

The Japan Society Year in Review 2013

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The celebratory atmosphere of 2012's Diamond Jubilee and Olympic events extended into 2013 with the marking of a number of significant anniversaries in the annals of UK-Japan relations.

Principal amongst these was the four hundredth anniversary of the first diplomatic, trading and cultural relations established between the two countries. This was celebrated with a series of inter-related events running throughout the year. The Japan Society hosted Timon Screech's lecture *400 years ago: The English mission to Japan and its legacy*, featured in this volume, exploring the reasons behind the first, historic voyage undertaken by the *Clove*, arriving in Japan in 1613. In June, *Britain & Japan - 400 Years: A Voyage Through Words and Music*, marked the date the *Clove* landed on Japanese shores and took place at the same church, All Saints Fulham, where the ship's Captain John Saris was finally laid to rest some years later.

On Sunday 15 September, in the august surrounds of Whitehall's Banqueting House, the Japan Society helped organise an event to commemorate the delivery of official letters and presents from King James I of England and VI of Scotland to Tokugawa Ieyasu and his son Hidetada; *Two Cultures United by Tea*. The venue was full to capacity and featured a ceremony officiated by tea master Matsura Akira, a direct descendant of the Lord of Hirado, ruler of the port where the English first landed.

The second major anniversary celebrated in 2013 was that of the 'Chōshū Five.' The 'five' were members of the Chōshū clan in western Japan who secretly left the country during the turbulent times toward the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate. They departed from Yokohama in May 1863 and arrived in the UK that November. 2013 marked the 150th anniversary of their journey.

The five young men studied at University College London. After returning to Japan, they all contributed in their various ways to the modernisation of their country. The 'Chōshū Five' included Itō Hirobumi, who became Japan's first Prime Minister and is otherwise

known as ‘the Father of the Japanese Constitution’ and ‘the Father of parliamentary government in Japan’. The other men were Inoue Kaoru, who became Japan’s first Foreign Minister and has been called ‘the Father of modern Japanese diplomacy’, Yamao Yōzō (‘the Father of Japanese engineering’), Inoue Masaru (‘the Father of Japanese railways’) and Endō Kinsuke (‘the Father of the modern Japanese mint’).

One smaller anniversary with a direct connection to the Japan Society was the centenary celebration of the life of Sir Alfred East, an artist whose tour of Japan in 1889 resulted in a prolific collection of Japanese landscape paintings. On his return from Japan, East became one of the seventeen founding members of the Japan Society in 1891. Paul Johnson’s article *Sir Alfred East - a western window on Japan*, also featured in this volume, elaborates on this intriguing figure in the history of UK-Japan relations.

2013 was a transitional period for the Japan Society. In December, the Society moved to new offices occupying the top floor of Daiwa Foundation Japan House. John Swire & Sons, which had since 1996 been a generous landlord, first for Japan 21 but later also for the Japan Society, required the space for its own business; we remain grateful to its directors and staff for their support. Thanks to the trustees and director-general of the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, the Society has been able to rent office and library space in Japan House. The move to Cornwall Terrace involved much preparation and upheaval for the Society, though efforts were made to ensure there was as little disruption to the activities as possible.

Sir David Warren’s first year as chairman of the Japan Society was a busy one, helping to co-ordinate a number of the Japan Society’s regular events and taking part in panel discussions on Japan-related themes.

Two years on from the triple disaster that struck Japan in March 2011, the Society’s Tōhoku Earthquake Relief Fund continues to support reconstruction projects in Japan through its partnership with the Sanaburi Foundation. Christopher Purvis, Phillida Purvis and Heidi Potter went to the region during private visits to Japan in October 2013, where they met with representatives of Sanaburi as well as with NPOs which had been supported by the Fund. A full report from this

visit is included in this volume of *Proceedings* under the title, *Tōhoku: Two and a Half Years On*.

Events overview

The Japan Society exists to educate; to enable a more profound understanding of Japan, its people and culture. By promoting this mission through all aspects of its work, from links with schools to free public events, the Society is active in challenging stereotypes and encouraging a deeper interest in all that Japan has to offer.

In 2013, the Society organized seventy-nine different events across all areas of its outreach, including Arts & Culture, Lifestyle, Lectures, Education and Business Events, alongside special Annual fixtures. The general events programme included: the annual dinner and Christmas party; eleven business related events; thirteen conversation group events; twenty-three events aimed at younger members or families; five chairman's events; fifteen lectures and eleven arts and culture events.

The business year

2013 was another highly successful year for the Japan Society's core business programme.

The chairman held a series of small lunches in which key figures based in both the UK and Japan were invited to meet senior members of the Society. These provided opportunities for decision makers to share ideas and information, and ensured that those involved in business and government were well informed on topical issues relating to the UK-Japan relationship in a global context. Subjects in 2013 included international relations (The Rt Hon Hugo Swire, The Rt Hon David Lidington) UK-Japan business links (The Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Roger Gifford) and the pharmaceutical industry (The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt).

Larger lunchtime business seminars were again generously hosted by JETRO. These included an overview of the global economy by Gerard Lyons, economic adviser to the Mayor of London, given



Sir David Warren addresses members at the JCCI / Japan Society joint lunch for the UK-Japan 21st Century Group

in the run up to the 2013 G8 summit in the UK. Other seminars were given by Lori Henderson, executive director, British Chamber of Commerce in Japan, who briefed participants on the work of the Chamber in supporting recovery in Tohoku; Aidan Foster-Carter who gave an overview of developments in North Korea; and Dr Ken Koyama, Institute of Energy Economics, Japan, who led a seminar on the world energy outlook, including the impact of the shale revolution. 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 John Beddington, Government chief scientific officer; Charles Grant of the Centre for European Reform; and Sir Simon Fraser, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. A special lunch was also organised with members of the UK Japan 21st Century Group in advance of its 30th annual meeting.

An enduringly popular event in the business calendar is the annual address given by the serving British Ambassador to Japan. In January 2013 this was a particularly special occasion, as Sir David Warren gave the address on the cusp of his transition from diplomatic office to becoming the Society's new chairman. Rather than summarise the events of the preceding year, Sir David looked back over his entire four-year tenure in office, providing invaluable insights into the evolving nature of the UK-Japan relationship during this period (the transcript of this lecture was printed in Proceedings 149).

A diverse programme

As always, the Society's general programme in 2013 attempted to appeal to as broad a spectrum of Japan-related interests as possible.

For those with an interest in the arts, the year began with a curator-led tour of an exhibition at the Ashmolean in Oxford; *Threads of Silk and Gold* showcased some of the finest ornamental textiles from Meiji era Japan and the expert guidance of Dr Clare Pollard made this a memorable outing. Other Arts & Culture highlights from 2013 included a special guest lecture from Kanai Yūichirō, the man behind the spectacular set designs of *Anjin: The Shogun and the English Samurai*, and a private talk from iconic Japanese photographer, Ishiuchi Miyako.

The lifestyle calendar in 2013 was a mix of new events alongside the return of regular fixtures. In April, members toured Kew Garden's unrivalled collection of bonsai trees in the company of resident specialist, Richard Kernick, who explained how to avoid the many pitfalls that plague the amateur enthusiast. April also saw the return of the Japan Society's extremely popular pub quiz after three years in retirement, marking a special visit to London by the Japan British Society of Kagoshima. The competition was fierce but after an hour of neck-and-neck teams at the top, the hardened journalists from *Asahi Shimbun* scored a runaway victory in the last round.



The Japan Society Pub Quiz



Making sushi at Sozai Cooking School



Momotarō confronts the ogres at the Japan Society Family Day onboard the Golden Hinde

Elsewhere there were cooking demonstrations and whisky tastings, golf tournaments and opera evenings. The highlight of the year for members with younger families was the Japan Society's day-long event onboard the *Golden Hinde* in Southwark. The *Golden Hinde* was the replica ship used to film the famous television series *Shogun*, charting the voyage of William Adams to Japan. On Sunday 29 September, the Japan Society and the Embassy of Japan organised a family day to tie in with the Japan 400 anniversary. The sun shone and visitors enjoyed a wide range of Japanese cultural activities, from trying on kimono and armour to watching theatrical performances and listening to folktales. Over five hundred people boarded the ship during the course of the day, following the *Shogun's treasure trail* through its different deck levels and emerging to pose with the dockside cut-outs of King James I and Tokugawa Iyasu.

The Japan Society Book Club had another successful year and two of its meetings were honoured to have translators of Japanese fiction and poetry in attendance. In September, Peter MacMillan hosted a special book club to discuss his translation of *Hyakunin Isshu* (*One*

Hundred Poets), a collection of classical Japanese poetry. In December, Angus Turvill led members through the problems and rewards of translating *Tales from a Mountain Cave* by Inoue Hisashi, a review of which is featured in this volume.

Another event with a literary focus was April's *Japanese Fiction in Translation*, which featured award-winning translator Michael Emmerich in conversation with Stephen Dodd, Senior Lecturer in Japanese at the School of Oriental and African Studies. The two debated theories of world literature alongside a discussion of their own translations, from Kajii Motojirō to Yoshimoto Banana.

Japan Matsuri was held in Trafalgar Square for the second year running, taking place on Saturday 5 October. The event provides an unrivalled opportunity for Londoners to come together and enjoy a day of Japanese activities in a festival atmosphere. All the elements of previous matsuri were present; from a mix of food stalls, to martial arts, live performance and crowd participation. In addition the 2013 event



A performer at Japan Matsuri 2013 in Trafalgar Square

hosted some exciting new acts, including *Siro-A*, a mesmerising group of mixed-discipline performers, and the electric guitar of *Kill Bill* theme composer, Hotei Tomoyasu.

London Lectures

The lectures programme in 2013 covered an eclectic mix of subjects and new research, from musical history to horticulture. As always, the monthly academic lecture formed the mainstay of Japan Society lectures. In addition to those featured in this volume, lectures in 2013 included a talk on curating Mori Mariko's exhibition *Rebirth* by Kathleen Soriano, Director of Exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Arts; *Kimigayo to Japanoise: 160 years of Japan-UK relations in popular music* by Imamura Akira, Consul General, Embassy of Japan; *The youth of things: an exploration of 1920s Japanese culture through the literature of Kajii Motojiro* by SOAS Senior Lecturer in Japanese, Stephen Dodd; *Ginkgo: An Evolutionary and Cultural Biography* by Peter Crane, former Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew; *Love Statues, Shell Fish and Communist Treachery: Japan's early postwar responses to the War Crimes Issue*, Barak Kushner, Senior Lecturer in Modern Japanese History at Cambridge University and *Japan's Family Planning for the Global War on Population*, Homei Aya, Wellcome Trust Fellow at the University of Manchester.

Once again the Society looked to forge partnerships with other organisations in staging our lecture series in 2013. These included, The British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT), and regular lecture partner the Japan Research Centre at SOAS. The 2013 Carmen Blacker Lecture, in partnership with the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, was given by Professor Yokoyama and is reprinted in this volume.

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. Priority is given to applications for grassroots projects and for activities involving schools and other educational establishments. In 2013, thirty-three grants were made averaging approximately £600 each. Of these some seventeen were organised in schools or provided opportunities for school students to participate in Japan-related activities. These ranged from Japan Days to complement ongoing study of Japan or Japanese language to activities in preparation for a trip to Japan and workshops in Japanese music where primary school children learned about shamisen through making and performing on their own instruments. Grants were also awarded to projects which allowed people to engage with and learn about Japan. A family day at the Serpentine Gallery's Summer Pavilion designed by Fujimoto Sou explored contemporary Japanese architecture in tandem with contemporary Japanese music, while the Russell Cotes Art Gallery and Museum in Bournemouth engaged in an ambitious family learning programme drawing from its Japanese collection. Support was also given to community Japan Days in Cambridge, Glasgow, London, Leicestershire and Sheffield and school linking activities to commemorate the 15th Anniversary of the Derbyshire and Toyota City twinning agreement.

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 2013 this remained central to the Japan Society's objectives. In spite of proposed government reforms to the National Curriculum in England, due to take effect from September 2014, Japan, its culture and language, still have a place within both the primary and secondary classroom.

The Society's education team had a busy year supporting schools and individual teachers engaged with Japan-related activities. The Japan Conference for Schools on 7 March, held at the Embassy of Japan in partnership with the Japan Foundation, attracted over forty teachers, and 150 students attended the annual Sixth Form Conference

on 8 November at SOAS, University of London. The latter saw the Japan Society's Chairman, Sir David Warren, give an informative keynote speech on the current UK-Japan relationship which prompted many searching questions from the participating students. The event was also attended by representatives of a number of leading Russell Group and Global 30 Universities, who provided students with an insight into options for developing their interest in Japan further, whether through single or joint degrees in Japanese studies in the UK, or opportunities to be immersed in Japanese life while studying subjects from marine biology to international relations in Japan.

During the course of the year the Society's Japan in Your Classroom volunteers continued to inspire thousands of children through their schools visits. Over ninety school visits took place throughout the country including Greater London, Brighton, Derby, Manchester, Nottingham and South Wales. These volunteers are vital in helping to bring Japan to life for schoolchildren nationwide.

As well as providing practical tailor made training courses, run by experienced tutors, the Society continued to provide loan resources to schools wishing to teach about Japan. The Japan Activity Chests, which hold a plethora of Japanese cultural and language materials including yukata, geta and the Japanese *soroban*, were loaned to approximately sixty schools.

As more schools move toward achieving the International School Award offered by the British Council, the Japan Society has maintained and established new partnerships between British and Japanese schools. We support schools, helping embed international learning and education in their curriculum. *Japan UK-LIVE!* the Society's bilingual web resource, and its translation team, continued to be invaluable for schools in 2013. Without this service the language barrier that exists between partner schools, particularly in the primary sector, would prevent meaningful communication.

Existing school partnerships continued to move from strength to strength. In March 2013 County Upper School in Bury St. Edmunds hosted a successful homestay exchange from their partner school Takamatsu Dai-ichi Senior High School, from Kagawa Prefecture, one of five specialist science colleges in Japan. The visit coincided with the

UK National Science and Engineering week where each school took part in a series of Maths problem-solving challenges during the two day exchange.

Although a visit to or from a partner school brings an exchange alive in a way that pen-pal correspondence alone cannot, in today's economic climate not all schools have the financial resources to be able to fund visits. As alternatives, schools undertook some innovative exchange activities including relay stories, sending school mascots and cultural parcels, and holding video conferences. Shimomura Elementary School in Toyama Prefecture and Tregarth Primary School in North West Wales held their first video conference in 2013. This was a challenge due to the time difference that exists between the two countries but helped to bring a truly international dimension to classroom activities. This provided pupils with a first-hand experience of each other's language, culture and way of life. It remains a key ambition for the Japan Society to continue establishing meaningful and sustainable international school partnerships.



Fourth grade pupils at Amaji Elementary (Hyōgo) send *kakizome* to their partner school