

# **Guardian Report 2013**

### Message from the Chairperson

Thank you for taking the time to read our report.

We are happy and proud to give an account of our Guardian activities over the last year.

We have had another busy year promoting participation, protecting standards and providing services to Lau Gar Students. The Guardians continue to work on your behalf to support the development of Lau Gar Kung Fu in the UK and Ireland. The Guardians give their time and efforts as volunteers. Even though it is a great honour to be invited to be a Guardian it is also a responsibility requiring hard work and dedication.

This was a very special year for Lau Gar with Master Yau naming his successor as Lau Gar lineage holder. Master Yau is not retiring!

If you want to know more you can read about Master John Russell's historic inauguration ceremony in the report that follows.

This report describes what the Guardians have done as a group and as individuals in 2013 and explains our future direction.

We are always grateful for ideas and feedback from members. Please contact any Guardian to contribute your ideas or comments about the activities described.

#### Morag Quirk



Masters Jeremy Yau and John Russell with the Guardians at the Summer Course, Llandudno, 2013

If you want to know what the Guardians are doing for Lau Gar and you, look at this report!

Guardians Provide Services to Lau Gar and the BKFA

Council and Guardians Members

Guardians Promote the Style through Training and Demonstration

Guardian Report

#### Historic News for the Lau Gar Style and the BKFA

Report and Interview

Grand-Master Jeremy Yau names his successor as 'Master John Russell', Summer Course, Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2013

Students, Instructors and Guardians attended at the annual Summer Course which was held in Llandudno Wales. On Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2013 during the days training session, Master Jeremy Yau made a very important announcement concerning the future of Lau Gar. He then proceeded to ask John Russell if he would accept the role, honour and responsibility of being his successor as Master of Lau Gar. John gracefully accepted and Master Yau then presented him with a Red Sash and the title of 'Master Russell'.

Master Yau said that after many years of deliberation about the future of Lau Gar he has made the important decision to name his successor. He did not take this decision lightly, however, he thought it was the right time to make the announcement and put things in place for the future.

He spoke about John being a person of good character and of his lifetime commitment to the practice of Martial Arts. He went on to say that John has given selflessly to the style and to

training others which has made him worthy of such an honour. Master Yau also said that an official inauguration ceremony would take place later in the year.

Master Yau also stated that he was not retiring and will never retire as Kung Fu is his life and that he will continue to teach.

Once Master Russell received his sash, it was back to business as usual as he gave the command to resume training as though nothing had happened. I think the room was in shock and some students even in tears. However we were forced not to feel too elated as John told us to us take up stances and continue our practice.





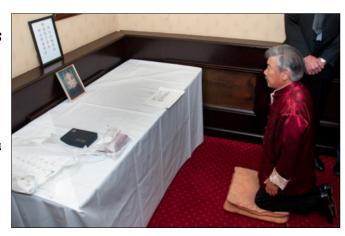
Group Photograph of the Guardians with Masters Yau and Russell

The inauguration ceremony took place in Shropshire where Lau Gar Guardians, their partners and some guests came together to witness the event.

Master Yau had prepared a shrine with his grandfather's picture and the founders name. He addressed the room and called forth John Russell to begin the ceremony.

Master Yau proceeded to kneel and bow 9 times to his ancestors to show respect and ask for their blessing for the ceremony.

Master Yau read from a Chinese text that he had written especially for the occasion, highlighting the values



and duties required of the person for the role. He firstly read it out in Chinese then translated it into English.

He then formally asked John if he would accept the role of Master and the responsibility that comes with it. John confirmed that he would accept and was then required to bow 9 times to Master Yau's Grandfather and the ancestors as a mark of respect.

Master Yau passed on some treasured possessions that were once passed on to him by his grandfather which were in turn passed from previous masters and the founder of the Lau Gar style. Master Yau presented the text of the ceremony, a small box containing a small square





book (which looks like it belongs in a museum), along with a recipe for Chinese medicine.

He then formally gave him the red sash, congratulated John and announced 'I present Master Russell'.

John gave a short but touching speech. He thanked everyone for coming and said that for all his life his only goal was to practise so that he could improve and pass on what he had learned to others.

The Guardians took it in turn to personally congratulate Master Russell and presented him with a gift (which he gratefully received.

The ceremony came to a close and all present went on to have dinner and celebrate this monumental occasion. It did not go on too late in the evening though, as we had training in the morning

I met with Master Yau shortly after John's inauguration, Master Yau explained about the text that he wrote to present to John during his a classical education and had improved his writing through self-study. He

inauguration. He told me that he had had stated that even young Chinese people may not appreciate this kind of text but



The Guardian's Gift

that it was traditionally valued. He explained that the rhythm and pitch is important in the choice of words;

"It is not a poem but it is written in four word sentences. It explains how Lau Gar should be. It describes the principles and offers guidance for the future. They describe eight aspirations for how we conduct ourselves".

The text urges us to: be respectful; care for fellow students; practise and improve the skills learned; help the weak and the young; not to be self-important; benefit society; pass on art and skill and to spread and honour the style.

Master Yau went on to say;

"I started the British Kung Fu Association but I want something more to pass down to the future generations. The text explains how things should be. "

Master Yau went on to explain that;

"Traditionally the kung fu man was seen as a roque who swaggered around saying I am bigger, better and stronger than you. Lau Gar is a family we don't want to be like this. We don't want to beat people up. We want to take care of each other like brothers and sisters. The Master of the style is like a father to the students. It would be good to pass these aspirations on in a traditional way from Master to Master."

Can you explain what a Master is?

"Now anybody can call themselves Master after a few years of training. It is the modern way. I like to keep things the traditional way. When I say John is a Master of the style I mean that people can ask him and he can advise but refer to me. I am not retiring. There can only be one who is the highest in the style. He can control the style. This is why we did

John's Role An interview by Morag Quirk the inauguration for everyone to witness. They will show the same respect to John as they do to me."

"Master Yau, can you tell us how this system will work in the future?"

"John will have my sash when I am gone. He will keep the other sash until he is ready to recognise someone who will rise up, someone who is the right material. I did not pick John, he emerged by working to a standard. "

"What else did you present to John on this occasion?"

"John was given my Grandfathers book and recipes for internal and external healing. My Grandfather was a famous healer and I will show John how to make the medicine."

"In the old times a man turned up at our house and his arm was so badly affected by an injury that he could not bend it. He had paid another healer all his money but it had not got any better and now he had to eat his rice with a spoon because he could not bend his arm to hold the bowl to his mouth. My Grandfather treated him. He had come so far he had to stay with us and after a while he got better. Another time someone had internal injuries from a kick and these were causing him to pass blood and this was healed with medicine".

"People ask me if I am retiring- I am not retiring. How can I retire? Kung Fu is my life. It has given me so much in my life that I have enjoyed and now I want to give something back. That is why I set up the Guardians and the charity so that we can have an even greater positive impact in the future and achieve the aspirations".

"In the old times it appeared that the students served the Master but in reality the Master serves the students".

Thank you very much Master Yau.

#### Questions to Master Russell

By Rash Patel

Supplementary

to ask him a few questions.

Following Master Russell's inauguration (a week later) I had the opportunity

RP - 'How did you feel on summer the course when Master Yau first made the announcement?'

JR - 'I was surprised and honoured and I accepted the responsibility then'. It was an honour to be thought capable of doing the role'.

RP - 'What do think about the title of Master?'

JR - 'Most of us would like to achieve mastery of the techniques we have learned, but the role of Master is quite different'. Master Yau's decision shows we are all capable of achieving this level.'

'I have sought to be competent in martial arts, not being better than others but being the best that I can be'.

The Inauguration Ceremony

RP - 'Did you know what was expected of you at your inauguration ceremony?'

JR - 'I knew the ceremony would entail ancestral worship which involves the linage. At least I didn't have to fight someone.'

RP - 'Could you tell us about what you were presented with by Master Yau?'

JR - 'I was presented with a little book with Chinese writing and no pictures which I believe to have been passed down the generations and it also contained a separate piece of paper which I believe to be a recipe for medicine. He also presented me with a red sash. '

RP - 'Anything else you would like to add about the evening?'

JR - 'It was a pleasant evening and the food was nice.'

RP - 'What is next for you John?'

JR - 'Well, back to training and work a bit harder to understand what is required'.

RP - 'Just for future reference, how should we address you, John or Master Russell?'

JR - 'John is fine.'

RP - 'But would you mind if we call you Master Russell?'

JR - 'It depends on the circumstances, for special occasions in a kung fu context, or if the situation warrants it, then its ok, however for normal training John is fine.'

'I would like to think of it as an acknowledgement of technical mastery. I don't want to be anyone's master'

RP - 'John thank you for taking the time to speak with me and congratulations once again.'

Master John Russell, a pivotal character in our lives and the history of Lau Gar in the UK. He has dedicated his life to the Lau Gar Style and the development of others.

On behalf of the Guardians, Instructors and Students of Lau Gar we wish to congratulate Master John Russell and we thank him for his lifetime commitment to Martial Arts and teaching us.

The Guardians would also like to thank Grand Master Jeremy Yau for bestowing such an honour to Master Russell.

Thank You.

Guardian Training
Courses

By Clive's greatest little fan

The next section deals with Guardian training courses and it has been very encouraging to see so many Guardians offering their skills and experience to students without personal gain. It is also important to recognise and celebrate the enormous contribution of Clive Thompson in having the idea to start with. Many of you will not realise but way back in time Clive ran a series of courses on the three section staff. Clive is a true giant of a man (in all respects) with a big heart and we thank you Clive for introducing Guardian Training Courses.



#### **Guardians Protect the Style through Training and Demonstration**

#### Black Sash Workshop



Attendees of the workshop with Master Yau and the Guardians

The Black Sash Workshop with Master Yau, which was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2013, was a great success and there was tremendous feedback from people attending.

Master Yau answered everyone's questions with insights into the moves, reasons behind them and various applications. There was also the added benefit of tapping into John Russell's vast knowledge, experience and understanding of Lau Gar, which is second only to Master Yau.

There were things to learn and tips picked up by all those attending, regardless of grade, experience or whether they had attended previous workshops/courses.

There was also the opportunity to train and drill any points under the guidance of the Guardians, with John moving between the groups to ensure that people took on board what had been explained by Master Yau and to offer individual technical improvements.

Master Yau commented that he had seen an improvement in individuals who have attended the workshops regularly (he always remembers a face!). These improvements will no doubt have a positive impact in future gradings, in addition to people's ongoing training.

He is keen to carry these workshops on as he can see the benefits for all concerned and you can see how much he is invigorated by the enthusiasm from those attending.

#### Guardian Courses

(Proceeds to the Trust)

The Courses held in 2013 included Sticking Hands of Lau Gar - Carl Jones: 6th Degree, Rope Dart - Robin Sunley: 4th Degree, Be Your Own Body Guard - Steven Burton: 4th Degree and the Points and Light Continuous Seminar - Sean Veira, 5<sup>th</sup> Degree and Sharon Gill 4<sup>th</sup> Degree and Mediation by David Harris 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree (on behalf of the Guardians). These were very well received and are planned to be repeated in different venues during 2014.

A series of courses are being planned for the future, including:

- Counter Grappling for Stand Up Fighters Andy Nation: 7th Degree and Rash Patel: 6th Degree
- The Gings; 8 Powers and 19 Key Words of Lau Gar Carl Jones: 6th Degree
- Short Sticks; Transferring Skills from the Lau Gar Weapons and Empty Hand Sets Jason Crabtree: 6th Degree
- Iron Rings for Lau Gar Conditioning Jason Crabtree: 6th Degree

- Application in Reality; Making Your Lau Gar Techniques Really Work using the Science of Body Mechanics - Andy Nation: 7th Degree
- Throws and Takedowns (Shuai Jiao) in the Lau Gar Sets Keith Thomas: 6th Degree
- Seeking Point Fan Morag Quirk: 7th Degree
- Shaolin Dragon Sword (shao'lin loong jian) Short Form

   Dave Eccles: 5th Degree
- Shaolin Dragon Sword (shao'lin loong jian) Long Form- Dave Eccles: 5th Degree
- Shaolin Dragon Sword (shao'lin loong jian) v Fan Dual form. Morag Quirk : 7th Degree & Master Russell
- Meditation with David Harris and John Russell
- Advanced Knife Defence & Awareness; Using Lau Gar in the 4 Zones Frankie Cooper: 5th Degree
- Gings with the Stick Pete Hornby 6th Degree
- Qi Gong; focusing on the teachings from Master Yau Pete Hornby 6th Degree
- Pushing Hands to benefit your Lau Gar Pete Hornby 6th Degree
- Chin Na details of locks and how to apply them Steven Burton

The Shaolin Dragon Sword and Fan forms are part of a four course package and there will be a discount for attending two, three or four courses i.e. all four, the fan and dual form, both Sword forms and the dual form.

Discounts will also be offered for multiple bookings on other coursesdetails to follow.

Keep an eye on the BKFA website calendar page and the Official Lau Gar Page on Facebook for dates.

It is envisaged that this program will take a couple of years to complete.

Sticking Hands Course

By Frankie Cooper

Sifu Carl Jones, 6th Degree Black Sash and Guardian of Lau Gar Kung Fu, went to Northampton in June to show students the methods of training Sticking Hands, known in Chinese as Chi Sau. It was the first in a series of courses showcasing and promoting the skills within Lau Gar and to support the Lau Gar Trust Charity.



Participants with Guardians: Carl and Frankie centre of second row Carl was invited by fellow Guardian and  $5^{th}$  Degree Black Sash, Tracy Edghill, who is the head instructor and proprietor of the Pro Martial Arts Gym where the seminar was held and was assisted by Frankie Cooper, Guardian and  $5^{th}$  Degree.

Carl is the joint senior instructor for South Wales and is also the senior area instructor for the South of England. He has over thirty years

experience and was passing on the skills learnt from practicing with Master Yau and Master Russell.

Close range fighting in Kung Fu is known as "Sticking Hands" - Chi Sau in Chinese - and the aim of Sticking Hands is to maintain contact when needed and trap and strike at the earliest opportunity by sensing your opponent's movements and openings.

Sticking hands is one of the five key elements of Kung Fu: of striking (da), Kicking (toi), Throwing (suai), locking (na) and sticking (chi) and according to Master Yau is the "glue" that holds the five elements together.

Sticking hands drills and sparring are designed to improve your reactions for close-in fighting. This enables you to easily find openings and take advantage of weaknesses in your opponent's defences.

In real situations, 'sticking' gives you control of your opponent and can create opportunities for you to end the situation quickly. As soon as you make a block, or are blocked, you can utilise sticking hands techniques to take immediate control of the situation if you are attacked.

Tracy said: "I was very pleased with the turn out and Carl put on a great seminar. People have been practicing the drills in lessons since. The course was four hours long so there was a lot of time to drill the techniques!"

Carl added "The students worked really hard and it was great to see over 40 people from all over the country attend. The Pro Martial Arts Gym has tremendous facilities and we were very grateful that Tracy offered to host the event on behalf of the Lau Gar Trust Charity."

Carl is looking forward to repeating the course in different parts of the UK to spread these essential skills and techniques.



Carl and Frankie demonstrating the finer points of Sticking Hands

## Dangerous Dynamic Darts

By Pete Hornby



Guardian Robin Sunley (centre second row) with course attendees

There was a tremendous buzz around the entrance hall of Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre as students awaited the arrival of Robin Sunley, Guisborough Lau Gar. There was no doubt - the air of anticipation was absolutely awesome. These eager beavers were definitely in search of thrills and were all a quiver with excitement. This was the very first rope dart seminar.

What is a Rope Dart?

The rope dart is one of the flexible weapons in Chinese martial arts. It is a long rope (usually 3-5 metres or 10-16 feet) with a metal dart attached to one end. This was a weapon from ancient times, which allows the user to throw the dart out at a long-range target and use the rope to pull it back. The rope dart can be used for circling and shooting along with a



variety of other techniques. These can be done from any joint such as foot, knee, elbow and neck. The rope is anchored on the left hand and played primarily with the right hand.

The skilful use of the rope dart can easily trick an opponent because the dart can shoot out very suddenly, from a person beyond immediate reach. Excellent hand-eye coordination is a must for the practitioner to use this weapon well.

The rope dart is constructed from 5 parts: dart, rings, rope or fine chain, flags or bright feathers and a handle. The dart is made of a hard material, usually iron or steel. It can be of variable weight depending on the user's preference and can be variable in shape (conical, triangular prism, pentagonal prism). The rings (usually 4 or 5) are attached to the dart head. The rope is attached to the final ring. Traditionally, the rope was constructed from Chinese rope and covered with wax to minimize friction but our ropes were made of cotton to reduce friction. There is at least one flag attached near or onto the dart head itself to conceal the dart during play. The handle is made from the last piece of rope.

As the rope dart is very long, a lot of space is required and thus places on the seminar had to be limited. Such was the interest in this intriguing weapon that the seminar was fully booked in no time.

The Seminar

The glee on the faces of all the students when they each received their

very own rope was amazing. As the rope dart is a deceivingly dangerous weapon, in the interest of safety, Robin had carefully added some padding to the dart and I am pleased to report at the end of the day, although students were somewhat exhausted from all their exertions, there were no injuries.

Although the rope dart is not part of the traditional weapons within Lau Gar, Robin fancied the challenge of mastering this most difficult, fast and flexible weapon. After years of practice, Robin wanted to share his



hard earned knowledge with fellow students of Lau Gar. Robin said, "Practicing with the rope dart is enormous fun and provides the opportunity for Lau Gar students to apply their Kung Fu expertise and rise to the enormous challenge of learning and mastering these new and exciting most intricate techniques".

The seminar certainly delivered loads of knowledge in a very safe, structured, progressive and professional manner. It was clear the students were astounded at the skill shown by Robin and as each new 'trick' was demonstrated, the students responded and practiced enthusiastically. Robin's aim was to teach the students a series of basic



techniques and then to encourage them to utilise their creative thinking to develop their own personal routines way into the future. This really adds to the enjoyment and thrill of practising with the Dart.

Robin rattled through the basic techniques which covered: circling, turning, shooting, wrapping and threading using many parts of the body - elbows,

shoulders, legs and neck. This was a fascinating and exhilarating journey for students to experience how they could use their six co-ordinations to manipulate the dart with speed and accuracy for striking.

The seminar was a roaring success as shown by the feedback below:

"Another excellent Guardian seminar, with an excellent venue, I really enjoyed it. This is the third Guardian course I have attended this year, having been to the Chi Sau and Be your own Bodyguard, which again were both excellent. I think that the seminars are an important way of passing on knowledge, but



they are also great at bringing like-minded people together and giving the

BKFA a sense of dynamism. I am looking forward, hopefully, to many more Guardian seminars in the future," said Mark Robinson.

#### Summary

At the end of the seminar, the students showed their appreciation with rapturous applause for Robin and they all requested him to hold future seminars. Robin praised them for their hard work throughout the day and told them how impressed he was at their achievements and progress made in such a short timescale and that the inspiration from this seminar will spur them on to master this demanding and complex weapon.

So if you are interested then please check the BKFA web-site or social media regularly for Lau Guardians' seminars in 2014 and book early, don't miss this tremendously exciting opportunity to have fun and further your martial arts skills.

The Lau Gar Guardians wish to thank all the students who attended and a special thanks to Robin who taught the seminar and to Pete Hornby for his organisation and support. This seminar definitely added to the Lau Gar Guardians' aims which are to increase participation and improve standards.

#### Points and Light Continuous Seminar

Guardian and  $5^{th}$  Degree, Sean Veira and  $4^{th}$  Degree Sharon Gill came to Gloucester on the  $19^{th}$  October to present a Points and Light Continuous Seminar on behalf of the Lau Gar Trust.

People travelled from London, Swansea, Stafford and a group even travelled down from as far as Edinburgh.

Sean and Sharon have flown the flag for Lau Gar for many years and are multiple World, European and British Champions amongst numerous other titles they have won.

They were members of the legendary Bristol Death squad who successfully competed on the Lau Gar and open circuits.

The course was very well received with a wide range of ages and Sean and Sharon passed on their vast experience, skills and tips with clarity and enthusiasm.

Lesson's learned from seminar included:

- Timing
- Distancing
- Movement
- Footwork
- Speed
- Efficiency of movement from launch to strike
- Full commitment to the technique you are doing

These foundations are fundamental to make your techniques effective in any situation; whether it is points, light continuous and with the addition of "power" for kick boxing, etc. or self defence on the street.

Without these fundamental foundations no amount of "fancy" additions will help and these things can only be learned and ingrained through physical practice, that is, repetition.

If these techniques are successfully drilled then other techniques e.g. faints, distractions, etc. can be added to gain the advantage over your opponent.

It's all about the basics!

The Seminar concluded with a question and answer session where people received valuable individual advice on how they can improve their fighting and a show of appreciation for Sean and Sharon giving up their time to present the seminar.

The course was hard work, great fun and presented in a friendly and encouraging manner by two true world class experts in their field. We hope to run the course again next year as it was so well received

Guardian
Demonstration Team
at BKFA Nationals
Championships 2013

By Alec Clark



The Guardian Demonstration Team

It was a few years ago now that the Guardians first discussed the idea of a Guardian demonstration at the BKFA National Championships and 2013 was the year that this plan finally came to fruition. The main reason for wanting to perform such a demonstration was to help meet one of the main functions of the Guardians, namely "to raise the profile of Lau Gar by seeking opportunities to demonstrate the highest standards of public performance".

This year the BKFA National Championships were held on 27th October 2013. The Guardian demonstration team consisted of myself, David Eccles, Pete Hornby, Frankie Cooper, Rob Francis, Jason Crabtree, Robin Sunley, Morag Quirk and Master John Russell. There were many very good individual performances in the demonstration. For my part I had chosen to perform a Five Animals set. This version of Ng Yik Kuen is particularly suited to demonstration because, within it, the animals (dragon, snake, tiger, leopard and crane) are performed separately. For this reason, the inexperienced observer can more easily pick out the animals as they appear in the set and hopefully get a sense of the characteristics of each animal and how these translate into a fighting style.

This year's demonstration follows a long line of successful and impressive performances in recent years from regions all over the country such as Birmingham, Stafford, Bristol, Wales and Yorkshire. According to the feedback I have received, the Guardian demonstration, and indeed, the National Championships as a whole, were a great success.

#### Kung Fu, Wrestling, Ground Fighting, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and MMA

By Rash Patel

In Lau Gar we have long range; kicking, punching, sweeping, then at close range we have; trapping, locking and also close range strikes with varying hand shapes and body parts, then incorporating; trips, throws and takedowns.

These components described in Chinese are; 'tek, da, sut, la, dit' which means 'kick, strike, wrestle, seize (submit) and ground'.

Once we engage an opponent into close range the next natural progression that can follow is grappling and wrestling which incorporates; the clinch, seizing and control of limbs, takedowns, throws and when on ground control and pinning as well as locking (chin-na). Wrestling, grappling and groundwork all encompass sensitivity.

Knowledge and understanding of all ranges will enable you to become a complete martial artist. Training up to a competent level in all ranges takes time as with anything but we all need to start somewhere.

In reality a fight may end quickly at any range of combat, it may also go on longer than you expect or want it to or into an area you may not be experienced in such as the ground.

My Practice

In recent years, additional to my Kung Fu practice I have been training wrestling and ground fighting. Whilst I am able, I have been working to learn and gain competency at all ranges of combat which include the ground. I have found all areas to complement my Kung Fu practice and thus add to my overall knowledge of martial arts and develop competency at all ranges.

I have written a brief introduction of each discipline below to offer an insight into each specialist area and also a bit about my training in these areas.

Introduction to Wrestling

Wrestling is a form of combat sport involving grappling type techniques such as clinch fighting, throws and takedowns, joint locks, pins and other grappling holds. A wrestling bout is a physical competition, between two competitors or sparring partners, who attempt to gain and maintain a superior position. There are a wide range of styles with varying rules with both traditional historic and modern styles. Wrestling techniques have been incorporated into other martial arts as well as military hand-to-hand combat systems.

Introducing Esmeli Wrestling Saeed Esmaeli is currently the head coach of 'Esmaeli Wrestling Academy' (Olympic, Freestyle and MMA) and is based in Bristol however travels throughout the UK and Europe to teach wrestling.

Saeed was taught by his legendary coach and late father Amir Esmaeli and comes from 3 generations of wrestlers.

Saeeds father Amir Esmaeli was an Olympian and Iranian National Champion and first formed 'Esmaeli Wrestling' when he came to the UK in the late 80's where he had coached Bristol's Olympic



Saeed seated on his Father's shoulders

Wrestling club for many years until his sudden death in 2005.

Amir became well known throughout the UK and famous for his vigorous and unorthodox methods based on a mixture of Persian training methods and traditional wrestling known as kohshti pahlevaani which is done in Zorkhaneh (power house) which is the name for Iranian traditional gyms. His form of wrestling was also known as Varsesho Bastanti (sport of Barstani).

Amir had trained competitors and athletes from boxing, wrestling, Judo, Rugby and many other sports that were working towards elite levels. Some of the celebrities he taught were; Rugby - Andy Robinson, Nigel Redmond. In Boxing - Glen Catly (WBC world champion), Ross Hale WBC, Dean Francis, Lee Haskins. In Cricket - Sid Lawerance.

Following the death of his father, Saeed vowed to continue his father's legacy by taking over as head coach and supporting all previous students and young upcoming hopefuls.

Saeed was a former member of the GB wrestling team and represented the UK and also previously his home country Iran in wrestling competitions around the world and has won numerous freestyle wrestling titles in both UK and Europe.



Saeed, Amir and Josh

With over 30 years of experience in Olympic Freestyle Wrestling, Saeed renowned for his technical abilities and supreme conditioning has now become one of the top Wrestling coaches in the UK and Europe.

During Saeed's distinguished coaching career, he has produced not one but two GB Olympic team members and British champions, Aman Sakhizadeh and Leon Rattigan, who went on to win a Commonwealth bronze medal in October 2010, in Delhi (India). He has also achieved similar success developing the next generation of MMA fighters in the UK, some of them to mention are; James Thompson (Pride), Bradley Scott (UFC), Ronnie Mann (Bellator), Che Mills (UFC).

Saeed's classes are renowned for their technical finesse and unparalleled attention to detail combined with a gruelling regime in fitness & conditioning.

He now concentrates on sharing his wealth of knowledge and experience with a new generation of Olympic wrestling competitors, martial artists and other athletes, helping them to achieve their maximum potential.

Sifu Patel and Esmaeli Wrestling Many years ago I was fortunate enough to train with the late Amir Esmaeli, I travelled to Bristol to attend his classes for his gruelling fitness and conditioning over the years.

Members of the Bristol Lau Gar Fighting team such as Sean Veira and

Nathan Lewis had also trained with Amir. This was a contributing fact to their elite level of fitness, conditioning and spirit that they become known for when competing throughout the UK.

A percentage of fitness and conditioning exercises that I use in my personal training and when teaching Kung Fu are to be accredited to Amir.

Wrestling Seminars for Lau Gar

Currently I am training wrestling regularly with Saeed Esmaeli in Bristol. Saeed teaches wrestling to a very high standard and teaches it with the detail we would teach Kung Fu.

Wrestling is highly effective and can nullify many martial art styles; I would certainly recommend learning wrestling to any martial artist. Wrestling follows naturally from Lau Gar at close range.

I have introduced Saeed to the content and principles of Lau Gar employing close range striking, chin-na and takedowns. We have put together sequences of techniques that are most beneficial to martial artists and that will act as an extension of Lau Gar.

All wrestling techniques will be taught from a self-defence perspective which will incorporate Olympic and freestyle wrestling.

The basic principles of wrestling will help improve your posture, balance and strength, you will also learn takedowns, tie ups, clinch, body mechanics, control and pins and also defence against takedowns.

All these techniques will work hand in hand with Lau Gar and will follow as a natural progression from close-quarter and sticking range.

You do not have to be strong or muscle bound to learn these techniques and the seminar will be suitable for everyone.

When & Where - Saeed and I propose to hold a centrally located seminar early next year. The date will be advertised soon.

Originated in Brazil within the Gracie family in the early 1900s, Brazilian

Jiu Jitsu is a method of combat that aims to neutralise an opponent as quickly as possible, with minimum damage to either side. Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is based around the idea that a fighter should use a variety of take downs to drop their opponent to the floor and subdue them using holds, various joint locks and chokes.



Pedro Bessa - BJJ Champion and Coach

Introduction to Brazillian Jiu Jitsu, Ground Fighting and MMA

MMA is one of the fastest growing SPORTS in the UK and worldwide and has overtaken boxing as a spectator sport. MMA Gyms seem to be popping up in most towns across the UK and with the increased popularity of MMA

on TV more and more people are joining these gyms.

It seems statistically, more people aged 14-30yrs are taking up MMA than traditional martial arts such as Kung Fu, Karate and other styles.

Although MMA seems to be popular with some it may not be so popular for others. Some see it is a barbaric sport where two people bludgeon each other inside a cage like animals with the potential of serious injury.



Former student Marc Allen professional MMA fighter and training partner

In the early days of MMA shows such as

'Pride' rules were minimal such as no gouging or strikes to the throat or groin, everything else goes and also there was no time limit on bouts, the fight would continue until one person was unable to continue or conceded victory.

The potential for injury is high however in current times the rules of MMA have evolved with the sport thus to protect the fighters a little more and also the intervention of referee can be seen more commonly in today's bouts.

Not everyone that trains MMA end up fighting in the cage. Many do it as they would any other sport as a means of keeping fit whilst learning a number of combat arts.

The main disciplines of MMA are as follows; Thai Boxing, Boxing, Wrestling and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

A lot of MMA coaches and practitioners come from different backgrounds such as; kung fu, karate, tae kwon do and kickboxing.

My Ground Practice

Originally training the ground against people that knew what they were doing felt alien and also proved difficult against the larger stronger inexperienced opponents. I was not happy with people getting the better of me and it became my mission to overcome this.

For the past 4 years, I have been training the ground (compared to Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and MMA) both with and without striking. In kung fu we already have numerous joint locking techniques and chokes so I didn't have to learn lots of new techniques, I just had to learn how to apply them on the ground.

As this area of practice was new to me all I really needed was mat time and training partners who knew the ground game well. I was fortunate to have two former students and an additional training partner whom are all professional MMA fighters.

Whilst training the ground I always had self-defence in the forefront of my mind however I soon became aware of the rules of MMA and BJJ

through my training partners. My brain would always be working overtime to how I could overcome these opponents if there were no rules to which have enabled me to develop various strategies and tactics beyond my partners training and limitations.

Following the last 4 years of training, I now feel confident in my ability to defend myself



Andy Jones and Winston White demonstrating some common positions

on the ground or feel I know enough to do something and escape such a situation. Ground practice has been an enjoyable experience for me and is enlightening as there seems to be never ending possibilities and new things to keep learning.



Pedro Bessa BJJ Coach and Sifu Patel demonstrating Chin-na on the ground

Ground Training without Striking and for sport

Ground Training with Striking

I have been invited to local BJJ classes and have had opportunity to test my ground sparring (no-gi without striking) with local BJJ schools taught by popular and world class Brazilian coaches and to their amazement they were shocked at my competency as I declared it to be Kung Fu. It was nice to gain acknowledgment for our Kung Fu style.

As soon as you add in the striking element, it changes everything. Submissions are easier and mistakes are easily made. When you employ the control of limbs and pinning combined with over-whelming striking things can become very difficult and unpleasant if you are on the bottom.

It is through controlled sparring on the floor you will soon learn what works and what doesn't. There are different ways of holding and limb control off your back which are exclusive to that position. You also learn to

strike both from underneath and on top. Our short Kung Fu techniques are extremely useful at this range.

To conclude, I would say MMA is not to be underestimated. It is a very effect method of training and basics at all ranges can be learned in a relatively short time. Some MMA gyms also have Olympic and world class coaches in all disciplines such as boxing, wrestling, thai boxing and Jiu jitsu. So they are coached to a high standard.

Nobody wants to end up on the ground during a fight however having some knowledge may prove useful and could even save your life. It would be easy as to say 'but I would never end up on the ground' or 'I would finish the fight standing', but you can never predict this.

I can only recommend that people improve their awareness of the ground and MMA as with any other styles and systems.

Ground Seminars for Lau Gar I am proposing to teach a series of seminars in 2014 covering self-defence on the ground.

As well as teaching escapes and tactics on how to get back to your feet I will also be teaching how to apply locks and chokes on the ground including the application of striking.

The seminars are not intended to turn you into a ground fighter but for you to gain awareness of the possibilities that may occur and have some means of escape and defence in mind especially now MMA is becoming increasing popular. In my opinion, if we as martial artists teach self-defence then we have a duty of care to cover this area of combat. It is also moving with current times and trends.

I may also propose an instructors course so that instructors can go away and teach these subjects as part of their class or additional sessions.

As there is little or no ground practice in Lau Gar, this is an opportunity to develop this area and gain credibility to be competent in at all ranges of combat.

I believe 'knowledge belongs to no one' and should be shared. My intention for these seminars is to share my knowledge so others can benefit and enhance their current martial art practice.

The seminar will be suitable for everyone; preparation for the seminar by practicing forward and backward rolls either slow or at speed will help lightly condition the body, but don't worry if you can't do one.

When & Where - We will look to hold wrestling and ground seminars centrally however should you wish to hold one in your region then please contact me. Dates will follow shortly.

#### Action for Children

By Jason Crabtree

This year I was given the opportunity to teach a self defence session to some very special young individuals.

Action For Children is a charity set up primarily to give young carers the chance to "have a break "from their day to day responsibility looking after their parents or siblings needs. These young children [some as young as 11 years old ] are prime carers for their family member who either have a disability or a health problem. This caring role becomes a full time job and can often affect the child's normal day to day living that one would expect from a teenager/child e.g. education, socializing or taking part in a sport/activity.



The remit was to offer a session to the group so that they could feel they were doing something different for themselves and more importantly a rest bite.

The session consisted of some basic self defence techniques, pad work and a general workout.

I found this work to be very rewarding and it makes you realize there is a lot more that we as Kung Fu instructors can offer to "many people from many walks of life" who just need and deserve help to make them realize their potential even more through the medium of Lau Gar.

The feedback was very positive from the group and I've been contacted recently to start a regular/weekly class with them. The majority of the cost will be funded by AFC.

#### Promoting Lau Gar

By Steven Burton

2013 has seen a very busy year promoting Lau Gar and Chinese Martial Arts around the world. Throughout the year there have been numerous seminars in the UK that I have been invited to share skills with those interested in learning. Each seminar has been taught to help students understand application of Lau Gar forms in detail as well as offering support to the instructors to help them grow their schools utilising my experience of running a full time gym for 13 years highlighting some of the key areas to help them grow. I have offered support and mentoring to Lau Gar from Scotland right down to the South Coast of England. Each instructor has taken on board some of the practical tips given and each and every school has seen growth which in turn increases the numbers practicing Lau Gar.

During summer 2013 I taught a seminar at Willenhall Lau Gar having been invited by Ranjit Virk. The nature of this seminar was to look at the combative flow within the Lau Gar forms explaining how to seamlessly flow from one application to the next in a street effective way. During this course there were also many knife confrontation methods taught which all

began with a knife being held to the throat of the "vicitim" whilst their back was against the wall. The "vicitim" was quickly able to take control of the situation and deal with the attacker. The course was well attended by Lau Gar students from around the UK as well as a welcome visit from John Russell and Morag Quirk who both participated in what was an educational and fun course leaving everyone who attended with a different perspective of how to view forms and interpretations.

Later in summer 2013 The Lau Gar Trust hosted a course which was taught by myself at Wilenhall again. The proceeds from the course were to go to the trust in their entirety. The name of the course was "Be Your Own Bodyguard" and the nature of the course was to look at how the body copes under stress situations and how to learn to deal with said "hormone responses" which cause the Flight, Flight or Freeze reaction. The content of the course was interlinked with law and legislation as well as awareness exercises that have been taken from my experience as a police officer and close protection personnel within law enforcement. During the course the students were pushed to their limits physically and had to whilst exhausted perform self defence simulations against an attacker. This simulated how the body reacts and with the use of the "Fist Suit" (which coincidentally made the



Robin Adams in the 'Fit Suit'

person wearing it look like an 1980's Ninja Turtle) allowed the defender to counter attack with full force to any part of the body without injuring the attacker this allowing a very realistic simulation. The aspects of the law were very well received as this is a often misunderstood aspect, people know how to defend themselves but aren't aware of where they stand legally. The course left everyone knowing exactly where they stand within the law and the stated cases that protect them in self defence.

September 2013 saw myself running a trip to China open all styles of Chinese Martial Arts. The trip saw 24 people from UK, other areas of Europe and 2 people as far afield as Tahiti attending. The purpose of the trip was to share skills and to visit various teachers throughout China as well as perform for the TV in China plus the essential sightseeing of course. The group firstly visited Beijing where they visited the Great Wall and many other sites. Two days later the journey south began and we headed off to Wudang Shan where we were trained by a 15th Generation Master of the Wudang clan, Yuan Limin. This was very well received by all. The training with Wudang master took place during the day and each evening I taught aspects of Lau Gar and application to each person irrespective of style of background. A few days later saw our group travel to Zhangjiajie again continuing the training with myself and each evening training in the Taoist Internal Qi arts with a local master. At this point the group began to practice for the forthcoming TV show that we had been

invited to take part in. 6 days later we travelled to Xiangtan where we took part in the 1st Xiangtan (Hunan) International Martial Arts Exchange. This exchange was filmed by 5 Chinese TV stations one of which was a satellite station that broadcast worldwide, with an expected audience of over 1 billion people. The host of the exchange was the local government, military and police force and our group were made very welcome. During the tv show / performance Lau Gar empty handed forms, weapon forms and applications were performed by various senior Lau Practitioners that were present. I also gave a demonstration of the way I train the UK police forces which were well received and the performance was also covered on the national news. Representatives from the Police, Military and Hunan Martial Arts associations took part. This was a great opportunity to share Lau Gar with China and the world and the whole group were honoured by the fact we could perform and promote Lau Gar to over 1 billion people. Following the show and after discussions the Chief of Police of Xiangtan offered me a full time position as the Head Trainer of the Xiangtan, Hunan Police Force. This was a surprise and an honour, from a logistical point of view to just pack my bags and move to China is a very difficult thing to do and the Police Chiefs recognised this, therefore they accepted my recommendation that rather than having to live in China I would be able to take the role of Head Trainer on a consultancy basis and visit China periodically through the years giving training each time I visit. The TV show and the collaboration with the police and military as well as the provincial martial arts associations has thrust Lau Gar into the limelight in China and will hopefully have a snowball effect for future visits.

Lion Dance with Manchester United

By David Eccles



special request this

year; to perform for and teach Lion Dance for players of Man Utd. The performance took place as part of the football giants Chinese New Year celebrations and was filmed and broadcast worldwide in a series of 5 min promotional videos on MUTV and www.manutd.com in English and Chinese language versions. It was a great and lively experience for the players (Anderson Luís de Abreu Oliveira, Alexander Büttner and Sam Johnstone) and our team members Michael Townsend, Jason Hacking, Dave Eccles Snr, Chris Snape and myself.

## The Guardian Challenge

By Steve Jefferey

The 2013 Guardian Challenge involved a seven mile run across 7 very steep hills or peaks along the Dorset 'Jurassic' coastline; hence the name of the event the 'Magnificent Seven'. Twenty two runners set off on 26 May along the coastal route, the distance itself of which isn't that long; what



makes the event challenging is the ruggedness of the course and close succession of some very steep climbs.

The first hill hit is a long climb that starts off well, however half way up, your legs and lungs quickly start to burn as the steepness start to kick in. Over the first hill, you immediately try to regain some pace as you head towards the next climb. The second and third hills that follow are much steeper, more of a scrabble to the top whilst the fourth does allow the better runners some chance to gain back some pace if they are not too exhausted. Get to the turn around point and head back to do the course once again but in reverse.

In all there were 22 runners, total amount raised £1,115.57. It was a beautiful day, hot sunshine, a cool sea breeze; the views themselves from the cliff tops were stunning.



The runners with Steve Jeferry

The secret to this

event is preparation; you need to be able to run hard and for as long as possible up the hills and pick up the pace again upon bridging the peaks.

### Lion Dance in Dubai

By Stuart Agars

The National Centre for Chinese Martial Arts Lion Dance Team was invited to open the Bahrain F1 Grand Prix last year.

We took part in the opening parade and appeared on the bill with Calvin Harris and Ne-Yo!

We were asked to perform with Johnny Herbet the famous English Motor racing driver and filmed by Sky Sports - we were aired to 600,000 people on the sky network!

The final night was a party, it was a magical atmosphere which soon turned to rioting by locals when men were seen to be allowed to dance with women - which is strictly forbidden!

Jose and myself helped the local police to break up a riot! The police were having trouble detaining the trouble makers, so when one broke free and started fighting again, we performed a take down manoeuvre detaining him until he was arrested! We receive High 5's all round for helping!

Also - we have been asked to appear in Dubai around Chinese New Year for an International Festival.

We hope to go again this year



Chris Snape, Stuart Agars, Johnny Herbert, Car Syres and Jose Williamson

## New Guardian noticed

By Jim Cairns

On the 21st of September (my birthday) I was sworn in as a Guardian and also privileged to witness the inauguration of John Russell as the next Master of Lau Gar.

On my return to Scotland a social gettogether was arranged, this was attended by my family and friends as well as students.

It came as a great surprise to me when I was presented with a letter of congratulations written by Scotland's first minister Alex Salmond, accompanied by a signed bottle of Scottish parliament whisky.

The fact that I had become a guardian had been brought to his attention by one of our students. On hearing this he decided that he wanted to mark the occasion.



Jim with Letter



Jim with Whisky and Letter

#### **Guardians Provide Services to Lau Gar and the BKFA**

The BKFA Summer Course 2013, Llandudno, Wales

Master Russell

The 2013 Summer Course was held in its adopted home of Llandudno which has become a firm favourite with the participants. People travelled from all over Great Britain, Poland and the largest contingent was the ever popular Irish group with an impressive 14 people!

This year's summer course was extra special as Master Yau announced that John Russell was to be appointed his official successor and he presented John with his Red Sash. This was a complete surprise to John who did not know this had been planned!

This was a very special moment for all those attending and a great privilege for people to be able to witness such an historic event in the history of Lau Gar and it was huge congratulations from all to Master Russell!

Morning Exercise

The format of the course followed previous years with the early morning start kicking off on the Monday. People chose to run, walk or perform Tai Chi exercises with Pete Hornby. John emphasised that people had to be exercising on one format or another for the full hour!

The first morning run started at the car park at the top of the Orme, but following days started at the base and people chose different routes to run and walk depending on their levels of fitness, injuries, etc. The most challenging was walking (and slowly running!) up the immediate steep hill and carrying on to the summit of the Orme. The weather was very kind so there were some spectacular morning views from the top across the sea and hills.

Breakfast and recovery was from 8am to 10am when the action started again.

Two Person Sticking Routine Routine The session started with a gentle warm up led by Master Russell, followed by the stance routine and then it was on to the two person sticking hands routine that people worked on all week.

Students attending were divided into club groups (as they did last year) with two Guardians per group.

Master Russell and Morag Quirk demonstrated a short routine which people learnt over the first few days.

Each pair of Guardians had also been asked to devise a sticking hand routine and they taught this to their groups on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

The routine (routines) had to include

the elements of striking (da), Kicking (toi), Throwing (suai), locking (na) and sticking (chi), and the aim was to present it as a choreographed fight (rather like a movie).



Guardian Report

On Thursday and Friday the Guardians in each group assisted pairs in their group to combine and personalise the routines taught. Students introduced movements of their own at that point.

On Saturday each group nominated at least two pairs to demonstrate what they had achieved in the week. The demonstrators covered all grades and the standard of the performance and routines was extremely high showing how hard people had worked in and out of the training hall.



These routines can be entered into the new Sticking Hand Form competition in the Nationals.

Black Sash Training

Each day Master Yau took a different grade of Black Sash and went through detailed instruction on their relevant syllabus. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> degrees were privileged to have a session on Sticking hands with Master Yau with a number being able to practice with him and feel (or try to feel!) what was happening. It was interesting seeing him perform one handed against two hands and still completely control what was going on!

Gings

Following on from the brief introduction to Gings on the 2012 course, Pete Hornby expanded this in to a full session each day. He went through various techniques, mainly drawn from the Lau Gar sets, which targeted different aspects of Ging training. This was fast paced, very physical and tiring!

Remainder of the Days Training Each day people were split into their grade groups to cover syllabus work, supported by black sashes.

Walking techniques this year was led by Carl Jones who stepped in to cover as a result of Keith suffering from an injury. Carl kept everyone "amused" with the low stance (knee an inch above the floor) and had people reminding themselves that it was all for their

own benefit!

Kicking techniques followed and Andy Nation brought in the old favourites of drop down spinning sweeps as well as a variety of combination kicks. David Eccles and Frankie Cooper led the much loved Shaolin stamping and the day was rounded off by Morag Quirk's yoga based warm down (which is a work out in itself!) and then meditation.



In addition to the impromptu gatherings at the Kings Head there was the annual BBQ that was this year organised by the Scottish group. They put on a fantastic array of cooked food, vegetarian and non-vegetarian and an impressive selection of salads and fruit. It is amazing how far a few pounds each goes and the one day of rain did nothing to dampen the high spirits.

Evening Entertainment

On Friday evening a function room was secured at a hotel on the seafront where people gathered for a few drinks and a lot of chat and laughs, after

which those with a bit of energy left to burn headed off to a club to showcase their dancing skills!

Saturday

After the demos, and stamps, etc. it was time for a Question and Answer session with Master Yau and it was particularly pleasing to see the children asking questions and being fully engaged.

Then it was on to the awarding of the certificates for the Beginners up to Orange

who were all upgraded as a reward for completing the full course and then the certificates of attendance for everyone else were awarded by Master Yau. The course was rounded off with an informal photo session and fond farewells.

In Summary and 2014

The course was again a tremendous success; brilliant training, sore legs and great fun!

Llandudno is an excellent location with many attractions in the town and within a short drive and is ideal for families. The town is lively, with a friendly atmosphere and is very well kept.

The 2014 course is again in Llandudno - 27th Aug 2014 to 2nd Aug 2014. It is suitable for all ages and abilities and the Llandudno Tourist Information Centre will source accommodation for a few pounds, which saves a lot of time and money phoning around.

As Laura Wallace from Ireland put it "Old friendships were renewed and new friendships made. It is truly an amazing course that will teach you skills and give you tips to help with your regular training in your club. My advice? Start saving!

Training Tech Triumph

High quality new technology was purchased this year, seeking to improve the audio and visual production of our courses, competitions and teaching material. This investment will help to move us in the right direction of protecting and promoting standards for students and instructors alike and ultimately the promotion of Lau Gar.

Many thanks for the assistance and advice from:

Alan Smewing concerning the upgrade of our speakers. The speakers are of a considerably higher quality in sound and far easier to transport.

Robin Sunley, who advised on purchasing a further full high definition video camera to ensure different angles can be achieved and nothing is missed.

Nik Grainger who advised on a new full high definition projector. This projector improves on the previous one with a more vivid picture and faster frame rate to cope with the improved video cameras being utilised.

It was very pleasing to see all of these being utilised on the summer course 2013. The students present could see the instructors' movements more clearly, projected on the front wall so all could follow, even the students at the back of the hall.

The second camera enabled more footage to be recorded and from different angles to enable all to see the full detail of each technique demonstrated.

The new enhanced sound system made it much clearer to hear the instructors and drastically improved audio recording.

Once the summer course 2013 DVD is released, we will all see the benefits of this investment, and the best thing is we can continue to use this equipment on further courses to continue to improve the quality of our teaching and learning of Kung Fu - seeing and hearing into the future.

#### The Officers of the Council

President	Master Jeremy Yau	Chair Person	Morag Quirk
Vice Chair	John Russell	Secretary	Peter Hornby
Treasurer	Stewart Hunt	Officer	Andrew Nation
Officer	Alan Neeld		

#### and the non-council Guardians

Rash Patel	Keith Thomas	Clive Thompson
Jason Crabtree	Steven Burton	Kelvin Bartrum
Tracy Edghill	Steve Newby	Rajko Dockic
Bobby O'Neil	Carl Jones	Sean Viera
Alec Clark	Steven Jeffery	David Eccles
Stuart Agars	Robert Francis	Andy Phillips
Francis Cooper	Mike Lavender	Nathan Beer
Jim Cairns	Robin Sunley	Alex Barrowman