

VALE OF YORK T'AI CHI QIGONG ASSOCIATION



Winter Newsletter 2009

Grading

Our recent grading at Thirsk Town Hall took place on Saturday 24th October. A small group gathered to see three of our more senior members test themselves.

First, Ro performed to gain her orange sash. She did herself and us great credit, and we congratulate her on her well deserved promotion.

Andrea, who was looking for a red sash, was accompanied on the floor by Sue, who had more to do. Andrea, as always, was graceful and poised. She is a worthy holder of the red sash and we congratulate her.

Sue, who performed with Andrea, then went on alone to do Wild Goose Qigong, which is our most advanced Qigong form. Andrea supported her by performing in the background. Sue is now at black sash level, and is an assured and accomplished practitioner. However, she isn't quite there yet as she has to perform the whole grading syllabus at her next grading to achieve the coveted black sash. She is certainly ready to take this step, and it will be wonderful for the Vale of York and for me personally to see the next generation of black sash stepping up.

Master Alan Box presented the certificates and sashes, though Sue had to be content with a certificate and no sash until next time.

Also, to my surprise, I was called out and received my second degree stripe for my teaching and commitment to the association and the practice. This was a moment of great pride and totally unexpected.

(Well done Pat, on behalf of us all!)

Our thanks to Master Alan for his teaching, for judging the grading for VoY and for giving helpful feedback to candidates.

Lost Property

After a training at St. James's Green some while ago a black Edinburgh Woollen Mills fleece was found. I took it and have asked various people if they have lost one. No-one so far seems to have missed it. The poor thing is camping out in the back of my car and I am sure it would be very happy to have a real home with its own family for Christmas. If you have lost a fleece please let me know. This time of year is a hard time for lost fleeces, and we at the rescue centre work hard to give them as good a time as we can, but nothing really can make up for their own homes and families. Have you ever considered adopting a fleece? There is a very needy one here just waiting to be taken home and given the love and attention all fleeces want and

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deserve. For re-homing please contact: The Fleece Trust, c/o Pat Brooks, on 01845 525020.

Membership

Membership subscriptions are due at the beginning of 2010 and you will find the renewal form attached. Please return it with you fee by the end of January, unless you have opted to pay by standing order.

AGM

The AGM has been scheduled for 1.00pm on Saturday 13th February after the regular training at St. James's Green Methodist Church. Please do come along as it is an opportunity for you to give your views on how the association develops, and to hear what other people think.

We are looking for a new secretary. Ro Walmsley has given it up due to a very busy family and working life, and although I have taken it on until the AGM I have said, and mean it, that this is a short term arrangement. If you have the right skills and would like to have a go, we would all appreciate it. In fact if you feel you are willing to take it on let me know and I shall greet you with open arms. I'd be very happy to support you until you have got the role sorted out.

Library

The library is there for those who may want to borrow books or CDs and DVDs. I (Pat Brooks) look after it and welcome suggestions for new material. We have a great deal of basic stuff but could do with some material at a rather more advanced level. If you come across music which you enjoy and which promotes a calm and relaxed feeling, please let me know and I can add it to the collection. I do bring the box to training when I feel strong enough to lift it, but often notice that little interest is taken in it. This may be because we are not getting new material. Or is it just something people don't really want? Please let me know your views.

Guest Tutors

During the last few months we have enjoyed working with two very different guest tutors. It is interesting and stimulating to see how other practitioners work with energy, and to experience their styles of qigong and tai chi.

We had **Sandie Day** to run a workshop. She has qualified as a teacher of Infinite Tai Chi with Jason Chan and runs classes in the Moors area. She introduced us to the qigong exercises which Jason teaches, particularly The Golden Sun Qigong, and in the second part of the day worked with us on the first part of Infinite Tai Chi. Although the movements are flowing and very graceful, they are also strenuous and demanding. There is much to learn in

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this practice, and we shall enjoy further sessions with Sandie during the coming year.

The previous month we welcomed a very different practitioner, Stuart Agars, who runs the National Centre for Contact Martial Arts in Harrogate. He teaches a variety of skills, but for us he was focusing on Chen Style Tai Chi as well as qigong exercises to raise chi. He is a very experienced trainer, and visits China at least once a year to work with masters there. He is a Buddhist monk and a spiritual healer. The energy in the room when working was great, and stayed with many of us for days afterwards. He introduced the beginners' 11 step form of Chen Style. Different and intriguing, but with familiar moves. We shall be seeing Stuart in December and again during the coming year.

Besides these new developments we have established a series of trainings with Master Alan Box, who will teach some of the regular trainings, and extend sessions into the afternoons for those wanting to work on grading pieces. He will again oversee grading practice and adjudicate at the gradings in March and October. He will also be teaching the Wu style in a workshop in May. We are pleased to have established a pattern of contact with him which means we have regular access to his knowledge and expertise in the system which we follow.

A plea from the Publicity Secretary

Please make use of the website! For anyone who hasn't yet bookmarked it, the address is

www.valeofyork-qigong.co.uk

You will find all sorts of interesting and useful things on it, including a copy of the most up to date newsletter, details of clothing and, most importantly, a list of classes and workshops. The latter is accessed from the link in the text on the home page. The next update is due early in December. Pieces of paper with dates on are easily mislaid, but it takes real effort to lose a computer! It is also planned to publish more detail on the workshops to cut down on the cost (and carbon footprint) of printing trifolds, though a few will still be available for distribution to non-members at classes. Booking can then be made by e-mail or phone to Elisabeth.

Visitors to the Website

Just to inspire you; the website had 12,997 hits in the last three months. Nearly 60% of all sessions were from the USA, 17.5% from Asia (mostly China) and 14% from Europe. We had visitors from every continent except Antarctica (must try harder!) Closer to home, 179 sessions took place in Great Britain. We had

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a total of 6 people referred to us from the Harmony website and T'ai Chi Finder.

Harrogate Health and Healing Festival

On Sunday 27th September I went to the festival with Pat Brooks and Mary Williamson, the main focus being to see a demonstration by Jason Chan, the renowned Tai Chi Master and creator of the Infinite Tai Chi Form.

When we arrived we looked round the many stalls. These offered everything from crystals, jewellery, gifts, clothing, cds and books to tarot readings, feng shui consultations, aromatherapy massage, shiatsu treatments, aura photography and lots more.

We found Jason's stall, displaying books, and DVDs, on discovering he was to do a workshop later in the afternoon we signed up for that too, then settled down to watch the demonstration. His lady companion demonstrated Jason's Infinite Tai Chi Form, this was beautiful to watch and good to be able to pick out some of the movements which have been taught to us by Master Box and also Sandie Day, who is a pupil of Jason Chan. Then Jason began his part, this was a fast moving demonstration with strong martial art movements, very impressive to see in the flesh as opposed to on films or on TV.

After this it was a quick bite to eat before the workshop began. As the café was next to the stage we watched a performance by the Urban Gypsies, a very colourful ethnic and tribal belly dance group who appeared on Britain's got Talent in 2008.

The workshop with Jason Chan was truly inspiring; he talked about our inner radiance, and how to put peace and joy back into our lives and the world around us. We followed him through what seemed quite simple Chi gathering exercises, but the effects and flow in the body were quite incredible. He came across as a very genuine and sincere man and personally I would like to experience more of his training if I could. I purchased his book *The Radiant Warrior*, in it he expresses very pure and strong ideals, I am not sure I can live up to these but I'm going to try. Watch this space!! A very enjoyable visit.

Sue Dixon