

HOSTS ITS SECOND

UCL Alumni Aikido Group and Friends Annual Reunion Saturday 2 Sept 2017

Each BAC-hosted reunion will present different teachers from within the Group, for us to sample the diverse Aikido experience acquired by group members. This year we are pleased to welcome Julie Partridge, Mark Machin and Ara Schorscher-Petcu.

Instructor Profiles

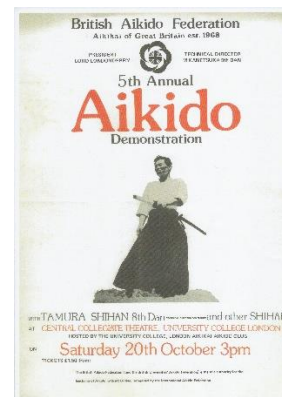
Julie Partridge, 2 Dan

From April 1973 till July 1976 I trained with a Burmese 3rd Dan called Htun Han in Lowestoft, Suffolk. I graded to 2nd Kyu. I recognise now that his style was very similar to Iwama in stance and movement.

In 1976 I trained at Sussex University for a year under Ron Cattrall, 3rd Dan, Aikikai (student of Chiba). In my second year I took over the dojo and taught there, three times a week, for two years. I invited Peter Goldsbury down most Fridays to support me and to take the lesson (before he left for Japan). I also travelled to London twice a week to train with Mick Holloway, Aikikai, (student of Chiba) at Tempukan dojo at Earls Court. On Sundays I would often go up to The Hut and train with Mr Foster (Institute of Aikido).

In 1979 I returned from a Summer School with Asai Sensei in Dusseldorf, Germany and was on my way to the BAF Summer School and decided to call into Kanetsuka Sensei's Ryushinkan dojo for a quick practice. Kanetsuka Sensei and Fujita Sensei (7th Dan) were there. Fujita Sensei asked Kanetsuka Sensei my grade, and he had to admit that I had no Aikikai grade despite running the Sussex University dojo for two years. Fujita Sensei insisted that I grade at summer school, which I did, and got my Shodan.

In 1979 I moved to London for a year and trained with Kanetsuka Sensei at Ryushinkan dojo most days of the week. Many times I would take lessons on his behalf at various locations. During my year in London Kanetsuka sensei was teaching frequently at the UCL dojo. I would often go with him and sometimes was sent to teach the beginners at UCL alone. (Back in the days when coaching courses were not necessary!).



1979: UCL Aikido hosts BAF Demonstration. David Helsby taking uke for Julie.

[UCL Alumni Aikido Group](http://www.uclaag.org) - a social and training network for UCL alumni anywhere in the world. Students have been practising Aikido at UCL since 1975. The UCLAAG of its essence not confined to any one club or organisation. Bloomsbury Aikido Club is a member of Goshinkai Aikido Association www.goshinkai.org.uk ; UK Governing Body: British Aikido Board www.bab.org.uk. Goshinkai is compliant with the regulations of the Aikikai Foundation, Japan, www.aikikai.or.jp/eng .

One memorable event at UCL was a wonderful aikido demonstration headed by Tamura Shihan along with many other high ranking senseis. I arrived with my gi hoping that I would not be needed as an uke. However Kanetsuka sensei instructed me to go on stage and demonstrate 'something' with David Helsby as my uke. I have never been so scared in my entire life! I decided to play it safe and perform flowing Ikkyo from whichever attacks David initiated. It went really well- David was always such a good Uke! We even found ourselves immortalised in print- someone in the audience was writing a book about martial arts and David and I were photographed in action.

The following year I decided to travel for a while and then spent 6 months at Asia Sensei's dojo in Dusseldorf, Germany before returning to the UK I where trained in Ongar (can't remember the Sensei's name.).

I moved to Southend in 1982 and got married, and as there was no dojo there I started an Aikikai dojo affiliated to the NAF, and then BAF, which I ran for 3 years before moving to Bedfordshire. At this point I stopped aikido while I started my family.

We moved to Ivory Coast in West Africa in 1987 and I started a dojo there for three years, then stopped for many years as the political climate changed, and while my children grew up. We moved back to the UK.

In 2007 I moved to London and in 2008 I joined a Kobayashi dojo run by Chris Diacopoulos (3rd Dan). I stopped aikido due to injury. A couple of years later I rather hesitantly started up again with Bjorn Saw.

In November 2016 Bjorn arranged for me to take my Nidan with an old friend I knew in London from 1980s, Bjorn Erik Olsen, 7th Dan from Norway.

Mark Machin, 3 Dan

I started practising aikido at university in 1991. In 1995 I moved to London and joined UCL Aikido progressing from 3rd kyu to Shodan with Barbara. It was a great time at the club, attending courses with Ken Cottier and other senior aikidoka while helping organise events such as freshers' fairs and the UCL 25th anniversary course with William Smith and Gordon Jones. Over



the couple of years I had regular teaching responsibility but moved away in 2003. For the last 9 years I've been running my own club in Bedford with around 40 students.

www.aikidobedford.org.uk

1991, UCLU Aikido Club: Mark taking uke for Mr William Smith MBE at the original UCL dojo on the 3rd floor of the Central Collegiate Building (now the Bloomsbury Building)

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Ara Schorscher-Petcu, 1 Dan

Ara picked up Aikido in 2004 while completing her PhD in neuroscience in Montreal. There, she joined *McGill Aikido*, a university club run by Daniel Laurendeau Shihan. In parallel, she trained at *Aikikai de Montréal* with Massimo di Villadorata Shihan. Both dojos are part of the US Aikido Federation presided by Yoshimitsu Yamada Shihan of *New York Aikikai* whose classes and seminars Ara attended regularly.

In 2010, then 2nd Kyu, Ara moved to Paris for a post-doc and enrolled at *Cercle Tissier*. Compelled by the precise and dynamic style of Christian Tissier Shihan she also studied with his numerous associate instructors, enjoying above all Bruno Gonzalez' (6th Dan) and Fabrice Croizé's (5th Dan) classes.

Few months after taking her Shodan exam in 2013, Ara suffered a traumatic tendon injury and had to pause Aikido practice. It wasn't until moving to London in 2016 that she was able to engage in regular training again. As a member of academic research staff at UCL she naturally joined UCLU Aikido and, with the generous support of Barbara Sotowicz (5th Dan), started to get involved in coaching. Ara has been one of the teachers at the club since January 2017.



2017, Goshinkai Teachers' Course hosted by Bloomsbury Aikido: Ara training with fellow Goshinkai instructor James Kirkpatrick.

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