter Strauss (QLD) Hong Soo Kim (NSW)
KYU INDIVIDUAL	A. McNeil (ACT)	H. (Alvin) Chen (VIC)	K. Huang (NSW)
WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL	Kate Sylvester (VIC)	Claire Chan (VIC)	Susan Bonar (WA) Vivian Yung (NSW)
SENIORS' INDIVIDUAL	Ken Okamoto (QLD)	Hong Soo Kim (NSW)	Gary Oliver (VIC) Greg Nicholas (QLD)
OPEN TEAM	QLD		NSW
KYU TEAM	VIC		WA
WOMEN'S TEAM	VIC		NSW
KATA TEAM	QLD		ACT
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	C. Fukumoto (WA), Claire Chan (VIC), K. Huang (NSW), Vivian Yung (NSW)		

剣道

30th Australian National Kendo Championships



9am-5pm, 26-27 March 2005
ANU Sports & Recreation Association Building
North Road, The Australian National University, Canberra
Spectators welcome - admission free





Susan Bonar, Claire Chan and Kate Sylvester



Stuart Burke scores a spectacular tsuki at the 30th AKC in Canberra

2009

18th Iaido and 9th Jodo Australian Seminar and Championships, Canberra ACT

2009 AIJSC – Canberra	1st	2nd
18th IAIDO		
4th Dan BLUE LEAF CUP	Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)	Bob Brown (NSW)
3rd Dan MILTON CUP	Ian Thomason (WA)	Brendan Frost (VIC)
2nd Dan BUTLER CUP	Rebecca Lim (VIC)	Brendan Kee (ACT)
1st Dan UENO CUP	Terri Gallear (WA)	Daniel Campbell (TAS)
1-3 Kyu HAGA CUP	Paul D’Intino (VIC)	Leanne Walsh (VIC)
6-4 Kyu JAMES CUP	Jarrad Sibbison (VIC)	Lucy Galbally (VIC)
TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP	VIC “A”	VIC “B”
INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL INDIVIDUAL ODA CUP	Rebecca Lim (Singapore)	Keiji Igarashi (Japan)
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Julia Chay (WA), Bosko Erak (NSW)	
9th JODO		
Dan Pair LAWRENCE CUP	Rebecca Lim (VIC) Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)	Russell Lawrence (WA) Geordie Thompson (WA)
Kyu Pair NAGAYAMA CUP	Chris Smith (TAS) Ben Sawers (VIC)	Arwen Fenton (WA) Euin Lindsay (WA)
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Peter Burge (WA), Patricia Hunt (ACT)	

Western Australia – 2000's

2000

Brian Brestovac awarded Godan Kendo.



Picture of some WAKR members 2001.
From left: Brian Brestovac, Jeff White, Chiharu Fukumoto, Chris Graham,
Susan Bonar (Tony Beston behind), Joshua Forrester (arms folded)

2001

26th Australian Kendo Championships, Perth WA

26 th AKC – Perth	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Brett Smith	Arpad Maksay	Hayami Aboutelab
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Ryan Oliver		
WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL	Hayami Aboutelab		
SENIORS' INDIVIDUAL	Yoichi Yano		
OPEN TEAM		VIC	
KYU TEAM		WA	VIC
WOMEN'S TEAM		VIC	
KATA TEAM		VIC	
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	Tarl O'Mara		



Victorious Victorians at the 26th AKC in Perth (2001)

10th Iaido and 1st Jodo Australian Seminar and Championships, Sorrento WA

24th to 30th January. With Iaido and Jodo students outnumbering Kendo students in WA, it was no wonder that these Championships attracted a big following. The event was hot, but a great success.

Bob Brown (NSW) managed a triple-art Dan grading: achieving 1st Dans in both Iaido and Jodo plus a 2nd Dan in Kendo. A strict separation of the arts since then prevents any likely repetition in Australia.

2001 AIJSC - Perth	1st	2nd	3rd
10th IAIDO			
Dan INDIVIDUAL BLUE LEAF CUP	Ramon Lawrence (WA)	Claire Chan (VIC)	Geordie Thompson (WA)
TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP	WA "A"	WA "B"	QLD
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Jason Flockton (WA), Nial Muecke (VIC) Jeri James (WA), Doug Griffith (QLD)		
1st JODO			
Dan Pair LAWRENCE CUP	Glen Henry (QLD) David Kolb (QLD)	Ramon Lawrence (WA) Bob Shersby (WA)	Geordie Thompson (WA) Katsumi Kuramochi (QLD)
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Charles Foster (WA)		

2005

14th Iaido and 5th Jodo Australian Seminar and Championships, Perth WA

2005 AIJSC - Perth	1 st	2 nd
14 th IAIDO		
3+ Dan BLUE LEAF CUP	Claire Chan (VIC)	Katsumi Kuramochi (QLD)
1-2 Dan UENO CUP	Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)	Brendan Frost (Vic)
1-3 Kyu HAGA CUP	Kamil Stovicka (WA)	David Leong (VIC)
6-4 Kyu JAMES CUP	Matthew Deane (VIC)	Michael Han (WA)
TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP	VIC "A"	VIC "B"
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Emily Smith (WA)	
5 th JODO		
Dan Pair LAWRENCE CUP	Russell Lawrence (WA) Geordie Thompson (WA)	Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC) Tony Pickering (VIC)
Kyu Pair NAGAYAMA CUP	Andrea Juresco (VIC) Brendon Frost (VIC)	Christine Cash (TAS) Christine Broadby (TAS)

2006

31st Australian Kendo Championships, Perth WA

These were held from 15th to the 16th of April at the Park Recreation Centre in East Victoria Park, Perth, Western Australia.

31 st AKC - PERTH	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	Kirby Smith (NSW)	Stuart Burke (NSW)	Arpad Maksay (VIC) Philip Baker (ACT)
KYU INDIVIDUAL	Anthony Tilbury (WA)	Brian Balshaw (SA)	Danny Mok (WA) Bertie Sanday (VIC)
WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL	Akemi Drohan (VIC)	Susan Bonar (WA)	Kate Sylvester (VIC) Vivien Yung (NSW)

SENIORS' INDIVIDUAL	Dennis Hong Soo Kim (NSW)	Brian Brestovac (WA)	Noriyuki Tamura (QLD) Ron Walker (VIC)
OPEN TEAM	NSW		QLD
KYU TEAM	WA		VIC
WOMEN'S TEAM	VIC		WA
KATA TEAM	VIC		QLD
JOHN BUTLER AWARD	Sue Rogers (VIC) , Sharyn Wragg (ACT)		
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	Martino Ellero (ACT), Chiaki Kobayashi (VIC), Elaine Chan (NSW), Nicholas Bartlett (QLD)		

2010

University Games, Perth

The universities of Perth hosted the University Games. The Kendo tournament results were as follows:

Gold	Monash University (VIC)
Silver	University of Ballarat (VIC)
Bronze	University of New South Wales (NSW)
4 th	Murdoch University (WA)

19th Iaido and 10th Jodo Australian Seminar and Championships, Perth, WA

These championships saw the inaugural Jodo individual competition, which was conducted in a "shadow" form, which competitors performing just one half of each kata.

2010 AIJSC - Perth	1st	2nd
19th IAIDO		
4th Dan BLUE LEAF CUP	Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)	Brendan Frost (VIC)
3rd Dan MILTON CUP	Rebecca Lim (VIC)	Peter Woolmer (WA)
2nd Dan BUTLER CUP	Peter Kitak (WA)	Tom Johnson (QLD)
1st Dan UENO CUP	Paul D'Intino (VIC)	David Puzzey (WA)
1-3 Kyu HAGA CUP	Julia Chay (WA)	Stuart Owens (NSW)

6-4 Kyu JAMES CUP	Matt Wickham (VIC)	Dennis Glorie (WA)
TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP	VIC "A"	WA "A"
INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL ODA CUP	Marcus Lee-Steere (Australia)	Rebecca Lim (Singapore)
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Andrew Thompson (ACT), Jeremy Hudson (QLD)	
10th JODO		
Dan Pair LAWRENCE CUP	Rebecca Lim (VIC) Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)	Terri Gallear (VIC) Rick Berghuis (WA)
Kyu Pair NAGAYAMA CUP	Julia Chay (WA) Peter Berge (WA)	Andrew Thompson (ACT) Louise Schidtchen (ACT)
3-4 Dan Individual	Russell Lawrence (WA)	Bob Brown (NSW)
1-2 Dan Individual	Dennis Glorie (WA)	Chris Smith (TAS)
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Stuart Owens (NSW), Jarrod Sibbison (VIC)	

Tasmania – 2000's

2000-2001

Foundation of Iaido and Jodo in Tasmania

In November 2000, Ramon Lawrence came to Tasmania to teach at a seminar in Iaido and Jodo hosted by Les Elliott, the best known martial artist in Tasmania. After that seminar, in early 2001, Les Elliott, Mark Woodland, Christine Broady, Steve Foster and Christine Cash formally formed the first Iaido and Jodo group in Tasmania and started regular training.

Tasmania has sent a dedicated (if sometimes small) delegation to every Iaido and Jodo Championship since. They have been a most welcome addition every time - friendly, hardworking, skilled and always punching well above their weight!

An Expanded Curriculum

Since the club added Seitei Iaido and Seitei Jodo, more recently the koryu (old school) styles of Tamiya Ryu and Muso Shinden Ryu have been added to the training regime, assisted by visits from Ramon Lawrence.

The small but enthusiastic Tasmanian group have pursued their budo studies with vigour.



The Tasmanian Group – enthusiasm, energy, dedication.

Back row: Daniel Clark, Geoff Clark, Mark Woodlands

Front row: Daniel Campbell, Christine Cash, Dylan Labuschagne, Alanna Graudins, Les Elliott

PROFILE



Les Elliott

Few men on the dojo floor are such gentlemen as Les Elliott. A powerful budoka, he is a centred, settled and enthusiastic figure that inspires others to always try their best. Quick to befriend, he does not take friendship lightly, and will support anyone, in any way, whenever he can.

Famous as the main figure in Tasmanian Karate and with over three decades in martial arts, Les (Iaido 4th Dan and Jodo 3rd Dan) founded the Tasmanian Sando Renmei Inc. and has served as its president ever since.

He formed Budokan Tasmania (which changed its name to Dando Renmei in 2009) in 2000; and the Tasmanian Kendo Renmei in 2001. Les served as Secretary, Treasurer and President for four years; and as Secretary/Treasurer for five years. He has also served on the AKR Jodo Board member for six years; and the AKR Iaido Board Member for three years.

He hosted the first Iaido /Jodo Seminar to Hobart in 2000; the Iaido and Jodo Championships in 2002 and 2007, and will again in 2013.

Les also trained in Japan under Ueno Sensei, who was a former Technical Director of All Japan Kendo Renmei.

When Les gives his word to do something, you know he means it. His devotion to his students and loyalty to his group are legendary. He sets an example we should all aspire to follow.



Les Elliott performing Iaido kata.

PROFILE

Christine Cash

A stalwart of the Tasmanian group, Christine first started studying laido and Jodo in 2001.

She attended her first National Seminar, Grading and Championships in January 2002 in Hobart where she won the Kyu grade Jodo pairs championship paired with Les Elliott.

Christine is an enthusiastic and popular member, always ready to assist others, and to that end has served on the AKR Jodo Board since 2008.

In the final days of compiling this first edition, she has achieved 4th Dan in both laido and Jodo.



Christine Cash performing laido kata

2002

11th Iaido and 2nd Jodo Australian Seminar and Championship, Glenorchy TAS

Excellent performances were seen at the Guilford Young College sports hall. Les Elliott excelled himself organising this excellent and memorable seminar, organising wide media coverage in Tasmania. The championship was officially opened by the Tasmanian State Minister for Sport.



Tasmanian Government House, Hobart

[www.govhouse.tas.gov.au/government-house/history]

The Sensei party and attending members were treated to a tour of the spectacular Tasmanian Government House (widely regarded as the finest Viceregal property in Australia) conducted by his Excellency Sir Guy Green, then Governor of Tasmania, who proved a most gracious host.

2002 AIJSC - Glenorchy

11th IAIDO

	1st	2nd	3rd
Dan Individual	Geordie Thompson (WA)	Claire Chan (VIC)	David Kolb (QLD)
Kyu Individual	Les Elliot (TAS)	Nial Muecke (VIC)	Brendan Frost (VIC)
TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP	VIC "A"	QLD "A"	VIC "C"
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Christine Cash (TAS), Hans Groesslinger (WA) Kevin Humphrey (QLD), Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)		

2nd JODO

Dan Pair	Ramon Lawrence (WA)	Geordie Thompson (WA)	Claire Chan (VIC)
LAWRENCE CUP	Russell Lawrence (WA)	Katsumi Kuramochi (QLD)	Tony Pickering (VIC)
Kyu Pair	Hans Groesslinger (WA)	Andrea Juresco (VIC)	Mark Woodland (TAS)
NAGAYAMA CUP	Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)	Vui Tung Mau (VIC)	Christine Cash (TAS)
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD	Andrea Juresco (VIC), Luis Pires (VIC) Vern Jacob (WA), Les Elliott (TAS)		

Aden Steinke recalls arriving in Glenorchy the morning before the 2002 seminar and deciding to go for a walk with Bob Brown to locate the dojo, ahead of the next day's early start.

Now, Tasmanians are perhaps the friendliest people in the world, willing to drop everything to help a stranger, but they have perhaps the world's worst sense of direction. Every person asked gave entirely different instructions.

Several hours later the pair found themselves at the top of a nearby mountain, at the cricket oval of Guilford Young College High School, realising they need only have walked five minutes from their motel on the main road to the Guilford Young College Primary School!

The next morning, while walking to the real seminar venue with weapon bags over their shoulders, passing motorists slowed down and asked them:

"you boys goin' fishin'?"

"nope"

"shootin'?"

"nope"

"what's in the bags then?"

"swords"

"well, bugger me! OK ... See ya!"

2007

16th Iaido and 7th Jodo Australian Seminar and Championships, Hobart TAS

Les Elliott and the crew from Tasmania again showed that they can host events as well as any other group. An excellent event was had by all – despite a small health scare from Oda Sensei during the official championship dinner at the Wrest Point Casino. Nagayama Sensei showed his scary side as he instantly went into 'bodyguard mode' and would not allow anyone near the Sensei until the Ambulance service arrived. Fortunately, all was well.

2007 AIJSC - Hobart**1st****2nd****15th IAIDO****3+ Dan UENO CUP**

Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)

Claire Chan (VIC)

1-2 Dan BLUE LEAF CUP

T. Sugio

M. Deane (VIC)

1-3 Kyu HAGA CUP

D. Campbell

John Usher (VIC)

6-4 Kyu JAMES CUP

Paul Lagoutatzis (VIC)

G. Costanzo

TEAMS NAKANISHI CUP

VIC "A"

WA "A"

6th JODO**Dan Pair LAWRENCE CUP**

Marcus Lee-Steere (VIC)

Brendan Frost (VIC)

Tony Pickering (VIC)

Andrea Pickering (VIC)

Kyu Pair NAGAYAMA CUP

Matthew Deane (VIC)

Labuschagne (TAS)

Chirot Sarraniyathan (VIC)

Graudins (TAS)



Mark Woodlands



Left to Right: Christine Cash, Russ Jackson, Dylan Labuschagne, Chris Smith, Les Elliott

South Australia – 2000's

2000

Chris Bleby was the sole South Australian competitor at the 2000 AKC in Canberra, held just after the 11th World Championships, but Sasha Sawyer and Nicole Wylie attended the associated training seminar. The entire Tanaka family travelled there also, only to find that a Yondan grading couldn't be held.

In August Ooe Sensei (5th Dan) and his son Shinya San visited and greatly assisted the members with their techniques.

Khung was the only South Australian student representative in the Ballarat (Victoria) Interschool Kendo Tournament for University Students (BIKTUS) in 2000, held when Kendo was refused a part in the Ballarat University Games (held the weekend after semester break due to the Sydney Olympics).

From October to November, Terasaki Sensei stayed up at Golden Grove and was available to assist members. His help was deeply appreciated.

2001

Poor Jonathan & Ahn Hong (Cross) rushed back for the 2001 AKC, only to be without any team in Perth!

In August the Chapsat Cup was conducted and visitors Hong & Kuritaka San helped referee.

Catherine Hallgath visited Adelaide and provided some much appreciated technical guidance.

'Uncle' Khung lead Makito, Fiona and Ed to the Homebush 2001 University Games. Their quest was made all the more notable for their "corridor-keiko" matches, held in the backpackers lodgings!

2002

A Beginner Course was displaced by the Adelaide Festival on campus to the Madley Dance Space. The floor was "crap" and impractical noise restrictions greatly restricted things, but there was lots of space for fun with lots of people.

Marcus Clarke returned back from Sydney for about 6 weeks before he headed off to the International Budo University. Fortunately, this meant Makito had a sempai for *kodachi* (short sword) kata training.

At the Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre, Nick, Fiona, Ed and Chris joined Jonathan to defeat ACT (this was the beginning of Martino's enmity against Nick!). Jonathan brought down the mighty Stuart Burke (NSW). Makito Ogawa achieved her 3rd Dan, and Chris his 1st Dan.

The University Games came to Adelaide in 2002, enabling SAKA's 2nd ever Kyu grading to be held at the preceding weekend seminar. The competition results too were quite satisfying (with Eddie 4th in Kyu Individuals and Makito 4th in the Dans). Poor Brian almost had a Flinders team, but not quite.

At the year's final training in December at the UniGym (before it closed forever) the "Cupboard" (where Kendo equipment was stored) had to be moved to the Laughton's garage (where it kindly stayed over a year, till the club moved to the Thebarton Dojo where they are now)

The 1st Renmark Kendo SA Summer Camp was organised by Brian Balshaw with kind hosts Chidokan Karate and Kancho Chris Pearce.

2003

At Homebush (Sydney) Nick, James and Chris come close to beating the ACT team (but prompted a rule-change to prescribe fighting positions for understrength teams). Nick jumped Joe Semmler in a spectacular win! More importantly, Nick came 3rd in the Kyu Individuals and was awarded a Fighting Spirit award.

In September, at the Newcastle University Games, James Brooks, Stuart McKee and Makito Ogawa represented Adelaide University credibly, but had to settle for gaining experience, rather than glory.

In October, The first formal AKR Kendo Board Seminar and Grading was conducted by Brian Brestovac (Kendo 5th Dan), Joachim Semmler (5th Dan) and Jeff White (4th Dan). This booster shot helped the SAKA community enormously as an organisation in both direction and spirit as well as individually.

2004

In February, Kendo was the first club to play at the Sports Association's new Thebarton training facility.

At the 2004 AKC in Queensland, Jonathan and Hong (from Tokyo), Chris, Nick (from Brisbane), Fiona, Brian and Stuart all bravely flew the South Australian colours. SAKA achieved a 3rd in the kata competition! It was a tight tussle with the Western Australians (Barrett in jodan). Jon and Yuji Sano's legendary rivalry really began when they met as taisho.

Unfortunately no SAKA students had the funds to attend the University Games that year. The opportunity for training and advancement at the 2004 Kendo Board Seminar, again held with Joe Semmler, Yuji Sano and Catherine Hallgath, more than made up for the missed trip though.

The 2nd Renmark Seminar was held.

Brian Balshaw won the University's A E Mitchell Award for 2004 Best Student Club Administrator!

Iaido and Jodo

In February, Ramon Lawrence and Jerri James flew over from Western Australia specifically to assist with the development of Iaido and Jodo in South Australia. A full and busy weekend's study saw the small group led by Kristian Zirnsac undergo a marked improvement and achieve a broader vision.

Over Easter, Tony Beston (WA) conducted a training session whilst visiting family in SA.

Mid-year, Ramon Lawrence returned and held a Winter training at the Thebarton dojo during semester break.

2005

The Kendo Board Seminar was again held, with Joe Semmler, Jonathan Cross and Ben Kelly teaching.

Iaido and Jodo Championship, Perth.

Kristian Zirnsac and August Boehm were the first SAKA members to attend a national Iaido and Jodo Seminar and Championship. August achieved 4th Kyu and took on a teaching role back at the small SAKA group.

2006

The 4th Renmark Summer Camp was held.

Jonathon Cross attended and greatly assisted everyone. An unfortunate double-booking of the Institute building fortuitously meant they had to train over that 40 degree weekend at the Renmark Sports Centre, which was equipped with showers and a pool!

There was a wonderful visit by Yoneyama Sensei of Kobukan and Waseda *Daigaku Kendo-bu* (University Kendo Group)

University Games, Adelaide

The universities of Adelaide jointly hosted the University Games. The Kendo tournament results were as follows:

Gold	University of Sydney (NSW)
Silver	University of Melbourne (VIC)
Bronze	Macquarie University (NSW)
4 th	Monash University (VIC)

Iaido and Jodo Championship, Wollongong

Kristian and August achieved a mighty 2nd place in the National Jodo competition and were semi-finalists in their Iaido division!

Ramon Lawrence visited again (this time with Russel Lawrence and Bob Brown of NSW) that year and drew some attention from local *koryu* (old school) people. The larger visiting party were able to hold a grading and Kristian achieved his Shodan in Iaido!

2009

34th Australian Kendo Championships – Adelaide

These were held over Easter at the Immanuel College Sports Centre and thanks to the hard work of Brian and his crew, were well regarded and successful.

34th AKC - Adelaide	1st	2nd	3rd
OPEN INDIVIDUAL	H Tani (WA)	K Smith (NSW)	M Henstock (NSW) J Cross (NSW)
KYU INDIVIDUAL	L Lee (NSW)	T Reeve (VIC)	B Yehuda (WA) C Brondolino (ACT)
WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL	V Yung (NSW)	K Sylvester (NSW)	R Marshell (ACT) D-S Chun (NSW)
SENIORS' INDIVIDUAL	T Nishimoto (NSW)	Y Sano (NSW)	G Nicholas (QLD)
OPEN TEAM	WA		VIC
KYU TEAM	WA		SA
WOMEN'S TEAM	NSW		VIC
KATA TEAM	QLD		VIC
JOHN BUTLER AWARD	D. Boyd (ACT)		
FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD	J. Chaplin (NSW), W. Yoo (WA), B. Nedic (VIC), S. Nguyen (SA)		

South Australia benefits from the World's

At the World Kendo Championships in Brazil at the end of August 2009, Nic Bartlett became the fourth South Australian expatriate to represent Australia. Some of that excitement and achievement was brought to SA by Kate Sylvester (Women's Team Captain), Arpad Maksay and Yuji Sano (Assistant Coach) running a joint SAKA/AKR Seminar in October.

34TH AUSTRALIAN KENDO CHAMPIONSHIPS

11 - 12 APRIL, 2009



VENUE: IMMANUEL COLLEGE SPORTS CENTRE,
32 MORPHETT ROAD, NOVAR GARDENS SA

Women in Kendo

Celebration of Fighting Spirit

The Australian Kendo Renmei is an organised privileged to oversee not one but three arts, which are all equally open on a gender basis. As was typified by Keiko Hirota's spectacular win over Stuart Burke, size and strength are not the determining factors in any true martial art. Spirit, as well as strength of character, technique and timing will defeat any enemy.

This section is not, in any way, an afterthought or an appendix or some kind of 'auxiliary' section. Australia's Women budoka certainly do not need a separate section because their presence, spirit and achievements shout loudly enough from the pages of this entire history. This section, then, is a celebration of their achievements and recognition of those who have helped make it so.



As commented above, spirit is the single greatest factor for any martial artist, and this has been recognised by various Fighting Spirit Awards from our earliest competitions.

The fighting spirit of Australia's Women players is exceptional and has been recognised around the world. At numerous World Championships, many great Sensei watching the Australian Women in battle have commented to Ron that *"they have great sprit!"*

It is due to the forward thinking of several leading female players in Australian Kendo that this power has been nurtured, encouraged and brought out onto the *shaijo* (tournament floor) with devastating effect.

Women in Kendo

These leaders of Australian Women's Kendo have excelled in organising international seminars and interstate seminars. Thanks to their efforts, Women's Kendo in Australia has certainly flourished and there is no doubt it is a mighty force to be reckoned with. In this too brief section, we remind the reader, in no particular order, of just some of those great leaders (many of whom are justly recognised in the main body of the text), and say "thank you" to them all for their mighty efforts in 'Promoting and Growing the Arts' as is the mission statement of the AKR itself.

Betty Lawley

Betty may never have own a trophy, but she was without a doubt THE driving force in Australian Kendo right up until just before Rex passed away. Betty's decades of selfless service were recognised with a special Life Membership award.

Hiroko Otsuka

Hiroko was one of the three 'Kendo Ladies' inherited by Willoughby Dojo by way of Yoshida Sensei. These three (Hiroko, Masako and Yukiko) provided the 'character' and cultural heart of that early Kendo community. Hiroko herself was immortalised when Ron Bennett named his ancient orange Kendo bus after her – the wonderful '*Hiroko's Express*'.

Masako Strenger (*nee* Yoshida) As well as a great figure in Australian Kendo, Masako is now perhaps Australia's greatest Japanese Weapon Sensei. A 5th Dan in the difficult art of *Naginata* (halberd), Masako teaches (with her husband Danny) from the dojo in their beautiful home. Her calm, centred demeanour belies her incredible spiritual power and skill.

Yukiko Suzuki

Third, though by no means, least, of the wonderful three 'Kendo Ladies' (Hiroko, Masako and Yukiko) who kept a fledgling Sydney Kendo Club going and, jointly, were perhaps the single greatest reason why Australia now has such a powerful and appreciated Women's membership! From its earliest days, Australian Kendo was constantly reminded by these three Women's dedication, fighting spirit and great skill, that there was no "us and them", no "Women's auxiliary group", there were just Kendo Players – one and all.



Yukiko Suzuki, Hiroko Otsuka, Ron Bennett and Masako Yoshida

Sandra Knowles

Notably, Sandra was the first ever woman to compete in an Australian Kendo Championships in 1977.

Dianne Rixon (*nee* Hughes)

Central to a great Australian Kendo dynasty (including brothers Edward (Ted), Paul and then-husband Warren Hughes – “*all champions*”), Dianne together with her brother Paul were the only joint sibling National Sporting Champions in Australian history, besides the famous swimming duo, the Conrad twins.

Dianne first encountered Kendo in autumn of 1977 in Japan when, in the 6th year of her Goju Karate study, she witnessed a Tokyo Metropolitan Police Kendo training session in the grounds of the Imperial Palace. She was hooked, as life’s complications accumulated, it was Karate that “*had to go*” to make room for Kendo!

Dianne remembers all too well those frustrating early days when there was no equipment and limited opportunity for high level instruction. The Australian Kendo community has always been an open family, and Dianne recalls often sharing hard training with the socialising that followed – all “*tired and emotional*” together! One of her strongest memories is being beaten black and blue by a tiny 60 year old *Naginata* (halberd) Sensei at the World Expo in Queensland (1988).

For 15 years a pivotal figure in Willoughby Dojo and Australian Kendo, Dianne now resides in Queensland.

Sophie Macak

Sophie’s contributions vastly outweigh the all-too-brief time we were fortunate to share with her. She enthusiastically contributed at all levels wherever she went, and helped cement South Australia into the AKR.

Her deeply sad loss in 1994 deeply wounded both her loving father Yakov, and the whole Australian Kendo community.



Sophie Macak

Catherine Hallgath

It is hard to find enough space to give justice to Catherine's contributions to Australian Kendo. A member of John Isaac's early Queensland group, pivotal in South Australia and the power behind the NSWKA, Catherine rose to serve many years as perhaps one of the greatest Vice Presidents of the AKR (keeping Ron Bennett's Presidency *in line*).

Her powerful presence on the dojo floor can only hint at her incisive presence in a board room or (we imagine) a court room, and there is no surprise that she has (just as this volume went to print) been appointed to the International Kendo Federation (FIK) Anti-Doping Hearing Panel.



Catherine Hallgath

Shoko Bunder (*nee Ito*)

No one who trains Kendo in Wollongong can fail to be examined, assessed and improved by the Shoko! A powerful 5th Dan Kendo player, Shoko (married to David and mother of three young Kendoka, Andrew, Alice and Matthew) is arguably *THE* force behind the Australian Women's Kendo program in the 21st Century.

Shoko's no-nonsense style of training and study provides a much needed foil to the Wollongong dojo's natural larrikin nature, and this drive and devotion to proper martial study is an incredible asset to the AKR and its Women members especially.

Vivian Yung

Vivian discovered Kendo at the age of about 10, through watching Japanese anime in her native Hong Kong in the early 1990's. She yearned for the devotion to training that was depicted in that program. While studying *wushu* she would slip quietly to the other side of the stadium after class to take a peek at the Kendo action occurring in another section of the stadium.

In 2001 she took a daring jump into the Sydney Kendo Club. She still remembers her very first lesson with Yoichi Yano, Michael Payne, Yuji Sano and Daniel Strenger, and with Cath Hallgath as her first *kihon* (basics) practice partner.

Vivian is a true stalwart, living her dream of hard study, and it shows in the vast benefits we all have for her time. Vivian served as Secretary to the NSWKA (actually keeping it working!) and has now moved up to bring these same skills, and the same selfless dedication, to the role of Secretary of the AKR.



The Nittaidai girls and Vivian Yung (right of centre, back row)

Kate Sylvester

Kate immigrated from New Zealand and joined the *elite* Kendo Club 'Fudoshin' (in Victoria). A signature member of that powerful group, she has represented competitively at numerous Worlds and National championships.

Notably, Kate was awarded the Worlds Fighting Spirit Trophy in Brazil, testimony to the spirit she brings to her club and to Australian Kendo.

Hayami Aboutaleb

The Fudoshin Dojo in Victoria is justly famous for its fighting spirit, due largely to its fearsome fighting Women! Hayami took the Worlds Fighting Spirit Trophy in 2000, Santa Clara.



Hayami Aboutaleb and Kate Sylvester

Claire Chan

It is hard to contemplate Women's' Kendo without conjuring an image of Claire Chan. Perhaps the single strongest Kendoka ever produced in Melbourne, Claire has represented her club, her state and Australia repeatedly; with honour, power, vigour and modesty.

Claire's impressive line-up of trophies: in Kendo, Iaido and Jodo too, declare her hard work.



Claire Chan - VIC

Motoko Indo

Motoko was a member of the Sydney Kendo Club at the Willoughby Dojo during the extended stay of Shizawa Sensei. She is fondly remembered as a powerful and dynamic player



Motoko Indo

Arwen Fenton

Arwen was a pivotal figure in South Australian Kendo, laido and Jodo, right up until her career took her away to live in Perth. Her strong support, boundless enthusiasm and incredible team spirit are sorely missed!

Erica Hewitt

Erica was the soul of the Wollongong Kendo Club, always encouraging others, always keeping the “boys in line”. She stepped up to the mark and did more than just fight with the rest of them, she nurtured and drove them to ever greater levels of effort.

A truly serious budoka, with the singing voice of an Angel (and CDs to prove it!), Erica was able to call upon the services of her Japanese Grandmother to provide much cherished *kanji* for everyone’s names. She achieved her ‘*fighting Nidan*’ rank before moving on with her life, and is deeply missed.

Jennene Greenhill

Jenenne was central to the early Queensland Kendo community as a player and administrator. She was part of the Australian contingent who represented Australian Kendo at the World Expo in 1988. Jenenne was also a powerful player and administrator, serving at the QKR Secretary in the early 90’s.

Anh Hong Cross

A frequent visitor, and thus member, to the formative South Australian Kendo group, Anh (or ‘Hong’ as they know her) held the group together and provided numerous of their better competition results.

Now married to Jonathon Cross and resident in NSW, Anh serves as one of the best State Secretaries the NSWKA has ever had.

Keiko Jones

Keiko won the Women's Australian Championship at least four times and together with husband Gregg was Australian kata Champion repeatedly.



Keiko Jones

Allison Woods

Allison travelled from Sydney to the World Championships in Korea, but was frustrated to learn that the teams were not open and at that time there was no women's division in the competition.

Chiaki Kobayashi

Chiaki fought powerfully on the Australian Women's team to the World Championships in Taiwan.



Chiaki Kobayashi

Susan Bonar

Susan is Western Australia's "pocket rocket". Her powerful scoring techniques 'on the back foot' bouncing backwards out of a cinch have brought down many a larger opponent. Not surprisingly, Susan is a regular member of the Australian National Team!

Melanie Smith

Another of South Australia's great contributions to Australian Kendo. Melanie represented Australia at the World Championships in Glasgow, where she was awarded the World Fighting Spirit Trophy.

Suzanne Rogers

Sue is Fudoshin's "trouble shooter" – she is also the "photo shooter!" Sue's incredible creative skills, often seen documenting historical Kendo moments, put a human face to Australian Kendo. She was the designer of the Australian Women's Kendo Victory Banners and of the Seishin Dojo Mon (where she holds 3rd Dan in Iaido).

Sharyn Wragg

A creative, intuitive and inspiring figure, Sharyn held the ACT together, serving as the ANUKC President. She twice represented her country at the World Kendo Championships.



Sue Rogers and friends: Oda Sensei (Kendo and Iaido 8th Dan Hanshi)
with Richard Ward and Bill Brown from Seishin Iaido Dojo



Vivian Yung, Susan Bonar, Claire Chan, Kate Sylvester (2004)



Left to Right: Shoko Bunder, Vivian Yung, Melanie Smith

Women's Kendo Victory Banners - 2006

Though the open competition events have always been fiercely contested by the women players, in order to encourage and nurture their spirit, there has long been a competition division to recognise their dedication.

As flags and trophies have accumulated in the national collection for various divisions, there was a glaring omission that needed to be addressed.

The incredibly talented pair of Sharyn Wragg (ACT) and Sue Rogers (VIC) created two spectacular Victory Banners (for the Women's Individual Champion and the winning Women's Team) to sit beside the great Victory Flags gifted by Nakakura Sensei and Matsushima Sensei.

The banners were dedicated to Ron Bennett who was surprised and very humbled by the honour.



Original pencil concept sketches for the Women's' Victory Banners



Women's Victory Banners in the making



The magnificent Australian Women's Kendo Individual Victory Banner



The spectacular Australian Women's Kendo Team Victory Banner



Left to Right: Kate Sylvester, Ron Bennett and Hayami Aboutaleb display the Women's Championship Banners

Dear Sensei

I have made a little kendo present for you. "Zipper" - my friendly dog allows me to use some of her bones - after she has enjoyed the marrow. Instead of engraving 'Fudoshin' or 'heart' or 'soul' on it, I chose 'Dream'.

(If you don't want it on a hakama, it is useful as a zip-puller on a bogan bag.)

I hope that it will remind you that there is a kendoka who (among many others) will always be grateful for your kindness and encouragement.

with love,

Sue

(SUE ROGERS)



"Dream" bone hakama tag. Handmade by Sue Rogers, presented to Ron Bennett.

Women in Iaido and Jodo

The AKR is, of course, an organisation of three related sword-based martial arts.

Australian women have been standout figures in these incredibly disciplined and deeply philosophical arts as well. Some standout leaders among Australian female Iaidoka and Jodoka (again, in no particular order) include:

Claire Chan

Though famous in Kendo circles, it is impossible to ignore Claire in both Iaido and Jodo as well! She won multiple Iaido championships, right up until she was no longer able to compete (due to having attained 5th Dan). Claire is a main teacher in these arts at the Kenshikan Dojo in Melbourne.

Ruth Franklin

Ruth is the teacher of Iaido the Suigetsu Kan Dojo, which she founded. A long time NSW Iaido member, Ruth is the 'soul' of NSW Iaido, keeping that whole community focussed on the deepest principles of the art.

Rebecca Lee-Steere (*nee* Lim)

Once in Australia, Rebecca trained extensively in Western Australia under Ramon Lawrence in multiple arts. Her career took her to Victoria, where she married Marcus Lee-Steere. The two have become a dominant force in Australian Jodo, winning the national trophy almost every time they contest it.

Majde Horden

Is perhaps the brightest star in the ACT Iaido community. She provides motivation, enthusiasm and publicity to the Iaidoka there in abundance. Her husband Darren Boyd is a leader in the ACT Kendo world, and together they are the pillars that hold Canberra up!

Melanie Hawthorne

Daughter of Dean Hawthorn, Melanie studied at the original Blue Leaf Dojo and again in the Sydney Iaido Club after her father restarted it. A frequent visitor to Japan, Melanie quickly rose to the rank of 3rd Dan in Iaido and trained many of Sydney's Iaidoka.

Christine Cash

Christine first started studying Iaido and Jodo in 2001. She is the exemplar and driving force behind Tasmania's committed group of Iaido and Jodo students. Christine's budo philosophy might be best typified as "*bloody hard work*" – a straight shooting, straight talking martial arts leader, she only asks of others what she demands of herself; total commitment.

A stalwart of the Tasmanian group, She attended her first National Seminar, Grading and Championships in January 2002 in Hobart where she won the Kyu grade Jodo pairs championship paired with Les Elliott. Christine is an enthusiastic and popular member, always ready to assist others, and to that end has served on the AKR Jodo Board since 2008.

Christine Trevillion

Chris and her husband Doug have been friends of Ron Bennett since the earliest days. Their commitment to martial arts is without peer. They are natural leaders and were chosen by Dean Hawthorn to take up the leadership of the prestigious Sydney Iaido Club when health issues forced Dean to stand aside from regular practice.

Chris (now 3rd Dan) works tirelessly to maintain good standards and to further her study, and has recently founded the Shirasagi Iaido Dojo in Sydney's west.



Chris Trevillion

Terri Gallagher

A smile as big as the great West itself belies a powerful budoka! Terri doesn't just make a splash on the dojo floor with her presence, but with her skills as well. She frequently dominates the Iaido championships in her division.

Dr Ah Loi Lee

Dr. Lee (8th Dan Aikido JAA, 7th Dan Renshi Iaido ZNKR, 7th Dan Renshi Jodo ZNKR, 1st Dan Kendo BKA) started her martial arts career in 1959 with Tomiki Aikido, which she came to lead, in the UK. Dr Lee commenced her study of Iaido and Jodo in 1981 whilst in Japan whilst on a visit to her Aikido Sensei.

She immigrated to Western Australia, initially to simply run a small business and maintain her personal training, but was soon drawn back into the budo world (initially offering 'flying visits' to the Budokan Academy), and established the Shu Bu Kan Dojo (Iaido and Jodo) in Perth.

As of the very last moments of the editing of this text, Dr Lee is now a central figure in the AKR, having just assumed the Chairs of the AKR Iaido Board and of the Western Australian Kendo Renmei.

Janet Griffiths

Janet took up martial training at the age of 8 and achieved high status in UK Aikido. Janet started studying Jodo under Dr Lee in 1992 and has risen to hold 5th Dan in that art, accumulating extensive international experience along the way.

In 2005 she commenced study in Iaido and has since attained 2nd Dan in that art too. Janet now serves on the AKR Iaido Board.

The 2000 World Kendo Championship

At Santa Clara (USA) at the 2000 World Kendo Championships, the Australian Women's Kendo Team made a huge impact. Their fighting spirit was second to none, and none who saw them could fail to be deeply impressed.



Australian Women's Team to the 2000 World Kendo Championships, Santa Clara, USA
Left to Right: Melanie Smith, Hayami Aboutaleb, Jonathon Cross, Damien Carmody-Stephens, Dr Miyasaka,
Catherine Hallgath, Claire Chan, Susan Bonar

The Future

They're Never Too Young

The mission statement of the AKR is to *promote and grow the arts*. To that end, it is necessary to encourage young people to take up this life-long calling. We present below a small sample of the future of Kendo. To see these youngsters in general practice can only give us a feeling of contentment, for there is no doubt that they are the future of Kendo in Australia.



Paul and Jayne Rixon's daughters Jessica and Teanne



Vivian Yung and the youngest member of Jonathon and Ahn Cross' family



Damon Shearer's son Alexander



Front row from Left: Karin Komemoto, Yuko Hoshino, Takuto Hoshino, Sena Koshiji
Second row from Left: Sayo Kokubun, Kate Sorden, Yamato Ise, Towa Kagami



Kirby Smith's son Xavier



Remy Makoto Smith – son of Brett Smith



Left to Right: Alice, Matthew and Andrew Bunder



Shizawa Sensei – Professor of Kendo



Jonathon Cross encouraging younglings



A Juniors' training session



Spirit, energy and enthusiasm – the great benefits of youth!

Late Developments

History has no end

It took far longer to compile this first edition of the Progress of Kendo, Iaido and Jodo in Australia than anyone ever anticipated. Though this text addresses events up to 2009, there were a few notable (and too often, sad) events after that date that simply could not be left out. We rely heavily on the reportage of these events from the official AKR website (designed, built and maintained by President Richard Ward) for these final few articles.

Vale: Sumitaka (John) Nagae

Sensei Sumitaka (John) Nagae, Kendo Kyoshi 7th Dan, passed away on November 14th 2011 in Tokyo.

Nagae Sensei was a much loved and respected Kendoka both in Australia and in Japan. Since the 1970's Nagae Sensei has been not only a Kendo inspiration to many, but a much respected and loved leader to the Kendo community in Victoria and in particular, in Melbourne.

He will be missed very much.



Nagae Sensei was the Patron and a Life Member of the Australian Kendo Renmei. He was presented with the Japan Foreign Ministers Commendation Award in August 2002 for his work in establishing relations between Australia and Japan; the Japanese Imperial 5th Order of Merit of The Rising Sun in April 2003 and received a Commendation awarded by the All Japan Kendo Federation in December 2007 for his contribution to Kendo. Accompanied by his wife, Reiko, Nagae Sensei returned to live in Japan in 2008.

Nagae Sensei was laid to rest at private ceremony in Tokyo on November 17th 2011.

Shogo Rank for Yoichi Yano

Setting a wonderful precedent, Yoichi Yano, Kendo 7th Dan, was awarded the Shogo level of Kendo Kyoshi. He is the first Australian-trained member to be so recognised.

The All Japan Kendo Federation (ZNKR) opened up their examination for Kyoshi, to Kendo, Iaido and Jodo practitioners who do not reside in Japan for the first time in 2011. Yoichi travelled to Japan to sit a gruelling half day exam in Tokyo in November 2011, which he passed.

This is an important milestone for Australian Kendo as Yano Sensei commenced Kendo training in Sydney during the 1970's and therefore we can claim him as a home-grown Kendoka!

The AKR warmly congratulated Yoichi Yano on his great achievement.



Yoichi Yano (R) receiving his Kyoshi certificate, from AKR President, Richard Ward on 29 January 2012

AKR member selected for FIK Anti-Doping Hearing Panel.

One of our members has been selected as a member of the International Kendo Federation (FIK) Anti-Doping Hearing Panel. The decision was made at the recent International Kendo Federation Board of Directors Meeting.

Catherine Hallgath of the Sydney Kendo Club in NSW, is a former AKR Vice President and has represented Australia at World Kendo Championship events. Those attributes, added to her experience as a lawyer, were considerations when making the appointment.

The Hearing Panel has been established to consider appeals (if any) related to the use of prohibited drugs by competitors at international Kendo competitions.

Catherine's achievement greatly raises and highlights the status of Kendo in the international arena of sports administration, which is usually dominated by European sports.

Vale: James Fennessy

In the final moments of preparing this edition, Australian Kendo was saddened to hear of a great loss. Mr James Fennessy (our first undisputed home-grown Sensei) had passed after a short battle with cancer. The AKR President published a moving tribute which we reproduce in full below:



It is with great sadness that the Australian Kendo Renmei acknowledges the passing of Sensei James Fennessy, Kendo 7th Dan, on Sunday 22 January 2012.

Fennessy Sensei, or to many of us – Jamie, was an inspirational and charismatic leader in the Australian Kendo community and he will be sadly missed. Fennessy Sensei was also well known around the world. Deep respect and fondness are two apt descriptions for the esteem in which he was held by those who knew him.

Fennessy Sensei had been actively involved in Australian Kendo since 1974. In his various locations for study or work, he established or was a founding member of numerous Kendo clubs. This alone was a remarkable series of achievements that has provided a foundation from which to further strengthen the Australian Kendo community.

In 1990 Fennessy Sensei achieved the esteemed Kendo level of seventh dan. Until then, such a high grade was exclusively possessed by Japanese Kendo experts. This was a great personal achievement for him.

Fennessy Sensei lived and worked in Japan for many years and after his return to Australia, became active in guiding the technical improvement of Australian Kendo, particularly in New South Wales, where he had settled.

Fennessy Sensei was also a member of many management committees and in recent years was the internal auditor for the International Kendo Federation.

Fennessy Sensei was a formidable and experienced competitor in Kendo competitions. He first competed at the Second Australian Kendo Championships thirty-four years ago and has since represented Australia at many World Kendo Championships. He has competed at and won Australian Kendo Championships and many other local Kendo championships as well. He will continue to be fondly remembered for his formidable presence in the Kendo dojo (training hall).

In his Kendo, committee and competitor roles, Fennessy Sensei was also a much respected mentor to others. In the Kendo dojo, Fennessy Sensei was keenly sought out by all Kendoka for an opportunity to test their skills against him and to also to learn from him. He had many skills that were very, very valuable to us – he was fluent in Japanese and English, his understanding of Kendo was sublime and his ability to use those attributes for the benefit of progressing the Kendo skills of others was outstanding and most generous. His advice to us on just how to manage relationships with people from a different culture was also gratefully received and of great assistance.

In recent years, Fennessy Sensei's devotion and interest in Kendo was of benefit to the Kendo players of Victoria, to where he had returned and made many new friends while also reigniting friendships of many years standing.

The training guidance, support and unforgettable advice offered by James Fennessy has altered the landscape of Australian Kendo, and for that we are in his debt. For his valued friendship and his passion to share his knowledge, he will be in our memories forever and such a nice man will be sadly missed by all of us.

Our condolences and sympathy are extended to James' family and friends.

Rest in peace James.

-Australia makes a big hit in kendo-

By NICOLE JEFFERY

TO the uninitiated, Australian exponents describe it as "Japanese fencing". But kendo is more Darth Vader than Three Musketeers, and film-maker George Lucas need not have looked any further for inspiration for the costume and weaponry of the Star Wars villain – cross samurai with science fiction and there you have it.

With only 1200 kendo players in Australia, the sport doesn't attract too much attention, but in Japan it is more popular than judo or karate and just as exacting a martial art.

For such a small band, Australian kendo players have achieved remarkable international success. The five-man Australian team has just returned from New Zealand, having won the annual Nakukura Cup.

In 1979 the Australian team finished in the top four at world championships and is still ranked in the top 10 of 47 countries where the sport is practised.

National captain Jamie Fennessy is a fifth dan – the highest qualification attained by an Australian – and has taught kendo in Japanese schools, where it is compulsory. (He says it is like having a Japanese teaching cricket to Australian school-boys.)

Like his Australian teammates – Michael Peters, Paul Rixon, Colin Minter and Don Miller – Fennessy's interest in kendo began with a love of Japanese culture. He visited Japan as a high school student in 1973 and has been studying kendo since. He has spent six of the past 17 years in Japan, has taught Japanese language at university, and is now manager of the Japanese marketing division of the Australian Trade Commission.

Fennessy said his kendo expertise was partly responsible for his success in trading with the Japanese.

"It opens doors... I am the only one who can do business with a Japanese businessman and hit him over the head afterwards," he said.

Kendo players wear a modern version of the traditional medieval garb – dark robes, an apron, breastplate and helmet – called a "bogu"; the weapon is a "shinai" (made of four plates of bamboo bound leather).

"It's not like a solid piece of wood because it bends on impact and we are well-protected, but you can feel it when it hits.

"In international competition, the players swing them at up to 175 km/h, which is faster than Dennis Lillee's bowling – you have to be very, very quick."

In kendo matches, points are scored for hitting an opponent on the head, chest, neck and wrists.

Kendo combat is accompanied by ferocious yelling and the slap of bamboo swords.

Fennessy said age, sex, size and strength are no barrier for top kendo players.



The Australian kendo team has a hit-out at practice – Picture: PETER BRENNAN

Tireless supporter of us all, Jamie Fennessey kept Kendo in the headlines wherever he went.

Afterword by Ron Bennett

At last we have finished our historical recollections. In the main, we have endeavoured to give the story line of how it all happened. In writing it, I was saddened by some memories and at other times elated with happiness and humour.

It is all of you I thank, most humbly, for giving me the chance to be part of our Progress in Kendo.

Please be kind to each other and remember to carry on the true spirit of all three arts.



Ron Bennett

6th July 2011

Ron Bennett

Afterword by Bob Brown

Halfway through a cold and drawn out mid-year AKR Executive meeting at the University of Sydney a few years ago (I was Secretary for the laido Board at the time), I gladly volunteered to help 'Benno' compile a historical document. I imagined that my background in publishing, academia and budo would be of some use, but no one could predict the long and lonely journey that lay ahead of us. We covered many miles, ploughed through endless photo albums, ancient mouldy documents, and spent endless hours on the phone and the internet.

It has been a long, often frustrating exercise and I don't think I'd be happy with the result even if I spent a further decade working on it, but I am privileged to have had the chance to catch up with old friends again, to learn about what went before, and to see just how important were many of the people I was fortunate to meet, train with and learn from over the last quarter century or so.

That said, it amazed me that so many people, glad to sit around over a beer after a match and reminisce for hours about the 'good old days', consistently had little or nothing to say when asked to go 'on record'. We hope this, the best effort we could make with what we had, will stir some memories and prompt people to submit photos, facts, figures and most importantly, anecdotes towards some expanded future edition.

Our primary motivation was to present a fair telling of the Progress to Rex Lawley (the man who started it all) as well as the membership. Sadly, Rex left us before we could finish. It remains to present and future AKR members, to keep the memory and traditions of our AKR arts alive.

This story has no end. You write new pages every time you pick up a sword in a dojo. Please do so with honour, building and (I hope) recording, a worthy legacy for those who will follow us.



Bob fails to cut newspaper with a shinai, under the withering gaze of Hage Sensei (2004)

Bob Brown

7th July 2011

Appendices



List of Australian Kendo Championships

1975	1 st	Melbourne VIC
1977	2 nd	Canberra ACT
1978	3 rd	Brisbane QLD
1979	4 th	Sydney NSW
1980	5 th	Sydney NSW
1981	6 th	Canberra ACT
1982	7 th	Sydney NSW
1983	8 th	Sydney NSW
1984	9 th	Canberra ACT
1985	10 th	Gosford NSW
1986	11 th	Canberra ACT
1987	12 th	Cowra NSW
1988	13 th	Rockdale NSW
1989	14 th	Canberra ACT
1990	15 th	Sydney NSW
1991	16 th	Perth WA
1992	17 th	Melbourne VIC
1993	18 th	Sydney NSW
1994	19 th	Brisbane QLD
1995	20 th	Canberra ACT
1996	21 st	Perth WA
1997	22 st	Melbourne VIC
1998	23 nd	Wollongong NSW
1999	24 th	Tallebudgera QLD
2000	25 th	Canberra ACT
2001	26 th	Perth WA
2002	27 th	Melbourne VIC
2003	28 th	Sydney NSW
2004	29 th	Tallebudgera QLD
2005	30 th	Canberra ACT
2006	31 st	Perth WA
2007	32 nd	Melbourne VIC
2008	33 rd	Sydney NSW
2009	34 th	Adelaide SA
2010	35 th	Melbourne VIC
2011	36 th	Tallebudgera QLD

Many AKC results, especially through the 1990's are missing from this edition. Sadly, one set of records was destroyed in the fire of 1999 that claimed Dale Gould's home and the draft of his Kendo History. Another complete listing of all championships, compiled over decades, was entrusted to Nagae Sensei for safekeeping at the Kenshikan in Melbourne. Sadly this volume has not yet been located since his return to Japan and subsequent passing.

List of World Kendo Championships

1970	1 st	TOKYO, Japan	
1973	2 nd	LOS ANGELES, USA	
1976	3 rd	MILTON KEYNES, UK	
1979	4 th	SAPPORO, Japan	... first appearance of an Australian team.
1982	5 th	SAO PAOLO, Brazil	
1985	6 th	PARIS, France	
1988	7 th	SEOUL, Korea	
1991	8 th	TORONTO, Canada	
1994	9 th	PARIS, France	
1997	10 th	KYOTO, Japan	
2000	11 th	SANTA CLARA, USA	
2003	12 th	GLASGOW, Scotland	
2006	13 th	TAIPEI, Taiwan	
2009	14 th	SAO PAOLO, Brazil	
2012	15 th	NAVARA, Italy	

List of Australian Iaido and Jodo Championships

Iaido Championships – First Decade

1991	1 st	Sydney (NSW)	... inaugural
1993	2 nd	Sydney (NSW)	
1994	3 rd	Canberra (ACT)	
1995	4 th	Canberra (ACT)	
1996	5 th	Sydney (NSW)	
1997	6 th	Sydney (NSW)	
1998	7 th	Sydney (NSW)	
1999	8 th	Sydney (NSW)	

Joint Iaido and Jodo Championships – New Millennium

2000	9 th	Iaido	Melbourne (VIC) ...	Jodo seminar and grading, no championship
2001	10 th	Iaido & 1 st Jodo	Perth (WA)	
2002	11 th	Iaido & 2 nd Jodo	Glenorchy (TAS)	
2003	12 th	Iaido & 3 rd Jodo	Tallebudgera (QLD)	
2004	13 th	Iaido & 4 th Jodo	Melbourne (VIC)	
2005	14 th	Iaido & 5 th Jodo	Perth (WA)	
2006	15 th	Iaido & 6 th Jodo	Wollongong (NSW)	
2007	16 th	Iaido & 7 th Jodo	Hobart (TAS)	
2008	17 th	Iaido & 8 th Jodo	Tallebudgera (QLD)	
2009	18 th	Iaido & 9 th Jodo	Canberra (ACT)	
2010	19 th	Iaido & 10 th Jodo	Perth (WA)	

List of Intervarsity and University Games

Intervarsity Kendo Tournaments

- 1993 Melbourne VIC (unofficial)
1994 Adelaide SA (unofficial)

University Games with Official Kendo Competitions

- 1994 Wollongong (NSW)
1995 *no record*
1996 Canberra (ACT)
1997 Melbourne (VIC)
1998 Melbourne (VIC)
1999 Perth (WA)
2000 Ballarat (VIC)
2001 Sydney (NSW)
2002 Adelaide (SA)
2003 Newcastle (2003)
2004 Perth (WA)
2005 Brisbane (QLD)
2006 Adelaide (SA)
2007 Gold Coast (QLD)
2008 Melbourne (VIC)
2009 Gold Coast (QLD)
2010 Perth (WA)

List of Founders Cup Tournaments

- 1997 1st Coaldale (Grafton) ... inaugural
1998 2nd Newcastle
1999 3rd Picton (UOW Kendo Club)
2000 4th Picton (UOW Kendo Club)
2001 5th Picton (UOW Kendo Club)
2003 6th Burwood (Dae Han Moo Do Kwan)
2004 7th Epping (Han Rim Won Kumdo Dojang)
2005 8th Sydney (Glebe)
2006 9th Sydney (UNSW Kendo Club)
2007 10th Wollongong (UOW Kendo Club)
2008 11th Camperdown (USYD Kendo Club)
2009 12th Burwood (Dae Han Moo Do Kwan)
2010 13th Epping (Han Rim Won Kumdo Dojang)

List of AKR Clubs – 2011

New South Wales

Sydney Kendo Club	Willoughby & Five Dock	Kendo		
Sydney Iaido Club (Blue Leaf Dojo)	Seven Hills		Iaido	
University of Wollongong Kendo Club	University of Wollongong	Kendo	Iaido	Jodo
University of Sydney Kendo Club	Camperdown	Kendo		
University of NSW Kendo Club	Kensington	Kendo		
Byron Bay Kendo Club	Byron Bay	Kendo		
Dae Han Moo Do Kwan Kumdo	Burwood	Kumdo		
Han Rim Won Kumdo Dojang	Epping & West Ryde	Kumdo		
Kingscliff Kendo	Kingscliff	Kendo		
Macquarie University Kumdo Club	North Ryde	Kumdo		
Sakura Bana Budo Ryu	Milton	Kendo		
Sei Do Kan Dojo	Dundas Valley & Cherrybrook		Iaido	
Shinbukan Dojo	Hornsby	Kendo	Iaido	
Shirasagi Dojo	Toongabbie		Iaido	
Suigetsukan Dojo	North Ryde		Iaido	

Victoria

Ballarat Kendo Club	Ballarat	Kendo	Iaido	Jodo
Chikushinkai	Lower Templestowe		Iaido	Jodo
Fudoshin Kendo	Parkville	Kendo		
Melbourne Budokai	West Melbourne	Kendo	Iaido	
Monash University Kendo	Clayton	Kendo		
Mumeishi Kendo Club	Berwick	Kendo		
Nanseikan Dojo	Heidelberg West	Kendo		
North Balwyn Iaido	North Balwyn		Iaido	
Renshinkan	Benalla	Kendo		
Seishin Iaido	Kew		Iaido	
Tojinkai	Coburg		Iaido	Jodo
University of Melbourne	Melbourne University	Kendo		
Victoria University Kendo Club	Victoria University	Kendo		

Queensland

KenShinKai	Mount Gravatt	Kendo	laido	
Brisbane Aikikai	Newstead		laido	Jodo
Bayside Budokai	Wynnum		laido	Jodo
ShuBuKai	Nerang, Gold Coast	Kendo	laido	Jodo
Tengenkai	Tewantin, Noosa & Ipswich		laido	
Kohokai	Gatton	Kendo	laido	Jodo
Mu Shin Itto	Toowoomba	Kendo		
Rockhampton Kendo Club	North Rockhampton	Kendo		
Mackay Kendo Club	North Mackay	Kendo	laido	
Goshu Shobukan	Cairns	Kendo	laido	Jodo

Australian Capital Territory

ANU Kendo Club	ANU Sports Bldg	Kendo		
Shorinkai	Belconnen		laido	Jodo
KuroYamaKai	ANU Sports Bldg		laido	Jodo

Western Australia

Budokan Academy	Canning Vale	Kendo	laido	Jodo
Fremantle Kendo Club	Fremantle	Kendo		
Goshinkai Kendo Club	City Beach, Perth	Kendo		
Jugokan Iaido/Jodo Club	Mosman Park		laido	Jodo
Murdoch University Kendo Club	Murdoch University	Kendo		
Perth Martial Arts Academy	Tuart Hill		laido	Jodo
Shu Bu Kan Iaido/Jodo Club	Wembley		laido	Jodo
Shin Bu Kan Busselton	West Busselton		laido	Jodo
Shin Sei Kan Iaido Club	Karrinyup		laido	
Dunsborough	Old Dunsborough		laido	Jodo
Manjimup Rin Bu Kan	Manjimup		laido	Jodo

Tasmania

Hobart Kendo Club	Glenorchy	Kendo		
Les Elliott's Karate & Kobudo Acad.	West Hobart		laido	Jodo

South Australia

Adelaide University Kendo Club	Thebarton Campus	Kendo	laido	Jodo
Flinders University Kendo Club	Bedford Park	Kendo	laido	Jodo

AKR Honours List

Shogo Awards

- 2011: Yoichi Yano, Kendo Kyoshi 7 Dan
2010: Takeshi Itakura, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan and Yuji Sano, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan.
2008: Damian Carmody-Stephens, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan.
2007: Toshiaki Tsukadaira, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan. Paul Rixon, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan.
Brett Smith, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan.
2006: Michael Payne, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan. Ramon Lawrence, Iaido Renshi 6 Dan.
2005: Yakov Macak, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan. Yoichi Yano, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan.
Peter Szwarcbord, Kendo Renshi 6 Dan.
1996: Sumitaka Nagae, Kendo Kyoshi 7 Dan .

Honours

In recognition of their valued contribution to the Australian Kendo Renmei, the below listed members have been awarded special recognition by the members of the AKR.

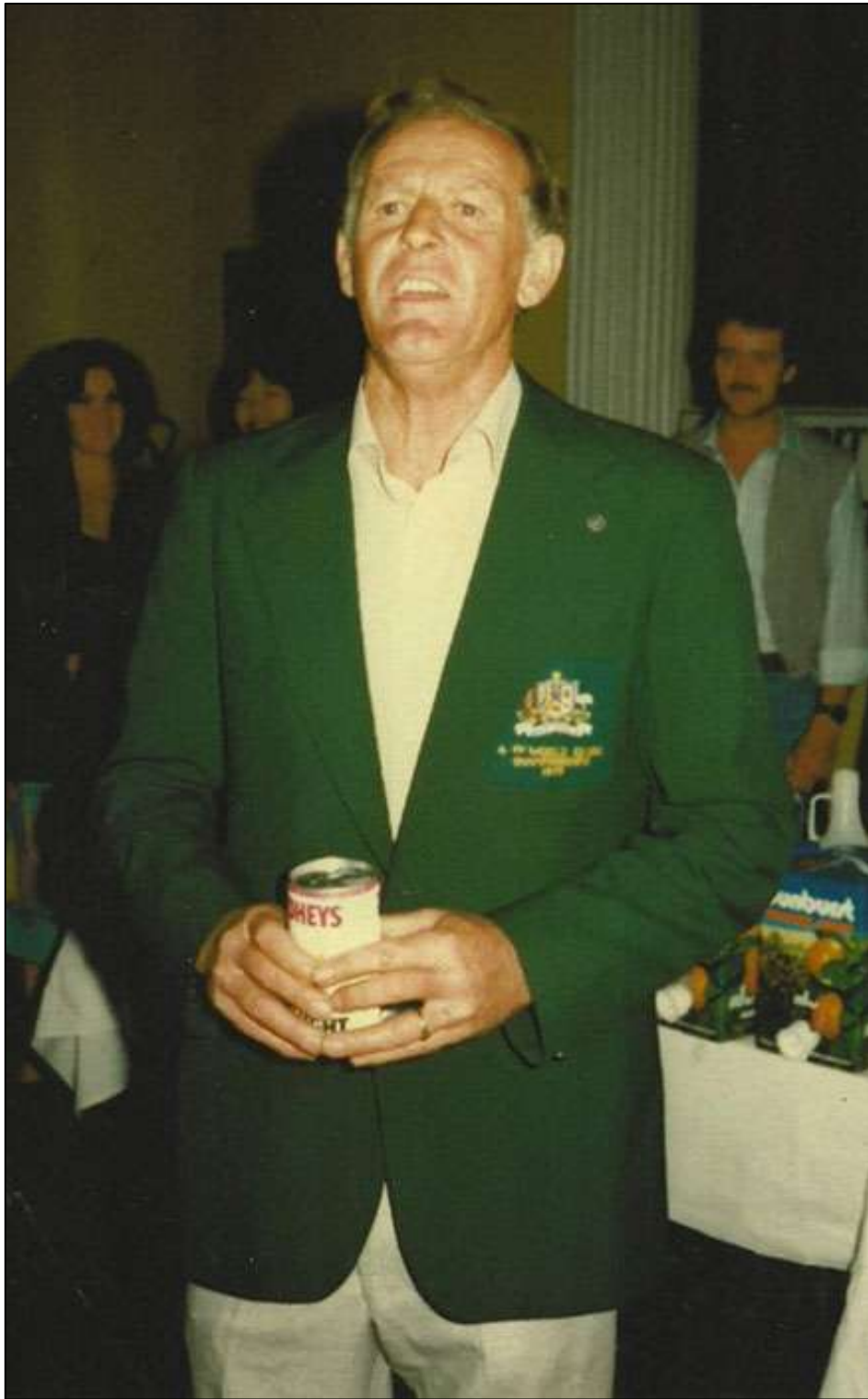
FIRST PATRON and LIFE MEMBER:

Sumitaka Nagae, Vic. 23/04/1921 - 14/11/ 2011.

Presented with the Japan Foreign Ministers Commendation Award, August 2002. Awarded AKR Life Membership, April 2003. Awarded the Japanese 5th Order of Merit of The Rising Sun, April 2003. Commendation awarded by the All Japan Kendo Federation, December 2007.

LIFE MEMBERS

- Ron Bennett, NSW., November 2002.
Betty Lawley, NSW. November 2002.
Rex Lawley, NSW. *Special Commendation*, November 2002.
Stephen Lawley, NSW. November 2002.
Michael Payne, NSW. November 2002.
Rod Prince, Qld. November 2002.
Yakov Macak, Vic. 2001.
John Vincent Butler, Vic. 2002.
Paul Leon Guerillot, Vic. 2002.
Yoichi Yano, NSW. 2005.
Ramon Lawrence, WA. 2008.



From all of us,
thank you Rex