

Cream of Shotokan visit Waterford

by Mary Ryan

DUNGARVAN, CO. Waterford was the venue for the recent International Japan Karate Association(IJKA) Summer Camp and Asai Cup European Open Karate Championships, an impressive event which boasted a 'who's who' of top black belts from the world of Shotokan Karate-Do. Topping the bill were Shihan Tetsuhiko Asai, 9th Dan IJKA world chief instructor; Shihan Sadashige Kato, 8th Dan IJKA European chief instructor, and Sensei Bruno Koller, 6th Dan chief instructor of the IJKA Switzerland.

Other well regarded instructors who assisted at the Camp included Sensei Keith Gullen, 6th Dan IJKA Britain; Sensei Jan Spatzek, 5th Dan IJKA Denmark; Sensei Sokare Gorgen, 5th Dan IJKA Sweeden; Sensei David Muir, 5th Dan IJKA Scotland; Sensei Andrei Dornenko, 5th Dan IJKA Russia, and Sensei Brian Toomey, 5th Dan chief instructor for the IJKA Ireland.

A number of fishing trips were organised for those guests who arrived prior to the camp. The visiting Japanese Senseis came out on top here with Asai shihan catching his first ever salmon on the River Blackwater, and Kato Shihan catching the most species on the sea fishing trip.

The summer camp proper began on Thursday evening in the sports hall of the Agustinian College where, after the warm-ups Scott Langley -who flew from Japan especially for the event- showed the students a range of interesting stretching techniques. Following this, Asai shihan took the class where he concentrated on hip movement. This varied from 'hanmeshomen' hip movement to spinning 180 degrees and 360 degrees to evasion techniques just using hip movement and also using Shihan's unique circular blocking techniques.



He then taught Mae Geri and Mae Geri Kekomi. It was wonderful to watch him demonstrate kicking Mae Geri from the 'seiza' position without raising his upper body. The only person I've seen to match him in this was the late 7th Dan Sensei Brian Woods.

After a break, Kato Shihan took over and taught Zuki No Kata and Mae Geri No Kata. These are part of a series of katas developed by Kato Shihan for practising a particular technique or stance. He explained that by perfecting these katas, the particular technique or stance will come a lot more naturally in what ever kata it is practised in. Some of these katas will shortly be introduced into the grading syllabus from 4th kyu upwards.

The following morning everyone assembled on the nearby beach where in brilliant sunshine they started the days training with warm-ups. Asai Shihan taught his own unique exercise routine - one which he practises every morning at 5:00am. He then demonstrated how each of these movements were applicable in a self-defense situation.

Bruno Sensei took the next class and began with kihon training with Oi-zuki. Next he taught Ma-Ai or proper distancing or timing with respect to one's partner, explaining that since karate techniques always vary according to circumstances, it is important to understand how difference in initial position affect the timing and application of the techniques. This enjoyable session finished with Kato Shihan teaching Kiba Dachi No Kata. Later in the afternoon, back in the college gym, Kato Shihan taught Ma-Ai and Tai-Sabaki techniques against two attackers, while Asai shiahn finished the day by teaching Kata Jun Ro Yondan.

The following day the Asai cup European Open Championships took place. Eliminations took place at 10:00am and by late afternoon four countries, Ireland, England, Russia and Switzerland, were clearly dominating the proceedings. The biggest surprise of the Championships was the elimination of the Irish world champion P.J. Maloney in the mens kumite competition, and Scott Langley in the kata event. However, later both fared better in the team events.

In the evening there was a party for everyone and especially for Sensei Toomey who was celebrating 25 years practising Karate-Do. presentations were made to sensei toomey by Asai Shihan on behalf of the Japanese and IJKA Europe Instructors, and by P.J. Maloney on behalf of the IJKA Ireland in recognition of his service to the art.

There was a great turnout the following morning for the final session where Kato Shihan took the class for kumite training. Asai Shihan also taught Yori Ashi and explained the importance for natural body movement. He then finished a wonderful camp by instructing Jun Ro Godan Kata. During the camp Irishman Paul White and visiting English Shotkan exponent Philip Freeman successfully graded to shodan and yondan respectively.

RESULTS:

<u>Junior Kata:</u>	<u>Ladies Kata:</u>	<u>Mens Kata:</u>	<u>Veterans Kata:</u>
G.Noshrevan (Russ)	T.Marshall (Eng)	L.Kirwan (Eng)	A.Dormenko (Russ)
K.Long (Irl)	N.O'Sullivan (Irl)	C.Fisher (Switz)	B.Toomey (Irl)
L.Urbanke (Switz)	P.Rut (Switz)	P.Freeman (Eng)	O.Brinlenox (Russ)
<u>Team Kata:</u>	<u>Girls Kumite (8-12yrs):</u>	<u>13 - 16 yrs:</u>	<u>Boys Kumite (8-12yrs):</u>
England A	G.Ni Graide (Irl)	F.McCarthy (Irl)	M.Sheehan (Irl)
Switzerland A	G.Ronayne (Irl)	M.Freyne (Irl)	O.McCarthy (Irl)
England B	R.Duffy (Irl)	N.Urbanke (Switz)	M.Mullarkey (Irl)
<u>13 - 16 yrs:</u>	<u>Ladies Kumite:</u>	<u>Mens Kumite:</u>	<u>Team Kumite:</u>
G.Noshrevan (Russ)	P.Rut (Switz)	C.Fisher (Switz)	England
A.Thriskan (Russ)	N.O'Sullivan (Irl)	M.Donnely (Irl)	Ireland
R.Margan (Irl)	M.Ryan (Irl)	S.Langley (Eng)	Switzerland