



The Essex Tai Chi Academy Newsletter Seven, July 2018



This photo sums up my Toronto experience.

I just happened to turn round at the break and notice the rainbow of t-shirts calmly lined up to collect drinks. It struck me that the whole event was as perfect as every rainbow in providing exactly the right conditions to produce a space where so many people from so many backgrounds all joined perfectly together to share their passion to hold on to, practise and spread the knowledge of Tai Chi left to us by Mr Moy. I personally received so much patient instruction and for me it was the trip of a lifetime that will stay with me forever (and, with practice, improve my Tai Chi too).

Lisa Kay

**The Essex Tai Chi Academy runs classes in Tai Chi, Sabre, Lok Hup Ba Fa and Sword at
Birchanger, Black Notley, Burnham-on-Crouch, Cold Norton, Felsted and Mundon**

20-year anniversary commemoration, Toronto

Mary Dann

Wednesday 6 June was the 20th anniversary of the death of Moy Lin-shin. To mark this event, the Canadian Tai Chi Academy held a workshop and commemorative tribute to Mr Moy, to which Academy members from around the world were invited.

Six members of the Essex Tai Chi Academy made the trip to Toronto to take part in the event held from 5-10 June. There were six from other UK Academies and many from across Canada. We had five days of workshops, in various locations. As well as Tai Chi there were sessions on Lok Hup Ba Fa, Sword, Sabre, chanting, meditation and stretching.

On the Saturday evening we enjoyed a Japanese buffet, followed by cake. Afterwards there were talks, photos, and memories from some of those who had known Mr Moy.

On the Sunday morning Mrs Kwan, a highly respected student of Mr Moy's visited the workshop. She is in her 90s but was able to talk about her experiences, through an interpreter, and demonstrate some of the things she has worked on over many years.

It was a great opportunity for tai-chiers to get together and express thanks for Mr Moy's legacy, to meet old acquaintances and make new friends in the Tai Chi family. And of course to play lots of Tai Chi!



Judy Lee-Fenton



Intrepid tai-chiers brave Niagara Falls - from the left, Shirley, Lisa, Judy, Liz, Lorrie and Mary

It was all a very wonderful experience, and I loved all of it – from our three days sightseeing, staying at the Rex Jazz and Blues Hotel for the first three nights, with different bands playing.

Then on to Newmarket, to the Comfort Inn and the company of Tai Chi people, and to Scarborough, staying at the Don Valley Hotel, where we took advantage of the swimming pool. In addition to what Mary has described we had teachings in Push Hands, the Sitting Set, meditation, chanting and all the sets we practise here.

This is such a short précis of a fabulous time, but my best moments were the variety and quality of the teachers – 11 in all – passing on their knowledge and experience of Mr Moy. I feel honoured to have been there. Their generosity of spirit in imparting their understanding to us all was overwhelming and I'd add that the Canadians we met went out of their way to make everything go smoothly for us all.



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Beacon on Birchanger ...

The space shuttle, Anne Bulling



Birchanger – Junction 8, M11 – motorway services, expensive fuel and soggy food – that dreaded roundabout! This is now, but a thousand years ago Birchanger was already on the map. The settlement is recorded in The Domesday Book and the church dates from the eleventh century.

A highlight of the twentieth century was the visit of the space shuttle. This was part of a European goodwill mission and was the official visit to London! On 5 June 1983 the shuttle Enterprise flew into Stansted. This was the piggyback version that rode atop a significantly modified Boeing 747.

It was a warm but somewhat grey Saturday afternoon when a number of residents set up camp with binoculars, cameras and tripods on the cricket field. This is where we practised our Tai Chi for a number of months when the hall was out of action. Finally, later than anticipated, this gleaming, glistening giant appeared. Much to our delight it made three wide, sweeping circles round before sinking below the tree line to land. The camera shutters clicked and there was much 'Ooing' and 'Ahhing' – just amazement that this enormous pinnacle of man's scientific achievement was circling over Birchanger.

All that weekend there was traffic chaos as people tried to find routes to the airport so that they could get a glimpse of this awesome monster. It was parked up on the runway for several days and on display for public inspection. The shuttle was vast, standing well over 30ft high, discoloured by heat on re-entry to the Earth's atmosphere and with several external tiles missing. We were able to walk right round and even underneath it – health and safety was much more relaxed 35 years ago!

It made its departure on a weekday morning without so much public reaction but its majestic and overpowering presence as it circled to make its way back across the Atlantic created lifelong memories.

Tai Chi – Cait Goddard

I live in Lewisham, SE London but spent my early years in Birchanger, attending the old Primary School and then Herts & Essex High School. I moved away, trained as a doctor and worked in Mental Health until retirement in 2012. In 2014 I had a hip replacement and during my rehabilitation saw a leaflet for Tai Chi in Birchanger, where my Mum still lives. She had been having some falls so I encouraged her to come along with me on Wednesday mornings.

We both loved the class – Mary Dann is a great teacher and so are her stand-ins Sue and David. Having done Karate for a couple of years with my children, I found the Tai Chi routine much kinder – although much of its roots lie in the martial arts tradition. I really appreciate the non-combative and non-spiritual aspect of Mr Moy's Tai Chi for Health. Mum had to drop out after six months because of some serious health problems but I continue to drive from Lewisham every Wednesday for the class followed by shopping and lunch with Mum.

I now am confident with the Tai Chi set and we have just started Lok Hup. I have attended workshops in Malaga and Palma, Majorca which have been great fun – meeting other Tai Chi enthusiasts, improving my Tai Chi and eating very well.

Over the last year I have had two knee replacements – the last one this April. Tai Chi has been very useful in my rehabilitation and I now walk better than I have for the last ten years!

I now know more people in Birchanger than I have ever done before – it is a very friendly and accommodating class – we even did one class with my Corgi puppy Chip in attendance – he rather favoured Alan's bare legs!



Juniors, Birchanger Primary c Easter 1965



Chip



Paella in Majorca

The church hall – Sue Warr

The excellent church hall, which is light and bright with an excellent floor, is used by the whole village and exceedingly busy every day. It encompasses classes and groups of all sizes and ages, from Old Time Dancing to ballet for children, toddler groups to dementia association lunches. There are also fencing classes, line dancing and adult ballet classes. We have a community tea room - there will be a party of some description most weekend – and an annual art exhibition.

Most important of all for many of us is our weekly Tai Chi class, started in 2014.

If your only experience of Birchanger has been the utilitarian service station why not join us for a class one week – 9-30 every Wednesday morning. You would be made very welcome.

Foreign and home thoughts from David Woollcott

Whilst on holiday in Croatia in May, I had the opportunity to visit Dubrovnik and the largest adjacent island, Lokrum, with an old fort, monastery and botanic garden. It has no permanent human inhabitants, other than day trippers and staff for the small bars, but plenty of peacocks. An opportunity to practise our set to the sound of lapping bright blue water, calling peacocks and with Dubrovnik city in the background, plus a few onlookers.

A few weeks ago, whilst on holiday in Thurlestone, Devon, I noticed that there was a Tai Chi class on Wednesday mornings. So with cloudy skies, not suitable for the beach, I went along. They started with the some different exercises and the short form Yang style, which is taught prior to the 108 move set. In their version of the latter, the moves were in the same order but not wholly recognizable to us – they stepped in a curve both forward and back rather than into our familiar tor-yu and their arm movements were more circular between moves. Single whip was almost unrecognizable and no hint of square hips and shoulders! We finished with some meditation exercises.

I was made welcome and it was an interesting experience, one which I would recommend to anyone on holiday to seek out and join in other Tai Chi classes even if the style is different. We can all learn from other tai-chiers!

Performing the set - Cross hands to Carry tiger to mountain **Judy Lee-Fenton and David Woollcott**

Cross hands is a don-yu to begin with. In Canada one of our instructions was that, as you all already know, your feet are placed in a straight line on the outside edge. To give even more benefit to the opening of the body, turn your feet in a fraction, so they are more pigeon toed. This gives an extra stretch and twist to the don-yu. Sit away from your crossed hands and arms, pivot and open your arms wide as you turn – this elongation will massage your thalamus glands and your lungs.

Carry tiger to mountain assists the gastric/intestinal function and rejuvenates organs. Mountain is stillness, and Tiger is energy (an equal and opposite move). So carry tiger to mountain and regain stillness.

The turn is initiated on the heel of the left foot such that it turns a full 90 degrees. This is the ideal position but, if ankle stiffness prevents a full 90 degree turn then a balance step with the right foot should be used, followed by a small adjustment to the left foot to complete the full 90 degree turn. To facilitate the lifting of the right foot, there is a weight transfer to the left side, as in the pouring exercise. One of the mistakes made in the Carry tiger move is failing to 'swing' the right leg round sufficiently and, thereby, failing to step out at 45 degrees with the right foot into a tor-yu position.

In performing the Brush right knee move, don't forget to extend both arms to complete the equal and opposite forces. Lift the right hand into the crook of the left arm *before* starting the back position of the tor-yu by brushing off the left arm, thereby facilitating the stretch across the shoulders. Make sure that you turn before you start each forward tor-yu position.

As with many of the moves in the set, throughout Carry tiger balance, sure footedness and settling into the essential tor-yu exercises are key in presenting a solid stance to an adversary.

Reminders

- Subscriptions are due from 2 July.
- International workshop with Doug and Susan Overholt on Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 July at Cambridge Regional Sports Hall, Kings Hedges Road, Cambridge, CB4 2QT.

Thought for the quarter

From Mr Moy:

If you do not have your own health - you have nothing - it is the most valuable thing that you have. Without your health - how can you care for others? What value is your wealth if you cannot enjoy it? First take care of your health, then your family, then your parents and then your community.

and his final instructions, on 24 May 1998:

Accumulate virtue and continue to do good deeds. Help people while they are living, comfort them while they are dying or after death.



In memory of Michael Baker-Rogers