

Irish International Goodwill Taikai 2010 (26th-28th Feb) – Cork, Ireland

The flight to Dublin was an early 8am on the Thursday morning, which resulted in a ridiculous early waking time and a 6am meeting time at the airport. Unfortunately our flight was delayed coming into Edinburgh which caused us to be stuck waiting in the airport for an hour. This delay meant that we had little time to catch our train to cork but we made it with 20mins to spare.

The train journey was an uneventful one, with some sleeping and others playing Trivial pursuit (Neill just manage to steal the game from me). It was a short walk from the Cork train station to the hostel, which just has to be up a really steep hill. Once settled at the hostel and met up with Koji (who had decided to get a direct flight) we decided to use this free time to go for a wander and locate the nearest Tesco. We were successful in locating a Tesco (there is always a Tesco) and we bought all the necessary ingredients for our dinner. Our dinner was lovingly prepared Spaghetti made by our captain, Neill (It was tasty, thanks Neill for your hard work).

It was another early rise on the Friday morning, we needed to get a train to get to the sports centre in nearby Little island and we needed to leave extra time in case we inevitably managed to get lost. Sure enough we got lost, it was a surprising just how far the sports centre was from the train station and there were no clues to help us find it. A few directions later we made it to find the hall and met up with John (a member of the club last year) and once we got it into the hall it was freezing. We had a good seminar, slightly cold but educational and the beginners who came with us were able to take part and improve their Kendo.

In the evening our group split up, my group (myself, Paulina and Joy) decided to do some work due shortly after we got back from Ireland and the second group (Neill, Koji, Matt, John and Simone) went back to the evening session. When they returned from the welcome gigeiko they were knackered and they still hadn't eaten yet so Koji and John made themselves the unique meal of stir-fried Lasagne.

Fortunately on the Saturday, the competition day, there was a bus arranged to take us to the hall which saved us time and a long walk. The women's competition was first and I unfortunately didn't win but it was only my second competition. Next was the team event and for this I did not have a team as Koji, Neill and Matt were had already organised their team and I had booked to go to Ireland later than everyone else. Fortunately I found a team and I became a temporary member of Muyukan Kendo club to fill a gap in one of their teams. My team won a match and lost a match and the Edinburgh University team got through to the quarter finals. Then individuals came next and Neill competed for us. That night we also had the sayonara party which was a good opportunity to socialise with the other clubs.

The Sunday morning was the grading, we had 3 people grading; Matt for ikkyu, Koji for shodan and Neill for Nidan. They all past their gradings (well done!) despite the fact that the guys were kept awake nearly all night by drunks outside our window (I personally had a good night's sleep, I didn't even hear it). Fortunately the gradings finished early enough for some gigeiko to finish before we had to leave John and Koji to dash off to get a train to Dublin.

Once again we had a delay at the airport, this time we were on the plane in time but the plane had a fault so we had to wait for the next plane to land and then switch over but we made it back to

Edinburgh eventually. Once again the Ireland taikai had proven itself a valuable and fun Kendo experience for all and no doubt we will be returning for the next Ireland goodwill taikai.

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