

My journey through TaeKwon-Do

By Lorraine Mclear

I began my journey in TaeKwon-Do one Sunday in January 1995. My boyfriend (who is now my husband) was the reason I began training. Kevin told me that he trained in the martial art under the instruction of a Mr. John Kirkwood. I was curious to what TaeKwon-Do was so I joined Kevin on one of his training sessions. The first night I went I sat and watched, by the time the class was finished I had made up my mind that I wanted to join.

At my first training session Kevin introduced me to the other students in attendance and he pointed out the instructor. My first thought of this man was "Oh my god, he's scary". When the lesson began and we were all asked to line up, I had no idea what he was talking about and Mr. Kirkwood pointed to the left side of the hall and told me to stand there. I was shown how to carry out basic moves, sitting stance middle section punch and front snap kick, these words were just foreign to me which made me feel rather silly and self conscious, but as the lesson advanced I began to relax and Mr. Kirkwood seemed less intimidating. When the lesson was finished I was sore in places I never dreamed possible.

I enjoyed the first lesson that much I decided to come back and enroll. From there I got my dobok and belt, this made me feel apart of the class and less obvious as a new student. Each time I put on my suit and belt it made me feel proud.

At each new class I was accomplishing new techniques and learning the native tongue of Korea. The theory part of TaeKwon-Do confuses me as I find it hard to learn a new language, but I persevered with it best I could.

When my first grading arrived I was the biggest nervous wreck you have ever come across. I was afraid that I would mess it up and make myself look a complete idiot, but to my surprise I passed and this built up my confidence even more and I couldn't wait to my next grading. With Mr. Kirkwood I reached the rank of 3rd Kup before I left.

As time went on I started a family and through ill health and family commitments I missed out on a lot of my training. When my first son was born, I went back to training and brought my son with me even though he was only a few weeks old and Mrs. Kirkwood sat with him, but found it hard to cope with the training and being a mum. At the time I never really thought about training, I concentrated on family life, but in the back of my mind I missed it. As I was staying in Wishaw at the time I joined the ITF. I trained with them for a few months but never really liked it, it was not the same. From there I moved house again and came to stay in Larkhall where I found I was expecting again.

A few years later I was talking to a girl who I trained with at Mr. Kirkwood's class and she told me that she was training under a different instructor with the TAGB. I went along to this class and trained there for a few years. I gained my 2nd kup with the TAGB.

Today I find myself back with Master Kirkwood; I feel this is where I belong. Having returned to Master Kirkwood's class I have made great friends and I have one particular family has given me the kick I needed to go for my 1st Kup and they have done the same again for my black belt promotion testing. If it was not for Master Kirkwood allowing me to return to his class and teaching me everything I know and the family who is given me the courage to do so I would not be sitting here right now writing my thesis for my black belt testing. I feel I owe both parties a debt of gratitude. I know Master Kirkwood has given me the tools to pass my test.

My journey through TaeKwon-Do has been fantastic and I am looking forward to many more years of vigorous training and hard work. Training has given me great confidence in the face of confrontation and danger and perseverance and indomitable spirit has brought me to this stage in my training, 12 years later.