

THE TO-KEN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN
for the Study and Preservation of Japanese Swords and Fittings



HON. PRESIDENT. B.W. ROBINSON, M.A., B.LITT.

SECRETARY. H. M. HUTCHINSON, 141 NORK WAY, BANSTEAD, SURREY.

C. Bowman has had July 1985

PROGRAMME No. 75

JULY - AUGUST 1973

NEXT MEETING

Monday 2nd July, 7.30 p.m. at the Princess Louise, High Holborn. To get there: Underground to Holborn, turn west, cross Kingsway and the P.L. is 50 yards down on the left hand side.

FOLLOWING MEETING:

Monday, 6th August at the Princess Louise 7.30 p.m.

SUBJECTS:

July - Brief notes on Japan - Colin Nunn

August - Free night + Travellogue of Japan on proposed Trip.

NOTE FROM EDITOR:

I regret both the lateness and the short version of this Programme. This period of the year is a very difficult one for me and I unfortunately cannot spare all the time I would like to. However, I have a fair amount to catch up on and will do so for the next Programme.

Ed.

MAY MEETING

Prior to the opening of the meeting we duly laid out our cloth on the side tables and a number of small pillows for the resting of swords. The sword members brought were duly laid on them - so far, so good - it did seem that etiquette had considerably improved and may it continue to do so.

The meeting opened to a rather large gathering of members, over 40 in fact. It was very nice to see so many. Two new members were welcomed, Mike Chapman from Kingston and John.

Our Chairman, John Anderson, was asked by the Birmingham To Ken to express a vote of thanks to Vic Harris, who went up and gave them a very interesting talk which was much appreciated, to Colin Nunn who visited and gave a very generous donation to their funds and also to Sidney Divers who has also made a generous donation to their funds. They are extremely delighted - words fail them, and they asked John to express as forcibly as he could that they are really thrilled and very very satisfied with what has been done for them so far.

So don't forget, anyone who is up that way, do drop in and see them, and as you know talks will be more than welcome to a really appreciative audience. They meet the first Friday in every month.

3rd World Kendo Championships

Sidney Divers announced that these championships for 1976 are to be held in England at Milton Keynes. This is a really fantastic happening for 600 contestants from all over the world will be coming with officials - this will involve about 900 people. The Japanese Zen Kendo Renmai has offered \$20,000 to start it off. The whole cost should be about £20,000 but there is 3 years to do it all in.

Assent of Man - The T.V. film showing aspects of the Japanese sword. Sidney had a letter from the B.B.C. saying the 4th programme in this new series, sub titled "The Hidden Structure" with which you very kindly assisted us, will be transmitted at 9 p.m. on Saturday 26th May on B.B.C.II. The B.B.C. offered a private showing but since so few could have been included, it would raise the problem of who should go etc., so we declined their kind offer.

John Anderson then brought to the notice of members the start of the new system for members' swords, which we hope will function. He explained the tables set to one side and covered with a superb black material at great cost to the Society, together with small pillows on which to rest the blades. Please use them. We hope this way swords will come off better than they have in the past and members do not come off any worse.

Try and find out who the swords belong to and get permission before you handle them and I think we shall all appreciate it a little more. Peter Cottis then suggested that since such an event was due to take place at Milton Keynes, should not we do something in the form of an exhibition? It was thought to be an excellent idea and 1976 for such an undertaking - remembering the Ashmolean - is not so far off. Sidney explained that it would take place over the Easter Bank Holiday on the Saturday and Sunday. The team events take place on the Saturday and on Sunday the individual tournaments.

By using the Olympic pool it was suggested we might stage another Dan no Ura, but since it would involve considerable loss of members it was over-ruled. After considerable discussion, frivolous and otherwise, it was agreed by all that we should make this a really fine display and the time to start is now!

In the World Theatre Series at the Aldwych Theatre, we are informed Nori plays will be shown from the 4th to 16th June. Sidney was back once more letting us know that Milton Keynes has its own Dojo which was started last week. So any Kendoka passing through who would like to come, it's every Tuesday starting at 7.30. Be nice to see you - if you don't want to fight wear a big hat - sorry, I meant if you don't want to fight you can always watch. If you fence you get a free meal and all the beer you can drink. You don't get offers like that every day - out shinai and at 'em.

Sword Polishing - a member enquired if the facilities for polishing swords in Japan could be improved from the present wait of 2 years. Dave Parker informed us that some blades had been in Japan for two years and we were not sure when they were coming back.

Andrew Ford suggested that whilst it may be possible to contact other polishers and get cheaper polishes, the better the polisher the more work he will have and therefore the longer the wait. One specific polisher only does 6 blades a year and obviously his charges are extremely high and he will only do what he wants to. The price you may be prepared to pay is of no interest - only the sword. The standard of polish that we get is medioca by Japanese standards and those that have been to Japan will tell you this. On the other hand, they look a lot better after the polish, whatever it may be. He mentioned a friend who had a blade cleaned up for £50 and then they decided it was worth polishing and that cost £150 more. Anything else was extra and it was not done by one of the top polishers. We get our swords shipped there and back, shirasaya thrown in - insurance etc. for £70 a long sword.

Regards polishing - this is an art in itself and a polisher will not waste time on poor blades - apart from the fact there is nothing to bring out, it also wears his expensive stones badly. On a good blade he will spend much more time for there is something to produce and show his skill on - a challenge if you like.

It was suggested that the Society should employ a polisher and bring him over here for our own blades. Sid then mentioned that he had previously discussed this with your programme sec. and we had considered the idea of having him work at either of our homes on society swords. There would of course be no papers by this method as the polisher cannot give papers, only shinsa panels can.

We actually meant to bring this up possibly 2 or 3 months hence when it was all laid on. There would be the expenses of fare, keep, etc., but then the actual polishing cost should be lower and definitely quicker.

Considerable interest was shown by members and it was suggested that shares be sold in this venture. It was suggested that another method might be for the polisher to give a charge according to the work carried out; 10% be then added. The polisher would then be paid and the balance cover fare etc. and if any left over, go to the Society. On the question of how many he would do in say a year, would depend on the quality of the blades and effort involved. A figure of 100 in six months was mentioned, but I would think this impossible. Possibly 20 - 30 as an outside figure would seem more feasible.

The Birmingham Token have asked Sid to negotiate a cheap trip to Japan and on the latest count it appears 89 people are interested. This is a three week trip next year - cost at the moment is £349. If a full plane load of 120 could be gathered together it may well be cheaper. Sword viewing etc. would be arranged for those interested, obviously some people will only be going because of the cheap fare and make a business venture of it. There is quite a bit more to tie up but a six months warning will be given and those interested contacted.

Sword Etiquette - this vital subject was once again brought up with various suggestions as to how we should arrange the tables for swords. Sidney offered to patrol the swords with an assistant and should anyone point a blade at any person and thereby endanger either sword or member, then that person should be booted out. Most members approved, for something drastic must be done. It is something all are concerned in, not just a few members and the committee, but each person present. So members be warned, disciplinary measures will be taken no matter who is involved.

Several Swords - talk by Vic Harris.

Vic passed around a seven-page leaflet which had been very carefully typed and drawn by his good self. Those fortunate to get copies will have the illustrations to aid them. Unfortunately for corresponding members I shall have to leave those out, however I will do my best to describe them:

Sword Periods

1330 (approx)	to 1394.	Yoshino or Nanbokucho period
1394	Oei Period.	Start of Muromachi period.
1467	Onin.	Middle Muromachi
1504	Eisho	
1521	Taiei	
1573	Jensho	Late Muromachi
1604	Keicho	End of Muromachi period for swords, and start of Shinto period. Keicho and Kanei periods cover the early Shinto group known as the Momoyama period for swords.

Let us start as usual with the shape of swords, beginning with the earliest sword we have here, exhibit 1.

The sword appears to be the upper portion of a sword (it was a wakizashi with a blade of approx 16"). It is not easy at first to see whether it started life as a long sword or as a wakizashi. However, let us examine it closely. It has a couple of mekugi ana in the tang, the blade is broad and robust and of even breadth throughout its length. The Kissaki is long and the kissaki edge (fukura) is wasted (kareru). That is the curve of the edge is not there and it has a much more acute point - the edge being straighter. Another point to notice is that the groove is finished lower than the yokote but very close to it. The sword could belong to one of three periods when swords with long points and broad were made.

First is the Yoshino 1330-1394 approx. It could be from the Momoyama period, that is the first year period of Shinto when the Shinto smiths grouped themselves around the castles and were finally after a hundred years or so, able to make their swords in peace, and they made nice ones.

Those who made swords in this style were:-
Yoshino. Pupils of Masamune and their schools. (Masamune's school influenced the whole country and many long strong tachis were made to be wielded from horseback. These were made by smiths who were taught by Masomunes pupils.

Momoyama - The historical dating convention puts Tensho onwards as the Momoyama period, based on the Adzuchi castle type culture. But it was not until the castle towns grew up to be centres of commerce that swordsmiths settled down after a period of wars, when the wind of violence had disrupted the traditional schools that sword making came under the influence of the grand new culture. The Tokugawa bakufu disbanded the armies of common soldiers and many samurai too were jobless. The remaining samurai were castle garrison and jobs like that.. So in these conditions the swordsmiths found themselves not only making swords for a clientele composed only of samurai, but making swords for samurai inspired with the zest of a strong military government. In this period the great smiths made swords in the style of those they admired, and many imitations of cut down Kamakura and Yoshino period swords were made. Examples were: Morigawa Kunikiro who did make swords like that, copying the style of Masomunes pupils. Echizen Yasutsugu who made very heavy swords, that is the 1st Yasutsugu.

Chin Shinto period - about 150 years after the Momoyama period style there is yet another revival to the early days. Masahide made swords in Kamakura style, but of lower quality. Many smiths made large swords and late blacksmiths and cutlers made large crude swords.

Now let us consider the end of the groove which is firmly stopped just below the Yokote. During the middle Kamakura period long sturdy tachis were made. The length of the Kissaki was not, however, appreciably greater than in the early Kamakura period (Bizen Nagamitsu, Rai Kunimitsu for example, made these stubby great swords), and resultingly the kissoki was broad in comparison with its length.

Next comes the Ikubizaki or Bull neck point. This is the very stubby point where the length of the kissaki is shorter than its breadth. The point appears to have been ground off. The middle Kamakura period, the period of the flowering of the sword - some say - produced tachis about 2 ft. 8" long and chunky great tachis that you could cut someone with. The men who wielded them were a ferocious lot whereas the men of the preceding period were not quite so rough and ready - they were the Kamakura samurai. I never get tired of saying how these points used to get chipped against the armour of the Mongols and then they found when they repolished, the hardened steel was gone or it overlapped the bohi - groove. To correct this in the late Kamakura period they made the point a little longer and pulled the groove back a bit. It is interesting that one can distinguish between swords made by Yukimitsu and Masamune, alike in other respects, by the slight extra elongation of Masamune's Kissaki.

I am bringing Masomune into the talk because he was such a marvellous smith that he actually taught smiths and they came from all over the country to learn and he revolutioned the Japanese sword. It was a time when due to the political situation his forge was in a convenient place -- Kamakura.

He can be likened to Umetada Myoju who taught the 'grandfathers' of many famous shinto schools e.g. Tadayoshi, Kunihiro, Yasutsugu. Umetada Myoju taught his students to make swords in the shape and style of the old cut down swords of the pupils of Masumune.

Perhaps we can also liken Sushinshi Masahide, the founder of the Shinshinto era to Masamune for the same reason. Now let us consider the thickness. In general Momoyama period swords are thicker than swords of the same length of the Hoshino period. This sword exhibit 1 may seem thick but if it had originally been a three foot long tachi I don't think it would have been slimmer.

Next the Hamon and schools concerning sword 1. We have three types of choji hamon that were widespread during the Mid Kamakura period. Choji was popular throughout Japan in this period in various forms.

- 1) Osafune Choji - fairly subdued with the peaks of the choji forming almost a flat line - narrow hamon.
- 2) Rai choji - a deeper and more violent choji - with the bottoms of the valleys forming a reasonably straight line - much stronger - medium.
- 3) Ichimonji choji - the bottoms of the choji forming a wave like shape, much more florid and wider shapes - deep.

Masamunes inspiration came from some unlikely sources, unlikely that is if we think of five schools and Soshu den being one of them with Masamune as its founder. Kunemune of Bizen certainly lived in Kamakura and he certainly rubbed shoulders with Kunemitsu who most certainly taught Masamune.

Without going into detailed chronology here, I'd like to talk about Bizen Kanemitsu, pupil of Masamune. The Bizen hamon in the late Kamakura period declined from the brilliant choji of the preceding period to gunome and gunome mixed with choji and some smiths e.g. Kagemitsu forged pure gunome and sujuha. In the late Kamakura period and Yoshina period we always get gunome, sometimes mixed with choji. Gunome - literally means half a row of go men - the round stones used in the game of go - a row of semi circles. Pure choji is never to be made again except on Shinto copies of Bizen swords.

Kanemitsu, who seems to be related to Kagemitsu, who made swords in gunome, made long tachis. One of his swords survives in its original length of 4 foot or so in a shrine. Most swords were cut down (suriage) as are all Masamune's long swords and most of those of his pupils. This became necessary for in the Murayama period the wearing of swords through the belt was introduced and a four foot sword could make turning round rather hazardous as well as quite a stretch to remove it from the soya.

Nie and Nioi

After the Mid Kamakura period, the Bizen hamon is never again pure nioi. Kanemitsu blades and other Bizen swords of the Yoshino period always have fine nie over nioi.

Utsuri

The Utsuri of the Kamakura period is never found again. In the Yoshino period we find straight Utsuri - Bo utsuri. Even on other schools that had Utsuri, sometimes as Aoe school of the Yoshino period, it is straight.

So to conclude sword No.1. It has fine nie gunome hamon with a hint of choji and bo utsuri all along both sides of the blade. In the light of our low level of knowledge we cannot but say that this sword is a Soden-Bizen suriage tachi of the Yoshino period. (Soden is short for Soshu tradition). Soden Bizen is the style of swordmaking of the school of Kanemitsu who studied under Masamune.

Now, before we go onto the next sword let us consider another of Masamune's pupils, in whose style smiths forged like rabbits for two hundred years. (Rabbits are forged??!!)

Tegai Kaneuji studied under Masamune and went to Mino to make swords. Tegai Kanetomo went to Mino and is known as Naoe Shizu Kanetomo. Kaneuji was the 'grandfather' of the Mino style, which came to flourish during the Onin wars, to the end of the Koto period centred around Mino. Mino style was in Mino and Seki style which is Mino of a sort centred around Seki.

Kaneuji Hamon and derivation

- a) A straight suguha of Nei with wispy points rising above the hamon. This I claim to have seen on Sadamune's tachis.
- b) Similar to A but the wispy points much less acute and more obvious, often with quite pronounced togariba. Also gunome rising peakily. Sometimes the hamon kinks up and fades out into Nioi or something like Nioi. This hamon you find on Kaneuji swords. Again swords of the shape we are discussing.

- c) Next hamon is San bon suji (three cryptomerias), it comes under various names depending on how advanced the kinks at the top have got. You will find after the Yoshino period in the Muramachi period in Mino style basically it seems to be derived from Kaneuji's wispy hamon.

Well there are wispy little points on that sword - you get them on several of Masamunes pupils' swords. You can see them if you hold it up to the light and twiddle it backwards and forwards.

This hamon is Mino style, sanbonsuji or gunome with kinks at the top. Kanemoto of Mino - Muramasa (c1500) Sukesada of Bizen c1500 and other used this hamon.

- d) Another version of Sanbonsuji where the top is becoming extinct and unskilfully done - the tops of the peaks appear to fade away. The work of poor smiths of the middle and late Muromachi period, mass producing swords for the armies of the sengoku period (period of wars). The peaks in the gunome are weak and sometimes disappear altogether. On very poor swords the valleys also disappear.

Mino swords are characteristically practically shaped with a low curve. Business-like and simply forged. In a word Mino swords are not beautiful.

Sword No.2. A katana with gunome, the tops of which wobbled away into an indistinct fuzz. It is a Bizen sword.

Now, as in the Kamakura period, choji was popular all over the country so in the Muramachi period gunome was popular. Sort of the aftermath of this funny wispyness you get on some of Masamunes pupils' swords and indeed it's rather difficult to say exactly how much inter-relation there was between swords. The Muromachi period was a time when smiths migrated here and there and the hamon style of the period we find on Mino swords and Bizen swords and all sorts of swords is Gunome. Sometimes a very fine gunome like Muramasa with a san bon suji which has three little twiddles in it. Sometimes by unskilful smiths who couldn't get the twiddles in, they just stopped in a nasty little blur that there is on this sword No.2.

This sword I have put at the end of the Muromachi. It has a Mino type gunome hamon. The white line like Utsuri on it is often found on mass produced swords of Koto period due to the forging process, where rods of different steels are welded together simply, without the old techniques of folding and forging till a critical point in steel and structure quality was reached. This white line is also found on Seki swords, when it is known as Seki shirake (Seki white).

On very poor swords you can clearly see the joint between the body and the edge of the blade. You can even separate the edge and the body of the poorer blade by attempting to cut something hard with it.

Sword No.3. A short wakizashi 12", dated 1580. The hamon is quite complicated, made up of gunome then a sort of half-hearted choji and Sunanagoshi. Sunanagoshi means lines of Nie along the hamon perhaps connected with the flow of the actual metal. We think of it as being characteristic of Soshu style. In the Muromachi period there were so many smiths travelling to so many places and so many copying each others style that Soshu style and Bizen style got quite mixed up.

Late Bizen swords never had Utsuri and are usually in nie which is often coarse or broken down (Yaki Kuzure). Yaki Kuzure means the quench was a failure. The late Muromachi Bizen swords, the very good ones, are in very brilliant Nie and you don't get Utsuri on Nie swords.

This wakizashi is a classic example of the confusion between traditions during the Muromachi period. The sunagoshi is inherited from Soshu style. The half-hearted choji is a whimsical touch of old Bizen.

Yo (leaves) are found on Mino swords (e.g. Kanefusa) and is characteristic of late Bizen swords. Yo - sort of little dots in the hamon also found Seki swords and very fine Mino style swords as well.

Back to Sword No.2. The groove is a round ended groove above the hamachi and comes up rather weak and sloppy to the yokate. That is one of the characteristics of Oei period swords.

Oei Bizen Sword 4.

Oei is the first year dating in the Muromachi period. Bizen swords of this period were made after the style of the Kamakura period but on a smaller scale. It is said that this was due to the start of the custom of wearing swords thrust through the belt, and that these swords were articles of dress rather than combat. The Oei Bizen sword has a small point and a light rather graceful sword, rather frail. I don't know exactly what the situation in Japan was during the Oei period but I think it was pretty peaceful. After Nan bokucho 1394, the two lots of armies of the two rival emperors had just stopped battling each other across the Yoshino plain and the Ashikaga had taken over Japan.

The swords are tachi and katana type with Koshizori

(deep curve near the hilt) the blade decreases in width towards the kissaki. The kissaki is small and the hamon a mixture of choji and gunome.

These swords are generally more delicate even than Heian period swords. The Kamakura Bizen swords, of which Oei Bizen swords are copies, are, contrary to popular opinion, large sturdy swords. This sword has a gold inlay Katsumitsu - this too has ashi and yo.

Sword 5. This is a nicely made sword and it has a nice temper - a very slender sword, it gives the appearance of great age. It has a Sakizori feeling - no yokote. But if we look at the jigane we see that in fact it is a Fukko to (restoration sword). Shinshinto made with a poor forging technique of mixing together soft steels of different constitution.

It is made after the style of the old smiths techniques but the late smiths - that is after Masahide who was the 19th century revivalist. Masahide studied swordmaking. He made swords which looked like old Bizen and Soshu period swords, but he couldn't do it. Swordmaking is such a difficult thing that the great modern smiths cannot do it because when you are actually working the sword it becomes harder with working and there are various things that happen to the steel during the process. It can only be worked to a certain extent beyond which it loses the strength you impart to it and you have to get the last hammer stroke to coincide with the best strength and shape etc. of the steel. This is the art of the swordsmith and no one has been able to do it since a couple of generations after Masamune.

Kotetsu often made swords from just one piece of steel. Some used a piece for the middle and a hard piece for the edge. On swords which are tired, that is where the steel in the middle shows through, we find masame grain on the middle steel on most swords. On very very old swords, however, you find Itame in the middle steel often.

Masahide made a valiant try to revive the traditions, but he could not rediscover their methods, and the late swordsmiths were left with no inspiration and no beloved teachers to guide their hammers. But in the traditionally isolationist province of old Nagashima or Hizen descendants of Tadayoshi, pupil to Myoju, forged good swords for generation after generation, oblivious to the rest of Japan. Nagashima was closed off during the Tokugawa period; life was very strict. In the Muromachi period the Nagashima samurai lived so strictly and after the Tokugawa government came about the Tokugawa passed an edict which upset the Nagashima samurai. That is they prohibited the seppuku (suicide), except under certain

circumstances. When the Lord of Nagashima died at the beginning of the Edo period his chief retainers, of course, wanted to do away with themselves in the traditional manner, but as they were forbidden to do so by law, they retired to the mountains in disgust and wrote a severe criticism of the Edo period government. And this criticism is a most marvellous book that the Japanese have been taught from in recent years. It in fact outlines the principle of budo in rather vital terms.

Quote: When a man goes into battle for his Lord, he should consider himself a dead body and when there is a choice between living and dying he should always choose dying, as that is the best way to make efficient use of oneself. If in the heat of a battle a man starts to think of his own good then he is only part used, having already sold himself into service, what a wretched individual!! - etc. -

A member asked wittily perhaps - what was the punishment for killing yourself then. To much laughter. However, Peter Cottis came up with the answer, that is - the family suffered, for they were answerable to the Lord.

Sword No.6. - Masayoshi - a lovely sword by this swordsmith who forged in Bizen style. There were Shinto and Shin Shinto schools who imitated the Bizen swordsmiths but they could never make good swords. It has a little gonome and lots of choji but it hasn't got Utsuri because they could not do it. Even the Ishido school who were so famous for making Bizen copies, sometimes produced a little white murkiness, but not Utsuri.

No.7. Tanto with curve the opposite way uchizori. A very slim of very strong metal with an acient turned back tang. A whispy flame type boshi, bright nei hamon with tiny ashi. The style could be Kamakura or Oei period.

PROPOSED VISIT TO JAPAN (1974) FOR TOKEN MEMBERS (Sidney Divers)

Over the last few months the Midlands Token Society and I have been organising a visit to Japan. The normal tourist return fare London/Tokyo/London is £658 scheduled flight and this is without hotel costs which makes it too expensive for most people.

I am pleased to say that we have successfully negotiated an all-in trip including first class hotel accommodation at a cost of £378 return per person.

Hotel accommodation is twin bedded sharing. The single room supplement (superior standard) is £40.

This price (subject to currency fluctuations) includes the air fare London/Tokyo/London by B.O.A.C./J.A.L., all airport taxes, transit from airport to hotel going and return, Tokyo/Kyoto/Tokyo by air or rail, etc. It also includes five tour vouchers per person. These vouchers can be used for whole day or half day tours as you wish, to visit such places as Nikko, Hakone, Kamakura, etc. whilst in Tokyo and the temples, castles, Nara, etc. whilst in Kyoto. Food is not included at the hotel but can be bought to suit the individual. We have decided on this to get a reduced overall cost and because some may require large English breakfasts and others just a cup of coffee. Whole day tours usually include lunches and teas.

The best time to visit Japan is either in Spring or Autumn and we propose arranging the trip for the last week of March or early April 1974. Though this may seem some way ahead it is essential that we get this plan moving now.

Most people can get 2 weeks off so we have arranged 6 nights in Tokyo and 4 nights in Kyoto. The hotel in Tokyo is the New Otani and in Kyoto the Grand Hotel. All rooms include bathrooms, T.V. etc. There are some six restaurants to choose from if you eat at the hotel and both have revolving tower restaurants. They are absolutely first class and I have been to both.

We are arranging for Token members, visits to the museums and lectures, watching a sword being forged, sword polishing, examination of National Treasures, etc. etc. and for Kendo enthusiasts practise sessions at different dojos.

With the all-in package we have negotiated, overseas members please note that it may be cheaper for some of you to come on this trip with us starting from London than going direct at higher cost. It is only possible to get such a bargain

price on this trip if we have the numbers and so this is open to all Token, Kendo, art collectors, dealers, businessmen. Each person has to be a member of The Midland Token Society whose subscription is £1 p.a. and this should be sent to S.V. Divers. A membership card will be sent to you direct from Birmingham.

It is understood that though we are negotiating various day's activities such as sword polishing, etc. you have complete freedom to roam at will. All we ask is that you let me know the day before due to reception numbers required at the place we have arranged to visit.

The above schedules are, at this stage, purely a proposal. At the August Token meeting we hope to discuss this in more detail and a representative from the Japanese tour operators, Miki Travel, will be at the meeting to answer any questions and to give a talk and/or film show if required.

Newsletters giving information on this trip will be issued from time to time to all those filling in and returning the enclosed form.

Since I started looking into this idea of a Japanese visit the air fare has gone up £40 from £618.60 to £658. With the present world wide inflation, in a few years it could become very expensive indeed, so to those who have never been to Japan and to those who wish to revisit that Country, here is a chance not to be missed.

REPORT ON THE SPRING ARMS FAIR, Cumberland Hotel.

(by W.L. Baxter)

Although your Committee had decided for reasons of economy to forego representation at the Spring Fair (27 and 28 April 1973), and concentrate instead in putting on a good show at the Autumn Fair, to be held on 28 and 29 September 1973, (make a diary note of the date), pressure of members voiced objections was bowed to and a scratch display was put on - we having been fortunate enough to obtain a table at the eleventh hour by the withdrawal of another Society. As so often happens, this random collection really paid off, and all who saw it agreed we were well represented.

You will note I stated "all who saw it", for despite the howl of protest and insistence that we should be at the Fair, what happens? Just the usual small band of stalwarts make themselves known at the Society stand and a careful headcount totted up but twelve (12) members as visiting the Cumberland, apart from the writer, Syd Divers, Fred Stride, Brian Turner, Alan Bale, and last but no means least, Alan's wife (who put in a sterling full day), helping in rotation to police our exhibits.

Why we trouble in the face of such apathy defeats reason - dedication must be but one step removed from madness. Anyway, the Fair was a great success, with, I believe, over three hundred (300) people entering in the first twenty minutes it was opened.

Our exhibits consisted of:

Two kabuto, one donated by Chairman, John Anderson, and signed MIOCHIN MUNEMASA (c.1800), with a fine 24 plate bowl and 146 standing rivets, the peak and fukigayeshi embellished with silver dragon flies amidst gilt stalks and grainheads. The other being Alan Bale's SAOTOME IYENAGA (c.1690), having 62 plates, 5 lames and in mint condition.

Alan was also showing 7 excellent tsuba.

Stylized Bamboos in iron signed TOCHIKU (c.1850).

Plum Blossom by KINAI of ECHIZEN (sixth generation).

Shimenawa and a rat signed TSUNAGAWA MASAYOSHI with gold KAO (c.1860).

His lovely Choshu INOUYE KIYOTAKA (c.1790), that was in the Ashmolean Exhibition.

A Crayfish in Shakudo on iron (c.1650), by SHOAMI MASANORI of KYOTO.

One by KUNINAGA in swirling woodgrain showing stylized characters and, finally, a Yamagane Tachi-Kanaguchi school (c.1450)

For swords we had:

A superb 17th century Cloisonne Tanto with multicoloured enamel flowers and foliage mounts in gold lacquered saya loaned by Syd Divers, who also showed a double pronged "rigging cutter" arrowhead carved and pierced with a dragon in the clouds and having an 18" tang signed UMETADA MYOJU.

The SADAMUNE signed, but actually HORIKAWA KUNIHIRO school of 1620, wakizashi of Alan Bale that has graced our stand before, was put on view again as it is such an eye catcher. Likewise, Alan provided another wak. signed INUYAMA JU MICHIASA that was made in the castle of Inuyama c.1840, and tempered in the water of KISO river. The MINO GOTO fittings being gold mantis en suite by the GOTO ICHIJO school.

Fred Stride brought along two mouthwatering Katana's for display, but as we had a superabundance of material, it was decided that his MASAHIKE, recently acquired, should be retained for another day and pride of place was given to his ISE GORO MINAMOTO YOSHISADA, a shinto blade named DAIKICHI MARU (Great Good luck piece), with a Kaneiye tsuba and brown lacquer saya showing inset black stylized water swirls and having en suite soft metal Dragon Fly mounts.

The writer completed our show with his two TERUSHIGE swords, Katana and Wakizashi, the Katana with fifth generation blade, black ISHIME saya, white tsuka binding and sentoku dragon mounts by UMETADA NARIKAZU. The wak. having a first generation blade rippled ROIRO saya and rival generals UJI river mounts.

The main commercial section of the Fair was absolutely saturated with Japanese swords. Every other dealer seemed to be climbing on the bandwagon of current escalating values in our field with the result that a great deal of low quality material was being offered at over-enthusiastic prices. The usual old friends were well represented, and their principal offerings were - a box of 106 arrow heads with Peter Yorke, a spectacular gold signed BUNGO YUKIHIRA kokatana with sanded same saya and shakudo fittings in the hands of Tony Elliott, a good display of iron tsuba offered by Colin Nunn, and a long sword in ribbed ROIRO saya with SHAKUDO and gold mounts that the Smith family of Bexley Heath disposed of at four figures to one of our respected members. Two elegant matchlocks were also available, one of which likewise ended up in the eager hands of a Society member. It was, by common consensus, a good Fair. Extremely busy on the opening day when there was literally a sardine crush, but much quieter on the Saturday. Sale of Society literature covered our entrance costs, whilst three (3) new members were enrolled and a number of application forms taken which hopefully will be returned in due course. Why on earth more members don't

take advantage of visiting these shows I will never understand, even if you don't come to buy there is the unique opportunity of handling dozens of swords with something to be learnt all the time and the lasting and useful friendships that can be found with the trade are there for the taking. Roll on September, and the next gathering.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society has much pleasure in welcoming the following new members:

- A.J. Higgins, 12 Town Field, Doncaster, Yorks.
P.A. Hayes, National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, London, S.W.3.
M.A. Chapman, 14 Fairfax Road, Teddington, Middx.
J.L. Box, 31 Longden Close, Haynes, Bedford.
F.M. Van Bockxmeer, Dept. of Physiology, The University of Western Australia, Nedlands, W. Australia 6009.
G.J. Tammans, Gronineerweg 56 A, Eelderwolde (Eelde) Holland.

Change of Address

- R.B. Ronnqvist, Sininarhintie 5A 14, 02600 Leppävarra, Finland.
A.D. Holland, 32 Raynham Road, Stoke, Plymouth, Devon.
E. Mathers, 63 Little Moorside, Aston-on-Trent, Derbyshire.

Correction:

- J.J. Hanacek, 17921 Exchange Avenue, Lansing, Illinois 60438, U.S.A.

Resignations:

- Mr. H. Bartlett Wells, Washington, D.C.
Mr. J.M. Foster, Glasgow.
Sir R.H. Parker, Sudbury, Suffolk.

OSHIGATA

A reminder to new members who may have difficulties in reading tang inscriptions due to inadequate references; if they care to send a rubbing (oshigata) of the tang, addressed to Tony Chapman, 71 Ingaway, Basildon, Essex, he will check it for them and send them all available information he has on the swordsmith or inscription. Please remember to make a careful rubbing of the whole tang, both sides, not just the inscription.