

# HONOURING THE ANCESTORS

## The Annual Kodosai International

**T**he annual Kodosai International was the place to sharpen up your fighting skill 14 - 16 October. Stratford upon Avon Leisure Centre hosted one of the most prestigious gatherings of the good and the great in the traditional martial arts world. Top martial artists from Japan, USA, Canada, Italy, Ireland, Austria, Switzerland, Spain and England came to give a multidisciplinary master class on the real life application of their fighting techniques. Teaching at the event were over 20 international masters and teachers of aikido, karate, ju-jitsu, and kobudo to name just a few.

Students had the opportunity to train with masters from around the world and try out techniques from other styles in real life situations including techniques for dealing with knives and pistols as well as unarmed combat. In addition, students would also gain experience in the types of training methods used by others. It was a real pick and mix, with every traditional flavour on offer.

No one should have any doubts about traditional martial arts, they work!

William Stockey-Hanshi, 10th Dan, Okinawan Karate, made the point that long before the new arts of Kick

Boxing and Brazilian Ju Jitsu were invented, traditional martial artists had no difficulty in despatching assailants. When those guys who invented the traditional arts hit an opponent, it was effective! That's why the arts were past down for hundreds of years. Like many of the instructors, he has had cause to use it for real too! As a young man in Chicago some thug attempted to mug him for his wallet, but the mugger got short shift and his anti social behaviour was soon corrected. On kata's, Stockey-Hanshi was equally unequivocal - kata are a vital training tool teaching the student precision in technique. In addition to the benefit of practice for the student, it enables the instructor to observe and correct the student so he perfects and hones each technique until his body becomes a powerful weapon.

Stockey-Hanshi had some practical advice for real life. Don't waste your time going to ground with an opponent. If you do, you're likely to discover he has a load of mates around the corner just waiting to give you a good kicking on the floor. Take him out and then get out. The best defence is of course not to get involved. Running is good. Stockey-Hanshi commented that Linford Christie

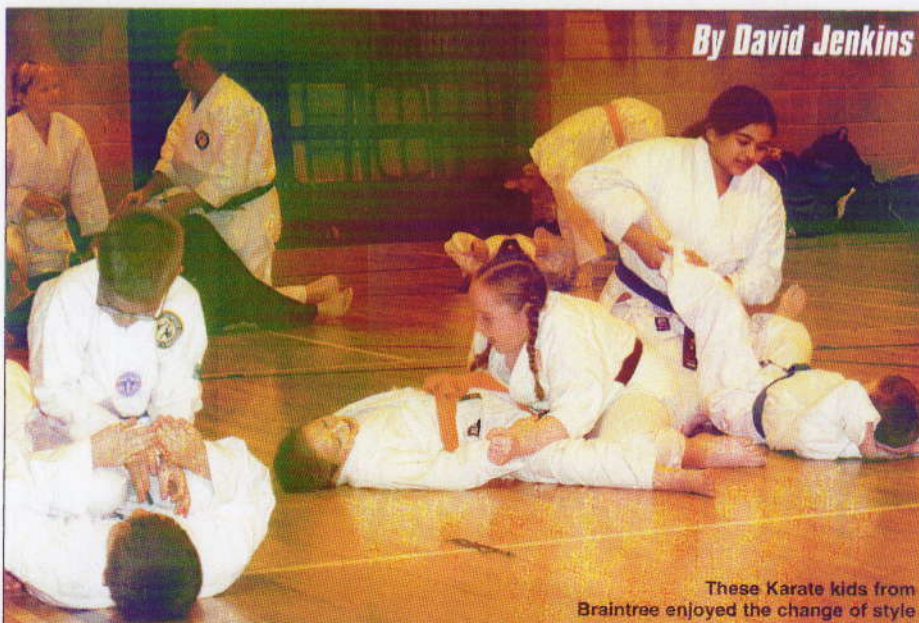
is the best martial artist. Be aware of what is going down, always study people, checking out their body language to see who is likely to kick off. Don't cut corners when you are walking, you could just be walking straight into trouble.

Stokey-Hanshi has extensive knowledge of many other arts and combines their techniques into his teaching providing a varied and effective fighting system. When asked what he would like people to take away from the seminar he answered, respect for and enjoyment of other peoples culture.

Pietro Spadaro-Sensei 6th dan Ju-Jitsu Italy.

Spadaro-Sensei teaches self-defence, including Ju-Jitsu, to an elite Italian police unit. He also teaches the general public including the physically challenged. Spadaro-Sensei enjoys Judo but sees it more as a sport whilst he sees Ju-Jitsu as a fighting system. He described them as two different faces of the same coin. The streets are like a jungle and it is important to learn a martial art but each one can be effective, so choose one you feel you will stick with. Like Stokey-Hanshi, Spadaro-Sensei stressed that the best protection is using your head before the fighting kicks off. Try and avoid confrontation but if you need to use your art, use it with confidence! Fights are won and lost with your brain as well as your body.

Spadaro-Sensei, who is only a little over five feet tall, was once attacked by a group of youths in Milan (Italy) and was able to demonstrate the effectiveness of Ju-Jitsu. They must have had one hell of a shock! Spadaro-Sensei considers Brazilian Ju-Jitsu as being too restrictive in its concentration with ground fighting. He saw it as more a sport than a fighting system and likened it to Judo. When asked what he would like students to take away from the course, he motioned to a beautiful lady, his interpreter laughed, "Sorry, he's Italian". He went on to say that he hoped that each student would learn humility. Each martial art offers something different and to keep an open mind. Also the course gave the opportunity to contact not



These Karate kids from Braintree enjoyed the change of style

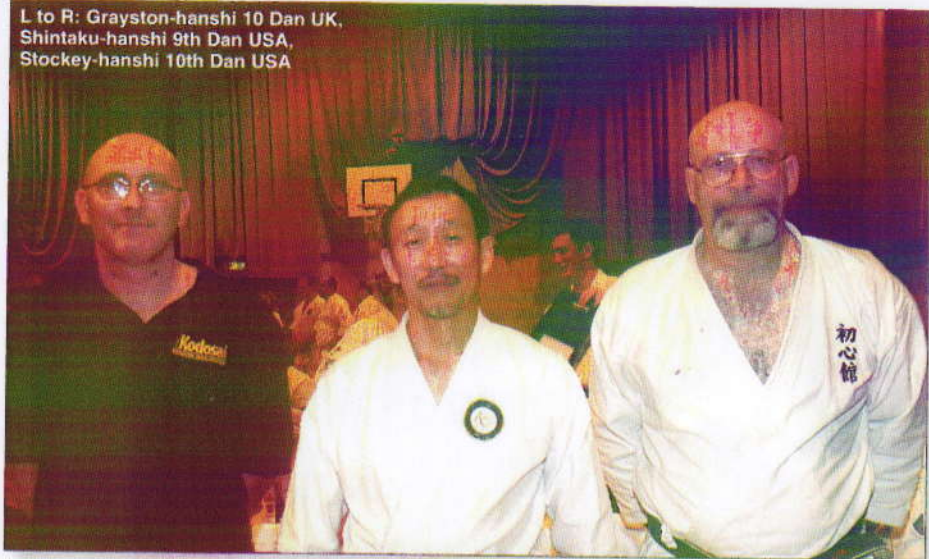
only people who practice different types of martial arts but from different countries and cultures. Again the message was enjoy meeting and experiencing other cultures.

Shiro Shintaku-Hanshi, 9th Dan and founder of Ten Shin Ichi-Ryu. Shiro Shintaku-Hanshi stressed that the aim of the seminar was to improve the quality of the traditional martial arts and that is why top instructors from all over the world were invited to teach. Sharing knowledge and teaching excellence. In true martial arts there are no ineffective techniques, if it doesn't work it is not a technique and should not be taught. When learning it is important to study and practice the motion of the technique, once mastered you can speed it up into an effective technique but learn it first!

Martial art training is learning about the safety and protection of your life. Picking up Stockey-Hanshi point on kata's, Shiro Shintaku-Hanshi said you learn the form, then you learn how to make it work. The higher the level of training you must learn how people react in different situations, reading body language. Then when the situation comes, you will know what to do. Traditional Japanese martial arts stress the mind as well as technique, a softer approach but very effective.

With such prestigious instructors, you would be forgiven for thinking only higher grades would be welcome.

L to R: Grayston-hanshi 10 Dan UK,  
Shintaku-hanshi 9th Dan USA,  
Stockey-hanshi 10th Dan USA



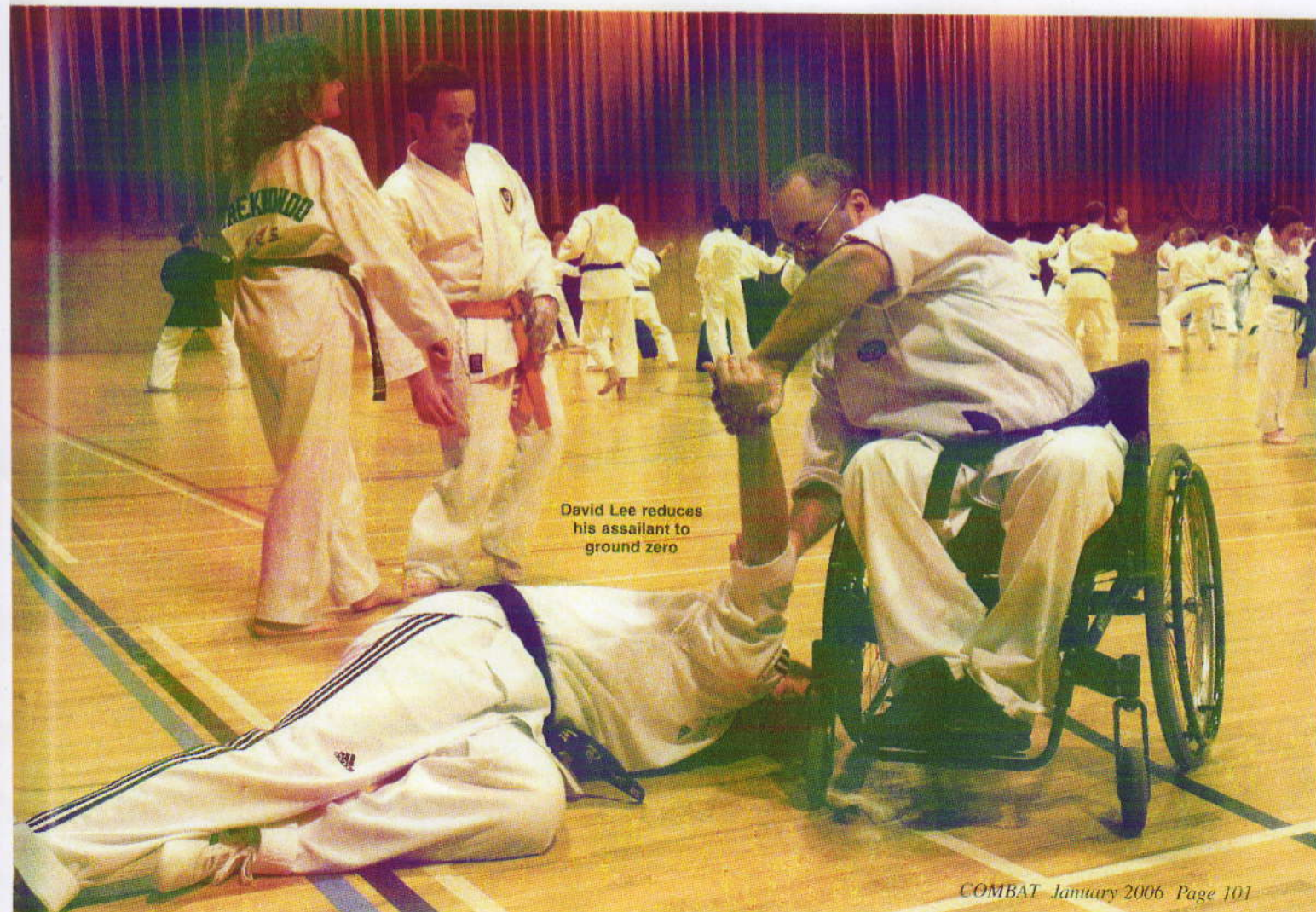
Nothing could be further from the truth. The Kodosai is an inclusive event, for people of all grades, all ages and any traditional style. The intention is to enable you to learn ideas from a multitude of arts and build them into your martial arts training. After all, each and every art has the same ultimate aim, to save your life!

David Lee practices Tae Kwon-do from a wheelchair. He was very pleased that every instructor spent time to adapt their techniques, so he was able to use them too! The Kodosai provided real instruction from experts. You were not just left to muddle through with

another student, as is so often the case at many other large seminars. If you have any doubts that martial arts are for everyone, just take a butchers at David taking down his opponent after an attempted punch.

The children from the Braintree Karate Club loved the takedowns and all recommended Kodosai too!

*Kodosai International gives you a unique opportunity not only to meet with martial artists from around the globe but to also see and learn the ideas from other styles from top international instructors. Why not check it out next year.*



David Lee reduces his assailant to ground zero