

The Hard and Soft Way in Sheffield



Training at Hallam dojo

It could have been a couple of 4 year old boys...

waiting for Christmas eve, but in reality it was two old lads of 40+, waiting for the chance to train karate in England. More specifically with Andy Barker at Hallam Dojo in Sheffield.

We, Carsten and Søren, had left for Sheffield to watch and experience snooker for five days. However, five days without Goju-Ryu is five days too long, which is why we searched and found an IOGKF dojo. We made contact with their Sensei, Sensei Andy Barker, 5th Dan, and he let us train with them .

As there was no place to change clothes at the dojo (so we had heard), we changed to our gi at the hotel and looked like a couple of..., we then quickly found a taxi.

After a short drive with a patient cabby, we arrived at the dojo. We were dropped off at a used building in an industrial area. We were in good time and was received by Sensei Eşref. Sensei Andy would arrive later and take over.

After a bit of getting to know each other we began to warm up, it was traditional to start with, to our surprise and joy Sensei Eşref added some hojo undo to fore arms and thighs. Ken Tate and situps were there too. Carsten even had the pleasure of counting in Danish as we did some. This was so Sensei Eşref could learn. It's a bit funny counting in Danish in an English dojo when you are used to Japanese.

After a good hard warm up, where we got really warm and sweaty, it was time for a bit of ippon kumite with focus on sto uche. All three ended with a takedown except one. Some really good techniques, we will try to remember and maybe even use in our daily training.

Then it was time for kata. It was Gekisai dai ichi, Saifa and rensoku bunkai for Ichi. There were few differences in the techniques, compared to what we do in Vordingborg and Roskilde, but all in all it looked very familiar. After kata it was time for more kumite, this time with gloves, and not just any gloves, no this was boxing gloves, big and sweaty, and a

pink pair for Linzi. There were no contact, with a few exceptions. At Hallam dojo they really go at it, when it's time for kumite, brilliant!

After kumite we bowed, not in a line, but rather were we ended up. Vi thanked Sensei Andy and Sensei Eşref for letting us take part in their training, with a couple of specially designed karate t-shirts, made by us for the occasion. They seemed surprised and glad by our gesture.

As a small bonus to the training, there where praising word to our instructors at home, in Vordingborg and Roskilde. Our techniques apparently had some quality to it. I think both Carsten and I grew a few inches right then.

Sensei Andy "persuaded" us to visit the local pub (The Fat Cat) with them, this would be yet another nice experience, and even with a very nice local brew. It was really good!



As we drank our last beer we said goodbye and see you next year for more karate and maybe also more beer.

On the plane home, we are considering a Goju-Ryu Tour of a bit more of England.

Many thanks to Sensei Andy Barker and Hallam Dojo for and wonderful karate experience we won't soon forget.

Arigato gosaimashita.

Carsten Stiller (5. Ho kyu Vordingborg) and Søren Larsen (4. Kyu Roskilde)

