

The Japan Society Year in Review 2015

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The Japan Society's membership is diverse, both in age and background. Anyone is welcome who supports the Society's aims and who wishes to join a community of people with an active interest in UK-Japan relations and in learning more about each other's life and culture. Our educational mission informs all areas of the programme, which strikes a balance between those activities tailored to particular interests and those designed to provide new opportunities for participation by the general public. We try to ensure that our activities are widely accessible, and events during the year included those open to both members and non-members, as well as a significant number which were free or low cost.

In 2015, the Society organised over ninety different events across the different areas of its outreach, including Arts & Culture, Lifestyle, Lectures, Education and Business Events, as well as special annual fixtures. The general events programme included: the Annual Dinner, Christmas party; fourteen business related events; thirteen conversation group events; twenty-one events aimed at younger members or families; four chairman's events; thirteen lectures and ten arts and culture events.

The business network

During the year, the programme of business events addressed issues of mutual concern to Japanese and non-Japanese members, providing briefings by senior experts and opportunities to engage in discussion. The chairman held a series of small lunches, generously hosted by member companies, in which key figures based in both the UK and Japan were invited to meet senior members of the Society. Subjects in 2015 included finance and economics (Peter Tasker, Japan-based financial expert, and commentator, Sir Jon Cunliffe, Deputy Governor, Bank of England), and security and defence (Sir Kim Darroch, National Security Advisor, and the Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP, Secretary of State for Defence).

Larger business lectures and seminars looked in more depth at a wide-range of subjects. Early in the year Glen Fukushima, in conversation with David Warren, gave his analysis of the political and economic situation facing the Abe Government following election victory in December 2014.

This was followed by a seminar on Cybersecurity at BT; an assessment of global threats by Richard Fenning, CEO of Control Risks; a view on Energy and Climate Change pre COP21 by Hattori Takashi, Head of the Environment & Climate Change Unit, International Energy Agency; a discussion on the UK's relationship with the European Union, with author and journalist, Bill Emmott and Mizutori Mami; an overview of the world grains market by Kitahara Etsuo, Executive Director of the International Grains Council; corporate governance by Michael Woodford, former President & CEO of Olympus; and a vision for Tokyo's future development by Masuzoe Yōichi, Governor of Tokyo.

The Society continued to arrange joint lunches in conjunction with the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the UK, which provided opportunities for Japanese and non Japanese to meet and to hear from guest speakers, who were during the year: Philip Stephens, Associate Editor, *Financial Times* and Robin Niblett, Director, Chatham House. A special lunch organised with members of the UK-Japan 21st Century Group on the occasion of its 32nd Annual Meeting, led to animated discussion on topics on the Group's agenda, including climate change and energy policy; geopolitics and security challenges; the future of the EU; collaboration in science & technology innovation; and approaches to social security issues.

The Japan Society values its partnerships with other organisations with similar aims and interests in developing a programme which is of interest and benefit to the membership. During 2015, the Society cooperated with UKTI, JETRO, Chatham House, and the Japan Security Dealers' Association to provide opportunities for members to build networks and hear from experts.

A wide-ranging programme

As always, the Society's general programme in 2015 included events designed to reflect the diverse interests and enthusiasms of its members. An annual highlight is the address given by the serving British Ambassador to Japan, which was given in March by Tim Hitchens, reflecting on a year of economic and political ups and downs. This was heavily over-subscribed, with a capacity audience filling the auditorium at Nomura International for the talk and stimulating question and answer session. (The transcript of this lecture was printed in *Proceedings 151*).



The lifestyle calendar in 2015 was as busy as ever, with a range of regular events such as the Japanese Conversation Group's monthly meetings for those wishing to maintain and improve their language skills, and the book club, where regular and occasional participants came together every second Monday of the month for lively discussions on a wide range of books including literary classics, anthologies and contemporary fiction. What was to have been a book launch for Dorothy Britton's Memoir became a moving tribute to the life of a remarkable woman by those who had known her.

Those looking for more active engagement participated in various sporting events. The annual golf fixtures saw the Japan Society team defeated for the second year in succession by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in the Collar Cup, while Wakiwaka Eiji won the Japan Society golf tournament. Members visited Twickenham as spectators for World Rugby 7s Finals Day, while others participated in a five-a-side football tournament at the Samurai Football Academy.

The Society participated in events surrounding the Satsuma 150 anniversary described in Andrew Cobbing's lecture reprinted in this volume. Members provided homestays for some of the nineteen 21st century students in July and joined the Kagoshima visitors for a challenging Satsuma-themed pub quiz. Our education team took Izaku Taiko Odori and Satsuma Kenshi Hayato performers to visit primary schools in London and Oxford for special performances and workshops.

During 2015, we organised a number of family-friendly events, ranging from a choral workshop to a Christmas craft day. A Tanabata Festival was held in August, this time in collaboration with Kew Gardens and the Embassy of Japan. Over two days, some thirty volunteers and members of Japan Society staff helped visitors make origami decorations at a popular event which also involved a treasure trail based on the tanabata story, tours of the bamboo garden and a *kamishibai* story-telling with Kuroda Haruka of A Thousand Cranes.

Members of the Society also visited Kew for a private view, led by the artist, of an exhibition of Yamanaka Masumi's botanical drawings of trees in the famous Gardens. Private views were also arranged to Miura Isao's *Sketches from the Poem Road* and Shimotani Ichijoh's exhibition of *bokusai* paintings *Life and Hopes for the Future*, where they also participated in a practical workshop. There were a number of musical events during the year: a choral workshop was led by Jonathan Gregory of the UK-Japan Choir, after which a number of participants joined the choir which always welcomes new members. In July, we were joined by virtuoso *gidayu*, Nozawa Matsuya, for an introduction to *jōruri*, a form of traditional storytelling which usually accompanies *kabuki* and *bunraku* (puppet theatre). In this event, Nozawa demonstrated the *jōruri* techniques with a telling of the famous folk tale, *Momotarō*. Prior to the premier of his new work *Mme Butterfly*, performer Ignacio Jarquin captivated us with a discussion of his collaboration with



composer Michael Finnissy and how together they have combined *nihon buyo*, *noh* and a contemporary operatic score in imagining what happened to the son of Puccini's heroine.

The Japan Society again partnered the Japan Association, Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Nippon Club to stage Japan Matsuri on 19 September in Trafalgar Square. Coinciding with Japan's opening match of the Rugby World Cup, this proved to be a memorable day with victory over the mighty Springboks. There was plenty to enjoy on the Square too, this year with a Satsuma 150 theme. The splendid costumes of the Izaku Taiko Odori performers rose above the crowds as they performed between the iconic fountains, while on stage the popular television character Satsuma Kenshi Hayato was pursued to London by his foe, Yassembō. Participating *yurukyara* mascot characters this year also had a Satsuma theme, as we were joined by Guribu and Kagobu, to the delight of children and adults alike. There was still room for old favourites, including the quirky Frank Chickens and Hirota Joji's London Taiko Drummers. Rooted in the UK's Japan-related community, Matsuri also showcases performances by local schools and community groups, including the Japanese School,



Satsuma mascots, Guribu and Kagobu on stage at Japan Matsuri. Photo Moribayashi Masaaki. London Bunka Yochien, Teikyo School and the British Suzuki Institute. The event would not be complete without Japanese festival food, stalls introducing a range of products and services, and activities for all the family.

London Lectures

The lectures programme in 2015 as usual covered a wide range of subject matter. The monthly academic lecture, held every third Monday at Swedenborg Hall, formed the core of this aspect of our public programming. In addition to those featured in this volume, lectures in 2014 included a discussion of the issues facing low-skilled foreign workers in Japan, by Kristin Surak, Senior Lecturer in Japanese Politics at SOAS; a look at the lives of Japanese Prime Ministers after leaving office by Hugo Dobson, Head of the School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield; Bakumatsu Kabuki Heroes by Alan Cummings, Senior Teaching Fellow at SOAS; a study of Japan's demography and the implications for social policy by Roger Goodman, Head of the Social Sciences Division at Oxford University; and an analysis of Japan's lifetime employment system by Peter Matanle, Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies at the School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield. The sixth annual lecture in memory of Dr Carmen Blacker, organised jointly with the Sainsbury

Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, was given by John Breen and is reprinted in this volume.

A special debate was organized with the International Friendship and Reconciliation Trust to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of the Asia Pacific War, and brought together experts Barak Kushner, Rana Mitter and Francis Pike for a wide-ranging discussion under the chairmanship of Alessio Patalano. Other ad-hoc lectures covered topics such as the tradition of ekiden races in Japan, by Adharanand Finn; Tattoo art by Okazaki Manami; and Kyoto's International Links by Pauline Chakmakjian (in association with Japan Room).

Japan Society Small Grants

An annual sum of up to £30,000 is set aside for grants in support of small-scale projects and events related to Japan. These grants provide opportunities for people throughout the UK to participate in education and exchange relating to Japan and thus contribute to raising awareness and understanding of the country and its culture in places where the Japan Society has no regular contact. Priority is given to applications for grassroots projects and for activities involving schools and other educational establishments. In 2015, 42 grants were made averaging £575 with funding totalling £24,150 being awarded. In line with the objectives of the grants scheme, most of the activities supported had an educational element, fostered exchange between the UK and Japan, or provided opportunities to bring Japanese culture to a wide group of people.

12 primary schools and 10 secondary schools and youth groups were involved in extended projects, ranging from whole school Japan days to interdisciplinary learning days and enrichment weeks. Japan Society support for these events allows schools to bring in experts to run specialist workshops to complement and enrich curriculum-based studies. These included Japan days at Marners Primary School, Tower Hamlets and St Albans CE Primary School, Rotherham, while pupils at Westdene Primary School, Brighton, enjoyed a series of workshops to celebrate the selection of their choir to perform at a welcome ceremony for Japan's rugby team. A visit by students from a Japanese partner school gave one secondary school the opportunity to run language learning activities with neighbouring primary schools, while a group of teachers spent time preparing together in advance



of a series of global education workshops with Japanese counterparts in Fukushima, Tokyo and Kyoto.

Other arts related projects include community and adult education workshops with visiting Bizen potter, Ishida Kazuya, including a workshop, demonstration and lecture about the Bizen tradition and the potter's experience. Master woodblock carver Asaka Motoharu spent 10 days in the UK, conducting workshops and giving demonstrations and lectures at eight locations including university art departments, printmaking studios and an art and design sixth form college.

Distinct Impressions: Prism 5 brought together 32 emerging printmakers for a shared exhibition including 14 from Japan and 10 from the UK. This was the fifth in a series of events which provide a forum for artistic exchange and education. Muscicity's *Reflections of Sumida* along London's Southbank presented a new way to experience Japan, allowing people to listen to recordings of Bashō poems in English and Japanese set against a soundscape of Tokyo's Sumida river.

Koto workshops and lectures by musicians from Tokyo University of the Arts, provided inspiration for students of performance and composition at the Royal Academy of Music, while Stirling University's Japan Week included language classes, lectures, receptions as well as cultural events and performances. Japan Society small grants also supported Japan festivals in Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Kent.



Woodblock carver Motoharu Asaka at Central St Martins.

Schools Education

The schools education programme has been developed out of a belief in the value to young people in the UK of growing up with an awareness and understanding of Japan and its culture. In addition to historical and business reasons for learning about a key international partner, there are more general benefits of broadening horizons and raising aspirations. Through its activities for schools, the Society supports teachers, who may have limited experience of Japan themselves, in providing these opportunities for their students.

Throughout the year, the Society's education team provides advice and resources to schools engaged in teaching and learning activities relating to Japan. As well as working in partnership with local authorities, it offers materials directly to schools throughout the country, including loan resources supplied to approximately seventy schools each year.

The Japan Conference for Schools organised with the Japan Foundation at the Embassy of Japan involved over 50 teachers taking part in a series of practical workshops alongside discussion groups on topics including school linking; introducing Japanese to the curriculum; sharing teaching resources; and teaching Japanese to dyslexic students. In this year's key note speech Lorraine Cooper, Deputy Head of Maryland Primary School



in Newham, reported on her trip to Osaka in 2014 to research methods of teaching critical thinking skills.

150 sixth form students of Japanese and their teachers attended a one-day conference on 5 November which aimed to provide insights into life in Japan and less familiar aspects of Japanese culture. The event included a keynote speech by Takiyama Susumu, Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief of Nikkei Europe. A talk by a former British student, who had spent time at university in Japan, provided information on opportunities to continue the study of Japan and Japanese after leaving school. Representatives of British and Japanese universities attended and gave participants advice and information on future courses of study.

During the year visits were made by volunteers in Greater London, Brighton, Derby, Manchester and South Wales to over 50 schools. For most students a Japan in Your Classroom visit is their first opportunity to meet a Japanese person and to hear about Japan first-hand; the visits have a lasting impact. A special visit was arranged for Izaku Taiko Odori performers from Kagoshima, who visited schools in London and Oxford to give a performance and run workshops as part of the Satsuma 150 celebrations.

Volunteers also ran a range of workshops and activities as part of South West London Scouts summer camp, coinciding with the Scout Jamboree being held in Yamaguchi Prefecture, and giving a taste of Japan to Scouts within the UK.

Support for school links has continued to be an important element

of the Society's work. During 2015, new partnerships were established and existing links strengthened through exchange trips. Kobe University Fuzoku Junior High School again visited the UK, this time taking students to participate in exchanges with three partner schools, Cirencester Deer Park School, Alleyn's School in London and Thomas Hardy School in Dorchester. Cropwell Primary School in Nottingham had another successful visit from their partner, Komaki Elementary School in Nagano, this year with the support of Heymann Primary School who are starting to develop their own exchange with Wakatsuki Elementary School. In the virtual world, some 60 school partnerships are now using Japan UK LIVE! and related services to develop their links. Takamatsu Daiichi Senior High School again visited County Upper School in Bury St Edmunds, for an exchange focused on science activities.

From June 2015, Kuroda Saki has been working in Japan to provide additional support to schools engaged in linking activities. Over the next five years, we have the opportunity to build on increased interest in international activities leading up to the 2019 Rugby World Cup and 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, in order to recruit additional schools to participate in school linking activities. Having a staff member in Japan, to support this activity by running workshops and visiting schools will facilitate this process. In the long term, we intend to rent desk space in a small office.

Japan Society Publications

At the end of 2014, the board re-established a publications committee with a brief to review the Society's work in publishing and identify material for future consideration. A general invitation for proposals was issued in early 2015 and fifteen received, which were then reviewed by the committee. Work is currently underway on an illustrated book for children and several other proposals were taken forward for further consideration. Work began on two other publications, due to be issued in 2016: *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits Vol X* and a history of Japanese Studies in the UK.

During 2015 an e-library portal was created and work began behind the scenes to add content. This will be launched in 2016 to commemorate the Society's 125th anniversary. Comprising in the first instance, books in the *Biographical Portraits* series, this will be further developed to provide greater access to important material in the Japan Society archives.