

## **KARATE ASSIGNMENT.**

I first took up Karate when I was 10 years old.

I remember my Dad coming home from work one day after a school visit telling me all about this Karate class he had just watched. I think he thought I needed toughening up, I was the smallest and lightest in the class and probably needed to learn some self defence before going to secondary school. The following week I was there raring to go, I loved it. Mondays and Friday evenings now became my Karate night at Langley Park school. Sensei John was great he took me under his wing. Gradings seemed further apart, than I remember now and we had to travel to mass gradings, always dreading certain examiners – Terry O’Neil being one of them.

I slowly worked my way up through the grades, achieving junior of the year several times. I got to 3<sup>rd</sup> Kyu before life/university got in the way and the dream of black belt disappeared. I remember going to the World Shotokan Karate Championships in Sunderland in 1988 getting all the autographs I could (none of which I can find now!).

I never forgot my training and restarted a new club in my early 20’s, I graded here to 2<sup>nd</sup> Kyu then once I started to work I could never get to any training nights so never progressed. I’ve always been active and any opportunity I would take part in any martial-art based class at the gym.

Fast forward 20 years James had been talking about wanting to learn Karate after a taster lesson at school, I researched a few local clubs being careful to make sure it was a Shotokan club and came across Junsui Karate Club. I liked the fact it seemed a great family orientated club and had lots of training nights so it would fit in with my shift work. Initially I had no intention to start training again but after watching a bit of a lesson and talking to Sensei Steve I knew I couldn’t sit and watch James without wanting to join in.

My first lesson James and I went to Hamsteels which had just started, I was greeted by my Sensei Kim who soon reassured me I would remember what I was doing, and she was right. It took me a while to get used to the terminology, again, but I was soon hooked. James absolutely loved it too, I think he quite liked the fact we were doing something together, but slightly disgruntled when I graded straight to green belt. After our first Easter Egg competition and lots of eggs Jessica decided she wanted to join too. Karate is now a family outing for us, its great to be able to train with your children and watch them do so well. One of my other sporting events is running, I regularly compete in various distances, the cross-training effect of Karate has given me a PB in every distance from 800m to Marathon. I don’t tell people what my secret training is!

I’d never thought I would be writing an essay for my 1<sup>st</sup> Dan so soon, Sensei Steve and Kim have more faith in me than I do in myself. The competitive side to me strives me to do my best, however I must say I am utterly terrified for my grading day. I do want James and Jessica to be proud and aspire also for their Dan gradings in the future.