

MENTION that you study karate and most people will shout Kung Fooey and then make wild chops at the nearest brick wall. The media have given karate the 'burning bras' treatment they gave to women's lib. That is, they choose one newsworthy aspect of a subject and emphasis it out of all proportion to its importance.

Some people who have been studying karate for a long time can perform remarkable feats of timing and strength with pieces of wood, brick etc. However, the ability to do these tricks is an incidental outcome of karate training, not its aim. The edge of a hand is much less efficient than a saw for cutting pieces of wood.

Newspapers, films and some karate adverts also foster the idea that once a person takes up karate he or she immediately becomes a deadly fighting machine capable of dealing with five rowdies in five or less easy moves.

Initially the opposite is the case. A person who has just started karate is probably slower off the mark than someone who reacts completely by reflex. In the first few months the student has to think consciously about any technique he executes. This conscious thought slows him down. Later of course he hopes to combine control, precision and speed in one reflex movement. This will give him a great advantage over someone with an uncontrolled swing.

# THE USES OF KARATE

by DAVE SCOTT

Unfortunately a number of students encouraged by the idea of becoming a second Bruce Lee overnight get disheartened when they realise this is impossible. Karate is very fair and the rewards it offers are equal to the time spent practising. Certain karate or kung fu schools, aware of this initial but rapidly fading enthusiasm, charge large membership fees which of course the student loses when he drops out.

There are immediate and long lasting benefits to be obtained from karate but not in the order suggested by the media. The first reward is a new awareness of your own body, even if you do find it stiffer and more poorly co-ordinated than you imagined. Try to execute simultaneously a different motion with each arm. Your degree of success is some measure of your own limb control. Since it is easier to be blasé about being unfit if you are unaware of your condition, this increased awareness encourages a student to become much fitter.

The greater fitness, better co-ordination and increasing self defence capability given by karate training improves a

student's self-confidence. Not in the manner promised by the small print adverts but in the knowledge of real personal effort. The student will have discovered that, as with other worthwhile pursuits, there are no short cuts in karate.

Part of each karate class is devoted to a series of formal exercises or movements called kata. The kata have a particular form, style and timing. They are performed in a precise manner and the same concentration and breath control are required as those needed in Yogic and Zen disciplines. The kata increase mind-body co-ordination. The mature student finds great satisfaction from performing the kata as perfectly as possible.

Thus although most people begin to study karate for self defence reasons they discover other reasons as well for continuing their studies. Paradoxically, in practice one finds the better the karate

students the less often he seems to find himself in a position where he needs to exercise his skill in anger or need.

To put those films and karate articles into some historical context, here is a very short history of the development of karate, followed by a quick run-down on how to find a suitable karate school.

There is a common belief that karate is originally a Japanese art, however, it was not demonstrated there until around 1917 and the first school wasn't opened until five years later. Master Funakoshi an Okinawan school master was the founder of this school. He was followed by other Okinawan karate masters and in the sixty-odd years since then a number of different styles have developed in Japan.

Okinawa is a small island in the East China Sea. It lies between mainland China and the main islands of Japan. Empty hand fighting has been practised there since as early as the 14th century, when it was probably introduced by Chinese occupation forces. There is evidence that some form of karate was in existence in China as early as the Tang dynasty (618-

907), although its very earliest origins are said to be in India.

Thus there are three main areas of karate development: China, Okinawa and more recently Japan. Systems with their origins in China but studied more nowadays in Taiwan and Hongkong include those styles that come under the heading Kung-Fu. Karate still flourishes in Okinawa and the styles from there are usually prefixed 'Okinawan'. Finally the Japanese-influenced systems are those which have been most successfully introduced to the West. They are those we are most familiar with.

If you decide to take up karate, the first thing to do is to find the whereabouts of as many schools as possible. Visit a number of them, talk to the instructors, find out if his aims in teaching karate are those which interest you.

Ask him about his teacher and training (i.e. check his credentials to teach). Finally if you like the atmosphere of the school and providing the instructor is prepared to accept you as a student, join the club. Persevere — the rewards will follow.

**D.L. Scott runs his own school in Liverpool where he teaches an Okinawan style called Uechi-Ryu. If you would like more details or to visit a class ring him at 709 1232 or phone the club secretary, Mick Pappas at 733 4194.**

# INFORMER

## THEATRE

### PLAYHOUSE 709 8363

Until Dec 11. **THE LION IN WINTER**, by James Goldman. Outrageously modern look at history. Set at Christmas at the court of Henry II, it examines boldly, amusingly and movingly his stormy relationship with Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Dec 15 for a season. **MY FAIR LADY**. Adapted from George Bernard Shaw's play 'Pygmalion', this must be the greatest musical comedy success of all time. "No-one ever tires of this enchanting story" say the Playhouse, but let's take a vote on that.

Dec 5. **GALA CHARITY SHOW**. Presented by, and in aid of, the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association. MC is Leslie Lawton. With Ken Dodd. Evening of music and laughter.

### PLAYHOUSE UPSTAIRS 709 8363

Until Dec 11. **THE FOURSOME**, by Ted Whitehead. Four young people in the sandhills of Freshfield... Not suitable for children.

### EMPIRE THEATRE 709 1555

Until Dec 11. **D'OYLY CARTE** with a week of Gilbert and Sullivan. Mon and Fri: Pinafore. Wed: Pirates of Penzance. Thur: Patience. Sat: Mikado. Matinees Wed and Sat.

### EVERYMAN 709 4776

**DICK AND THE BEANSTALK** — the traditional story of Jack with an intrusion by Dick Whittington. Plus the usual Everyman touches — a beanstalk growing from an exploded can of Co-op baked beans, and fairies such as Fairy Snow and Fairy Nuff.

Dec 15—22 and Jan 4—29 at Stanley Theatre, Liverpool University Students' Union, 7.30 p.m. Matinees from Jan 10 on Tue, Wed, Thur at 2 p.m.

Until Dec 11 at Southport Arts Centre.

### LIVERPOOL SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE MUSIC, DREAM AND PUN 227 2679

Until Jan 2 (except Christmas week) **THE SCIENCE FICTION THEATRE OF LIVERPOOL** in 'ILLUMINATUS'. A cycle of five plays by Ken Campbell and Chris Langham from the 'Illuminatus' books by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson. Tue—Sat, 8 p.m.; Sun 10 a.m.

### AMATEUR PRODUCTIONS

#### NEPTUNE THEATRE 709 7844

Dec 9—11. Lister School of Dance and Drama in **SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS**. 7 p.m. From Dec 17. Neptune Theatre Company in **OLD KING COLE** by Ken Campbell. Phone theatre for details.

#### OTHER AMATEURS

Until Dec 11. Newton-le-Willows ADOS in **DICK WHITTINGTON**. Town Hall, Market Street, Earlestown. 7.30. Sat 2.15.

Dec 13—17; **BULLY**. Original musical devised and performed by pupils and staff at Arundel Comprehensive School, Sefton Park Road, Liverpool 8. Story of the record-breaking voyage to Australia of 'Bully' Forbes, one of Liverpool's best known sea captains. Crew includes Dingle Dick and Lodge Lane Harry as well as some actual historical figures.

Dec 14—18. Hesselwell Operatic Society in **ALADDIN**. Little Theatre, Grange Road West, Birkenhead. 7.30 p.m. Matinee Sat 2.30.

### THIS MONTH I shall tell you a story.

Some years ago, the late Gerry Sharp of Topic Records came to Liverpool with a view to producing a record of material which was in some way representative of Merseyside.

I was one of those present at a meeting which Gerry called at the Bistro (Everyman) to discuss what, or how much material was available. The "Owdem Edge" recording of Lancashire songs, music and monologues had been released and it had proved extremely successful commercially, at least by Topic's hitherto specialist (and commercially limited) standards.

The meeting was a funeral. As far as traditional material was concerned, Liverpool could lay claim to shanties and sea songs (which everyone else claims anyway), Irish music locked away in the Irish Centre and a few fragments and odd things, most of which had been recorded by A.L. Lloyd and Ewan MacColl on — wait for it — Topic Records Ltd.

Jim Pechen, of the one-time Calton Three, confessed that the only truly Liverpool song that he knew was learned from a Topic recording by Stan Kelly. That was "Andrew Rose". It was certain that next to nothing indigenous existed in the area, so Gerry Sharp went back to London with, I suspect, a long face on him — to use an indigenous expression.

This situation could never have happened in the Newcastle area, with its unique small-pipes players and a fine heritage of traditional songs and music embracing both rural and industrial environments, to say little of the area's contemporary writers, music-hall tradition and fully integrated (music-wise) Irish community.

At the time of the meeting I was what you might term "a cock-eyed optimist", believing, but having little or no evidence to substantiate it, that somewhere along Scottie Road, or forgotten in Old Age Pensioners' homes there was an untapped wealth of material. Well, apparently, it is simply not there.

If that meeting of negatives proved disappointing in outcome, a statement by Pete McGovern as we were walking out of the place set me thinking and I have

## FOLK

had a good chew at it on many an occasion since. It was to the effect that the only way a record in the folk idiom could be produced which would be representative of Merseyside would be to resort to contemporary material.

When you actually think about it there is a lot to write about. It has never ceased to amuse me that some bod, somewhere, decided to call Merseyside a development area in place of it being previously described as "depressed". Big deal! "I live in a development area, you know!" That would please geographers (and politicians) everywhere.

So if we all live in a development area, where is the development? And what is the development like?

"Where do you work, la?"  
"What do you do?"  
"What are your mates like?"

Well, it might look naive on paper but there are endless questions. Plenty to write about. Unemployment for a start.

—FRANK McCALL

**Ship Inn Folk Club, Haskayne.** Meets Tuesdays at 8.30 p.m. Admission 35p. Singers' nights mainly, occasional guests. More information on guests next issue. Residents group is Tabby's Nook.

**Adrian House Folk Club, Sandringham Drive, Liverpool 17.** Meets 8.30 p.m., Tuesdays. More or less the same policy as Ship Inn, above.

Dec 10. **Coronation Folk Club, Coronation Hotel, King Street, Southport.** "Jack Ketch" — a local group who have built a reputation as superb exponents of traditional folk. 8.15.

Dec 16. **The Two Beggars.** Liverpool Poly Folk Club, Commerce Bar, Smithfield Street, off Tithebarn St. 8.15. Floor singers welcome.

Dec 17. **Coronation Folk Club** (see above, Dec 10). Rare visit to Merseyside by Alistair Anderson, the famous concertina player, and a member of the High Level Ranters.

## KIDS' STUFF

Fri 17 Dec. **Everyman YOUTH THEATRE WORKSHOP.** Presentation of work in progress by this group of 12—18-year-olds. At Southport Arts Centre, 7.30.

Sat 18 Dec. **THE AMAZING MR BLUNDEN.** (See Films).

Thur 30 Dec. **CHILDREN'S CONCERTS.** Bluecoat Hall, 2.00 and 3.30. Flutes reeds and whistles — with Doreen and Michael Musket.

Fri 31 Dec. **ATARAH'S BAND.** Philharmonic Hall, 11.00 a.m. New Year's Eve concert for the kids, with Atarah Ben-Tovim.

### THEATRE FOR CHILDREN

**PLAYHOUSE: My Fair Lady.** Matinee Dec 18 at 4.45.

"Franny Scully's Christmas Stories" — Scouse pantomime. Dec 21 — Jan 15. Matinees only; Mon—Sat, 2.30.

**GATEWAY (Chester): "The Adventures of a Bear Called Paddington"**. Dec 23—Jan 27. Mainly daytime performances — check with box office, tel Chester 40393.

**THEATRE ROYAL (St Helens): "Mother Goose"**. Dec 13—18. Mon—Sat 7.15, Matinees Wed and Sat at 2.15.

## JAZZ

Mon Dec 13. **JAZZ AT THE NEPTUNE.** Merseyside Jazz Band with vocalist Jill Martin. Neptune Theatre, Hanover Street. 8 p.m.

Fri Dec 24. **IAN ANDERSON TRIO.** Yuletide extravaganza. Southport Arts Centre, 6 p.m.

### REGULAR EVENTS

*LIVE JAZZ can be heard at the following places on Merseyside:*

**Monday:** Merseyside Big Band, Victoria Hotel, New Brighton. Formby Jazz Club, Formby British Legion (first Monday of month).

**Tuesday:** Blue Magnolia Jazz Orchestra, The Coffee House (pub), Wavertree. Savoy Jazzmen, Parkgate Hotel, Parkgate, Wirral.

**Wednesday:** Merseyside Jazz Band, The Sportsman, St John's Precinct. Panama Jazz Band, The Black Horse, West Kirby. Mike Jackson Quintet, Gladray Club, Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool 8.

**Thursday:** Panama Jazz Band, Victoria Hotel, New Brighton. Phoenix Jazz Band, Westminster Hotel, Chester.

**Sunday (Lunchtime):** New Orleans Jazz with various musicians, Victoria Hotel, New Brighton. (Evening): New Orleans Express, Albion Hotel, Chester.



Scene from 'Illuminatus', a cycle of five plays on until Jan 2 at the Liverpool School of Language, Music Dream and Pun in Mathew Street.

## EXHIBITIONS

• Until Jan 15. **GEORGE STUBBS: ANATOMICAL DRAWINGS.** Work by the great Liverpool-born animal painter. —Walker Art Gallery.

• Until Jan 2. **AMERICAN ARTISTS IN EUROPE, 1800—1900.** Ambitious exhibition including works by Benjamin West, J.S. Sargent and J.M. Whistler. —Walker Art Gallery.

• Dec 13—Jan 17. Selection of work by the **PARTIALLY-SIGHTED SOCIETY.** —Walker Art Gallery.

• Dec 17—Jan 16. **NORWEGIAN ROMANTIC LANDSCAPE.** Work by Scandinavian artists of the nineteenth century. —Walker Art Gallery.

• Dec 4—23. **CHRISTMAS EXHIBITION 1976.** Ceramics, drawings, paintings and prints by six women artists — Heather Campbell, Julia Carter Preston, Olive Firth, Catherine Grubb, Pam Holt and Paula Velarde. —Bluecoat Gallery.

• Dec 7—18. Paintings and drawings by **MARK EVANS, PETER DIXON, BRYAN BIGGS.** Bluecoat Gallery Foyer.

• Dec 7—23. **ACADEMY CHRISTMAS EXHIBITION.** Academy Gallery.

• Dec 2—24. **CHRISTMAS SHOW.** Mixed exhibition, including gallery artists, original prints and Victorian Watercolours. Prices £5—£50. —Allerton Gallery.

• Dec 14—Jan 10. **BETHLEHEM YESTERDAY, LIVERPOOL TODAY.** The story of Christmas as it was, and how it affects us today. Shown through the eyes of children from schools on Merseyside. —Metropolitan Cathedral.

• Until Dec 18. **PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES** from the Walker Art Gallery. —St Helens Art Gallery.

• Dec 11—31. **MAJOR LIVERPOOL ARTISTS.** —Atkinson Art Gallery.

• Dec 7—17. **PAINTINGS, TEXTILES AND CERAMIC SCULPTURE** by Cris Youngman, Jean Ellwood, Phil McGovern, Pat McCoy. —Heswall Library.

• Until January. **NEW SHIPPERIES EXHIBITION.** From the museum's own collection of ship models, relics and documents. —County Museum.

• Until January. **NIGERIAN POTTERY.** Illustrating techniques used in South Eastern Nigeria. —County Museum.

• Until January. **PREHISTORIC METALWORK.** Artefacts from the Bronze Age and early Iron Age.

• Until March 6. **CARE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.** Exhibition on loan from the Countryside Commission. —County Museum.

• Until Jan 2. **CLOCKS OF CHESTER AND CHESHIRE.** Long-case and other 18th and 19th century clocks. —Grosvenor Museum.

### WHERE TO SEE IT...

**ACADEMY GALLERY** 65 Renshaw St, Liverpool. 709 4088. Tue—Fri 10.30—5.00; Sat 10.30—2.30.

**ALLERTON GALLERY** 117 Allerton Road, Liverpool 18. 724 5206. Mon—Fri 10.00—6.00; Wed 10.00—1.00; Sat 10.00—5.00.

**ATKINSON ART GALLERY** Lord Street, Southport. 33133 Ext 149. Mon—Sat 10.00—5.00.

**BLUECOAT GALLERY** School Lane, Liverpool. 709 5689. Tue—Fri 10.30—5.00; Sat 10.00—2.30. Display Centre: Tel 709 4014. Tue—Fri 10.30—5.30; Sat 10.30—2.30.

**COUNTY MUSEUMS** William Brown Street, Liverpool. 207 0001 Mon—Sat 10.00—5.00. Sun 2.00—5.00.

**GROSVENOR MUSEUM** 27 Grosvenor Street, Chester. 21616. Mon—Sat 10.00—5.00.

**ST HELENS ART GALLERY** Gamble Institute, St Helens. Mon—Fri 9.00—7.00; Sat 9.00—1.00.

**WALKER ART GALLERY** William Brown Street, Liverpool. 227 5234 Ext 2065. Mon—Sat 10.00—5.00; Sun 2.00—5.00.

**WILLIAMSON ART GALLERY** Slaty Road, Birkenhead. Mon—Sat 10.00—5.00 (Thurs till 9.00); Sun 2.00—5.00.