

This being the 10th and final Kurosawa Cup in Barcelona, EUKC were glad to have organised three teams' attendance at the prestigious competition. Several attendees from EUKC had never attended this event before, so it was good to have this final opportunity. Our merry band consisted of Mr. Failes, Mr. Wright, Mr. Takeuchi, Ms. Gyory, Ms. Bingxin Li, Mr. Poon, Mr. Tsorman, Ms. Everett and the most welcome adornment of Bishop Sensei, whose presence lent an air of gravitas and solemnity to every occasion.

Six of the aforementioned band were not so merry at 4.45 am on a chilly Friday morning catching a bus to the airport. Pleasingly (or miraculously, as some would have it), none were late and we arrived in Luton at a more respectable hour, before awaiting the next plane to Barcelona at midday. The prospect of reuniting with Irma, Alicia, Steve Sensei and an errant Spaniard (Mr. A. Navarro) uplifted our spirits, and we arrived in Spain at about 3.30pm local time. The weather sparkled delightfully, but our minds were upon kendo bent. A training session at the dojo where the event took place was imminent at 6.30pm; this session, taught mainly by Kenji Takizawa Sensei 8th Dan Kyoshi, assisted by Chiba Sensei, 8th Dan Kyoshi, Masaya Takizawa Sensei, 7th Dan Kyoshi and Ryo Hiruma Sensei, 6th Dan, with other sensei from Europe too, was most enjoyable and covered several aspects of kendo including kihon keiko ho, kendo no kata, and then a thorough armoured practice. We retired to a restaurant at about 10pm to watch Adria, Steve Sensei and Matthew not get their dinners, and at last, to bed.

The next day opened with another seminar beginning at 10am, in which the famous bull-ring (three-person jigeiko circuit) was enacted for three levels of aptitude. Fierce!

The competition commenced at 3pm and Edinburgh University Team 1 was up, the first in one of the three shiai. Each team member would fight twice to determine whether the team got out of pools. Andy won his first match 2 ippon to 1, and drew his second match. Alicia, up next, fought well and bravely but both her opponents prevailed. Matthew drew his first match and lost the second by 2 ippon. Andy then fought again under dai hyo sen, unfortunately losing his match. Edinburgh 2, with Ryoto as taisho, and Joy and Nikos, fought the Irish team at the opposite end of the dojo, where a spectacular win brought home by Nikos was followed by a loss and a draw from Joy and a loss by 1 ippon from Ryoto. As the other team's third member was absent, Ryoto won by fu sen sho. More or less meanwhile, our final team, consisting of Irma and Tasun, fought the Spanish team, forfeiting one match by fu sen sho and unfortunately being knocked out.

Although our teams did not get out of pools, a fantastic experience was had by all (notwithstanding the slow spread of sore throats and coughs) and some excellent kendo was witnessed and performed. The championship was won by the Berlin team, with one Joshua Koplín from California (cough*Koji*cough!), and the silver medals taken by the excellent all-women team from Renshinkan Dojo. To celebrate the day's achievements, all repaired to the famous (notorious?) Sayonara Dinner at the restaurant at the Marina, where Joy was much fazed by her steak, as it was in fact larger than

her head. Team Edinburgh rolled piecemeal to bed around 3am, ready for a final session in which the illustrious Teruhiko Kurasawa Sensei 9th Dan himself, was called on Skype. An English version transcript of the conversation with the Sensei should soon be available on the Ryoshinkai website.

Our return to freezing Scotland may not have been triumphant in the typical sense, but the sense of good things well achieved prevails, and memories shall be treasured for many a year to follow.