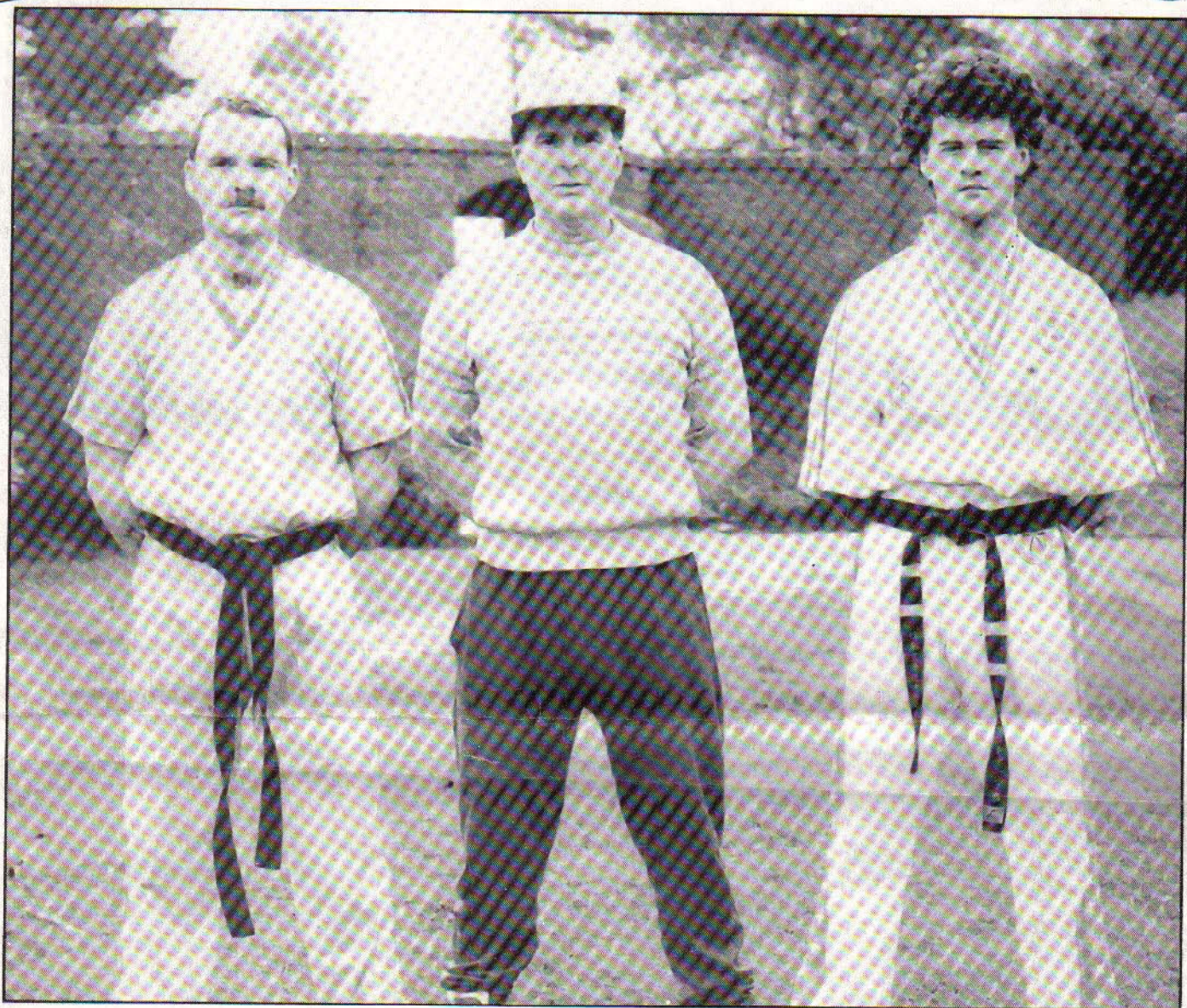


PROFILE ON

George and David Canning



BEGINNING in martial arts, at any age, is quite an undertaking and requires commitment. Add to this the pressure of having a father who is an acknowledged expert in the field, and the going can get pretty tough.

But not so for George and David Canning; their will to succeed and emulate their father does them proud. Through effort and hard work, plus dedicated training, they have risen to the top of their chosen sport. They could both have taken the easy route and ridden on their father's reputation. But with a father such as theirs — Mugendo

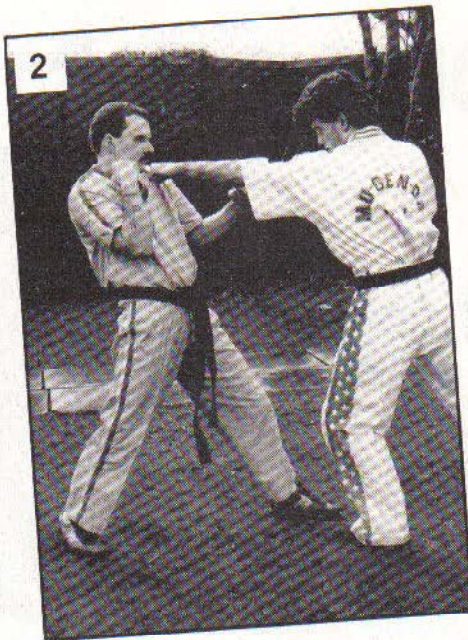
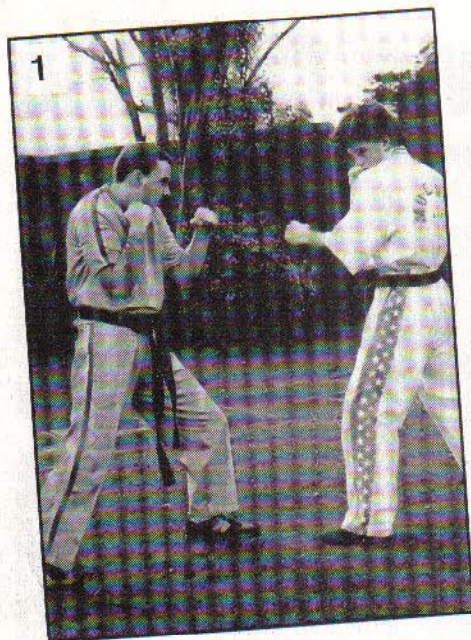
International supremo, George Canning — they knew that if they were going to take up the art they would have to take it up with determination, and succeed on all fronts.

They would have to work harder and train longer than all of the other students put together. Second best would be no good; they knew no special favours would be offered because they were the sons of the sensei. It was a case of all or nothing. And yet, in the light of perhaps all these daunting prospects, both boys jumped at the chance to learn the martial arts.

The lad's first real taste came when they were seven years old, beginning in Wado-ryu karate. As the years rolled on, the pair trained in the traditional karate form every day. After about five years or so David began to get a little fed up, and eventually opted out.

David gives his reasons for leaving at that time as: "Restricting! When I entered competitions I was always being pulled up for hitting too hard. Many times I could have beaten my opponent easily. It didn't seem right; I wanted to use so many techniques, but was always limited to what the rules allowed. Even when I won,

In the footsteps of their father



Mugendo Defence against the jab

1: The attacker jabs. • 2: The defender, rear foot back, leaning back at the same time. • 3, 4 and 5: Attacker throws a right punch. Defender moves the left foot, deflects with the right hand and turns the whole of his body. • 6: Defender uses left hook to take out the floating rib.

which I did on numerous occasions, I never felt any sense of achievement at doing so. At that time, my idea of a fight was: the man that's standing last wins. You know, that's the law of survival isn't it?"

Over the next few years, the Mugendo system was evolved by George Canning, Meiji Suzuki, Peter Meijic and Joe Johal. The rest is history, it became a system that caught on fast throughout the country. Many martial artists were looking for a way out from the traditional Japanese method.

When the new system was adopted fully, David Canning re-joined his

brother, George junior, at their father's club. But because he had been out of martial arts for so long, it was virtually like starting again from square one. On the other hand, George junior had made the transition easily and was fast building a reputation as a hard fighter.

Today, both boys have carved a name for themselves as fighters to be reckoned with.

When I asked David what his favourite technique was, he replied, "I like the hooks and jabs mostly. I think my favourite technique is the right cross; but that's today; I can't say what it will be two weeks from

now."

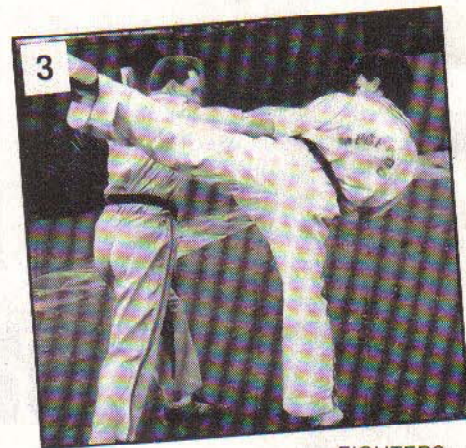
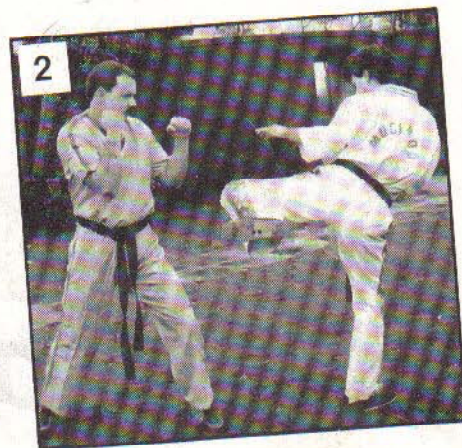
The same question was levelled at George junior, who replied: "I like to use everything. If you tend to develop a favourite technique, opponents watch out for it, and it could lead to your downfall. So, as I said, I like to use everything. After all, Mugendo is unlimited. At one time I did concentrate on my feet and foot techniques, but now I tend to use more hand movements."

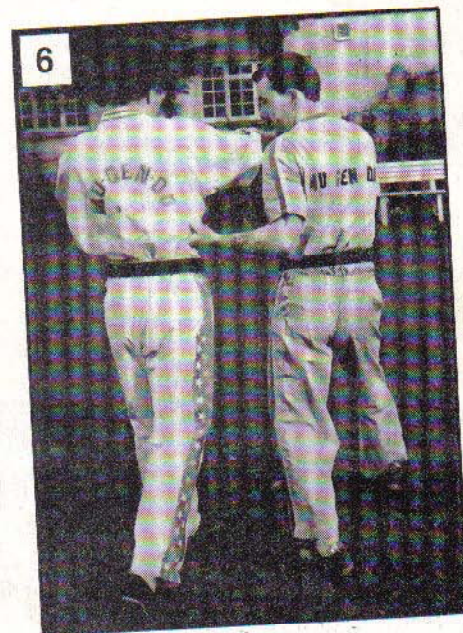
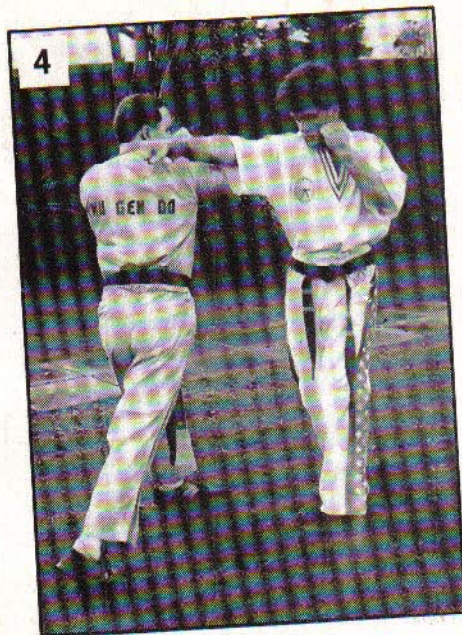
Future of Mugendo

I then posed the question of how they both, personally, saw the future for Mugendo.

George junior replied: "I reckon many more people will adopt the system, I am not being biased in saying this; it's just that I feel the potential for an all round fighting method is needed in this day and age.

"Mugendo is just that; everyone is





an individual. You can't really tell people what to do, they have to decide for themselves whether or not it is good Mugendo or bad. You do need enough martial arts knowledge to make the distinction though, at this level.

"Progress in a fighting art is very important, and Mugendo is progressing, it has to be. I wouldn't be doing it if it wasn't. I have spent a long time in the martial arts, and I think I can safely say that, as Mugendo becomes better known, many more martial artists (and non martial artists for that matter) will begin to adopt this system.

"Coming from traditional martial arts, I found the switch to Mugendo a little difficult at first. Especially the part where you have to keep your hands continually up to your face, protecting your jaw. The movements of Mugendo, being much more fluid than traditional karate, were a bit hard to get used to at first. I had spent seven or eight years being rigid, now I had to change it all.

"But, eventually, it all seemed to slot in perfectly; my competition achievements rose, I became junior champion, then later on, Irish Champion. With results like that I knew I was on the right route. It's all down to re-educating yourself and your body, martial arts wise.

Less Injuries

"Since taking up Mugendo I have had less injuries in tournaments that I ever had on the traditional scene. When I was doing Wado I had my nose broken three times. The

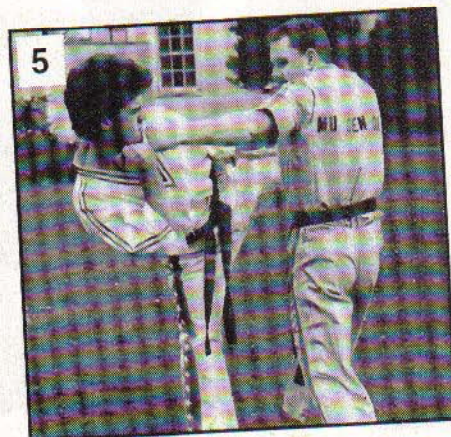
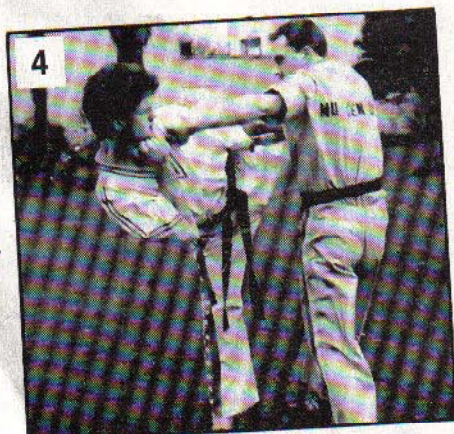
bobbing and weaving and the covering of Mugendo now prevent this from happening to me.

"My aims for the future are to become a champion at international level, but that's down to whether or not I do it right on the night. I know it's perhaps a chance in a million, but it's a chance I want to have a go at. I will certainly give it my best shot."

In answer to the same question, David Canning said, "When I first saw Mugendo in action, I was very impressed. Quite often today you hear of blackbelts being beaten up by green belts and even yellow belts.

Defence against the Roundhouse kick

1: Ready position. ● 2: Attacker attacks with left roundhouse kick. Defender steps off with the back foot. ● 3 and 4: Defender comes across with a right cross and left hook to the face. ● 5: The hook to the face. ● 6: Finishing off attacker with right foot sweep.



Now I know this doesn't apply to all schools, but in a lot of them, it does happen.

"When you hear this (and I've seen it) you start to think something is wrong. I know for a fact this could never happen in Mugendo. If you get a blackbelt you earn it. The whole regimen of training is different, my father and my brother

could never do the box splits when they were traditional, but they can now, with ease.

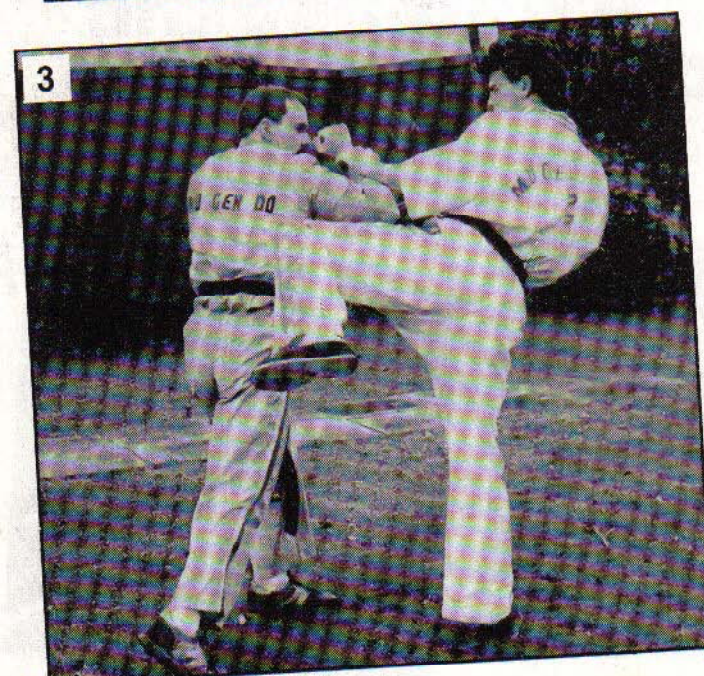
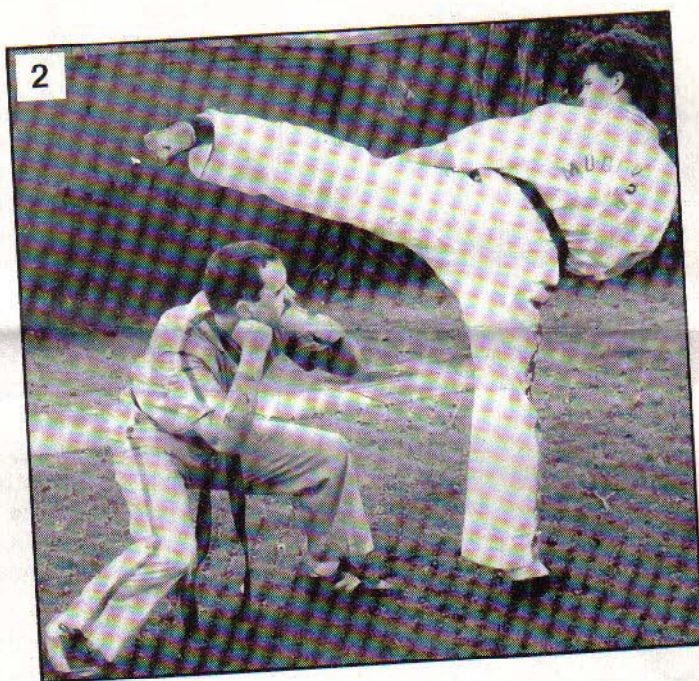
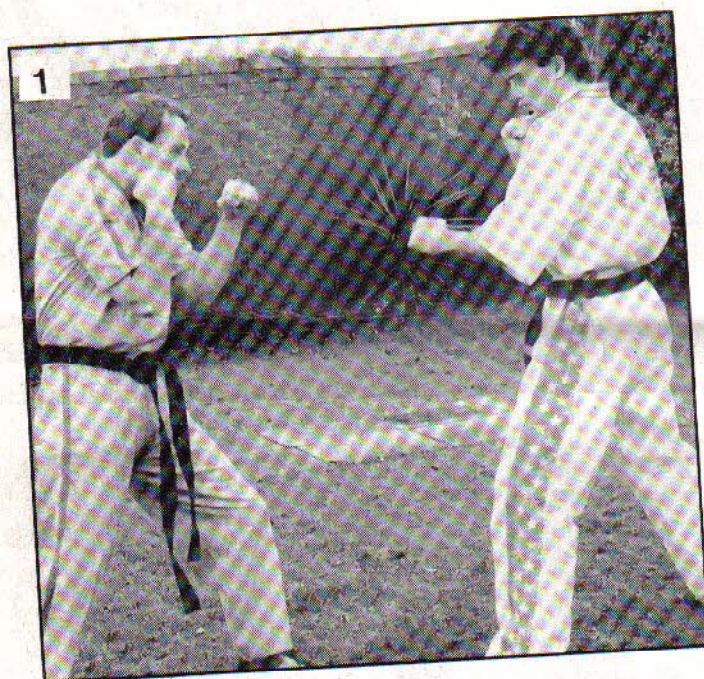
"Right from the start, I knew Mugendo was like nothing I had ever seen before. My father is well into his forties and he jumps and kicks like a young fella. So then I knew this was for me. I particularly like the Western boxer's approach

to the hand techniques. As I said, the training is very much harder. When we spar at our club, we spar for a full hour. It's altogether much more Westernised. I knew that if I threw myself completely into the system, I would eventually see the light at the end of the tunnel. Which now I have.

"I feel that now I am back into the martial arts, I am here for good. If I don't aspire to anything in the ring, then I will carry on as an instructor. If I am half as good as my father, I'll be on the right track. I have matured a lot since my early days in karate. I'm 24 now and a first degree blackbelt. I have got youth on my side, so I can give a lot of years to full contact and the

Defence against a back Roundhouse

1: Ready position. ● 2: Attacker attacks with back roundhouse kick. Defender ducks underneath the kick. ● 3 and 4: Defender disposes of his opponent with a left hook to the jaw.



kickboxing scene.”

Top Trainer

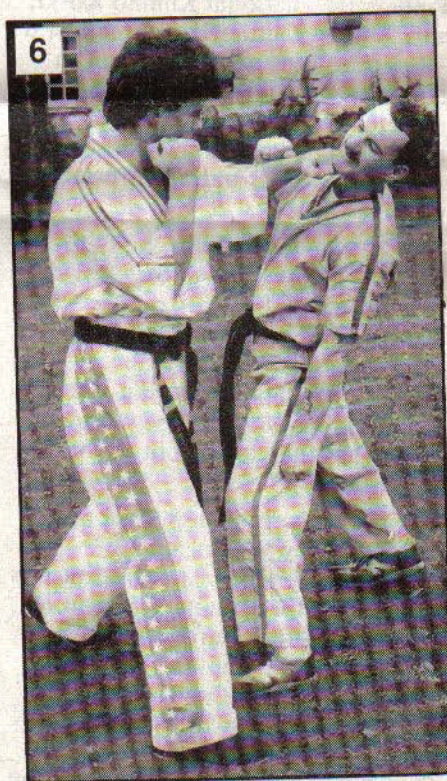
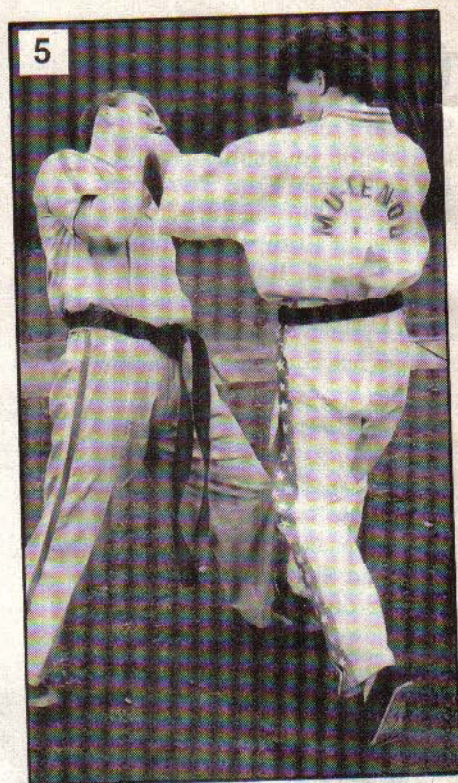
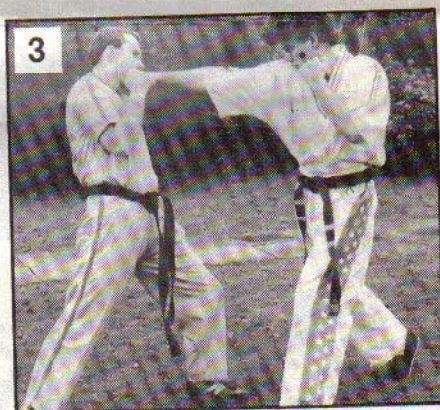
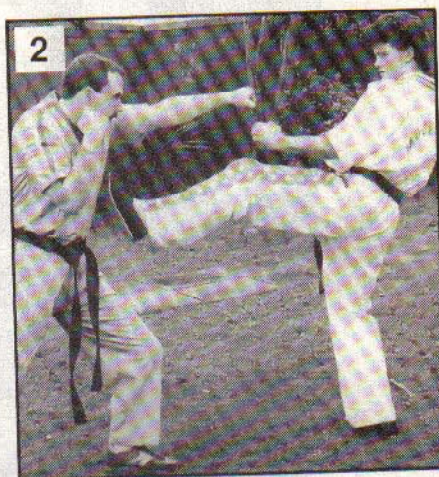
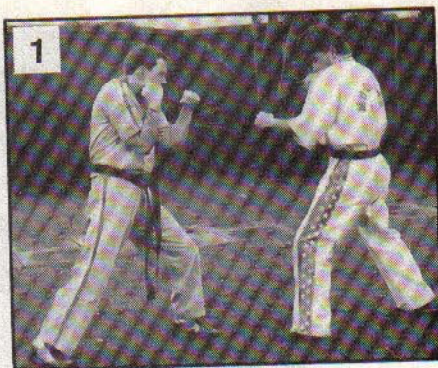
I asked George Canning junior what it was like to have his father as an instructor and trainer. He replied, “When I am in the dojo, I cease to become his son, it is student and instructor. The only thing is, it’s tougher on me than most, because I have to be number one. I work at the top and my father expects more out of me than anyone else, because I am his son. I train harder and have to be a lot sharper than everyone else, because of this fact.

“As a trainer, my father is one of the top in his field. He can understand you, and when he can understand your faults and favours, he can bring you on. Lots of instructors just teach and don’t bother to understand you. He brings the best out of me, and not just me. Everyone he trains feel that my father gives them the confidence to continue and improve. To know no limits is the basic essence of Mugendo. My father trains everyone to beyond their normal limit to make sure they turn out to be the best, I think this caring and concern for his students stands him out above many.”

Revolution

And the last word from George Canning junior: “Mugendo as I see it, is a new revolution in the martial arts. Its power and potential have to be seen to be understood. A few people believe that because it’s not really from the Orient it can’t be much good. So, like our American cousins say, ‘Don’t knock it until you have tried it.’ Or at least learn something about it”.

Mugendo is a fast growing martial art. A martial art of the twentieth century. It is continually growing, re-shaping, developing — and very, very much progressive. Students from the tradition arts are coming over in more than just a trickle. To see what it is all about. People have commented that Mugendo is Western boxing with kicks. This is not the case, it is art indeed very much a martial. Just ask the people who practise it . . .



Variation on the Mugendo Jab Defence

1: Ready position. ● 2: Attacker moves in with a jab. Defender front kicks underneath the jab. ● 3 and 4: Defender follows through with a right cross. ● 5 and 6: Defender finishes off attacker with a left hook straight onto the jaw.

