

Kuk Sool in Great Britain - The Early Years (1973 - 1989)

1973

Kuk Sool Master, Mok Yang KIM, arrived in Great Britain in the latter half of the year at the invitation of USAF military personnel, based in Suffolk. He came to Britain from Korea specifically to teach Korean Martial Arts to USAF members of staff, and was brought over to replace a Taekwondo instructor, Master Chom Son CHO, who was leaving. (Master CHO now lives in Wisconsin, USA.)

Soon after Master KIM arrived in Britain, Ollie BATTS arranged a meeting with him at the Howard Mallett Centre, New Street, Cambridge, along with a couple of Ollie's friends, to discuss the possibility of also setting up a club in Cambridge. Master KIM attended the meeting with interpreter, German-born, Peter KONSTANTS (who later changed his name to Peter LEE) from RAF Mildenhall (an American Air Base) in Suffolk. Master KIM, who spoke very little English at the time, initially agreed to start a private club in Cambridge with only a limited number of members.

A Private club was set up in Cambridge shortly after that, and the very first Cambridge members included: Ollie BATTS, Keith BULLOCK, Clive CUNNINGTON, Ken? DOWLING, Frank HERYET, Hans LAL, Peter NIGHTINGALE, Mark SMITH, Alan TAYLOR, and about three other unnamed members. We trained with Master KIM on Monday and Wednesday evenings.

When Master KIM first arrived in the UK, he initially taught Taekwondo and Hapkido. At first, he did not use the name 'KUK SOOL' as, unlike the names 'Taekwondo' and 'Hapkido', most people in Britain were unfamiliar with the names Kuk Sool, or 'Kuk Sool Won' at that time.



The above picture was taken in 1974 (late February) after the very first promotional testing of the Cambridge Club members. From top left: K. M. Tan (London), Unknown, Ollie Batts, Keith Bullock, Clive Cunningham, Mark Smith, Unknown. Bottom row from left: Ken? Dowling, Hans Lal, Master M. Y. Kim, Frank Heryet, Peter Nightingale. (Note the Kuk Sool flag behind the group.)

1974

Cambridge Club members took on a third evening of training together (in Master KIM's absence) on Friday evenings, from 6 - 7.30pm, in the Drama Centre, Wellington Street, Cambridge, in order to go over what they had practised earlier in the week.

Early certificates, issued by Master KIM, show the Kuk Sool logo in the centre, but the oblong box (between the handles of the two swords) bore the initials 'WKMA'. The certificates were signed: Shepherd M. Y. KIM Director of World Korean Martial Art Association.



1975

By (early) 1975, Master KIM was using the names 'Kuk Sool', and the 'British Kuk Sool Association'. He was also using the proper Kuk Sool logo with the current Korean symbols on printed documents, rather than the letters 'WKMA' which he had used previously. Only a few individual clubs existed at that time, including: USAF Mildenhall, Cambridge, London, CCAT (Cambridge Technical College), Oxford and Oxford University.



Leo Lewis

The person who Master KIM later appointed to take over in Oxford was his black belt student (the late) Leo LEWIS.

The author is unable to determine when Leo was awarded his black belt, but it is known that he was a Blue belt in November 1975.

Leo was not the highest graded student in Oxford at that time, however, Ronald CASSIDY was. It is also unknown if Mr Cassidy ever went on to gain Black belt under Master KIM or not.

Leo LEWIS later became Secretary of the United Kingdom Sulkido Federation (UKSF). Leo LEWIS sadly died some years ago, in mysterious circumstances it seems!

Following concerns raised by Denis Howell Esq., M.P. British Government Minister of Sport and Recreation, in a publication entitled 'The Ugly Shadow', dated 22 April 1975, the Martial Arts Commission (MAC) was set up. This in turn led to Korean Martial Arts organisations uniting (in the MAC) under the umbrella organisation called the 'British Association of Korean Martial Arts' (BAKMA), which the British Kuk Sool Association (BKSA) was a co-founding member of.



1976

The very first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the British Kuk Sool Association took place on Sunday 31st October at the YMCA, Gonville Place, Cambridge. Members in attendance included:

Master Mok Yang KIM	Chief Instructor & President
Ollie BATTS	Secretary
John MONTFORD	Treasurer
Hassan ZEKI	Officer
Roy MILNE	Officer
Leo LEWIS	Officer
Chris MILLER	Ordinary Committee Member
Shener DERSIS	Ordinary Committee Member
Kevin ISAACS	Ordinary Committee Member
Nick SUMMERHAYES	Ordinary Committee Member
Mim OKE	Ordinary Committee Member
Diane BLACKWELL	Ordinary Committee Member
Reinhard SPIOLEK	Ordinary Committee Member
Gary VINDIS	Ordinary Committee Member
Nigel VINDIS	Ordinary Committee Member

Master KIM informed the Committee that the Constitution was complete. He also said, that although still a small association, approx. 143 members total, at the time, he hoped that this AGM would represent one of the first stepping stones towards a strong and growing martial art association.

Following the recent resignation of the Vice President, Mr John MARNOCH (Cambridge), Mr Shener DERSIS was unanimously elected to serve in that position.

One of the most dynamic and charismatic of people to arrive and train at USAF Mildenhall in the early years (May 1976 - May 1979) was a guy called Larry WHITE. Larry had previously served three years in Korea, and had trained intensively during that time with Hapkido Master Choon Soo Yu. Being a third degree black belt in Hapkido, Larry outranked all but Master KIM at the time.

Larry was very strong and flexible. He often used to visit and train with the Cambridge Club, especially in Master KIM's absence. He would shut all the windows and doors, just to make sure that everyone sweat really hard during his extremely tiring training sessions. Larry had very close-cropped hair, and yet, he wore a stocking-type cap on his head. As everyone was either in awe (or else slightly afraid of him), no one dared ask why! Ollie BATTS and Larry WHITE quickly became friends, and Larry sometimes ate at Ollie's house during his frequent trips to Cambridge in his raucous black Dodge Charger.



1977

April A team from the British Kuk Sool Association, and other member groups of the British Association of Korean Martial Arts (BAKMA), along with several other martial arts groups and organisations, attended the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, in London, on Saturday 23rd April to participate in a Martial Arts Display arranged by the Martial Arts Commission (MAC) in support of the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee celebrations.

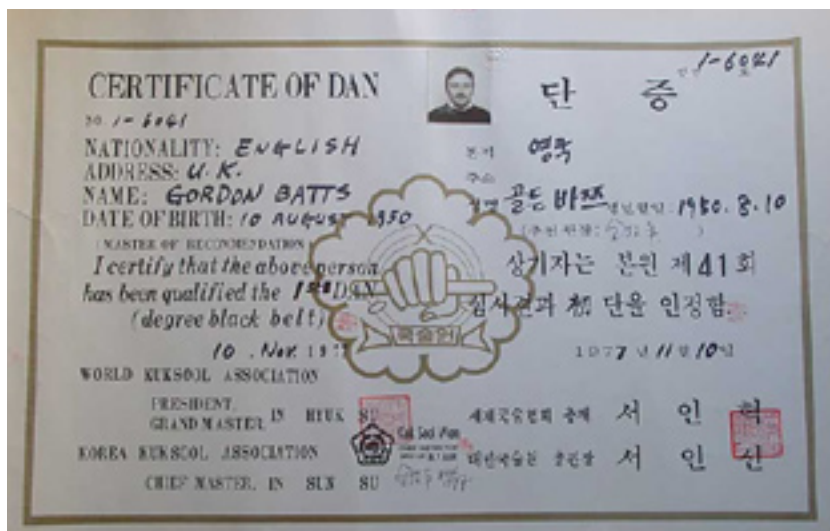
July An Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the British Kuk Sool Association (BKSA) took place, on Saturday 23rd July 1977, at Cambridge YMCA. Members in attendance were:

Master M. Y. KIM	
Hassan ZEKI	London
Shener DERVIS	London
Nick SUMMERHAYES	London
Ollie BATTS	Cambridge
Diane BLACKWELL	Cambridge

In addition, there were two invited guests at that meeting: Kevin ISAACS (London) and H. K. KIM [later to become known as Master Paul KIM]. Both guests were nominated and duly elected to serve on the Executive Committee, and employment contracts were outlined and verified for both Master M. Y. KIM and H. K. KIM. Master M. Y. KIM also informed those present that the BKSA had 236 members at that time, compared to 143 at the time of the AGM in October 1976.

November Ollie BATTS (Cambridge), Shener DERVIS (London) and Hassan ZEKI (London) became the first three British citizens to be awarded Black Belt by Master KIM in Kuk Sool, and to receive certificates from the World Kuk Sool Association (WKSA).

Ollie BATTS' 1st Degree Black Belt certificate (No: 1 - 6041) as signed by World KukSool Association President & Grand Master, In Hyuk SU, and counter-signed by the Korea KukSool Association Chief Master, In Sun SU.



1978

Following a falling out, and some legal dispute over property (in 1977), between members of the Great Britain Hapkido Association (GBHA), some of their senior members split away and applied to join the British Kuk Sool Association (BKSA), and to become students of Master KIM instead. The two most senior members being Philip HOLMES and Richard ROPER.

After at least two meetings of the British Kuk Sool Association (BKSA) Executive Committee, it was eventually agreed that those Hapkido members be allowed to join the BKSA, and that the instructor grades of Philip HOLMES and Richard ROPER be recognised. This led to the BKSA having to change its name to the 'United Kingdom Kuk Sool Federation - including Hapkido'.

At a meeting of the United Kingdom Kuk Sool Federation (UKKSF) on Friday 23 June 1978, the following Executive Committee members were present:

Master M. Y. KIM	Hon President
Shener DERVIS	Chairman
Master Paul KIM	Deputy Chief Instructor
Richard ROPER	Public Relations Officer & Assist Secretary
Hassan ZEKI	Ordinary Board Member
Mr C. RICHARDS	Ordinary Board Member

Master KIM then nominated the following additional members and positions:

N. K. PARK	General Secretary
Kevin DURKIN	Treasurer
Ollie BATTS	Ordinary Board Member
Leo LEWIS	Ordinary Board Member

1979

The Statement of Accounts for the British Kuk Sool Association (BKSA), year ending 31st March 1979, shows a total membership of 246. These were made up from 224 seniors and 22 juniors.

Before leaving the UK (in May), Larry WHITE, from USAF Mildenhall Club, defeated all at the Tang Soo Do sparring competition at USAF Alconbury. He also placed 2nd in the forms competition.

1981

Master KIM changed the name of the 'United Kingdom Kuk Sool Federation (including Hapkido)' to the 'United Kingdom Sulkido Federation' (UKSF). Master KIM explained that Sulkido was also known as 'British Kuk Sool'.

1982

April Ollie BATTS, Shener DERVIS and Hassan ZEKI were awarded 2nd degree black belt by Master Kim on 2nd April 1982.

July Dr. David WILLIAMS became the first Beccles Club member to be awarded black belt.

UKSF members put on a demonstration at the Korean Athletic Games, at the Crawley Leisure Centre, London. The demonstration team was congratulated personally by Dr. Young Hoon Kang, the Korean Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

August Philip HOLMES was awarded 2nd degree black belt in Kuk Sool by Chief Master In Sun SUH [SEO] whilst training in Korea.

1985

Cracks start to appear!

January Philip HOLMES, Dr David WILLIAMS, and other senior members of the Beccles Club, form the East Anglia KukSoolWon Association (EAKA).

June Three Beccles Club members: Stephen WHITING, Peter HEANEY, and Martin DUCKER are awarded 1st Degree Black Belt.

September UKSF members took part in the 'Martial Arts Spectacular' demonstration organised by the Martial Arts Commission at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, London.

October Beccles Club celebrated their 10th Anniversary of training in the Korean Martial Arts.

1986

The beginning of the end, and a new beginning!

April Five black belts from the East Anglian KukSoolWon (EAKA) and Beccles Kuk Sool Club resigned from the United Kingdom Sulkido Federation (UKSF), taking around 90 students with them.

May Ollie BATTS tendered his resignation from the UKSF, but assured Master KIM in a letter that he would not attempt, in any way, to take students from the UKSF who wished to remain loyal to him and the UKSF.

Mid '86 Philip HOLMES visited and trained at WKSA headquarters in San Francisco, and at Master Barry HARMON's school in San Mateo. Shortly after that, Ollie BATTS also visited the U.S. for a month, and he too trained at WKSA headquarters, and at Master Barry HARMON's school. Following their return to Britain, Philip HOLMES and Ollie BATTS began the process of founding and organising the 'World Kuk Sool Association - United Kingdom Branch Schools'.

1987

April Master Kim invited Chiefmaster In Sun Seo over to the UK. Philip HOLMES and Ollie BATTS complained to WKSA Grandmaster In Hyuk SUK that this should be allowed to happen, especially as the WKSA had previously sent out a document signed by Grandmaster SUH to say that Master KIM and his Sulkido organisation were not recognised by him or the World Kuk Sool Association. We were sent a document from HQ which stated that "Chiefmaster In Sun SEO has been invited to England by Master Mok Yang KIM. Chiefmaster SEO has accepted and will be visiting England and several other countries in his official capacity [sic] as the Korean Ki-Do Association Chairman. He is not there to give Kuk Sool Won demonstrations for Master Mok Yang KIM..."

Predictably, that turned out NOT to be the case as the Chiefmaster conducted at least one public demonstration, and also wore his Kuk Sool uniform in public at Richard ROPER's school in Norwich. He also presented Richard ROPER with a Commendation Certificate whilst he was there.

The Eastern Evening News cutting, dated Thursday, April 16, 1987, showing the Chiefmaster SUH wearing his Kuk Sool General's uniform.



May Master Barry HARMON visited the UK and conducted training seminars for WKSA - UK Branch Schools.

1988

January WKSA Grand Master In Hyuk SUH visited the UK and conducts his first ever series of seminars. Shortly after that visit, Richard ROPER applied to join the WKSA.

WKSA Cambridge Black Belts in 1988

Ollie BATTS	2nd Degree
Michael BOXALL	1st Degree
Chris HOLMES	1st Degree
Tony HOLMES	1st Degree
Aslaan ISHMAEL	1st Degree

September Ollie BATTS, Philip HOLMES and Richard ROPER were all awarded 3rd Degree Black Belt, and Dr Julie GABRIEL and Shaun PORTER (both from Cambridge) were awarded their 1st Degree Black Belt, by In Hyuk Suh and the WKSA, on 24th September 1989.



Soon after that, Ollie BATTS made a final decision to resign from the WKSA, in order to concentrate fully on developing Cambridge Academy of Martial Arts® (which he had founded in July 1989). He left the Cambridge Kuk Sool Club in the hands of instructor Chris HOLMES.

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Footnote from Jerry Sallee:

“Hello Ollie you left out the beginning of British Kuk Sool. Master Kim show up in Aug. at the Raf Mildenhall in 1973. I was studing with 3rd degree black belt Peter Konstants and 6th degree black Master Cho, Chom Son who left for the USA. Master Kim was invited to the UK by Peter Konstants to train at Raf Mildenhall. We trained 4 nights a week. I was stationed at Raf Lakenheath. I would travel to London with Master Kim. I would then travel to Raf Mildenhall to work out. When I made Blue Belt Master Kim asked me what did I want to do and I told Him that I wanted to Teach so he had me open a school at Raf Lakenheath in 1974. I would work out with Master Kim 2 nights a week and then teach 2 nights a week at Raf lakenheath. If Master Kim had something going on at the other schools I would teach his class for Him. I was one of the few who wore the Black uniform. I guess it show I was an Instructor. I was with Master Kim from 1973 until Aug. 1975 that was when I had to return to the USA. Master Larry White came after me. PS if you like to add my History before UK you have my permission. I will also sent some photo's to add also if you do not mind. I started Tae Kwon Do Chung Mu Kwan by Master Jhoon Rhee at Charleston AFB SC. Dec. 1971 by May 1972 I made the rank of Yellow belt being tested by Master Jhoon Rhee. By Aug of 1972 I had orders for Viet Nam but was cancelled and I was sent to the UK. When I arrive I started looking for a place to train and I came across Mr. Peter Konstants and Master Cho, Chom Son who was teaching Ji Do Kwan Tae kwon Do at the Raf Lakenheath base Gym. Now you know my whole story.

“Thanks Jerry Sallee.”

FIGHTERS

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IN HYUK SUH
Kuk Sool's Grandmaster

Ollie BATTS was tickled pink by Kuk Sool Grandmaster In Hyuk SUH's first visit to the UK in January 1988, which he had helped to organise.