

The magazine of the
British Chamber of
Commerce in Japan

30

Solomon Islands:
history, FDI, relics

39

Dame Judi Dench:
a national treasure

44

Arts events:
free tickets, gifts

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**Happy official birthday!
To Queen Elizabeth II**

SIMON FARRELL

9 EDITOR

Bottoms up!

CHRIS RUSSELL

10 MEDIA

UK-Japan news

13 INTERIM

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Seize the chance

EMMA HICKINBOTHAM

14 MEDIA

Japan news

17 PRESIDENT

Business legacy

DAVID BICKLE

18 DRINK

Drunk on choice

UK beers, ciders, wine and
spirits take on Japan

22 BCCJ & EMBASSY EVENT

Bearing fruit

Will English wines
take root in Japan?

24 BCCJ MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Beyond boxes

Logistics real estate firm explores
diversity, renewable energy

27 BCCJ EVENT

Small is great XI

Success as a serial
entrepreneur in Japan

30 TRAVEL

Past & present

Solomon Islands team
with UK and Japan heritage

34 HISTORY

Shared history

Stately home in Kagoshima sits
at the heart of UK-Japan relations

37 IF YOU ASK ME

A meeting of (almost) like minds

39 BEHIND THE MIC

English icon

41 TRAINING

Positive mindset for leaders

44 ARTS

UK events in Japan

- Comedic ballet
- Sci-fi cinema
- Cross-cultural fashion
- Post-war theatre
- Flower show
- British legend

46 COMMUNITY

UK-Japan events

50 BOOK REVIEW

The Minimalist

INDUSTRY

Real Estate

43 A-List

COVER PHOTO: SIPSMITH GIN



22



50



27



24



49



30



39



The British Chamber of Commerce in Japan

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To strengthen business ties between Britain and Japan, promote and support the business interests of all our Members, and actively encourage new business entrants into the Japanese market as well as Japanese investment into the UK.

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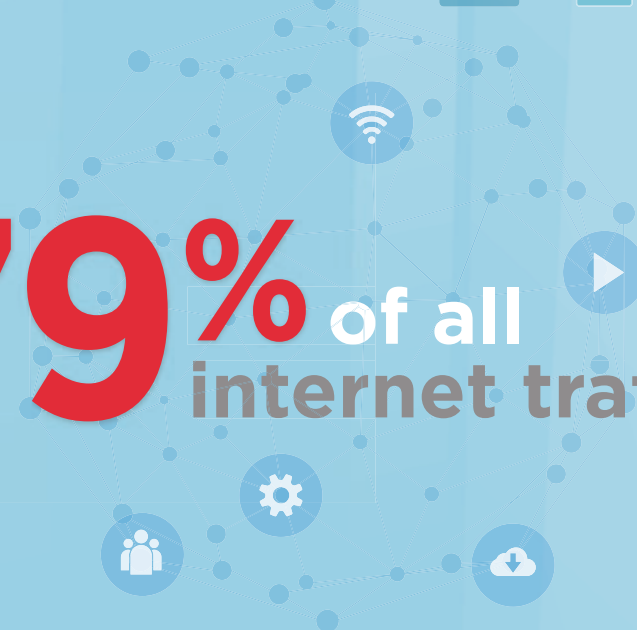
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HAPPY OFFICIAL BIRTHDAY!

To Queen Elizabeth II

BY SIMON FARRELL
PUBLISHER



We all know the queen celebrates an official birthday as well as her actual date of birth. But do you know why and who else claims two birthdays every year?

Blame the British weather: Our unpredictable and damp climate prompted authorities in 1748 to proclaim a date likely to enjoy fine weather for outdoor ceremonies. Since 1959, this has usually been the second Saturday of June. Some other Commonwealth realms and territories prefer May or near the monarch's actual birthday on 21 April.

The other lucky celebrant of two birthdays (25 June and Christmas Day) is a lovable, adopted Peruvian stowaway with a strong taste for fine British marmalade: Paddington Bear, created

in 1958 by English author Michael Bond CBE. Both feted British icons also share another often-unsung attribute: inspiring UK business, tourism, creativity, culture, food, books, movies, great causes and much more to succeed in Japan and around the world.

As well as being unpaid patron to more than 600 charities and institutions, the monarch presents the Queen's Awards for Enterprise, which honour firms and people who excel in international trade; innovation; sustainable development; and promoting opportunity through social mobility.

Since 1965, a number of diverse UK brands exported to Japan have won Queen's Awards: Brompton Bikes, Oxford Instruments and, this year, a meat exporter.

The Paddington books, meanwhile, have sold nearly 40mn copies worldwide and have been translated into some 40 languages, including Japanese. While maybe not as popular in Japan as that other fictional teddy bear, Winnie the Pooh, a sequel to his eponymous 2014 film, to be released this year, can only help Paddington's cause.

Paddington is also credited with helping motivate artisanal marmalade makers in Japan to win top awards at a UK global festival in 2016 and 2017, as televised by NHK in May (see page 10) and twice featured in *BCCJACUMEN*.

Custom Media and *BCCJACUMEN* wish you both a very Happy Official Birthday! 🇬🇧



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Bottoms up!

Fine UK drinks for the season

CHRIS RUSSELL | russell@custom-media.com

As I sit writing this on a Friday afternoon, thoughts across the country are no doubt turning to relaxing weekends at what is undoubtedly one of the nicest times of the year in Japan. It is when the sun is shining, the weather is warm and the real heat and humidity of the summer have yet to arrive. Essentially, it's perfect for lounging in one of Tokyo's many parks, an activity that, more often than not, is accompanied by an alcoholic beverage or two.

For Brits nostalgic for a taste of home, there are now more British drinks available than ever for such moments, for example ales and representatives of the UK's burgeoning craft gin movement. Their number is set to expand yet further following a strong push this year by the Department for International Trade to promote them in Japan. On page 18, we take a look at participants in April's Foodex exhibition—the largest such event in Asia—which shone a light on beers, gins, whiskeys and other beverages produced in the UK.

Then on page 22 we turn our attention to English sparkling wine. A relatively new product

category, but one that has recently come into its own, the British Embassy Tokyo held a wine tasting to promote the drink to Japanese buyers and distributors, and a few days later two brands—Bolney Wine Estate and Digby Fine English—showcased their wares at an event by the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ).

If these articles have seen you work up a thirst, then it shouldn't be too hard to find some of these UK beverages to sample for yourself. Already a number of shops and supermarkets across the capital stock some of the brands mentioned. Raise a glass to their fine work this summer.

If you build it ...

An ongoing theme in the world of Japanese business is how firms are wrestling with the country's ageing society and the resulting problem of a serious labour shortage. As a result, we are seeing a gradual increase in different work styles and the promotion of women's involvement in the workplace.

One firm attempting to help alleviate the problem is BCCJ member ESR Ltd., a logistic

real estate developer and fund manager. Across the firm's many sites in Japan new facilities for parents and the local community are being introduced. On page 24, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Stuart Gibson tells us more about both the firm's work in this area and its adoption of renewable energy.

Charity ride

The end of May saw the Knights in White Lycra (KIWL) charity cycle team—whom we have covered in previous issues of *BCCJ ACUMEN*—embark on their annual ride in support of the non-profit organisation Mirai no Mori, which helps disadvantaged children. The efforts of the riders and organisers were well rewarded, with KIWL achieving a record amount of sponsorship this year: more than ¥11mn.

The ride was at times challenging, with the team encountering some very inclement weather. Nonetheless, the feat was highly rewarding for all those involved in supporting most worthy cause. Take a look at their exploits on page 49, and buy them a drink next time you see them! 🇬🇧

HAPPY OFFICIAL BIRTHDAY!
To Queen Elizabeth II



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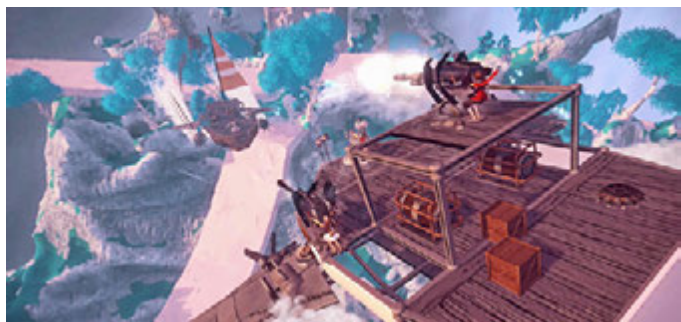


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MEDIA

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SoftBank funds for London games firm



SpatialOS can be used to create vast game worlds. PHOTO: IMPROBABLE

The British technology firm Improbable Worlds Limited has raised \$502mn (£390mn) in a new funding round that included SoftBank Group Corp. among the investors, *Venture Beat* reported on 11 May. Improbable is the creator of an operating system, SpatialOS, that enables the creation of vast online game worlds through the use of cloud computing.

SoftBank's Managing Director of Investments Deep Nishar will join Improbable's board as a result of the investment, although SoftBank has taken a non-controlling stake. Improbable will now also explore possible opportunities for cooperation with SoftBank and its partners.

The investment will enable Improbable to expand its operations in London and San Francisco.

ARM CEO: Still in control

SoftBank has honoured its commitment not to interfere in the day-to-day running of ARM Ltd., Simon Segars, the firm's chief executive officer, told *Management Today* in an interview published on 2 May. SoftBank acquired ARM for £24.3bn in September last year.

“They haven't spoiled the neutrality and our discussions are all about strategy and growth”, Segars told the magazine.

Segars also praised the speed at which ARM can now grow and operate. “For me and my team that has been pretty liberating and motivational”.

Farmers see big demand when UK meat ban ends

The rising consumption of meat in Japan may offer a chance for UK farmers to sell British beef and pork to this high-value market, *Farmers Weekly* reported on 1 May.

Britain's Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) is looking to open up opportunities in Japan for beef, imports of which are dominated by Australia and the United States. Currently, the UK cannot sell beef in Japan, because Tokyo has not conducted sanitary and phytosanitary tests at UK processing plants since a trade ban was instated in the wake of the BSE crisis.

AHDB hopes Japanese officials will visit UK plants within the next 12 months.

NHK shines light on Lake District

National broadcaster NHK transmitted a 90-minute documentary on Dalemain House and Historic Gardens in Cumbria on 31 May. Jane Hasell-McCosh, the wife of Dalemain's owner, was interviewed about her passion for gardening at the mansion, where she grows an old variety of apple.

Dalemain House and Historic Gardens is famed for hosting the World's Original Marmalade Awards, where Japanese chef Hideko Kawa introduced her yuzu-flavoured marmalade and which was visited by Japanese Ambassador to the UK Koji Tsuruoka.



Marmalade at Dalemain House and Historic Gardens. PHOTO: HERMIONE MCCOSH PHOTOGRAPHY

British author takes food tour of Japan

Michael Booth, a British author, journalist and broadcaster, spoke to *Nippon.com* about how he got to know Japan through its food.

Booth's travels took him on a culinary journey around Japan. His initial trip included Sushi Jiro in Ginza, lunch with sumo wrestlers, and *umibudo* sea grapes, an Okinawan speciality seaweed. In particular, he highlighted *izakaya*, Japanese pubs, as his ideal place to eat.

His new book, *The Meaning of Rice*, will look at his latest journey to Japan.

Duffel coats a big hit in Japan

Japan is the biggest market for the London-based duffel coat maker London Tradition, the *Hackney Gazette* reported on 17 May.

“The Japanese love anything authentically British, and it has to be made in the UK as well”, the firm’s co-founder Rob Huson said, noting that the firm sells a lot fewer coats in the UK than in Japan. “A duffel coat ... is a very English product and it’s made in London, so what’s not to like”.

Based in Hackney Wick, London Tradition is 15 years old and produces 800 to 1,000 coats a week, both for its own brands and high-quality high street retailers in the UK.

Yorkshire vegetable firm gets Heinz Japan contract

J E Hartley, a frozen vegetable supplier based in North Yorkshire, has secured a contract with Heinz Japan K.K., *BDaily* reported on 27 April.

The contract will see the firm supply frozen peas and mixed vegetables for products sold by retailers and used in Japan’s food services industry. The firm already has a contract with Heinz in the UK.

J E Hartley, founded in 1954, has 60 staff and a £16m annual turnover. The firm produces and sells a wide range of frozen vegetables including peas and various root vegetables.

Nissan to make batteries for UK homes

Nissan Motor Co., Ltd and US power firm Eaton will be producing batteries—previously used for electric cars in the United Kingdom—to store energy for households, *The Guardian* reported on 4 May.

These are believed to be the first British-made household batteries pitched to the UK home energy storage market. Households using solar panels will be able to store electricity to use later, rather than export it to the grid, thereby saving some £43 a month.

The batteries will be manufactured at Nissan’s Sunderland plant, assembled in Morocco, and sold in partnership with Eaton.

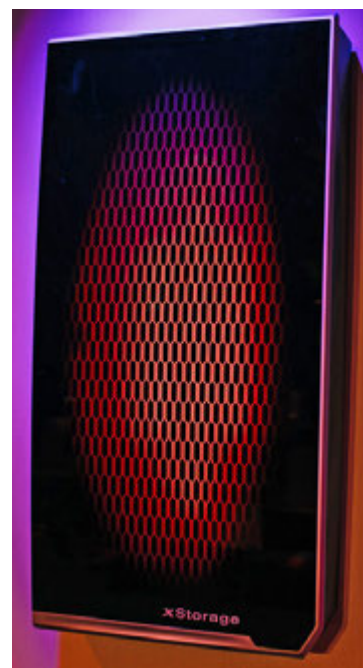


PHOTO: NISSAN/EATON

London gets first sake brewery

London’s first sake brewery, named Kanpai, has opened in Peckham, the *Southwark News* reported on 27 May.

The brewery is run by Lucy Holmes and Tom Wilson, who both still work full time and make the sake during evenings and weekends. The first batch will be launched at Selfridges in June, and local pubs and restaurants have expressed an interest in stocking the beverage.

The pair began brewing sake as a hobby after visiting Japan.



Tom Wilson and Lucy Holmes, founders of Kanpai. PHOTO: KANPAI

Tale of samurai and pirates proved

A British teacher in Japan has found evidence of a visit to the country in 1830 by a ship from Australia, then a British colony, *The Guardian* reported on 28 May. The visit came at the height of Japan’s *sakoku*, or isolationist, policy, and was long dismissed as fiction by scholars.

The episode saw British convict pirates land on Shikoku, one of Japan’s main islands, aboard the *Cyprus*. There they encountered local samurai, who attacked and also helped the pirates.

Nick Russell, who made the discovery, came across it after examining a record of an encounter between samurai and non-Japanese.

A world of opportunities

“The Club is like a second home where I can meet or entertain clients, which makes doing business in Tokyo much easier.”

Matthew Romaine



Club members Paul Kuo and Matthew Romaine



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Seize the chance

Parasports good for firms and society

EMMA HICKINBOTHAM | emma@bccjapan.com

The British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) this month hosted two engaging speakers from the Nippon Foundation Paralympic Support Centre (NFPSC). Chairman Yasushi Yamawaki (also president of the Japan Paralympic Committee) and Project Manager Eri Yamamoto-MacDonald spoke about how to better engage the public and corporate partners in the Paralympics through the experience of parasports and focusing on the ability of the incredible athletes rather than their disabilities.

Yamamoto-MacDonald, who hopes to represent Japan as a powerlifter in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, spoke passionately about her personal experiences of being introduced to sport, which she had grown up believing was off limits to her. She explained how being involved in parasports had changed her life. Through the work of the NFPSC, she wishes to not just give other young disabled athletes a chance, but to encourage more people who do not have disabilities to get involved in this type of sport.

She noted that firms who introduce internal initiatives around inclusion, and in particular involvement with parasports, engage and motivate their employees. And they can help to create a more inclusive society.

Many BCCJ members are doing great work to support and promote inclusivity and we encourage all businesses to see engagement with parasports as an opportunity rather than a responsibility. The NFPSC offers awareness-raising workshops that can help you get started, so please do contact them to see how they can help your business.

Deal with change

How many of you have encountered resistance to change in your career? As a leader, how do you get “buy-in” from your employees for the sometimes unpopular decisions you must make for the good of the business?

No matter how well thought out an initiative is, a common reason for failure is internal resistance, and managing change takes special leadership skills. On 28 June, we will be holding

a toolbox session on how managers can successfully implement organisational change while retaining trust, credibility and authority. In these uncertain times, can you afford to miss it?

Pimm's o'clock

The sun is out and Tokyo is heating up. It can mean only one thing—it's nearly time for the BCCJ summer party! This year, with the support of BCCJ corporate member Diageo, we will be holding a Great British Pimm's Party at the Hilton Odaiba on Thursday 6 July. Join us for a fun evening of relaxed networking while enjoying a breathtaking summer's evening view of Tokyo Bay and the Rainbow Bridge, and, of course, enjoying a good old Pimm's.

The summer party will also be a chance for you to bid a fond farewell to our fabulous marketing and communications whizz, Joanna Lundt, who will be leaving the BCCJ for pastures new in Europe. She has been a great asset to the team for nearly two years, and although we are sad to see her go, we wish her all the best for her new adventures. 🇬🇧

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MEDIA

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NEW TONIC FOR DRINKERS

A report, in the *Nikkei Marketing Journal* of 29 May, says that gin is growing more popular in the land of sake (see page 18), especially among people who enjoy imbibing at home.

Seijo Ishii Co., Ltd., a speciality supermarket chain that stocks a wide variety of imports, now carries 30 different varieties of gin—up by some 60% compared with a year ago—including a limited-edition craft gin sold under its own label. To encourage customers to better appreciate the beverage's versatility, new ideas for gin-sipping, such as mixing it with club soda, are also being introduced.

KI NO BI Kyoto Dry Gin, the product of Japan's first dedicated gin distillery, sells for ¥5,000 (plus consumption tax) per 700ml bottle. Seijo Ishii also offers Sipsmith V.J.O.P. London Dry Gin ("Hand crafted in small batches", the label reads), for ¥4,990 (plus tax) per 700ml bottle. For an extra kick, it claims to use double the amount of juniper berries compared with a conventional gin.

Major distiller Suntory Holdings Limited, meanwhile, has re-launched an earlier product named Ice Gin, but with a lower alcoholic



UK gin brand Sipsmiths has gone on sale in Japan, just as the drink's popularity takes off. PHOTO: SIPSMITHS

content (25 proof) than the previous product, which was 37 proof. The firm has also added a new label, Ice Gin Lemon & Lime.

Makers' and retailers' strategy appears aimed at encouraging more consumers to

keep gin on hand at home, with a push being made through more promotional efforts at supermarkets and major liquor shops. Another angle is to emphasise how the beverage goes down well with meals.

SHOPS BATTLE TO KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

Even in Tokyo, round-the-clock business operation only began making inroads in the late 1980s—during the so-called bubble economy—when technology businesses began flourishing and Japan's capital finally emerged as an international financial centre.

The 14 April edition of *Weekly Toyo Keizai* magazine reports that a warning lamp has gone on concerning 24-hour businesses, particularly with regard to convenience stores and restaurants. As has been reported previously in *BCCJ ACUMEN*, they are finding it difficult to procure staff.

The Royal Host family restaurant chain, for example, announced in January that it would halt round-the-clock operations, and McDonald's Japan K.K. has been reducing the number of all-night outlets.

Convenience stores mulling similar moves are finding themselves in a tricky position. By closing, even if only late at night and early in the morning, they fear risking a loss of consumer confidence and a decline

in their brand image. Currently, they are said to be engaging in trial-and-error experimentation with their operating hours.

In April, Family Mart Co., Ltd., one of the three main convenience store franchises, initiated a Famima School. Up to then, worker training had been done on the job at outlets. But this had been thought to be adding to the burdens of already sorely stretched and undermanned stores, which in many cases were said to be failing to provide sufficient training as a result.

Thus, the firm has dispatched 70 staff from its headquarters to various places around Japan to provide training, either on store premises or in nearby facilities. Store managers are instructed in operation management, while rank-and-file staff receive training in merchandise reordering and customer service.

During periods of worker shortages, supporting the franchises with such training will be important, and it is to be hoped that convenience store workers will feel motivated to stay on longer, general sales manager Kazunari Ueno told the magazine.

DYSON POPS UP IN NAGANO

Dyson Limited, already popular in Japan for its high-performance vacuum cleaners and cooling fans, has announced its entry into the competitive market for hand-held hair dryers. The initial product launch—pitched to the media by 31-year-old Mexico-born musician Kavka Shishido—happened at the Ikebukuro branch of the Seibu Department store on 10 May, according to the Japanese version of the technology website *Endgadget*. The dryer features a distinctive cylindrical design and can be set to reach 100 degrees Celsius, compared with the existing limit of 78, thereby providing faster drying and added styling capabilities.

The firm is planning to post qualified beauticians and other staff on the sales floor to give demonstrations. The new model's suggested retail price is ¥45,000, plus tax. Dyson also plans to offer limited-edition purple-coloured models exclusively at the department store.

Beginning in June, the firm plans to operate a Dyson Demo Pop-up Store in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture, a resort area where affluent urbanites go to escape the summer heat.

Dyson has entered Japan's competitive hair dryer market.
PHOTO: DYSON LTD.



NEW DESIGNS AS BUYERS SEEK GOOD-LOOKING ITEMS

Household goods have a better chance of selling when they help to make the home look better in the eye of the beholder. *Aera* reported on 17 April that household product manufacturers' efforts to wreath their items in attractive containers have been paying off. It seems that if attractively designed, even goods for everyday use, such as dispensers for liquid hand sanitizer, can be appreciated as part of the home interior. Photos by users of such products, posted on Instagram, are playing a role in spreading the word.

Aera focused on several examples, such as the sales success of Resesh deodoriser, which Kao Ltd. offers in an elegant dispenser, with its pump colour-coordinated with the pattern on the container.

In addition to the claims of the products' quality, these package designs may make it easier to sell them online as a result of their attractive appearance on a screen.

"Simple designs will match a room's interior," Miyoko Kimura, an executive director at ASKUL Corporation, told the magazine, adding, "We had been thinking for some time that such designs could be expected to appeal to online shoppers".

The term for this phenomenon is *pake-kai*, meaning a purchasing decision influenced by the item's packaging (*pakeji* in Japanese; abbreviated to *pake*). Its predecessor was *jake-kai*, meaning the purchase of a record, CD, DVD or book based on the jacket, or sleeve. The main target for such products is said to be women in their 30s and 40s.

Even the toilet is not being disregarded—the external packaging of toilet tissue is getting an upgrade with products such as Kibako. Developed through collaboration between Oji Nepia Co., Ltd. and ASKUL, the wrapping resembles—as the Japanese name implies—a wooden box.

"More people are willing to pay a little more for a product based on its design," pointed out Kotaro Nuriya, head of Kao's home care business group. "With the current popularity of home furnishing firms such as Ikea and Nitori, we had been under the impression that more consumers were looking not only at fashionable designs, but also for items whose appearance fits the needs of their personal lifestyles, and we realized this is how far it's come". 🇯🇵

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Business legacy

Steady support needed for UK exports

DAVID BICKLE | @BCCJ_President

Following the first meeting of the new British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) Executive Committee (Excom), I am delighted to report that Alison Beale has been unanimously endorsed as vice-president of the chamber. Beale is the director of the University of Oxford Japan Office, and in previous years has led the BCCJ's events task force. I know that members will join me in congratulating her on this appointment, and I look forward to working closely with her and our fellow Excom members in the year ahead.

Brand Britain

In common with British chambers of commerce worldwide and their respective host countries, the overall goal of the BCCJ is to support the bilateral UK-Japan business relationship, including the encouragement of trade and investment.

As consumer spending in the UK has softened in recent months, a concerted effort to boost exports will necessarily be an important part of the country's programme to secure continued economic growth. The vibrancy and fitness of the

UK's production capability in terms of goods and services must therefore be secured as a necessary condition for the nurturing and development of new and existing exporters.

Notwithstanding recent surprises in the outcome of some election results around the world, there is at the time of writing an unexpected level of uncertainty about the complexion of the UK government that will be formed after this month's general election.

However, for the sake of the UK's aspiration to have a world-class export capability, it is important that the government, whomever it may comprise, continues to protect and burnish the country's pro-business credentials. Openness and transparency must be combined with a competitive regulatory and tax system—a system that is stable, simple and fair, and which creates an environment that rewards ambition, creativity and ingenuity.

In terms of a specific destination for goods and services, UK exporters to Japan can enjoy an implicit association with "Brand Britain". Although this is not explicitly defined, it is, for many Japanese, intuitively synonymous with

tradition, quality and style. For those that are willing to customise their business model for Japan's discerning consumers, the sheer size of the market (the economy of Tokyo alone is comparable in size to that of Mexico or South Korea) and the loyalty of the customers make this a potentially rewarding destination for UK exporters.

The same economic and regulatory attributes that help the UK support its exporters are also among the features that make the country a magnet for foreign investment, of which Japan is a major provider. This investment has been a major source of jobs and capital, and has frequently led to an infusion of technology, innovation and management discipline.

The bilateral benefits of increased UK-Japan trade and investment are incontrovertible, and support from UK policy makers is essential to ensure that conditions remain in place for this to thrive. I therefore urge them to be mindful of the premium value of Brand Britain to Japanese consumers and investors alike, and to ensure that the current generation of exporters are empowered to add to its legacy. 🇬🇧



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To be featured on BIJ.TV, please contact: Anthony Head • anthony@custom-media.com • 03-4540-7730

Drunk on choice

UK beers, ciders, wine and spirits take on Japan

BY JULIAN RYALL



Eden Brewery was one of the British drinks firms at this year's Foodex. PHOTO: EDEN BREWERY

Despite the rising popularity of home-grown craft beers and some impressive new innovations when it comes to sake and other spirits, Japanese drinkers have a reputation for being a fairly conservative bunch. They will still usually buy one of the ubiquitous big four brands of domestic beer, they largely believe that only French wine will impress their guests, and Scotch has to be a single malt bearing a label that can be found everywhere from Tokyo to Timbuktu.

Not so, say a new generation of British brewers and distillers, keen to emphasise that

gin is incredibly hip around the world right now, that frozen cocktails can come in pouches, that a bottle of 9.3% Steamin Monk knocks your generic lager into a cocked hat, and that blended whisky really can be quite good.

To put their case, British manufacturers of alcoholic drinks were much in evidence at this year's Foodex, which was held in mid-March at the Makuhari Messe international convention complex near Tokyo. That was the result of a conscious decision by the Department for International Trade to raise the profile of a sector that it is widely believed to

have significant growth potential in overseas markets, including Japan.

Hops aboard

With Japan a major beer-drinking nation, the food and drink exhibition attracted several British brewers, who were keen to point out what they could offer the Japanese market.

"There are some slight variations in the beers in Japan, but basically they are better quality continental European-style lagers", said Jason Hill, managing director of Cumbria-based Eden Brewery.

"They can be quite drinkable, but they are all so very similar and they lack the hops that give our beers such flavour and character", he continued. "That is what this market is really missing".

And while he admitted that the tastes and textures of the 7.8% Hop Rokket and the slightly weaker Atomic Blonde and Dynamite IPA "might not be for everyone in Japan", most industry people Hill had spoken with at Foodex had been "very positive".

"I have been talking with representatives of one of the big, high-end supermarket chains here and they like what we do, although many of the buyers here do seem a bit focused on craft beers, which the UK market has moved on from", he said. "We're talking about organic



Charlie Gibbs (right), managing director of Steampunk Ltd., is bullish about the prospect for premium gin in Japan.

beers and gluten-free varieties and I just get the impression that they're still a few years behind Britain when it comes to beer".

The trick, he believes, will be to find the right wholesalers and retailers willing to get ahead of the curve in terms of drinking trends by stocking Eden Brewery beers.

Another approach that may very well pay off, Hill believes, is to tie up with a locally based brewer that has a similar philosophy on real ales. With that in mind, Eden Brewery is working with Dan Cockburn, founder of Hakuba Brewery. They are close to perfecting their first collaboration, called Yuzu Juice IPA—a clever combination of a well-hopped pale ale with one of Japan's favourite citrus fruits. And plans are already under way for the next Anglo-Japanese brew, the Tokyo Express Green Tea ale.

Good spirits

Also present were a range of brands showcasing their take on one of the UK's quintessential drinks—gin.

Luke Smith, founder and head distiller of the Poetic License Distillery in Sunderland, was one of several exhibition participants paying their first visit to Japan. He expressed confidence that the global craze for gin would soon land in Japan.

"Gin has kicked off in a really big way because, for the consumer, it's a very easy drink to understand", he said. "It's much more straightforward than whisky and the style of drinking gin is much more accessible. Add some tonic and you can't go wrong.

"However, there is gin and there is premium gin and we use a number of ingredients, such as Persian dried lime, green cardamom and lots of juniper, that make our gins stand out", he said. And then, just to add another element, the gin is barrel aged in oak sherry casks.

"And as soon as any barman worth his salt opens a bottle of this", he said, hefting a bottle of Old Tom 1800s-style gin, "he can smell what's in it and knows that it's going to be good".

Smith admits that the firm is in its infancy—a mere 18 months old—and would find it very difficult to crack the Japanese market without a good amount of local assistance. For that reason, he was hoping that attending Foodex would help introduce him to a Japanese distributor "who would feel as passionately about the brand as I do".

Another premium gin marking its debut in Japan was south London-based Steampunk Ltd., with founder and Managing Director Charlie Gibbs equally bullish about the market for a drink that is quintessentially English.

APPLE OF THEIR EYE

Within the past couple of decades, cider in the UK has undergone a transformation in its image, from the cloudy concoction sold in plastic pitchers by farmers in Somerset to a bottled tippie that is no longer out of place in trendy bars the length and breadth of the country.

And now, according to a group of aficionados who know a Bulmers from a Black Rat cider, it is Japan's turn.

"Cider has become a much more sophisticated drink in the UK now, and there are three cider or beer producers starting up every week, meaning there are some phenomenal ciders coming onto the market", said Clive Poole, owner of the Full Monty Pub in Yokohama, which specialises in imported ciders.

"When I first opened a bar 14 years ago, we only had Blackthorn cider, but it quickly became very popular with Japanese drinkers", he told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. "We pushed it and when we opened the new bar five years ago, we decided to really focus on cider and that has paid off".

Poole, who in mid-March at a pub in Roppongi attended a tasting session, backed by the British Embassy Tokyo, has around 20 ciders available at any one time and also imports other labels for retailers, restaurants and bars in the Kanto region.

And the taste, he says, is catching on.

"Most people think cider is apple juice, so at first we have to explain a little bit and get them to try a couple", he said. "I usually give them an Aspell at first because it is carbonated and easy to drink, and then we introduce them to something else.

"It really is an education process, but I think the potential in Japan is just huge", he added.

Indeed, Japanese apple growers are being encouraged to try their hand at cider making by various regional governments, such as that of Aomori Prefecture.

Marie Tanaka, a sommelier and owner of the Wine Styles shop in Tokyo's Taito Ward, was bitten by the cider bug when her husband was posted to London by his firm. She now imports 10 varieties of cider and perry, the fermented pear beverage.

"I'm a huge anglophile and we started out by importing English wines, but it was very difficult to sell them at an appealing price", she admitted. "I was wondering how we might be able to expand, when I found another supplier who was making cider with apples from his own orchard".

The imports were an immediate hit.

"Young people in Japan can't drink much alcohol and many complain that it is too strong or tastes bitter", she said. "But cider has a lower alcohol level than wine, is easier to drink, and women like it because apples are healthy and have lots of vitamin C", she said.

And frequently, after a young woman orders a cider, her boyfriend will try it and order the same.



Cider is another drink that is catching on in Japan.

PRIZE

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- ◆ To enter, simply tell us what you like about BCCJ ACUMEN and answer this question: **KI NO BI Kyoto Dry Gin is made using the water of which area of the city?**
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“Globally, gin is the fastest-growing drinks sector and there is worldwide demand for premium, craft gin as consumers reject the mass-produced stuff”, he said, pointing out that the “big boys” of the industry have clearly seen the emerging trend. Beam Suntory Inc., the third-largest spirits firm in the world, shelled out an undisclosed sum—thought to be as high as £50 million—for London gin maker Sipsmith (see page 14), just eight years after the brand was founded.

Steampunk Gin—crafted with no fewer than eight botanicals from around the world—was awarded a gold medal at the 2016 Gin Masters awards, while the Northumberland-based firm also produces “rascal strength” Steampunk Pirate, Hexham Premier Cru and a pair of tipples named after Victorian-era fans, Florence Parma Violet and Prudence Rose Petal.

Holding its own alongside the traditional was the innovative, evidenced by KÖLD Cocktails’ selection of four frozen products—cosmopolitan, mojito, lychee and elderflower martinis—that come in pouches that the consumer pops in the freezer at home.

“We commissioned research last year and learned a lot about the Japanese market”, said Sales Director Tori Carlaw. “Armed with that



Tori Carlaw and Nick Sotiropoulos of KÖLD Cocktails

knowledge, we redesigned our packaging, which also allowed us to bring down the price point for the same 250-ml pouches.

“And now we are getting a good amount of interest, and the people who are stopping to speak are exactly the ones we want to talk to about the product”, she said. Ideally, KÖLD will find an importer or retailer ready to put the cocktails on their shelves.

“The research has shown that, along with Australia, Japan is the biggest market for home-use, ready-to-drink cocktails”, said founder Nick Sotiropoulos. “We’re looking to get into the mass market and we do believe that the quality of the drinks is going to set us apart from the competition, because there is already lots available in the ready-to-drink sector, but the quality is quite low”.

No food and drink show in Japan would be complete without a selection of Scotland’s most famous liquid export, with kilt-clad Jan Beckers predictably busy talking to a steady stream of whisky fans.

“Quite a lot of people already know our products, but it is still very important for us to be here, because Japan is an important market”, said Beckers, who is originally from Belgium but now revels in the title of Global Malt Ambassador for Glasgow’s Douglas Laing & Co., Ltd.

“The Japanese are obviously big fans and they are very knowledgeable about their whiskies, but they can also be a bit old-fashioned because they still tend to ask for a single malt when there are a lot of really good blends out there now”, he said. “So I am here to strengthen our image, but also to get across what they might be missing out on if they only stick to single malts.” ❀



CRAFTING A NICHE

BY CHRIS RUSSELL

Just because a gin doesn’t originate in the UK doesn’t mean it is without a strong British influence. Last year, The Kyoto Distillery, which was founded by British partners and is overseen by Head Distiller Alex Davies, a graduate of the brewing and distilling course at Edinburgh’s Heriot-Watt University, released its first gin, KI NO BI (see opposite page). Incorporating various Japanese ingredients, the Kyoto-made beverage is a good indicator of just how popular craft gins can become in Japan.

“We’ve been overwhelmed by the response to KI NO BI, particularly in light of the fact that it was effectively opening a new category in the Japanese drinks market”, said David Croll, chief executive officer of The Kyoto Distillery. “Domestic demand started strongly and has got stronger, meaning we’ve had to put a block on opening any new export markets for the rest of this year”.

The firm is now planning to expand its range of products, particularly as major Japanese producers are making moves into the sector, which Croll expects to help drive interest even further. The Kyoto Distillery has already launched two limited-edition products—KI NO TEA, which was inspired by the teas of the city of Uji, and a navy-strength version of KI NO BI—and it is a direction the firm is looking to explore even further.

“We are investing in more distilling equipment this year, but actually to help us get smaller”, Croll explained. “With our current set-up, we need to utilize all capacity fully, but we would love to have the luxury of being able to look at very, very small, very bespoke batches. I’m talking maybe a few dozen bottles.

“Japan is blessed with an abundance of wonderful ingredients just itching to see the insides of our gin stills”.



Bearing fruit

Will English wines take root in Japan?

BY CHRIS RUSSELL



Charlie Holland, winemaker at Gusbourne • PHOTO: GUSBOURNE

Asked to name the best wine-growing nations, the first to come to mind for many people would be France, Italy, Australia and Chile. But increasingly England is asserting itself as a force to be reckoned with, particularly when it comes to sparkling wine, and several UK wineries have secured top prizes at the *Decanter* World Wine Awards.

With British alcoholic beverages earmarked for a special promotional push this financial year by the Department for International Trade (see page 18), a tasting event was held together with the Wine and Spirit Trade Association at

the British Embassy Tokyo on 16 May. The event gave Japanese buyers, distributors and media a chance to sample some of the finest sparkling wines that the UK has to offer, as well as a range of craft gins.

Own path

The question for many consumers is what distinguishes English sparkling wine from the better-known Champagne.

“We use the traditional methods and, in England, the great thing is we use the knowledge that has been used for centuries in Champagne,

but we’re not bound up by the rules,” explained Charlie Holland, winemaker at Gusbourne Estates Limited. “We pick the bits we want to use and we don’t choose the bits that are restrictive, so we’re allowed to be much more creative in what we do.

“We used to compare ourselves to Champagne in the same way the Californians did with Bordeaux, the same way New Zealand did with Burgundy, with Pinot Noir,” he continued. “Now we have come of age we’re saying, ‘Okay, we have our identity which is unique to us—let’s focus on that’.”

The growth in English sparkling wine is in part due to improved conditions in the south of England. Those conditions now arguably surpass those in Champagne.

“Climatically, we are where Champagne was in the ’70s, due to global warming,” said Holland. “Climate change brings inconsistent weather, but we can now ripen these grapes.

“In a hot climate, the sugar goes up, the acid goes down and the flavours don’t always have time to develop. But [in the UK] the sugars climb very slowly, the acidity goes down very slowly, so you get a much longer growing season, and it means you can pick ripe flavours, but still have the acidity remain fresh, so that’s probably what puts us in that sweet spot”.

Making an entrance

It was the first time many of the winemakers had come to Japan, although some of their brands were already available in the market. Other



PHOTO: BOLNEY WINE ESTATE



Nyetimber was one of the brands at the embassy. PHOTO: NYETIMBER



Anthony Carfantan, Nyetimber's head of sales, pours out a glass of wine at the British Embassy in Tokyo.

representatives, meanwhile, were looking to secure their first distribution deal.

“We have no distributor in Japan, that’s what we’ve come to look for, because we don’t need to sell huge amounts”, said Rebecca Hansford, co-founder and president of Furleigh Estate, a sparkling wine producer in Dorset. “We only make about 50,000 bottles a year, and we intend to keep it like that, because at the moment we grow our own grapes and my husband is the winemaker, so we can control the quality if we keep to that scale.

“We’re just looking to export a little bit into top-end restaurants and department stores”.

The choice to explore the Japanese market was no accident. While other countries, such as China, have a significant and growing demand

for wine, English sparkling wine is a specific kind of product.

“For English wine, you need a sophisticated market, meaning that they know wine, they like Champagne and also I think for English sparkling wine you need a market that is willing to try new things”, said Hansford. “The person who always has to have the latest mobile phone, that’s what we need. And I think Japan is good on that score”.

For the firms involved, the trip to Japan presented the opportunity to gauge the reaction to their products, and also establish the viability of certain categories that, in recent times, haven’t been as popular.

“Rosé had become very unpopular because it was sweet and terrible, but now dry luxury rose is back as a force in Europe and it seems

like it’s starting to develop here in Japan as well. So we’re interested in gauging the reaction”, said Trevor Clough, co-founder and chief executive officer of Digby Fine English.

As part of English wine’s positioning in the Japanese market, the wineries are having to consider food pairings. But although Japanese cuisine is radically different from its British counterpart, the prevalence of fish and other seafood was taken by participants to be a good thing for the prospects of English sparkling wine.

“In England, it’s a classic thing: we have it with oysters, with seafood, shellfish ... for me, it’s the ideal thing to mix with *sashimi*, sushi”, said Gusbourne’s Holland. “With the acidity we have in the wines, it seems to match really well. So for us, it’s the perfect match for the food” 🍷

ENGLISH WINE TASTING EVENT

On 18 May, members of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) got a chance to try some English sparkling wine at the Life Science Hub in Nihonbashi. Attended by Digby Fine Wines and Bolney Wine Estate, members were able to sample a range of wine, including Digby’s Vintage Reserve Brut 2009—a mix of chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier grapes—and Bolney’s 100% chardonnay Blanc de Blancs 2010. By all accounts, the event was a great success.

“We wanted to introduce our wines to all and hope that then the BCCJ and its members will be ambassadors of our English sparkling in Japan”, said Bolney Wine Estate’s winemaker and Managing Director Sam Linter. She had also been present at the British Embassy Tokyo’s wine tasting event.

“We were very pleased and encouraged by the reaction to our wines,” she added, saying that Kew Sparkling Rosé was the most popular with BCCJ members.

The BCCJ wine tasting capped off a very successful trip for both Bolney and Digby. On the Monday before the BCCJ event, the two firms were able to showcase their

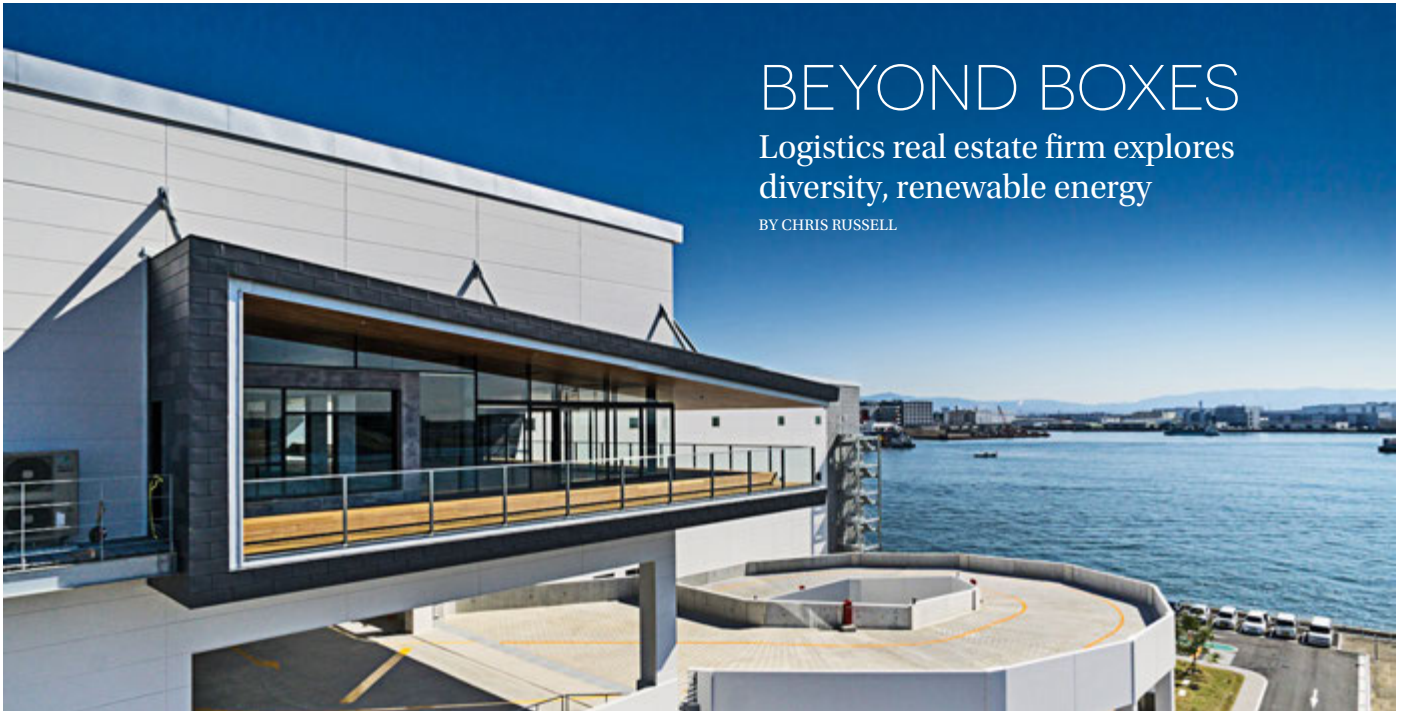


Trevor Clough (centre) and Sam Linter (right)

wines to 23 members of the Japan Sommelier Association at an evening hosted by Japan’s top sommelier Yoichi Sato, where the wines received a very favourable response. And that was in addition to a number of other tasting sessions and media events.

“It was a busy week, with a huge amount of interest and very favourable comments on our wines”, said Linter. “The main benefit was to see how well the wines were received and the ability to start building our category in Japan.

“Our production is targeted to grow by three times over the next five to seven years, and part of this growth we would like to see exported to Japan”, she continued. “So our hopes are for a slow and solid build of wine sales in Japan. We see this as an important future market for us and want to keep visiting”.



BEYOND BOXES

Logistics real estate firm explores diversity, renewable energy

BY CHRIS RUSSELL

PHOTOS: ESR

While we may enjoy the fruits of consumerism—marked by an abundance of goods and, increasingly, on-demand services and delivery—we rarely give much thought to the systems and infrastructure that underpin this global social force. A key component of the logistics systems that are vital to the consumerist world is the humble warehouse. For British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) member ESR Ltd., warehouses are their bread and butter.

The firm is a fully integrated logistics real estate development and fund management enterprise, with operations spanning Japan, China, South Korea and Singapore. The firm owns or leases 132 properties across Asia, making it one of the largest developers and investors in this asset class.

“These glorious looking warehouses, that’s all we do—there’s nothing sexy about them”, said Stuart Gibson, co-founder and chief executive officer of ESR. “It’s not a glass building in Marunouchi or in front of Tokyo Station—they’re just giant warehouses, or distribution centres as we prefer to call them, with not many windows”.

But while they might not be glamorous, they’re significant business, as the sums in ESR’s various funds attest. Attracting investment from the likes of Morgan Stanley and various endowment funds and institutional investors, the firm’s Redwood Japan Logistics Fund 1 is now worth \$1bn (£769mn), and a second fund is at the same level and will be closed once it reaches about \$1.35bn (£1bn). Another for projects in South Korea currently sits at \$500mn (£385mn).

After financing is factored in, the firm has around \$4bn (£3bn) at its disposal, a figure that

will continually increase. Currently, ESR has an investment pace of around \$800mn (£620mn) each year in Japan.

“I personally don’t view our type of business as a real estate business—I see it more as an infrastructure play, and logistics really is the backbone of the economy”, said Gibson.

While ESR is the product of the January 2016 merger of China’s e-Shang Cayman Ltd and the Redwood Group Asia, Pte. Ltd., Gibson’s firm, he is adamant that ESR remains a British firm, owing to its roots. Meanwhile, although the merger has expanded Redwood’s China operations, Japan remains a key focus.

“We’ve probably invested more in the past three years than any other British firm in Japan, and by that I mean some of the big iconic firms”, said Gibson. “In the past three years, we’ve probably invested about \$3.2bn (£2.5bn) in Japan”.

A DAY IN THE LIFE: STUART GIBSON

7am: Woken up by twins, go through breakfast ritual with children, catch up on emails.

9:30am: Get to the office. Go over areas of land, design and leasing throughout the day

10:30am: Meetings and conference call with staff

12pm: Lunch with clients

1:30pm: Meetings with banks, clients and investors

4pm: Conference calls with oversea clients in Asia and Europe

6:30pm: Dinner with clients

9pm: Back home, take care of children

10pm: Conference call with clients in North & South America



Labour pains

As with many firms in Japan, ESR is having to adjust to the country’s ageing demographic.

“The big white elephant in the room right now is labour”, said Gibson. “There are fewer and fewer people of working age in Japan, since the death rate is 1.82, whilst the birth rate is 1.42—the maths does not lie—and all the artificial intelligence and robotics in the world isn’t going to cure that in the next 10 years.



New ESR warehouses include lounge areas for staff.



... and even daycare facilities

“Five years ago, my customers, the first thing they would say to me was, ‘How much is that rent per *tsubo* per month?’”

But that is no longer the case.

“Before we talk about rent, before we talk about the length of the lease contract, they ask, ‘Where do I get workers? Is there a labour pool nearby?’” Gibson explained.

With levels of immigration still low, firms and policymakers have had to explore ways to make the most of the underutilised section of the labour force, namely, women. This reflects Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s womenomics agenda.

“I can’t procure workers, but I can create an environment where people want to go there,” explained Gibson. “The only untapped resource is stay-at-home mums—we need to bring these ladies back to work if we can, and the only way you can do that is if you take care of the kids.”

Since government centres are oversubscribed, the firm has chosen to make daycare facilities a standard provision at ESR warehouses that are

larger than 100,000m². In addition, the newer warehouses also have lounges and spaces that employees and members of local communities can use. This is all a part of what ESR calls “human-centric design,” and Gibson joked that in some cases the facilities look more like resorts than traditional warehouses.

These steps represent a costly undertaking for the firm. Not only does it provide and pay for the services, but the facilities eat into the bottom line by taking up valuable floor space that would otherwise be used for storage and distribution.

Meanwhile, the government is also trying to do its bit by encouraging the adoption of different work styles. Notably, that has come in the form of the Premium Friday initiative, which encourages firms to let staff leave at 3pm on the last Friday of the month. Although he does believe this to be a step in the right direction, Gibson characterises the scheme as “gimmicky”.

“I would much rather the government put increased pressure on firms to make people work a little bit less and get paid a little bit

more,” he said, pointing out that many Japanese firms sit on hoards of cash.

“If they’re sitting on a bunch of profits, they really have to pass it down to their workers before it can go into the general circulation of the economy, and that’s what they really have to tackle. I just don’t think they’ve really got to grips with that right now”.

ESR has also made a push into renewable energy by installing solar panels on its warehouse roofs. This not only provides ESR with a profitable side business, but also helps Japan in terms of its energy needs.

“[The development at Nanko in Osaka] gets us almost seven megawatts, which is huge,” explained Gibson. “We’ve got a separate firm called Redwood Renewables, which I think now has got a pipeline of about 20 megawatts of power that we can generate.

“I’m quite proud of these kinds of offshoot businesses that came up,” he continued. “There was a problem generating electricity and we turned it into an opportunity. And it’s also that our investors love it as well, because it’s part of your corporate social responsibility and your carbon footprint”.

Indeed, the chance to promote its contributions to tackling two of Japan’s biggest problems—labour and energy—was one of the motivations for ESR’s BCCJ membership.

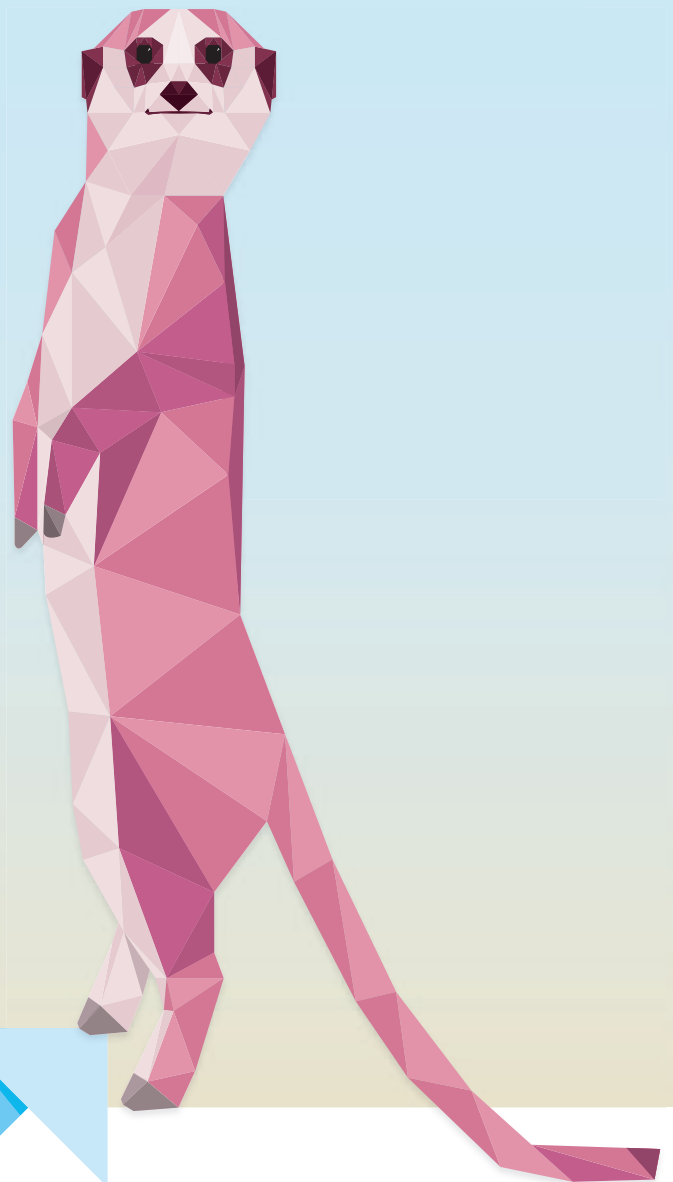
“I think it could be a good stage for us, to maybe just shine a light on who we are and what we do, and maybe to just underline some of the initiatives that we’re coming up with, like bringing women into the workplace, trying to enhance the workplace environment,” said Gibson.

“If you’re just building warehouses and people pay rent, it can become a kind of dull business to be quite honest. But we like to change the perception of what people think of as a warehouse”.



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SMALL IS GREAT XI

Success as a serial entrepreneur in Japan

BY CHRIS RUSSELL



Fariza Abidova, founder and chief executive officer of SOPHYS Corporation and Trusted Corporation

It often feels as if we are living in an age of entrepreneurs, with many of the firms that now define our lives having been founded in recent memory and many more, based in the likes of London’s “Silicon Roundabout”, achieving multimillion-pound valuations. But Japan has arguably proved somewhat more resistant to the startup bug, and well-trodden career paths with major firms remain the preferred route for those just starting out in the world of work.

It is an even tougher environment for non-Japanese, who typically lack cultural familiarity and useful connections. But that hasn’t stopped some from trying, and one of them, Fariza Abidova, who hails from Uzbekistan and initially came to Japan on a government scholarship, spoke at the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan’s (BCCJ) 11th Small is Great event on 23 May.

As the founder and chief executive officer of two firms—SOPHYS Corporation and Trusted Corporation, which offer cross-cultural training and a platform for connecting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), respectively—Abidova has accrued a great deal of experience in what it takes to build a successful business in Japan.

In the course of her presentation, Abidova revealed many of the hard-won lessons and insights she has taken from founding her own firms.

Trusting yourself

While startups might lack the resources of larger firms, they do have the advantage of

agility. Abidova said this was something she has come to appreciate from working on her first business.

“For startup companies, speed is everything”, she said.

That can be a big factor when it comes to partnerships and the targeting of clients—saying you have worked with a large firm brings prestige, but it can also be a slow process with a high chance of failure.

“I was always chasing big names or huge companies, but sometimes it’s the wrong decision”, said Abidova, noting that over time she learnt to target the chief executive officers of SMEs instead. “With SMEs, you can directly decide with the chief executive officer about the pricing, about the marketing strategy, everything. It speeds things up”.

Goal setting is a key part of any business, but it is all the more challenging for startups given they often are facing a comparative lack of resources and experience, as well as the fact they might be trying to bring a novel product or service to market. When Abidova sat down to establish what could be achieved, she came away with a plan that would have seen her earn \$500,000 (£388,000) in revenue per year. But in reality, it took her two years before she secured her first paying client.

“Even though [my goal] seemed really realistic because it was based on numbers, I understand now that I didn’t take into consideration two points”, she said. “I was depending on the resources of other companies

“Because you’re doing something new, no one can confirm for you if your strategy is right or wrong—that is the most difficult thing”.



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BCCJ President David Bickle (right) praised Abidova's courage in his closing remarks.

that I cannot directly manage, and that was something that I understood later to be why my goals were unrealistic. And the second part was I was making goals based on my company priorities, my company strategies, and I didn't take into consideration my partner company's processes, internal issues, company priorities and everything else".

That slow progress was stressful, but Abidova found that these "unrealistic goals" nonetheless helped motivate her. Now, with her second firm, she has learnt that these goals are useful so long as you recognise things won't always go completely to plan, and that it is important not to lose sight of small achievements along the way.

Asked by BCCJ President David Bickle if she had ever suffered a crisis of confidence in those two years, Abidova admitted that she had. But this fed into one of her most significant lessons—how to make decisions.

"Because you're doing something new, no one can confirm for you if your strategy is right or wrong—that is the most difficult thing for me because I always needed someone to say, 'Yeah, it's a good idea'", she said, noting that the pressure was often particularly acute given that other people's salaries might be on the line.

"The only way to understand if the decision is right or wrong is to take action and see the result—to believe your own intuition.

"If you fail, fail fast", she added, repeating the mantra that has come to define startups the world over. "If your success was lucky, well, it's working".

Abidova also noted two challenges she encountered once her startup had become a success. The issues provided the impetus for exploring a second business. The first challenge was that she couldn't scale the firm's operations—her own schedule was full and the types of clients she was targeting were of a limited number. The second problem was that the startup had become founder dependent.

"Even though I had some people interested in working with me, my clients always told me

"I have business plans until I am 80 years old. I have so many ideas".

they wanted me to deliver the service because they don't want to receive a different level of quality", she explained.

A new path

Trevor Webster, who is a member of the BCCJ Executive Committee and managing partner at Taylor Brunswick Group, asked Abidova what it was that excited her about being an entrepreneur. She revealed that she had needed to overcome traditional attitudes in Uzbekistan to the role of women in society. Those beliefs almost prevented her from attending university, let alone moving to Japan to study and eventually start her own business.

"I didn't agree with traditions, I wanted to make my own path", she explained. "I want to be in control, to be free—that pushed me to do my own business without working with a big corporation, because I want to decide when to work, what projects to work on and how to work.

"Now I am enjoying my freedom, standing here in front of you—I never guessed that I would be giving a speech in Tokyo".

As a final question, BCCJ Interim Executive Director Emma Hickinbotham asked if Abidova was already thinking about her next startup.

"I have business plans until I am 80 years old", she replied. "I have so many ideas". 🇬🇧

PAST & PRESENT

Solomon Islands teem with
UK and Japan heritage, FDI and war relics

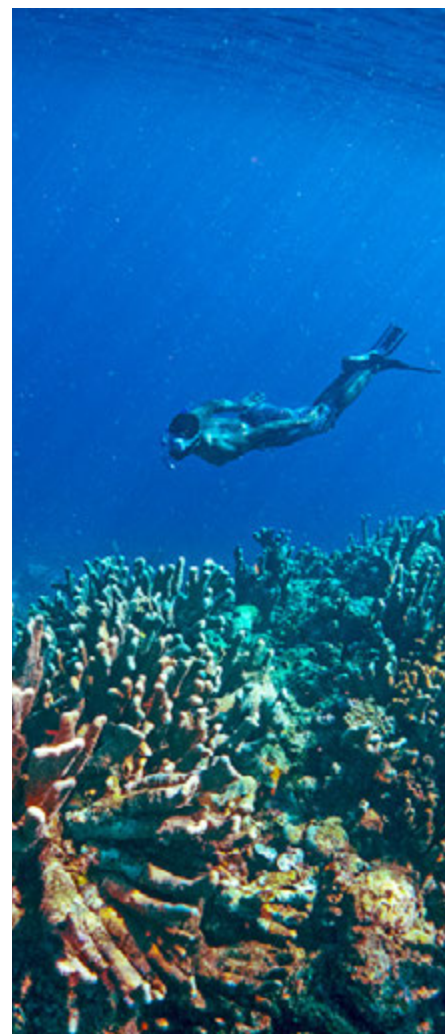
BY JULIAN RYALL
PHOTOS: DAVID KIRKLAND



The flag of the Solomon Islands may no longer include the Union Jack in its upper left corner, but British culture, society and royalty are still fondly remembered and respected in a part of the Commonwealth that is just about as far from Great Britain as anywhere on the planet.

In this nation of nearly 1,000 islands to the north-east of Australia, the ties to the UK are palpable in so many little ways: cars drive on the left of the dusty roads and a good number of homes are still colonial-era concrete and breeze block. The Prince Philip Highway is the main road from the international airport into the capital, Honiara, and it passes King George VI National High School, still considered the country's best.

The plush new Heritage Park Hotel was built on the site of the former governor general's state house and retains a degree of the splendour



associated with the colonial years. Heavy furniture adorns the lobby while overhead fans stir the sultry air.

The hotel, also the home of the British High Commission for the Solomon Islands, has an eye catching Sport is Great Britain poster in the lobby highlighting Premier League football. The national obsession with English football over other possible imports—such as basketball or baseball—is visible everywhere: I saw Manchester United and Chelsea shirts, and even an elderly local resident proudly wearing a faded Leeds United cap.

Pride of place at the Heritage Park Hotel is given to a series of photos of the visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in September 2012. The royal couple were greeted by 60,000 well-wishers—impressive for a country of only 600,000 people—on the third stop of a nine-day tour of South-East Asia and the Pacific on

behalf of Queen Elizabeth to commemorate her Diamond Jubilee.

And the Union Jack—replaced when independence was granted in July 1978—frequently still can be seen fluttering alongside the new blue, gold and green flag of this fledgling nation.

Strolling through Honiara towards the Point Cruz Yacht Club, I am greeted by good-natured smiles—or maybe they are grinning at my mild sunburn—and it is quickly apparent that Japan also has a sizeable presence in this country. The vast majority of vehicles on the road, which include a high proportion of rugged four-wheelers, are Japanese brands. Meanwhile, Tokyo is clearly investing heavily in the local infrastructure. A new bridge and road to the west of the city centre are being built by Japanese engineers using Japanese money.

But even in the furthest-flung parts of the islands, the reminders of Britain are constant.

Across oceans

Norman Wheatley was born in Yorkshire in about 1868 and reportedly fled South Shields for Australia after being involved in an assault. In the early 1890s, he arrived in New Georgia, the largest island in the Solomon Islands' Western Province, and set up as a trader on Nusa Zonga Island, just off the modern-day town of Munda. He overcame the reservations of the inhabitants of other islands in Roviana Lagoon—infamous as the domain of the most vicious headhunters and cannibals in the Solomon Islands—and established coconut plantations.

In 1902, in what was apparently an effort to further pacify the locals and boost his own business, Wheatley encouraged Methodist



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Resort accommodation on the Solomon Islands



Remnants of the Second World War are to be found on the islands.

missionaries to build a church on New Georgia. The waterfront site of that first church is today the Agnes Gateway Hotel.

Plantations formed the basis of the islands' economy in the years after Britain declared a protectorate over the Solomons in June 1893, with Lever Brothers—the forerunners of modern multinational giant Unilever—planting oil palm, peanut and sweet potato crops.

A few islands further north-west of Munda is Ghizo, where a hand-drawn Union Jack flutters at the stern of one of the boats that serve as taxis for crossing the lagoon.

This part of the Solomons has more of an affinity with the United States, thanks to then-future President John F. Kennedy who survived being shipwrecked nearby during World War II.

Yet the owner of the most luxurious hotel on neighbouring Mbabanga Island nevertheless has opted for a British theme. Fatboys Resort is named after Joe, the “fat boy” who eats heartily and falls asleep at the drop of a hat in Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*.

The name is apt; a stay at Fatboys Resort revolves around sampling the local cuisine—the chef is happy to prepare fish that guests have caught on a fishing expedition—and relaxing around the impressively stocked bar. The restaurant stands 100 metres from the shore above the coral and other sea life of the lagoon, while juvenile black-tip sharks congregate for scraps from guests' tables. Turtles are regular visitors, too, and flying fish skim across the surface a short way off.

The boatman at Fatboys rejoices in the unlikely name of Panda and I find him watching a football match in between ferrying visitors to the airport or taking them out on fishing trips. He has never been to Britain but insists that West Ham United are his team. Looking out across the turquoise lagoon that he calls home, his commitment to a team in the reaches of east London is impossible to fathom.

How to get there

There are no direct flights from Japan to the Solomon Islands, but Air Niugini operates twice-weekly flights from Tokyo's Narita International Airport to Port Moresby, with onward flights to Honiara by Air Niugini or Solomon Airlines. 🇯🇵



Diving opportunities abound throughout the country.



Sengan-en's main entrance

Shared history

The Sengan-en stately home in Kagoshima sits at the heart of UK–Japan relations

BY JULIAN RYALL

Back in 1863, UK–Japan relations “got off to a bad start” in Kagoshima, admits Sheffield-born Alex Bradshaw.

Now, 154 years after Royal Navy warships bombarded the city on the island of Kyushu in retaliation for an unfortunate confrontation, the public relations manager for the Sengan-en traditional Japanese garden and stately home is doing everything in his power to forge deeper and stronger ties between the two countries that he considers to be home. The initial clash was the Namamugi Incident in 1862, in which a British merchant was killed by samurai escorting the father of the *daimyo* (feudal lord) of Satsuma.

Notwithstanding the brief attack on Kagoshima the following year, known as the Anglo–Satsuma War, there are a surprising number of links between this part of Japan and the UK.

Those connections include members of the British Royal Family having visited Sengan-en in the past, and Bradshaw is working with The Royal Collection Trust to strengthen ties between the UK and Japan through the Publishing Supporters Scheme, which sees items loaned to institutions that are signed up to it.

Gifts presented to Edward VIII in 1922 are still in the possession of the Royal Collection, and Bradshaw travelled to Buckingham Palace to inspect them in February.

“I’d like to revisit the shared history between Satsuma and the UK as a starting point”, Bradshaw told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. “The UK played an important part in the modernisation of Japan, and I think that story is not well known.

“I believe that culture—whether traditional or modern—is really the basis of promoting meaningful links between countries”, he added. “Japan puts a lot of emphasis on ‘soft power’, and culture really is the driving force behind this.”

Although Sengan-en, and Kagoshima more generally, are at a distance from the traditional destinations of Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka for first-time visitors to Japan, in April 2016



PHOTO: SHOKO SHUSEIKAN

Bradshaw helped to launch an aggressive new international promotional campaign.

“We hope to provide authentic Japanese cultural experiences that tourists can then share with their friends and family—promoting Japan—and particularly Japan at a grassroots level”, he said. “I’d also like to work on events that promote British culture in Japan”.

Bradshaw, 37, studied social and economic history at the University of Leeds, before a spell as a systems engineer. But a long-standing fascination with Japan, including in martial arts and Japanese films, encouraged him to apply to join the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme in 2005.

After five years on the JET programme, Bradshaw set up his own language school and dabbled in a number of other enterprises, ranging from working as a reporter for a local TV station, to lecturing at a university, translating and organising an international karate competition.

Offered a position at Sengan-en by the firm that operates it, Shimadzu Ltd., Bradshaw sold his language school and began working there. The aim, Bradshaw says, is to serve as a link between Kagoshima and the UK.

“The problem with living abroad is that after a while you don’t really know where you come from any more”, he said. “When I’m in the UK for two weeks during the summer, living in Japan almost seems like it was a dream. When I’m in Japan I don’t really think about the UK, except as a distant memory. It’s very strange really.

“I suppose I want to reconcile that for myself in a way. Because I love both places so much I really want my friends and family in both countries to see how great each place is”, he added.



Alex Bradshaw, Sengan-en public relations manager

“On a business front, I suppose people are more likely to travel to a destination that they feel some sense of familiarity with”, he emphasised. “Not that they would necessarily know the place, but just that it feels relevant to them. For me, I suppose rather than national relations, I’m hoping to promote personal relations”.

And the starting point is some of the shared history.

After the unpleasantness of the two-day Anglo-Satsuma War, the two sides built up a high degree of cooperation.

In 1865, Satsuma managed to evade the shogun’s edict on overseas travel and sneaked out 19 young men to be educated in the UK under the premise that they were visiting islands south of Kagoshima. They were educated at University College London, a connection set up by Thomas Blake Glover, the Scottish merchant who was based in Nagasaki. But one member

was too young to be admitted to university, so went to study in Aberdeen and stayed with Glover’s family.

Subsequently, seven British engineers were employed to teach modern manufacturing techniques and were housed opposite Sengan-en, while the machines that are still at the site were purchased from Platt Bros. of Oldham. One of the earliest English-Japanese dictionaries was also produced in Kagoshima, while the medical department of Kagoshima University was founded by the British doctor William Willis.

Other visitors included Glover, diplomat Sir Harry Smith Parks as well as scholar, diplomat and Japanologist Sir Ernest Satow.

Britain played a significant part in Japan’s industrial revolution during the Meiji Era, with Sengan-en and the adjoining Shoko Shuseikan site being awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 2015 for their contributions.

Prince Arthur, the Duke of Connaught and grandson of Queen Victoria, visited Sengan-en in 1906 and was reportedly particularly keen to meet Marshal-Admiral Togo Heihachiro—who had studied naval techniques in the UK and became known as “the Nelson of the East”—to discuss his successes in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05.

In 1922, Sengan-en also hosted Edward VIII, when he was Prince of Wales.

“I would say that the people of Kagoshima do not know too much about the UK, despite these links, because it’s not something they have any relation to in their everyday lives”, Bradshaw said. “That is why I would like to use those historical ties between the UK and Satsuma as a starting point for the creation of new relationships between both countries”. 🇬🇧



Prince Arthur (centre), the Duke of Connaught, visited Sengan-en in 1906. PHOTO: SHOKO SHUSEIKAN



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A MEETING OF (ALMOST) LIKE MINDS



Theresa May tackles the G7, election campaign

BY IAN DE STAINS OBE



PHOTO: THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS/G7

British Prime Minister Theresa May and her Japanese counterpart, Shinzo Abe, both took part in the recent G7 meeting in the Sicilian town of Taormina in Italy. The outcome of the annual meeting of the leaders of seven nations (the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan) was mixed.

There was a general commitment to fight trade protectionism, despite early fears that US President Donald Trump's "America First" policy would skew the discussions. Another key area was the threat posed by North Korea which, as the G7 meeting drew to a close, launched its third missile test in as many weeks. The meeting called on the North to immediately abandon its nuclear and missile programmes. So far, so good.

But when it came to the subject of climate change, it was a different story. Six of those attending confirmed their commitment to the 2015 Paris Agreement. The hold out was the United States, one of the world's largest polluters. During the election campaign, Trump had suggested he would take the United States out of the accord if elected.

At the G7 he prevaricated, suggesting he was considering his options. Since then, he has announced that the United States would in fact be leaving the Paris climate accord, in what is a major blow to the effort to reduce carbon dioxide and other contaminants in the atmosphere. Trump favours supporting the US coal industry, which is a major source of pollution. Indeed, the final communiqué from the meeting had acknowledged that the United States was not yet ready to commit to the agreement.

Closer to home

With the G7 behind them, the Japanese and British prime ministers can now focus on domestic issues. For Abe, now the nation's third-longest-serving prime minister, that includes focusing on next year's LDP election, which under new rules could give him a third consecutive three-year term as president. However, his administration faces a number of controversies and scandals, some of which involve the prime minister himself. For all that, his support rating remains comparatively high.

Theresa May returned to the UK to continue campaigning for the snap general election she called ostensibly to strengthen her hand at the tiller of negotiations for Brexit. Campaigning by all the parties was briefly suspended in the wake of the Manchester Arena atrocity in which 23 people were killed by a suicide bomber.

She immediately faced calls to defend the so-called "dementia tax", which she said was a means to ensure no-one would need to sell their home to afford care in later life. May declined to join a televised multi-party debate in which participants discussed this and other pressing issues, including education and the highly controversial subject of immigration, on which Labour Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn refused to be drawn.

One of the most notable features of the election was that May campaigned on a platform that, for the first time in many years, distanced itself from the Thatcher-inspired manifestos of the past:

"We do not believe in untrammelled free markets. We reject the cult of selfish individualism. We abhor social division, injustice, unfairness and inequality. We see rigid dogma and ideology not just as needless, but as dangerous".

This is, perhaps, the mantra of "Mayism" and points the way to the future as we embark on the no-doubt difficult negotiations over Brexit, regardless of who is in charge.

Many questions remain unanswered about those negotiations, including who owes whom what. The European Union (EU) insists the UK faces a "divorce bill". Others claim the UK owes nothing, while still others claim the EU actually owes the UK. But nobody is holding their breath.

Meanwhile, Japan is watching all of this carefully. Japanese firms in the UK employ more than 140,000 people and the long-term effects of Brexit are anyone's guess. 🇬🇧

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ENGLISH ICON

National treasure on Bond and acting

BY GUY PERRYMAN MBE

Dame Judi Dench CH DBE has won many awards and accolades throughout her 60-year career, but at the Chelsea Flower Show this year there was a first—she had a rose named after her. I think it's rather appropriate. Both are pretty, delicate, can be prickly, smell delightful and are very English icons.

It was at another reception celebrating her career that we met for an interview. In 2011, the British Embassy Tokyo commemorated Dench being awarded the Praemium Imperiale, a global arts prize from the Japan Art Association in honour of the late Prince Takamatsu (1905–1987), the younger brother of the late Emperor Hirohito.

We had a conversation in a private sitting room away from the guests, and yes, just like a rose, she did smell delightful. A soft powdery perfume you would associate with a mum or granny, which Dench is—apart from being a global film star and legend of the stage.

She immediately reminded me of my mother: of the same generation, petite, softly mannered and with a similar cheeky twinkle in her eye. So it felt a bit odd having to interview her, instead of just giving her a hug and having a gossip. I suddenly felt nervous. I didn't want to be too familiar. But she put me at ease and we had a laugh comparing our spiky haircuts.

Dench is a Dame of the British Empire, has an Oscar, a Tony, two Golden Globes, seven Oliviers, 10 BAFTAs and many more awards. But when I asked her what is the most rewarding part of her work, she said, "Being in a company

in the theatre. Getting a go at doing a play, night after night and, hopefully, getting better".

Getting better is something she has certainly achieved. She has become a master of her trade by being on stage, as well as the small and big screens, since 1957. And yet the fear of never working again hasn't diminished. She touched wood and said, "I'm always frightened of where the next job is going to come from".

Work hard

When I asked her why she keeps working so hard, she bristled slightly. "Why do I keep working? Because I love it so much. What is the percentage of people who really love the job and run to work? I'm in that tiny little percentage".

The prickly Dench demands respect for the craft of the theatre and "can't bear being referred to as a luvvie". She recently berated young actors for lacking curiosity in their artistic heritage, not speaking or projecting properly nor understanding Shakespeare. She has never stopped studying, saying, "There's always something to learn. If I come into a job being complacent, that's the moment I trip up".

And what advice would she give to people entering this career, which can be a very a

The prickly Dench demands respect for the craft of the theatre and "can't bear being referred to as a luvvie".

tough ride? "If you're inclined towards another career, do that".

Our conversation took place one week before Dench was to start shooting *Skyfall*, which would be her final instalment in the James Bond series as M, the head of MI5. I had no idea at the time that her character was to be killed off, and if I had, I might have shed a tear—007 is a bit of a guilty pleasure.

Dame Judi said playing M was great fun, but that it was also quite a challenge learning to use all of the gadgets on set. When rehearsing unsuccessfully with some high-tech gizmo while her husband was by her side, he said in jest, "Judi, if you've got to save the world, we've given up". She was sworn to secrecy and wouldn't tell me any more about the incident. I commented on how good she was at playing the role on screen and carrying it over into real life.

Talking about working on the Bond films, Dame Judi said, "Again, it's like family. It's very, very exciting". She obviously has many loyal colleagues in the acting world and noted, "I love working with other actors, and find the generosity of actors a very remarkable thing. Their friendship, I wouldn't exchange it for anything".

Her own generosity on stage and screen has been for our enjoyment, and I'm sure many people are delighted to know they can now have a Dame Judi Dench growing in the garden. Described by its creators as "a beautiful rich apricot rose, with a lovely light-medium tea scent. A vigorous grower that is particularly reliable and healthy". Now that sums up Dench to a T! 🌹

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POSITIVE MINDSET FOR LEADERS

Simple steps at the start of the day

BY DR GREG STORY

How do we set up a positive mindset? More importantly, how do we set it up from when we wake in the morning and when we start work? What are we feeding our mind? What things are occupying our thoughts? How do we control what we allow into our mind? Who has influence over our mindset? Are we in control, or are we being controlled?

Usually, our start to the day begins with a quick scan of our email or social media to see what has happened overnight. The problems of yesterday and the ones we will be facing hereafter are brought straight into our brain from the start of the day. We then access the media in some other format, but the content is consistently the same—predominantly bad news!

Is this the best way to get us into a positive mindset? Unfortunately, it is a fact of life and we are unlikely to change the need to access our email or check on world and local events. We could just ignore it all, but in this fast-paced world that is a luxury that we won't be enjoying anytime soon.

Balance is better

So we can't shut it out, but we can balance it out a bit better. Accept that the start of the day is already working against having a positive mindset and accept that it is going to be like this forever. We need to take some countermeasures. We need to create some time at the start of the day to get ourselves into a positive frame of mind. The start of the day is key because once the day gets going,

the chance for any type of personal reflection is absorbed by crises, meetings, a deluge of emails, phone calls and so on.

We shouldn't expect that somehow this positive mindset pivot is going to happen by itself. We need to schedule an intervention. Schedule is the key word here because time is all we have, and how we use it means everything. If we want to become more positive, we need to take action.

That means scheduling time to allow that to happen. It might mean that, during our commute, we are listening to podcasts on educational or motivational topics that get us thinking in a positive way. It might mean we start the day by reading something on the train or bus that is pouring positive sentences into our brain. It might mean we are reviewing our goals and the reason for them.

Goals vs. wishes

Most people don't have concrete goals. They have wishy-washy wishes masquerading as goals. They are usually high level and aspirational—I want to be successful, rich, happy and so on. These vagaries are suspended in the ether as well, because they are not written down anywhere. Real goals are concrete, written down and have timelines and milestones.

So what about a reset for our values every day? Have we pondered just what it is we stand for? Have we distilled our "True North"? If we have spent time thinking about what type of person we are and want to be, we will need to have an internal conversation about what our values are. Writing them down for review every

day helps us to reconnect with what we believe in and our best self.

So setting aside time—before the work day really gets frantic—to review our goals and our values provides us with clarity about our purpose in life and our aims and direction. How long would this take? Probably less than 10 to 15 minutes, depending on how deep we want to take the process. Is that a massive burden? This reconnecting with who we are and what we want is a way to get us organised mentally, to make sense of what is happening every day.

The alternative is that we are a rudderless mind, being blown off course at the whim of outside forces. Leaders are supposed to be the best organised because they have been put in charge of the direction of the firm. Often, however, work sucks up all the time and our personal needs are sacrificed. We have the needs of the firm and needs of our own. We need to be vigilant, because it is too easy to get that balance wrong. Start the day by ensuring a positive mindset and the balance will be assured.

Action Steps

- Create time at the start of the day for you
- Review your goals
- Review your values
- Make time to inject positive information into your brain

Engaged employees are self-motivated. The self-motivated are inspired. Inspired staff grow your business but are you inspiring them? 🌸

Real goals are concrete,
written down and have
timelines and milestones.

NATURAL DIVERSITY

Advice from Matt Nicholls, RGF Managing Director

BY RGF

Diversity is a hot topic. The world's best companies take it seriously—and rightly so. The thing I've always liked about working for good recruitment businesses is how things almost always happens naturally. We're such a transparent, results-driven industry that the most talented people get the biggest rewards and the quickest promotions. Age, gender, and nationality don't really come into play.

As managing director of RGF Japan, I really appreciate the different perspectives and opinions—as well as challenges—that a

diverse management team can offer. These contributions result in a more balanced, humanistic approach to a real “people business” like recruitment.

Here at RGF, we take a diverse approach to working with clients and candidates. In our business, we employ consultants with very different personalities and styles; but they all fit in with our core beliefs and values. This, combined with the resources of the Recruit Group, allows us to attract the best candidates on the market. 🇯🇵



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Argentum Properties is the real estate arm of a well-known financial advisory firm headquartered in Tokyo. We can help you find the right property, whether it's in Japan or abroad, for investment or as your primary residence. Many people living and working internationally want to invest in property, but may not be aware that this is even an option.

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ONE DESIGNS is an interior design and renovation firm based in Tokyo. We offer a wide range of services from interior design and construction to the complete renovation of an entire building. Proposal and arrangement of furniture, curtains, lighting and electronic appliances can also be done. Our English-speaking agent can assist you with your inquiry, so please feel free to contact us.

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- Sales & marketing
- Retail
- Luxury & consumer goods
- Healthcare
- Supply chain
- Logistics

ARTS

UK EVENTS IN JAPAN

COMPILED BY
KIYOKO MORITA
AND SOPHIA KIRTLEY

1 8-9 JULY

Coppélia

The English National Ballet will perform *Coppélia*, a comedic ballet based on *Der Sandmann* (*The Sandman*) by E.T.A. Hoffmann. Known as “the last romantic ballet”, it tells the story of Dr. Coppélius, who creates a dancing doll. Franz, a young man from the village, becomes captivated by the doll after mistaking it for a person, calling his feelings for his fiancée, Swanhilda, into question.

PHOTO: © LAURENT LIOTARDO

Tokyo Bunka Kaikan

Ueno Koen 5-45, Taito-ku, Tokyo
Various times
Adults: from ¥7,000
<http://www.nbs.or.jp/english/stages/2017/enb/introduction.html>
03-3791-8888

2 FROM 1 JULY

The Girl with All the Gifts

This British film, adapted from the novel of the same name by M.R. Carey, is set in a post-apocalyptic world. After an infection has turned most of humanity into flesh-eating zombies, humankind's survival is in the hands of a scientist, a teacher, two soldiers and a girl called Melanie. *The Girl with All the Gifts* is directed by Colm McCarthy, the Scottish director who has worked on BBC productions such as *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock*.

PHOTO: © GIFT GIRL LIMITED / THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE 2016

Shinjuku Wald 9

(Among other locations)
3-1-26 Shinjuku
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo
Various times
Adults: from ¥1,800
<http://pandora-movie.jp/>
03-5369-4955

◦ Free gift

We are giving away three *The Girl with All the Gifts* mini fans.

3 UNTIL 25 JUNE

The Elegant Other: Cross-cultural Encounters in Fashion and Art

This exhibition at the Yokohama Museum of Art showcases how the East and West have influenced each other since the beginning of the Meiji Restoration in 1868. There are over 100 dresses and accessories from the Kyoto Costume Institute, including an 1870s Turner dress, as well as accessories, paintings and photographs from various Japanese and Western collections.

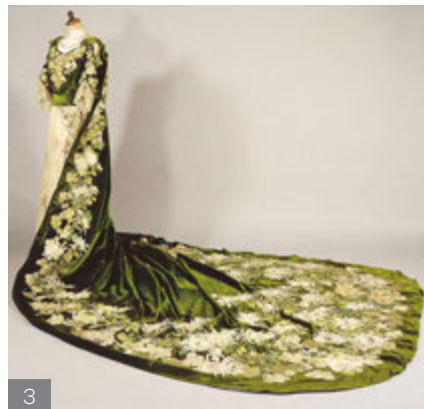
PHOTO: © TURNER / DRESS / 1870S / COLLECTION OF THE KYOTO COSTUME INSTITUTE (KCI) / PHOTO BY RICHARD HAUGHTON

Yokohama Museum of Art

3-4-1 Minatomirai
Nishi-ku, Yokohama
10am-6pm (last entry at 5:30pm)
Adults: from ¥1,500
<http://yokohama.art.museum/>
045-221-0300

◦ Free tickets

We are giving away five pairs of tickets.





4

◦ To apply for free gifts and tickets, please send an email with your name, address and telephone number by 30 June to: coordinator@custom-media.com
Winners will be picked at random.

4
12-30 JULY

Look Back in Anger

Written by English playwright John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger* tells the story of a young, working-class man, Jimmy Porter, and his wife Alison. The play draws attention to the struggles of the working class population in post-war Britain, and its popularity led to the coining of the term “angry, young men.”

The play is the 12th instalment in the New National Theatre, Tokyo’s JAPAN MEETS...A Look at the Lineage of Contemporary Drama series.

PHOTO: WALLACE/ANL/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

The New National Theatre Tokyo
1-1-1 Honmachi
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
Various Times
Adults: from ¥3,240
http://www.nntt.jac.go.jp/english/productions/detail_008014.html
03-5352-9999

◦ **Free gift**
We are giving away five coupons that can be exchanged for programmes.

5
22-26 JUNE

The 27th Barakura Flower Show

This special annual event at the Barakura English Gardens features lectures from prominent British speakers, as well as a variety of live performances by British musicians. There will also be fish and chips provided by Rugby’s Brownsover Fish Bar, which has been voted as the provider of Britain’s best fish and chips.

Barakura English Gardens

5047 Kuridaira, Kitayama
Chino-shi, Nagano
9am-6pm
Adults: ¥1,500 in advance, ¥1,800 on the door
www.en.barakura.co.jp/events
02-6677-2019

◦ **Free tickets**
We are giving away five pairs of tickets for this event.

6
17 JUNE

King Arthur: Legend of the Sword

A fantasy film directed by Guy Ritchie. It is loosely based on the tales of the legendary British leader who was denied his birth right but went on to reclaim it, pulling the sword from the stone. Arthur is played by British actor Charlie Hunnam.

PHOTO: © 2017 WARNER BROS. ENT. INC., VILLAGE ROADSHOW FILMS (BVI) LIMITED AND RATPAC-DUNE. LLC

Marunouchi Piccadilly

2-5-1 Yurakucho
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Various times
Adults: from ¥1,800
<http://www.warnerbros.co.jp/king-arthur/>
03-3201-2881

◦ **Free gift**
We are giving away a *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* t-shirt.



5



6



UK-Japan events

1 | REAL ESTATE

Martin Fluck (left), director of operations, North Asia at Oakwood Asia Pacific, with colleagues and investors at the opening party of Oakwood Apartments Azabudai on 26 May.

PHOTO: OAKWOOD

2 | BCCJ EVENTS

British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) President David Bickle (left) and Trevor Webster, BCCJ Executive Committee member and managing partner at the Taylor Brunswick Group, attended Small is Great XI: Success as a Serial Entrepreneur at the BCCJ office on 23 May (page 27).

3

Ian Gibbins, founder of the Swan & Lion, putting finishing touches to food served at the BCCJ's wine tasting event (see page 22) held on 18 May at the Life Science Hub in Nihonbashi.

4

BCCJ members and guests prepared to tee off on 3 June at Gold Tochigi President's Country Club as part of the chamber's annual golf day.

5

Lisa Wilson, a freelance economist, and David Swan, Robert Walters' managing director, Japan and Korea, at the Attracting Top Talent: Millennials event held on 31 May at the ANA InterContinental Tokyo.



6 | CHARITY

Elizabeth Oliver MBE (centre left), founder of Animal Refuge Kansai, and visiting dignitaries from Japan and the UK cut the ribbon to open the charity’s new kennel in Sasayama, Hyogo Prefecture on 28 May.

PHOTO: ANIMAL REFUGE KANSAI

7 | SPORT

The Tokyo-based British Embassy Football Club finished as the runner up at the Footy Japan Charity Soccer Day in Yokohama on 27 May. The event was held in support of Refugees International Japan.

PHOTO: FOOTY JAPAN

8 | CULTURE

Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* was performed on 12 May at Musashino Kokaido in Kichijoji, Tokyo as part of the International Theatre Company London’s 44th Japan Tour. The performance was supported by the British Council.

PHOTO: STEVE LEWIS

9 | EDUCATION

On 6 May, British School in Tokyo (BST) students took part in the Kanto Plains Robotics Competition at Yokota Air Base in Tokyo, with girls in Year 8 claiming second place. Teams demonstrated their skills in building and programming robots.

PHOTO: BST

10

BST Year 2 students went on their residential to Hachioji, Tokyo on 25–26 May, which included a hike up Mount Takao.

PHOTO: BST

BCCJ ACUMEN readers are welcome to email recent UK–Japan event photos with captions and credits for the editor to consider: russell@custom-media.com

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



Knights in White Lycra

The Tokyo charity cycling team Knights in White Lycra cycled 550km to Ichinoseki, Iwate Prefecture on 25–28 May. They raised more than ¥11mn, enabling 25 children to attend Mirai no Mori’s winter camps for the next three years and helping to develop a Leader in Training programme for the benefit of older children.

PHOTOS: IVAN DOHERTY



BCCJ ACUMEN has one copy of this book to give away. To apply, please send an email by 30 June to: publisher@custom-media.com. The winners will be picked at random.



The Minimalist

Goodbye, Things: The New Japanese Minimalism
Fumio Sasaki
Translated by Eriko Sugita
WW Norton & Company
\$21.95

Everything about this delightful book is minimalist, from the simple cover design with its lower case title, to the font used in the body copy. The author does not claim to be an expert and is certainly not an organising guru like the consultant and author Marie Kondo. He claims he is “just a regular guy who was stressed out” and constantly comparing himself to others.

One day—for reasons he doesn’t exactly go into—he decided to change his life. He chose to get rid of everything that he did not absolutely need. The effects, he says, were remarkable. He gained real freedom and a new focus, together with a sense of gratitude for everything around him. The book is an attempt—largely successful—at sharing that experience.

It opens with a series of photographs, including before-and-after shots of Sasaki’s previous apartment. “I couldn’t throw things away ... my possessions kept piling up. I lived in that apartment for 10 years, and during that time it seemed like my life had stopped moving forward”.

That is when Sasaki discovered the concept of minimalism, going from what he terms “messy maximalism” to life as a minimalist.

“I said goodbye to almost all my things, and to my surprise I found I had also changed myself in the process”.

Reading about his experience and accepting his tips on how to achieve this change, I found there is a certain appeal to the idea, though I confess I cannot imagine living in a space without books at least—they take up quite a bit of space in our house. Indeed, there’s barely a room that doesn’t have some books in it somewhere.

But the idea of getting rid of things you no longer need and will probably never need again is a sound one, and Sasaki’s argument for doing so is convincing. He demonstrates how the new minimalist movement can not only transform your space, but also enrich your life. He argues that the benefits of a minimalist life can be realised by anyone.

At the end of the book—which is solidly translated by Eriko Sugita—there are two “Recap” sections, which summarise much of what has been explored in previous chapters. These are extremely helpful in choosing whether or not you will say goodbye to things, even if it is just in a general de-cluttering rather than a complete minimalist makeover.

Some are just common sense. For example, “start with things that are clearly junk”. Others have a little more depth: “Differentiate between things you want and things you need”.


Goodbye, Things is an enjoyable book and you do not have to be a convinced minimalist to find much of interest in it. 🇬🇧


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