



YOU WOULDN'T expect to find outstanding martial artists in Argyll and Bute let alone Oban and Mull.

In fact Mull and Oban are home to several different martial art clubs.

In Oban there are four different clubs, two are run by Willie Rodger, a 4th Dan, and Iain Rodgers, also a 4th Dan, who teaches kickboxing and Kyo Koshin Kie Karate.

Both clubs are named Senshi Do, or *The Warrior Way*. Both clubs are of the Oban Boudokan.

In all there are four clubs in Oban and a new club is on the way.

When *Lorn Life* asked Willie if there were any up and coming stars in the dojos he told us about Thomas Conroy.

Thomas recently took on a gruelling challenge at the Oban dojo to become a 2nd Dan.

Thomas went through a punishing 40 one-minute fights, each time facing a fresh opponent.

Willie paid tribute to his young pupil who, he said, had shown tremendous stamina, character and skill.

Willie Rodgers said: 'It's great that a wee community like this can have can have outstanding martial artists.'

Willie and some juniors from his club will be competing at the British Open in London. The competition is a bare-knuckle knock down; meaning that there is no protective gear and a competitor can win a fight if his opponent goes down and stays down.

The fighters will earn points every time their opponent hits the mat even if they do get back up.

The Crystal Palace event is a large-scale competition

in which some European teams fight.

The Oban clubs have numbers of 20 or more while Iain Rodger's has more than 30 at a club he runs in Lochgilphead. Mull is home to the number one officially ranked Ju Jitsu dojo in Scotland, as recognised by the MA.

The club is run by 7th dan Andy Russell and has been going on for at least 30 years.

The club was formed in August 1978, while the Oban clubs have been going for three to four years.

The Tobermory dojo is self-funded and often has fundraisers to raise money for travel to various tournaments.

The Tobermory club members have been competing for a number of years and there are many dedicated members within the club, for example, Lauren MacLean, a junior black belt, who has been training with Andy for 12 years and has travelled with the dojo to the world championships.

In the 2001 world championships on Jersey, the club took the silver medal for their weapon displays, then in the 2004 in Canada they took Gold.

Unfortunately Andy is unsure if he will have a team for next year's championships.

Andy said in the 28 years the Tobermory club has been open, the worst injuries have been broken arms and there have only been two such incidents in 28 years.

Members of the Tobermory Dojo, like Amanda Malloy, have gone on to become world champions. At the moment the club is going strong with 60 members. It costs £1 for children and £2 for adults and training sessions last about one hour for children and two to three hours for adults.

RISE OF THE WARRIOR WAY