



The Kano Society Bulletin



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News

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of one of the Kano Society's founder members, Syd Hoare who passed away on the morning of 12 September 2017 after a long illness. He is sadly missed by many friends and family, and his death marks the end of a *judo* era.

One of the youngest pupils of Trevor Leggett, Syd was at the same time gruff, scary, tough and funny with a wicked sense of humour, a great coach and teacher and a skilled technician with a lethal *osoto-gari* which he strengthened by practicing in the swimming pool doing *uchikomi* against the resistance of the water.

We miss you Syd.

In this edition

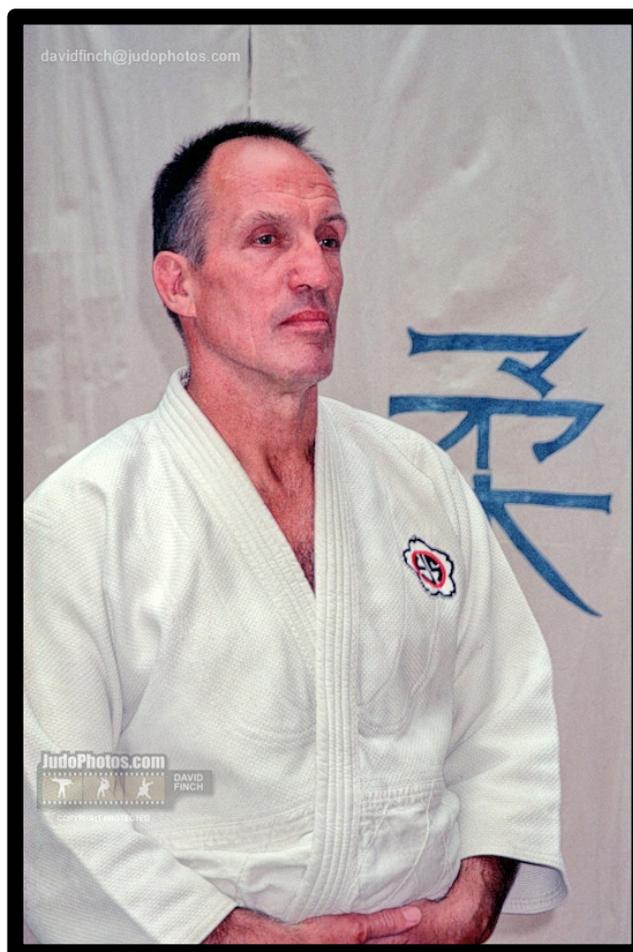
Contributions to this special tribute issue of the Kano Society Bulletin have been provided, from the *judo* community, by Diana Birch, John Pinnell, John Bowen, Nicholas Soames, Brian Watson, Jim Bregman, Mike Callan and Llyr Jones. Llyr Jones also prepared and edited this edition.

Thank you all.

Regards Diana Birch

Obituary – Syd Hoare 8th *dan* (1939 - 2017)

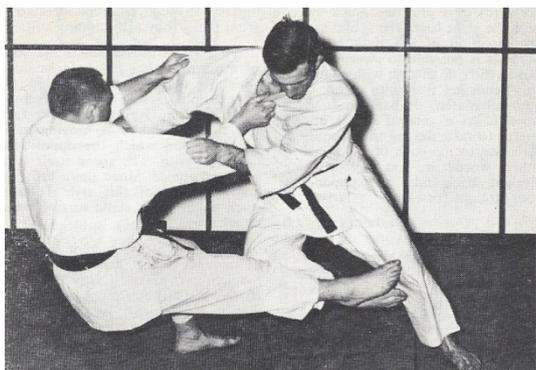
By Diana Birch, John Pinnell and Llyr Jones



Sydney Reginald Hoare was born in Paddington, London on 18 July 1939. He started *judo* at the *Budokwai* in 1954, and did much of his training under Trevor Pryce (TP) Leggett. In 1955, he became the youngest British *dan*-grade at that time, and eventually progressed to 8th *dan*, receiving this last promotion in 2002.

In 1961, Syd travelled to Japan and trained at the *Kodokan* for 3 years, where his fellow compatriots included George Kerr and Tony Reay. He went on to become an Olympian, representing Great Britain at *judo* at the Games of the XVIII Olympiad (the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics) where he fought in the Middleweight -80kg category. Other highlights from his competitive career include a Silver medal from the 1965 European Judo Championships held in Madrid, where, although only a Middleweight, he fought in the Open-weight category.

Syd's *tokui-waza* [favoured technique] was *osoto-gari* [major outer reaping throw] which he frequently combined with *ko-soto-gari* [minor outer reaping throw]. It was often said that he probably had the best *osoto-gari* outside of Japan.



Syd Hoare throwing with *ko-uchi-gari*
[minor inner reaping throw]

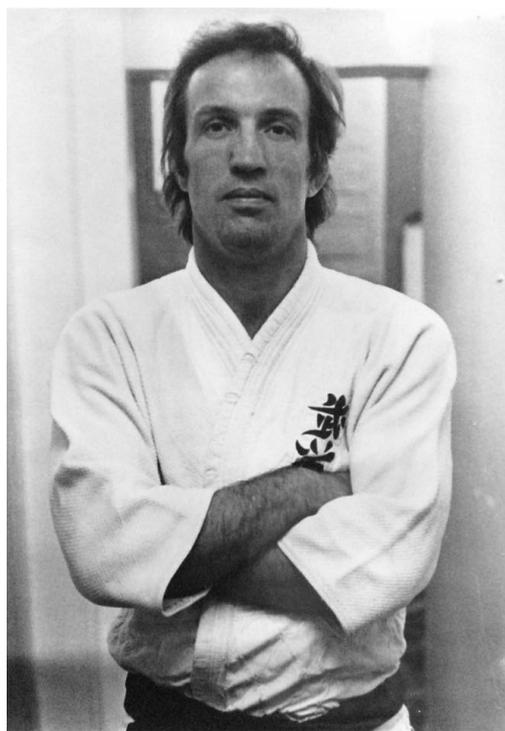


Syd Hoare in his Olympic Blazer
(Source: "A Slow Boat to Yokohama")

After retiring from competition, Syd became the Manager and Chief Instructor at The *Budokwai*, London.



Syd Hoare (centre front) – Chief Instructor at The *Budokwai*, 1967
(Source: "A Slow Boat to Yokohama")



Syd Hoare at The *Budokwai* in the early 1970s
(Photograph: Peter Gallie; Supplied by Christine Gallie)

Syd subsequently went on to become a British National Coach, a Senior Examiner and the Chairman, from 1985 to 1987, of the British *Judo* Association (BJA).



Syd Hoare speaking at the British *Judo* Association's lecture by Trevor Leggett, held at the Cora Hotel, London on 7 January 1984

Syd left The *Budokwai* after becoming the Chief Instructor of his own club – the London *Judo* Society (LJS), which he took over from Eric Dominy. The LJS building was subsequently acquired by property developers, at which stage he returned to the *Budokwai*, becoming an Instructor there, and later Chairman.

Syd was also a major driving force behind the development of amateur *sumo*, or "*amasumo*", in the United Kingdom (UK), an interest that he picked up while studying in Japan. He chaired the British Sumo Federation for many years and became a 5th *dan* in the discipline. Around 1990, Syd organised for the first European to train in a Japanese *Heya* [professional *sumo* training stable], and in 1992, he organised a team to compete in the very first Amateur *Sumo* World

Championships held at the Ryogoku *Kokugikan* [Ryogoku Sumo Hall] in Tokyo.

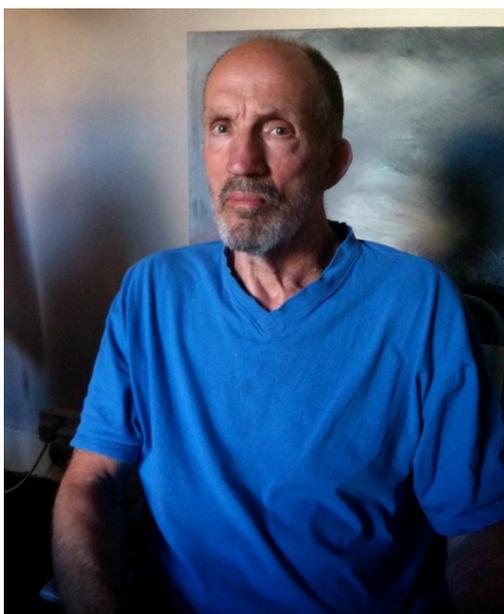


Syd Hoare with some early British amateur *sumo* competitors

A *judoka* of real intellect, Syd graduated in Japanese history, language, literature and religion at the prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of London University, where he studied from 1968-1971. He was also a fluent Japanese speaker.

Off the mat, Syd went on to write books on *judo*, self-defence and exercise – including: “*Famous Judo Throws – 2 Oso-togari*” [with John M. Goodger] (1969); “*The A-Z of Judo*” (1993); “*Teach Yourself Keep Fit*” (1986); “*Teach Yourself Judo*” (1988); “*Teach Yourself Self-defence*” (1988); “*Judo Strategies*” (1995); “*A History of Judo*” (2008) and “*A Slow Boat to Yokohama*” (2010).

Syd became a TV commentator for various martial arts, regularly commenting on Olympic *judo* and the various *basho* [tournaments]. He also became known for bits of work in film – particularly on “*Snatch*” (2000), “*Secret Society*” (2000) and “*As You Like It*” (2006).



A portrait of Syd Hoare (Source: Sasha Hoare)

Syd married Sophie Fox in Hammersmith in 1973 and they had four children – Sasha, Jocelyn, Zoe and Max. He later married Oksana Khoutornaja and had a further two children – Viviana and Rafferty. The portrait shown in the previous column, was taken by his eldest daughter, Sasha, in 2010.



Judo friends and *Budokwai* members gather for Syd Hoare's funeral at Lambeth Crematorium

Syd's funeral was held at the Lambeth Crematorium, London on 22 September 2017, and was very well attended. The photograph above shows his numerous *judo* friends and members of the *Budokwai* that were present. The eminence of many in this group demonstrates the honour and respect Syd was held in by the *judo* community, and underpins how influential he was to British *judo* as a role model, coach and administrator.

Syd Hoare

By James (Jim) Bregman

Sent from Leesburg, Virginia, on 14 September 2017

Jim Bregman was a member of the first United States team to compete in *judo* in the Summer Olympic Games. He won a Bronze medal, in the Middleweight (-80 kg) category, at the Tokyo 1964 Summer Olympics.

Syd and I shared a common goal. We both aspired to be *judo* technicians, *wazashi*. We wanted to be technically excellent, learn the art of *judo* and become proficient. And we understood full well to do just that it would take practice, practice and more practice. We would do road work and weights in the mornings, and make as many practices a day as our schedules and bodies would allow, going to the *Kodokan*, the *Keischo*, and Meiji University or Nichidai. But on rare occasion, we would meet in the morning for a run and give each other a 'knowing look'. Neither of us wanted to give in first, but it was clear to both that we were totally spent. So, simultaneously, after a long pregnant pause, would say, “Coffee Shop?” and smile. Off we would go to a close, friendly coffee shop, and spend a quiet morning chatting about life in Japan, its history, our histories and our daily struggles with university, language studies, making enough to pay rent and eat, and survive the hard, intense, day in and day out practices to master our chosen martial art.

Syd was my hero and partner in what I later termed the 'Gray Judo Life' because our *judogi* were always soaked with perspiration which was proof positive that we were indeed making slow but steady progress. His life story is a testament to what can be accomplished with patience, perseverance, and persistence.



Tony Reay, Miura-sensei, Syd Hoare and Jim Bregman at the Kodokan. (Source: "A Slow Boat to Yokohama")

Syd Hoare, Judo Master

By John Bowen

Sent from Tokyo on 30 September 2017

Syd became interested in *judo* and *jujutsu* in 1953, when he was 14, and bought several books on the subject – he was already a voracious reader. In February 1954, he took a beginners' course at the *Budokwai*, paid for by his father, and taught by Percy Sekine. Syd proved to be a quick and eager learner and joined the club as soon as the course ended.

He was thin as a rail in those early days with little muscle. It seemed the only physical attribute he had going for him was his suppleness. Percy Sekine advised him against going in for the first grading he was eligible for, which was in June. With all the practice he was doing, Syd was developing physically and becoming skilled, and in his first grading, in September 1954, he was awarded fifth *kyu* by Sekine, skipping sixth *kyu*. Every three months Syd moved up a grade, and by December 1955 he was ready to go for his black belt. He was well up to the task, beating six opponents to become, at 16, the UK's youngest ever black belt.

By that point, he was already a member of the Sunday black belt class run by Trevor Pryce (TP) Leggett. Leggett was the great man of post-war British *judo* and had a hand in training most of the key figures in UK *judo*. For TP, Syd Hoare was an ideal student, someone who was eager to learn and worked hard. The Sunday class gave Syd a perfect grounding in what to expect when he went to Japan to train. First, however, he had to do his National Service. He signed up for three years so he could save the fare to Japan, and started his basic training in March 1957.

In September 1957, he was able to take part in the BJA (inter) Area Championships as a member of the London team. The format in those days was a three-man team, the other

two being John Newman and John Ryan, who both became mainstays of the British national team. (Two months later, Newman became first-*dan* champion of Europe.) Although he was four or five years younger than his teammates, Syd was the captain, and London won.

Three years later, when he got out of the army, Syd was at his physical peak, 178 cm tall and weighing up to 80 kg. He looked deceptively slim as he wrapped the black belt around his waist, but he felt as solid as a rock, and was seemingly immovable on the ground when I practiced with him. His *osoto-gari* was in full bloom – he would still be pushing down hard as you hit the mat, as if he were trying to drive you through it.

In the 1960 Area Championships held in Cardiff, Syd was again captain of the winning team. Mick Woodhead, who died less than one month before Syd (see issue 30 of this bulletin), was also on this team. Syd and Mick were good friends in Japan too, where they played the role of broly-car-carrying English gentlemen. If a car stopped partly on the crossing at lights, Syd or Mick would sternly tap the bonnet with his umbrella, and as it was Japan, the driver would sheepishly back the car so they could stride across unimpeded.

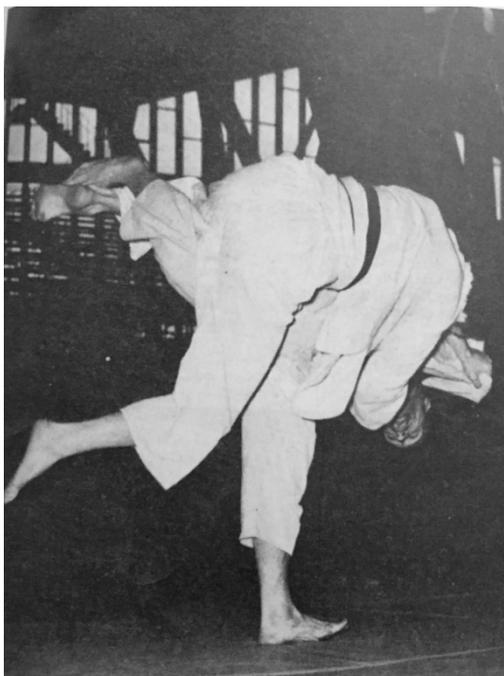
Syd wanted to go to Japan as a third *dan*, so quickly got his second *dan* in March 1960, after going through a seven-man line-up. In December, he went for his third *dan*, facing eleven men lined up across the left end wall of the *Budokwai*. In all, five second *dan judoka* were going for their third but only Syd got cleanly through the line-up, using a wide variety of techniques. To me, an 18-year-old first *dan*, it was utterly inspirational and quite unforgettable. In fact, I remember more of the occasion than any of my own line-ups.

Soon after, he sailed to Japan, where he trained hard at *Nichidai* [Nihon University], the *Keishicho* [police instructors' dojo] and the *Kodokan*. He probably stayed a bit too long in Japan. Around that time, the conventional wisdom about how long foreigners should train in Japan was starting to change as non-Japanese *judo* and *judoka* became stronger. Syd himself realised this; he was very attuned to such changes in the Japanese and international *judo* environments. After a long period of training in Japan, it could take some time to readjust to contest *judo* on one's home turf.



Syd Hoare and Mick Woodhead at the *Keishicho* (Source: "A Slow Boat to Yokohama")

Syd returned to Britain as a fourth *dan* in May 1964, which gave him two months to prepare for the Olympic trials, and was selected to represent Great Britain in the Middleweight category. The following year, 1965, he was a Silver medallist in the Open-weight category at the European Championships, and also won silver in the Adriatic Cup, Heavyweight category. After retiring from competition in 1967, he became Chief Instructor at The *Budokwai* for several years, during which he also obtained a BA in Japanese studies from SOAS, London University. In the 1980s Syd bought the LJS and ran it for some eleven years, a period during which the number of *judo* clubs in London dropped from 110 to 35.



Syd Hoare throwing John Bowen during a selection contest for the 1965 World Championships (Source: "A Slow Boat to Yokohama")

Syd wrote books and many articles on *judo*, all marked by his keen intelligence and thoughtfulness. His writings contain many practical ideas for improving training methods and contest rules. When in 1981 Brian Goodger wrote his 440-page doctoral thesis on the development of British *judo*, he cited Syd as a reference 65 times, more than even the number of TP citations.

Syd was a traditionalist and did not like the direction of modern *judo*, the departure from the vision of Jigoro Kano, the *Shihan*. In his later years, Leggett passed on to Syd about 400 of his books, most of them Japanese: who else would he have given them to? TP had had several star pupils, but Syd was special.

As all who knew him will attest, Syd was also very witty, coming out with sharp comments with his crooked grin. Once, for example, when a former British *judo* international who'd worked in Tokyo for years was declaiming about all the opportunities in Japan, Syd's response was, "Well, where's your Rolls-Royce?" He was never averse to speaking his mind.

In the British *judo* world, Syd was an inspirational example to younger *judoka*, and a teacher able to inspire them to work harder. His influence will live on through the many outstanding *judoka* he taught over the years, who are now, in turn, teaching new generations how to do *judo* the right way.

Syd Hoare

Eulogy by Nicolas Soames

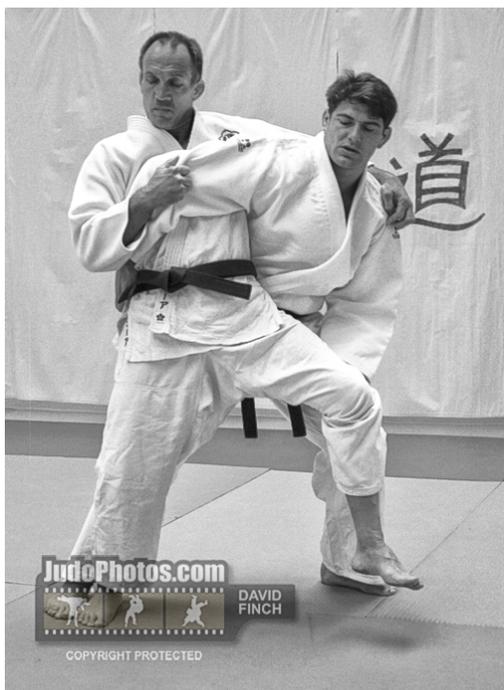
As delivered at the funeral on 25 September 2017

Syd's discovery of *judo* was like alchemy for him, turning base metal into gold. Many of us here know that feeling of the transforming power of *judo* – far beyond the ordinary enjoyment of a sport with medals – but for Syd it was the guiding motivation of his life. It changed him from a teenager without purpose into a man with vigour, endurance, passion, ambition and commitment – qualities which lasted through his entire life. Though at 16 the youngest *dan* grade in England, though he fought in the 1964 Olympics and the following year won a silver in the Open-weight category at the European Championships – his opponent in the final, Alfred Meier, was 6' 7" – it was the day-to-day training that was important to him. An avid reader at school, he became a star pupil of Trevor Leggett whose view of *judo* as a character training was paramount. We know Syd spoke and wrote excellent Japanese and got his degree at SOAS. But I had a personal example of his assiduousness. When he was Chairman of the BJA we went to the European Championships in Belgrade, and, arriving the day before, we walked around the town. He bought a map and started to lead the way. But the map, and all the street names, were in Cyrillic. "I learned to read the letters before coming out" he said. "A lot easier than *Hiragana*, *Katakana* and *Kanji*". That was Syd.

He told me he stopped competing because he found all that fuss about competitions time consuming and boring. But he never stopped learning. He was a fount of knowledge, academic and practical. When running his gyms, he did most of the maintenance himself. His books – on *judo*, self-defence, get fit, history and autobiography – were based on acquired knowledge AND research. Having read 19th and early 20th Japanese records, he was fascinating on how the development of rules had formed modern *judo*. His 1993 text "The A-Z of *Judo*" was, and still is, the best-seller for Ippon Books.

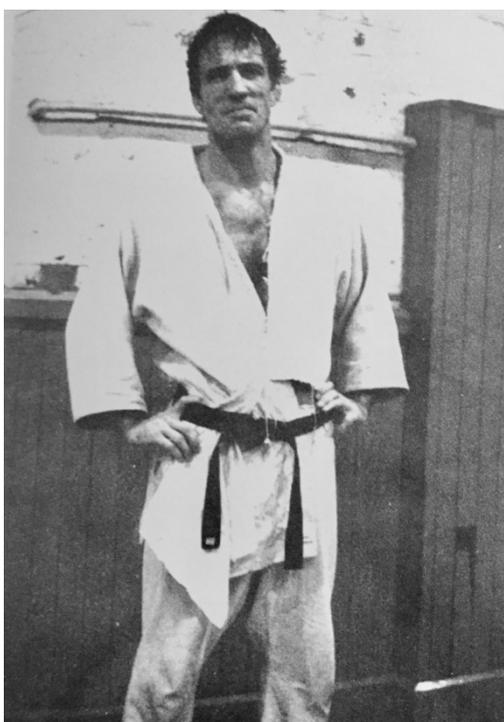


Syd Hoare showing *Atama-hishigi* [Head crush] (Source: "The A-Z of *Judo*")



Syd Hoare being attacked with *Suki-nage* [Scoop throw]
(Source: "The A-Z of Judo")

And, having himself trained to high degree, (I didn't know him when at his fighting peak, but I gather he was quite something) he went on to inspire others. Many of us here still regard Syd as a principal figure of inspiration, even though day to day contact can really dent admiration. He was, at times, rough certainly. At one point, watching me on the mat, he barked: "Soames. You are not fit." Go and run a marathon. And I did.



Syd Hoare training hard at the Budokwai in 1964
(Source: "A Slow Boat to Yokohama")

Later, when I was getting a bit stronger, he growled, "The way to test your *judo* is to go to a pub in the East End and pour a pint of beer into someone's lap". I didn't do that, but to this day I am unsure sure if he was joking or not.

Though he was Chairman of the BJA and The *Budokwai*, I suspect he was never comfortable as a politician, with a smile for everyone. He was Syd Hoare, 8th *dan*. An old friend of his dubbed him a loner, which has some truth. Syd was self-contained, self-motivated and always combative. Sometimes, inadvisably, too combative. He had to get to the top.



Syd Hoare, and George Kerr, pose for the camera on 28 August 1986 at the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, South Norwood, United Kingdom. (Source: David Finch)

It was this clarity of purpose and determination demonstrated throughout his life that made his final illness, when he was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia, almost unbelievable for many of us. Even more so because he had kept himself fit. Such is the human lot.

But this will not disturb the memory I have of Syd – an exceptional, singular man, who was clear, direct, accomplished, courageous, a loving father – and actually very good fun. Above all, a continuing inspiration to me and to many who knew him.

Syd Hoare

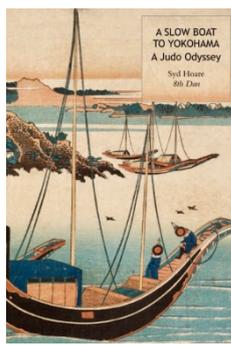
By Brian Watson

Sent from Tokyo on 14 September 2017

It was with much sorrow that I learned of the passing of Syd Hoare. I trained with him at the *Renshuden* and the *Budokwai* in the early 1960s. He was always both physically strong and superbly fit. When we were doing physical exercises after training, I noticed Syd was the only one in the *dojo* who could clap his hands after each repetition when doing scores of push ups. Not as easy as it sounds!

Following a training session at the *Renshuden*, we would often go to the 'Bonfini' restaurant for a meal. Before I left for Japan in 1966, Syd gave me useful advice on what to expect not only during university and police *dojo* training here, but also on life in Japan and on Japanese language study. The last time I spoke to Syd was in London in 1993 at John Newman's funeral.

Syd had a profound knowledge of not only *budo* but also of Japanese society, this is borne out in his books, especially "A History of Judo" (2009) and "A Slow Boat to Yokohama" (2010). Both are well worth reading.



"A History of Judo" (2009) and
"A Slow Boat to Yokohama" (2010)

Truly a sad loss to British *judo*, R.I.P. Syd.

Recollections of Syd Hoare

By Mike Callan

My first real conversation with Syd was at an interview for a role as a Gym Instructor at Haverstock Hill Gym, which had been arranged for me by Roy Inman. Syd and I chatted about *judo* for a while, it didn't seem like an interview. Then Syd said, "OK, I'll take you on, you can start on Monday. This is the rate I'll pay you. But after one month, I'll ask the gym members if they like you, if they say yes, I'll increase your wages and back-date them, if they say no.... I'll sack you".

So, I knew where I stood. I worked with Syd for around nine years after that conversation. The gym at Haverstock Hill was basic with no frills, and attracted musicians such as Ben Watt and Boy George, and actors such as Zoe Wannamaker, and Michael Keaton.

One morning, Syd came in with a sledgehammer. I asked him what it was for, so he grabbed an old envelope and sketched a plan of the changing area, explaining how adding a women's changing area would be good for business. Minutes later we were demolishing a wall to create a new doorway, and calling the ever-dependable Jimmy Rudden to come and finish the job.

Another day he came in with a table leg. He said, "There's been some thefts around here lately, I brought you this so you can protect the till". I explained that I wasn't particularly proficient in the 'noble art of the table leg', and so Syd gave me a lesson in said art, which I recall to this day. Thankfully I didn't have occasion to use those skills.

He knew that there were times when the gym was quiet, and he told me to write. It was at that time that I wrote several articles for the British *Judo* magazine, thanks to Syd's encouragement. I've no doubt I would not currently hold an academic post in a University, had he not encouraged me back then.

The superstar of Japanese and world *judo* at the time was Yasuhiro Yamashita. Syd had written to Nobuyuki Sato and offered to help host Mr Yamashita for his year-long honeymoon in London. Mr Yamashita and his wife Midori arrived on the Friday, and Syd asked if I was free on the Saturday, to help take them on a tour of London. My abiding memory was climbing up Tower Bridge, and the four of us singing the song "London Bridge is Falling Down" as the lyrics were posted on the wall of the exhibition.

Both Mr Yamashita and I were regular attendees at the Zen class that Syd arranged for Trevor Leggett to teach on a Tuesday morning at 0730 hrs. I had to catch the first tube, and run from the station to be on time. I think all present were more than aware that this was a special time and we were privileged to take part.

After his stay in London, Mr Yamashita invited me to Japan to train for a couple of months. Syd very kindly continued to pay my wages while I was away. Whilst there Syd asked me to visit the Ryogoku *Kokugikan* and find out what I could about the All-Japan *Sumo* Federation, thus began his association with the world of *rikishi* [the Japanese term for a professional *sumo* wrestler] in *mawashi* [belt / loincloth].

That trip was my first visit to Tokai University, and next year marks the thirtieth anniversary of my long-standing relationship, which has seen many Japanese *judoka* visit the UK, their teaching providing an enduring legacy of Syd's far sightedness and generosity.

Thanks Syd.

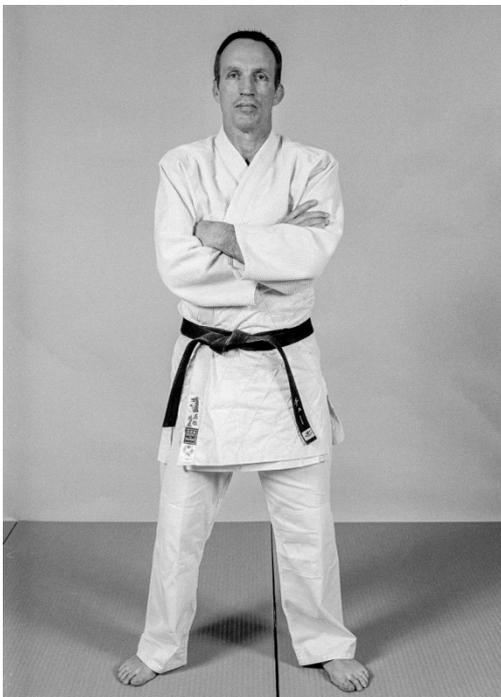
First Meeting Syd Hoare

By Llyr Jones

I first met Syd on a grey Sunday afternoon in 1988 at the LJS on Lansdowne Way in Stockwell. These were the days when the monthly *dan* promotion examinations (gradings) at the LJS drew high numbers of *judoka* of grades first *kyu* to fourth *dan*, all vying for promotion to the next grade.

Syd, along with John Waite were the Senior Examiners (SE) that day, and my first memory of Syd is when he examined me in, what was called back then, *Dan Grade Theory* (now called *Competitive Dan Grade Skills*). Before that day, Syd Hoare was a name I had heard of – mainly through him being a recent Chairman of the BJA and his authorship of the book “*Teach Yourself Judo*” – the first *judo* book I ever owned. Now the man himself was standing in front of me, exam form in hand. No pressure then.

For some unknown reason, I fancied myself as a bit of a technician, and all seemed to be going OK until we got to the fifth set of the individual throwing techniques, where Syd called for me to demonstrate *koshi-guruma* [hip wheel]. I did what I assumed had been a pretty fair effort at the throw, and Syd, rather than calling out the next technique said, “I’ve given you 3 for that”. He then proceeded to hold an impromptu coaching session on the finer points of *koshi-guruma* before carrying on with the exam. I went on to pass and had “SR Hoare, SE2” scrawled on my points card and examination form. Wow, I thought, how tough must whoever was SE1 be?



Syd Hoare in August 1986
Photograph: David Finch

I went on to see more of Syd in the years that followed, and he was always very interesting to talk to. Much later we kept in touch mainly through e-mail – particularly after I returned

to the UK from living in Japan, and started myself to write about *judo*.

I was proud to share a love of *judo*, its traditions, discipline, culture and history with Syd. We corresponded a lot, and he always had much to say about what he called the “Cyber Sensei” that the internet and social media were producing. We also shared the articles and papers we were both writing – usually in advance of publication – to obtain criticism and suggestions for improvement. His feedback on my work was always constructive and delivered with kindness, and usually included an appropriate Japanese phrase or saying that summed up his point perfectly. When Syd’s books “*A Slow Boat to Yokohama*” and “*A History of Judo*” were published, he generously sent me dedicated and signed copies. I treasure them.

Syd was one of the finest and hardest *judoka* I ever met. He was also one of the most thoughtful and intellectual. He oozed style and class in everything he did. Rest well *sensei*, you are much missed.



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