



Institute of Aikido Auckland & Institute of Aikido Silverdale

End-of-year report 2013

Overview:



Institute of Aikido Auckland dojo, Okura

The Institute of Aikido Auckland is in its 8th year and continues to be based out of the Okura dojo approx 25km to the north of the city. It is a community hall that we hire on a long-term basis and we have permanent storage space on site for our 72 sqm of mats.



Institute of Aikido Silverdale dojo

The Institute of Aikido Silverdale is based out of Dunken sensei's private dojo at his property in Silverdale approx 30 km north of the city. Built in 2007 (opened by Frank Burlingham sensei) it is a custom built facility with 112sqm of mats, onsite accommodation for up to 4 deshi students (UK visitors welcome!) and a high ceiling to facilitate weapons training. It is one of only 3 full-time permanent Aikido dojo's in New Zealand, and the fourth largest full-time aikido dojo in Australasia.

It's been an extremely busy year for both clubs, with an increase in membership, total hours trained and in the number of gasshuku we've hosted or attended as a group, compared to 2012. However, we seem to have been very unlucky with injuries this year; Dunken sensei training one-armed for nearly 6 months (shoulder), Daniel sensei (back and wrist) and Jonathan sensei out long term whilst he awaits a full knee replacement!

A nice milestone was reached earlier in the year when one of Dunken Sensei's [Youtube Ukemi video's](#) hit 100,000 views (currently on 139,000) and his book "Aikido - A beginner's Guide" is about to go into its 3rd edition with over 22,000 copies sold worldwide.



Membership:

Total 68 (fully paid up or on monthly AP)

IOAA: Seniors 28, Academy 26

IOAS: Seniors 14

Although we have recruited well this year, we have lost a lot of students due to families relocating or students going overseas to study.

Classes:

We continue to provide 6 regular classes:

Tuesday 6.30 – 7.30pm (kids 8+)

Tuesday 7.30 – 9.00pm (adults 15+)

Thursday 6.30 – 7.30pm (kids 8+)

Thursday 7.30 – 9.00pm (adults 15+)

Sunday 9.00 – 10.30 am (adults 15+) Silverdale dojo. By invitation only.

Monday 7.00 – 8.15pm weapons workshop (adults 15+) Silverdale dojo.

Wednesday (If requested - pre grading training etc) 7.30 – 9.00pm

Dunken sensei also teaches several private classes every week from the Silverdale dojo.

Academy:



The biggest growth area for us this year was in The Academy (kids aged 8-15) with a lot of new joiners, many of them families/siblings (we currently have THREE sets of twins on the mat!).

We are very proud of our youth group and try to provide a seamless transition from the junior classes into the adult group as soon as the student shows they are ready. This year we celebrated the achievement of Rashmica Gupta, the first of our students to come through our Youth Academy, into the adult group and achieve the rank of shodan.

[Click to view a clip from an Academy Student grading.](#)



For new joiners to The Academy we have implemented a badge system (prior to white belt) and we have found this very useful in keeping (especially younger) kids motivated. The Bronze Square is awarded after approx. 8 mat hours and represents an understanding of the basics of etiquette, behaviour, balance and hanmi. The Silver Circle is awarded after approx. 16 mat hours and when the student can perform the entire [ukemi warm-up drill](#) safely and confidently. The Gold Triangle is awarded after approx. 24 mat hours and represents a basic understanding of technique from ai-hanmi and core bokken & Jo skills, in preparation for a white belt examination at approx 32 hours.

Our Academy syllabus is identical to the adult syllabus (as per Institute of Aikido UK) but we try to keep the classes high energy and fun - to this end we have developed a number of games to keep the kids focused and enjoying themselves. During every warm-up we play [The Ta-Sabaki Game](#) which not only gives them valuable body movement practice but also improves their concentration and reaction times. The winner of each game gets to lead off the ukemi drill - a very sought after honour! We also allocate a random number to each side of the dojo, and the instructor can call this out at any time, the kids having to bow and be in seiza on that side of the mat as quickly as possible - last one sitting is sensei's uke...



Adult Classes:

Our adult classes span a wide cross section of ages, cultures, shapes and sizes! Ages range from 15 to 52. We have students representing approx 8 different nationalities. Our most petite student is 150cm/40kgs and at the other end of the scale 201cm/132kgs! The current male to female ratio is approx 6:1. Within our ranks we have 6 students who hold the rank shodan or higher in other martial arts. We have an open door policy, welcoming anyone into our dojo from all clubs, styles and disciplines.

Thanks to Jeremy sensei's custom-built software package (contact jeremyminton@gmail.com for details!) we can sign in students to each session via the club laptop and this gives us useful data as to training hours and grading eligibility etc. The best attended class of 2013 was the Monday night weapons session (for you Hut dojo members this is 7pm until 8.15pm on a Monday - of course!) and the most neglected is "Church" or "The Hangover Special" (Sunday mornings 9am-10.30am)!



Within the adult classes we adhere to the UK Institute syllabus but try to also use this as a framework for self improvement, so that each individual gains something specific to their needs, whether that be with regards to posture, body movement, spatial awareness or state-of-mind. We have several students who live with chronic illnesses (Dunken sensei included!) and one of the clubs greatest challenges is finding ways to allow individuals to train regularly despite this and to continue to make progress.

As a group we try to share training ideas whenever possible with organisations around the country, and in the past year we have done "exchange" classes with a local jiu-jitsu group as well as other Aikido groups (Traditional, Aikikai and Ki styles).

Gasshuku:

Due to the comparatively small population in Auckland (1.4 million compared to London 8.5 million) Gasshuku (seminars/special training events) are an essential part of training and provide our group with an invaluable opportunity to train and interact with not only other Aikidoka but also other martial artists.



This year has been one of the busiest so far with Dunken sensei frequently teaming up with Tony Shaufelberger 5th dan to teach both weapons and tai-jutsu themed gasshuku. They are building a great reputation together in NZ and their seminars are always well supported. The last weapons seminar held at The Silverdale dojo had attendee's from 4 cities around NZ and participants from Ju-jitsu, Free Combat and Krav Maga groups. Marcus Encel sensei (Stefan from The Hut's previous instructor) has also invited Dunken sensei over to Melbourne to teach a weekend seminar in March 2014 which we are all looking forwards to.

The highlight of the year as always was Summer Camp. The combination of a beautiful dojo set in 5 acres of woodland and pasture as well as the chance to train with people from all over the country over four intensive days (usually in 30 degree temperatures!) means that these camps are always very well supported. Summer camp is usually held during Auckland Anniversary weekend, a public holiday, allowing many more people to attend than if scheduled during a normal working week. This years camp was, as usual, led by Sensei Dunken and Sensei Tony, but also had excellent guest teaching appearances by Junichi Nishimura (Buikukai Aikido) 7th dan, Dianne Haynes (Rotorua Aikido and a former student of the late great Ron Russell) 5th dan, Marcus Encel 5th dan (Pure Aikido Melbourne, Australia), Mike Stanford (Ki Aikido) 6th dan and of course sessions by senseis Daniel and Jeremy. Dan gradings are often held on the last afternoon of Summer Camp, and this year Rashmica Gupta was examined and awarded shodan.

2014

Summer Camp 2014 is looking to be another great event, with a group from Pure Aikido Australia attending, a group from Hamilton, Aikidoka from Wellington and Rotorua, and guest instructors from Israeli Krav Maga; A senior Systema instructor who trained under Vladimir Vasilev; Jules Robson, a very well respected senior Jitsu instructor and the regular sessions from Senseis Dunken and Tony.

Our goals as a group for 2014 include:

- To further strengthen our ties and communication with the Institute of Aikido in the UK.
- To continue to grow our organisation. A third club was planned with Sensei Jon at the helm in Browns Bay (about 20 mins north of the City). If his knee surgery is successful this may again be possible at some point.
- To persuade one of the technical directors of The Institute in the UK to visit us some time in 2014
- To organize a trip for a few of us to the UK summer school in August.
- To add Yudansha to our ranks with successful shodan gradings at Easter.