

Karate Academy

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Newsletter January 2024

Happy New Year! Welcome to January 2024. We have a whole new year ahead of us. A year's worth of hours, days, weeks, and months, and the potential to spend them in so many ways. So what will you do? Life will throw many obstacles in our path, as it has done in the past. We're still here and we aim to make progress—I mean why would you aim for not making progress? Spare some hours for Karate. Train with us twice per week for best results. This year is a very important one for Keikokai. May 14th marks 25 years since I took over running Newton Abbot Shotokan Karate Club and re-named it. 25 years is a milestone, and we have much to celebrate from the past, and many plans for the future. We'd like you to be part of it.

John Burke,
Chief Instructor

January Events

Not so much of an event, but the return to the normal timetable should be celebrated, as it opens up our options for training and allows us to get an early start on our plans for the year. We are once again running the full timetable from 2nd January onwards. Make sure you get your new Training Diary. Make sure you use it. It isn't just there to record how many lessons you have done, but contains pages for making notes and setting your goals for the year. Remember, it is possible to grade 4 times during 2024 for a coloured belt. Start at white belt and end the year at green. Begin at orange and end the year at purple. And so on... Of course it's slightly different for a Black Belt. We still aim to make progress and work towards our goals, though.

Hachidan

We are pleased and proud to announce that **Anthony Blades** kyoshi was awarded the prestigious **8th Degree Black Belt**—hachidan on 1st December 2023. We have been proud to have Mr Blades as our teacher, friend, and external verifier for 25 years and we look forward to his next visit to sunny Devon (in May)

The Festive Lesson

Well, it was pure chaos, but the Festive Lesson took place on Saturday 16th December 2023. We started out with the Little Warriors at 9am, and after they had been run ragged we proceeded through to the main Festive Lesson. Big thanks to Sam Schafer for helping out with the Little Warriors.



There were 29 children and teens who dared the chaos of the Festive Lesson. We did all the usual things, and apart from a couple of rolled toes and pulled arms people were smiling and enjoying themselves. There was Kata-on-the-spot, piggy-back-sparring, ninja-ninja-turtle and lots more. Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to the buffet table. There were sandwiches, pizza, and savouries, cakes, crisps and biscuits, and even macaroni cheese!. Whether homemade or shop bought your generosity was appreciated, and the leftovers went down a treat in the lessons the following week.

Thanks also to everyone who helped with the clear up.



Awards

On Saturday 16th December 2023 we announced the winners of our annual awards. Most recognition of progress and reward is through the belt system—it shows just how far you have come and what you are capable of. It doesn't do everything though, and we believe that the categories we have for our Awards show recognition for some of the other factors that martial arts can enhance. The instructors watch throughout the year and we try to make a fair decision.

Our 2023 Award winners were:

Most Improved Student: Henry Slipszenko

Most Dedicated Student: William Hone

Most Helpful Sempai: Sunny Weedon

Student of the Year: Oscar Magor

Now, of course, we begin to analyse who will be in the running for the 2024 Awards...

Birthdays

The following students celebrate their Birthday this month (January)

2	Oscar Magor
8	Sora Thomson Tanaka
9	Oscar Sharpe
11	Sunny Weedon
16	Thia Lake

Happy
Birthday
to You



2nd kyu

Madeleine Williams

3rd kyu

Slav Holubinka

5th kyu

Jamie Blondell, Jack Churchill,

Henry Slipszenko,

Sora Thomson Tanaka

7th kyu

Limony Ashley Liosatos

8th kyu

Edward Little

Congratulations to the successful candidates.

The next Kyu Grading will be soon. Please ensure that you are training regularly to be nominated to take part in the grading.

also to cover other subjects. These sessions are being offered for free in order to help our members. Please book your time slot using the thread on the **Keiko Karate** Facebook Group or see your instructor. The sessions are 30 minutes long, and Sensei Janet is donating her time, so if you book a session make sure you show up.

Looking Forward

2024 begins with a return to the normal timetable on January 2nd. That means that both the Newton Abbot dojo and the Torquay dojo have classes on the first active day of the New Year.

2024 is the year that Keikokai turns 25 years old. We have some exciting projects and events, with guests and announcements to make.

The big one is the anniversary seminar.

There will also be seminars in Scotland (1st and 2nd June), and in Ely, Cambridgeshire (13th & 14th July). Summer School will be in August, as usual.

Diary Dates:

January 2024

2nd	Timetable resumes
13th	Private lessons
27th	Private lessons

Grading

On Sunday 17th December 2023 we held the final Kyu Grading of the year. Deborah Needham sensei, Janet Drew sensei, and John Burke renshi put the candidates through a physical test and the following grades were awarded:

Kata Intensives

Sensei Janet will be offering students **private lessons** on **Saturday 13th January 2024** to help with their kata practice. These loaded sessions will initially be for the white belts, orange belts, red belts, and yellow belts.

On **Saturday 27th January 2024** Sensei Janet will be working her magic with the green belts, purple belts, purple-white belts, and the 3rd kyu brown belts.

We hope to offer sessions for higher grades in the months to come, and

TKSI Badge

As you will be aware, we are members of and licenced by the **Traditional Karate Study Institute** under the guidance of **Anthony Blades** kyoshi and **John Burke** renshi.

The Institute's badge has now become available. This can be sewn onto the gi on the right shoulder. It's available from your instructor at £5. We expect to see members, especially the seniors, proudly displaying their badges.



Last Word

Happy New Year. What are your goals and expectations for the year? Whatever they are, it's best to start working on them at this end of the year. We don't want to be approaching Christmas 2024 and have regrets about things we should have started earlier. Take the steps now. Break the goal down into manageable chunks and start to work on that first chunk. In Karate terms, if I was a white belt I could finish the year as a green belt, but first I'd need to get the orange belt. Obviously, the sooner I set to work on getting to orange belt the more likely I could make it to green belt by the end of the year. I could do it if I maintain focus and dedication to training, and made sure that I got some help from my instructors. You should be training twice per week for best effect. You're welcome to train more often, but beware of burn-out. Training less frequently means that it will take longer to assimilate new information and internalise lessons learned. Starting early and setting a good training habit is essential, and if the instructor offers a correction then it is done to help you get better, not to put you down. Taking on-board the things you need to change is how you improve. Most of us have over-indulged during the festive period, so it's like we are all starting again in January. We'll build back up to fitness and ability level together.

I've used grades as an example because they are easily understood, but it's about having a destination and a direction, not really about a specific rank. I always try to get across that rank is a result of effort, and we should work on progress and effort and then the rank will arrive anyway. Not everyone is driven by achieving rank, but we should all want to perform our Karate better. The point is to have these bite-sized increments of progress that we can aim for, because just saying that you want to be at the destination is too much—we have to take the steps along the way...

Proud to be the Keikokai. See you in the dojo.

Oss



**Dedicated to Black Belt
Excellence**