



# JUDO PASSION TURNS INTO A FAMILY AFFAIR

by **STEPHEN WRIGHT**

**F**OR judo fanatic Stewart Hogg the martial art isn't so much a passion but a family affair.

The owner of The Meiji judokwai, based at Burntwood Leisure Centre, in High Street, Chasetown, was inspired to set up the club a decade ago after his son asked him to teach him the ancient art.

Stewart was already well versed in the techniques of judo; he had taken it up in as a 13-year-old in an attempt to deter school bullies.

Not only did he manage to halt the bullying, he gained confidence while learning learning self respect and discipline.

The 49-year-old care worker, from Heath Hayes, carried on judo after leaving school and joined the army reaching black belt 1st Dan, becoming the army judo middle weight champion. He also won the British land Forces judo championships and the British combined forces judo championships.

It's a enduring love which he has passed down to his two children who help him run the Meiji judo club.

"My son had tried his hand at kick boxing and karate but didn't really take to it," he said. "He asked if I'd teach him and my wife offered to buy judo mats, costing £2,000, to start up a club.

"Adverts went out and a club in the little village of Shenstone, near Lichfield, was opened. We ran it for four years but had to find a bigger venue due to the interest."

To celebrate The Meiji judo club's 10 year anniversary Stewart has opened a second club in the Cannock area. It will held at Heath Hayes Community Centre, next to Tesco's.

Stewart added: "I had a lot of interest from people in Cannock who wanted to take up judo but weren't able to get to Burntwood so I decided to set up the satellite club in Heath Hayes."

"We have set up a committee, which consists of parents and members, and due to our professional status we have secured two lottery grants during our 10-year period.

We run it a non-profit club and no-one receives any payment for giving up their time."

## Instructor

Stewart's son Darren, aged 21, a black belt 1st Dan, has won the Midlands and National area championships umpteen times and claimed a silver medal in an international European judo contest in Holland.

He has progressed to be a 2nd Dan black belt instructor and Midlands area referee and grading officer.

Meanwhile his daughter Katherine, 16, is currently sitting her black belt exam and has won the Midlands area and Nationals for the last eight years.

She has also entered the international European judo contest in Holland for the last five years, winning three golds and one silver.

Heath Hayes judo club will be open to adults and children aged over eight as well as those with disabilities and lessons will be every Friday from 7-9pm.

As an anniversary gesture the club will be paying for the Judo licence and the first grading fee for all new pupils within the first three months. For enquiries regarding lessons call Stewart on 07957443642.



Twins Riley and Issie Hall-Woodcock



Jordan Ivory-Birtles, Riley Hall-Woodcock and Katherine Hogg, European International medal winners



European international bronze medal winner Riley Hall-Woodcock, right



Katherine Hogg, second from left, wins bronze at the Heart of England British Nationals at the NIA, Birmingham