

Aikido Times

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH AIKIDO BOARD



October 2018



Welcome to the Autumn Edition of the Aikido Times.

This is traditionally one of the busiest times of year for recruiting new members. Hopefully you have all seen a big influx of new students into your dojos.

We have a good spread of articles for you, and it's good to see quite a few course reports coming through (including one from the BAB's National Course).

Finally, on a technical note, it is always helpful to receive Event posters as PDFs or JPGs, ideally in portrait format. I will do my best with other formats!

In this issue

Executive Committee Report page 1

More logs on the fire. page 3

International Friendship Seminar page 6

Aikikai Alliance Course Report..... page 11

BAB National Course report page 13

Weapons Training page 15

Upcoming Events page 17



Executive Committee

Report by the Chairman

National Course

This year's course was held at Brunel University with some 120 Aikidoka attending including 14 CL3 Coaches which contributed to the high standard of training on the mat. (see also the personal report from one of the participants)

Whilst it was disappointing that only 11 Associations were represented, including our first visit from a Club based in Northern Ireland, on the plus side the Association composition was significantly different to last year, despite it being in the same venue, suggesting that holding the event in different locations, is not necessary critical. What can be equally important is that the Instructors are able to bring with them strong support. However if the standard of a Course is high, then we get a strong indication that students will return.

This year we were blessed with quality Instructors, students who fully committed to the day and an atmosphere of openness and willingness to expand our knowledge of this wonderful art.

A survey was undertaken, on the day, to ascertain where members learned about the Course and overwhelmingly it came through the Associations.

This clearly highlights that our membership is unaware or uninterested in accessing our 3 main sources of communication viz, Website, Facebook and Aikido Times and this must be a main focus for change.



However whilst the survey shows that those Associations who engage with the event, do disseminate information to their members, from the low percentage of Association's represented more needs to be done to ensure that information reaches the individual member. This hopefully will be overcome once the new on-line payment system is operational, bringing with it a direct communication to members via e mail.

It has been suggested by several members that the BAB might run/support both a Weapons Course and a National Course for Juniors and these will be pursued if sufficient demand is received.

Insurance Matters

Validity of Non BAB Insurance at Courses: Whilst it is acceptable for non BAB students to use their own insurance on a course, unless otherwise specified by the organisers, it remains the responsibility of the organisers to satisfy themselves that the insurance offered is comparable to our own to avoid any possible liability towards them or the BAB.

New Students: Temporary Insurance: Although our insurers currently allow us to give potential new members 3 taster sessions before requiring them to take out membership, with insurance, this facility is restricted to CLUB training sessions and does NOT cover students or instructors attending one off courses.

Accident Forms

Please ensure that only the current Accident forms, downloadable from the website are used when reporting accidents.

Aikido Development Plan

The ADP is a 5 year action plan to help us develop a strategy to move forward the Board's priorities. Unfortunately whilst some areas have made little progress due to resources (offers of help therefore welcome) others, such as Coaching, have made good progress. The Committee are now undertaking a review of the Plan and members are invited to submit initiatives for consideration.

Data Protection

We are delighted that the Board has taken the necessary steps to ensure it is compliant under the new GDPR regulations and a wide range of documentation is now downloadable from the website for use by Associations and individual clubs.

Additionally in response to concerns from some members about the technical format of documents, the Webmaster is developing a number of "Idiots Guides" which I am sure we will all welcome.

Coaching

1st4sport Endorsement

For several years coaching courses run by the BAB have been endorsed by 1st4sport. However we have now been informed that the endorsement scheme, which had only endorsed 5 NGBs, had been shut without any notification; and the Board as a user had not been invited to participate in the apparent Review that had been undertaken.

A replacement scheme is to be developed but it was noted that the time and cost commitments for the new scheme exceeded those that we had originally signed up to. The Committee considered that 1st4sport had to prove the credibility of the new scheme before it might be contemplated by the BAB.

However we are encouraged that the primary concern of hirers requiring proof of coaching qualifications was for National Governing Body accreditation rather than external endorsement and in all the circumstances it was agreed not to pursue the new scheme at this time.

Association & BAB Coach Tutors

It is encouraging that over time a number of former Associations have now re-joined the BAB. Whilst their individual coaching certificate remained valid, the same did not automatically apply to Association and BAB Tutor status, for a number of reasons including the number of changes in policies and procedures which might have been implemented since they were last a Tutor.

The Committee have agreed requirements to ensure that those resuming a Tutor role receive the necessary training and mentoring.

More Logs on the Fire

Chris Wallace, Marple Aikido 4th Dan Lancashire Aikikai

The discussion on Aikido and its effectiveness in the 'real' world seems to rumble on - and on.

I have been disheartened, as I know many others have, by reading recent articles on the demise of Aikido and the traditional martial arts in the UK.

I would like to throw a few more logs on the fire.

My martial arts training spans 45 years and includes; Judo, Karate, Aikido and Systema. Longest serving is my 28 years with the Lancashire Aikikai, and over the years I have given considerable thought to the effectiveness of the various martial arts and their application to 'real' life.

Like many of you, I have shared many beers pondering this serious question with friends and colleagues. Three things made me decide to share my thoughts now; my trip to Japan last year, an interesting book I read recently and having now retired from work, perhaps a little more time to reflect.

My experiences of Aikido in Japan are that students don't tend to spend time analysing the whys and wherefores of training i.e. whether Aikido works on the street or is better as a self-defence than Karate, Krav Maga or MMA etc, they simply pursue their chosen art, select a Sensei, train to the best of their ability and enjoy the experience.

Why can't we do the same?

I have no doubts about the potential effectiveness of Aikido in a 'real' situation but would emphasise the word 'potential'. Of course, there are limitations but you only have to read the stories about the early exploits of O'Sensei and watch old videos of the first-generation students to get a flavour of Aikido's awesome potential.

We don't all practice with such gusto these days. Many students of Aikido have no real interest in street effectiveness - and why should they? They need to get up fit and ready for work the next day and it may not be why they started training anyway.

Unless you live in one of the less salubrious areas of the UK, you probably have more chance of being involved in a road traffic accident than being attacked on the street. Although, with knife attacks on the increase, turning towards the martial arts for self-defence is certainly a good option.

I believe that the principles which lead to real effectiveness are still there in modern Aikido, if your mind is free and your spirit is willing to explore the path of Budo.

All Martial Arts offer some benefit of self-defence, if only that it gets us off our backsides, into the dojo and moving our bodies. Dealing regularly with potential aggressive situations, even within the safe environment of the dojo, trains our mind to react rather than freeze. All martial arts offer benefits but they also have limitations. The most important lesson is to understand and accept the limitations of your art and most importantly the limitations of yourself.

Effectiveness is not in your knowledge of techniques but in how you would react and apply yourself to a situation. Are you sure that you could stay relaxed, move and react effectively if faced with 'real' aggression?

I have recently read a book called 'Living Systema' written by Matt Hill.

A key message within this book, is that a true martial artist doesn't train 1, 2 or 3 times per week. He/she trains all the time.

My favourite quote from the book is "....do you ever see a tiger doing push ups? Their every movement is training."

If you want to study your chosen art as a pastime or hobby – Go for it! This is genuinely a good reason for study. However, if you want to take your training to the next level and have confidence that you could really handle yourself in a difficult or aggressive situation, then you need to make training part of your life. You need to become a better tiger!

Our effectiveness in dealing with an aggressive situation is down to us as individuals, not the art we study. We are the martial artist. Our chosen art gives us a bag of tools - it sets up a framework of principles for us to work with and gives us an opportunity to develop our own natural skills.

It is important to recognise the difference between study within the dojo and 'real' life.

They are very different. A few things to bear in mind: -

- Competitive martial arts are sports and usually have rules. There are no rules outside the dojo.
- Non-competitive martial arts tend to have compliant training partners whose task is to present an empty body and mind, to help improve your technique.
- Why then does this sometimes result in tori slamming uke into the mat with gusto and standing back with pride and satisfaction, when uke has just gifted their body, with only limited resistance?
- On the other hand, for two willing and able partners to escalate their level of practice to a higher intensity of training is both exhilarating and is a necessary part of high-grade practice.
- It is important to test our limits. It is also important to understand the context and limitation of high-level training.
- If we are not careful, however, this high-level practice can lead to an over estimation of our ability, which could be dangerous assumption outside the dojo.
- Your training partner wants to test you but (usually) doesn't want to hurt you.

Outside the dojo the mindset of a 'real' attacker is very different.

I would like to offer an opinion that in a 'real' aggressive situation, your martial art techniques probably contribute only 20-30% to your ability to deal with the situation. The remaining 70-80% is how you apply yourself and the efficiency of your mind and body.

Maybe the stories about O'Sensei referring to 90% of Aikido being atemi, are along similar lines of thought?

Maybe you should choose your martial art for your own enjoyment and the benefits it can bring to your whole life – not just for self-defence.

Dojo practice can only take your preparation and development so far. The rest is down to you!

Bibliography

- Budo: The Martial Way – The Way of the Warrior
- Living Systema - by Matt Hill (5th Dan Iwama Ryu Aikido and Systema Instructor)

Amazing Place *To the tune of "Amazing Grace"*

*Amazing place, this training-hall,
Not wood but mats as floor;
"Aikido? What is that?" I thought,
As I stepped through the door.*

*"This looks rehearsed, how can it work?"
thought I, so much in doubt;
But how it works, and why it works,
I very soon found out.*

*The students flew across the mat,
With speed and grace, for sure;
And yet with grins they all bounced up,
and ran straight back for more!*

*'Twas really hard, when training first,
Techniques and falls to try;
But through the intervening years,
I too have learned to fly!*

Marianne Crisp Oct 2017

9th International Friendship Seminar (IFS)

Frank Burlingham

As most of you may know the first International Friendship Seminar took place in 2010 at my dojo in Lowestoft when Haydn Foster sensei Institute of Aikido (U.K.), Philip Lee sensei (Singapore) and Osamu Obata sensei (Canada) agreed to teach together in friendship. Sadly Foster sensei passed away the following year. Since then each year it has rotated being held in the U.K., Singapore and Canada. This year on weekend of 6th – 8th April saw the 9th IFS take place in Singapore along with Philip Lee Shihan association, Aikido Shinju-kai celebrating its 30th year.

It was without a doubt the largest Aikido seminar and celebration I have ever attended in my 46 years of training and study of Aikido, when I say largest I mean it was a very big event as you can see below in the attached photo.

At one point for the group photograph there was a total which included the children, in excess of 870 on the tatami from 26 countries



See Youtube: aikido shinju-kai ASK30 behind the scene

Posters of seminar senseis





This included 13 from the U.K. above

Shane Riley sensei taught at Shinju-kai headquarters dojo on the Thursday night prior to the seminar.

Teaching on the two and half day seminar were:

Me with my friend (It had to be done)

AIKIDO SHINJU-KAI
30TH ANNIVERSARY
6 - 8 APRIL 2018
2.5 DAY SEMINAR & EMBUKAI

合気道
心柔會

K SHIMAMOTO SHIHAN 8 TH DAN AIKIKAI JAPAN	GUEST-OF-HONOUR WAKA SENSEI MITSUTERU UESHIBA HOMBU DOJO-CHO	PHILIP LEE SHIHAN 7 TH DAN AIKIKAI SINGAPORE
M FUKAKUSA SHIHAN 8 TH DAN AIKIKAI THAILAND	SHINJU-KAI 30 YEARS ANNIVERSARY - SINGAPORE -	TAKEKI TSUBOI SHIHAN 8 TH DAN AIKIKAI JAPAN
IKUHIRO KUBOTA SHIHAN 8 TH DAN AIKIKAI JAPAN		TONY SMIBERT SHIHAN 7 TH DAN AIKIKAI AUSTRALIA
OSAMU OBATA SHIHAN 7 TH DAN AIKIKAI CANADA		NOBUO TAKASE SHIHAN 7 TH DAN AIKIKAI NEW ZEALAND
R SHIRAKAWA SENSEI 6 TH DAN AIKIKAI JAPAN	FRANK B SENSEI 6 TH DAN IOA 5 TH DAN AIKIKAI UNITED KINGDOM	AZIZ BELHASSANE SHIHAN 6 TH DAN AIKIKAI BELGIUM

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- Guest of Honour Waka Sensei Mitsuteru Ueshiba Hombu Dojo-Cho
- K. Shimamoto Shihan 8th Dan Aikikai Japan
- M. Fukakusa Shihan 8th Dan Aikikai Thailand
- Takeki Tsuboi 8th Dan Aikikai Japan
- Ikuhiro Kubota Shihan 8th Dan Aikikai Japan
- Osamu Obata Shihan 7th Dan Aikikai Canada
- Philip Lee Shihan 7th Dan Singapore
- Tony Smibert Shihan 7th Dan Aikikai Australia
- Nobuo Takase 7th Dan Aikikai New Zealand
- Aziz Belhassane Shihan 7th Dan Belgium
- R. Shirakawa sensei 6th Dan Aikikai Japan
- Frank Burlingham sensei 6th Aikikai Zen Ten, 5th Dan Aikikai U.K.

A Typical class



Planning started in August 2016, the dojo was a fully air conditioned 20 badminton courts wide sports hall that can hold 2000 participants and spectators, over 1000 tatami were laid

The Gala dinner was held on the Sunday evening and was attended by over 860.



*Guests of honour
See youtube: aikido shinju-kai gala dinner*

Most of us arrived the Thursday, one day before the celebration and were greeted royally



The arrival of
the Canadian
Contingent

At the end of the seminar Philip Lee Shihan kindly presented a token gift to all senseis and country representatives.



Frank Burlingham

Aikikai Zen Ten

Aikikai Alliance Course Report

Paul Evans, Shun Poo Kan

In July three Aikikai aligned associations (Shun Poo Kan, Go Shin Kai and Te Shin Kai) came together to pool teaching resources and hold a joint course under the new Aikikai Alliance umbrella. Hombu dojo in Tokyo encourages groups to work together to develop regional aikido. The groups can maintain independence conducting their own gradings and internal business but work together to host larger courses. The combined numbers of such groups makes it more viable to invite visiting Hombu instructors and disseminate training to a wider audience.

The event was held at the Samurai Dojo the headquarters of Go Shin Kai. It's a beautiful purpose built martial arts centre for judo, Aikido and karate with a permanent mat and sprung floor. An ideal venue to hold a large course with plentiful parking, accessible by main transport routes and good facilities nearby. The Alliance course brought together on one mat a wealth of experience from the senior instructors of the three associations with a combined total of 144 years of traditional Aikido experience.

Shihan Brian Burrows 7th dan opened the day's proceedings teaching morotedori and ushiro techniques emphasising hip movement and subtle technique to overcome an uke of superior strength and size. Next was Keith Hayward 7th dan demonstrating his dynamic aikido with ikkyo with its relation to jo Maki Otoshi plus the different stages of iriminage. Mike Smith 6th dan taught back foot irimi tenkan techniques and later paired sword work. Opportunity was also given to myself and Danial Barass to teach a section each. While all the sensei were outwardly different in their style, the Aikido demonstrated was built on the same basic foundations that we all strive to improve.

For some Aikidoka this was their first taste of an external seminar away from the familiar home dojo. While it may be a little daunting for some Kyu grades venturing beyond the home dojo they soon discover we are all one Aikido family regardless of affiliation. Some enjoyed the experience so much they have decided to embrace a deeper study of the Aiki ken to expand their Aikido. For others simply having a concept explained in a slightly different way opened up a whole new avenue of learning. This is what going to external seminars are all about. Meeting new people and expanding your horizons. It also tempers the ego. Finding it difficult to move or encountering someone who moves in a way you are not accustomed to helps refine technique.



From a personal perspective it was nice to train with people who have all helped and continue to help my Aikido journey over the years. I am always mindful that I walk the path they travelled long before me. We also had visitors from other associations such as Frank Burlingham Sensei a very well known figure in U.K. Aikido and the British Aikido Board.

The success of this event truly embodied the spirit of Aikido with a diverse range of people working together to improve and further their Aikido. It is hoped the success of the Aikikai Alliance course will lead to more courses and other Aikikai groups joining the Aikikai Alliance. Already plans are in motion to deliver another Alliance course in November (Sat 24th). I believe the next course will be even bigger and more successful than the first with more new faces on the mat perhaps taking their very first seminar.



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. Maximum article length will usually be in the region of 1000 words. It may be necessary to split some articles over more than one issue of the Newsletter.
2. No payment shall be made for items used.
3. The focus of articles must be on aikido, its impact on people and the community, or contain content which would be of interest and relevance to aikidoka
4. Contributors must be either members of the BAB or be invited to contribute. Other people may submit items for publication and approval from the Board's Executive may be required.
5. There should be no explicit criticism of individuals or other associations/organisations.
6. All material submitted must be original (i.e. not breach copyright laws). Appropriate credits and permissions should be included within the submission if relevant.
7. Articles may be edited/corrected at the Editor's discretion
8. The Editor's decision shall be final in determining the content of The Aikido Times.

Upon arriving early at Brunel University, our small cadre of Belfast based aikidoka were warmly welcomed by the BAB stewards who were manning the entrance. After registration we were guided to the changing area to prepare for the full day of aiki ahead of us. We noticed the majority of aikidoka in attendance were wearing hakama although some just wore their normal gi. It was immediately evident that there seemed to be a significant amount of aikidoka attending the BAB national course, from many different affiliations, which was enthusiastic to witness.

After the normal customary ritual of 'in case of a fire...' and 'the designated first aider is...', all participants got stuck into the course, beginning with some stretching, ukemi and shikko. The Chief instructors then each took a turn delivering their lessons throughout the entire day, allowing a break from training at lunchtime. The Coaches that delivered the sessions were; Paul Barker 7th Dan (Aikido Circle), Malcolm Crawford 7th Dan (Goryukai Yoshinkan) , Mike Smith 6th Dan (Go Shin Kai Aikido), Mark Danford 6th Dan (White Rose Aikikai) and our very own Paul Bradley 4th Dan (Aikido Development Society - Belfast Shodokan Aikido), who was invited to coach at a BAB course for the first time.



It was a superb day of aikido cultural integration where aikidoka from different affiliations, age, gender and ability adopted the essence of what was being taught while maintaining their own aiki culture. Each participant seemed to give a 100% commitment to every session despite being quite evident that for some it was not the style or flavour of Aikido that would have been normally practiced by them. Despite this I feel that people managed to gain some intrinsic nourishment from each session, each learning something new from what was being taught, or maybe simply positive in the fact they are happy practice 'their' style of aikido.

Everyone at Belfast Shodokan very much enjoyed the seminar and we would be definitely interested flying across the water again to attend another BAB National Course in the future. It was interesting to experience the different teaching styles, the content of what was on offer around the UK in relation to Aikido and to continue establishing friendships with other aikidoka. A hearty thank you to all those who organised and made this event such a success. We hope to see you all next year. Stay Safe.

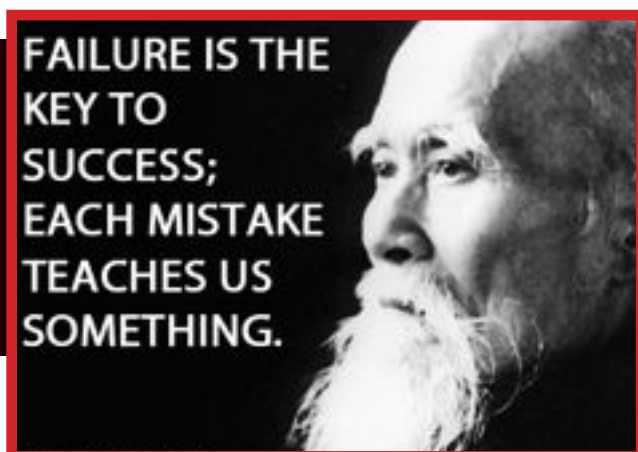


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Choosing a way to train with weapons in line with the principles.

Based on my many years of training in the Aiki weapons of Saito Sensei from Sensei Tony Sargeant, many years of tai chi practise and some very useful insights into Ki Aikido from Sensei Huw Collingbourne, I'd like to share some thoughts on training with weapons.

The Iwama style weapons training has given a foundation of techniques and applications. Their purpose is to change the body, express and extend spirit and develop skills in timing and distance. Tai chi has brought a philosophy and a set of principles that sit in harmony with my idea of aikido. The symbol we so often associate with tai chi represents opposites that abide in harmony not in conflict. The symbol has no beginning and no end; there are no straight lines and no breaks. The principles of Ki aikido, difficult to master as they are, offer abilities that seem at times, akin to magic. (Essential to find the right teacher)

Would you agree that Aikido requires sensitivity, connectivity and relaxation of the right kind, to effect the desired result on your training partner? Are Aiki principles generally counter intuitive to the human condition, which note, is also its greatest asset?



**Speed and power come from
relaxation and co-ordination —
not from strength**

Training with weapons is an interesting and useful way to develop the harmony necessary for Aikido and can help find the effortless power exhibited by some of the great past masters.

Only the receiver experiences the force but cannot identify clearly where it came from, rendering them unable to counter.

How often have you heard expressions like, 'accept the gift,' 'please come past,' 'care for the attacker,' 'respect the partner's ki,'? All these expressions are there to take your mind away from the point of contact and allow your whole being to engage in the movement without tension and in a harmonious manner that leads to a failure to harm or control you. Success for you is not over them, but over yourself.

If aikido requires sensitivity and leading the attacker to where they are willing to go – not where you force them to go against their will – then to exert unnecessary force will be counter to aikido principles. Any force the attacker feels, not in line with their own, will provide them with information to use against you.

Like it or not, weapons training was a big part of O-Sensei's practise and development of his art and his own amazing skills.

If harmony is required in taijutsu then it must be also found in weapons or bukiwaza.

Taking the Jo or short staff as our example, it should be possible to make all the suburi and kata with the lightest of grip and to experience the moment without any effort except intention. Whether you wish to hold stronger is up to you and circumstances. But, if you can perform katate toma uchi (suburi number 12) with only a light thumb and finger grip, then you must have been in harmony with the Jo. Both you and the Jo travelled on a mutually agreeable path. The sort of harmony that you need in taijutsu and for what I now believe is the real essence of aikido. The passive overcomes the strong. Yin overcomes yang.



All of your moves with weapons should take the path that is agreeable to the weapon. There are certain directions, almost exclusively along the length of the weapon, that provide that effortless path to aiki.

The weapon is not used to block but to blend, connect and neutralise and your own movement should be at one with that blend. 'Never have conflict at the point of contact', is the prevailing principle here.

If you can't do it with the Jo, then perhaps you'll struggle to achieve it empty handed.

A harsh grip on the Jo can only slow and restrict your movements and possibly worse still, encourage you to 'make the Jo travel where you wish – right or wrong'. Lighter grip more sensitivity, more harmony, better feeling.

It's the body and not the arms, that makes the move whole and in doing so, will affect the training partner in the same way too ie their whole body.

I neither know nor claim that this view is right but it represents my current belief based on the feelings I have during training. Perhaps it is worth a try!

www.aikijo.weebly.com

Upcoming Events

Second Aikikai Alliance Course 2018

In association with

Go Shin Kai Aikido
Shun Poo Kan Aikido
Te Shin Kai Aikido



24th November 2018
Kidderminster Aikido Club
Zortec Avenue
Kidderminster
West Midlands
DY11 7DY

Timetable for events:

10:00 - Shihan Brian Burrows 7th Dan Aikikai - Shun Poo Kan
10:50 - Sensei Keith Hayward 7th Dan Aikikai - Te Shin Kai
11:40 - Sensei Mike Smith 6th Dan Aikikai - Go Shin Kan
12:30 - Lunch Break
13:00 - Shihan Brian Burrows 7th Dan Aikikai - Shun Poo Kan
13:50 - Sensei Keith Hayward 7th Dan Aikikai - Te Shin Kai
14:40 - Sensei Mike Smith 6th Dan Aikikai - Go Shin Kan
15:25 - Closing remark and finish

Course cost £10.00 per person for the day (no half day rates!)

Please bring your own refreshments.

This course is open to all aikidoka from all associations. Please bring proof of insurance to take part.
Ensure you bring bokken, jo and tanto!



North London Aikido Dojo

is proud to host a weekend seminar with

Hombu Dojo Shihan

Shigeru Sugawara, 7th dan Aikikai



Friday March 1st 2019 to Sunday March 3rd 2019

Venue: Dartford Judo Club, Dartford, Kent DA2 6PD

Details of times of classes and course fees will be available shortly.

For updates please visit: www.northlondonaikido.org

Upcoming Events



Shun Poo Kan
AIKIDO

**Course Sunday November 11th 2018
10:00am – 2:00pm**

**Shihan Brian Burrows 7th dan Aikikai
Paul Evans 5th dan Aikikai
Tim Lee 4th dan Aikikai**

**Trysull Pavilion, Woodford Lane,
Trysull, Wolverhampton WV5 7HP**



All associations welcome cost £15



FUDOSHIN AIKIDO CARDIFF

**29TH NOV-
02ND DEC
2018**

**BATH
CARDIFF
BRISTOL**

A weekend Aikido course with one of Europe's finest instructors and technical director of Mutokukai Europe.

This course is open to practitioners of all levels and is particularly recommended for newcomers to Aikido.

For further details and to book your place, please visit our website or email: enquiries@aikidocardiff.com



Lewis Bernaldo de Quiros, 6th dan Aikikai

Saturday October 27th 2018 11am – 5pm

(registration from 10.15)

&

Sunday October 28th 2018 10am - 4pm

(registration from 9.30)

At

Charlton Down Village Hall

Herrison Hall, Sherren Avenue,

Charlton Down,

Dorchester,

Dorset DT2 9UA.

More information and booking form available from

www.wellspringsoftheeast.co.uk

Please bring bokken, jo and proof of insurance.