

On May 5th. the first ever European Kendo Tournament was held; the venue was Paris.

On our arrival on the evening of May 3rd. we were met by Marc Bigoureux of "La Revue des Arts Martiaux" and several other volunteer helpers and escorted to our hotels in the Boulogne district. The organisers, under the capable direction of Claude Hamot, secretary of the France Kendo Renmei, had done all that was possible to make the meeting the outstanding success it turned out to be. The accommodation was excellent and everything went off without a hitch and in the friendly spirit throughout.

After lunch on the following day we were all taken along to the Gymnase du Stade Français where we had a strenuous three hour practice, everyone joining in regardless of nationality. This was followed by a meeting of the representatives of the various countries taking part and here it was decided, by a majority vote, that the main feature of the tournament should be an individual competition instead of the friendly team event which had been the original objection of the convention; also that the winner of this competition should be acknowledged as the European Kendo Champion.

This was unfortunate for the British contingent as not only had we not brought over our strongest team but Roald Knutsen (4th. Dan), who had come over only in his capacity of Secretary-General of the European Kendo Association and not with the intention of fighting, was very much under the weather and off form.

Charles Lidstone, Chairman of the British Kendo Association, was elected President of the Tournament, and Louis Lasselin (President of the France Kendo Renmei) the Vice-President. The Japanese Yudansha from France, Switzerland, Belgium and Great Britain very kindly offered to form the Judging Panels, under the Presidency of Mr. Morioka of Holland, and this suggestion was gladly accepted.

On May 5th. we all gathered at the Gymnase in the Boulevard Blanqui for the tournament. As soon as the competitors had taken up their positions in the dojo and the public their seats Mr. Lasselin, on behalf of the host country, opened the proceedings by welcoming all the kendoka from Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, Holland, Switzerland and France. Roald Knutsen then read an address on behalf of the President of the European Kendo Association, Count Robert von Sandor of Sweden who, unfortunately, could not be with us in person. He thanked the France Kendo Renmei and the directors of the magazine "La Revue des Arts Martiaux" for making the Taikai possible. A special congratulatory message from the All Japan Kendo Association was also read and was warmly received by all present.

The individual contest, for which there were twenty-three entrants, followed and was run on the knock-out system, without repechage. In the first round we had three byes, Chadwick, Piper and Hodge and Knutsen, Tucker and Kvalon all got through without much difficulty. In round 2, Knutsen and Chadwick came through with 2-0 victories, but Hodge lost to Durand of France (the eventual winner), Piper lost to Sterckx of Belgium, and Tucker lost to Chartrain of France.

The composition of the third round was: 2 from Great Britain, 1 from Belgium, 1 from Austria and 4 from France. Durand beat Chadwick; Sterckx, ~~Knutsen~~ beat Calhoun of France; Knutsen beat Steiger of Austria, all by two points to nil. Hamot of France beat his compatriot Chartrain 1-0.

Durand had ~~knutsen~~ to battle here in the semi-final to beat the sixteen-year-old Sterckx 1-0. ~~He then~~ in a ~~very~~

his opponent's attack, put his foot outside the fighting area and thus allowed Knutsen to take the bout without a hit being scored.

By this time Knutsen was showing signs of having lost his usual aggressive spirit. Had he been on form he would certainly have been able to defeat Durand in spite of the fact that Durand was fencing well. When time was called in the final encounter neither had been able to claim a hit; nor was a point given during the first extension of time. A second extension was called and this seemed too much for Knutsen who by now appeared to be incapable of attacking. Durand, forcing the pace, got in with a well-executed Sho-men Uchi (vertically downward cut at head) and this gave him the match and the Championship of Europe.

In order to give everyone further experience of international contest fencing it had been arranged that the individual competition should be followed by a friendly match between two teams picked as equally as possible in respect of skill, regardless of nationality. This went through in good spirit and resulted in a 6-4 win for the white team with one fight drawn.

Between these two events two of the British ~~men~~ kendoka, Roald Knutsen and Mike Tucker, gave a display of the Nippon Kendo no Kata. Few, if any, of the general public who were watching had ever seen Kata before and it was very much appreciated by them, as it was by the onlooking kendoka.

Presentations were made to the winner and runners up of the individual competition by Mrs. Patricia Knutsen; also a special award to Claude Hamot for technique and one to Chadwick for Kendo Spirit. Every participant received a medal as a memento of this historic occasion, the first ~~men~~ European Kendo Tournament.

Throughout, the friendly spirit amongst all, both in the dojo and outside, could not have been more harmonious, and the hospitality of our French hosts was magnificent. It was fortunate for us, the visitors, that the student riots had only just started and we were in no way affected by them. It was not until we got home that we realized what had been going on just round the corner from where we had been !