

Bloomsbury Aikido Club is pleased to host its first

UCL Alumni Aikido Group and Friends Annual Reunion Saturday 30 July 2016

Instructor Profiles

Each BAC-hosted reunion will present different teachers from within the Group, for us to sample the diverse Aikido experience acquired by alumni since their time at UCL. This year we have four instructors, including UCL Alumni Andy Washbrook, Mire Zloh and Barbara Sotowicz.

Andy Washbrook, 2 Dan

Andy entered UCL in 1992 to study Astrophysics and immediately began cross training in Aikido and Karate at the Bloomsbury dojo from freshers' week on. He regularly trained with UCL Aikido Club 1995 - 2000 led by Barbara and Mire. Particularly memorable were the seminars with Mr Smith (see photo, 1997, below).



He relocated to Northern California as a software engineer in 2000 - during the tech boom - and studied with [Frank Doran](#) Shihan (7th dan) in the San Francisco Bay Area, where he met his wife Jennifer on the mat and took his shodan. He enjoyed the vigor of [Cyndy Hayashi](#) Sensei's (7th dan) classes the most. Hayashi Sensei has since taken over running Aikido West. Following the bursting of the dot-com bubble, Reuters closed the silicon valley office in 2003 and shipped staff out to St Louis, in the heart of the American Midwest. Andy and Jennifer helped lead [St Louis Aikikai](#) a local dojo under Mitsugi Saotome Shihan ([ASU](#)) for nine years. They were heavily influenced by their mentor [Marsha Turner Sensei](#) (5th dan) now dojo-cho at Chicago Aikikai. In 2008 they hosted [Hiroshi Ikeda](#) Shihan (7th dan) for the first time, who awarded Jennifer her shodan and his nidan. They were able to host him once more in [2011](#), before moving back to London the following year.

Matsuoka Sensei was another strong influence. Back in 2005 Andy and Jennifer hosted a very popular public friendship seminar with a local student of [Haruo Matsuoka](#) Sensei (6th dan) in [Southern California](#). They were extremely excited to later join his dojo in their annual tour to Japan to visit his master [Seiseki Abe](#) Shihan (1915 - 2011) in Osaka. They got to try Noh dancing and Abe Shihan taught them how it links to the "samurai walk".

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/awashbrook>

Professor Mire Zloh, 4 Dan

Mire joined UCL Aikido club in September 1994, while a Phd student. Mire became an instructor at the club and taught there until c.2005. He also founded the Aikido Club in Walthamstow, which he ran for about ten years during his time in London. Mire is now based in Hertfordshire, currently not affiliated with a particular club, but helping Mark Machin in his Bedford dojo. He is Professor of medicinal Chemistry at the University of Hertfordshire and Visiting Professor at UCL School of Pharmacy.

<https://uk.linkedin.com/in/mire-zloh-b7a22016>



Photo with Mr William Smith Sensei, MBE, 2002 at Renshinkan Dojo, Old Hill.

Barbara Sotowicz, 5 Dan

Joined the Aikido Club at UCL in 1977, while a postgraduate student. She is the Head of Dojo at Bloomsbury Aikido Club, one of the coaches for UCLU Aikido Club and a member of Ren Sei Kan (Kidderminster) Aikido Club. In 2013 she set up the UCL Alumni Aikido Group, for which she is the Contact. Bloomsbury Aikido Club is one of the founding clubs of the Goshinkai Aikido association, established in June 2016. She is now based in London and Worcestershire.

<http://www.bloomsburyaikido.co.uk/who-we-are/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bloomsburysotowicz>



UCLU Aikido, 1996