

# 記念日おめでとう

*Newsletter May 2026*



Welcome to May at the Karate Academy. With a couple of Bank Holidays and schools' Half Term it can feel like a very short month. I'd urge you to use your training diary so you can see that you are getting two sessions per week to maintain skills and your growth. Even those taking exams need to put aside their studies for rest and recuperation. As important as exams are, it's best to face them with a fresh head, not one that's been worrying about the exams the night before. Physical health and mental health are strongly linked and coming to Karate can help both. This month is month number 5 of this year, and to make sure you achieve what you want to achieve this year you will want to be half way there (or better) next month.

John Burke,  
Chief Instructor

## 27 Years

May 14th 2026 marks the **27th Anniversary** of John Burke starting the Keikokai Karate club. Before running his own club, John used to teach for Phil Trebilcock sensei in Newton Abbot; and before that he taught classes for Jim Harvey sensei in Seaton.

We will be running our regular timetable that day, with no extra course or class planned, but it would be great to see everyone training on that day in particular. Teaching Karate for 27 years has been a great joy and full of challenges. Our members can be proud to be part of an established club with high standards. Our best celebration is to practice Karate on that evening. As usual.

## Summer School

The dates have been announced! You can book places now. Summer School at the Karate Academy in Newton Abbot will take place from the 10th to the 14th August. It is a

week's training Monday to Friday 10am-3pm in addition to our regular evening classes. This can lead to an immersive Karate training experience which produces compound development through intensive training. We might also have time for some fun and games.

Calling it Summer School might give the impression that it's all children. It's not. We've had all sorts of ages and grades in previous years. Adults and children, white belts to fourth degree black belts. It's a heavy workout for any age or grade, but it's like getting a couple of week's training every day.

The course has been £100 per person in recent years and we're not planning on putting the price up in 2026.

For those prepared to commit to Summer School, we are offering an Early Bird Booking price of just £80 per person. This is valid until 30th June, when the full price will be reinstated. Book your places now to guarantee your place.

## May Timetable

Most of our classes are on as usual during May. There are, however, a couple of dates to be aware of:

**Monday 4th May** is a Bank Holiday. We don't do Bank Holidays.

**Monday 25th May** is a Bank Holiday. We don't do Bank Holidays.

Apart from these there will be classes throughout the term time and the schools' Half Term Holiday at the end of May. Grab your training when you can. You have lots of training opportunities to choose from.

## Birthdays

The following members celebrate their Birthday this month (May)

5	Emma Williams
9	Natasha Thomas
13	Sean Sliney
18	Slawomir Holubinka
20	Kitto Farmer
23	Jude Arnold
24	Evie Joyce
27	Jack Churchill
	Edward Saunders

Happy  
Birthday  
to You



## New Members

The Karate Academy is pleased to welcome the following new members who joined during April:

**Evie Joyce**  
(Newton Abbot Little Warriors)

Recommendation is the highest compliment we can receive.

Welcome one and all!

## New Belts

There was a Stripe Test for the Little Warriors on Saturday 18th April 2026, overseen by Janet Drew sensei and John Burke renshi. The following students passed to their next grade:

### Yellow Stripe

Lucas Cooper

### Red Stripe

Reef Fey.

Congratulations both.

On Sunday 19th April 2026 there was a Kyu Grading in Newton Abbot. The test was conducted by Nick Hawkes sensei, Deborah Needham sensei, Janet Drew sensei, and John Burke renshi with assistance from Slawomir Holubinka.

The following grades were awarded:

### 1st kyu

Louie Chambers

### 2nd kyu

Yovella Green

### 5th kyu

Edward Saunders



### 6th kyu

Federico Forti, Tilly Thomas,  
Harrison Williams

### 7th kyu

Jacob Mperi

### 8th kyu

Kavin Balaji, Andrii Hriorhiev,  
Diyon Prince, Henry Saunders

### 9th kyu

Emmanuel Benoy, Ezekiel Benoy,  
Edgar Humphries, Adon Prince

The successful candidates enjoy the recognition but also the responsibility of living up to their grades.

The next kyu grading is imminent, and the instructors are looking at who can be included in an early June exam.

## Diary Dates:

### May 2026

4th Bank Holiday

14th Keikokai 27th Anniversary

25th Bank Holiday

### June 2026

7th No Advanced class

8th Little Warriors starts at  
5.30pm

9th No evening classes in  
Newton Abbot. Torquay on  
as usual.

10th Little Warriors starts at  
5.30pm

12th No classes

21st Father's Day. No classes.



## Last Word

May 14th marks Keikokai's 27th anniversary. Before that day in 1999 I was teaching on behalf of Phil Trebilcock sensei and the club was called Newton Abbot Shotokan Karate Club. Once Phil retired and left the club in my hands it was time to make a few changes. Phil wanted to call the club Newton Abbot Dragons but the debate went on about the name. Once the decision was mine I wanted to give the club a name that was fundamentally about what we do. We train. It's what we do. The words for training in Japanese are many. Practice, lessons, training. I looked at them all. The one I went for is the one that means "re-enact the old ways" as there is a classic martial arts saying "Look at the old to understand the new" - On Ko Chi shin. Consistently, we look at the old practice methods and integrate modern teaching methodology in order get the best results.

Naturally, I get very nostalgic at this point in the year. I get to thinking about the people I've taught and the places I've been, the successes I've had and the challenges which have stood in my way. There's plenty to be sad about with people who have gone from our lives, but in the main we look back on the last 27 years with huge affection and pride. We've tried all sorts of things over the years, from teaching aerobics to having a "pressure point of the week". We've looked at every fad that has occurred across the decades but in the end, and with a broad perspective, we come back to doing Karate the way we feel it should be done. It's how we hold our heads up high.

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

**Oss**



**Dedicated to Black Belt  
Excellence**