

Team UK's Italian Job

Every two years, the Euro-Budo European Championships takes place. This is a competition where many countries within Europe gather together their best martial artists of all ages to go and compete in the Random Attacks category.

Random Attacks is a very specific type of competition which requires the hard work and co-ordination of both the competitor and their carefully chosen partner. This year's European Championships, the third of its kind, was held in Taranto, Italy with the previous two held in Halle, Belgium and Loughborough, United Kingdom respectively. The UK team has grown immensely since the first European Championships in 2012 and although the number of competitors was not as high as they were when the competition was held in the UK, there was definitely no shortage of effort.



The Jikishin Jujitsu association chooses their students carefully each year to represent the United Kingdom; some chosen from the talent spotted in the Nationals competitions, and some stay on to compete time and time again for the championships. But all have to go through a rigorous selection day judged by Jikishin's highest level of sensei's including Graham Sargeant (7th Dan), Ricky Izod (7th Dan), Colin

Humbles (6th Dan), UK team coach Lee Bywater (4th Dan) and of course the head of the association, founder and chairman of UKMAGB, Brian Herbert (9th Dan).

Hanshi Brian Herbert began his martial arts training in the early 1970's, starting with karate, but he quickly discovered that he preferred the self-defence style of jujitsu and in 1981, he started his own club after obtaining his 1st Dan. Now, many years later, he is the head of the Jikishin association, with clubs and a loyal following of black belts trained by him all over the United Kingdom. During the team's time in Italy, after being ratified by Association Head sensei's all across

Europe, hanshi Brian was awarded his 9th Dan (Kudan) in front of the whole stadium.

(Below) Hanshi Brian Herbert with his award and new belt, along with Jikishin's highest grade sensei's, and wife Lyn.



This year, team UK brought home one silver and one bronze medal; both won by the competitors in the junior category. Beau Cooper (Left), 13, smashed his way to the top and brought home a silver medal which was shared with his uki, 13 year old Tyler Hudson. Olivia Pasquale (Below), 11, was well adored by all the judges and proudly brought home a bronze medal, also shared with her uki, 13 year old Harry Gaish. Overall, the UK came 3rd in regards to amount of medal winners in Europe.



That night, team UK celebrated their victory in style at the hotel they was staying at, along with the Belgian and Italian teams. All of the hard work and stress of the day forgotten as members from all countries ate and drank



and danced and celebrated with each other. Team UK celebrated in tradition by gathering all the chairs from within the hotel, getting on top of them and singing 'Sunshine Mountain' at the top of their lungs (Left). The other countries and the hotel staff looked absolutely lost but accepted the 'spirited' happiness of the UK team nonetheless and eventually joined in

with the fun.

After the weekend, some members sadly had to return to the UK due to work/school commitments but the majority stayed in Italy for an extra week of fun and relaxation. They moved to a different hotel, one that was right by the beach and had a clean, filled swimming pool. The youngsters played and swam in the pool while the adults lounged around, sunbathing. And after having pizza for dinner for 4 nights straight, it was not a surprise that some members would've given anything for a classic British fish and chips. (Right: Members of the UK Team playing sports even on holiday.)



After a whole week of sport, making new friends, eating great homemade pizza, swimming in the sea, befriending the stray dog and just absolutely having the time of their lives, the team was ready to head home and sleep in their own beds. It was a great experience for every member of the team and also every family member that came along, they are all certainly looking forward to the next European Championships which are to be held in Spain 2018.



Sophia Allwood