

The magazine of the  
British Chamber of  
Commerce in Japan

26

Steering Japan  
into the data age

34

Regions:  
Rural revival

45

Training:  
REAL leaders

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# June 2016

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 6

7 EDITOR

## People assets

KATHRYN WORTLEY

8 MEDIA

## UK-Japan news

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Time, treasure and talent

LORI HENDERSON MBE

12 MEDIA

## Japan news

15 PRESIDENT

## EU membership

DAVID BICKLE

17 AMBASSADOR

## Happy birthday Your Majesty; long may you reign over us.

## 18 TOP STORY

### Ninety years

Marking the Queen's birthday

## 25 EXCOM

### Attracting members to the BCCJ

New scheme launched

26 BCCJ MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Steering Japan into the data age

Impact of the analytics revolution

28 D&I

### Workplaces for all

British firm sets bar on diversity

33 SURVEY

### Slow growth

Firms positive but less upbeat  
than in last poll

## 34 REGIONS

### Rural revival

Briton seeks answers to  
Japan's people challenges

36 ECOTOURISM

### Hidden paradise

Oki Islands geopark reveals  
Shetland-like secrets

45 TRAINING

### REAL leaders

## 46 GONG

### Putting art on the map

Award for boosting museum gems

48 ARTS

### UK events in Japan

- Shakespeare film
- Photography exhibition
- Musical performance
- Comedy film
- Satirical play
- Legendary musical

50 COMMUNITY

### HM the Queen's Birthday Party UK-Japan events

52 JET

### Where are they now?

Putting down roots brings  
new cultural ties

53 IF YOU ASK ME

### Forty years on

Reflecting on Japan experiences

## 54 BOOK REVIEW

### A slice of social history

Builders of bonds



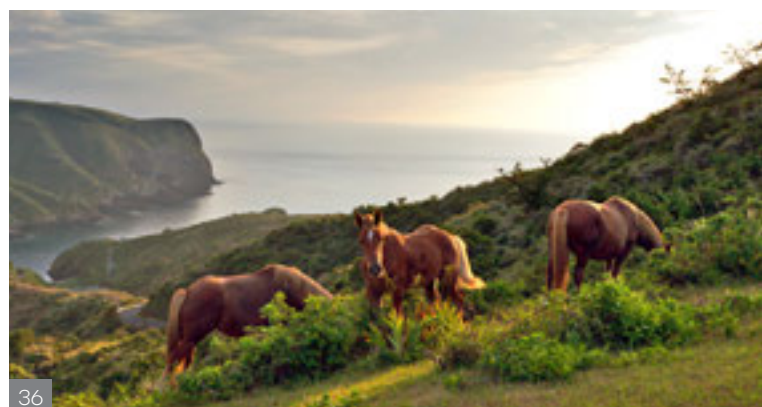
18



54



49



36



46



50



34

INDUSTRY

### Technology

**43 Golden times in IT security**  
Chances lie ahead for skilled staff

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*BCCJ ACUMEN* is the magazine of  
the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan



Printed on paper certified by the US Forest Stewardship Council with vegetable oil ink certified by The Japan Printing Ink Makers Association.

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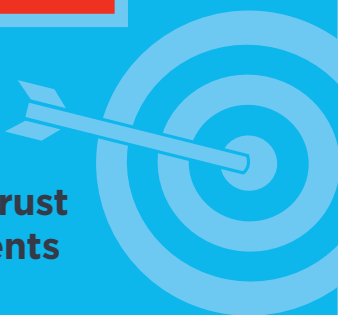
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# People assets

Combining skills for the future

KATHRYN WORTLEY | kathryn@custom-media.com

**E**ight years ago this month, when I was notified of the place I would live while on the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, I couldn't resist looking it up on Google for a sneak preview. As might be expected, given its size—a mere 543 households as of October 2014—not a lot came up for Shimode, Kagoshima Prefecture. I remember imagining a vast expanse of rice fields dotted with houses.

My vision turned out to be not far from reality. And, to my delight, I soon found the locals to be some of the warmest people I had ever met. It was—and still is—hard to see them struggle with the effects of chronic depopulation. What was once a thriving market area with schools full to bursting has become a place of abandoned homes, a partly shuttered shopping street and services at risk of closure.

Due to its remote location and lack of job opportunities, demographics are heavily skewed towards the elderly (some are aged over 100), rather than the young. Yet despite economic difficulties, the adjacent communities of Shimode, Kuroki and Imuta, are nothing short

of vibrant. Activities led by, and for, the locals range from *go-daiko* (set of five) drumming classes to tug of war and bamboo-burning festivals, not to mention lessons on planting sweet potato and a mini-marathon.

Although the events differ, there is one ever-present component: the ability of the local people to draw on their often inherited skills for the good of the community at large. I saw first-hand how events cement ties, allow traditional customs to be passed on, spark new ideas and, perhaps most important, bring joy.

It was, therefore, with great interest that I learned of the work being carried out in Yamagata Prefecture to revive a similar rural community. Briton Adam Fulford is bringing locals and visitors together to harness the area's natural and cultural resources in the hope of strengthening the community economically and socially (page 34).

#### In these pages

In keeping with cultural relations, albeit on a global scale, this issue features a review of *Bridges*, a celebration of Anglo-Japanese

cultural pioneers (page 54). The book offers insights from academia, business, media, government and the non-profit sector on cross-cultural relations: a topic increasingly important for business.

Also making her mark is London-based art historian and writer Sophie Richard. As the youngest recipient and only non-Japanese in 2015 to receive an award from Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs, she shares her story with *BCCJACUMEN* (page 46).

#### Celebrating 90 years

To mark Her Majesty's official 90th birthday, we reflect on the remarkable landmarks in UK-Japan relations that have taken place over the years since her birth (page 18). In honour of the occasion, British Ambassador to Japan Tim Hitchens CMG LVO has a special message for readers (page 17).

We are also delighted to showcase a selection of rare photos of the Queen and her family (page 22), as well as visual highlights from Her Majesty's birthday party at the British Embassy Tokyo (page 50).

Happy birthday Ma'am. 🇬🇧

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# MEDIA

## Abe warns against Brexit

Ahead of the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has told British voters to vote to stay in, *The Guardian* reported on 5 May.

Abe said that a departure could threaten Japanese investment and put more than 100,000 jobs at risk. He noted that, "Japan attaches importance to our relationship with the UK as a gateway to the European Union ... it is better for the world that Britain remain in a strong EU".

"Our priority is reaching trade deals with the EU, and large trade areas, rather than with individual states," he added.

## New global team for North Wales nuclear plant

A US-Japan joint venture is to build Wylfa Newydd, the nuclear power station planned for Anglesey, North Wales, a report, dated on 20 May, states on [www.globalconstructionreview.com](http://www.globalconstructionreview.com).

Horizon Nuclear Power, a subsidiary of Hitachi, Ltd., announced that Hitachi Nuclear Energy Europe, Bechtel and JGC Corporation (UK) would be responsible for building the plant.

Malcolm Twist, project director, said: "All the partners are proven at the highest level ... we expect to begin firming up relationships with our main sub-contractors—many of them British—very soon".

## English bubbly to hit Japan

Mottox Inc., a Japanese wine importer, has struck a deal to bring four English sparkling wines—from the vineyards of Kent, Hampshire and West Sussex—to Japan, *The Drinks Business* reported on 6 May.

The British Bottle Company, an export firm specialising in UK-made alcoholic drinks, helped secure the business. According to a representative, English sparkling wine is attracting "considerable interest from the international trade".

Kayo Kono, chief buyer and brand manager at Mottox, said English sparkling wine is "the brother of Champagne, with its own charm".



English sparkling wine is proving popular.

## Japan taps UK outdoor pursuit



Snow Peak, a Japanese outdoor pursuit firm, is set to target the UK's "glamping" (glamorous camping) market with the launch of a boutique in London, *The Financial Times* reported on 15 May.

The UK—where the term glamping was coined—is a growing market for the activity, with 2% of the population having gone glamping, according to market research group Mintel.

Toru Yamai of Snow Peak said Europe and North America had spotted the joys of the activity, which offers the thrill of the outdoors with exceptionally high-end equipment and a team of professionals to help.

## Foxes grow fan base

Japan's Leicester City Football Club fan base has had a boost thanks to forward Shinji Okazaki, and the side's success in the Premier League, [www.aol.co.uk](http://www.aol.co.uk) reported on 3 May.

Supporters of Okazaki who began to follow the Foxes when he joined the then-struggling side saw Leicester win the Premier League title in May.

One fan said, "After Shinji Okazaki joined [the club], Japanese TV decided to broadcast every Leicester match and, due to Leicester's success and Okazaki's contribution, lots of Japanese noticed the team and supported them".



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## Hankyu team learn how to make tasty Welsh rarebit



An executive chef at Bondant Welsh Food Centre has hosted a Japanese delegation to show how to make the perfect Welsh rarebit, the *Daily Post* reported on 13 May.

Tamao Sako, a chef, author and entrepreneur from Osaka (page 51), was joined by representatives from the Hankyu Department Store researching Welsh products for future British fairs to be held in their Osaka branch.

Sako will return to Bondant in the summer, accompanied by amateur cooks who want to learn about British and Welsh specialty cakes.

## Trout bellies for Japan

The UK's largest trout producer has secured its first order from Japan during a three-day Seafood Expo in Belgium, *The Press and Journal* reported on 13 May.

Dawnfresh Seafoods Limited of Lanarkshire will supply trout bellies, which are often considered an offcut by consumers. In Japan, however, the fat-rich produce is in great demand, given its popularity grilled or in sushi.

David Rae, the firm's head of brand and international sales, said the deal is new territory for the business. He added: "Overall, the Scotland stand [at the expo] created an impressive showcase for Scotland's produce, and it was a great success for us".

## E-ciggy export to UK

Japan Tobacco International has launched its first e-cigarette across the UK. The battery-operated device uses replaceable cartridges of vaping liquid, *City A.M.* reported on 27 April.

It is estimated that such devices are used by about 85% of e-cigarette smokers, equating to about 2mn users.

The product was launched at Sainsbury's supermarkets in January, and plans have been drawn up to boost sales by television and outdoor media campaigns.

## Youth rugby team reach top world game

Cornwall's Truro College Rugby Academy is to represent England at the Sanix World Rugby Youth Invitational Tournament in Fukuoka Prefecture, the *Falmouth Packet* reported on 24 April.

It will be the fourth time the Cornish college will compete at the championship, which is one of the most prestigious Under-18 rugby tournaments in the world. Previous squad members include current England internationals Luke Cowan-Dickie and Jack Nowell.

Marek Churcher, coach for the Cornish side, said: "The quality of opposition in every game is of the highest level, with the Japanese teams improving year on year".

## Rare fossil to make debut

A fossil from the Natural History Museum in London of the earliest known bird will make its world premiere in Tokyo in 2017, *The Japan News* reported on 29 May.

It will be the first time a specimen of Archaeopteryx, which lived in the later stage of the Jurassic period about 150mn years ago, will be shown in Japan.

About 180 items from the British museum will be included in the special exhibition, titled *Treasures of the Natural World: Best of London's Natural History Museum*.



Archaeopteryx is the earliest known bird.  
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# Time, treasure and talent

Who's doing what at the BCCJ?

LORI HENDERSON MBE

**A**s many of you know, our volunteer Executive Committee (Excom) meets once a month to discuss British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) business, and review our progress in promoting the interests of all members.

The first Excom meeting of the new chamber year took place on 15 May. The following task force leaders and functional roles were identified, and a flurry of activity has since followed.

- Membership: Iain Ferguson
- Events: Alison Beale
- British Business Awards (BBA): Simon Farrell
- Global Sports: Trevor Webster
- Finance: James Dodds
- Legal: Reiko Sakimura
- European Business Council in Japan partnership: Jonty Brunner
- British Embassy Tokyo partnership: Chris Heffer
- British Council Japan partnership: Matt Burney

## Events

Alison Beale will oversee the most visible pillar of chamber operations—our events programme—and has been set the task of delivering 40 events to a predicted 2,200 attendees.

If there are any event topics or speakers you'd like us to cover, or if your firm might like to sponsor a BCCJ breakfast, lunch or evening session, please let us know.

## Best of British

Simon Farrell will lead the BBA taskforce to deliver the BCCJ's flagship event, this year to be held at the Hilton Tokyo on 11 November.

More than any other event throughout the year, the BBA showcases the energy and enthusiasm of member firms—as well as business and community leaders—to strengthen UK-Japan relations. Over the past eight years, we have strived to make the BBA a meaningful awards competition. We hope that you will take part, to celebrate your achievements.

Be sure to book corporate tables and seats by the early-bird discount deadline of 31 July, and keep your eyes peeled for details on how to nominate your favourite organisations and individuals for a coveted trophy.

And, are you interested in sponsoring the ninth annual BBA? Support options may take the form of cash, in-kind donations, media coverage, raffle prizes and goody bag items. Email [info@bccjapan.com](mailto:info@bccjapan.com) with your proposal.

## Golf

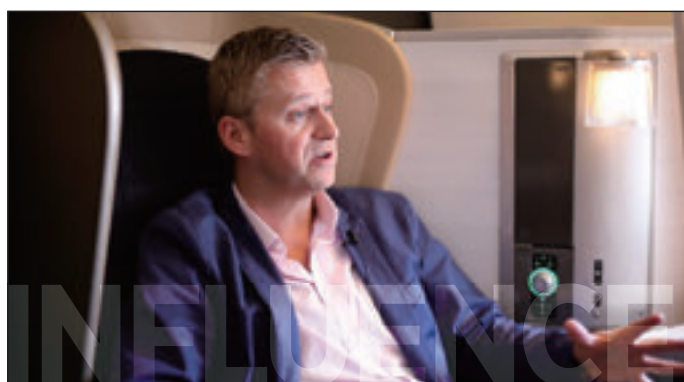
Congratulations to Iain Ferguson for winning the BCCJ golf tournament for the fourth consecutive year. On 22 May, in Tochigi Prefecture, he saw off stiff competition from William Ramsay, of entrepreneur member Hynd K.K., and head of the BCCJ golf task force.

Supported by Jackie Scanlan-Dyas (Hogan Lovells) and Richard Straughan (Peak K.K.), this group delivered our most inclusive and enjoyable Golf Day so far, with 56 players of various ages, levels and nationalities enjoying the warm weather and stunning scenery.

Thanks to our generous sponsors: IHG ANA (headline), Berry Bros. & Rudd, Conrad Tokyo, Fauchon, Folli Follie, Grand Hyatt Tokyo, Hilton Tokyo Odaiba, Hobgoblin, Hogan Lovells, Hynd, Michael Page, Parabola, Peak K.K., Pernod Ricard, Standard Chartered and T-Bags.

## Get in touch

All Excom task forces are grateful for ideas from members. Have you got time, treasure or talent to offer the team? Please let us know. 🍷



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# MEDIA

## “DINOSAUR” RESTAURANT CHAINS FACE “ICE AGE”

Much ink has been devoted over the past two years to the declining revenue of McDonald's Japan. *Nikkei Business* reports that, after nearly half a century of popularity, the business model of restaurant chains offering fast food no longer appeals to Japan's consumers. Its 16 May issue covers the decline in a special section titled “The Collapse of Eating Out”, which features six articles.

They look at the performance of 10 major nationwide restaurant chains that last achieved year-on-year growth in 2011, when total operating profits reached ¥94.7bn. For the past four years, profits have declined; the 2014 figure was ¥33bn, around one-third that of just three years earlier.

According to the Japan Food Service Distributors Association, the number of customers is down 3.1% year on year, making last year the first time in the past 20 years when a decline was recorded for three years in a row. A president of a family restaurant chain was quoted as saying that “depending on price increases to boost turnover per customer has reached its limit”.

Three key factors are believed to account for the businesses' declining fortunes.

The first is image. While these chains formerly appealed to customers with the rationale that they could “have peace of mind because every shop has the same menu from which to choose”, the overriding impression has changed to that of, “no matter which branch I visit, it's the same, boring stuff”.

Some people may even go so far as to remark, “I don't want to eat at a chain restaurant”. Boosting appeal by shedding this poor image remains a challenge.

The second relates to commodity costs that affect the chains' buying power. Changes in the international balance of supply and demand—such as that wrought by the recent boom in beef consumption on mainland China—can significantly influence procurement costs in Japan.



An inexpensive menu draws customers to Saizeriya, according to a survey.

Lastly, due to an endemic labour shortage throughout Japan's service industry, firms that engage in so-called black hiring practices—whereby employee efforts tend not to be recognised, let alone rewarded—are forcing some businesses to curtail operating hours and close outlets.

One article examines four major restaurant chains with declining business performance (and in some cases deficit): Yoshinoya (offering bowls of stewed beef on rice); McDonald's Japan; Watami, a bar chain; and Royal Host, a family restaurant chain. They are described as dinosaurs whose existence is threatened by a coming ice age.

So, why are customers avoiding chain restaurants in droves?

An affiliate of *Nikkei Business Publications*, Inc., publisher of *Nikkei Business*, conducted a survey in April 2016. Valid replies were received from 1,330 adults. In response to the question, do you have dinner at chain restaurants, 45% said no, while only 18% said they used restaurant chain outlets “frequently or fairly frequently”.

The survey shows that customer dissatisfaction has little to do with factors such as sanitation, employee attitudes or the firm's negative image. The most common reasons cited (with multiple replies accepted) were, in descending order:

- Food is not tasty
- Tired of always seeing the same items on the menu
- Atmosphere is poor or unfashionable
- Tendency to be crowded

If prices are low, people seem to be willing to overlook other shortcomings.

When customers at two popular chains, Gusto and Saizeriya, were asked the main reason for their choice of eating establishment, the top response in both cases—with 38% and 42%, respectively—was inexpensive menu items. Other reasons given for liking Gusto and Saizeriya, respectively, were the tasty food (11% and 16%); and short waiting time (12% and 9%).

## MORE LUNCH IN FOR OFFICE STAFF

The lunchtime behaviour of Japan's office workers has come to be treated as a useful socioeconomic indicator.

An article in *Nikkei Marketing Journal* (11 May) examines changing trends in terms of lunch procurement, time spent eating and other practices.

According to a 2014 survey of staff at Shinsei Bank, Limited, 16.1% ate their lunch at a restaurant, but this figure declined to 13.9% in 2015. Fewer workers also ate in the bank's dining hall (13.8% in 2014 compared with 12.6% in 2015).

One factor is more bank staff bringing lunch from home. Compared with 38.1% selecting this option in 2014, the percentage had risen to 44.1% in 2015. Staff who bought boxed meals outside the office and took them back to eat at their desks declined slightly, from 22.7% to 21% over the period.

A high percentage of working women—66.7% according to a survey by *Nikkei Woman* conducted last December—is motivated by their diet

and health. This interest has been supported by the popularity of posts of homemade lunch photos on Instagram and other social networking sites.

Businesses, however, appear determined to win back customers. Some 7-Eleven convenience stores have begun taking next-day orders for sandwiches and boxed lunches, indicating a move to offer a catering-style business. A source at the firm said that, by the end of August, this system would be in operation in most parts of Japan.

Meanwhile, FamilyMart convenience stores are said to be expanding sales of their meals via vending machines installed in office buildings. Some 1,700 such machines are currently in operation.

Another item of interest is the increasingly brief time that male staff take to wolf down their meals. The time spent has declined from around 34 minutes in 1983 to around 22 minutes in 2015.



## RIISING NUMBER OF FIRMS GOING BUST

Direct sales in Japan via the Internet—estimated to total ¥12.6trn in 2014—are projected to double to ¥25.6trn by 2021. *Nikkan Gendai* (14 May), however, reports that there is a downside to this healthy growth.

According to a study by Tokyo Shoko Research, Ltd., 74 firms in the Internet and door-to-door sales sector filed for bankruptcy during fiscal 2015. In 2009, the number of similar bankruptcies was 18, a figure that has continued to increase year on year. Businesses selling apparel and consumer electronics are said to be particularly hard hit.

Just under 80% of those failures (58 firms), however, are those with five employees or

fewer, indicating that smaller businesses are most likely to go under. Moreover, 20 of the business were established after 2010, indicating the difficulty in sustaining new firms.

Masashi Seki of Tokyo Shoko Research, Ltd. said: “The increase in failure of direct sales firms is conspicuous, considering bankruptcies as a whole have been showing a declining trend. While it's easy for both individuals and businesses to enter Internet sales, expanded growth has led to intensified competition.

“In addition to rapid changes in consumer preferences, complaints by customers can have

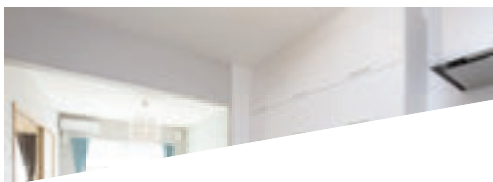
a major effect on a company's sales. In a battle of ideas, businesses won't thrive unless they can differentiate themselves from their rivals. In some cases, businesses have been hurt by increased costs resulting from the weaker yen.”

One side effect of the heavy competition has been incidents of employee foul play. According to Seki, in April 2015, a company was ordered to suspend business operations after it was discovered that an employee had misdirected accrued bonus points from shoppers into his own account. This example is a well-known recent failure because the business had previously been the recipient of a Shop of the Year award. ❄





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# EU membership

Leave or stay?

DAVID BICKLE | @BCCJ\_President

With less than a month to go at the time of writing before the UK’s referendum on membership of the European Union, news is dominated by speculation on the economic impact of a Brexit—a UK departure.

At the Group of Seven Summit in Ise-shima, Mie Prefecture, in May, leaders warned that such a move would pose a serious threat to the global economy. Individually, a number have also publicly expressed their hope that the UK will vote to remain. These include Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who last month stated that, “a vote to leave would make the UK less attractive as a destination for Japanese investors” (page 8).

In spite of these high profile interventions in favour of the British government’s campaign to remain, research by the University of Oxford’s Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism shows that press coverage in the first two months of the campaign was firmly skewed in favour of leaving. Amongst articles on the referendum, 45% favoured an exit, while only 27% backed retention of the status quo.

### Voters’ views

One way to make some sense of the differing and increasingly partisan viewpoints is to consider the position of the commentator. A chief executive reliant on sales to Europe might feel duty bound to his or her shareholders to campaign vigorously for continued membership, which would guarantee access to the single market. Conversely, a small business owner selling exclusively within the UK may cast a vote to leave in the hope of lighter regulation.

Not all voters, though, are calculated realists acting in narrow self-interest. Most, it is hoped, will weigh the impact of EU membership on the British economy, sovereignty and security, and vote for what they believe is right for the country as a whole.

### Engage in the process

As a mature and stable democracy, however, the right to vote in Britain is sometimes taken for granted, and a low turnout would be damaging to the government. Not least because a key objective in calling the referendum is that it draws a line under the debate on Britain’s commitment to the EU.

In this respect it is disheartening to learn from the Electoral Commission that only around 200,000 British expats have registered to vote. Moreover, according to *The Financial Times*, 54% of 2,000 students surveyed were unable to name the month in which the referendum is to take place.

### The future

Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, two things are certain.

First, the appetite of Japanese consumers for innovative and high-quality British goods and services will not evaporate. So, whether British exporters are governed by an EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement or a bilateral UK-Japan deal, Japan will continue to be an important market for UK businesses.

Second, Britain will rapidly need to accept the referendum result and move forward.

For those who have an active interest in business between Japan and the UK, this will mean doing all we can to demonstrate that the UK continues to be the most rewarding and richly deserving European destination for Japanese investment. 🇬🇧

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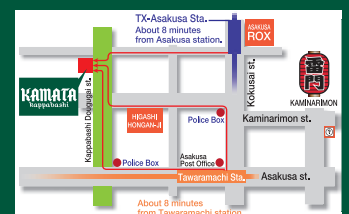


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# These firms wish HM Queen Elizabeth II a wonderful 90th birthday.



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# Happy birthday Your Majesty; long may you reign over us.



BY TIM HITCHENS CMG LVO  
BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

It gives me great pleasure to have been asked to send a message to the readers of *BCCJACUMEN* on the occasion of Her Majesty’s official 90th birthday in June.

Her life is a truly extraordinary record of public service. In 1940, just 14 years old, the then-Princess Elizabeth made her first BBC radio broadcast to bring comfort and hope to the children who had been evacuated from British cities during World War II.

At 18, she became the first female member of the royal family to join the armed forces, working as a driver and mechanic in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the women’s branch of the army.

And, at just 21, she made a defining broadcast from Cape Town, South Africa, in which she said: “My whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service”.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said, as he led tributes in Parliament: “This was an extraordinary promise, profoundly fulfilled. In this modern Elizabethan era, in which so much around her has changed, Her Majesty has been steadfast—a rock of strength for our nation, for our Commonwealth and, on so many occasions, for the whole world”.

Since ascending to the throne in 1952, she has worked with 12 British prime ministers—



© BRITISH EMBASSY TOKYO/JUN TAKAGI

starting with Sir Winston Churchill—more than 150 prime ministers in her other realms, and met a quarter of all US presidents who have sat since independence.

This year, we have the honour of celebrating Her Majesty the Queen’s 90th birthday. Events in the UK and Japan are being held to celebrate her dedication, service and commitment to the

UK and the Commonwealth. These celebrations are important for everyone who is British, and everyone who cares about the relationship between Japan and the UK.

Japan is not only a highly valued partner, as our second-largest source of foreign direct investment, but a firm and loyal friend. We’ve received kind messages from friends all over the country, showing the affection in which the Japanese people hold the British royal family.

One of the key defining features of Britain and Japan are our royal and imperial families. Both are very important to who we are as nations, and the relationship between the royal family and the imperial family is strong and vibrant. Her Majesty has powerful relationships with the Emperor, and it was a great pleasure to see, in 2015, Prince William, The Duke of Cambridge, on his first visit to Japan.

The Queen has always been a great model of duty and hard work. As a member of Her Britannic Majesty’s diplomatic service, a former private secretary to the Queen and, above all, as a British subject, I hope readers will join me in saying, “Happy birthday Your Majesty; long may you reign over us”.

Follow me on Twitter at @UKAmbTim, and stay up to date with the latest news from the British Embassy Tokyo at @UKinJapan. 🇬🇧



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# Ninety years

Marking the Queen's birthday

BY JULIAN RYALL  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF TREVOR DARE



The Queen opens the New Zealand Parliament in Wellington, in 1963.

When Ian de Stains OBE first arrived in Japan in 1976, the country was still abuzz following Queen Elizabeth II's state visit the previous year. Four decades later, and as the monarch marks her 90th birthday, there remains a strong affection for the Queen, and broad admiration for her dignity and support for British causes overseas.

"She has had a tremendous impact on relations between these two countries and, I believe, is held in deep affection by the Japanese people", de Stains told *BCCJ ACUMEN*.

"When I arrived, people were still talking about her visit—and that was arguably before she reached the great heights she has achieved since", he added. "I think they see the very special place that she has in British people's lives, in part because of the deep dignity that she brings to the royal family".

The Queen is patron of The British Council, the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, and "deeply influential" in promoting its work overseas, according to Matt Burney, director of the council in Japan and a member of the BCCJ Executive Committee.

"Our licence to operate is provided through a royal charter and the Queen's activities in relation to the council have really helped to raise the profile of education opportunities and creativity in the UK.

"As our patron, the Queen is seen as the embodiment of trust in the UK, and that is very important for what we are doing", he said.

The British people's affection for the monarch is shared by many Japanese, not least of whom are the members of The Japan-British Society.

"Many of our long-time members have wonderful memories of the Queen's visit in 1975, when they attended a reception with her and the Duke of Edinburgh", said Jun Shirakata, executive secretary of the society.

"I feel that Japanese people have a great admiration and respect for the Queen" 🇬🇧



1926

Princess Elizabeth, the first daughter of the Duke and Duchess of York, is born.



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1948

British Overseas Airways Corporation, the predecessor of British Airways, commences flights between London and Haneda.



1953

The British Council opens an office in Tokyo. Queen Elizabeth later becomes patron of the organisation.



Elizabeth is crowned queen after the death of her father, King George VI, on 6 February 1952.

1955

Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry grants permission for use of the name "British Chamber of Commerce in Japan" (BCCJ).



The British Chamber of Commerce in Japan



1964

Unilever begins operations in Japan.



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1963

The BCCJ sets up a permanent secretariat when its status is ratified by the Treaty of Commerce, Establishment and Navigation between Japan and the UK.

1984

Makoto Yamada, a professor at Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, revives the game of cricket in Japan by helping to set up the national association.



1975

The Queen pays her only state visit to Japan to date.



1989

The British School in Tokyo opens as a charitable trust by a group of parents who wished their children to have a British-style education.



©DICK THOMAS JOHNSON/CC BY 2.0

1993

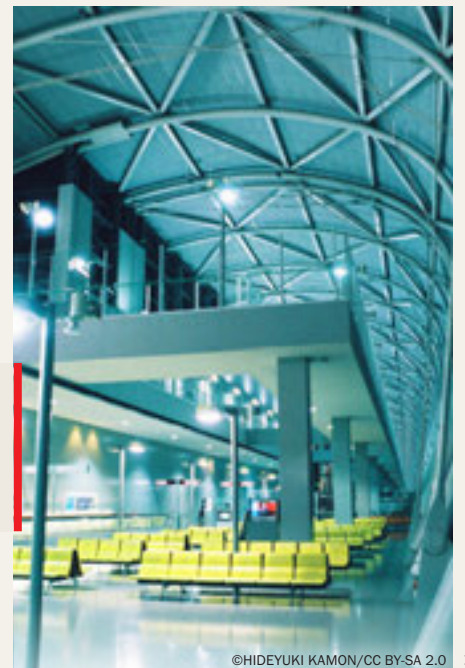
Berry Bros. & Rudd, which has been based in London since 1698, opens a Japan office to meet a growing demand for high-end drink imports.

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1994

Kansai International Airport opens, becoming the first monumental project in Japan for the local practice of British engineering consultancy Ove Arup.



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1997

The British Industry Centre is established in Yokohama.



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2,994cc V6 Supercharged Engine, Maximum Power 340ps (35t R-SPORT) · 380ps (S, FIRST EDITION)

\*Specifications are in the process of obtaining its approval of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

\*The prices are exclusive of tax (other than consumption tax), expenses for registration, insurance, recycling charge and other expenses.







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# dyson

1998

Dyson—famous for its cutting-edge vacuum cleaners and bladeless fans—begins operations in Japan.

2001

Triumph Motorcycles Japan sets up an office; brings its iconic bikes into a market already famous for the manufacture of two-wheeled vehicles.

GlaxoSmithKline K.K. is founded, bringing a new generation of innovative pharmaceuticals to the Japanese market.



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2008

The Japan-British Society marks 100 years of promoting cordial relations between the two nations.

2009

The first issue of *BCCJ ACUMEN*, the magazine of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan, is published by Custom Media.

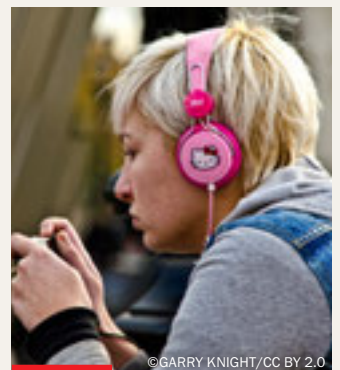


2011

British Airways becomes the first European carrier to operate out of Haneda International Airport.



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2012

Sanrio Co., Ltd. opens its new headquarters in London—after purchasing the Mr. Men franchise—as a foothold in the European market for its Hello Kitty products.

2013

Japan and the UK begin a one-year series of events to mark 400 years of relations, which began when British ship *The Clove* arrived off Kyushu in 1613.



UK Trade & Investment launches the Export to Japan website, designed to unlock the market for more British firms.



2013

The UK becomes the first country to sign a comprehensive defence deal with Japan after Tokyo relaxed its guidelines on the overseas transfer of defence equipment.



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2015

Hitachi Rail opens a £82mn Rail Vehicle Manufacturing Facility in County Durham.

>>

2015

Queen Elizabeth becomes the UK's longest-serving monarch.

In commemoration of Her Majesty's 90th birthday, this photo retrospective shows images from years past of Queen Elizabeth and her family.







6



7



8



9



10

1. Then-Princess Elizabeth (front left) with her family at Buckingham Palace.
2. Members of the Royal Family wave to the public after a Trooping the Colour Ceremony to mark the Queen's official birthday and the 9th anniversary of her coronation, in 1960.
3. The Queen gives a salute at the gateway to Buckingham Palace on her return from Horse Guards Parade, in 1960.
4. The Royal Family at Windsor Castle prior to a royal tour of Canada, in 1959.
5. Prince Charles and Princess Anne leave HMS Britannia to visit Stornaway during a royal tour of the Western Isles in 1956.
6. The Queen at her coronation in Westminster Abbey, in 1953.
7. The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh visit the base of the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Alice Springs, Australia, in 1963.
8. The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles, the Queen, Princess Anne and Prince Andrew in Balmoral, Aberdeenshire, in 1960.
- 9,10. Princess Anne and Prince Charles sail a yawl through the Crinan Canal, Argyllshire, on a holiday in Scotland, in 1962.



# GROWTH OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

## New field of deep learning enjoys success

BY CHARLES BREEN AND MOHAMED OSAMNIA  
SPRING PROFESSIONAL

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been changing our lives for decades, but never has it felt more ubiquitous than now. It is a branch of computer science that aims to create intelligent machines, and is fast becoming an essential part of the technology industry. It includes several sectors and branches, such as pattern recognition, data science, machine learning, computer vision and genetic programming.

Machine learning—a method of data analysis that automates analytical model building—is a key technology in the AI sphere. Using advanced algorithms that repeatedly learn from data, machine learning allows computers to find hidden insights without being explicitly programmed about where to look. Powering many of our daily activities are the smart recommendation systems on e-commerce platforms, image recognition systems, email spam filtering and speech recognition, to name a few.

Now that the IT world faces marked growth in computing power, there is an increased interest in machine learning. Around four years ago, a new field of research was introduced called deep learning, and it is enjoying massive success in several areas.

It is based on the use of several layers of artificial neural networks (ANN), a group of algorithms that are closely based on the understanding of human brains. Deep learning combines advanced computing power and special types of neural networks to learn complicated operations using a large amount of data. This allows systems to identify—automatically—objects in images, or words in sounds. The commercial applications for this area are only starting to be discovered.

A project that combines several fields of machine learning—as well as AI—is the



Charles Breen of Spring Professional

driverless vehicle. This arena is a clear focus for several firms in Japan ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Mainly based on sensors and software to drive, the cars will be taking visitors around the city by the summer of 2020. They rely heavily on such aspects of AI as machine learning, pattern recognition and computer vision.

For instance, computer vision techniques can generate a sophisticated learning algorithm, fed with many images containing objects that will allow a car to read and understand different images. This enables it to know the kind of obstacle with which it is faced—for example, a person, another car, or a bicycle.

The cars will also rely on language processing algorithms, such as sound recognition and real-time speech translation. Thus, those in the cars can give orders to the vehicle about destinations, or can inquire about their surroundings.

These are just a few examples of the large use of machine learning and AI. In the near



Mohamed Osamnia of Spring Professional

future, robots and machines will be able to independently carry out several tasks and complicated operations. We will also have many smart devices and IT systems available to us in all industries due to the continuous advancement of AI and machine learning.

Although AI in popular media is not always painted in the best light—whether that is via the dystopias of Hollywood, the warnings of thought leaders such as Stephen Hawking CH CBE, or the words of inventor Ray Kurzweil in his book, *The Singularity is Near*—the reality is that many firms are adding elements of AI to their product suites to improve our lives.

The market in Tokyo is, therefore, as vibrant an incubator for the application of AI as are other global cities. This is leading to a wide variety of exciting new career opportunities here. From automotive to telecommunications to robotics, the demand for experienced professionals with backgrounds and interests in AI is on the rise, and not set to slow down any time soon. 🇬🇧

# ATTRACTING MEMBERS TO THE BCCJ



## New scheme launched

BY IAIN FERGUSON  
BCCJ MEMBERSHIP TASK FORCE

Membership of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) has many benefits: a wide range of interesting and informative events, promotional opportunities, useful information, great entertainment and enhanced access to key bodies and influential people. But perhaps the most powerful benefit of all is the BCCJ membership network.

We enjoy one of Japan's most active and influential business networks, driven by 900 professionals with a shared interest in promoting UK and Japan business relations. In the wider BCCJ ecosystem, membership also allows access to the British Embassy Tokyo and key policy makers in Japan, as well as dignitaries from business, government, political and royal circles. Moreover, it provides opportunities to engage at a senior level with British and Japanese executives.

We believe that the more we grow our network, the stronger it will become. Every time we welcome a new member, the collective skills, experience and knowledge of the BCCJ member ecosystem grow a little bit more, too. For that reason, we have launched a new Member-Gets-Member (MGM) scheme to continue growing the collective strength of our network.

The BCCJ exists to encourage more British business in the Japan market and more Japanese investment in the UK. Accordingly, the new MGM scheme targets individual or corporate members of any nationality who are working on this mission.

As the majority of the current individual and corporate membership is British, we are particularly interested in attracting more Japanese members. We believe that having a good balance of British and Japanese members will lead to a more stimulating network, a greater reciprocal understanding of business

culture and the creation of more productive business and personal relationships for everyone involved.

### How does it work?

The MGM scheme is very simple, and all members can take advantage of it. Each member who introduces a new member—in any membership category—will receive a credit to their BCCJ account equivalent to 50% of the new member's first annual membership fee. This credit may be used against the cost of the existing member's membership fee or to cover event participation fees.

So, the benefit is clear for existing members but what about that of new members? Well, new members gain access to the same member benefits that are enjoyed by existing members. It's not every day you find something so simple yet so beneficial for both members and the chamber.

### How can I apply?

It's very easy and should only take a few minutes. Either pick up one of the bilingual

MGM forms at a BCCJ event or ask the BCCJ office ([info@bccjapan.com](mailto:info@bccjapan.com)) to send you a form by email.

The company or individual applying for membership fills out a few contact details, and the introducing member validates the form by providing their membership details. Then it is ready to submit, by hand, post or email to the BCCJ office.

We feel sure that you already know many potential members with an interest in promoting UK-Japan business relations. They will be the people and businesses that you already interact with in Japan on a day-to-day basis: your customers, suppliers, business partners and others in your business network.

Please do help the chamber (and yourself) by using this scheme. There is no limit to the number of new members you can introduce and, with every new member, our network gets stronger, leading to more business opportunities for all involved in the BCCJ. 🇬🇧

[www.bccjapan.com/MGM](http://www.bccjapan.com/MGM)



# STEERING JAPAN INTO THE DATA AGE

## Impact of the analytics revolution

BY ANTHONY FENSOM

Arriving in Tokyo around the end of the bubble era, Sweden native Tomas Olsson recalls how as a foreigner he could not get a taxi after midnight for love or money. By the time he departed temporarily, in 1995, cabs were lined up at taxi ranks by the hundreds and there was no such drama finding late-night transport.

Just as Japan's bubble era excesses quickly faded, the "golden age" of advertising appears also to have moved on. In its place are savvy, data-driven businesses like UK-based Ve Interactive, which Japan representative director Olsson says is spearheading a complete transformation of the advertising agency model.

With a background in corporate banking and finance, Olsson sees an opportunity for proficiency and expertise in data analytics and technology to trump the insider know-how of the traditional Japanese ad industry.

"In the past, advertising was driven by having access to media and, particularly in Japan, having access to famous stars, and using the stars to drive your brand and company promotion," he told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. "We believe the future is all based on your data set—how well do you know each individual visitor to your website?" he added.

"We're entering a stage of advertising that's going to be very interesting, where traditional advertising agencies will potentially be disrupted by marketing technology companies like ourselves who use data to build a good picture of the consumer, and technology to deliver a message to them."

An early investor in the UK firm—founded in 2009—Olsson returned to Japan in 2014 to launch the Tokyo office. Now running the Japan, South Korea and Australasia operations, he sees the technology sector in Japan as largely similar

to, albeit slightly behind, its Western rivals.

"In terms of overall Internet commerce, we find the US and UK are still a bit ahead, but we see a fairly quick catch up in Japan in terms of sophistication and use of technology," he said.

"Because there is very limited domestic technology in our sector, the market is very approachable and receptive to our solutions".

The slight head start that Ve Interactive has in the adoption of their marketing technology in Japan leads Olsson to believe that, "Japan potentially could be our largest market globally within five years".

In Japan, the firm employs 20 staff, who work with 500 clients ranging from major brands Fast Retailing and Muji, to telecoms giant NTT and brewer Suntory.

### Advice for the local market

Olsson says Ve Interactive has learned the need to get everything right before launch.

- Data-driven consumer analytics to replace traditional advertising
- New business model for the industry pioneered in UK
- Important, in Japan, to be viewed as a local firm

"When you launch a new product in the UK or US, most customers will accept that it doesn't work perfectly from the start, and will work with you to improve it," he said. "That's not the case here".

He also cautioned against recruiting an office purely of bilingual staff, since it could alienate potential customers.

"From my experience, Western firms should be very cautious of going down the route of a perfectly bilingual working environment.

While an international, bilingual workforce may make management's life easier, you might find some resistance from clients when staff are out with the customers—you want to be viewed as a local company as much as possible," he said.

Ve Interactive's success to date may put credence in that theory, however its distinctive business model is also a likely contributor. By merging the processes of



### A DAY IN THE LIFE: TOMAS OLSSON

- 10am:** Arrives at work—a late riser.
- Morning:** Works through strategic issues.
- 2pm:** As the morning coffee begins to wear off, he has an hour at the gym or a quick lunch at an uncrowded restaurant.
- Afternoon:** Provides support to local staff in Japan, South Korea and Australasia.
- 9–10pm:** Has dinner—a late finisher, too.
- 1–2am:** Watches a film on Netflix; finally hits the pillow.



“The future is all based on your data set—how well do you know each individual visitor to your website?”

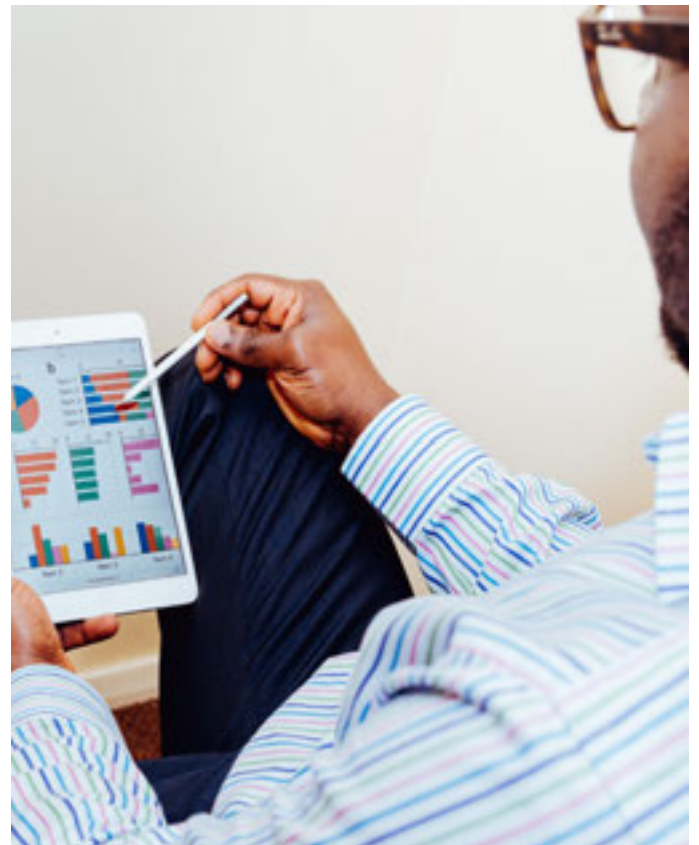
advertising, measurement and sales conversion into one inclusive platform, it offers clients a high level of transparency.

But perhaps even more important for in-house marketing managers, it operates on a performance-based payment structure, challenging traditional agency costs.

Along with his drive to make Ve Interactive the pre-eminent

player in the marketing technology market, Olsson has no plans to leave Tokyo again soon, although he credits that to more than just business.

“Tokyo is probably the most underrated city in the world. It’s one of the most liveable cities, with easy access to beaches and skiing, and the best food you can find. It’s a terrific place to live”, Olsson said. 🇯🇵



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# WORKPLACES FOR ALL

- Different people foster creativity and, therefore, innovation
- Firms' D&I policies can be a deciding factor for job candidates
- Need exists to reward performance rather than personal factors

## British firm sets bar on diversity

BY GEOFF BOTTING

**W**hy adopt diversity? Why should large corporations go out of their way to create a workforce of people from all sorts of backgrounds?

For global pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline K.K. (GSK), the answer is simple: diversity and inclusion (D&I) policies make perfect business sense.

"I believe that, in a uniform world, there is less chance to have creativity", explains Philippe Fauchet OBE, the firm's president and representative director. "I think diversity is a source of potential for any company".

Diversity breeds innovation, which has never been more critical for business managers.

Given the fact that GSK plc has operations in more than 150 countries and is a global leader in the development of a wide range of pharmaceuticals, vaccines and consumer healthcare products, it is a topic close to the heart of the British firm.

### Diversity in recruitment

According to Fauchet, an inclusive approach, right from the outset of hiring staff, is essential.

"I think it's quite natural for a pharmaceutical company, where you want to get inspiration and innovation, to try to capture talent from any background", Fauchet told *BCCJACUMEN*. "We need to innovate

constantly to take care of patients' needs, and from diversity we can create that kind of environment where innovation appears".

Opening the recruitment door as widely as possible also makes sense in a labour market with considerably more jobs on offer than candidates available. Japan's unemployment rate is barely above 3%, suggesting a chronic labour shortage. Employers, especially ones in the fast-growing healthcare field, simply cannot afford to overlook talented individuals solely because of their gender, cultural background or other factors.

"GSK is very much focused on this topic—of how we can attract and retain talent, regardless



## “Quotas may not be the solution to the problem. I believe it’s more about a change of culture ...”

Philippe Fauchet OBE  
of GSK K.K.



of their origin,” Fauchet said. “Japan is a market of full employment, which means that competition will take place, not just with salaries.

“How you attract people will depend on other factors. I believe D&I is one of those factors that will make differences between companies”.

### Gender

A leading issue in Japan is getting more women into management. The government’s Womenomics initiative had set a target for females to hold at least 30% of leadership positions in large firms by 2020. This was later revised to a goal of 15% for the private sector—and 12% for central government.

GSK, meanwhile, already has shown some outstanding progress. Half of its board members—in addition to 30% of its corporate officers—are women. Yet, Fauchet says, achieving equality is not simply a matter of numbers: “Quotas may not be the solution to the problem. I believe it’s more about a change of culture ... a long journey that requires permanent communication, which requires training”.

Ultimately, the goal is to have a workforce that accurately reflects society. According to Fauchet, this means that firms should have a “50-50 balance between men and women”. In order to find gender balance at the leadership level, however, roles “should be based first on merit and performance”. While working to achieve diversity, Fauchet said firms “should not try to discriminate in a way where being a man is a disadvantage”.

### Sexual orientation

One of the latest issues for human resources departments is that of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employees. Demographers

disagree on the exact percentage of the general population who fall into this category. Many estimates put it at around 5–10%.

“If you extrapolate [that percentage] to a company like ours, where we employ approximately 3,000 people, then you immediately see that we have a few hundred people who might feel concerned by the environment in which they work if they are not properly recognised,” Fauchet said.

He added that GSK is working on an initiative aimed at making LGBT people feel at home at the firm, so that “working at GSK in Japan is seen as something that allows you to have your own life”.

“We respect all preferences. And these should be a factor in inclusion in the sense that people will be comfortable in joining us, as they know the environment won’t stress them”.

### Ability

One event that will be a chance for GSK to promote its D&I stance is the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Lots of corporate sponsors are excited about being part of the greatest show on earth. GSK Japan has special reason to celebrate: a few of its employees are former Paralympians, and the firm plans to focus on a series of events for athletes with physical disabilities—or, as Fauchet prefers to say, “different abilities”.

**Diversity breeds  
innovation, which  
has never been more  
critical for business  
managers.**

“The Paralympics is less well advertised [than the Olympics],” he said, adding that the event needs more volunteers.

“GSK Japan will look at the Paralympics as another opportunity for us to demonstrate our solidarity”.

### Age

Youth is another quality GSK is eager to tap. Their strategy is to offer young people an open and flexible environment where their efforts and contributions are fully appreciated.

“What attracts people when they are young is [if they will] be recognised, trained and have a certain perspective on their career,” said Fauchet, adding that those people do not want “to feel they will enter a kind of box where they will get out 10 years later, and then be promoted at that time”.

“I think that has been unfortunately the case a lot in the past so, as a company, we need to show that young people also can take positions in the company and don’t need to wait until they are 50 or 60 to take higher responsibilities”.

### Future of workplaces

That principle—of pay for performance rather than the length of time spent in a job or even working at the office—is part of a D&I initiative that GSK announced this spring. The stepped-up measures include ways to promote various work styles, such as remote working—from home or on the move—and flexible or shorter working hours. Working fathers are also being encouraged and supported to take childcare leave.

The goal is to deal with an increasingly challenging and competitive global business environment by making the workplace more flexible and tolerant. 🌸



# NEW HEIGHTS

## Fresh approach from British Airways based on strong heritage

British Airways has been flying high in the Japanese market since 1948, but new partnerships, state-of-the-art aircraft, and award-winning facilities—in the air and on the ground—are taking the UK's leading airline to new heights.

And, with increasing competition in the global industry, British Airways' commitment to ensuring its passengers enjoy the best possible experience, from check-in to arrival, sets it apart from its rivals, according to Jonty Brunner, British Airways' regional commercial manager for Japan and South Korea.

That promise extends across all the airline's classes, but a long-haul journey in a British Airways first class or business class cabin is truly an occasion to savour.

"Our record of setting high standards in aviation for more than 90 years has continued

with the award-winning Club World business class and the recent launch of a new first class product," said Brunner.

"These new cabins bring together a balance of privacy, comfort, space and contemporary British design," he added. "They draw on the airline's heritage, focusing on quality and attention to detail, and the new first product will be available on the Tokyo Narita route from July 2016".

Premium passengers are spoilt for choice with the selection of food and drink options on board, and in British Airways' lounges around the world.

"We take special care and pay attention to ensure that the tastes, flavours and types of dishes work well in the air and at different times of the day or night, while we also customise our menus to suit the local tastes of our travellers," he said.

For premium passengers departing from Heathrow Airport Terminal 5, as well as those arriving or transiting, the Elemis travel spa provides complimentary treatments. Meanwhile, for those energised by Champagne, it is served free of charge at the airline's six lounges in the terminal, including The Concorde Room.

Priority boarding is a nice perk, while passengers travelling in Club World can enjoy a two-metre flat bed to stretch out on during the journey. Complimentary snacks are available in the Club Kitchen throughout the flight.

The very latest refinements in British Airways' on-board product are being incorporated into the new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, which is to start flying between Heathrow and Narita International Airport in July. Featuring a new first class cabin—designed

British Airways' new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner will begin service between Heathrow and Narita in July.



based on extensive feedback from frequent fliers—the new aircraft will have only eight first-class suites, compared to 14 on the majority of British Airways’ other long-haul aircraft, providing even more exclusivity and privacy.

“Our premium customers are used to the very best in life, be that at home, work or whilst on the move”, said Brunner. “They are accustomed to personalised service from our cabin crew and they may even expect a little British style as they travel with British Airways”.

The airline is constantly seeking ways to improve its reach, he added, pointing out that the partnership with Japan Airlines and Finnair provides customers in Japan with greater convenience and access to a wider network throughout Europe.

“We are able to offer our customers even more flexibility, enabling them to combine flights from all three oneworld carriers to create the perfect itinerary at the best price available”, said Brunner.

In 2015, oneworld was voted Best Airline Alliance by *Business Traveller* for the third consecutive year.

Passengers now have over 88 European destinations from which to choose, as well as 40 destinations at the Japan end of the journey.

Those numbers will receive a further boost in October 2016, when Iberia comes under the umbrella and commences direct flights between Narita and Madrid in Spain. Iberia, which will be resuming flights to Japan for the first time in 18 years, will provide the only direct links between the two cities.



The new aircraft offers eight first-class suites.

From Madrid, Iberia’s network will give travellers easy access to its 29 Spanish destinations—from Barcelona to Granada—and other destinations in the rest of Europe, Africa and the Americas.

British Airways recently marked the fifth anniversary of its route linking Heathrow with Haneda airport. The airline was the first from Europe to fly to Haneda after it was opened to international operations. In April 2014, it increased the service to daily flights to meet demand. Daily flights also operate out of Narita.

Current services have come a long way from British Airways’ inaugural services to

Japan. If the 11-hour flight between Tokyo and London seems a long time today—in spite of all the entertainment and dining options—spare a thought for passengers on the route when it was pioneered in 1948 by British Airways’ predecessor, British Overseas Airways Corporation.

At the time, passengers were required to travel 17,099km to Japan, via Alexandria in Egypt, Karachi in Pakistan, Bangkok in Thailand and Hong Kong. That journey took seven days.

The contrast with the new Dreamliner—the most advanced aircraft in the British Airways fleet—could not be starker.

“They are designed to boost well-being and offer the best possible customer experience for our inbound and outbound passengers alike”, said Brunner.

“Our customers will notice the benefits of the integrated LED mood lighting system; it reflects daylight and night-time brightness and helps customers adjust to different time-zones.

“Our customers will also notice that the new aircraft offers a smoother ride, with built-in sensors countering the effects of turbulence, reducing nausea for those who suffer from motion sickness”.

The innovation of lower cabin air pressure helps increase the amount of oxygen and moisture in the cabin air, reducing the effects of jet-lag and dry eyes for passengers, while fliers will also enjoy a better view from the larger windows.

“We look forward to welcoming our customers on board”, said Brunner. ✈



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# SLOW GROWTH

- Exchange rate fluctuations given as primarily influence on business
- Profitability shows more stability than sales performance
- Questions on childcare and pay rises included

## Firms positive but less upbeat than in last poll

BY BRANDI GOODE

Results from a study, conducted by the Foreign Chambers in Japan (FCIJ), show dampened optimism regarding Japan's economy.

According to analyses provided by the *FCIJ Business Confidence Survey Spring 2016*, on a scale of +2 (strong improvement) to -2 (strong decline), Japan's economic indices for the next six and 12 months are +0.02 and +0.18, respectively. This compares with +0.31 (six-month forecast) and +0.47 (12-month forecast) in the autumn 2015 poll. It, too, reveals a dip in optimism.

Broken down by industry, the index for finance dropped significantly across question categories (Japan's economy, past/future sales, past/future profitability). Many respondents cited yen exchange rate fluctuations as a primary influence on business, as well as global regulatory changes that have heavily influenced the financial services sector.

Sales over the past six months were down from the previous survey (+0.59 vs. +0.71), with financial businesses having taken the biggest

sales hit (+0.19 vs. +0.73). Most firms do not foresee any improvement over the coming six months (+0.73 vs. +0.94 in the autumn survey).

Profitability has been more stable than sales performance, however, with the past six months' results showing a +0.01 rise since the previous survey. Some 58% of respondents attribute recent gains to their own efforts, several having focused on client retention and high-value offerings. But profitability forecasts for the

coming six months reveal pessimism, with an index of +0.71 compared with +0.80 in the autumn survey. European firms present a more negative outlook than their US peers.

The spring survey includes two new questions, on childcare and pay raises. Childcare for working parents was cited as a recurring topic in 67% of responding firms. For local hires, 79% of firms said they would increase salaries by 1-6%, with 2.1% the average hike.

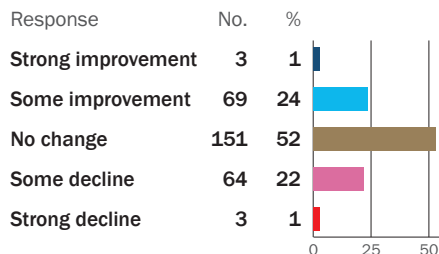
The biannual poll comprises responses from 17 local business organisations, with 61% of responses being from European chambers of commerce in Japan or business groups. Typically, a responding firm will have a Japan presence of more than 20 years, 40 employees, and an involvement in sales, trading or the service industry. 🇯🇵

**FULL REPORT:**

[www.fcc.or.jp/fcij/bcs.html](http://www.fcc.or.jp/fcij/bcs.html)

This survey is sponsored by Asian Tigers, Finnair and MOS Tax Corporation.

**JAPAN'S ECONOMIC SITUATION FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS** INDEX +0.02 (+0.31)



Total number of responses: 290



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# RURAL REVIVAL

Briton seeks answers to Japan's people challenges

BY JOHN AMARI

Japan is faced with a number of seemingly insurmountable challenges. A declining population and a dearth of global human resources are examples. However, such challenges are simply opportunities begging for a solution for some long-term residents. Briton Adam Fulford is such an individual.

Fulford has lived in Japan for 35 years. He is chief executive of Fulford Enterprises, Ltd.,

a provider of language services, and the brain behind the NowHow initiative.

NowHow's primary aim is to identify value in Japan's rural communities, many of which have borne the brunt of demographic shifts that threaten their very existence. Via the project, Fulford organises opportunities for diverse groups of largely non-Japanese city dwellers, to explore a community's resources under the guidance of

local residents, many of whom are elderly. These encounters generate new ideas that the community can utilise.

The initiative's secondary goal is to share experiences of coping with rapid change—from across Japan—with people in parts of the world where it may be valuable.

Since 2014, the NowHow project has worked with people in Nakatsugawa, a community in Iide, Yamagata Prefecture,

to identify their natural and cultural assets. These include the wisdom and talents of elderly people, cultural and agricultural practices, and natural features—such as mountains, rivers and even snow accumulations—that can be used to create value as tourist attractions or goods for sale.

A number of distinctive items—such as maple syrup and a local variety of pumpkin—have made it



Yamagata Prefecture has a large annual snow accumulation.



Locals support each other to cope with difficult winters.



as far as a retail shop in Tokyo that sells produce from Iide.

Critically, the NowHow project has gained solid support from the local community. With this united approach, Fulford told *BCCJACUMEN*, locals are in charge of their own fate while opening new avenues for partnership.

“Like many similar communities all across Japan”, Fulford said, “Nakatsugawa is struggling to cope with ageing and depopulation—demographic trends that threaten to push this idyllic community to the brink of collapse.

“NowHow is a project that aims to address these processes, revitalising communities by attracting multi-skilled teams of participants both from within Japan and overseas, to engage with local people”.

Fulford’s involvement in Nakatsugawa, which comprises around 300 people, began in 2013. At that time, he visited the community as a judge in the Bi-no-sato-zukuri Konkuru (village beautification competition), an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. That year, Iide came top among communities nationwide that had entered the competition.

In Nakatsugawa, Fulford was able to see first-hand the efforts



A snow storehouse is used to improve the flavour of vegetables.

that local people had been making to reverse decades of rural decline.

“Each community in the competition has been thinking with an open mind about how to keep going”, said Fulford, adding that Iide residents “already had a mindset of doing things their own way. The competition enabled them to draw attention to that.

“I thought Nakatsugawa was a very interesting community. They were thinking creatively about how to use local recourses, such as *yuki-muro*” (snow storehouses).

Located in the mountains, the village has an annual snow accumulation of around four metres, giving locals the means to preserve a large amount in a warehouse, which can then be used to store various vegetables.

According to Fulford, this results in the vegetables developing a sweeter flavour—a trait that locals use to differentiate their products in the market. The facility is also used to store products such as sake and coffee.

What is more, the facility has given birth to a new and counterintuitive activity in the village—a summer snow festival. A large amount of snow is trucked from the storehouse to an open space to enable locals and tourists to enjoy activities such as sumo wrestling and treasure hunts.

The community is also using its traditions in imaginative ways, Fulford explained. It was once the custom in the area for teachers and travelling merchants to stay at local homes at the snowiest times of year.

Today, a number of local families uphold this tradition by opening their homes to tourists as bed and breakfast offerings. Hundreds of guests have had a special experience staying in such accommodation.

“I’ve been told that Japan’s countryside communities tend to be cautious in their dealings with visitors”, Fulford explained, “but I rarely encounter that myself. Certainly the people I know in Nakatsugawa always seem delighted to welcome new people from anywhere in the world”.

Following two years of government support, Fulford is now pursuing ways for NowHow to stand on its own two feet as a business. One possibility is to use places such as Nakatsugawa, which offers great natural beauty and facilities for meetings, as a venue for corporate training.

“The idea”, Fulford said, “is that all the trainees share the aim of generating new value for the local community. On the way to that goal, Japanese trainees might explore ways to be more resourceful, creative and flexible.

“Foreign trainees might seek insights into Japanese culture”, he added. And everyone would get a preview of what Tokyo will be dealing with—just a few years from now—in terms of demographic change”. ❀



Idyllic Nakatsugawa won a national award for harnessing its beauty.



Elderly residents teach young people traditional skills. • PHOTO: TOM MIYAGAWA COULTON



# HIDDEN PARADISE

Oki Islands geopark reveals Shetland-like secrets

BY JOHN AMARI



The Oki Islands UNESCO Global Geopark is internationally renowned for its beauty. • PHOTO: JIMMY NGUYEN



Activities such as sea kayaking are popular offerings. • PHOTO: CLUB NOAH OKI

Viewed from the air, the Oki Islands of Shimane Prefecture look like verdant cushions gently sitting atop the Sea of Japan. As our propeller-powered aircraft descends through clouds, more details emerge. Rows of settlements, roads and waterways hewn out of earth sit in a great valley, connecting one end of the islands' emerald seashore to the other.

On the ground, the perspective shifts entirely. Signs of human habitation seem few and far between. A few outbuildings and a two-storied airport terminal stand before us. Heavily forested mountains jutting out of the light blue sea frame the horizon.

We walk from our plane across the pulsating tarmac. The sun hovers directly above, the intense midday heat tempered by a soft breeze.

Within minutes, we clear the reception area and gather our luggage from the small





Visitors take in the scenery at the Akao Lookout. • PHOTO: NICK BRADLEY



The islands support a vast ecosystem. • PHOTO: NICK BRADLEY

carousel. As we emerge into the main area of the terminal building, Ryuji Miyahara and Teresa Sadkowsky, our guides, greet us with broad smiles.

A native of the Oki Islands, Miyahara is director of tourism promotion at the Oki branch of the Shimane prefectural government. Sadkowsky, who hails from Australia, is a coordinator of international relations on the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, who also works on the Oki Islands Global Geopark Promotion Committee.

“The vast nature—characteristic of the Oki Islands—and traditional lifestyles that remain here, have been identified by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization as something special”, Miyahara told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. “I think that visitors can experience this through interaction with the local people.” Sadkowsky heartily agreed.

Certainly, the Oki Islands’ natural endowment, together with its distinctive cultural assets and thoroughly agreeable locals, are a special combination.

### History

In 2013, the islands became part of the Global Geoparks Network, which defines geoparks as “single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development”.

Such designated areas, which may include a coastline, forest or rock formation, “may have aesthetic beauty or scientific importance—or both”, said Sadkowsky.

The Oki Islands UNESCO Global Geopark provides a number of services, such as local guiding, education including fieldwork with

schoolchildren, and academic research in partnerships with universities. Located there are the Oki Nature Museum and Oki Islands Geopark Visitor Center, which has exhibits on the islands’ ecological and geological past.

Since the inception of the network in 1998, the number of global geoparks has grown to 120 in 33 countries as of June 2016. In Japan, there are eight, including the Oki Islands.

Located 40–80km off the coast, the Oki Islands consist of the Dozen Islands—Nishinoshima, Nakanoshima and Chiburijima—and Dogo Island, the largest of the four inhabited islands. There are also about 180 islands in the area that are uninhabited.

Due to the region’s geological heritage, a bio-diverse ecosystem has emerged that is distinctive, both on land and in the sea. This can be seen from the flora, fauna and geological features.





Geographical and cultural elements exist in harmony. • PHOTO: JIMMY NGUYEN



Visitors take a tour incorporating the Sekiheki Red Cliff.



Bull sumo matches are a feature of the Dangyo Shrine Festival.

From the awe-inspiring Sekiheki Red Cliff and the ethereal Dangyo-no-taki Waterfalls to the enigmatic, 800 year-old *Chichi-sugi* (Japanese cedar), the islands are a living natural history museum.

Anthropological evidence suggests humans have lived in the region for around 30,000 years. By the middle ages, the islands had become notorious for hosting noblemen in exile, such as the 14th century Emperor Godaigo.

Later, merchants sailing north along the Sea of Japan relied on the islands for ports, dropping anchor in inclement weather, in particular.

The sailing ships of the day, called *kitamaebune*, are also thought to have spread far and wide cultural trends like *reng-e-mai*, which is an ancient court dance of the Heian era (8–12th century).

#### Cultural treasures

Today, evidence of the islands' affinity with the sea can still be seen in the fishing towns. One of the islands' many charms is that small boats, anchored next to homes, line a myriad waterways.

Cultural forms of expression—such as the *gore-furyu* festival, where horses are led to the Tamawakasu-mikoto Shrine on Dogo Island—are also popular features of local life: “One of the things I really enjoy is the variety of cultural events on the islands,” Sadkowsky shared.

In early September, she explained, visitors can enjoy the Dangyo Shrine Festival. “When you get there, you’ll see a bull ring with people sitting around it on the hill. That is where you can see the bull sumo matches, which pit one bull against another. A winner is determined as soon as one bull turns away, at which point they are separated to avoid injury.”

The bouts are accompanied by people singing and cheering. “It’s an atmosphere that I’ve never encountered before, anywhere in Japan,” she added.

The calendar of festivals on the islands runs between April and November. One highlight is the colourful *shara-bune* (spirit boats) festival on 16 August when locals say farewell to their ancestors.

Activities are a hit, and include swimming in the sea (June–September), sea kayaking tours of coastal caves (April–October) and diving. There are also a number of immaculate beaches.



Recreational fishing is growing in popularity, perhaps having been given a boost when tennis champion and Shimane Prefecture local Kei Nishikori said he loves eating *nodoguro* (sea bass).

Cruises along the Kuniga Coast go past the jagged Matengai Cliff and through the Tsutenkyo Arch to the ghostly Akekure-no-iwaya Cavern. This 250m sea cave is locally known as the cave of light and dark.

Hiking through primeval forests with the Geopark-led eco-tours, picnicking at the stunning Akao Lookout on Nishinoshima Island, or camping in the idyllic Jodogaura Campground on Dogo Island provide endless wonders for visitors. And, each year, an ultramarathon of 50 or 100km is held on Dogo Island, while a half marathon is held on Nishinoshima Island.

“I love being able to jump into the car, drive a couple of minutes, and be surrounded by stunning nature”, said Sadkowsky, who has lived in the area for more than four years.

### Tour highlights

The first port of call during our whistle-stop tour was Saigo-misaki Cape Park on the southern coast of Dogo Island.

From a lookout next to Saigo-misaki Lighthouse, we enjoyed a breathtaking view of the rugged coastline as we strained to spy the enigmatic Tokage-iwa rock, which famously resembles a lizard. The rock is located on Mount Washigamine and Mount Tsuzurao, some 12km from the lookout.

After lunch and a pitstop at the geopark visitors’ centre, we drove past Tsuma Bay, stopping briefly to take in the fresh air, on our way to the spectral beauty of Dangyo waterfalls. Its *kachi-mizu* (winning water), which is said to bring good luck to those who drink it, is renowned.

Our thrilling experience around the islands had two highlights. The first was our overnight stay at Minshuku Tajimaya, a traditional family inn. Our host, chef and entertainer was the charismatic manager Yoshie Uno. Not only did she take care of our every need, including answering questions in English about Wi-Fi availability, but she also served up the most delicious local dinner.

A meal of fresh Oki rock oysters, sumptuous red sea bream *sashimi*—caught that morning



Locals say farewell to their ancestors at the spirit boats festival. • PHOTO: MAO KITAMI

by Uno’s fisherman father and son-in-law—delectable tofu and vegetable *tempura*, all washed down with the local sake, is the stuff of culinary dreams.

On top of that, she serenaded us with a sonorous rendition of four of the best local tunes to the accompaniment of a *shamisen*. All the while, her irrepressible smile did not leave her face.

The second highlight was the devastatingly beautiful view from Onimai Lookout on Nishinoshima Island. From there, you have not only splendid views of the Sea of Japan, but also verdant farmland. Enjoying the view, while cows and horses grazed lazily nearby, was satisfaction itself. Rumour has it that these are the happiest cows and horses in the world. It is easy to understand why. 🌸

### GLOBAL GEOPARKS

Gilbert Murray, an Australia-born British scholar and public intellectual, played a key role in the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation. This group advised the League of Nations, the forerunner of the United Nations, which established UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Similarities exist between the global geoparks of the Oki Islands and Shetland, the UK’s most northerly archipelago. While the climate is vastly different, both areas offer stunning coastal scenery, geographical and ecological attractions and a vibrant local culture.



The Oki Islands Geopark visitor centre includes exhibits on local wildlife.

# EXPLORE YASUGI CITY

## Adachi Museum of Art among Shimane Prefecture's many attractions

A visit to Shimane Prefecture is never complete without time spent in one of its signature attractions, the Adachi Museum of Art.

Between April 2015 and March 2016, some 24,000 visitors from abroad put it on their travel itinerary. While tourists from the US topped the rankings among Westerners, the French came second and Brits third.

Wataru Takeda, a manager at the museum, explained that the museum is “an independent institution open to everyone”.

“We wish to be a valued and proud member of Yasugi City, and our goal is to be a must-visit museum for tourists and expats in Japan”, he added.

Established in 1970 to develop Japanese art and nurture promising Japanese painters, the museum houses about 1,500 works—including paintings, sculptures and ceramics—by masters of Japanese art.

Among the museum's star attractions are the work of such artists as Taikan Yokoyama (1868–1958), known simply as Taikan, who co-founded the Nihon Bijyutsuin (Japan Art Institute), and Seiho Takeuchi (1864–1942), a master painter of the pre-war era.

Taikan's collection of 120 works is particularly noteworthy. Among these are the famous *suibokuga* (ink wash paintings), which are complemented by works in deep colours, such as his screen masterpiece, *Autumn Leaves*.

Another of the museum's main attractions is the spectacular landscape garden. According to the museum's founder, Zenko Adachi, the garden is “a picture scroll; a living painting”.

Consisting of The Tea Garden, The Moss Garden, The Dry Landscape Garden, The Pond Garden, and The White Gravel and Pine Garden, not to mention an actual mountain range that frames its background, the garden boasts yet another attractive aspect: seasonal variety.

*The Journal of Japanese Gardening*, published by the US-based Japanese Gardening Organization—a multinational, non-profit organisation that is spreading the benefits of Japanese gardening for individuals, groups, communities and society—has given the garden its top ranking since 2003.

To complement its regular exhibits, the museum's displays are changed each season. In addition to a recently completed two-storey annex, housing around 200 masterpieces

by contemporary Japanese painters, there is a theatre, where visitors can learn more via explanations of the exhibited works and films.

In addition to appreciating its artistic offerings, visitors to Shimane are encouraged to explore and experience its many craft activities and local cuisine.

At the Hirose-gasuri Center, you can take part in traditional indigo dyeing. *Hirose-gasuri* are intricate and detailed patterns created on cotton by weaving different shades of indigo by hand.

Typical designs feature images of pine, bamboo, plums, cranes and turtles. The designs are customarily used on items such as cushions for brides or on clothing and bedding. This dyeing process has been designated an intangible asset of the prefecture.

To satisfy your tastebuds, meanwhile, a number of venues offer traditional vegetarian *shojin-ryori* (devotional food), which contains neither fish nor meat. A staple of trainee monks of local Buddhist temples, the dish typically includes intricately prepared dishes using tofu and mountain vegetables, seasoned with vegan *dashi* (stock) or soy sauce. 🌱



Adachi Museum's landscape garden is a popular attraction.



Devotional food, which contains neither fish nor meat, is famous in Yasugi City.



# LIVING MUSEUM

## Step back in time in Oda City

Visitors to Shimane Prefecture would be remiss were they not to visit one of the region's best-kept secrets: the silver mines of Iwami Ginzan in Oda City.

A trip to the preserved town, where the silver miners lived, is also recommended. It features an area designated an Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings. One can also visit the Iwami Ginzan World Heritage Centre, which exhibits items that have been excavated from the mines.

As Europe expanded its interests across the world during the 16th century, the silver mines of Iwami Ginzan became a supply hub for Europe and other parts of Asia, accounting for around one-third of global silver production.

Registered as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site in 2007, the Iwami Ginzan mines are a window onto a prosperous past. Although the mine stopped producing silver in the early 20th century, at its peak the town was home to some 200,000 people. Now, there are only 400 households in the area.

Digging for silver at the mine was done entirely by hand, and evidence of the work can still be seen today. There are around 600 outcroppings and mine shafts, as well as flat tracts of land where refineries and dwellings once stood.

By the 17th century, the mines were of such value that they were fenced in for protection, and tight regulations were put in place.

Today, visitors can walk through the tunnels of the silver mine and along

mountain transport routes, which connected the mines to Yunotsu, a port town about 12km away. The area is surrounded by immaculately maintained nature, and the port area boasts a long history of hot springs.

After allowing a few hours to explore the mines, a 2km walk leads to a living museum of preserved dwellings where the miners and administrators lived—the Omori-Ginzan Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings.

The House of the Kawashima Family, for example, is a perfectly preserved residence of a local official. Dating back to the 19th century, it is a time capsule, showing the life of a high-ranking samurai.

What is more, at the Rakan-ji Temple's Gohyakurakan Shrine, one comes face to face with 500 seated Buddhist arhats, each engraved with an individual expression. These sculptures commemorate the lives of those who died working in the mines, and honour the ancestral spirits.

Omori-Ginzan pays homage not just to the past, but also to the present. A number of businesses have sprung up in the area, including gift shops and restaurants. An interesting one is Iwami-Ginzan Seikatsu Bunka Kenkyusho Corporation, a family-run business that blends past and present through high fashion, household goods, a café, lodgings and a gallery.

If you seek a trip with a difference down memory lane, you cannot get much better than a visit to Oda and its illustrious offerings. ❀



Yunotsu Town is home to many hot springs.



A monument marks the Ryugenji Mabu Mine Shaft.



Rustic stone bridges lead to statues at Rakan-ji Temple.





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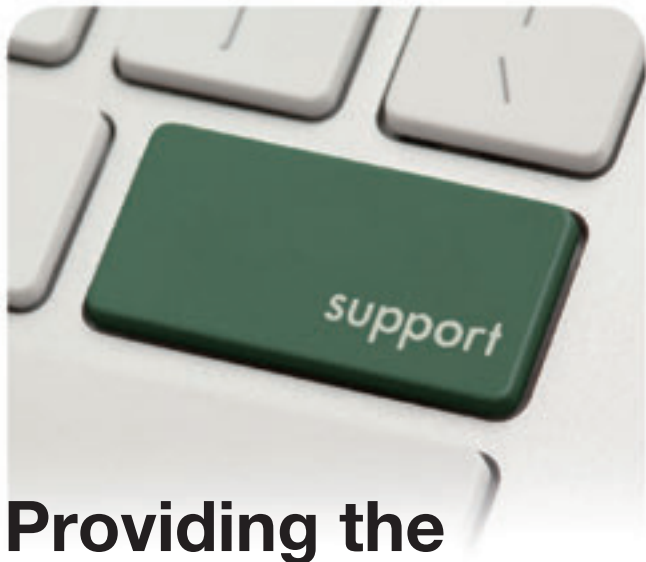
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# GOLDEN TIMES IN IT SECURITY

- Frequent career moves in IT accepted, given demand
- Large foreign firms investing in training of junior staff
- Less candidate sourcing from abroad than in other sectors

## Chances lie ahead for skilled staff

BY JOSHUA FERRIS  
DIRECTOR, MICHAEL PAGE TECHNOLOGY

With the growing proliferation of mobile phone use, globalisation of business operations and expansion of the Internet of Things, the IT security industry is becoming part of everyday life. Organisations across the board are increasingly realising the importance of protecting their information and that of their customers.

As a result, there has been a dramatic increase in demand for IT security professionals. Such is the thirst that it extends from candidates with general experience in the industry to security engineers and others with high-level skill sets.

### Hiring trends

Typically, workers in Japan tend to stay in a job for longer than their counterparts in the rest of Asia, reflecting a historical work ethic based on career stability that is valued by employees and employers alike. However, there is such a lack of talent in the security sector that suitable candidates can change jobs frequently—even yearly—without negatively impacting their reputation. These frequent job changes allow the specialised pool of talent to continue to improve not only their job prospects, but also their salaries.

Some candidates, particularly young ones with network engineering backgrounds, are finding themselves able to move into the security space. As relevant measures become ever more critical to operations, job seekers are trying to improve their prospects by expanding their skill sets. At the same time, those with engineering specialisations are often seen as good investments by larger firms.

While it is generally expected that experienced candidates seeking a security-related role come from a background in security, there is such competition for talent



that firms may need to relax their expectations in order to secure candidates.

### Invest in staff

One option for firms is to invest to a greater extent in up-skilling their IT and technology workers by equipping them with capabilities in combating security risks. Foreign businesses operating in Japan, however, tend to have a sales and business development focus, which limits the resources they can dedicate to formal training programmes. That said, large foreign firms are increasingly investing in talent management, developing junior workers with a long-term view while addressing skill gaps and creating a strong and capable workforce.

Due to the long-term investment required to develop and implement training programmes—along with the risk of loss if employees then leave—there is resistance among firms in Japan to the widespread adoption of training programmes.

### Current demand

Operating in the Japan market requires a high degree of literacy in Japanese, and an ability to liaise with local clients. This means that firms

are less likely than those in other markets to source candidates internationally, unless they are fluent in Japanese. This is particularly true of Japan's multinational firms, due to their focus on servicing local clients and building business. Local firms may be more amenable to international talent in IT and technology functions, but they only represent a small portion of the market.

Recruitment in the IT and technology sectors is currently at a four-year peak. Considering the current demand for talent in the information security sector—and the lack of available candidates—it can be expected that this trend will continue, while also becoming more pronounced in other high-impact areas of IT and technology, including enterprise cloud software, business intelligence and analytics software, Big Data technologies, advertising technology, as well as augmented and virtual reality.

Both augmented and virtual reality, in particular, look set to experience an explosion in growth as other sectors such as digital media, marketing and retail increasingly use technology to gain an edge in the market and compete on a global scale. 🌐

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# REAL LEADERS

## How to be more successful

BY DR GREG STORY

**W**e love acronyms. Our workplaces are thriving with them to such an extent that we can hold extended conversations composed entirely of these seemingly impenetrable codes. They can be handy, however.

This is a summary of the great and the good tendencies amongst leaders based on recent research carried out by Dale Carnegie Training in the US on what leaders need to do to be more successful. It is comprised of the elements reliable, empathetic, aspirational and learner (REAL)—a short and serviceable way to describe best practice leadership attributes.

### Reliable

This attribute is an obvious choice for a leader. Though much upheld in principle, however, it tends to break down in practice. For example, “managing up” is a buzzword for describing how to deal with one’s boss. It used to be called “sucking up to the boss” to get ahead. In the latter scenario, this means being a Teflon worker: taking all the glory for yourself, being untouchable for mistakes while blaming others for them, and stepping on the bodies of your staff, to elevate your own brilliant career.

Reliable, however, is an attribute that leads to trust only when staff observe that what is said is actually done, that promises are kept, and that their own personal

development is being given a high priority.

To ask, “What is in it for me?” is a common human frailty. Bosses who keep this employee perspective in mind, while making sure that the organisation and individual goals of their staff are aligned, get more loyalty—and more work accomplished. Misunderstandings that arise usually can be traced back to poor communication. More work is needed by bosses in this area.

### Empathetic

This trait is closely linked to listening skills. Taking the viewpoint of the other person is difficult if we don’t know what it is. The Japanese expression *kuki wo yomu*, or summing up the real situation, is a great phrase to explain empathy. What is being said is important but, more often, what isn’t being said is where the insight is buried.

Busy bosses, though, don’t have much time to get below the surface of the workplace. Some don’t care: “just get me the numbers—or else”. Using our position power works up to a point, but we then pay the price. We miss out on a lot of

creative potential, as ideas are not shared. If we want to know what is really going on, and what people are really thinking, we have to take the time to work at it.

Expressing that we genuinely care is another neglected communication skill. Successful bosses have good awareness, and confidence to communicate they really do have concern for their people.

### Aspirational

We need to grasp the bigger picture; hover above the melee of the everyday to see the vision being realised far on the horizon. This means communicating beyond the quarter’s goals and considering each individual’s role in terms of their contribution to the bigger picture.

Framed glass protects a firm’s vision statement, ceremoniously hung on the wall. While those words may not fade in the sunlight, they fade in the collective memory. No one can recite it, let alone live it, so it is as meaningful as the flower arrangement on the reception desk—a sufficiently pleasant idea but ephemeral.

- Care about your people, not just your sales numbers
- Don’t step on the bodies of your employees to get ahead
- Live your vision statement; it fades in the collective memory

A leader has to inject ideas and concepts related to that vision into terms that resonate with each person. This takes time, which is why so few organisations get any return on their investment in their vision statement.

### Learner

This practice of learning often gets nods of approval but many executives have had one year of experience 30 times rather than 30 years of experience. Their views are still locked away in a mental vault, for which they have lost the key.

They are also too busy to learn—busy working in their business rather than on their business. They are up to date on Facebook but way behind where the industry is headed and where their firm needs to go. They are well informed yet ignorant, because they lack perspective and acuity.

Moreover, if we aren’t prepared to permanently kill our darlings—our favoured ideas and concepts—we must be prepared to risk falling behind, trampled by our competitors.

### Get started

While yet another acronym, REAL is easy to remember, which is, at least, a start to actually realising its power. We know all of these things—we just forget or get too busy to do them. We should change that. 🚩

What is being said is important but, more often, what isn’t being said is where the insight is buried.



# PUTTING ART ON THE MAP

Award for boosting museum gems

PHOTO: NAKAMURA KEITH HARING COLLECTION • © KEITH HARING FOUNDATION

BY JULIAN RYALL



Art historian and writer Sophie Richard • PHOTO: MAKOTO ITO

London-based art historian and writer Sophie Richard received the Commissioner's Award from Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs in December, making her the youngest recipient and the only foreigner on the awards list in 2015. To add to the honour, the book that won her the award was released in Japanese, in April.

Richard was recognised for promoting Japanese art and culture through her book, *The Art Lover's Guide to Japanese Museums*, published by The Japan Society.

Richard, who travelled to Tokyo for the award ceremony, said she was "very happily surprised and felt greatly honoured".

"I originally wrote my book with foreign visitors in mind, so it is a great satisfaction to feel that the Japanese themselves are interested in it", she told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. "I take it as an encouragement, from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, to continue my research and my work".

The appeal of the book has clearly crossed cultures, given demand for the Japanese-language version. Moreover, Richard is already making progress with a second volume of the book, which is expected to be released in 2018.

"I have been in love with Japan since I was young," Richard said.

"I was particularly attracted to the country's traditional aesthetics and architecture, and I remember poring over books every time I could find some with photographs of Japan, and also watching classic Japanese movies", she said.

"I was dreaming of being inside traditional houses or palaces, which I found so beautiful and sophisticated, moving from room to room through sliding doors", she said. "I also found Japanese gardens very attractive and mysterious.

"I found the fact that everything was so different from what I knew, and yet also so refined, completely fascinating".

Of the more than 5,600 museums across Japan—including those dedicated to noodles,

handbags, Santa Claus, manga and even “sewage science”—one-fifth focus on art. Richard selected 50 of her personal favourites for the book. And, with the over-arching theme of art, she has applied the definition to include museums dedicated to photography, traditional costumes and objects used in the tea ceremony, even stretching to embrace a garden that houses a number of buildings designated as important cultural properties.

Cleverly designed and laid-out, the book has a section that explains the basics of getting the most out of Japanese art, whether it be scrolls of calligraphy, sculptures of religious subjects, fans, woodblock prints of *ukiyo-e* (pictures of the floating world), folk craft or the avant-garde modern art movement of artists such as Yayoi Kusama.

Details such as opening hours, access and website address are provided for each institution, as well as high-resolution images of some of the most eye-catching exhibits. Richard even warns that collections at Japanese museums are frequently rotated in order to display their extensive inventories and to protect delicate and ageing items.

Divided into five geographical regions, she also wisely chose not to provide copious information on museums that might be considered the largest and most influential, primarily because details in English on those institutions are already widely available.

That permitted her to focus on the lesser-known gems, such as Kyū Asakura House, a politician’s home that survived the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake and the firebombing of Tokyo during World War II. Today, it is an oasis of traditional design and greenery in one of the hippest parts of the city.

Clematis no Oka, in Shizuoka Prefecture, is another must-see, along with Kyoto’s Raku Museum, dedicated to tea bowls crafted by the same family for 15 generations. Another favourite is Sankeien Garden, in the suburbs of Yokohama. The former estate of a wealthy silk merchant, the 175,000m<sup>2</sup> garden is dotted with 17 buildings that, designated important cultural assets, range from a 15th century pagoda to a thatched tearoom dating back to 1917.

Richard says her decision to write the book was born out of her own experiences as a traveller in Japan.

“When I began visiting the country, I naturally wanted to see museums, which is what I always do when I travel anywhere in the world”, she said. “I soon realised, however, that it was rather



The Ryukoku Museum in Kyoto is featured in the book. • PHOTO: KIYOHICO HIGASHIDE

difficult to get good information beyond the main museums in Tokyo—and maybe Kyoto.

“Sometimes I would get somewhere and find a museum that was closed, which of course was very frustrating, and mostly due to the fact that often information was only available in Japanese.

“But I also stumbled upon little-known gems, or made the effort to travel to a museum far from the two main poles of attraction that are Tokyo and Kyoto, and felt it was really worth it. That made me more and more curious.

“While talking [to people in the UK] about Japan and my experiences there, I realised that most people actually had no idea how rich and varied the museum landscape is in Japan”, she added. “This is what made me want to write about it. I also wanted to know more about these places—discover their story”.

Richard considers museums to be “the ideal gateway into the country’s culture”.

Describing the possibilities for exploration of art in Japan, she said: “One can visit a traditional house, or be inside exciting contemporary architecture—and Japanese architects do really exciting work—or admire everything from ceramics, paintings and textiles to design or conceptual art.

“Also, museums exist in all sizes so depending on my mood, the time I have ahead of me, or the exhibition that happens to be on, I can get an insight into something that moves me or intrigues me and learn something about Japan”, she added.

For her follow-up book, Richard plans to travel to more remote parts of Japan, simply because “there is so much to discover beyond central Japan and people are eager to visit less-travelled destinations”. 🌸



# ARTS

## UK EVENTS IN JAPAN

COMPILED BY  
KIYOKO MORITA

### 1 28 JUNE: 2, 8 JULY

#### *Maxine Peake: Hamlet*

British Academy of Film and Television Arts nominee Maxine Peake stars in this film, based on the sell-out performances of *Hamlet* at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester. Shot creatively with eight cameras, this production is making its Japan premiere.

#### National Film Center, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

3-7-6 Kyobashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo

28 June: 2pm

8 July 5:45pm

Adults: ¥520

03-5777-8600

The Museum of Kyoto

Sanjo-Takakura

Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto

2 July: 1:30pm

Adults: ¥500

075-222-0888

»[www.eufilmdays.jp/en/films/2016/maxine-peakes-hamlet/](http://www.eufilmdays.jp/en/films/2016/maxine-peakes-hamlet/)

### 2 2 JULY– 19 SEPTEMBER

#### *Julia Margaret Cameron: A woman who breathed life into photographs*

This exhibition celebrates the bicentenary of the birth of Julia Margaret Cameron (1815–79), a British photographer credited for her innovative artistic techniques. It is coming to Japan as part of a tour of six countries, and will feature about 150 exhibits.

Julia Margaret Cameron, *Beatrice*, 1866

©VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

#### Mitsubishi Ichigokan

Museum, Tokyo

2-6-2 Marunouchi

Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

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12 September and holidays)

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### 3 7–22 JULY

#### *Gala: An Evening with Sarah Brightman*

Sara Brightman is an English classical crossover soprano, actress and songwriter who is often credited as the creator of the classical crossover genre. She has sold more than 30mn records worldwide.

#### Tokyo International Forum (among other locations)

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Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

Various show times

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4

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**4  
9 JULY**

*Sing Street*

Starring English actress Lucy Boynton, and featuring mostly iconic British music from the 1980s, such as classics from Duran Duran and The Jam, this comedy musical tells the story of an Irish boy who escapes his strained family life by starting a band.

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Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo  
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»<http://gaga.ne.jp/singstreet/>  
03-6259-8608

◦ **Free tickets**

We are giving away five pairs of tickets to the 30 June preview.

**5  
12-31 JULY**

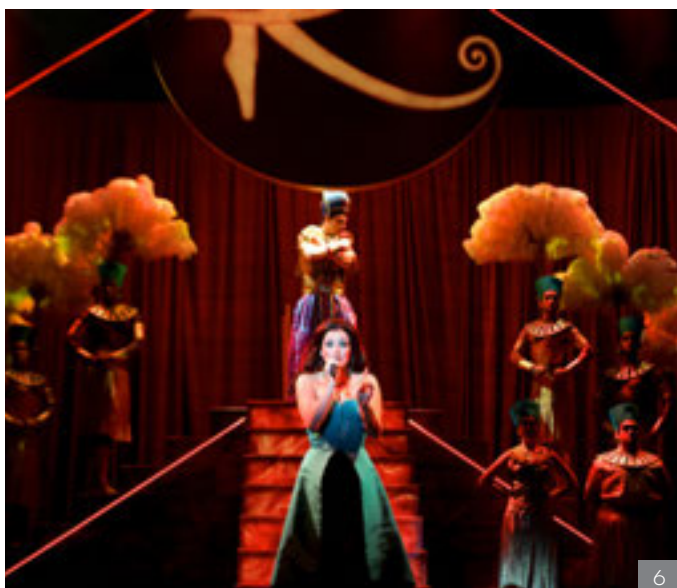
*Radiant Vermin*

Written by English storyteller Philip Ridley, this play is a comic satire about a young couple who are offered a way out of a housing crisis. It explores what they might be willing to do to achieve it.

PHOTO: TOMOKI FUTAISHI



5



6

**Theatre Tram**

4-1-1 Taishido, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo  
Various show times  
Adults: from ¥7,000  
»<http://setagaya-pt.jp/en/performances-en/20160712radiant.html>  
03-5432-1515

**6  
13-24 JULY**

*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*

This legendary musical about the Bible's Joseph, features lyrics by Sir Tim Rice and music by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber Kt. It is directed and choreographed by Andy Blankenbuehler, who is a recipient of a Tony Award.

PHOTO: DANIEL A. SWALEC

**Tokyu Theatre Orb**

Shibuya Hikarie 11F  
2-21-1 Shibuya  
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo  
Various show times  
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»[www.joseph2016.jp/english.html](http://www.joseph2016.jp/english.html)  
03-3477-3244



## HM the Queen's Birthday Party

PHOTOS: © BRITISH EMBASSY TOKYO/JUN TAKAGI

1

Tim Hitchens CMG LVO (right), British ambassador to Japan, welcomed guests.

2

A piper played traditional music.

3

A statue of Shaun the Sheep was on display.

4-6

A wide range of British classics were available.

7

Guests enjoyed fine weather in the garden of the ambassador's residence.







## UK-Japan events

### 1 | BCCJ EVENT

Terence Harvey, CRM manager of EMC Quest K.K., Kathryn Wortley, editor of *BCCJACUMEN*, and Joy Fajardo, client services manager at Custom Media K.K., attended the BCCJ 51 Night in Minato Ward on 24 May.

### 2, 3

BCCJ members and guests took part in the event “BCCJ Golf: Swing in Spring”, in Tochigi Prefecture, on 22 May.

### 4 | SPORT

Eddie Jones (right) was interviewed at an event for The Japan Society in London, hosted by Clifford Chance, on 3 May.

### 5 | FOOD & DRINK

Tamao Sako (page 9) won first prize for her book *British Home Cooking*, and third place for her book *British Cake Stories* at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards 2016, in Shandong Province, China, in May.

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



## Putting down roots brings new cultural ties

BY SAM BIRD

I first heard about the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme after graduating from university, when I was living in South Yorkshire. By working at two jobs—one for the Environment Agency and one for a charity in the evenings—I was saving enough money to travel around South America for six months.

I applied to the programme thinking that, if I got in, it would be a good opportunity to experience a new place while continuing to prepare financially for my adventure. Now into my 11th year in Japan, I am still looking forward to that trip to South America.

I spent two years on the programme (2005–07), in Niigata Prefecture, working as an assistant language teacher (ALT) in each step of the education system. I taught at three academic- and engineering-focused high schools, one junior high school and six elementary schools.

While the high school lessons tended to focus on reinforcing learned grammar patterns and expressions through realistic role-play, those for junior high and elementary pupils involved doing fun activities to spark interest in the language.

Outside of the classroom, I got involved with the Niigata Charity Musical, working with the Niigata International Charity Organization to stage a series of productions at theatres in the area.

Now in its 30th year, the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme has welcomed more than 62,000 people from 65 countries to deliver grassroots international exchange between Japan and other nations. This column features former JET Programme participants who keep the idea of fostering mutual understanding firmly at heart.

After four months of set building, rehearsals and shows, we had raised enough money to build a school in Papua New Guinea and donate resources to six villages and their local schools.

Twenty of the Niigata cast and crew were fortunate enough to be able to visit the region and see how our donations were being used.

While on the JET Programme, the support I received from my teaching colleagues, other ALTs, the local community and both the prefectural and city boards of education was fantastic; it made living in a new country much easier than I had expected.

Because of the hospitality that had been shown to me, I was keen to continue living and working in Japan after my contract with the programme ended, so I took full advantage of the post-JET career fair. Within a few months, I had secured a job with a recruitment firm and was planning where to live in the Shibuya area.

The JET Programme creates ambassadors of Japan, thereby creating an amazing way in which the country is promoted, both domestically—when the participant remains in Japan—and abroad—when the participant returns to their home country.

In Tokyo, I've lost count of the number of people I've met over the past eight years who came to Japan with the JET Programme. Many of them have offered to help with introductions and given insights into their careers.

The alumni network in Tokyo has played a direct role in my career, with an assigned mentor having introduced me to my current employer, Custom Media K.K. Since joining the firm, I've built up my business experience and knowledge, having completed the Japan Market Expansion Programme and an MBA from Canada's McGill University.

The programme also has given me opportunities to face new challenges, and provided experience that has proved valuable in the workplace. Meanwhile, I have gained direct insight into Japan's people and traditions, through such activities as weeding for a community project, planting rice with schoolchildren and the elderly, and carrying a *mikoshi* (portable Shinto shrine) at a local festival.

I am still in touch with many of the Japanese and non-Japanese friends I made in Niigata. While some have returned to their respective home countries or journeyed elsewhere, others, like me, have stayed and put down roots, helping to improve ties between Japan and the non-Japanese community. 🌸



Sam Bird supported volunteer projects in Papua New Guinea with other JET participants.

# FORTY YEARS ON



## Reflecting on Japan experiences

BY IAN DE STAINS OBE

Forty years ago this month, I was a television network presenter based at the BBC Television Centre in White City, and mainly working on BBC Two. But I was also looking forward to a move that, though I couldn't have known it then, would literally change my life.

At the time, the BBC had a Japanese language service that was run out of London's Bush House, the home of its World Service. The Japan Broadcasting Corporation, NHK, provided native speaking announcers and producers to run this service and, in exchange, the BBC seconded members of staff to NHK in Tokyo. In June 1976, I was selected for that secondment.

The nature of my arrival in Tokyo has been recounted before but it bears retelling. In those pre-Narita days, I arrived at Haneda airport, which was seething with people. It seemed that every jumbo jet in JAL's fleet had arrived at the same time. I was nervous but excited as I joined the queue, passport with precious visa in hand, inching my way forward towards the man at a high desk at the head of the line.

When my turn finally came, I brandished my passport, which the functionary dismissed with a wave of his hand and asked in a bored voice, "Where is your pineapple?" For one gloriously Pythonesque moment I was tempted to reply that I didn't know I needed one,

but a helpful young lady from JAL approached to escort me from Plant Quarantine and point me in the direction of Immigration, where I waited all over again.

It was an unusual beginning to what proved to be an unusual assignment. Originally planned as a two-year contract, it was quickly extended to four years as I fell in love almost immediately with Japan and my newfound family of colleagues at NHK.

My work principally centred on Radio Japan, a short-wave service that broadcast around the world, though much of the programming I worked on was for Australasia. One regular commitment was a feature called *Hello Australasia!* that found me partnered with the delightful Kaoru Kubo whose dulcet tones will be familiar to many readers. Hers is the voice that exhorts us

not to use our mobile phones on the Narita Limousine buses.

There were other programmes too, including *Tokyo Report*, a documentary series that allowed me to interview prominent individuals such as late music composer Isao Tomita (1932–2016) and print artist Toko Shinoda (1913–). It also gave me the chance to travel around the country. Memorable trips include a visit to Hiroshima where I made *The Shadow on the Wall*, a documentary.

I talked to people who had been victims of the atom bomb, and I experienced the power of the Peace Memorial Museum.

Another trip I remember with great clarity was in 1977, to the Sapporo Snow Festival in Hokkaido. As I said in my introduction to the programme: "This year has been

especially cold and there's been more snow here this winter than there has been for over a decade".

I seem to have been particularly taken with the snow-built replica of Germany's Marienplatz—the most famous square in Munich—describing it as "complete in every detail: town hall, statues, fountains alike, and to a scale that overshadowed many of the solid buildings around about ... I am full of awe for the genius behind such undertakings".

And I recorded members of the Japan Self-Defense Forces who, dressed in shorts and happi-coats, drummed out the traditional rhythms of Hokkaido. "It is a sound I shall remember long after the snow palaces of Sapporo have returned to the rivers and the sea", I said.

Other aspects of my work during my time in the position focused on television work including the English subtitling of NHK dramas bound for overseas competitions and sale. I also undertook the recording of English language narrations for documentaries with similar fates. This stood me in particularly good stead for a later project when I would provide the English language scripts and narrations for a series of programmes made by Nippon TV on the restoration of the Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.

It's hard to believe it all began those 40 years ago. 🇬🇧





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## A slice of social history

Builders of bonds

This handsome book features interviews with 10 prominent people involved in Anglo-Japanese exchange, showing the rich cultural diversity and interaction between professional people in the UK, the rest of Europe and Japan during the past 70 years.

It has been most carefully compiled and makes for fascinating reading, never once falling short on interest. The names of the majority of those interviewed will be familiar to anyone associated with Anglo-Japanese affairs, so there is a familiarity about it, and yet there are a few surprises within its pages, too.

No such volume would be complete without a contribution from Sir Hugh Cortazzi GCMG, one of the UK's former ambassadors to Japan. For once, instead of editing others' contributions, he speaks—and eloquently, too—of his own experience:

“I'm neither what you might call pro-Japanese nor anti-Japanese. That doesn't mean to say that I don't attach great importance to Japan; of course I do. I attach a great deal of importance to people understanding what makes Japan what it is today.

“But I think we mustn't approach this in a racial, or a nationalistic, or a prejudiced way. I'd like us to approach Japan, and to see Japan as a key factor in the world, which it is, to appreciate its good points and to see where there are problems. But don't let us ever do this in a way which is not at least self-critical”.

In this regard, Cortazzi might well have been speaking for the

majority of the other contributors who, with one striking exception, are the authors of their own pieces; it is their voices we hear.

The exception is that of the late Geoffrey Bownas CBE (1923–2011), a Japanese linguist and scholar, to whose memory *Bridges* is dedicated. The contribution made in his name comes from his widow Wiesia Cook-Bownas. It is right that he has been included, for not only was he one of the nicest men you could hope to meet, but his contribution to the field of Anglo-Japanese relations was immense. He is remembered as a dedicated teacher who was much loved by his students and as the man who put The University of Sheffield on the map as a centre for excellence in Japanese studies. But there was so much more to him: he was a poet, writer and translator who crossed the line—apparently easily—into the world of business. As Wiesia said:

“I think he fostered the knowledge of Japan in so many ways, not just as a scholar, but also in the business context. He was a person of many parts, and the importance of linguistics and cultural skills in this economic context, I think, was his most important contribution”.

Other, perhaps less well known, contributors include Robert Ketchell, a Japanese garden designer whose contribution to the book is down to earth and heart-warming, and the photojournalist and publisher Setsuo Kato.

All those included have made a great impact in the field of international understanding. 🇬🇧



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