

To-Ken Society of GB September 2016 meeting and AGM agenda

1. September meeting report

The meeting centred on a visit by a fellow German nihontophile Uwe Grabowski's visit and his presentation about nihonto photography. Uwe is a fellow collector and enthusiast who has also perfected the art of taking high-quality, ultra high-resolution photographs, which he then superimposes and stitches together to produce a composite image through layering. Often he needs three days (20 hours of post-production Adobe Photoshop work) to create such a composite picture, needing to incorporate 1000-1500 individual-section photographs into a whole. He described the different techniques used by Fujishiro, Richard K George and Darcy Brockbank and commented on the characteristics of various scanners used by the profession as well (eg Epson and Canon).

Uwe's work can be seen at www.nihontophoto.com. He has offered to come to the UK for a longer stay and photograph a number of members' swords. We shall try to organise such an event in 2017.

As usual, there was a lot of study material encompassing elegant koshirae and tosogu, blades, eg:

- Clive had brought his impressive Hizen Masahiro sword
- David Maynard shared his two Mino blades: a Kanemichi tanto and a ShinShinto Jumyo
- David Wells brought along an Iga no Kami Kinmichi blade

2. Agenda for forthcoming 7-December AGM

- Clive Sinclair is proposed to be elected vice-president
- Maurice Hayes is retiring as treasurer and will support future treasurer with advice on part-time basis
- Michael Spasov is resigning as secretary and applying for treasurer role / further applications for treasurer role are welcome
- Ian Chapman is applying for secretary role / further applications for secretary role are welcome

A number of roles are being vacated by the existing committee members and some of the members are proposed to assume new responsibilities. Applications for the roles of treasurer and secretary will be considered and voted on at the AGM.

Fig.1 Hizen Masahiro



Fig.2 Jumyo tanto

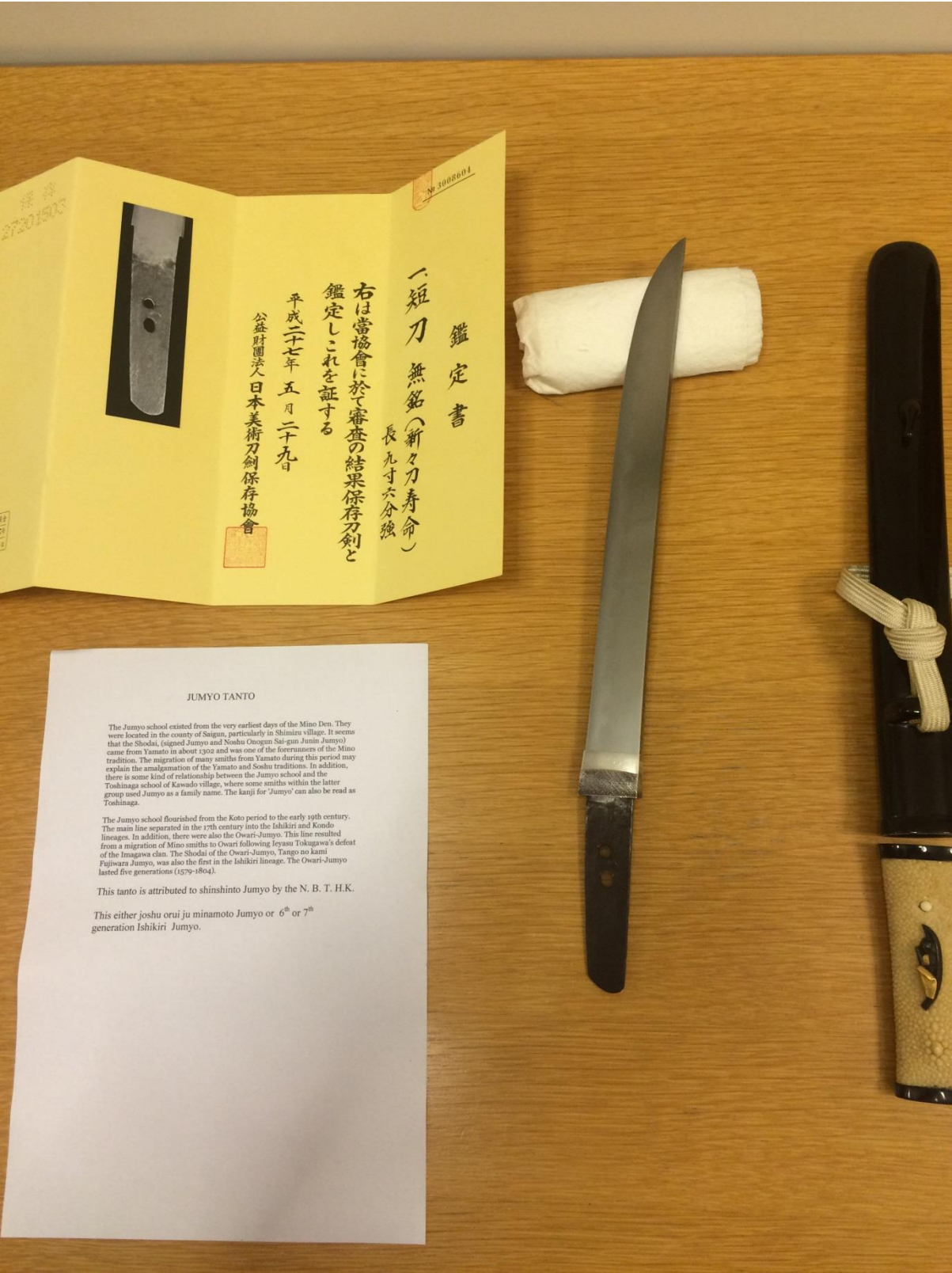
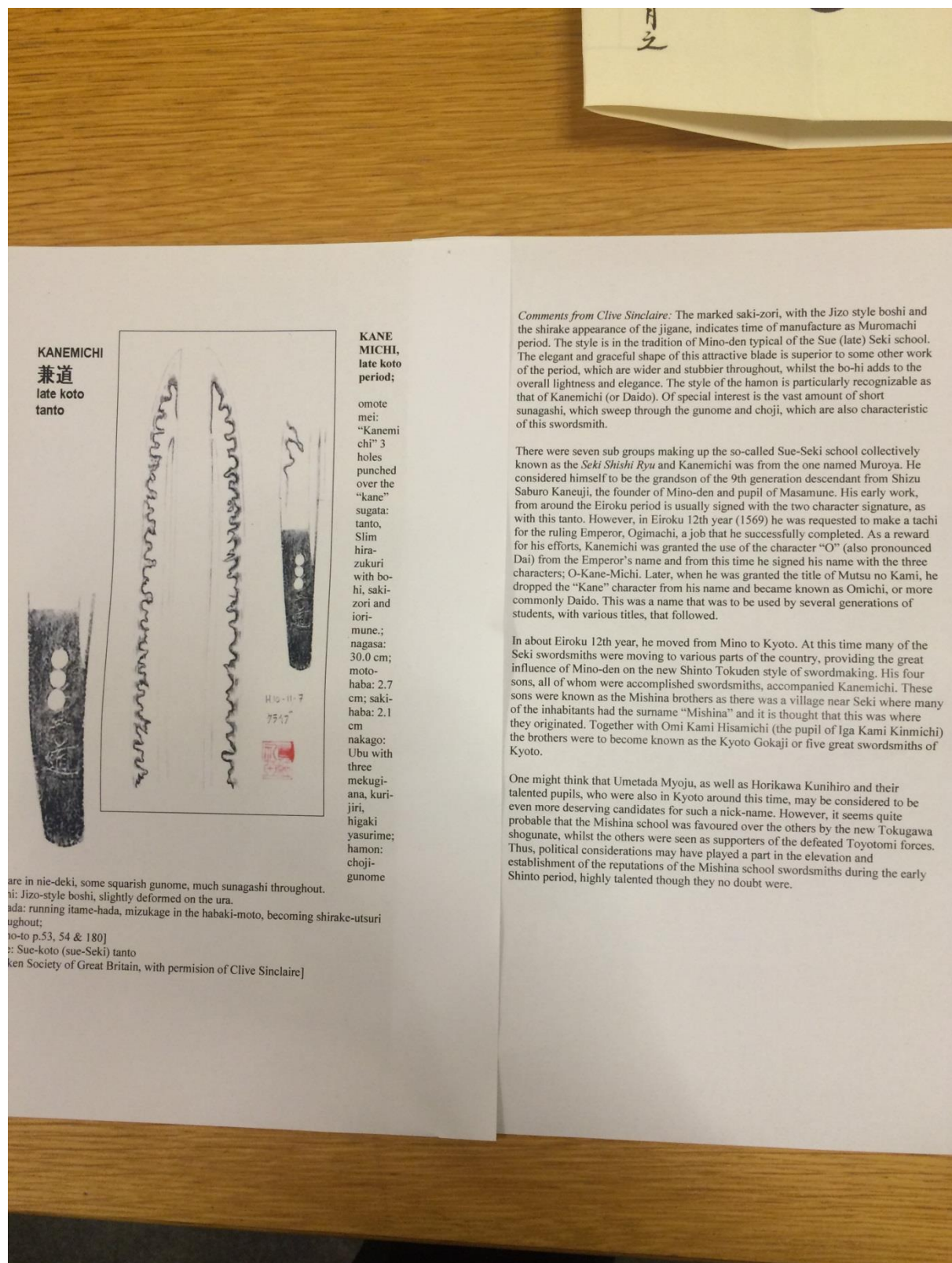


Fig.3 Kanemichi tanto – oshigata and information



are in nie-deki, some squarish gunome, much sunagashi throughout.
 i: Jizo-style boshi, slightly deformed on the ura.
 ada: running itame-hada, mizukage in the habaki-moto, becoming shirake-utsuri
 oughout;
 io-to p.53, 54 & 180]
 : Sue-koto (sue-Seki) tanto
 ken Society of Great Britain, with permission of Clive Sinclair]

Comments from Clive Sinclair: The marked saki-zori, with the Jizo style boshi and the shirake appearance of the jigane, indicates time of manufacture as Muromachi period. The style is in the tradition of Mino-den typical of the Sue (late) Seki school. The elegant and graceful shape of this attractive blade is superior to some other work of the period, which are wider and stubbier throughout, whilst the bo-hi adds to the overall lightness and elegance. The style of the hamon is particularly recognizable as that of Kanemichi (or Daido). Of special interest is the vast amount of short sunagashi, which sweep through the gunome and choji, which are also characteristic of this swordsmith.

There were seven sub groups making up the so-called Sue-Seki school collectively known as the *Seki Shishi Ryu* and Kanemichi was from the one named Muroya. He considered himself to be the grandson of the 9th generation descendant from Shizu Saburo Kaneuji, the founder of Mino-den and pupil of Masamune. His early work, from around the Eiroku period is usually signed with the two character signature, as with this tanto. However, in Eiroku 12th year (1569) he was requested to make a tachi for the ruling Emperor, Ogimachi, a job that he successfully completed. As a reward for his efforts, Kanemichi was granted the use of the character "O" (also pronounced Dai) from the Emperor's name and from this time he signed his name with the three characters; O-Kane-Michi. Later, when he was granted the title of Mutsu no Kami, he dropped the "Kane" character from his name and became known as Omichi, or more commonly Daido. This was a name that was to be used by several generations of students, with various titles, that followed.

In about Eiroku 12th year, he moved from Mino to Kyoto. At this time many of the Seki swordsmiths were moving to various parts of the country, providing the great influence of Mino-den on the new Shinto Tokuden style of swordmaking. His four sons, all of whom were accomplished swordsmiths, accompanied Kanemichi. These sons were known as the Mishina brothers as there was a village near Seki where many of the inhabitants had the surname "Mishina" and it is thought that this was where they originated. Together with Omi Kami Hisamichi (the pupil of Iga Kami Kinnichi) the brothers were to become known as the Kyoto Gokaji or five great swordsmiths of Kyoto.

One might think that Umetada Myoju, as well as Horikawa Kunihiro and their talented pupils, who were also in Kyoto around this time, may be considered to be even more deserving candidates for such a nick-name. However, it seems quite probable that the Mishina school was favoured over the others by the new Tokugawa shogunate, whilst the others were seen as supporters of the defeated Toyotomi forces. Thus, political considerations may have played a part in the elevation and establishment of the reputations of the Mishina school swordsmiths during the early Shinto period, highly talented though they no doubt were.

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認定書
二脇指 銘 菊紋伊賀守藤原金道
右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別貴重
刀剣として認定す
昭和五十三年二月四日
財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協会
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Fig.5 Muromachi blade



Fig. 6 Edo-period kozuka

