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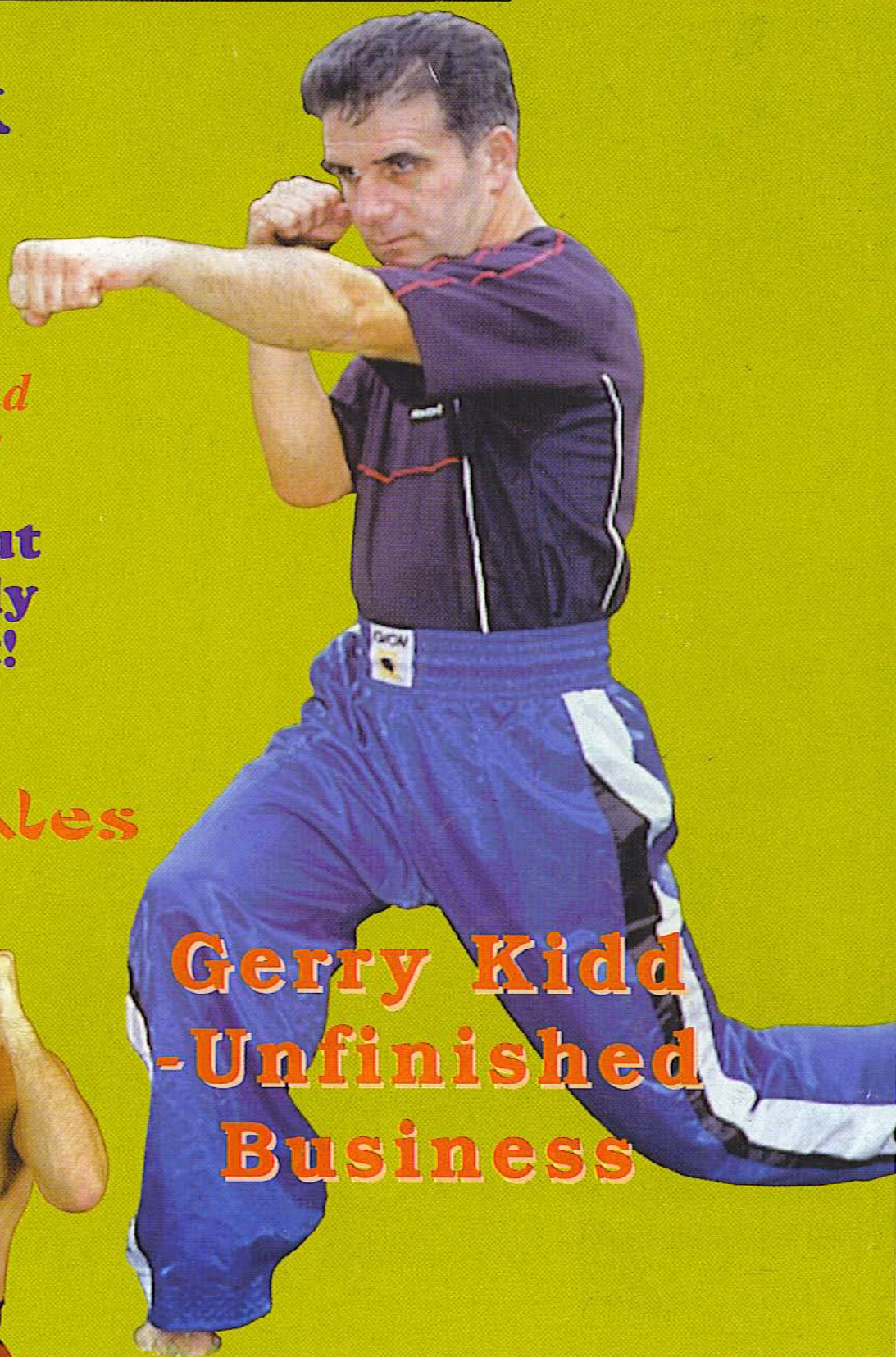


*World Grand
Prix Final*

**Down But
Definitely
Not Out!**

New Series

Dojo Tales



**Gerry Kidd
-Unfinished
Business**

**Gary Turner
Interview**



UNFINISHED BUSINESS

AN INTERVIEW WITH GERRY KIDD

Story & Pictures by Peter Lewis

ONCE YOU BEGIN training in the martial arts it's not too long before you want to prove yourself. You ask yourself 'am I as good as I think I am?' For some the question remains unanswered. For others they set out on a kind of journey, in an attempt to find out. This path takes them to the mats and rings of the world's competition circuits. The journey is long, the work via the training is hard and arduous, disappointments can be many, successes few. But for the select few who actually make it all the way to the top and become champions the question often arises, 'was it all worth it?' In an amateur sport such as full contact/kickboxing the rewards often don't match what the fighter/champion has had to sacrifice in order to become the best of the best.

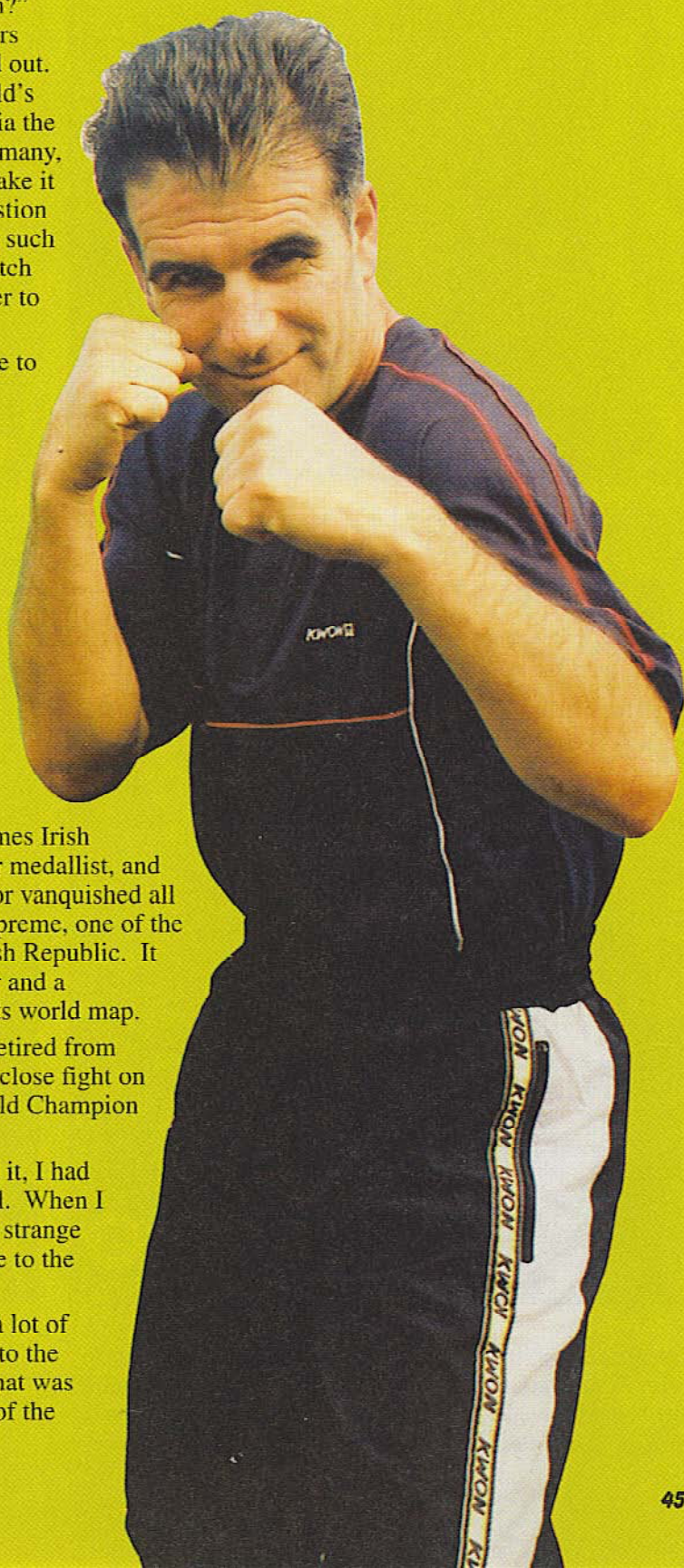
For many, it is a purely personal journey whose rise to fame and glory is only dictated by one's own driving force. How fast? How soon? How good? It is only dependent upon one thing at the end of the day and that is How hungry? This is the deciding factor between good fighters and great champions. One such fighter who came into the martial arts with no preconceived ideas whatsoever was bitten by the bug (as they say) almost from the start of his training and eventually went on to become All Ireland Full Contact Champion in the -60K division for ten consecutive years. Gerry Kidd who lives and trains in Dublin took the 1980's by storm, as he ripped through all opposition for a decade.

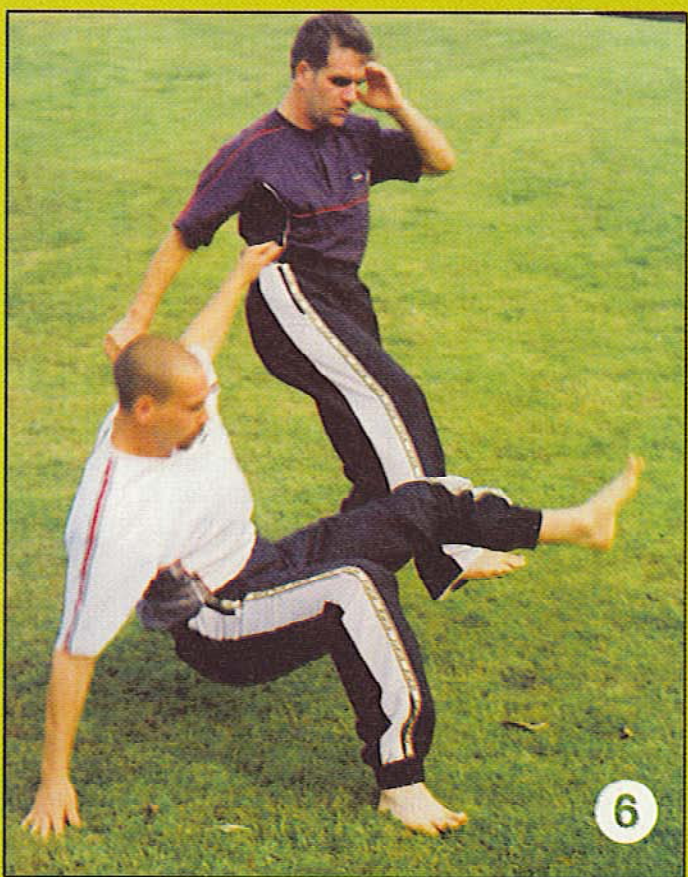
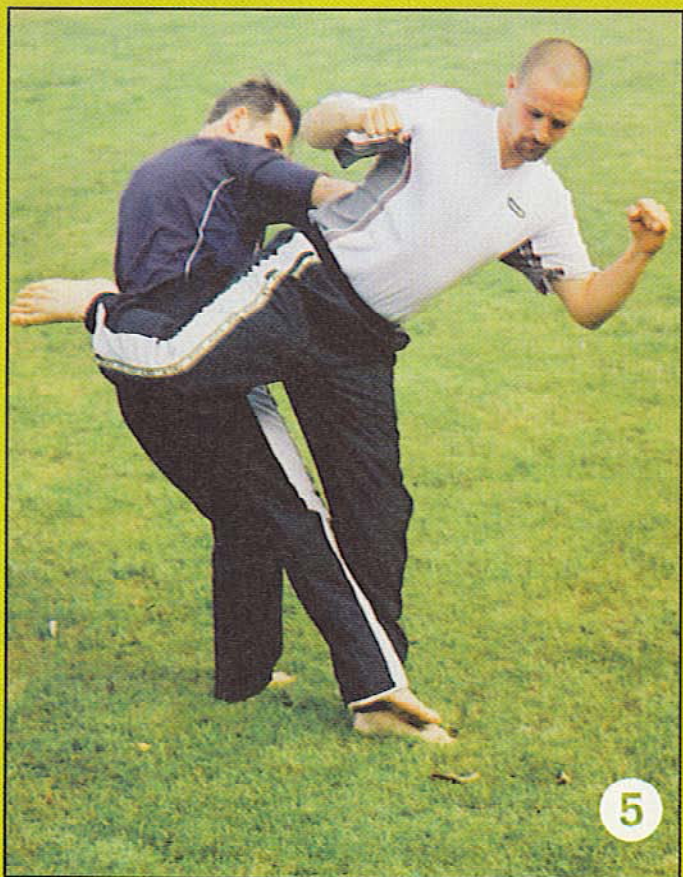
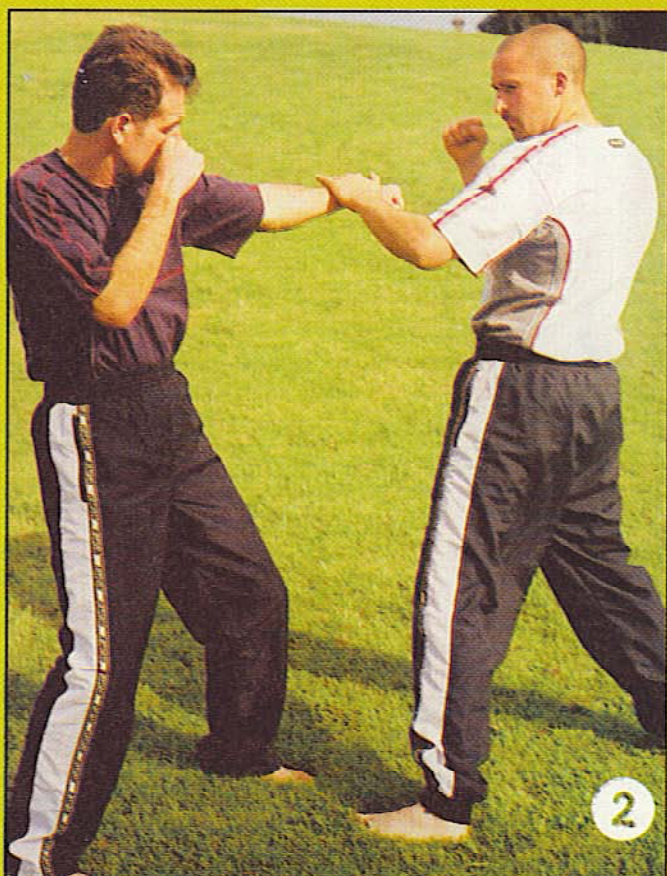
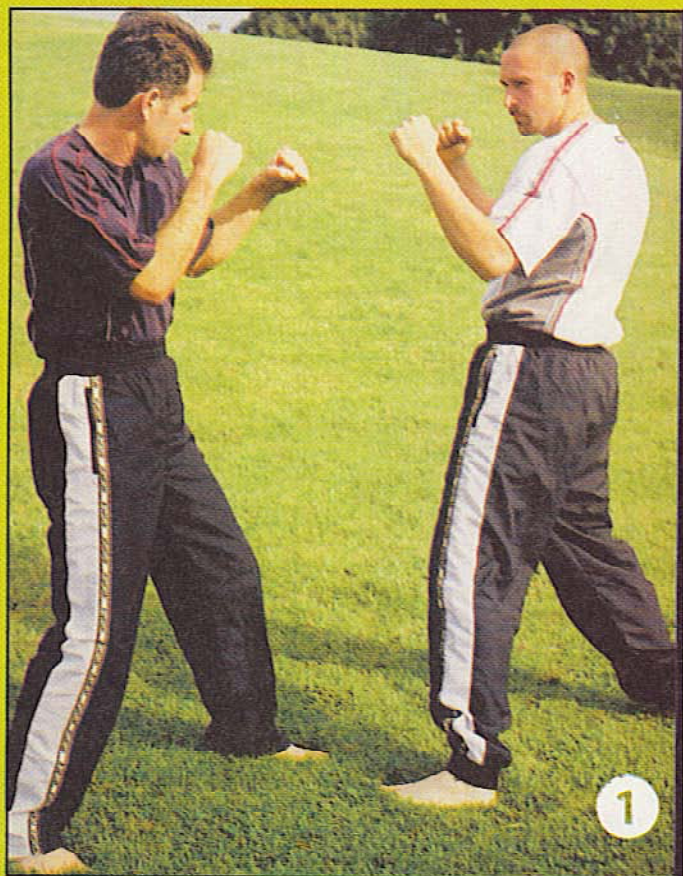
Gerry fought under the ring name Gerry 'Cisco' Kidd. A product of the George Canning Mugendo gym in Dublin, Gerry's rise to fame saw him as 10 times Irish Champion, European Champion, WAKO World silver medallist, and countless other international titles. This Celtic warrior vanquished all who met him in the ring. For ten years he reigned supreme, one of the finest full contact fighters to have come out of the Irish Republic. It could be said of Gerry Kidd that it was he as a fighter and a champion who put Irish full contact on the martial arts world map.

Then in 1990 he abruptly hung up his gloves and retired from the ring. Some months earlier he had just lost a very close fight on points in Manchester, England against five times World Champion Ronnie Green for a European title.

Gerry Kidd takes up the story, "Yes, I just chucked it, I had got slightly disillusioned, and walked away from it all. When I look back I feel in some respects disillusionment in a strange sort of way had always been with me, even on my rise to the top".

"It's the old story, in the early 1970's I was doing a lot of running at school and I was doing very well and I go to the movies one Saturday afternoon, saw Bruce Lee and that was it, I was hooked. Just like everyone else coming out of the movies kicking and going bananas. I got very, very

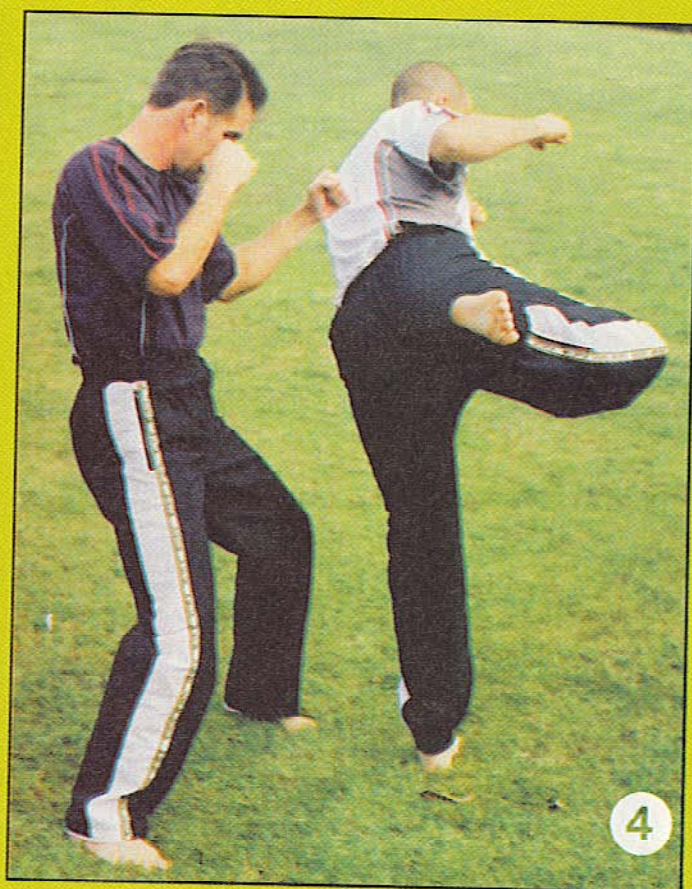
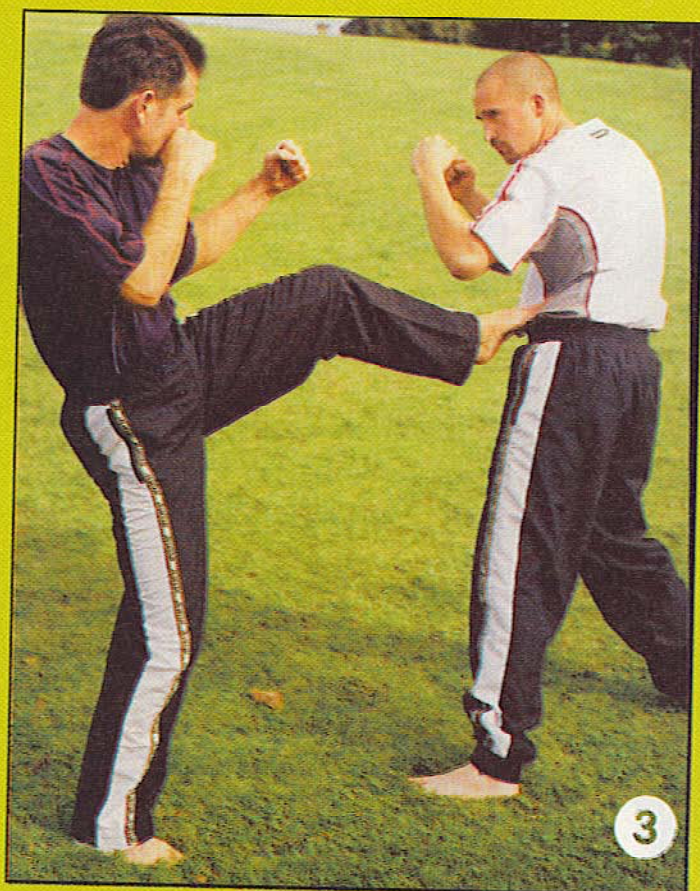




interested in it, then after that I went and did some Wado with George and a bit of Kempo. George's class suited me because he had a gym every night so I could go straight from work to train and I was training very, very

hard. After that I used to do kickboxing and I started to win, that'd be the mid to late seventies. In 1980 I won my first All Ireland title in kickboxing"

"I suppose once you're training you want to prove



yourself. When you're sparring in the gym you want to know "am I as good as I think I am". I was 57K and I fought under 63.5K and I actually went into the first All Ireland titles in the stadium – it was a very big event at the time because everyone wanted to get into kickboxing. It was definitely all-stars in the WAKO at that time and I said I'll just go in and see what happens because as I said I was 57K I went in at under 63K and I was shocked when I won it and I got awarded "fighter of the day" over the two weekends. It was fabulous you know".

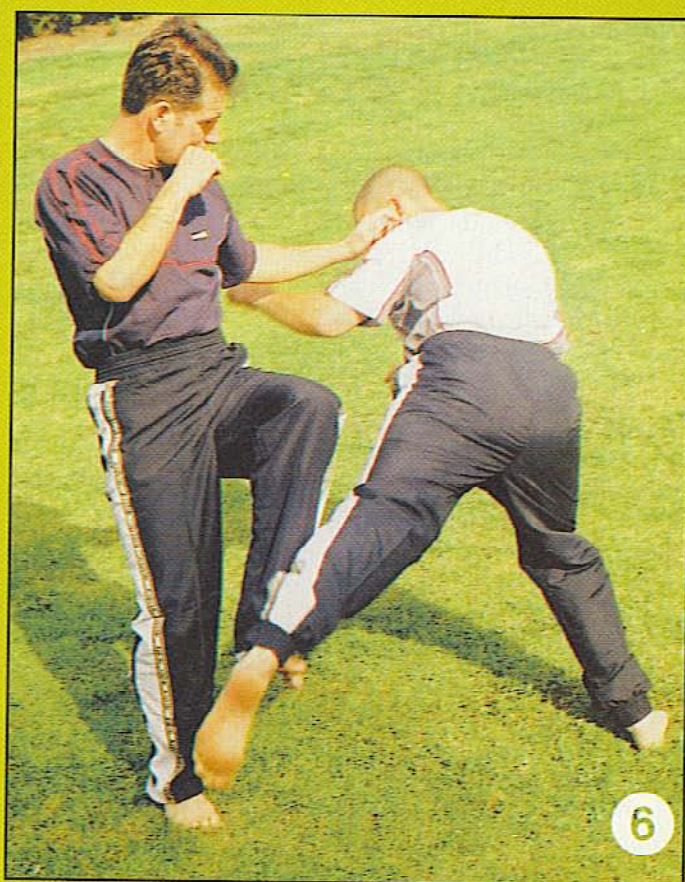
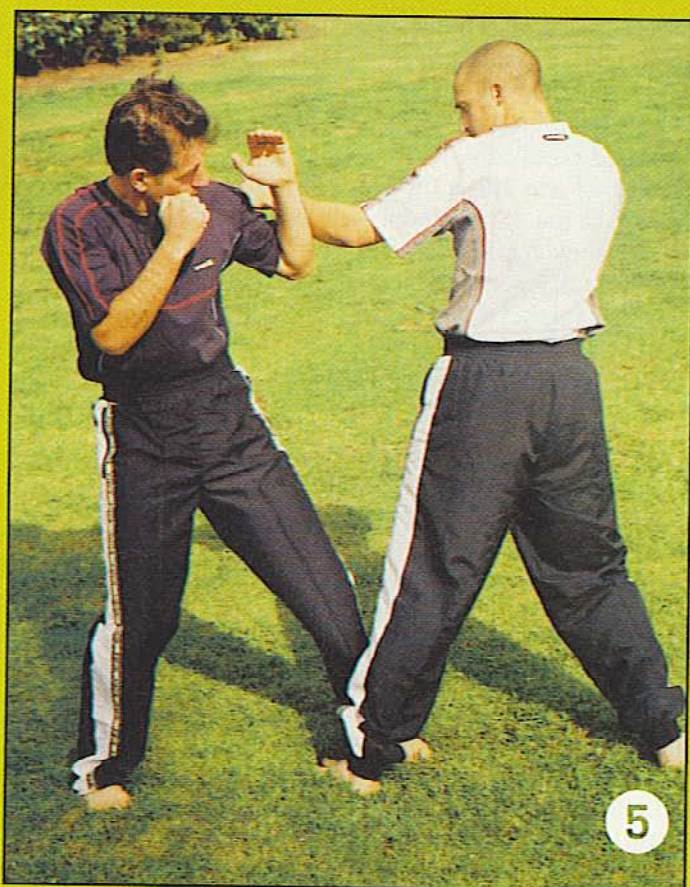
"But the pressure of continued winning gets greater because each year you expect yourself to be better than before and of course there are always those fresh new faces each year chasing your title. When I won the world title, I was training for 5 hours a day and my father who owned the business at the time was letting me off in the morning and the afternoon and the evening. The actual title fight was here in Dublin at the stadium which was packed to capacity. It was the WAKO & Mugendo World Title. George Bruckner came over from Germany with Michael Kuhr so for me that was the pinnacle really. Michael was the reigning champion, he'd beaten me in London on a split decision. So now it was my turn to snatch the title from him on my home ground".

"As I said earlier it was after the Manchester fight with Ronnie Green that I decided to just walk away from it all. It was the first time I'd fought Ronnie and it went to a points decision after six rounds. Let me explain what I mean about disillusionment. I was always disillusioned really in the sense that I thought there were

so many different bodies, too many different world champions. George (Canning) understood this you know. He was getting out of the martial arts as well to do his own thing. I'd lost my hunger for it really even though I enjoyed it. I tried teaching, but deep down at the time I was still a fighter. I felt that there was still a lot left in me. So I tried a couple of different clubs, but they always made me their chief coach or something so I'd be back teaching all the time. And once you teach you can't fight because I find that when you teach your standard doesn't exactly drop, but it goes to the level of the person you're teaching and I find that your level does go down".

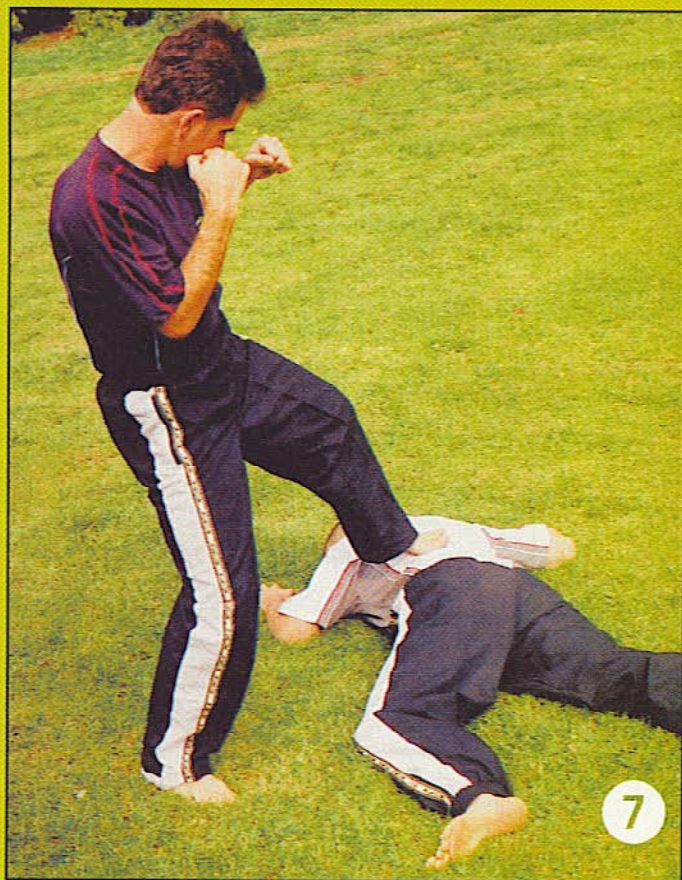
"I was enjoying teaching but I believe you're either a fighter or a teacher. You can't be successful at both and I still had the hunger to fight. I had the mind of a teacher, but the heart of the fighter and it wasn't working out so I got married in 1990 and had three children, three little girls and a mortgage, house, work. So what I did over about nineteen years was build up a very good business and we're the biggest wood finishing firm in Ireland and we're growing bigger all the time. So I'm in a position now for about the past year to take more of a back seat in the business. The hunger for the fighting is still there, it never went away and I'm only forty-two and I feel I'm very, very fit. I've always maintained my fitness levels, never abused my body and I feel good".

"Anyway about a couple of years ago I met up with George again and I spent a few months training with him. This led to training on a regular basis which then led to all those old urges coming back to me. I felt that



due to fighting the kind of guys that he had training at his gym, people like the big Russian Serge, and all the other guys most of whom are 2nd and 3rd Dan's I was getting great spars. Even though they were all much

heavier than me it felt good. The hunger started coming back straight away. Later in the year I'm back in the ring at a world championship promotion. This is where I want to clear up some unfinished business. Rather than



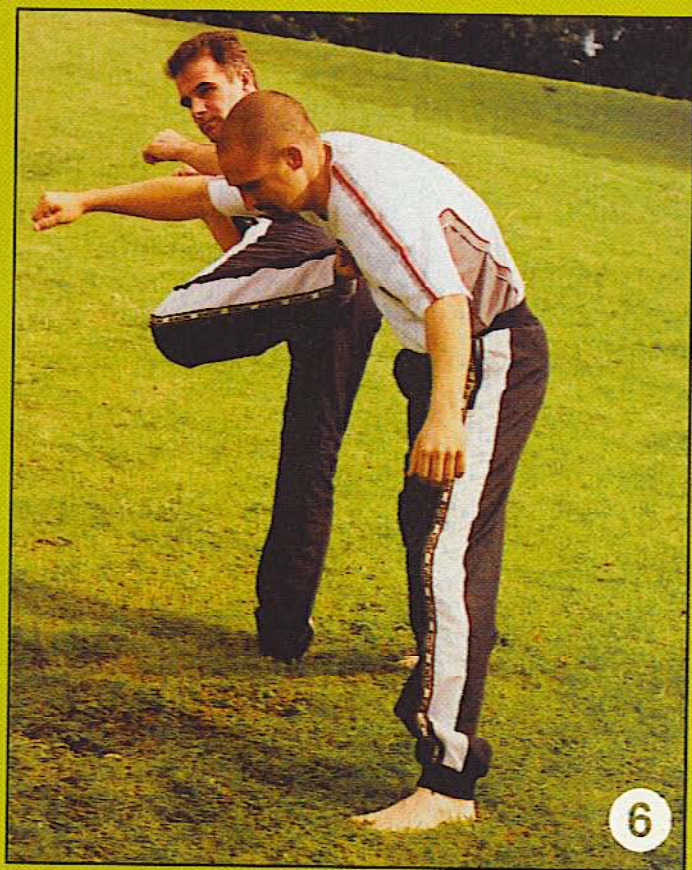
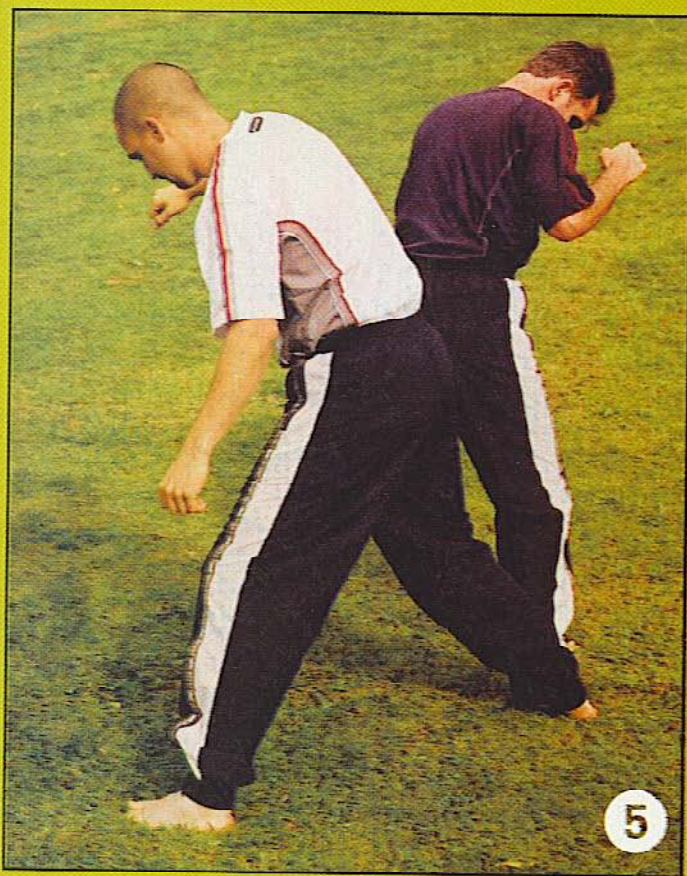
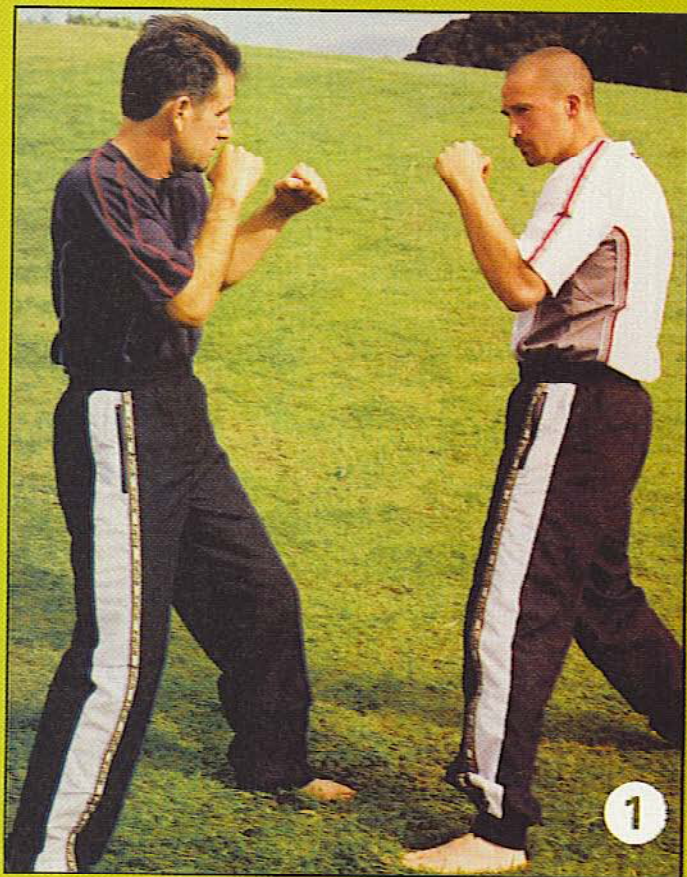
this fight being a comeback fight, I believe in my heart and my mind that I never went away. I'm older and wiser and I'm enjoying it more now, it's not all consuming either in the sense of what martial arts is, it's

one thing or another. I've got other aspects of my life as well and they're all sorted out, my wife and children and my business so I can spend more time doing what I really enjoy, it's not a hobby, it's more than a hobby".

"The guy I'm supposedly fighting is the Welsh champion. I'm not sure who he is, 63.5K and six rounds of two minutes. That's all I need to know. This will be my first major competition fight in ten years. So as you can imagine there's a lot going on in my head right now, the nerves and the buzz, the real buzz. But I know I can do it. If I didn't think I could do it, I would never have agreed to do it. Time wastes itself while we're preparing to live you know, while we're saying 'when that happens' and 'when I do that'. My philosophy is to take the bull by the horns. Do it now! Live now and enjoy doing it. Don't just talk about it".

"I love the game. I've never really been away from it even over all those years when I wasn't competing. I still trained. But people from different systems who see I'm still training with George Canning say I'm training with the best coach for kickboxing that there is. Because he's just pure kickboxing you know. The area that we train in has a couple of punch bags, a few chairs and tyres, but the training is absolutely excellent".

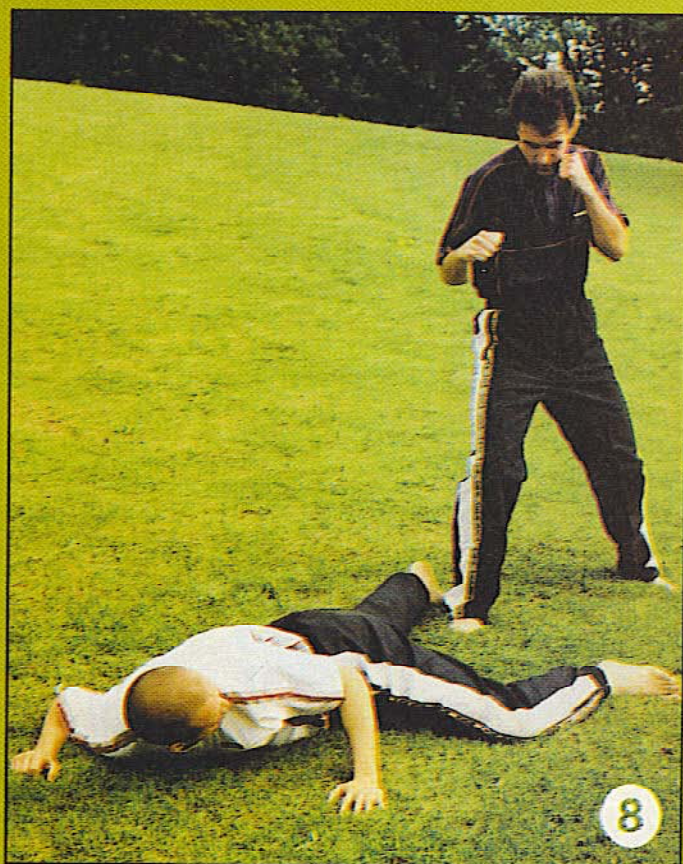
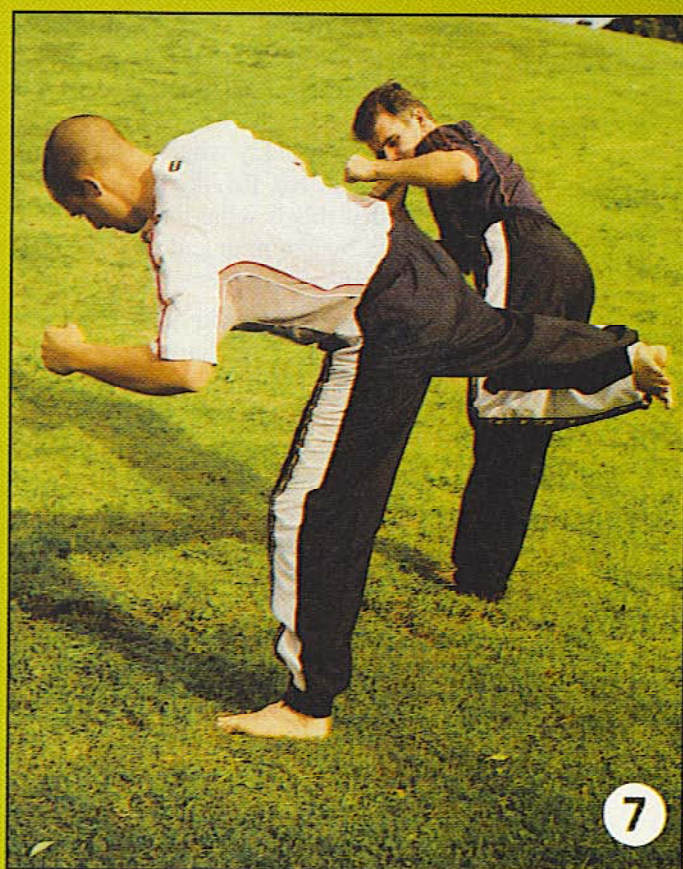
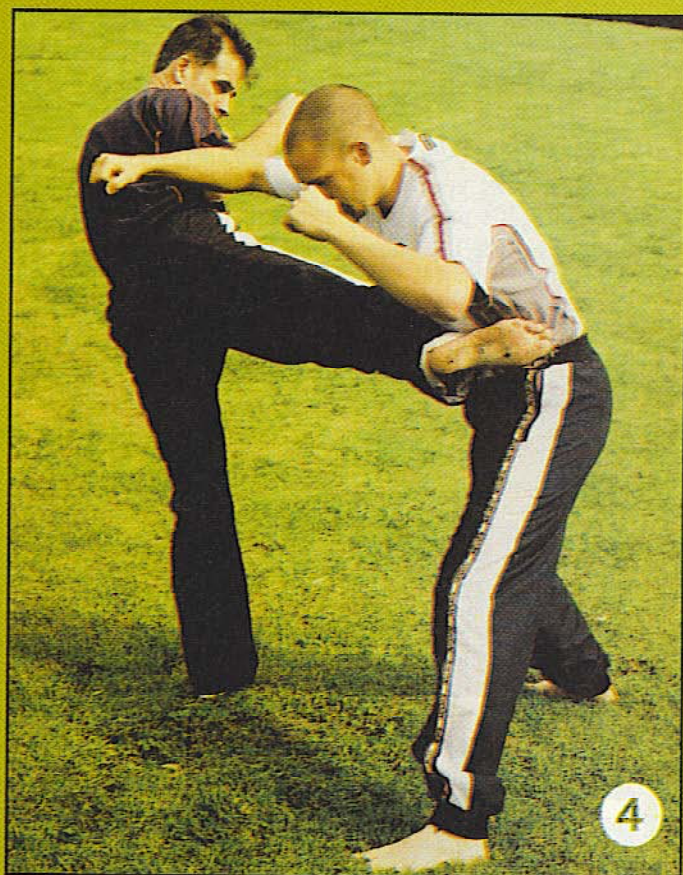
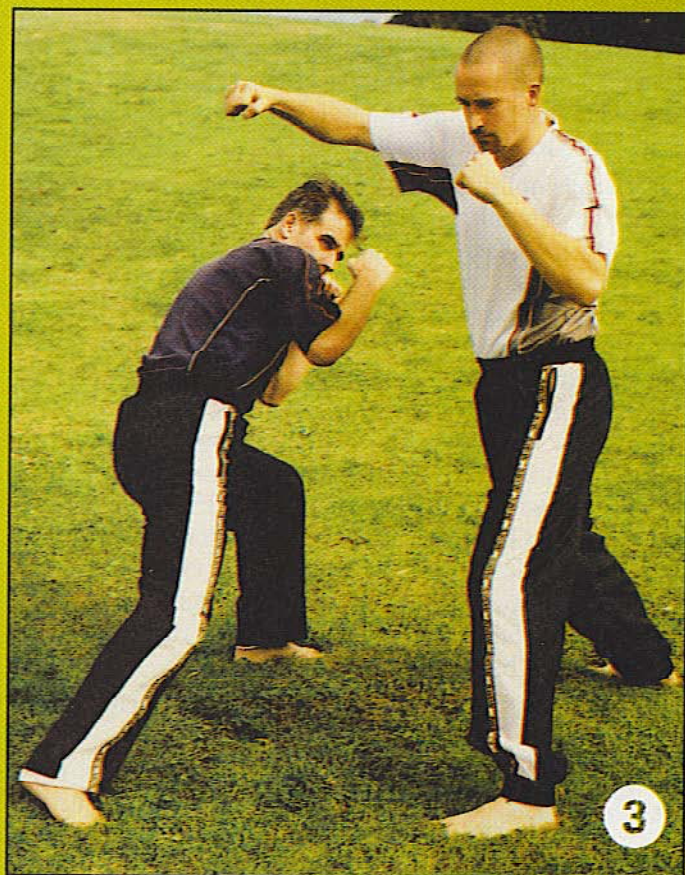
"His fighters are at a great standard, a huge standard, pure kickboxing. I can go in there and spar for say an hour or an hour and a half, really heavy stuff rather than going in and doing forms up and down the floor or two hours skipping, bit of this, bit of that you know. I go in and it's bump! Straight away into gloves and you're off. I find that the more time I spend in kickboxing and martial arts, the less I know".



At this point in the interview *Fighters Magazine* posed the question, "What will motivate you now? What I mean is you've probably achieved more than most would achieve in a fighting career. You stepped back out of it,

raised a family, got your business going and it's like the footballer who hangs up his boots, then he wants one more go. Is that what it is with you?"

To which Gerry Kidd replied, "I would like to be able



to take it as far as I can again like winning the world title at forty two. It's there for the taking and I believe I can do it. But I can see myself in maybe five or six years having my own place, my own operation because

as I've already said I'm already set up, I have my own business and that's going very, very well and now I can devote my time to doing what I really want to do. I don't want to be the guy at sixty-five saying I could

have done that, I should have done that, but I didn't. And even though I have achieved so much I just felt that I could have done a lot more and that's always been with me".

"If you still feel that good especially in fighting, I mean it's not like you're running a marathon distance. With fighting it's much more mental. Sixty percent is mind games. It's like chess. And I would go in purely

just the buzz, the adrenaline. And you know when you see two fighters get into the ring, everyone watching gets the butterflies, the feeling of anticipation, it's not like watching someone running laps around a track where you might get excited".

"There's nothing like watching two guys facing each other, the adrenaline rush fills the whole arena. And for that moment, that single moment when that bell goes to start round one, whatever you do outside the ring in your life, whatever you achieve is outmatched by that single moment. It's like getting in touch with your higher self. Why would I want to lose that? But having said that, I'm realistic about it. I'm forty two so I've set myself a goal of about five years. Then I will go on to teach and pass on the knowledge and experience that I have acquired and I am learning more and more as I go on. Even fighting again now I'm learning more and I find I'm more focussed because I'm older and wiser. For me the flame still burns brightly".

"On the family front I feel that with my three daughters; Sarah's ten, Rebecca's nine and Chloe is seven, I haven't gotten them into kickboxing yet because I want them to come to me. But I also want them to see the dedication that's needed in whatever they take, not just sport, whatever they decide to do whether it be music or literature or kickboxing. There are so many outside influences today what with television etc, I'd like to show them that this is what they need to do and to lead by example and to show them what you can achieve".

"Another point I would like to make is the fact that martial arts haven't changed in fifteen years. It hasn't moved forward. You don't see much, much better fights. You don't see much, much better skills. I mean like running, someone is always breaking the world record and then the next world record, but martial arts I feel hasn't grown in the last fifteen years. I just feel that the dedication isn't there now and I would like my children to feel that you must be committed to anything you want to achieve in life, whatever avenue you choose to go down. A lot of people take life for granted and time goes so fast".

"On a final note I would like to thank my wife Sylvia, my children, Sarah, Rebecca and Chloe and the rest of my family for their love and support and for making everything I have achieved possible. And a special thanks to Professor George Canning for being with me every step of the way".



Gerry Kidd with his instructor
Professor George Canning

with knowing that I'm in physically good shape, I have the movements and mentality-wise I'm one hundred percent focussed. Inside me I know I can do it. Since I was fourteen years of age my heart has been with the martial arts and you know once you get into the ring, it's