

Events Officer's Report 2018

Northern Iaido Seminar

A successful event at the usual venues in the Darlington area. There were a few disgruntled remarks about the venue for the non-graders (Darlington College) since it is rather dingy, can be too cold if one forgets to remind the caretaker to turn on the heating (very difficult to speak to caretaker as he's always out of the office, on site). An alternative might be worth looking for this second hall but I am aware there is little enthusiasm and indeed choice for this but it should be remembered this is an expensive venue (£1200 for both venues) and booking confirmation cannot be made until August of the year of the event allowing only three months to find an alternative should the usual places become unavailable. This can lead to sleepless nights for the EO. Attendance was at about the same level as previous years (n= 45)

Scottish Seminar

Glasgow was the host city this year. This is a smaller seminar (n=28) held in at Clevedon Secondary School. The hall has a nice timber floor which is ideal for the practise for Iaido. The smaller number of attendees means the teacher to student ratio allows for excellent providing for personal tuition from our sensei and the comradery of the host dojo make this a very pleasant seminar to attend.

Spring Seminar

Despite my vow not to use this venue at last year's AGM due to the 'third world' standard changing facilities, minimal response to my other 37 enquiries about possible venues (3 responses to my emails) made me re-examine Comberton Leisure Centre. The manager offered to let our attendees use the excellent member's facilities if they identified themselves to reception on arrival. This was deemed acceptable and duly advertised to our members. Perhaps it was the short walk through the icy blast of the 'Beast from the East' that made attendees not avail themselves of this opportunity as is their right. This is a very cheap venue, approximately £400 to hire for the whole weekend if memory serves. Attendance was down (n=42) compared to last year but again this meant a more favourable instructor to student ratio. This together with the publication and use of a teaching plan before the seminar made this a very useful and enjoyable seminar.

West Midlands Seminar

This has historically been a small seminar and this year 34 Iaidoka attended. We experimented with a venue with a vinyl floor after discussions at the last AGM where a member suggest that vinyl was not necessarily always a poor choice. Feedback suggested it was 'acceptable'. Again, this was a very cheap venue which has to be figured into the equation for acceptability.

Summer Seminar

This was held at Cambridge University's, international standard, sports venue. This boasts a timber floor and allows for comfortable training once the air condition is engaged! Attendance was noticeably lower this year (n=67) but I have received a number of reports suggesting the ZNKR delegation and array of European senior teachers present were truly excellent and again the low numbers allowed for a very favourable teacher to student ratio. This is an expensive venue but it is our flagship event so perhaps this is a necessary evil. The real issue is the availability and high cost of accommodation at this time of year, in particular. Cambridge is an attractive tourist destination which is a bonus for our international visitors, but members on a budget, and there are many, struggled to get reasonably priced accommodation. I suggested trying Airbnb to those who contacted me requesting assistance in finding somewhere suitable and this proved to be good alternative to hotel accommodation and would recommend it to members in the future.