

The Japan Society Year in Review 2016

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The Japan Society celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2016, which provided an opportunity to reflect on how much has changed over the intervening period. However, ignoring the many social, technological, political and economic differences between Britain in Victorian times and that of today, some things remain the same. The founders of the Japan Society were fascinated by Japan and its language, culture and traditions, and actively sought to share knowledge and develop understanding. This is still at the heart of our mission. From the outset, the Society welcomed both British and Japanese members and encouraged friendships alongside learning. Over the years, our membership has become more diverse, being open to anyone who supports the Society's aims, and no longer requiring approval by committee. It includes people who have lived and worked in Japan, those seeking to find out more about the country, Japanese people living in the UK both permanently and on secondment, businesses working between Japan and the UK and their staff, as well as students and academics. Our youngest members are in their teens and our oldest in their 90s. Education in its broadest sense continues to be central to our programme, whether events for members and the general public; work with schools and youth groups; support for community and regional projects through the small grants scheme; or our publications.

In this special year, the Society was honoured to be awarded the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation for its role in promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the United Kingdom. The bestowal ceremony took place at an anniversary dinner on 2 November, with special guest, Sir John Major. In presenting the award, Ambassador Tsuruoka praised the Japan Society as a major player in the evolution of the Japan-UK partnership, having striven tirelessly over its long history to foster the warm ties that unite our two countries. In response, speaking on behalf of the Japan Society, Sir David Warren thanked the Japanese Government for extending its recognition in this way and paid tribute to the many individual and cooperate members whose support had been crucial to the Society's success. Among the guests at the dinner were two former chairmen, Sir Hugh Cortazzi and Christopher Purvis, under whose

leadership the Society flourished and who continue to offer great support.

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. These included a chairman's lunch, hosted by King & Wood Mallesons LLP where Bridget Kendall, Master of Peterhouse, University of Cambridge, and former BBC diplomatic correspondent, spoke about the state of Russian-EU relations. This provided senior members of the Society's business community with the opportunity to meet to share ideas and information, while being briefed on an issue of particular relevance.

Other larger-scale business lectures and seminars were also generously hosted by corporate members of the Society, or organised in partnership with others. One such was a seminar by Robert Ward, Editorial Director of the Economist Intelligence Unit, who introduced the Unit's long-term forecasts for the UK and Japan, looking ahead to 2050. Kimura Tadakazu, former editor of the *Asahi Shimbun* joined Japan Society Chairman, David Warren, in conversation about the occasionally difficult relationship between the media and politics.

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: Sir Edward Lister, Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor for Policy and Planning, GLA; the Japanese Ambassador, Mr Hayashi Keiichi; and Lord Mandelson, who gave his views on Britain and Europe ahead of the June referendum.

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. In the current economic climate, the sharing of up to date information and best practice is particularly important. Two seminars were held in association with JETRO, in which Koyama Ken, Chief Economist of the Institute of Energy Economics, gave a Japanese perspective on World Energy; and a seminar with Kenichi Kawasaki of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, considered the impact of the EU-Japan EPA Free Trade Agreement.

The Japan Society • Cultivating the UK-Japan relationship since 1891 • 125 1891-2016

9 September 1891

The Japan Society is founded during the International Congress of Orientalists when Arthur Diosy explains a society for the encouragement of Japanese studies and for the purpose of bringing together all those in the United Kingdom, and throughout the world, interested in Japanese matters. Its objectives are stated as the 'encouragement of the study of the Japanese Language, Literature, History and Folk-Lore, of Japanese Art, Science and Industries, of the Social, Life and Economic Condition of the Japanese People, past and present, and of all Japanese matters'.

One year later, in his speech at the first annual dinner in the Whitehall Rooms of the Hotel Metropole, Diosy tells attendees that 'if the Japan Society succeeds, in the course of years, in twisting one more silken thread into the red cord between the hearts of the people of Japan and the hearts of the people in Britain, then, I think, our Society will not have existed in vain'.
A Punch caricature of Diosy:



8 December 1891

The first meeting of the council, formed by Diosy, Daigoro Goh – Chancellor at the Japanese Consulate General in London – and F.J. Piggott. The Society at this point numbers 126 members, among them merchant Arthur Lasenby Liberty, artist Alfred East and art dealer W.B. Huish. Professor William Anderson takes the chair. The Society's offices are at 20 Hanover Square, and subscribers are one guinea.

29 April 1892

For the inaugural meeting of the Society, at the Royal Society of Arts, T. Shidachi speaks on 'Ju-Jitsu, the Ancient Art of Self-Defence by Slight of Body'. The lecturer repeatedly throwing Mr Goh over his head, apparently with the greatest of ease.
The Japan Society quickly became an important forum, alongside the Asiatic Society, providing stimulus for scholarship and an outlet for research,

11 November 1892

Emperor Meiji gifts 100 guineas to the Japan Society, conveying his hope for its continued prosperity.

1914-1918

During the First World War, the Japan Society's ordinary meetings continue, but activities are curtailed. A series of lectures is given on 'Japan's naval, medical and financial contributions to the war effort.'

14 November 1962

The Society, with the Japan Association and Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI), welcomes Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda to a reception marking the signing of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation.



1995

Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama announces a worldwide initiative to mark the 50th anniversary of the war. The Japan Society is asked to administer the British arm of this programme, the Anglo-Japanese History Project, with the first books published in 1998.

2016

Publication of the tenth volume in the *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits* series, which along with its sister publications has recorded the lives of over 600 men, women and institutions who have played a significant role in UK-Japan relations. 2016 also marks the launch of the Japan Society Education Library, the first stage in an on-going digitalisation project.

15 April 1937

This is the programme from a lunch given to mark the first flight from Japan to Europe. Aviators Masasaki Irima and Kenji Tsukagoshi fly almost 10,000 miles in just over 94 hours, landing at Croydon airport on 9 April 1937.



1910

The Society plays a significant role in the 1910 Japanese Exhibition, Shepard's Bush, in particular presenting an exhibit on the development of Anglo-Japanese relations.



7 October 1971

The Japan Society hosts a joint reception with Nippon Club, the Japan Association and the JCCI for IIM Emperor Hirohito and Empress Nagako as part of a visit marking a new beginning in UK-Japan relations.



1988

The Society changes its name from the Japan Society of London to the Japan Society to better reflect the scope of its activities.



28 September 1949

Regular lectures and social activities continue in the 1950s, but on 1 April 1949, the decision is taken to formally suspend activities. The Society is revived in 1949, and at the first meeting of the new council its membership totals 199. Lectures begin again in the 1950s and the Society works towards improved understanding between the two countries in the aftermath of the war.



13 May 1921

The Society gives a banquet for HH The Crown Prince (Emperor Showa), also attended by HRH The Duke of York (King George VI). By this time the Society has already hosted numerous events welcoming visiting Japanese royalty, and will continue to do so.



19 September 2009

Matsuri are an important expression of Japanese community and have taken various guises over the years. Today's annual Japan Matsuri is held in Trafalgar Square in early autumn and attracts tens of thousands of people. The first in this series of Matsuri took place at Spitalfields market and exceeded all expectations. Japan Matsuri is co-organised with the Japanese Residents' Association, the Embassy of Japan, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the UK and Nippon Club.
Photo: Masaaki Moribayashi

2010 to 2002

As its contribution to Japan 2001, the Japan Society organises A Garden Becomes an exhibition exploring the wealth of plant material produced from Japan to the West, featuring traditional artworks of gardening from the 17th Century onwards. The exhibition takes place in both Edinburgh and London.

2007

The Japan Society merges with Japan 21, taking on its extensive grassroots education programme.

2016

The Japan Society is honoured to be awarded the Japan Foreign Ministers' Commendation for its promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and the UK.

1891-1901

1902-29

1930-1948

1949-1970

1971-1990

1991-2000

2001-2016

Planned celebrations to mark the Japan Society's centenary, grow into the nationwide Japan Festival 1991. Highlights include Sumo at the Royal Albert Hall, Grand Kabuki at the National Theatre, an exhibition of Buddhist sculpture at the British Museum, and a survey of the Meiji movement at the Burrell Collection. At a reception given by the Lord Mayor and Corporation at the Guildhall, HRH The Crown Prince remarks that 'During these 100 years, the Society has been the focus of goodwill and enthusiasm of those who were eager to promote friendship between both our countries'. The Japan Festival Education Trust and the Japan Festival Fund ensure that the Festival leaves a lasting legacy.
1991 also sees the opening of the Kyoto Garden in Holland Park, where the dedication stone pays tribute to the work of the Society.

Japan 2001

Japan 2001 celebrates Japanese culture with a yearlong programme of over 2000 events throughout the UK. The emphasis throughout is on grass-roots education and exchange, with events involving over 250 schools. Following the festival, the Japan Festival Education Trust and the Japan Festival Fund today become Japan 21, which in 2007 will merge with the Japan Society. Today the Japan Society's education programme continues; the spirit of both festivals, broadening children's horizons and making Japan something accessible rather than distant and strange.

The general events programme

As always, the Society's general programme in 2016 included events designed to reflect the diverse interests and enthusiasms of its members. An annual highlight is the address by the serving British Ambassador to Japan, which was given in March by Tim Hitchens, reflecting on the previous year and ongoing cooperation between our two governments on economic and security issues, as well as highlighting connections on a more individual level. The event was well attended, with a capacity audience filling the auditorium at Nomura International for the talk which was followed by a question and answer session. (The transcript of this lecture was printed in *Proceedings* 152).

Under our 'lifestyle' heading, we continued to offer 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 and contemporary fiction. Book launch events during the year looked at the Japanese experience in wartime Shanghai, with Keiko Itoh's novel based on the life of her mother, and celebrated the publication of Ian Nish's *History of Manchuria*. The Society also joined with the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts & Cultures to mark the launch of *Carmen Blacker - Scholar of Religion, Myth and Folklore*, an important collection of writings, diaries and related lectures.

One of the most popular events of the year was an evening in conversation with Eddie Jones, England rugby's inspirational head coach and former coach of the Japanese national team, hosted by Clifford Chance. From his experience working with top sportsmen in the two countries, Eddie Jones provided insights into differences in the culture of elite sportsmen in the UK and Japan. His acute observations and passion for his work were an inspiration to all who attended.

Practical activities during the year ranged from sport to cooking! The annual golf fixtures saw the Japan Society team regain the Collar Cup from the Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, while John Mills won the Japan Society golf tournament. The Japan Society again participated in the five-a-side football tournament at the Samurai Football



Eddie Jones with the Japan Society team

Academy, this year fielding two teams, one of which reached the semi-finals. Less energy was expended in the cookery workshops, the first of which gave an introduction to *shojin ryori*, Japanese temple cuisine and which seemed to strike a chord with members keen to extend their repertoire. Parents and children had the opportunity to work together in making Hallowe'en themed bento in a workshop hosted by Clearspring.

Japan Society volunteers provided kimono and calligraphy workshops at the Victoria & Albert Museum's Japan Festival for Families, as well as at the Tanabata Festival at Kew, which has become an annual fixture. The Society again partnered with Kew Gardens and the Embassy of Japan in organising this celebration, appropriately held in the *minka* and bamboo garden over two days in August. This was followed by the eighth annual Japan Matsuri, held in Trafalgar Square on 25 September. In 2016, the event received special support from the Japan Foundation to bring the Aozasa Shishi-Odori Dance Troupe and Tezuma the magician to London. We were delighted to welcome again the NHK Radio Taiso demonstration team, who enthusiastically mobilised visitors to the

Square in gentle physical exercise. Japan Matsuri remains true to its roots in the UK's Japan-related community, and provides opportunities to enjoy performances by local schools and community groups, including the Japanese School, London Bunka Yochien, Teikyo School, the British Suzuki Institute, Nippon Club's Green Chorus, Okinawa Sanshinkai and many others.



The Aozasa Shishi-Odori Dance Troupe on stage at Japan Matsuri 2016

Arts and culture events are always popular with members and included a lecture by Toyoda Koji, one of Suzuki Shinichi's first students, who spoke about the pioneering Suzuki method of teaching the violin and its international impact, followed by a performance from young students in the UK. It was particularly appropriate in the year which saw the sad loss of Ninagawa Yukio, that the Society partnered with Shakespeare's Globe for *Hamlet and Japan*, an evening of talks and performances which included Thelma Holt's tribute to Ninagawa, Japan Society Chairman David Warren discussing the reception of Shakespeare in Japan and a performance by Isoda Aki of her one woman piece *A Vision of Ophelia*.

Other events included a recital by Vickers Bovey Guitar Duo of Ryan Probert's *Thirty Six Views of Mount Fuji*; a visit to the Pitt Rivers Museum *noh* mask collection and an evening exploring the history and current

state of Japanese cut glass, *Edo kiriko*, which highlighted the influence of English glass makers in the transmission of skills and development of the industry.

London Lectures

Japan Society lectures are nothing if not wide-ranging and this was true again this year. The monthly academic lecture, held every third Monday at Swedenborg Hall, forms the core of this aspect of our public programming. In addition to those featured in this volume, lectures in 2016 included a reassessment from a military history perspective of Japan's role in the Great War 1914-18, by Ian Gow, director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Glasgow; an analysis of the Japanese art collection of Scottish engineer, Henry Dyer, by Rosina Buckland, curator responsible for the Japanese collections, National Museums Scotland; and an introduction to the current fascination with *haikyo*, Japan's ruins by Mark Pendleton, lecturer in Japanese Studies at the University of Sheffield. The June lecture offered a rare opportunity to see archival footage of *mingei* in Japan, when Marty Gross screened extracts from his film compendium, including film taken by Bernard Leach on his visit to Japan. The seventh 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 James McMullen and is reprinted in this volume.

Outside the monthly lecture series, Peter MacMillan spoke about his new translation of *The Tales of Ise* and the challenges presented by one of the most famous works of Japanese literature and introduced some of his favourite episodes. Lesley Downer looked at the arrival of Commodore Perry and his black ships from the perspective of the Japanese and American protagonists, and the stories which form the background to her novel *The Shogun's Queen*.

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 and thus contribute to raising awareness

and understanding of the country and its culture in places where the Japan Society has no regular activity. Priority is given to applications for grassroots projects and for activities involving schools and other educational establishments. In 2016, 30 grants were made averaging £700 with funding totalling £21,000 being awarded in support of grassroots projects in the UK. 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.

As in previous years, the Society supported a number of school-based extended projects, ranging from whole school Japan days to interdisciplinary learning days and enrichment weeks. With relatively small amounts of additional funding, schools are able to bring in experts to run specialist workshops to complement and enrich curriculum-based studies. The Japan Club at Fraserburgh Academy ran alternate language and craft weeks, giving participating students an introduction to Japanese and its cultural context. Other schools organised cross-curricular events over a shorter period, with a day or week of concentrated activity. The British Cartographic Society continued its Restless Earth workshop series using the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami as a case study to learn about disaster response activities: with authentic materials and real data, participants gain an understanding of Japanese human and physical geography.

The Society also supported projects involving young people outside the school system. On the Sussex coast, a group of 16 - 25 year olds engaged in a three month programme of workshops exploring different aspects of Japanese culture, while Fife Scouts welcomed a group from Iwate for ten days of activities and homestay, and in south Wales, manga workshops formed part of the annual Kotatsu Japanese Animation Festival.

A collaboration between the Royal Armouries in Leeds and the Halifax-based Textile Arts Group created an exhibition of textiles which explored traditional techniques and the construction of Japanese armour, in the context of their contemporary uses. In addition to the exhibition, members of the Group held public sessions to demonstrate techniques used in the artworks and to discuss the inspiration for the contemporary works and their links to the collection and Japanese heritage.

The Society again supported the Wasurenagusa project, a valuable

initiative which aims to tell the story of the Japanese community in the UK through personal narratives, with a grant in 2016 enabling the project to be extended to include interviews in the North of England, Scotland and further afield. Funding made to the Devon Guild of Craftsmen supported music and theatre performances to accompany an exhibition of the work of four Japan-based potters. The ground-breaking Yo no Bi project entered its second phase, with sound artists Oshiro Makoto and Suzueri touring the North of England, producing new sonic works and holding performances and talks. Small grants also supported community-based Japan festivals in Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kent, Lincoln and Sheffield.

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 70 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; preparation for speaking exams; the Online Resource for Japanese Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (ORJACH); and an update from Pearson on changes to GCSE Japanese. In this year's key note lecture, Baroness Coussins (Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages) spoke about the importance of language education.

During the year over 60 visits were made by volunteers in Greater London, Brighton, Derby, Manchester and South Wales. 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 series of training sessions was held to support the volunteers, covering both general matters such as classroom management and techniques for engaging pupils actively, and subject specific content.

Support for school links has continued to be an important element of the Society's work. During 2016, 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 Cirencester Deer Park School and Alleyn's School in London. Takamatsu Daiichi Senior High School again visited County Upper School in Bury St Edmunds, for an exchange focused on science activities, with Newstead Wood School joining this partnership in the autumn. A number of primary school exchanges also took place: Cropwell Primary School in Nottingham had another successful visit from their partner, Komaki Elementary School in Nagano and teachers from Reepham Primary School participated in an exchange visit to Japanese partner, Sadako Azuma Kindergarten in Saitama. In January, Escomb Primary School, Bishop Auckland hosted a visit from their partner school Ogawara Minami Elementary School near Sendai before making a reciprocal visit in October. In the virtual world, Japan UK



Ogawara Minami Elementary School visiting Escomb Primary School

LIVE! and related services continued to support schools in developing their links and work began to redevelop the site to take advantage of improvements in technology available to schools. Ysgol Gymuned Y Fali and its partner, Kitauchi Elementary School in Nara Prefecture, completed a joint musical collaboration *Welsh Breeze*. Students in the two schools worked together to compose and write lyrics for a song, which was recorded and edited with footage of their localities, to create an inspiring video record of the friendships developed online.

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. Following a second invitation for proposals issued in early 2016, nine were received which were reviewed by the committee alongside some 2015 proposals carried forward for follow up. It was decided to proceed with publication of a selection of short stories by Japanese women writers.

The tenth volume in the series, *Japan and Britain, Biographical Portraits* was published in 2016 and launched at the Annual General Meeting in June. Containing some 69 portraits, the volume brought the collection of memoirs to a cumulative total of nearly 500. Turning the spotlight onto individuals and organisations that have contributed to the relationship between Japan and the UK, this series has been instrumental in fulfilling the Society's mission to promote learning in respect of the two countries. In October, the Society launched a second publication: *Japanese Studies in Britain: a survey and history*, which assesses the state of Japanese studies in the UK today and argues that this should remain a priority at a time when Britain is going through a radical re-evaluation of its role in the world.

2016 also saw the launch of the Japan Society e-library which currently includes thirteen volumes, including the Biographical Portraits series and related publications. The ability to search by keyword and theme enables readers to discover new connections within the wealth of content contained in these publications.