

A.I.M.A.A SCOTLAND

CHO'S BLANTYRE

MASTER JOHN KIRKWOOD

JEANETTE MCCAIG 1st KUP

BLACK BELT THESIS

It must have been about 7 or 8 years ago when I first started doing to Tae Kwon Do .

I had always been asthmatic but had contracted pneumonia in 1999, and once I felt fit enough I decided I had to start exercising properly. My three children had just started going to a Tae Kwon Do class in Blantyre so it seemed easy enough to go to the gym whilst they and my husband trained . Every night after I had finished at the gym I would meet them after their class and as the weeks past I was impressed at what they had learned . , Sometimes the instructor Master Kirkwood would be demonstrating some of the movements he always made these look effortless regardless of how difficult they actually were .

After a few months we took the children to their first competition ,I really enjoyed the atmosphere and they enjoyed competing we all enjoyed supporting our class mates by cheering them on.

Whilst watching the adults performing their patterns and sparring I decided it was time I stopped watching and started doing.

One of the instructors from Master Kirkwoods class was starting a club in East Kilbride and we all decided to support him by joining it .

I remember feeling a bit apprehensive before the class started but after a few exercises I was too busy concentrating on these to be nervous. Once the class was over I felt tired but pleased I had managed to finish it.

As the weeks passed I began to learn some of the basic movements I noticed my balance and fitness improving .I still continued to go to the gym too which helped sustain this.

After several months of going to the East Kilbride club we decided to go back to the Blantyre class.

This was a bit like starting over again the class was bigger and more dynamic

I was concerned that I may not be able to keep up. Although my first class was hard we had fun and everyone was very welcoming.

After a few months it was time for our first grading .

I had practiced as much as I could learning the Korean was particularly challenging but I tried my best. On the day of the grading we were all very apprehensive the children were first ,once they came out it was our turn .The grading was very formal and I was glad I had prepared as much as I could, once it was over we had to wait for our results. On the Tuesday after the grading we found out our results WE HAD PASSED.

I could'nt believe I had an orange belt.

What I did'nt realise then was that was the beginning of my journey to my black belt.

Receiving my orange belt spurred me on to continue my training for my yellow belt. Thats how it continued through the gradings I always tried my best and so far this has worked. I never thought I would progress this far and really appreciate the help and support the others in the class have given me . I also enjoy supporting other students in turn. Although as the belts get higher the gradings become harder and I have to train more to achieve a positive result , this is part of the ongoing challenge of Tae Kwon Do . I feel Tae Kwon Do has given me the opportunity to challenge myself which I would not have had otherwise in doing this you get to understand yourself and your potential.

During the past years I have also taken part in competitions the most notable being the world championships in Ireland which showed that Tae Kwon Do is for all ages and abillites.

I have used some of what I have learned in my working life too helping adults who have a learning disability. I feel what they have learned has helped to give them confidence, improved their fitness and has given them a opportunity to try a new activity which may not have been accesiable to them otherwise.

I would like to continue to do this in the future and enable more people who have additional support needs to benefit from Tae Kwon Do .

I feel that by doing Tae Kwon Do I have gained confidence, balance, fitness and friendship.

I look forward to facing the new challenges and continuing rewards Tae Kwon Do offers.