

UNITED NATIONS OF JU JITSU

1996 Congress — Malta

THREE GROUPS of British Ju Jitsuka flew to the Mediterranean island of Malta for the 5th Annual Congress of the United Nations of Ju Jitsu. From Lancashire, in the north west, came Martin Dixon and members of Go-Shin Kempo Ju Jitsu Association, from the Greater Manchester area there was James Pape and the members of Bushido Ju Jitsu Academy and from the South of England came Terry and Janet Parker with members of their Jikishin Ju Jitsu Association. Jikishin Ju Jitsu Association's members on the island of Malta were the hosts and had arranged for the UNJJ's members to be accommodated in the St. George's Park Complex in Paceville, a very lively area of St Julians.

The congress began on Friday night with an official welcome, after which the National representatives and Senior Coaches were whisked away for the "Master's Dinner". Many countries are now applying to become members of the UNJJ and some of those who were represented were Belgium, Spain, Italy, South Africa, Denmark, Great Britain, France,

Germany and (of course) Malta. Many other countries are represented through their membership of Jikishin Ju Jitsu Association who also have members in Poland, Israel, Eire and areas of the country formally known as Russia.

The Course

The official opening took place in the sports hall of the former military prison in Paola, a very large building with good spectator facilities. Each country filed into the hall supporting the name of their country, lining up for the presentation of the UNJJ flag which would be unfurled and flown for the duration of the event. Bill Rushton from Go-Shin Kempo Ju Jitsu Association lead out the British members who were one of the biggest groups attending. After a thorough warm up the course was split into training groups and the coaches allocated. The British coaches were Prof. Terry and Janet Parker, Martin and Sheila Dixon, James Pape, John Hunt and Roger Wilkes. The course lasted for a little over three hours and each of the coaches spent time with each group



Sarah and Sally during their event.

and were actively and enthusiastically received.

Random attacks

The session following the main course was given to a one-and-a-half hour introduction of the Random Attack format of Sport Ju Jitsu, which is being steadily, but thoroughly, introduced as the format for Sport Ju Jitsu throughout the countries covered by the UNJJ and Jikishin Ju Jitsu Association. Two



A section of the course in the Sports Hall.



Sally and Clare with their trophies.

contestants were then chosen from each country and a small competition was held giving Ju Jitsuka and spectator alike a first hand view of this internationally approved and welcome format for Sport Ju Jitsu. From the interest shown, and the questions asked, it would look as though many miles will be covered in the next few years by Terry Parker and his coaches who are leading the training

in this exciting martial sport, even as this event was taking place arrangements were being made to visit Eire in November to continue the training.

This first training day being ended, buses ferried the members back to their hotels to prepare for the evening's entertainment, which was in the form of a congress dinner and disco in the town of Mdina, which is in the centre of the island.

The venue was a beautiful hotel where the dinner was served and on looking around it was not hard to see those who were to compete in the championship the following day, they were the ones eating small portions of pasta while the remainder enjoyed the many and varied courses on offer. After the meal everyone enjoyed the disco and were sad when it was announced that the buses had arrived to return us all to our hotel.

The competition

After a night's sleep we were woken at 8.00am to be ready for the coaches to take us back to the sports hall at Corrodina, which is the name that will have struck fear into the hearts of many ex-servicemen who served on the island and found themselves the subject of service discipline. The format of this competition was to be men's and women's pairs and mixed team demonstrations. A large entry was expected and many contestants began their preliminary warm ups in anticipation. The support and cheering added to the enjoyment of the competition and many exciting displays and team demonstrations were seen. None more so that the German National Team, who gave a display of synchronised Ju Jitsu, the standard of which has not been seen before. Eight members of the team, working in pairs, gave an extraordinary and exciting display of Ju Jitsu which was not only technically perfect but was synchronised to the last moment,



UNJJ British contingent.

every punch, block, throw, breakfall, lock and counter was to the split second and they were rightly declared the winners of the team event with their 'B' team coming second and the Jikishin Ju Jitsu Association team of Simon Neal, Claire Neil, Sally Whybrew and Sarah Hargiss coming third. There was further success for the British teams with Sally Whybrew and Sarah Hargiss winning the silver in the Women's pairs and Go-Shin Kempo Ju Jitsu Association's Heath Blackledge and John Cruise winning the Bronze in the Men's pairs, which was won by Denmark with Germany second.

The time was now right for the congress to be closed and in closing the President of the UNJJ, Jean De Greef, said that even closer ties had been forged between the countries, he looked forward to the individual national events and especially the next UNJJ congress which would be held next August in Germany. The flag was lowered, folded and presented to Deiter Losgen, the representative of Germany, ready for the 1997 congress in his country.

Some free time now existed before the final night's entertainment and many thanked Jikishin Ju Jitsu Association's members on Malta for their efforts as the congress hosts. In particular Phillip Azzopardi, who had attended the previous congress in Denmark, with Malta's Senior Coach Vincent Scoratino, 3rd Dan, to put forward the plans for Malta and had visited Aalst in Belgium, in April, to further appraise the UNJJ of the progress, and who had worked so hard during the time the congress candidates had been on the island, sorting out any problems. Along with his partner, Blanch, they had been so kind and supported the event so well, dealing with all of the problems placed before them, even down to dealing with our only injury of the week, Anthony Kwok, who had unfortunately broken his leg in two places while helping to coach the congress members in Random Attacks. They had met each group arriving at Luqa airport, even at 3 o'clock in the morning, and had travelled with them to their

accommodation where they sorted out room keys, etc. To everyone involved thank you, but a very special thank you to Philip and Blanch.

The remainder of the week was free to enjoy the island and many British were seen in the bays, valleys, harbours, creeks, grottos and bars during the following three days. Some were just sightseeing, some relaxing, some were even enjoying the local cuisine that the St. George's Complex had to offer. Some were even seen in the company of "George", a character who might pop up from time to time, although I feel that one or two of the British may have been sad to leave him on the island, and I know for sure that Vince Bull envied his shoes. The final night saw all of the British who were still on the island on Wednesday enjoying a meal together before retiring to the "Best Karaoke in Town" for their version of "A song for Europe" where we were joined by the Danish and the Belgians. The winner was not important but the friendship was. Thank you all and heres to next year.

WILL YOU BE THERE? BUTLIN'S SKEGNESS 1997 NATIONAL TRAINING COURSE AND CHAMPIONSHIPS Friday 18th to Monday 21st April

With just a couple of months to go you should have reserved your accommodation, self catering or half board, entered your weight, grade and age for the competitions and be looking forward to a great weekend with all of your BJJ (GB) friends and colleagues.

Our third course will be the best one yet, and the location, "Funcoast World", is one of the easiest to reach from wherever you live in the UK. Although on the east coast in Lincolnshire, Skegness is just 148 miles from London, 183 miles from Liverpool, 151 miles from Manchester and 202 miles from Newcastle upon Tyne. Don't delay, if you have not booked in yet contact your club or association head for a booking form, fill it in and send it, complete with a deposit to Butlin's. The cost of the whole weekend ranges from £37.50 each (six sharing a budget self catering chalet) to £83.00 per adult for half board in a County Room (children £51.50).

Remember, if you live within easy travelling distance from Funcoast World there is provision for you to come in as a "Day Visitor". Booking forms are available from your club instructors.

If you need any further information or assistance please contact either of the addresses below:

BJJA(GB) National Training Course
31 Burleigh Close
ROCHESTER
Kent ME2 3TQ
Tel/Fax: 01634 721292

BJJA(GB) National Training Course
29 Ringstead Crescent
Crosspool
SHEFFIELD S10 5SH
Tel/Fax 011 426 66733
(Office hours 9.00am to 4.30pm Mon. to Thur.)