

The Japan Society Proceedings

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LIST OF CONTENTS

<i>Item</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. The Japan Society. Officers and Members of the Council	Ixc
2. Sir John Pilcher, G.C.M.G <i>Obituary by Sir Hugh Cortazzi</i>	2
<i>Conservation East and West by Sir John Pilcher</i>	7
3. Editorial Policy	12
4. Japan's Northern Territories <i>by Sir Hugh Cortazzi</i>	13
LECTURES:	
5. Sir Harry Parkes and the Meiji Government 1868-1883 <i>by Dr. Gordon Daniels</i>	17
6. Yoshio Markino: A Recollection <i>by Dr. Carmen Blacker</i>	27
7. Foreign and Human Relations between Britain and Japan <i>by Paul Dimond</i>	40
8. EEC and Japanese Companies and 1992 <i>by Hiromasa Kubo</i>	52
9. Japan and the North East of England: From 1862 to the <i>Present Day by Marie Conte-Helm</i>	58
10. The Showa Emperor and the Asian-Pacific War <i>by Stephen Large</i>	65
11. Local Administration and Revitalization of the Hometown <i>in Japan by Yukio Kurita</i>	78
ARTICLES:	
12. Recent Developments in Japanese Language Studies <i>in Britain by S.A. Ridgwell</i>	94
13. A Pioneering Drive across Japan in 1923 <i>by Sir Hugh Cortazzi</i>	96
14. Taking the Waters <i>by Michael Wise</i>	101
15. St. Andrews University, Japan and Sir D'Arcy <i>Wentworth Thompson by Sir Hugh Cortazzi</i>	104
BOOK REVIEWS:	
16. <i>By Pat Barr. "The Emergence of Modern Japan"</i> <i>by Dr. Janet Hunter</i>	109

17. By *Ben Thorne*. "Japan — The Blighted Blossom" 113
 by Roy Thomas
18. By *Sir Hugh Cortazzi*. "Political Protest and Social Control
 in Pre-War Japan" by Ian Neary 115
19. By *Sir Hugh Cortazzi*. "Ceremony and Symbolism in the
 Japanese Home" by Jeremy & M.E. Robinson 117
20. By *Sir Hugh Cortazzi*. "The Cambridge History of Japan:
 Vol. 5. The Nineteenth Century" edited
 by Marius B. Jansen 119
21. By *Sir Hugh Cortazzi*. "Britain's Encounter with Meiji
 Japan, 1868-1912" by Olive Checkland 120
22. By *Sir Hugh Cortazzi*. "Japan Forum Volume 1 Number 2,
 October 1989." 122

REPORTS:

23. "Japanese Cars in the EC", from the Financial Times,
 12.XII.89 by *Sir Hugh Cortazzi* 125
24. "War Veteran Leads Japan Peace Mission", from
 Newcastle Journal, 27.XI.1989, by *Alan Southwell* 126
25. "International Kendo Clubs Championship"
 by *Terry Holt, President* 129
26. "Sumo U.K. Fan Club" by *Bleddin Hopkins* 131
27. Editor's Message 132

Sir John Pilcher, G.C.M.G.

Obituary

by *Sir Hugh Cortazzi*

Members of the Society heard with much sorrow of the death on 10th February of Sir John Pilcher who served for two separate three-year terms as Chairman of the Council. We extend our deepest sympathy to Delia, his widow, and Julia, their daughter.

John Pilcher was the only son of elderly parents. He was born in 1912 in Quetta, where his father was lecturing at the staff college. He was educated at Shrewsbury and Clare College, Cambridge. He then studied in France, Austria and Italy. He joined the Japan Consular Service in 1936. His first impressions of Japan were not favourable. Japanese militarism and ultranationalism were abhorrent to him. But he managed to escape from Embassy life and went to Kyoto to study. There he lived in the precincts of the temple of Shokokuji and discovered the beauties and charm of Japanese culture. He recognised the merits of Japanese Buddhism but it could not fill his spiritual needs. He had begun to receive instruction in the Catholic faith while in Tokyo and he was

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AUTUMN 1990

CONTENTS

LECTURES

Medicine, The Ministry and the Pharmaceutical Industry Ian Neary	2
Japan: The Reconciliation. Old Soldiers Never Die Louis Allen	12
Japan and Great Britain - Partners in a Changing World H.E. Ambassador Kazuo Chiba	36

ARTICLES

UK - Japan 2000 Group Report	46
The Daiwa - Japan Foundation C.H.D. Everett	50
The Japan Festival 1991	58
Maxims D.L.M. Macfarlane	60
JAPAN SOCIETY NEWS	61
CORRESPONDENCE	67
BOOK REVIEWS	70
BOOK NOTES	79
MINUTES of the 93rd Annual General Meeting of the Japan Society ..	85
ACCOUNTS of the Japan Society for the Year Ended 31st December 1989	96