



Tai Chi Newsletter

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30th Anniversary 1994-2024

Sometimes you blink and years have whizzed by. It is hard to believe it is thirty years this month (March 2024) since we first formed the Kai Ming Association for Tai Chi Chuan. Kai Ming translates as 'open-minded' as that was and is our ethos.

Our annual weekend camp is planned for 7th & 8th September, and we're looking for a special theme this year to add to the celebrations; if you have any requests/suggestions, please do let us know.

We're currently considering a viewing of the **"Professor Cheng Man Ching's Journey West"** documentary which is hard to find now as most participants have now pass. I'm also considering teaching the 18 lower hand form taught in Malaysia and developed by Yue Shu Ting, one of Prof. Cheng's senior students. The form was added to the end of the 37 to practice some additional aspects of the original Yang style.

Fond memories

Reflecting back over the 30 years of Kai Ming, and my own training with Zhong Ding before that, I have been searching through old photo's and share some below. We used to do Chinese Lion Dancing too, and performed a number of times at event including Chinese New Year, but for reason I can't find any photographs to share which is such as shame; hopefully somebody in the club will have a few pics to share.

The funniest time was when Tin-Tin's restaurant put an advert in the Birmingham mail and it was misunderstood as line-dancing rather than lion dancing LOL. They had to have both; it made for an interesting evening.

Photo's include The world championships in 1994 in Orlando where Garry, Steve and I went to compete as part of the British team; in Taiwan when Don, Ian and I went to compete in 1998 and represent the UK at the request of my teacher Tan Ching Ngee; along with many more memories. I hope you enjoy them.



Mark and Tan Ching Ngee in Singapore in the early 90's



Mark, Nigel Sutton, Koh Ah Tee, Steve, and Garry in Kaular Lumpur in the early 90's



a young Mark, Garry and Steve enjoying Orlando Sea World in 1994 as a break from the completing



Mark with Tan Ching Ngee and William C.C. Chen in Taiwan in 1998



Mark being awarded a silver for tai chi fan form in Taiwan in 1998



Practicing Broadsword (Dao) as taught to him by Tan Swoh Theng, master of Shaolin Fujian Yongchun Wuzuquan, also known as 5 Ancestors boxing”



Sword sparring with Master Tan in the late 90's



Mark giving Master Liang He Ching a club sign made for him and his school in Malaysia. He taught Mark Kwai Taiji, Yang family qigong and more, and stayed with us at our home on his first and only visit to the UK. Master Liang sadly passed away July 2007



Weekend camp at Unstone Grange, Chesterfield. I believe it was 1995



training and demonstrating together at the championships in Taiwan



push-hands free play at Unstone Grange, Chesterfield. I believe it was 1996



My favourite photo with Master Tan Ching Ngee in 1996



Weekend camp at Unstone Grange, Chesterfield. around 2000



Morning qigong at Unstone Grange, Chesterfield.



Sumo fun take on pushing hands at Unstone Grange, Chesterfield.



Fancy dress party to celebrate the 10th anniversary camp at Unstone Grange, Chesterfield



We used to hire Tin-Tin's Chinese Restaurant every year for our Christmas Party. A great time to dress up and let loose.



Our training used to be much more martial as you can see from this demonstration with Steve Fullerton



tai chi demo on the pop up beach Birmingham City Centre outside the old Library



World tai chi day with over 100 participants in Birmingham City Centre around 2000



World tai chi day in Cannon Hill Park around 2005



World tai chi day in Birmingham City Centre 2014



Workshop with Willie Lim around 2008



Workshop with Willie Lim around 2011



We formed Painting The Rainbow Community Tai Chi in 2007 to help give more access to tai chi & qigong so groups and individuals could gain greater health benefits from these wonderful arts. Instructors are training in condition awareness, CPR and more.

Chinese New Year Celebrations in Lichfield 17th January



The Chinese New Year Festival occurs at some point in either January or February, dependent on the second new moon after the winter solstice on 21st December, and in 2024 it began on 10th February.

This year we were asked if we would join the Inaugural Lunar New Year Celebration Event held on 17th February 2024, for the Chinese and Hong Kong communities living in and around Lichfield, and hosted by the Lichfield Labour Group.

Heather rose to the challenge to represent Painting the Rainbow and Kai Ming Tai Chi.

Throughout the afternoon, it was a complete Team effort - our ten-strong Kai Ming Team was supported by members of the Painting the Rainbow Groups, heavily disguised as Members of the Public - to draw people.

The full write-up by Heather is on the next page(s) in the digital version or you can read/download the digital March issue at <http://www.taichinewsletters.co.uk/kai-ming-news.html>



Advanced monthly training sessions.

Sessions are held each month for 3 hours at Weoley Hill Village Hall, Bournville, to enable instructors time for their own training and for more advanced students to gain the time to develop a deeper understanding of the application of tai chi chuan.

Sessions are Sunday's 9.30-12.30 at £30 per person.

What3words locatoin <https://w3w.co/pits.level.cake>

Training in 2024 starts with

- 14th April
- 12th May
- 9th June
- 7th July
- 11th August
- 6th October
- 10th November

Weekend camp – 9.30am to 4pm
7th & 8th September



History, heritage and bubble waffles !

Cantonese for 'Happy New Year' (san nin faai lok) is a greeting used by the Chinese community both at the traditional change of the year across the world on 1st January, as well as for the Chinese Lunar New Year, known in China as the Spring Festival - as it means exactly what it says on the tin!

In Mandarin - xīn nián kuài lè



The Chinese New Year Festival occurs at some point in either January or February, dependent on the second new moon after the winter solstice on 21st December, and in 2024 it began on 10th February.

Other greetings with wishes for 'Good Health', 'Career success', and the more widely known one for 'Prosperity' (gung hei faat choi) are all heard, as family and friends meet each other.

The fifteen-day period of celebration for the Lunar New Year is steeped in tradition, celebrated at the beginning and the end - and to be involved in it makes one aware of just how important to the Chinese and Hong Kong communities 'one's culture' and 'family' are at this time.

This was a privilege given to members of the Lichfield Kai Ming and 'Painting the Rainbow' Groups when I was asked if we would join the Inaugural Lunar New Year Celebration Event held on 17th February 2024, for the Chinese and Hong Kong communities living in and around Lichfield, and hosted by the Lichfield Labour Group.

In previous years to take part in such celebrations I would have had to travel to Birmingham, but with the recent increase in numbers forming a significant Hong Kong community in the Lichfield area, the idea to celebrate the Lunar New Year locally was launched. As with many new ventures relying on public participation, the management of the day 'evolved' rather than it following a rigid plan.

Throughout the afternoon, it was a complete Team effort - our ten-strong Kai Ming Team, was supported by members of the Painting the Rainbow Groups heavily disguised as Members of the Public - to draw people in to have a go in the Qigong Sets !

I am indebted to the thirty-one folk from the Lichfield Kai Ming and Painting the Rainbow Groups who gave up their Saturday afternoon, braved the February temperatures, and stepped forth into the streets of Lichfield. They were prepared to put themselves forward to interrupt the unsuspecting 'shoppers', encouraging them to pause in their headlong whirl along cobbled

streets, shopping bags and pushchairs at the ready - and to perform in front of a coach load of Sunderland FC Supporters stopping for a beverage of choice on their way to a match, and who rapidly disappeared inside their hostelry when I suggested that their 'red and white' would complement our 'red and black' !!

The Kai Ming Display Team 'opened' the festivities, performing their first Display at 12 noon outside the historically impressive Lichfield Guildhall, complete with dungeon and cells !

No mean feat - stepping out onto flagstones and cobbles, and into formation, surrounded by folk in a hurry, heads down, with thoughts on things a far cry from Tai Chi but we did it ! Our programme was repeated later in the afternoon, with an even bigger audience and larger numbers having a go !

Our performances were well received, and attracted a large number of people to discover the indoor activities that were not that obvious from outside. Later I was informed by the Organisers that over five hundred people had visited their stalls. In addition, we had a good deal of interest in our weekly Kai Ming and Painting the Rainbow sessions that were publicised around the walls inside the building - posters that also made reference to the websites for publicising classes further afield. The Team's efforts were very much appreciated by the Organisers - and we are on their radar for next year !



Throughout our thirty-year history the Kai Ming Association has been asked to be involved in a variety of public events - ranging from a hundred-strong Qigong display in Centenary Square in Birmingham, a similar experience in Cannon Hill Park, displays at the Botanical Gardens and various Fetes and focussed Well-being events. Personally, as well as taking part in the above-mentioned events, I have given numerous Talks and Presentations promoting the benefits of Tai Chi to large and smaller Conferences, and various community groups of all sizes; provided two-day courses to schools for both staff and pupils; full day information events in Wolverhampton; regularly led Display Teams at a Canal and River Trust Heritage Gathering; as well as running the World Tai Chi Day celebrations in Beacon Park, Lichfield with 98 folk taking part.

All of these events in their many forms have made an impression on me - all of them encouraging participation by members of the public in one way or another. I have always valued the responses one gets when someone experiences taking part in a Qigong set for the first time whether in a formal setting like a Conference for Myasthenia Gravis, Multiple Sclerosis or

Secondary Breast Cancer, a school hall full of pupils, a freer WI or U3A Meeting, or drop-in sessions in a park.

They have all had an impact - all demonstrating the accessibility of Tai Chi and Qigong, and the benefits that are possible even if they are embryonic, in a taster session.

The events have all made their mark and their memories have stayed with me - reinforcing why I love, and am passionate about, what we do and offer, in both Kai Ming and Painting the Rainbow.

Taking part in the Lichfield Lunar New Year celebration event was an experience right up there and will be stored away with all my other Tai Chi memories but this event had something extra, something I have not experienced before.

In all the other events, large or small, the target audience has always been multicultural, but by its very nature and the venues involved, the emphasis has always been on Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong within the British culture. This event was different. This time we were performing Tai Chi and Qigong sets for an audience steeped in its heritage. They were already well versed in its benefits even if their current lifestyle didn't lend itself to the traditions of their parents, grandparents and great grandparents. It was obvious that our performance 'mattered'. It was obvious, too, that 'how' we performed was important. Our CMC Form has lineage, with its original source being followed for generations. To perform each move incorrectly, or on 'automatic pilot' without feeling, would have been an insult to our knowledgeable audience.



It was a weird feeling encouraging the Hong Kong community to take part - to have a go ! To see the expressions on their faces, male and female, as they followed our Group performing the Qigong sets, provided us with an extra 'lift' to what we were doing. To see the pride on the faces of the parents as they photographed their children taking part in something Grandma still practised at home, brought us an emotional appreciation of exactly what our Team was providing for them. The tears on the cheeks of a grandmother, as she watched her son and granddaughter perform Qigong with pure enjoyment, was noticed by a few of our own supporters - and made it all so worthwhile !

Yes - there were all the banners, paper lanterns, lucky 'Year of the Dragon' wall hangings, and plenty of stalls, cups of tea -

and bubble waffles (scrumptious bubble waffles !) but they were all 'material' items. What the Kai Ming Display Team provided in performing the Cheng Man Ching 37 Form and the Short Fan Form triggered a massive interest in the watching community (as well as the passing 'shoppers' !) They saw something that they related to from childhood - it was powerful ! What the combined Kai Ming and PtR students provided in performing the various Qigong sets enabled the community to try something from within their heritage - some who were doing it for the first time ! That experience was much appreciated by them - shown in their movements, emotions and joy.

On reflection, the afternoon reinforced the importance of us 'getting it right' ! The responsibility we, as Instructors within the Kai Ming Association, have as we introduce the CMC Form to our students was never more evident. We are the custodians of a legacy - the lineage that comes with the Cheng Man Ching Form has come down the generations from the Yang Family, through Yang Cheng-Fu. We have a duty to carry that on, with integrity - to ensure our own Form is correct, rather than 'dilute' the quality of what we produce in our classes by our own lack of effort or awareness.

The trust the Hong Kong community showed they had in our interpretation of the various Qigong sets and the Forms was plain to see.

An excellent afternoon..... and one that is already planned to be repeated in 2025 !

Heather Lomas - Chief Instructor

