

## **To-Ken Society of Great Britain**

### **Report on the meeting held in St Helens on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

The meeting took place in Jubilee Barracks on Prescott road in St Helens on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025, it was hosted by the Quartermaster of the 103rd Regiment Royal Artillery, Major Martin Hughes. This was the first regional meeting held in the North-West and we are grateful to Martin for making the venue available to us and organising the event. The meeting was well attended with over 35 members traveling from as far as London and Scotland, both new and old members were well represented.

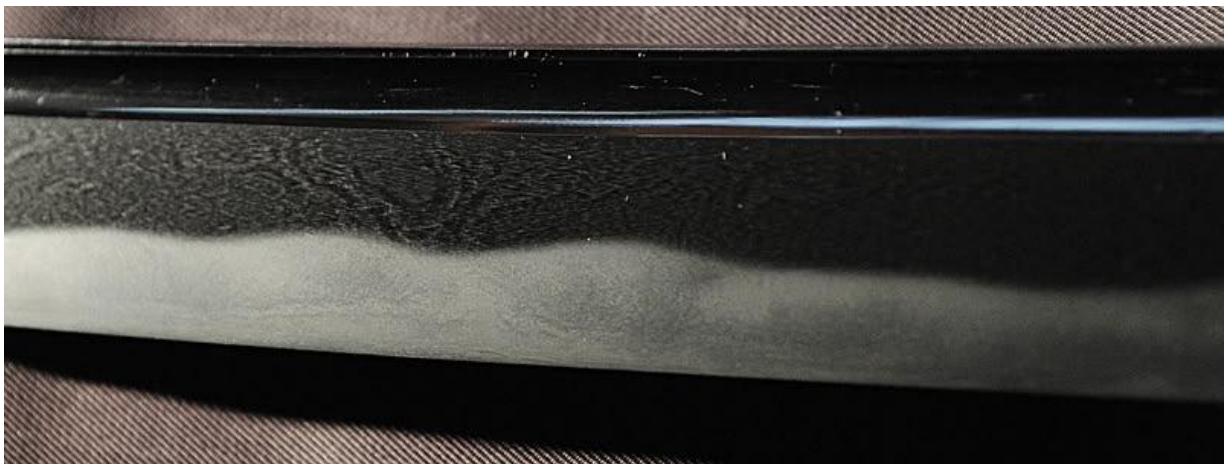
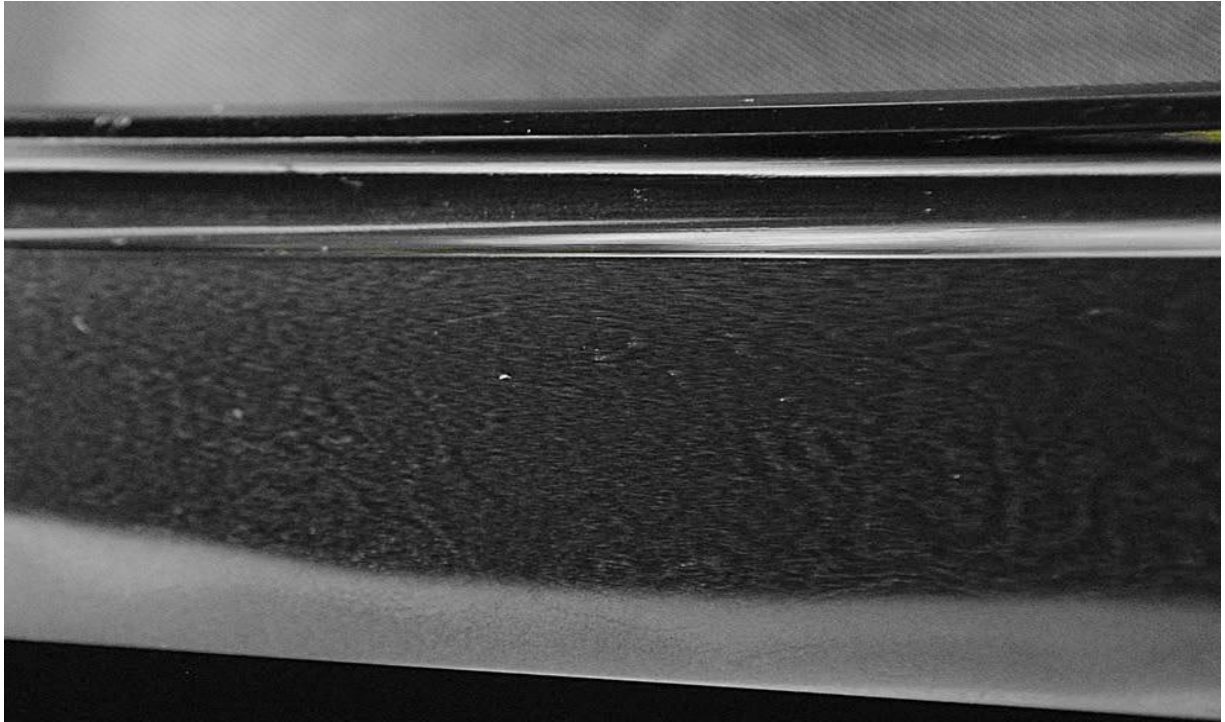
Martin started by covering the usual safety and administrative points you might cover at any event and then Paul Bowman introduced the day's activities.



Thorsten introduced a well-preserved Ko-Hoki sword and then delivered an in depth presentation providing great insights aimed at both new and well-seasoned members alike.



Photos showing the Ko-Hoki Hada and Hamon:



Next came a joint presentation by Paul Bowman and Bill Tagg looking at their long friendship and their own individual journeys as collectors. They discussed the benefits and potential pitfalls of collecting swords from the Showa period.



Following lunch Martin presented on his journey so far as a collector and introduced the members to his swords also on display.



Following Martins presentation, a brief guide to sword handling etiquette was given and the members were released to view the swords at their leisure. We were very fortunate to have the opportunity to view a wide range of very good blades dating from the early Kamakura period all the way through to some excellent Shin-Shinto work. To be able to examine these blades in hand was a rare privilege and we are grateful to those members who made their swords available. Highlights included the Ko-Hoki blade discussed in Thorsten's presentation, An Awataguchi blade attributed to the master smith Hisakuni, some excellent examples of blades exhibiting beautiful masame hada and some fine later work.



Following the sword viewing, the members came back together to ask any questions before closing the presentations and moving to observe the sales tables.





Following Bill's presentation, he displayed a range of material relating to the Occupation of Japan post WWII and the collection of swords. Some of the images are undoubtedly the stuff of nightmares to the collector of Nihonto and one can only speculate at the number of fine blades destroyed in the collection and confiscation process.

