

BJA CHAIR REPORT July 2017

It has been a very eventful year! We have the second edition of Kihaku published with the third edition on the way. A special thanks to Fraser Biscombe, who is a pleasure to work with, and to all the contributors who make the magazine visually exciting and informative for us all to enjoy.

The website has steadily improved over the past three years, in both design, user friendliness and accessibility to information with the support of our voluntary members. These include Gerry Kincald, Malcolm Smalley and Piotr Hawrylczak. Add to this members from all three bu who regularly post updates thereby ensuring all members are aware of future events and matters of interest.

As a not for profit organisation we rely heavily on the goodwill of our voluntary workers. It is therefore a privilege to have such an excellent diligent and hardworking NC Team whose amazing work behind the scenes efforts benefit our organisation in many ways. I feel it only right and fitting that I highlight just how much this wonderful team works on behalf of the membership, as volunteers.

Besides ensuring all constitutional matters and NC notices are in place, Vice Chair Debbie Bevan is also making sure we will implement updated Data Protection legislation into our organisation. Data Protection is now becoming a major issue and, as an organisation, we need to ensure we fully comply with all legal requirements. Debbie also has very creative talents as she turns up in the capacity of photographer to various events, capturing those all-important memories.

Chris Mansfield, International Affairs has ensured everything is up to date, having been very proactive with regards to managing the EKF database, along with Malcolm Smalley. A big job which takes considerable time. There is a tremendous amount of responsibility to ensure full compliance not just with the EKF but also Japan and our International Director is undertaking excellent work in protecting our members in this area.

The Treasurer's role is not an easy task with plenty of responsibility to comply with legal and constitutional requirements, as well as in meeting members' expectations. Anna is doing her utmost to ensure everything is up to date and in order - and works long hours to meet all the NC, Bu and members financial needs. Her commitment and dedication is exemplary.

Membership Secretary Fides Desacada has been a pleasure to work with. Incredibly efficient, and I know many members are impressed with how she and her deputy, Roger Pimlott, help members with many enquiries.

Lesley Drew, our Child Protection Officer is working diligently to ensure that we, as an organisation, are in compliance with DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) regulations and standards of protection. I recently sent an email to all members to check whether their Dojo complies with DBS requirements - especially if teaching children, young people and vulnerable adults. This has generated a lot of responses from members which Lesley is working her way through.

Donnie Gordon has the task of looking after Health and Safety. Again a very important area to ensure reporting procedures are in place and carried out. We have recently had a couple of incidents which highlight the need to look at insurance procedures. In support of ensuring to provide the highest possible standards we do offer free First Aid Courses for our members and also support towards DBS checks where this may be required in a dojo teaching young people and vulnerable adults.

Merchandising

The Survey Monkey questionnaire identified we have hidden talent amongst our members and I have tried to meet with many of you who have offered your support, knowledge and talents – thank you.

In particular we now have ideas to consider for merchandising BKA products to help with, both promoting our organisation to attract new members, whilst helping to raise additional funding to support a range of activities.

Survey Monkey

We have tried to action many of the good points put forward by members - thank you! We had an excellent level of feedback. Over 500 members replied which is almost a third of the entire membership. Another Survey Monkey will be issued shortly so please again take the time to tell us your views – they do count!

Social Media

Social media is becoming ever more popular, especially with young people. Apparently the under 40s prefer it! But over 40s don't worry. We accept any form of communication such as paper, email. you name it, we accept it. However, as we move into an ever more digital world we need to embrace technology whilst still catering for all membership requirements. For example we need to include people with learning difficulties, visual impairment and other mental or physical disadvantages.

It is also important to use social media in a sensible and respectful way. It is very easy to feel we are chatting to a few friends but we are in a very public domain where anyone from anywhere around the world can see what we are saying and how we are behaving. With this in mind we need to behave accordingly respectfully. If something is not right then the correct process needs to be followed either by face to face (preferred), telephone, letter or email. This will minimise circumstances of miscommunication which can be avoided and any prejudiced and imbalanced criticisms when people are not in possession of the full facts.

Sponsorship

We are continuing to secure sponsorship to support promotional areas such as the production and printing of the Kihaku magazine. In addition, we are raising income from Google ads (£167.27 last payment) generated by over 9000 views of the Kendo championship films and others. Merchandising is also supporting our brand awareness as well as raising funds.

Shogo developments

We now have our own BKA Shogo available after the dedicated work of several members from all three bu. Thank you all for your efforts and contribution so that we can now offer the Shogo to those who become eligible. This is in recognition of much deserved achievements after many years dedication and contribution to our arts supporting both the organisation and its' members.

Constitution

As many members know we are now updating our constitution. This is not an easy task so a sub-committee has been selected by the NC to prepare and finalise the first draft of the constitution for members to consider. All constitutions and important policies should be reviewed at least every five years. Learning, acknowledging, correcting and implementing are continuous processes successfully executed in organisations that operate within total quality environments. A TQM culture will warrant visibility, openness and productive working relationships which ensure improvements of all organisational areas. These concepts apply to any organisation, whether aerospace or community volunteer. Ours is no different. Such a culture will impact upon the attitude and organisation of a company that strives to provide customers with products and services that satisfy their needs. And the spirit of this is closely aligned with that of Budo. We owe this to our members. Members have

already put forward suggestions which will be considered for inclusion at the next AGM in 2018 or earlier if required and deemed necessary.

Harmony

As in most organisations there will be difference of opinion and management/teaching styles. What is important is that we aim to respect these differences and where we may not agree to be as helpful as possible rather than decide to put in a complaint or spread rumours to damage peoples' characters. Yes, this is easy to do but the truth always raises its head eventually. With this in mind I am calling on all members to behave with dignity and be harmonious at every opportunity. Our Budo practice must help us to develop our characters and be supportive of each other. Trying to throw Shinken around (metaphorically speaking) is against everything we should be trying to achieve in a Budo study. In the grand scale of things we are a small organisation yet have people of many years' experience and knowledge. As we know Sensei means 'One who has followed the path before....' We should strive to ensure we are wise and can demonstrate truth and good conduct at all levels. We may not always agree with another member, teacher or officer but we need to be respectful and at least give new people in post an opportunity to show what they can do.

Future – The vision

Our membership is growing - especially in the past two years due to a number of factors. The Kendo bu have been very proactive working with Universities offering students a much easier route to join the BKA and continue the membership.

In addition, our activity in promoting a more professional image with the updated website, social media and magazine, has greatly helped to give the BKA an attractive public face with clear images showing a range of events highlighting what Kendo, Iaido and Jodo have to offer.

A final reminder:

We are only as good as our team and those who serve to support us. It is easy to criticise, chastise, spread rumours and gossips but this is not the accepted behaviour of becoming of a Budo practitioner - no matter what grade or rank. If you disagree with anyone or any process find the courage to meet face to face, be truthful and consider the consequences of dishonest action – it never serves any purpose other than to harm people and can lead to serious consequences. We should lead by example and therefore set a good example!

Fay Goodman

BKA Chair